War and the Representations of Women in the Twelfth-Century China

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Abstract

The dissertation focuses on examining female images of the period 1100–1200, analysing how they were produced and used in the context of national instability and investigating how the interpretation and production of such images were affected and/or shaped by war directly and indirectly.

A significant volume of previous scholarship has discussed different aspects of women's roles and rights that might have an impact on, or even started, many of the gender-related cultural phenomena in late imperial China. However, discussions on the impact of wars on women's lives in the Song dynasty have only started in the last two decades. The Northern Song dynasty was bitterly defeated by the Jin army in an unexpectedly swift manner in 1127. Losing half of its lands to the Jin army triggered a major population shift; having almost the entire imperial family, including the two emperors, Huizong and Qinzong, captured by the north, the Song court somehow managed to survive and ruled for another a 150-odd years. As a result of the war, China saw huge social and political changes at the time. For this reason, the dissertation focuses on this period, 1100–1200.

By studying the female images under the context of national insecurities and rediscovering the hidden images of women in the war narratives, I hope to see how women at the time were impacted by national instability, fill the gaps of related studies and discussions, and offer a perspective that could lead to a further understanding of the lives of women at the time.

Introduction

This research focuses on examining the war-related images of women in the period 1100–1200. 1100 is the year Emperor Huizong of Song dynasty 宋徽宗 (b. 1082–1135, r. 1100–1126) succeeded the throne, while Emperor Guangzong 光宗 (b. 1147–1200, r. 1189–1194), his wife, Empress Li 李氏 (1144–1200), and his daughter-in-law, Empress Han 韓氏 (1165–1200), died in 1200. Within the century, the Northern Song Empire (960–1127) was crushed by the Jin army. The two emperors, Emperor Huizong and Emperor Qinzong 欽宗 (b. 1100–1156, r. 1126–1127), along with members of the imperial family and servants residing in the palace, government officials and thousands of commoners, were captured by the north. The Song court, deeply humiliated, was forced to retreat to the southern part of China to rebuild the empire, known as the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1278).

The collapse of the Northern Song dynasty was no doubt one of the biggest shocks, not only politically but also culturally, for the Song people. I believe that these national insecurities are one of the important factors in changing women's roles, although women were frequently excluded from the war narrative. By investigating the images of women in this period, examining how images of women in war time were constructed and how different narratives were produced during and after the war between Jin and Song in literature, I hope to explore the changing depictions and perceptions of women at the time.

In this chapter, I will first provide an overview of previous scholarship on related topics, including the discussions on femininity in premodern China, the studies on Chinese women's history, and the research on the Song dynasty. I will then introduce my research approach, the materials used, and the structure of the research.

1. Literature Review

The review is divided into three parts. In the first part, I discuss previous scholarship on femininity, female voices, and images of women in Chinese literature, especially those written by women themselves. I then turn to look at previous studies about women in the Song dynasty. Last, I explore studies about the national insecurities the Song Empire was facing and the social changes that occurred in the Song dynasty.

1.1 Femininity and Images of Women in Chinese Literature

The first part of the literature review focuses on the writings about women and the writings of women. Femininity has been a popular literary theme throughout the history of Chinese literature; thus, it is also a hot topic in studies on women's literature and gender history.

Studies on female social standings, women's literature, and gender history have been receiving scholarly attention since the late Qing. The "woman question" became one of the popular topics of discussion in the May Fourth Movement. Early studies on women's literature were general introductions to and very brief analysis of the overall history of literary women and Chinese literature, such as Xie Wuliang's 謝無量 *Zhongguo funü wenxue shi* 中國婦女文學史 (first published in 1916).[1]

It was not until the 1980s that studies on women's history and literature of the Song dynasty flourished. However, there are very few books focusing on general histories of female literature in the Song dynasty. Only two, to be exact: first, Su Zhecong's 蘇者聰 *Songdai nüxing wenxue* 宋代女性文學 (1997), which focuses mainly on analysing *shi* 詩 (regulated poems) and *ci* 詞 (song lyrics) written by women in the Song dynasty, divides the female poets into different groups according to their social status and examines the lives and works of

[1] Xie Wuliang 謝無量, *Zhongguo funü wenxue shi* 中國婦女文學史 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1931).

famous female poets such as Lady Wei 魏夫人 (active in the second half of the eleventh century), Zhu Shuzhen 朱淑真 (active in the first half of the twelfth century), and Li Qingzhao 李清照 (1084–ca. 1155) in detail;[2] and second, Shu Hongxia's 舒紅霞 *Nüxing shenmei wenhua: Songdai nüxing wenxue yanjiu* 女性審美文化：宋代女性文學研究 (2004), which focuses on the images linked to the feminine and compares the differences between the images of women written by men and women.[3]

Generally, women were usually depicted to be tender, slender, delicate and were often associated with the images of loneliness, sadness, and confinement. However, in earlier scholarship, researchers often stressed excessively the oppressor/oppressed gender dichotomy, and women were viewed as either victims of the feudal system (*fengjian* 封建) or fighters against this system.

Images of Women in Chinese Literature (1994), edited by Li Yu-ning,[4] is a collection of essays presented in one of the panels in the New York Asian Conference of the Association for Asian Studies in 1984. Among the presented papers, in "Concepts of Redemption and Fall through Woman as Reflected in Chinese Literature,"[5] Tsung Su suggested that women were either depicted as good — virtuous, willing to sacrifice — or bad — whorish, too sexually appealing, and even destructive to the nation because of their beauty — which was feared by men. To some extent, her argument oversimplifies the meaning as well as the process of production of such images. In her words:

> In the dichotomy of either being perceived as evil or saintly, as goddess or whore, women in patriarchal societies were not depicted or appreciated realistically, but

[2] Su Zhecong 蘇者聰, *Songdai nüxing wenxue* 宋代女性文學 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 1997).
[3] Shu Hongxia 舒紅霞, *Nüxing shenmei wenhua: Songdai nüxing wenxue yanjiu* 女性審美文化：宋代女性文學研究 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2004).
[4] Li Yu-ning, ed., *Images of Women in Chinese Literature* (Indianapolis: University of Indianapolis Press, 1994).
[5] Tsung Su, "Concepts of Redemption and Fall through Woman as Reflected in Chinese Literature," in *Images of Women in Chinese Literature*, ed. Li Yu-ning (Indianapolis: University of Indianapolis Press, 1994), 23–72.

> rather than fantasies […] Only when women are accepted in their human totality as equal partners in man's universe, in work, in pursuits, in ideals, and in aspirations, will woman be understood and defined in truthful and justifiable.[6]

From the excerpt above, we can see that Su has her own agenda — promoting sexual equality — which might make one's viewpoint look biased. However, it also brings up a more important question: the representation of women in Chinese literature. It should be noted that it was common for both male and female writers to write in a female voice, so one must be very careful when speaking about the unique characteristics of literature written by women.

There have been discussions on why writing femininity is so common, or even dominating, for male writers in certain literary genres, such as *ci*, for example, Grace Fong's "Contextualisation and Generic Codes in the Allegorical Readings of Tz'u Poetry,"[7] Martin W. Huang's "Gendering Chinese Lyricism: Literati Anxiety and the Gender Problem in Dream,"[8] and Maija Bell Samei's *Gendered Persona and Poetic Voice: The Abandoned Woman in Early Chinese Song Lyrics*.[9] Writings about women can be erotic in nature. Writing in female voices can also be a method for men to write about issues and emotions previously forbidden for men to feel or say.[10] I am including these discussions in my literature review because it is important for us to acknowledge the nuances of female images written by men and women.

Among literary genres in Song literature, *ci* is traditionally associated with themes of femininity and is often written in female voices; therefore, it received more attention than others when it comes to studies on female voice and femininity represented in Song literature. However, there are very few studies focusing on women writers and femininity in literature in

[6] Su, "Concepts of Redemption and Fall," 66.
[7] Grace Fong, "Contextualization and Generic Codes in the Allegorical Readings of Tz'u Poetry," *Tamkang Review* 19 (1988–1989): 663–679.
[8] Martin W. Huang, "The Dilemma of Chinese Lyricism and the Qing Literati Novel" (PhD diss., Washington University at St. Louis, 1991), 136–178.
[9] Maija Bell Samei, *Gendered Persona and Poetic Voice: The Abandoned Woman in Early Chinese Song Lyrics* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2004).
[10] Samei, *Gendered Persona*, 6.

the Song dynasty. Among them, the most important research in recent years is probably Ronald Egan's *The Burden of Female Talent: The Poet Li Qingzhao and Her History in China* (2013), raising important questions on the life, authorship, and interpretations of the work of the most discussed Song female poet Li Qingzhao.

Most of the works about images of women, "female" voices and "male" gaze in Chinese literature focus on women writers of the Ming and Qing dynasties and their works. For example, Grace Fong's *Herself an Author: Gender, Agency, and Writing in Late Imperial China* (2008),[11] *The Inner Quarters and Beyond: Women Writers from Ming through Qing* edited by Grace Fong and Ellen Widmer (2010),[12] and Daria Berg's *Women and the Literary World in Early Modern China, 1580–1700* (2013).[13]

Although these are pieces of research on female poets of the Ming and Qing dynasties instead of those in Song dynasty, the questions raised and the analyses conducted in these scholarly works, such as the unique living space of women created by gender segregation, "the filter of male-authored discourse from literati works" as Daria Berg phrased it,[14] the agency women writers had when writing, and also the self-censorship they underwent, et cetera, can be inspiring for all researchers working on premodern women's literature.

1.2 Women in the Song Dynasty

As indicated in the previous session, there are very few studies done on female literature of the Song dynasty, except for Li Qingzhao, who has received an overwhelming amount of scholarly attention compared to other female poets since her time.

[11] Grace S. Fong, *Herself an Author: Gender, Agency, and Writing in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).
[12] Grace Fong and Ellen Widmer, eds., *The Inner Quarters and Beyond: Women Writers from Ming through Qing* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).
[13] Daria Berg, *Women and the Literary World in Early Modern China, 1580–1700* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
[14] Berg, *Women and the Literary World*, 46.

Li Qingzhao is undoubtedly the most discussed female poet of all. Apart from Ronald Egan's *The Burden of Female Talent* mentioned previously, there are numerous essays, biographies, anthologies of her works and collections of scattered information about her and brief analysis of her work, for example, *Li Qingzhao ziliao huibian* 李清照資料彙編 (1984) edited by Chu Binjie 褚斌杰, Sun Chongen 孫崇恩, and Rong Xianbin 榮憲賓,[15] Kai-yu Hsu's "The Poems of Li Qingzhao (1084–1141)" (1994),[16] John Timothy Wixted's "The Poetry of Li Ch'ing-chao: A Woman Author and Women's Authorship" (1994),[17] and *Li Qingzhao ji jianzhu* 李清照集箋注 (2002) edited by Xu Peijun 徐培均.[18]

Zhu Shuzhen is another female poet who has received considerable scholarly attention, probably because her literary works are (suspiciously) well preserved. A large number of her poems (to be exact, 337 of Zhu Shuzhen's *shi* poems) can still be found nowadays. Wong Yin-lee is one of the first scholars to study Zhu Shuzhen's poems and has written two books about her.[19] In 2008, a collection of Zhu Shuzhen's literary works with commentaries and explanatory notes was published.[20]

Authorship of the works of Song female poets has been debated and challenged over the years, especially when some of their literary works, or sometimes whole collections of their works, reappeared long after their death. For example, Wilt Idema questioned the authorship of Zhu Shuzhen and Zhang Yuniang in "Male Fantasies and Female Realities: Chu Shu-chen

[15] Chu Binjie 褚斌杰, Sun Chongen 孫崇恩, and Rong Xianbin 榮憲賓, eds., *Li Qingzhao ziliao huibian* 李清照資料彙編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984).
[16] Kai-yu Hsu, "The Poems of Li Qingzhao (1084–1141)," in *Images of Women in Chinese Literature*, ed. Li Yu-ning (Indianapolis: University of Indianapolis Press, 1994), 73.
[17] John Timothy Wixted, "The Poetry of Li Ch'ing-chao: A Woman Author and Women's Authorship," in *Voices of the Song Lyric in China*, ed. Pauline Yu (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 146–169.
[18] Xu Peijun 徐培均, *Li Qingzhao ji jianzhu* 李清照集箋注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002).
[19] She first wrote *Zhu Shuzhen jiqi zuopin* 朱淑真及其作品 in Wong Yin-lee 黃嫣梨, *Zhu Shuzhen jiqi zuopin* (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1991). A decade later, she co-wrote a biography of Zhu Shuzhen with Wu Xihe 吳錫河: Wong Yin-lee 黃嫣梨 and Wu Xihe 吳錫河, *Duanchang fangcao yuan: Zhu Shuzhen zhuan* 斷腸芳草遠：朱淑真傳 (Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 2001).
[20] Zheng Yuanzuo 鄭元佐, *Zhu Shuzhen jizhu* 朱淑真集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008.)

and Chang Yü-niang and Their Biographers" and suggested that the two female poets were only made-up fantasies.[21] He concluded, "Modern scholarship on women, motivated by its own agenda, still, too often, allows itself to be victimised by the fantasies of dead males."[22] The problems of female authorship, unfortunately, remain unresolved in many cases due to poor preservation of information on women's lives and works in the Song dynasty.

On the other hand, gender historians working on the Song dynasty have had great accomplishments over the years. There are only a few general history books and essays on women's studies published before the 1980s, including Chen Dongyuan's 陳東原 *Zhongguo funü shenghuo shi* 中國婦女生活史,[23] and Florence Ayscough's *Chinese Women: Yesterday and To-day*.[24] In these early studies, it was generally agreed upon that the Song dynasty was a turning point for the worse for women. Because of the rise of neo-Confucianism, foot-binding, and female fidelity cult, women's social status has been constantly lowered ever since. This idea was inherited by some scholars and challenged by others later.

Since the 1980s, scholars have started to focus more on specific topics. That being said, there are still general history books written and published, such as Barbara Bennett Peterson's *Notable Women of China: Shang Dynasty to the Early Twentieth Century* (2000).[25] Generally, studies on gender history related to women in the Song dynasty can be divided into three groups.

First, there are studies on women of different social statuses and identities, for example, Beverly Bossler's *Courtesans, Concubines and the Cult of Female Fidelity: Gender and Social Change in China, 1000–1400* (2013)[26] and Keith McMahon's *Celestial Women: Imperial*

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[21] Wilt Idema, "Male Fantasies and Female Realities: Chu Shu-chen and Chang Yü-niang and Their Biographers," in *Chinese Women in the Imperial Past. New Perspectives*, ed. Harriet Zurndorfer (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 19–52.
[22] Idema, "Male Fantasies and Female Realities," 48.
[23] Chen Dongyuan 陳東原, *Zhongguo funü shenghuo shi* 中國婦女生活史 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937).
[24] Florence Ayscough, *Chinese Women: Yesterday and To-day* (Boston: Jonathon Cape, 1938).
[25] Barbara Bennett Peterson, *Notable Women of China: Shang Dynasty to the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2000).
[26] Beverly Bossler, *Courtesans, Concubines and the Cult of Female Fidelity: Gender and Social Change in China, 1000–1400* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013).

Wives and Concubines in China from Song to Qing (2016).[27] There are also studies on images of imperial wives and court women in paintings. Examples are Lee Hui-shu's *Empresses, Art and Agency in Song Dynasty China* (2010)[28] and Zoe Song-Yi Kwok's "An Intimate View of the Inner Quarters: A Study of Court Women and Architecture in Palace Banquet" (2013).[29]

Additionally, the relationship between women and their families and kin has also been discussed in various books, such as Patricia Ebrey's *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period* (1993),[30] Beverly Bossler's *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status and the State in Sung China (960–1279)* (1998),[31] and Yu Hui Yuan's 游惠遠 *Songdai minfu de juese yu diwei* 宋代民婦的角色與地位 (1998).[32]

Furthermore, property rights and female careers in the Song dynasty have also been studied in, for example, Kathryn Bernhardt's *Women and Property in China, 960–1949* (1999),[33] Bettine Birge's *Women, Property and Confucian Reaction in Sung and Yüan China (960–1368)* (2002),[34] and Zhang Xiaoyu's 張曉宇 *Lianzhong wu: Songdai zaishi nü "caichan quan" zhi xingtai yu yiyi* 奩中物：宋代在室女「財產權」之形態與意義 (2008).[35]

[27] Keith McMahon, *Celestial Women: Imperial Wives and Concubines in China from Song to Qing* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).
[28] Lee Hui-shu, *Empresses, Art and Agency in Song Dynasty China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010).
[29] Zoe Song-Yi Kwok, "An Intimate View of the Inner Quarters: A Study of Court Women and Architecture in Palace Banquet" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2013).
[30] Patricia Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).
[31] Beverly Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status and the State in Sung China (960–1279)* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1998).
[32] Yu Hui Yuan 游惠遠, *Songdai minfu de juese yu diwei* 宋代民婦的角色與地位 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gufen youxiangongsi, 1998).
[33] Kathryn Bernhardt, *Women and Property in China*, *960–1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).
[34] Bettine Birge, *Women, Property and Confucian Reaction in Sung and Yüan China (960–1368)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[35] Zhang Xiaoyu 張曉宇, *Lianzhong wu: Songdai zaishi nü "caichan quan" zhi xingtai yu yiyi* 奩中物：宋代在室女「財產權」之形態與意義 (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2008).

There are also studies on female education and the religious lives of women in the Song dynasty.[36] These are less-discussed topics. Nevertheless, they provide new perspectives on women's lives in the Song dynasty.

As mentioned before, early studies tended to victimise women in premodern China and emphasised the sufferings they experienced. Song dynasty — the era when women's lives turned to the worse, as suggested by early scholars — was "under fire" due to the rise of neo-Confucianism and foot-binding. In the last three decades, scholars have been trying to redress the situation. I would like to conclude this section by quoting the words of Marie Florine Bruneau:

> It has become unfashionable in women's history to view women as victims. […] However, our desire to create or vindicate a past for women, and the emphasis we put on women's self-empowerment in a patriarchal system such as seventeenth-century China or Europe, might lead us to lose sight of the price women had to pay for a modicum of self-empowerment. […] To see women as mere victims is not inadequate; it is insufficient. To study women's culture without questioning the values that contain it, and women's desire without analysing the unconscious forces that shape it, is also insufficient. A more accurate picture lies somewhere between the two.[37]

1.3 National Insecurities and the Changing Society in the Song Dynasty

There are numerous discussions concerning women's social standings, legal statuses, familial relations, property rights, education and expectations, et cetera. However, seldom do

[36] For example, Beverly Bossler, "Women's Literacy in Song Dynasty China: Preliminary Inquiries," in *Qingzhu Deng Guangming jiaoshou jiushi huadan lunwen ji* 慶祝鄧廣銘教授九十華誕論文集, ed. Tian Yuqing 田餘慶, (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997), 322–352; and Shao Yuxin 邵育欣, *Songdai funü de fojiao xinyang yu shenghuo kongjian* 宋代婦女的佛教信仰與生活空間 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuike xue chubanshe, 2015).
[37] Marie Florine Bruneau, "Learned and Literary Women in Late Imperial China and Early Modern Europe," *Late Imperial China* 13, no. 1, (1992): 170–171.

we link women's studies of the Song dynasty with the national insecurities the Song Empire was facing at the time.

The Song Empire was surrounded by strong neighbours from the beginning — the Khitans, the Tanguts, the Jurchens, and later the Mongols — and a part of the central plain (*zhongyuan* 中原) was never under Song's control. The Song Empire had to establish and maintain diplomatic relations with these northern empires. As Hans Bielenstein pointed out:

> The Chinese [...] liked to believe that the emperor or Son of Heaven was destined to govern the world. This concept of a universal ruler was hard to maintain in times of internal division or strong foreign neighbours, when emperors had to accommodate themselves to the existence of other emperors, and rival courts had to devise means of coexistence.[38]

The national insecurities haunted the Song court, and the humiliation intensified when the Song Empire was bitterly defeated by the Jin army. The defeat of China against the Jin Empire was devastating to the Song Empire. It was such a great national disgrace, and the political, social, and cultural impact was so severe that some even suggested that the transition period from the Northern Song dynasty to the Southern Song marked a turning point in Chinese history. For example, James T. C. Liu suggested:

> The eleventh century was a time when culture among the elite expanded. It pioneered in new directions and blazed promising trails. With optimism it emphasised prospects. In contrast, the twelfth century saw elite culture paying more attention to consolidating and extending its values throughout society. Turning more retrospective and introspective than before, it became tempered by a

[38] Hans Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World 589–1276* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 5.

circumspect and sometimes pessimistic tone. In short, while the Northern Sung characteristically reached outward, the Southern Sung essentially looked inward.[39]

Whether China turned inward after the defeat has become a big debate in recent years. Nevertheless, it is agreed upon that the twelfth century was an era of great changes for China.[40] These changes, of course, affected women's lives too. I believe that war is one of the important changing factors for women's roles and status.

There are very few papers focusing on the images of women in the war-time Song dynasty: four papers and one dissertation in total, including Patricia Ebrey's "Record, Rumor, and Imagination: Sources for the Women of Huizong's Court Before and After the Fall of Kaifeng" (2003),[41] Zhang Minghua's 張明華 two papers — "'Jingkang zhi nan' beilu Beisong gongting ji zongshi nüxing yanjiu" 「靖康之難」被擄北宋宮廷及宗室女性研究 (2004) and "Zhanzheng, zhanfu, wenhua pengzhuang: Jinguo gongting shenghuo fangshi ji gongting liyi hanhua qushi yanjiu" 戰爭、戰俘、文化碰撞——金國宮廷生活方式及宮廷禮儀漢化趨勢研究 (2008)[42] — Cheng Yu 程郁 and Wen Dan's 文丹 "Cong shehui xingbie shijiao shenshi shou zhanzheng tudu de Songdai nüxing" 從社會性別視角審視受戰爭荼毒的宋代女性

[39] James T. C. Liu, *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-Political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1988).
[40] Hilde De Weerdt, *Information, Territory, and Networks: The Crisis and Maintenance of Empire in Song China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 428.
[41] Patricia Ebrey, "Record, Rumor, and Imagination: Sources for the Women of Huizong's Court before and after the Fall of Kaifeng," in *Tang Song nüxing yu shehui* 唐宋女性與社會, ed. Deng Xiaonan 鄧小南 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2003), 46–96.
[42] The first paper: Zhang Minghua 張明華, "'Jingkang zhinan' beilu Beisong gongting ji zongshi nüxing yanjiu" 「靖康之難」被擄北宋宮廷及宗室女性研究, *Shixue yuekan* 5 (2004): 48–52; the second paper: Zhang Minghua, "Zhanzheng, zhanfu, wenhua pengzhuang: Jinguo gongting shenghuo fangshi ji gongting liyi hanhua qushi yanjiu" 戰爭、戰俘、文化碰撞——金國宮廷生活方式及宮廷禮儀漢化趨勢研究, *Henan daxue xuebao* (Shehui kexue ban) 4 (2008): 125–130.

(2013),[43] and Yang Yiyi's 楊伊依 "Zhanzheng shiyu xiade Songdai nüxing yanjiu" 戰爭視域下的宋代女性研究 (2016).[44]

Zhang Minghua, Cheng Yu, Wen Dan, and Yang Yiyi are undoubtedly pioneers in this area, the first to look into women's experiences in war time. However, there is a tendency to divide women into two groups: they are either praised for being loyal and chaste or pitied and victimised.

Patricia Ebrey's paper focused on evaluating the accountability of records of women in Huizong's court, the stories about their journeys to the north, and their biographies. It is an inspiring yet brief and general evaluation of how court women's war experiences are recorded and how they might be used as tools. More recently, Elad Akyagon has also touched upon the lives of women in military camps in *Inked: Tattooed Soldiers and the Song Empire's Penal-Military Complex*.[45] While providing a new perspective to investigate the lives of women who were closely associated with the military system at the time, as the title suggested, his research focused on the lives of the soldiers but not the women who lived with them.

On the other hand, the literary works related to female war experiences in the late Ming and Qing written by women and their emotions and criticism towards political and social problems triggered by the nation's crises have been explored and studied in greater depth, for example, Susan Mann's "The Lady and the State: Women's Writing in Times of Trouble During the Nineteenth Century" (2010),[46] Xiaorong Li's "Inside out: The *Gui* in Times of

[43] Cheng Yu 程郁 and Wen Dan 文丹, "Cong shehui xingbie shijiao shenshi shou zhanzheng tudu de Songdai nüxing" 從社會性別視角審視受戰爭荼毒的宋代女性, *Jiangxi shehui kexue* 9 (2013): 107–112.
[44] Yang Yiyi 楊伊依, "Zhanzheng shiyu xiade Songdai nüxing yanjiu" 戰爭視域下的宋代女性研究 (MPhil diss., Sichuan Normal University, 2016).
[45] Elad Alyagon, *Inked: Tattooed Soldiers and the Song Empire's Penal-Military Complex* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2023).
[46] Susan Mann, "The Lady and the State: Women's Writing in Times of Trouble during the Nineteenth Century," in *The Inner Quarters and Beyond: Women Writers from Ming through Qing*, eds. Grace S. Fong and Ellen Widmer (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 375–390.

Chaos" (2012),[47] and Wai-yee Li's *Women and National Trauma in Late Imperial Chinese Literature* (2014).[48] In 1998, Wang Zijin also published a book titled *Zhongguo nüzi congjunshi* 中國女子從軍史, introducing women's military lives throughout history.[49] All these scholarly works shed light on studies of war and women in premodern China.

2. Research Approach: Related Theories and Concepts

Before I introduce the structure of my dissertation, I should first explain several theories and concepts I base my work on.

The definition of "war" used in this research is one of a broader sense — here it is defined as "lethal intergroup violence."[50] I base this on Joshua S. Goldstein's definition of war used in *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*.[51] That means both warfare between states and violence inflicted by bandits and even Song soldiers, regardless of the scale, would be counted as war.

The other theories and discussions can be grouped into two aspects: 1) the question regarding the authorship of female writings and the construction of a female narrative; and 2) the notion of femininity and how it affects the portrayal of the common female experience.

2.1 The Authenticity of Female Writings

Authorship and therefore authenticity of female writings in the Song dynasty are often in question. Very few poems that were written by women had survived. Scholars such as Ronald Egan pointed out the possibility of anonymous male writers impersonating the female

[47] Xiaorong Li, "Inside out: The *Gui* in Times of Chaos," in Xiaorong Li: *Women's Poetry of Late Imperial China: Transforming the Inner Chambers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 115–144.
[48] Wai-yee Li, *Women and National Trauma in Late Imperial Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014).
[49] Wang Zijin 王子今, *Zhongguo funü congjunshi* 中國婦女從軍史 (Beijing: Junshi yiwen chubanshe, 1998).
[50] Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3.
[51] Goldstein, *War and Gender*.

voice and signing it as if the poems were written by women.[52] More importantly, Zhou Hui 周煇 (1127–1198), a Song literatus, claimed that inn-wall poems that seemed to be written by women because of the delicate brushstrokes and sentimental wording were in fact "entirely composed by aficionados who made a game of composing poems by 'women and girls'" (皆好事者戲為婦人女子之作).[53] This claim has further weakened the authenticity of poems written by anonymous women.

However, even if the authorship is questionable, these poems allow us to examine what a feminine voice would be like for the Song people. They must carry certain qualities which are deemed feminine, and we would therefore be able to explore the boundaries and flexibilities of social expectations towards women.

The same applies to literary works that are of confirmed authorship and are written deliberately in a feminine voice by male authors. Furthermore, we would be able to see the layers of perspectives shown in these works.

According to Peter Goldie, a narrative "is a representation of those events which is shaped, organised, and coloured, presenting those events, and the people involved in them, from a certain perspective or perspectives, and thereby giving narrative structure — coherence, meaningfulness, and evaluative and emotional import — to what is related."[54] He further explains how a narrative would contain diverging perspectives:

> First, a narrative can be meaningful by revealing how the thoughts, feelings, and actions of those people who are internal to the narrative could have made sense of them from their perspective at the time — that is, from their internal

[52] Ronald Egan, *The Burden of Female Talent: The Poet Li Qingzhao and Her History in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 35.
[53] Zhou Hui, *Qingbo zazhi* 清波雜志 (Miscellaneous Notes from the Gate of Qingbo), in *Quan Song biji* 全宋筆記, eds. Zhu Yi'an 朱易安 and Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2012), vol. 5, bk. 9, 109. Translated by Ronald Egan; Egan, *The Burden of Female Talent*, 36.
[54] Goldie, *The Mess Inside*, 2.

> perspective. And, secondly, a narrative can be meaningful by revealing the narrator's external perspective: his or her thoughts and feelings that throw light on why the narrative was related (or just thought through) in that particular way. Bound up with these two kinds of meaningfulness are the two ways in which a narrative can have evaluative and emotional import.[55]

Thus, in these literary pieces, not only can we see how femininities are depicted, but we are also able to investigate the hidden perspectives towards the notion of femininity held by the male authors.

2.2 Hegemonic Masculinities

To better understand how narratives about female war experiences are constructed, we would inevitably touch upon how the society is gendered at the period and how the notions of gender shape these narratives.

The two biological sexes should not be seen as binary opposites, and there are a lot more nuances regarding the notions of gender. Therefore I use the plural form of "masculinities" and "femininities" because they should not be viewed as dichotomy. Rather, there are multiple masculinities, as revealed in the texts above, as well as femininities. To explain how the concept of "masculinities" and "femininities" is layered, I shall first introduce the concept of "hegemonic masculinity," which was first proposed by R. W. Connell in 1987:

> Hegemonic masculinity was distinguished from other masculinities, especially subordinated masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statical sense; only a minority of men might enact it. But it was certainly normative. It embodied the currently most honoured way of being a

[55] Goldie, *The Mess Inside*, 17.

> man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men.[56]

Therefore, hegemonic masculinity, as Jennifer Heeg Maruska added, "is time — and place-dependent; it is also multiple, contested, and fluid. It is one type of identity construct, at the top of the hierarchy that includes subordinate masculinities and femininities."[57] It then implies that "all varieties of femininities are subordinate."[58]

The concept has been widely discussed and applied in feminist scholarship on war-related research. It is agreed that war, as well as militarised institutions, are both gendered and gendering.[59] In particular, militarised institutions "have long been recognized as important sites for the construction of masculinities."[60] Within these organisations, qualities perceived as masculine, such as aggression, bravery, courage, service, precision, protection, and physical strength, are prized.[61] This idealised militarised masculinity rejects anything feminine, and as a result, "images of femininities and other masculinities are marginalised and subordinated."[62] It should also be noted that masculinities and femininities are not fixedly linked with biological sex.

Being defeated, then, would be a feminisation of the state. It should be noted that "feminisation is something that can happen to anyone".[63] Thus it "can be employed to downgrade masculinity."[64]

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[56] R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." Gender and Society 19, no. 6 (Dec 2005): 832.
[57] Jennifer Heeg Maruska, "When Are States Hypermasculine?," in *Gender and International Security*, ed. Laura Sjoberg (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 238.
[58] Hooper, "Masculinist Practices and Gender Politics", in *The "Man" Question in International Relations,* eds. Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart (London: Routledge, 1998), 35.
[59] See Jutta Joachim and Andrea Schneiker, "Of 'True Professionals' and 'Ethical Hero Warriors': A Gender-Discourse Analysis of Private Military And Security Companies," *Security Dialogue* 43, no. 6 (2012): 499; and Susie Kilshaw, *Impotent Warriors Perspectives on Gulf War Syndrome, Vulnerability and Masculinity* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 206.
[60] Rachel Woodward, "Warrior Heroes and Little Green Men: Soldiers, Military Training, and the Construction of Rural Masculinities," *Rural Sociology* 65, no. 4 (2009): 643.
[61] Via, "Gender, Militarism, and Globalization," 44.
[62] Kilshaw, *Impotent Warriors*, 184.
[63] Laura Sjoberg, *Gender, Justice, and the Wars in Iraq* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2006), 34.
[64] Joachim and Schneiker, "Of 'True Professionals' and 'Ethical Hero Warriors,'" 498.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity, thus, would give us a better understanding of how and why certain issues are considered feminine and therefore constructed in a feminine voice and how different femininities are judged.

3. Research Sources and Structure

The sources I use can be divided into two groups. The first group includes official histories, historical records, epitaphs, etc. Scholars such as Yi Jo-lan and Beverly Bossler have stated that these materials demonstrate a moral judgement towards the women recorded in these accounts and show us how gender is constructed.[65] The second group includes random jottings (*biji* 筆記) and fiction writings. In the previous section, I have explained why a fictional feminine voice can still be useful. Here I would also like to deliberate on the importance of random jottings.

In this research, I use the broader definition of random jottings that includes miscellaneous essays and fiction. There are no fixed formats or themes for random jottings, and therefore from these materials, we can see the different interests and stances of different authors.[66] We might be able to catch a glimpse of the narratives outside of the ones that belong to the elite society and thus the nuances of social expectations at the time.

The dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter One explores how the kidnapping of women was portrayed as a typical feminine war experience, what parties, including both the predator and the prey, were involved, and the reactions and outcomes of, as well as possible precautions made at the time. By analysing the nuances of different depictions of this war experience made typical and branded as feminine, the chapter serves as the basis of the whole

[65] For examples, see Yi Jo-lan, "Social Status, Gender Division and Institutions," in *Overt and Covert Treasures: Essays on the Sources for Chinese Women's History*, ed. Clara Wing-chung Ho (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2012), 138, 149; and Bossler, *Powerful Relations,* 10.
[66] Liu Yeqiu 劉葉秋, *Lidai biji gaishu* 歷代筆記概述 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2003), 104–124.

dissertation, allowing us to understand how women's status was perceived in war time, and thus the following chapters, on closer inspection, could delve deeper into different aspects of women's lives in times of chaos.

While Chapter One examines the generalisation of these war experiences, Chapter Two focuses on the analysis of the comments and writings generated as a reaction to women's war experiences at the time. A collection of poems, in which male authors wrote in the voice of contemporary female captives, would be analysed and compared with poems about female historical figures who were either associated with marriage alliances with foreign states or captured during an invasion.

Aside from all the gendered implications and political readings in the literary tradition of male authors assuming a female voice that have been widely discussed in many studies, the poems are of great contemporary significance. The image of the female captives, who were tortured psychologically and/or physically but still managed to survive, conveyed a hint of expectancy about returning home in the midst of suffering without directing criticisms towards anyone. While the stories of these abducted women were able to trigger strong emotions as the memories of the fallen Song dynasty were still fresh, the messages hidden behind the image of these abducted women remained equivocal, avoiding possible political consequences.

After analysing the political narratives and literary traditions in the first two chapters, Chapter Three then delves deeper into different accounts to see how a common female war experience was constructed. I aim to offer a wide-angle view of women's lives at the time by analysing a collection of sources that exhibits different, or even contradicting, views on women's war experiences and their corresponding behaviours, or to say, how they were depicted in the sources. These sources are historical records on war experiences of women, epitaphs, fiction, or even storiettes and snippets that contain a trace of related information.

It should be noted that there is a disproportionality in historical records of women. Female members of the imperial and elite families, inevitably, were the centre of the spotlights. Their lives would be recorded in greater detail, and their behaviour, good and/or bad, would invite rumours, resulting in the production of an array of stories. While there is a comprehensive list of sources on the lives of upper-class women, records on women of lower social classes remained scarce and scattered.

Therefore, this part is designed to explore many sources instead of focusing on one or two specific case studies. By looking at different accounts, I try to shift the focus from what has been the focus, such as women of higher status or men from elite families to the nameless, faceless women who were also mentioned in these records. Not only because this would provide a glimpse of the full picture, but it is also a result of the limited sources on women's lives.

Chapter Four investigates how opportunities and restrictions for women arose as a new imperial court was established. Political realities and social expectations changed accordingly with chaotic interstate relations. With the aim of evaluating how war changed society and how social standards in turn shaped the lives of women, the accounts of five women will be examined. While two of these women tried to make use of the chaotic situation and pose as princesses, the other three had benefitted from the chaotic situation as a new group — the military men — had risen through the ranks at the time. The chapter focuses on how they succeeded and/or failed as they grabbed the opportunity and climbed up the social ladder.

Finally, the last two chapters focus on the construction of two types of ideal women during the war time. Chapter Five investigates the celebration of heroic women at the time. The accounts show us how femininity and masculinity overlap in extreme cases and the flexibility of the social expectations for women's roles when comparing these two groups. These heroic women could be divided into two groups: women who used their wit and intelligence as their

weapons and the heroines who had really participated in fighting instead of simply acting as advisers to men. The chapter examines the depictions of the events, the portrayals of these women, and the contemporary discussions and commentaries about them.

If the heroic women listed and examined in part one were said to be valiant enough to be compared with men, *zhen* (貞), usually translated as chastity, which would be the focus of part two, had often been a virtue that is compared, if not shared, with the integrity of men. To illustrate how chastity was depicted in writings, changes of interpretations on the virtue, and how it was compared with male integrity, different versions of stories of Empress Zhu 朱皇后 (1102–?) and a collection of poems about Xiannü ci 賢女祠 (The shrine of the virtuous maiden) would be the main focus and evaluated along with biographies, anecdotes, historical records and poems of loyal ministers and chaste women.

4. Conclusion

Song dynasty, known for both its height of civility and its military weakness, has been regarded as an era marked by great changes. For instance, Naito Torajiro proposed that the Song dynasty was the beginning of Chinese modernity.[67] Chen Yinke even claimed that Chinese culture peaked during the Song dynasty.[68] The unique interstate relations of the Song dynasty certainly helped shape the society and culture at the time and in turn changed women's lives. The shock brought by the defeat and the humiliation the Song people suffered after the Jingkang Crisis were so enormous that the Chinese Empire changed in a dramatic way.

The great changes happening at the time, of course, had an effect on women's lives. By working on the female images of the twelfth century, I hope to fill in a research gap and find

[67] Naito Konan 內藤湖南, "Gaikuo de Tang Song shidai guan" 概括的唐宋時代觀 in Yue-se Huang trans., Liu Jun-wen ed., *Riben xuezhe yanjiu Zhongguoshi lunzhu xuanyi* 日本學者研究中國史論著選譯 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), vol. 1, 10.
[68] Chen Yinke 陳寅恪, *Chen Yinke wenji* 陳寅恪文集(Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), vol. 2, 245.

out how these images were produced, what they represented, how they were perceived, and what their significance was at that certain period.

Chapter One

Construction and Generalisation of a Typical Feminine War Experience in Twelfth-Century China

Wars have been seen as male dominated. It still rings true in a relatively gender-equal society today, as women in the military are still marginalised. It would be even more so in a male-dominated society, where the government and the army consisted mainly, if not completely, of men. Moreover, there is a disproportionality in historical records — while men and very few upper-class women who participated in decision-making took centre stage in historical records, women's war experiences were hugely ignored and usually very generalised in historical records. Women's struggles and challenges as they faced wars and riots were often only briefly mentioned in a jotting, with their triumphs and tragedies squeezed into a short sentence, while they were often anonymised.

This chapter examines records related to women's war experiences in the period of 1100–1200. While all human beings were indeed deeply afflicted by brutalities of wars, and these experiences were shared by all, especially the sufferings of commoners who were excluded from the decision-making process would often be generalised by the use of subject nouns such as "people" (*min* 民) or "humans" (*ren* 人), there were war atrocities that seemed to be depicted to be mostly, if not exclusively, targeting females, referred in texts as *fu* (婦) and/or *nü* (女). Even when both sexes were facing the same situation, exploring how women acted and why their behaviours were portrayed in certain ways (rather than generalising such behaviours as actions executed by all people in general) revealed the status and roles of women in war time, how masculinity and femininity were interpreted, and how a typical feminine war experience was constructed and portrayed. While such war experiences were largely associated

with women, they were not exclusively suffered by women. Therefore, I use the word "feminine" instead of "female."

Related materials are scarce and scattered. Considering that the sources are limited and mostly short in length and the subjects of focus are mostly anonymised, instead of focusing on one or two detailed case studies, the chapter is an evaluation of the construction of the common feminine war experience, using the concept of hegemonic masculinity as a tool to understand and analyse texts such as random jottings, short stories, epitaphs, and pieces of historical records, especially *Sanchao beimeng huibian* 三朝北盟會編 (A compendium of records regarding alliances with the north during the three reigns) by Xu Mengxin 徐夢莘 (1126–1207) and *Jianyan xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄 (Chronological records of important events since the Jianyan reign) by Li Xinchuan 李心傳 (1167–1244), which contain excerpts of books and documents that have otherwise not survived to the present day.

1. Examining the Worst-Case Scenarios

When war arrives on your doorstep, what would your greatest fear be? In one of the accounts recorded in Hong Mai's 洪邁 (1123–1202) *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 (The Record of the Listener), there is this record of the strangest "worst-case scenario drill" a family performed as they found themselves in the middle of a riot:

> Fang La started a riot and turned to rampage Xin'an [now Huizhou, Anhui]. A man from She [now Shexian, Anhui] [named] Cheng Shuqing and his family fled the area [and lived in] the southern part of the city. [He had] a daughter who was seventeen years old. [Her] parents contemplated and said, "Our family is here. [If we are] unfortunate, then [we would] die. [However, our] daughter's age and beauty have just blossomed. If [she is] humiliated by the bandits, how would [we still have] face to see our kin and friends again!" Therefore [they]

called [her to] talk to her and said, “Our prefecture regards licentiousness as taboo. You are a child from a decent family and never had your foot step outside our door. If you were seized by force, what would you do?” The daughter said, “How could I submit to the bandits? If I can’t escape, I could only just die.” For this, she took her clothes and jokingly carried [them] and bolted and tried to act out the situation [as if she was] seized and was defending [herself from] the bandits. [Her] parents happily said, “[If you] can truly do it like this, [then you are] truly our daughter!”

方臘作亂，轉寇新安。歙人程叔清家避地城南，一女年十七，父母計曰：「吾家居此，不幸則死，女年色方盛，萬一辱於賊，何顏復見宗黨！」乃呼語之曰：「吾州以淫為諱，汝良家子也，足不及門外，倘為兵刃所劫，奈何？」女曰：「兒豈從賊者，脫有不可，唯死而已！」因取衣裳，戲負以趨，試為見執拒賊之狀。父母喜曰：「能如是，真吾女也！」[69]

This story does not only show us the condemnation of women who failed their moral responsibilities and the shame brought to their families and clans could be viewed to be worse than death; it also reveals the nuance in the depictions of different people’s war experiences. In this account, while the worst outcome for the parents of Maiden Cheng in war time was death, the greatest misfortune that could happen to Maiden Cheng herself, who was in her prime, was to be captured by the bandits. Unfortunately, their drill had become a reality later in the story. She was captured and brutally murdered for refusing to comply with her abductor’s commands.

This kind of discussion between family members about what to do if they found themselves caught up in war does not seem to be something untypical at the time, allowing us

[69] Hong Mai 洪邁, *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 (The Record of the Listener), ed. He Zhuo 何卓 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), juan 1, 1557.

to catch a glimpse of the worst fears of women during war times. Another conversation between a young couple, in which they discussed their escape plans if the worst-case scenario was ever to happen, was recorded in an epitaph of Woman Chen 陳氏, wife of Zhong Bing 仲并 (?–?):

> [She] heard that [in her] hometown there was a woman who had destroyed her integrity. [She] sighed over and over again and said, "Why wouldn't [she] die!" Later, every time [she] talked about this, [she would] definitely frown and [become] upset. [At the time] the Jin people repeatedly attacked areas of the Huai River basin. [She] told me, "When the enemy comes, [we should] prioritise things that are less urgent and more urgent, [and therefore you] should not save [me]. You should serve my father-in-law and leave. I am not important enough to burden you. [I] swear to keep my determination and fulfil my promise."
>
> 聞鄉閭婦有毀節者，歎息再三曰：「獨無死乎！」後每言之，必為之蹙額不樂。金人連犯淮甸，謂予曰：「敵來，緩急不相救，子奉吾舅行。吾不足累子也，誓守吾志，踐吾言爾。」[70]

Again, we see moral expectations towards women being brought up here. The epitaph claimed that Woman Chen was from a decent family, like Maiden Cheng; therefore a similar set of moral standards for women from gentry families could also be applied to Woman Chen. Moreover, Woman Chen married Zhong Bing when she was eighteen years old and died due to complications after childbirth when she was twenty, meaning that, like the Maiden Cheng in the first account, she was quite young when she had this conversation with her husband, making her a target of the enemy and/or bandits.

Moral ideals for women, which would be discussed in later chapters, were certainly one of the reasons for women like Maiden Cheng or Woman Chen to choose death when they were

[70] Zeng Zaozhuang, ed., *Songdai zhuanzhuang beizhi jicheng*, 5326.

forced to confront such situations. For women who were considered to be well bred in order to defend their own and/or their families' honour, death would be a more desirable option compared to being seized and having their reputation tarnished. However, we should acknowledge that women from all classes could be victims of such atrocity, and the same set of moral standards would apply fewer restrictions on women from the lower classes.[71]

2. Seized by the Enemy/Bandits

Here I would like to focus on how and why the seizure of women was cast as the typical feminine war experience instead. As illustrated in other texts such as memorials to the throne, historical records and random jottings, this was the one particular war atrocity which was depicted to be targeting mostly females, in particular, ones who were young, healthy and strong. Most often, what the seized women had to endure while they were held captive would not be mentioned. Generally, this war atrocity would be briefly noted with only four words — *lulüe funü* 擄掠婦女 (the abduction of women). In order to demonstrate the destructions made and the pain inflicted upon the Song people, it was written as one of the examples of how barbaric the enemy and/or bandits were and was frequently mentioned along with killing, pillaging, and destroying properties as a generalised depiction of brutalities of war. Seizing women was often singled out as a specific problem — while everyone could be a target of the Jin army's brutal killings, another threat for women particularly was to be captured by the enemy. For example, Zhao Zisong 趙子崧, the governor of Huaining Prefecture 淮寧府 (today's Huaiyang District in Henan Province), sent Qinzong a confidential memorial, in which he reported to the emperor about new organisations of volunteer military and cooperations between prefectures and gave a general overview of how the Jin army was perceived at the time:

[71] See Appendix 1 for an example.

> Recently, the defensive forces at the border have been compromised, and the barbaric bandits again attacked the capital city and haven't withdrawn their troops. [All] under the heavens were distressed. [I have] also heard that [wherever] the barbarian cavalrymen step foot, they would only be committed to killing the people, pillaging valuables, seizing women, burning down houses and other properties. [They] wish to make all people in the Middle Kingdom — fathers, sons, brothers, husbands, wives, could not protect each other — [ending up] agitated, cold, and hungry, [and they eventually] lead to the situation of death in order to indulge their unappeasable wishes. [They were the reason why] people from near and far were all angry and worried about.
>
> 近者，邊境失備，虜賊再犯京都，尚未退師，天下之所痛心；兼聞虜騎所至，惟務殺戮生靈，刼掠財物，驅擄婦人，焚毀舍屋産業。意欲盡使中國之人，父子兄弟夫婦不能相保，狼狽凍餒，歸於死地，以逞其無厭之心，遠近之民所共憤疾。[72]

The excerpt above was a prelude to his account of the formation of a volunteer army, emphasising the Jin army's destruction of the state by destroying families in both a physical sense, including burning down houses, and in an ideological sense, including separating fathers and sons, husbands and wives, and explaining how the people were infuriated and as a result were prompted to take action. Confucian ideals emphasise that a family is the basic unit of the state, thus the harmony within a household/family is the basis of the state stability, and family virtues, especially filial piety, become political virtues.[73] By destroying families and breaking down family relations, the Jin army would also be effectively destroying the Song state.

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[72] Xu Mengxin 徐夢莘, *Sanchao beimeng huibian* 三朝北盟會編 (A compendium of records regarding alliances with the north during the three reigns) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 780.
[73] See Xinzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 181; Cong Ellen Zhang, *Performing Filial Piety in Northern Song China: Family, State, and Native Place* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), 4–8.

He summed up the evil deeds the Jin army committed: killing, pillaging, seizing women and destroying properties. In another account, however, we would see the complexity of occurrences of violence in a state when all social orders had been broken down:

> On the twenty-ninth day, which is the day of *gengshen*, the snow has stopped. The morning sun rose, and its was [red] as blood. The colour of the sun was like blood, [but] the people in the city who saw this, none of them were not horrified. Some thought it was an omen for murders and abductions and were all worried that [the Jin army would] massacre [all people in] the city. The City Gate of the Vermillion Bird was opened for the first time [since the city was seized]. […] Since the city had fallen, [the Jin people] set fire and burned the barbican and the watch towers, and for three days [the fire] could not be put out. The army led by Nianhan [Sinicised name: Wanyan Zonghan 完顏宗翰; Jurchen name: Nianmohe 粘沒曷; also known as Nianmohan 粘沒罕 or Nikan 尼堪 (1080–1136)] was prohibited from killing people, therefore no one dared to violate [the rule]. The ones who were recklessly killed the people of our own army. As many as some seventy women were seized from the household of Empress Gao (1032–1093). Wives of officials were seized. They were ransomed for a hundred *liang* of gold.[74] In the northeast region, there were quite a lot of murders and injuries, [and the criminals] were residents of the capital city. Among the criminals in the city, some would shave their heads and change their clothes, pretend to be foreign people and loot. When the police caught them, [they were] beheaded and displayed on the streets. The barbarians saw this and said, "This is how the southern people managed the ones who committed crimes."

[74] *Liang* is a unit of weight; one *liang* approximately weighs forty-two grams.

二十九日庚申。雪止。旦日出。其色如血。日色如血，城中之人，見者無不驚懼。或以爲殺虜之兆，皆憂洗城。始開朱雀門。……自城破，（金人）縱火燒甕城樓櫓，三夕不滅。粘罕軍前禁不可殺人，故無人敢犯，其恣殺戮者，乃吾軍中人耳。高后宅掠去婦女七十餘人，左言妻被虜，以金百两贖之，東北一帶，殺傷頗多、乃黑水人。城中不逞之徒，有髡首易衣，僞爲番人而剽掠者，吏捕得之，梟首通衢，虜人見之曰：此南人治犯法者。[75]

On 13 January 1127, four days after the fall of the Northern Song capital city, Bianjing 汴京 (now Kaifeng in Henan Province), the Jin army officially entered the city. The people living in Bianjing feared for the worst — that the killing and abducting of women would start — but the massacre did not happen. The Jin army set fire to destroy the watchtowers, which could be seen as a military tactic. The Jin soldiers also started ransacking households of the rich and the powerful. Along with the valuables, women were also seized. While Maiden Cheng's story implied that abducted women would suffer from sexual violence, this account suggested that they could also be kidnapped for money. It is not mentioned here if women from other families were also abducted, but it does suggest that women, particularly from elite families, were treated as valuable goods, and they would be released if their family members were willing to pay a hefty ransom.

Appallingly, some of the local people pretended to be Jin soldiers and started looting and killing. The Jin army, as the invader of the country, ironically pointed out that these local people were the ones who "breached the law." Sarcastically, the Jin army was even depicted to be relatively well disciplined and obeying the rules set by their military commander, which in this case was "no killing [of commoners]." *Jingkang jiwen* 靖康紀聞 (Recording of hearsays

[75] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 532.

of the Jingkang reign) also recorded how riots broke out in the capital city and depicted how the city sank into madness, as people had lived in fear since the city was besieged and food gradually ran out, so much so that human flesh was sold as food in markets.[76] Both of the records show that the Jin army was not the only villain in narratives of war. Song people themselves were capable of being just as destructive.

We should note that the Jin army was not the only party killing, pillaging and seizing women. At times of war and/or famine, there would be riots. Rioters gathered and formed gangs, or even armies of outlaws, creating huge disturbance to local people. Women, again, were abducted and held prisoners by pillagers. As an example, take the following case (one of many), in which bandits made use of the chaotic situation to rise against the local governments during the war between the Jin and Song Empires:

> Initially, the gang of bandits led by Ji De and Han Qing used the opportunity of the invasion of the Jin people to gang up and commit crimes. They infested the areas between Ru River and Luo River [areas in now the Henan Province], had some ten thousand followers, and were stationed at the Temple of Liushan and at the Plain of Chinese Mugwort. Until then, the resident regent of the Western Capital City [then Henan Prefecture; now Luoyang, Henan], military officer Di Xing used light cavalry to attack them. Once they were struck, they were defeated. De was captured by Xing, and Qing got away and fled. [Xing discovered] and seized a sizeable sum of money and valuables, and he gave them all to his subordinates. Several hundreds of women [were rescued, and] all were returned to their homes.

[76] On three different occasions, it was recorded that the people in the city went so hungry that they started eating and/or selling human flesh as food. See Ding Teqi 丁特起, *Jingkang jiwen* 靖康紀聞 (Recording of hearsays of the Jingkang reign), *Quan Song biji*, 106, 113, 123.

初，羣盜冀德、韓清乘金人入犯，嘯聚不逞，出沒於汝、洛之閒，有衆萬人，屯留山寺及艾蒿坪。至是西京留守司統制翟興以輕騎襲之，一擊而潰，德為興所擒，清脱身遁去。獲財物甚衆，皆給麾下；婦女數百，悉縱還其家。[77]

As shown above, hundreds of women were kept in the camps of the bandits, and as Maiden Cheng's story indicated, there could be more women who were killed for not complying. Freeing these abducted women and letting them return to their homes was viewed as an act of mercy because these women could be prosecuted for conspiracy and ended up being executed.

3. Seized by the Song Soldiers

Even though Miao Fu and Liu Zhengyan became outlaws and were considered traitors to the Song court, they were military commanders. In fact, at the time, it was not uncommon for soldiers to turn their back on the state and become bandits.[78] The Song army was notorious for its unruly behaviour, as depicted in many records, and very often the local governments failed to take control of the situation because they relied on their protection from the Jin army. Take Ji Ling's 季陵 (1081–1135) memorial to the throne written in 1132 as an example, in which he criticised that "as the commanders and support officers are far away [from the central government], the discipline [of the army] has loosened" (偏裨遠去，紀律漸疏). He summarised five misdeeds committed by the military men and listed them in the memorial. Quoted below are the first three types of misconduct:

[77] Li Xinchuan 李心傳, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄 (Chronological records of important events since the Jianyan reign) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), 2, 292.
[78] Chen Xuelin 陳學霖, "'Shuikou' yi 'yijun': Nansong chu Shao Qing shiji kaoshu" 「水寇」抑「義軍」？——南宋初邵青事蹟考述, *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* 9 (2000): 192–193.

[For] all who are titled as the military officers, [they in fact did not lead] a large number of soldiers. They often brought their families along with them. Once [they] heard that the enemy has come, they select the best [among their soldiers to] protect and escort the old and the young [in the family]. The ones [who were left] to follow him to be employed were only for making escape plans. This is the first issue that is worth discussing. Their base salary for their household and bonus tickets [were so low that after they used it to] support their parents, nothing was left. That is why seizing women was very common in the army. When they don't even have enough money to support [their parents], [the supervisors] would rather exonerate them from their misdeeds. This is the second issue that is worth discussing. Wherever prefectures and military regions they go, [they would] seek rewards and entertainment. Those who slightly defy their will would be publicly and recklessly shamed and threatened. The local officials were afraid of causing trouble, and so they exhaustively extracted from the people's resources in order to serve these military men. This is the third issue that is worth discussing.

凡稱統領，兵數不多，家口隨行，一聞賊至，擇其精銳，護送老小，其用以自隨者，祇辦走計耳。此當議者一也。家糧口券，贍給無餘，虜掠婦女，軍中多有，養既不足，寧免作過。此當議者二也。所至州軍，邀求犒設，稍忤其意，公肆劫持。守令憚於生事，竭取於民而奉之。此當議者三也。[79]

[79] Ji Ling 季陵, "Lun shengfei yuguo qiangbing ximin zhi ce shu" 論省費裕國強兵息民之策疏, in Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊, Liu Lin 劉琳, et al., eds., *Quan Songwen* 全宋文 (The complete collection of Song prose) (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2006), 161, 239–240. See all five types of misconduct in Appendix 2. The detailed explanation of their base salary and bonuses (家糧口券) is discussed in Lei Jiasheng 雷家聖, *Julian mouguo: Nansong zonglingsuo yanjiu* 聚斂謀國：南宋總領所研究 (Taipei: Wanjuanlou), 80.

Once again, women were shown to be victims of abduction, and this time, they were threatened by a group of people who were supposed to protect them. In fact, how these military men behaved was not very different from the bandits. If their requests were not met, they would use force in order to get what they wanted. The military had such bad reputation that comparisons were often made directly between soldiers and outlaws, as illustrated in an account recorded in *Taozhu xinlu* 陶朱新錄 (The new collection of the wealthy) below:

> In the reign of Jianyan, the army of Du Yong, the bandit of Chenzhou, was incorporated into Dengwan in the area of Chen. The military officers of the army were Cao Shi and Han Hongshou. One night at the gate of the camp of [another] military officer, Wang Huan, they heard a small turbulence. Slowly, a beautiful woman was taken and brought outside to be beheaded. The executioner told the two military officers: "He frequently kills the innocent!" [Then, he] heavily sighed to himself. He then said, "The woman [who was beheaded] said she was the wife of Chen Zhixu. Earlier, the Military Officer Wang acquired her in [the camps of] the bandits and wanted to have an affair with her. She did not agree. He had already stabbed her once. Just then, he forced her again, and the woman said, "Military officers are officials of the army and follow the military attaché to defeat the bandits. Originally you should be eliminating harms for the people. If you wish to have this newly-wed bride as your maid and order [me to work], it would be fine; if you wanted to start an illicit affair [with me], this is what I'm not willing to do." Wang Huan wanted to force her and said, "I shall kill you." The woman then said, "If so, military officers are also bandits. [It's only] death; how [could I be] scared?" As a result, [Wang Huan] ordered to behead her. The two military officers sighed and could not sleep all night. Alas! [The woman] could preserve her chastity and was not

afraid of death! Even if [compared to] the ancient chaste women, it would not be too much.

建炎間，收陳州賊杜用軍於陳之鄧灣，統制官曹實、韓宏守。統制王渙寨門中夜聞小喧，徐擁一美婦出斬之。行刑者語二將曰：「某屢斬無辜矣！」重自嘆息。又曰：「適婦人自云陳之胥妻也，早來王統制得之賊中，欲與之通，不允。已刺一刀，適又逼之，婦人曰：『統制軍官也，隨都統來破賊，本為百姓除害，若要新婦充婢使則可，若欲見私所不願也。』王渙欲強之，且曰：『我當殺汝！』婦人又曰：『如此，統制亦賊爾。一死何懼！』遂命斬之。」二將嗟嘆，通夕不能寐。噫！保其貞節而不懼死，雖古烈女不為過也。[80]

While the executioner had great sympathy for the wife of Chen Zixu, who did not even have her own name recorded, and the two military officers were so stirred by her death that they could not sleep at all that night, for some reasons they did not, or could not, stop either the execution or the "bandit-like" behaviour of Wang Huan. Officials did make an effort to stop such behaviour. Ji Ling was not the only official who tried to bring the issue to the emperor's attention. As early as 1128, Lü Yihao 呂頤浩 (1071–1139), who was the vice-minister of revenue and the governor of Yangzhou (戶部侍郎兼知揚州) at the time, raised the concern regarding the military seizing women when he was having an audience with Gaozong:

The crime of the state army vied to extract gold and silk wherever they go is relatively minor, but the calamity of plundering and seizing women is deeply grievous. I wish Your Highness can openly instruct the generals and commanders: from now on, if anyone commit such offenses, they must be punished without pardon. In Zhenjiang city, [there are] still women in the

[80] Ma Chun 馬純, *Taozhu xinlu* 陶朱新錄 (The new collection of the wealthy), *Quan Song biji*, 163.

military camps. [I beg Your Highness to] quickly order them to be released, and an imperial decree should be issued to all military commanders.

官軍所至爭取金帛之罪尤小，劫掠婦女之禍至深，願申諭將帥，自今有犯，必罰無赦。昨鎮江城中婦女有尚在軍中者，亦乞速令放歸，詔以付諸將。[81]

However, it seemed that the problem was never fully resolved. In 1161, decades after Lü Yihao's plea, the Song Empire once again entered war with the Jin Empire. In order to call for the cooperation of the Han people in the Jin-occupied areas, a memorandum of amnesty and enlistment was issued: While Gaozong promised to remove the liability of the army of taxes for ten years if they did not violate any crimes, such as killing, committing arson, seizing valuables and women, he also stated that previous criminals who had helped the barbarians with their brutalities, including seizing women, would also be pardoned.[82] Within a month, as the war had started, Gaozong gave a direct order to one of his military commanders, Wu Lin 吳璘 (1102–1167), and reiterated that Wu Lin should "admonish [his] soldiers: no killing, no treading on crops, no seizing women, [and] no setting residences on fire" (誡爾軍士！毋殺人！毋踐稼！毋掠婦女！毋焚室廬！).[83]

The memorandum and the order for Wu Lin indicated that misconduct committed by military men remained to be a problem. However, the Song court seemed to be desperate to increase military capabilities by enlistment so Gaozong was willing to pardon serious crimes, making his intention to build a well-disciplined army half-hearted.

His instruction to Wu Lin, on the other hand, shows us how the Song court depended on military commanders to discipline the soldiers. Although looting and kidnapping of women

[81] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 2, 265.
[82] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 1667.
[83] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 1669.

were recognised as misdeeds, the Song court seemed to think that the offenders could be pardoned if they were willing to obey the authority, that is, the Song court, especially when the Northern Song had just collapsed and the newly established Southern Song court was desperately struggling to survive the Jin attacks. The Song court often offered amnesty to rioters and welcomed them to join the army and fight the enemy with open arms without punishing the crimes they had committed. People seized by the bandits-now-turned-soldiers, like the wife of Chen Zixu, would be handed over to the army, and they then had to rely on the mercy of military commanders to survive. The best outcome, of course, would be the one shown below, in which the soldiers were willing to follow the commander's order and all kidnapped would be released from the military camps:

> The gang of bandits [who offered their amnesty to Zong Ze (1059–1128)] had long been docile [because of] the master, [and they] came one by one. [There was] one named Yang Jin who particularly respected and admired [Zong Ze]. The master said, "Within the military, the old, the weak, and the women have long been enslaved. I could not bear [to see them being enslaved for] they [were] innocent. [You] should release them all." Jin and the others obeyed his orders, [and from] all military camps, some twenty thousand people were released.
>
> 群盜素服公名，相繼而至，楊進者尤所敬慕。公曰：「軍中老弱婦女久被驅虜，吾不忍其無辜，宜盡釋之。」進等奉命，諸軍所放幾二萬人。[84]

These bandits-turned-soldiers agreed to free the people they abducted only because of their admiration and deference for Zong Ze, who was described to be reputable, upright, and loyal to the Song court, not because they felt obliged to obey the law.

[84] Wang Bai, "Zong Zhongjiangong zhuan," *Quan Songwen* 338, 375–376.

4. To Protect or Not to Protect

The above piece of text informed that not only women were seized and kept in the military camps. People who were considered weak and powerless, including the elderly and the women, would be captured and enslaved. This leads us to the next part of the discussion: protection of the family, especially the weaker members. Ji Ling's memorial also touched upon this aspect, as he criticised military officers for putting their own families before their responsibilities of guarding the state, revealing existing tension between the welfare of their own families and state and/or public interests.[85] However, it was a huge concern for all during war time. Maiden Cheng and Woman Chen in the first two accounts mentioned were portrayed to be extremely vulnerable, so much so that it almost seemed that a young woman alone in the outside world would certainly fall into the hands of either the army or the bandits. Therefore, to prevent being captured, those considered weaker members of a family, including women, needed some sort of protection. In the two stories, Maiden Cheng and Woman Chen were depicted as having relied on others for protection.

Even if Maiden Cheng seemed to be quite optimistic by mentioning the possibility of escaping from the hands of the bandits, the concerns of Maiden Cheng's parents were based on the fact that she had not stepped her foot outside her home. While this is to show that she was virtuous as a maiden, her home in fact also provided protection to her. As the bandits neared the place where the family lived and there was a large possibility that riots would break out, the parents feared that the family would be forced to leave the shelter of their house, and concerns about the possibility of their daughter being abducted increased.

On the other hand, Chen, along with her in-laws, relied on her husband, supposedly a younger and stronger male in contrast of the parents of Maiden Cheng, for protection. If she

[85] For related research, see, for example, Orna Sasson-Levy, "Research on Gender and the Military in Israel: From a Gendered Organization to Inequality Regimes," *Israel Studies Review* 26, no. 2 (2011): 85–86.

was abandoned, chances were she would fall into the hands of the enemy. The sexual undertones of what being seized meant, as held in Maiden Cheng's story, understandably, were very much toned down in this text because of the serious nature of epitaph as a genre. Woman Chen's epitaph focuses more on the virtues of Chen as a wife and a daughter-in-law. Filial piety dictated that the seniors, her in-laws in this case, took priority over younger generations. The perfect moral decision at critical moments, as Chen mentioned in her conversation with her husband, would be to protect the in-laws and for her husband to leave her behind and escape with his parents.

The hypothetic arrangements envisioned by Woman Chen sounded definitive and straightforward. The reality, on the other hand, would prove to be much more chaotic. Here is another historical record reporting how people struggled to escape after Bianjing was captured by the Jin army in 1127:

> In the morning of the twenty-sixth day [of the first year of the Jingkang reign; 10 January 1127], the Jin soldiers came down [from the] city walls and entered the Temple of the Five Sacred Mountains [and] the Temple of the Sweet Spring Water. At the Chen Bridge, the Nanxun City Gate, [and] the Fengqiu City Gate, [there] were Jin people who entered the city to kill people and seize valuables. The people in the city all used clothes and blankets to cover their bodies to escape. The literati used silks to exchange for the poor people's jackets and pants in order to hide the women, and [they] brought their small children to walk among the mud and snow [in order to escape]. People who panicked and died by suicide by drowning themselves in the river were countless. The ones who hung themselves or threw themselves into wells [to commit suicide] totalled tens of thousands.

> [二十六日早]金兵下城，入五嶽觀、醴泉觀，陳橋、南薰門、封丘門皆有金人下城殺人，劫取財物。城中百姓皆以布被蒙體而走，士大夫以綺羅錦繡易貧民衲襖布袴，以藏婦女，提攜童稚于泥雪中走。惶急棄河者無數，自縊投井者動萬人。[86]

In the midst of turmoil, people desperately tried to escape the city in the harsh winter. Many felt so hopeless that they committed suicide. Hiding in plain sight was a common survival tactic, especially for women and rich people, as "the rich and the powerful covered themselves with balls of animal hides, [whereas] women used dirt and ink to smear their faces" (豪右披毡毬，婦女以灰墨塗面，百計求生).[87] The dirty appearance provided a sense of security for them when they had to leave the safety of their homes. The less attention they attracted, the less likely they were to be robbed or abducted, and the higher their survival chance would be.

The text specifically detailed how the elite families tried to protect the weaker family members: They tried to hide the women by making them as unnoticeable as could be and tried to bring their children with them. This was somewhat an exalted image of the literati. *Sanchao beimeng huibian* also documented how the people struggled for survival after the fall of the capital city but in a much more demoralising manner:

> On that day [11 January 1127], several Jurchens gradually came down to the city and engaged in plundering, but they did not kill anyone. Also, the [Song]

[86] Xia Shaozeng 夏少曾, *Chaoye qianyan* 朝野僉言 (The opinions of the court and the commonalty), *Quan Song biji*, 262.
[87] Wei Cheng, *Wengzhong ren yu jianzheng*, in *Jingkang baishi jianzheng* 靖康稗史箋證 (Annotation and commentary on the accounts of Jingkang), eds. Que An 確庵 and Nai An 耐庵, 70. *Jingkang baishi jianzheng* includes seven books: *Xuanhe yisi fengshi Jinguo xingcheng lu* 宣和乙巳奉使金國行程錄 (The records of the journey of the envoy to the Jin Empire in the Yisi year in the reign of Xuanhe), *Wengzhongren yu* 甕中人語 (The words of the people in the urn), *Kaifeng fuzhuang* 開封府狀 (The accounts of the Kaifeng prefecture), *Nanzheng luhui* 南征錄匯 (A collection of records on the conquest of the south), *Qinggong yiyu* 青宮譯語 (The translated words of the green temple), *Shenyin yu* 呻吟語 (The words of moans), and *Songfu ji* 宋俘記 (The record of the Song captives).

soldiers took the opportunity of the chaos and recklessly pursued robbing and had no fear. The literati and the commoners all [tried to] escape. [The residents of] the eastern part of the city would move to the western part of the city, and [the residents of] the western part of the city would move to the eastern part of the city. [They] behaved frantically, passing each other and not knowing where to go. Fathers and sons, husbands and wives could not protect each other to the extent that the whole family hung themselves and committed suicide. There were also people who entered the old city walls from the eastern and western corner gates. The two rivers, Bian and Cai, were filled with abandoned older people and children. Their dead bodies accumulated and clustered. The sound of their devastated cries [was something] people could not bear to hear.

是日金人漸有三兩下城刦掠者，並不殺人。又軍兵乘亂恣行刦奪，略無忌憚。士庶皆奔走，城東徙於城西；城西徙於城東，狂行交互，莫知所適，父子夫婦不相保守，至有全家自縊自殺者。又有由東西角門而入舊城者，汴蔡兩河，遺棄老幼，屍骸堆聚，哀號之聲，所不忍聞。[88]

In this record, there were no options and thus no hope. Even if people tried to run, they did not know where to go. The old and the young were abandoned, and as a result, many of them died. The reality is that people who were considered to be weak would often be abandoned in the face of war.

In *Hedong fenglu ji* 河東逢虜記 (The record of encountering barbarians in Hedong),[89] Tao Xuangan 陶宣幹 (?–?), a managing supervisor and a member of the staff of pacification commissioners (*xuanfushi* 宣撫使) recorded how he arrived at Pingyang 平陽 (now Pingyang, Zhejiang) and attempted to defend the city from the Jin army. As the enemy neared, he tried to

[88] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 531.
[89] The book is quoted by, and therefore preserved in, *Sanchao beimeng huibian.*

call all residents in the city to fight. He "went to every house to enjoin and summon [the people to help fight the enemy], [all of those who were left in the city were] either [too] old or [too] young, or else [they would just be] some women, the strong ones had all fled [in order to] avoid [the danger]" (家至户到呼召，非老即少，或婦女輩，壯者悉皆逃避矣).[90]

These people left behind could be classified as the same group of people as those captured, enslaved, and released from Zong Ze's camp. They were too vulnerable and often lacked the ability to escape the conflict. If they were left unprotected by the strong males, as also hinted in Woman Chen's story, they were easily preyed upon by the enemy, the bandits, or even the Song military men.

The elites were depicted to be more capable of keeping their families safe. It could be because they had the means to control the narratives as they were the ones producing them. Family would have a greater meaning for these literati. As Richard L. Davis pointed out, "Little in traditional China is not political and little in politics is uninfluenced by family"; the two elements interacted with each other.[91] The literati would also be more likely to have more resources, namely, information and connections, to protect their families in war time. In fact, there were reports illustrating how prepared the elite families were to tackle disturbances. Two decades after the fall of Bianjing, as the situation got slightly more settled, we could see a depiction of a more systematic arrangement to protect one's family if a possible raid were to happen:

> In the seventh month of the seventeenth year in the reign of Shaoxing [1147], under the administration of the military prefecture of Jianchang [now Nancheng, Jiangxi] in Ruoling, a literati, Fu Zongdao, prepared wine to entertain his guests. Just as they were seated at the banquet, they heard the clanging sound of gongs.

[90] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 441.
[91] Richard L. Davis, *Court and Family in Sung China, (960–1279): Bureaucratic Success and Kinship Fortunes for the Shih of Ming-chou* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986), 1.

As they looked afar, it was a gang of bandits, [consisting of] dozens of people. [Fu] therefore quickly called for the strong servants to do preparations to defend [the household]. The women all went up the hills. The bandits got into the house, saw the wine and food, carelessly ate and drank, and seized money and valuables [that were worth] four thousand strings of coins and left.

紹興十七年七月，建昌軍管下箬嶺士人傅宗道置酒延客，方就席，聞鑼聲錚錚然，遙望乃群盜也，其徒數十人。因急喚壯僕治禦備，婦人皆登山。盜入門，見酒饌，恣飲食焉，掠財物四千緡而去。[92]

The family was quick to respond to the situation: While men stayed to safeguard the property, women, presumably the most vulnerable in the family, left for a shelter in the hills, staying away from turmoil. The process was organised and also very gendered.

5. Hegemonic Masculinity and the Nuances of the Subordinated Others

A gender hierarchy was created and indicated in the war-related political narratives.[93] As seen in the examples mentioned, women were often automatically characterised as the weaker ones who needed protection. They were targets for all men who were militarised, even to the slightest degree. The first part of this research focused on how "the capture of women" was constructed as the *typical* feminine war experience and the nuances within the related depictions. However, when we dig deeper into the texts, women were not the only victims being seized. Instead, any human who was characterised as vulnerable, namely, people who were too old or too young to fend for themselves, and women, would be at risk of being abandoned and/or captured, depending on the situation. In order to understand why women's war experiences were constructed in such a way, we have to first look at how these war

[92] Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi yi*, juan 10, 876.
[93] See Introduction for details.

experiences were gendered as a whole in different texts, how the treatments of men and women differed, and therefore how masculinities and femininities were interpreted.

The generalisation of the different treatments of both sexes is particularly evident in depictions of the sufferings of the Song people under the Jin invasion. There seemed to be a stereotypical impression that wherever the Jin army set foot, men would be brutally massacred while women, along with other pillaged properties, were often depicted as trophies of the Jin army. Women and valuables, both seen as booty at the time, were often listed together. For example, in an attempt of the Jin army to take the prefecture of Shunchang 順昌 (now Fuyang in Anhui Province), in order to boost the morale of the Jin army, the military commander Wushu 兀朮 (?–1148; Sinicised name: Wanyan Zongbi 完顏宗弼) made a declaration, in which he mentioned how the residents of the prefecture should be dealt with after they successfully seized the area:

> (Wushu) broke three arrows to make an oath. [As he] broke the first arrow, [he] said, "On the ninth day, [we shall] have breakfasts at the prefectural administrative office." [As he] broke the second arrow [he] said, "[All men] taller than the wheel shall be all killed." [As he] broke the third arrow, [he] said, "Women and valuables all would be rewards for the army."
>
> （兀朮）折三箭爲誓，折一箭曰：初九日早飯於府衙。折二箭曰：敢過車輪之下者皆殺。折三箭曰：婦人財帛，盡以賞軍。[94]

Sanchao beimeng huibian also cited another version of the declaration from another record, *Shunchang zhansheng pozei lu* 順昌戰勝破賊錄 (The record of triumphing in the battle and defeating the enemy in Shunchang):

[94] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 1454.

> In the coming days, [we shall] eat together at the prefectural administrative office. All acquired women, jades, and silks, [the Jin soldiers] could choose and keep them for themselves. Men over three years old should all be killed. [Wushu] also broke arrows to make an oath in order to encourage his gang.
>
> 來日府衙會食，所得婦女玉帛悉聽自留，男子三歲以上皆殺之，且折箭為誓，以激其衆。[95]

The latter record depicts the Jin army as even more vicious, as they could readily kill almost every male in the city, sparing only children under three years of age. The Jin army had built a reputation for looting, massacring, setting fire to houses, temples and monuments, and abducting women after seizing cities. In the previous accounts, women were categorised as booties to be taken. By equating them with commodities, women were objectified. Building such a reputation could be Jin's military tactic. The Jin army and their accomplices could use this reputation to coerce others to comply with their requests. During the negotiations for peace before the fall of the city of Bianjing, the Northern Song court tried to acquire money from the people in order to proceed with the peace negotiation with the Jin army, and a memorandum was issued:

> The Jin Empire requested five million *liang* of gold and fifty million *liang* of silver. Up till now, the gold and silver [we have] collected, from the honourable items of ancestral shrines, palaces, imperial carriages, clothes and utensils, et cetera, all had been searched and taken, and we only have some three hundred thousand *liang* of gold and around twelve million *liang* of silver. [Therefore, we now] look for financial aid [so we can] pay and move forward. If the great Jin Empire see the amount as not enough, and then [they will] send ambassadors and express their intention that it will be hard [for them] to retreat, and they also

[95] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 1449.

fear that the rewards for the soldiers are not fair, and definitely [it will] lead to resentment and anger, then [they will] come and attack the city, kill all men, seize and enslave all women, burn all houses, exhaust all gold, silver, coins, and valuables and take everything. If you still have not handed over anything, then [we will] obey the imperial memorandums issued either earlier or more recently, and [we would] arrest and imprison [you]. [We] issue this memorandum separately to show [you] the court's love for its people and the concern for the state.

金國要金五百萬兩，銀五千萬兩，今來所斂金銀，上自宗廟宮禁乘輿服御之物，盡行剗刷，止得金三十餘萬兩，銀一千二百餘萬兩，尋津置前去，大金國見其數未足，復遣使人諭意難為退軍，兼恐兵衆犒賞不均，必致怨怒，却來攻城，男子盡殺，婦女驅虜，屋宇焚燒，金銀錢物，竭底将去。今來既無所出，遂將前後所出黃榜，并行拘收，別出榜文，訓諭朝廷愛民憂國之意。[96]

In this memorandum, the people were warned that they would lose their families and kin if they failed to hand over their property to the government, "If [we cannot obtain] enough gold and silver, [and subsequently] the peace treaty cannot be concluded, [we will] then end up being unable to protect our family and kin. Even if [we] have money and treasures, what use would it be?" (若因金銀不足，和議不成，遂致家族不保，雖有財寶，何所用之？).[97] The statement that "men would all be killed, women would all be abducted, houses would all be burned down and properties would all be plundered" was seen as so absurd that Wang Xiaodi

[96] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 226. One *liang* is equivalent to around 37.3 grams.
[97] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 226.

王孝迪 (?–?), the deputy head of the central secretary bureau who was responsible for this memorandum, was ridiculed and nicknamed "the four all-gone central secretary" (四盡中書).[98]

Nevertheless, these texts demonstrated how men and women were treated differently if the Jin army were to triumph at war: All male survivors would be eliminated except for children who were unable to defend themselves, and women would simply become the Jin soldiers' trophies along with other valuables. Hence, a gender hierarchy is revealed.

It might also explain why the Jin army did not really kill all men in every case in which they captured a city. At the very least, from the records about the fall of Bianjing cited above, the massacre did not happen. Wang Xiaodi's memorandum is one of the pieces of evidence that the Northern Song court was using to desperately try to appease the Jin Empire and made no attempt to resist. However, in cases when Wushu had to make declarations such as "to kill all men and seize all women," the Jin army was met with resistance, so much so that they had great difficulties taking the city. While the Jin army was defeated in the battle in which they tried to take Shunchang, in another case when they successfully captured the city even when the Song army persisted and fought till the end, the people were treated with utter violence:

> Initially, Liu Qi, stationed at Yangzhou, divided the city [and] set up fences at the camp and wanted [the city] to be a safe place [to protect the people from] the barbarians and to make the prefectures of Huainan, et cetera, to all be peaceful plains. [Therefore, he] took all public and private savings into the city. The people all relied on Qi to be safe. And when Qi went to war, the people spontaneously carried dry provisions and picked up left arrows to help the army. When Qi lost the war, all of these were taken by the bandits. The strong women were all taken to the north, the remaining old and weak people all had their eyes gauged out and then returned to Qi. The devastated cries filled the roads.

[98] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 227.

初，劉錡之守揚州，披城立營柵，欲為虜确，俾淮南諸郡皆清野，盡斂公私儲蓄入城，百姓咸倚錡為安。及錡出戰，百姓自後負糗糒、拾遺矢以助軍。錡既失利，皆為賊所有，強壯婦女悉驅之北去，餘老弱者刳目以還錡，哀痛之聲塞路。[99]

After the war, the city was left with women and people who were old and weak, implying that men who were considered to have the ability to fight were incapacitated or even killed. Eliminating men who were strong enough to fight might be an act of humiliation, but more importantly, masculinity could be seen as an asset at the time. As mentioned, the Song court was desperate to increase military capability. All men who were considered strong enough to fight would be a potential obstacle for the Jin army to conquer the Song Empire, and we do see formations of volunteer armies, as mentioned in Zhao Zisong's memorial. In other words, these men could once again be masculinised and regain, or enhance, their masculinity.

On the other hand, women, once again, were captured along with the valuables, while the old and the weak were tortured; namely, they had their eyes gouged out and were returned to Liu Qi, possibly as an insult for Liu failing to protect the city — thus, this again is a form of feminisation. While in the examples mentioned before, women, along with people who were considered too young or too old, would fall victim to the enemy/bandits and could be seized and enslaved because they were the ones who were thought to be unable to defend themselves. They were the ones considered weak and therefore assigned feminised qualities in war time. However, even so, we see a difference in depictions of treatment even among these images of femininity. Another record in *Zhongxing yuwu lu* 中興禦侮錄 (The record of the resurgence of the state and the resistance against humility) of captured women might tell us the reason:

[99] *Zhongxing yuwu lu* 中興禦侮錄 (The record of the resurgence of the state and the resistance against humility), *Quan Song biji*, 43.

During the transitional period of Jianyan and Shaoxing, there are many bandits everywhere. Zhang Huaxiang and Qi Fang were particularly violent and brutal. Zhang defeated Chizhou (now Chizhou, Anhui) and stationed his army at the training grounds. The women he seized were countless. [He then] was chased by the government army and did not bear to abandon them. [He] then shortlisted the ones who could not walk — that was eight hundred people — and told his gang, "Take each of their feet." In an instant, there then were eight hundred pairs of feet stacked and accumulated at the courtyard, and then he left. The ones with their feet cut off would not immediately die, and all screamed and cried loudly. [The cries] continued all day, [and then they] stopped.

建炎、紹興之交，江湖多盜，張花項、戚方尤兇虐。張破池州，駐軍於教場，所掠婦女無數，為官兵所逐，不忍棄之，乃料簡其不能行者得八百人，諭其徒曰：「各納腳子。」須臾間則八百女雙足垜疊於庭，然後去。刖者未即死，皆叫呼號泣，經日乃絕。[100]

Zhang Huaxiang (?–?) and Qi Fang (?–?), who were bandits notorious for their ruthlessness, were possibly able to keep all of the women they captured in their base. For bandits who would usually occupy an area and establish their base, it would be easier to keep the people they captured in a certain place. However, later, they were chased by the Song soldiers, and the captured women had to adapt to their pace as they were escaping. The weaker ones who could not keep up would be disposed of. While the elderly and youngsters might not be able to endure the harsh environment on the road, "strong" women, as emphasised in *Zhongxing yuwu lu*, might stand a chance.

[100] Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi*, juan 5, 828–829.

This selection of who to be kept and who to be left behind would be illustrated more clearly in records in which the Jin army was escorting the captives back to the Jin Empire after Bianjing fell. Initially, when the Jin army left Bianjing, "the Han men and women whom [the Jin army] forced to go to the north [totalled] more or less some hundred thousand" (華人男女，驅而北者，無慮十餘萬).[101] However, the Jin army left the weakest ones behind, "abandon[ing] the old, the weak, the ill, the handicapped, and women etc., and eventually they were all moved into the city" (又有遺棄老弱病廢及婦女等，至是皆遷入城).[102]

However, the journey proved to be too difficult for the female captives, for "the women were not used to riding, and one after another [they] fell from the horses. [The Jin military commanders] wanted [them] to move quicker [but they just could not] move forward" (諸婦未慣坐騎，紛紛墜馬，欲速不前).[103] To make matters worse, the health of the female captives had become a problem; for example, "the two consorts, Xing and Zhu, and two princesses fell from horses and miscarried, and as a result could not ride" (邢朱二妃、二帝姬以墜馬損胎，不能騎行).[104]

The Jin army and the captives started their journey to the north on the twenty-ninth day of the third month in the second year of the reign of Jingkang. Among them, there were some three thousand female members of the imperial family. By the twenty-seventh day of the fourth month, many had died because of exhaustion, cold, and hunger.[105] "Women and children who could not ride would be abandoned along the journey. Only a thousand and several hundred

[101] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 1, 92.
[102] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 1, 92.
[103] Wang Chengdi 王成棣, *Qinggong yiyu*, 176.
[104] Wang Chengdi, *Qinggong yiyu*, 177.
[105] *Shenyin yu* 呻吟語, *Jingkang baishi jianzheng,* 198.

[women] remained and lived at the Temple of the Sweet Dew. Nine among ten people were ill" (婦稺不能騎者，沿途委棄，現存一千數百人，居甘露寺，十人九病).[106]

The imperial women became a concern for the Jin army because, just like the captured women of Zhang Huaxiang and Qi Fang, they were not able to keep up and ended up being abandoned. For the Jin army, depicted under the context of the Song-Jin wars, they were frequently on the move. While the captured were feminised and often depicted as unable to defend themselves and completely helpless, once they were captured, they were incorporated into the system within the militarised organisation, and in a sense were subjected to the demands such as those required of soldiers. To a certain extent, they had to be militarised, namely, display some sort of masculinity in order to survive.

This could be one of the reasons why the Jin army was known to "kill the strong, the old, and the weak, while seizing the women and the treasures" (族其强壯老弱，畧其婦女財寶).[107] This also implies that even if they were "strong" enough to survive the harsh military environments, they were considered to be so inferior that they did not seem to have the ability to fight at all.

6. Marginalisation, Objectification, and Elimination

In the words of V. Spike Peterson:

> Females are cast as, and socialised into, subjectivities and roles that feature dependence, accommodation, lack of personal autonomy and power, and implied consent to male domination. The effects of conformity seem to invite

[106] *Shenyin yu*, *Jingkang baishi jianzheng*, 198. *Shenyin yu* quoted *Songfu ji* 宋俘記 (The record of Song captives) that there were around 2,200 male members of the imperial family and some three thousand female members in the beginning. By the twenty-seventh day of the fourth month, only a thousand and so women were left. The remaining males were uncounted. See *Shenyin yu*, *Jingkang baishi jianzheng*, 199.
[107] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian,* 1274.

ideologies of protection, if not contempt. Women who defy the stereotypes are deemed suspect, social problems, and unnatural.[108]

In a sense, women were so marginalised under a military setting that they were completely objectified, hence, they suffered a total loss "of personal autonomy and power." They were frequently categorised in the same group as the looted treasures. For example, in the case of the bandit Fan Ru, here is a description of the disturbances caused even after the bandit was offered and accepted amnesty:

> In the Gengxu year of the Jianyan reign [1130], [in] Jianzhou, a ferocious bandit Fan Ru created a gang because of famine, and [there were] up to 100,000 or so [of them]. At the time, the imperial court, due to the turmoil at the borders, did not have the time to send [forces to] suppress [the bandits]. As a result, [the court ordered] the local circuit government offices, for the time being, should solicit [and offer] amnesty. Ru then obeyed the order and led his gang out of the city of Tunzhou [now in Shandong]. Nominally, [it was] claimed [that they had] accepted amnesty. However, [they] only stopped killing people. The robbing of people's riches and the kidnapping of people's wives and daughters [happened] so frequently as before. [Governments of] prefectures and provinces could not control [them].
>
> 建炎庚戌歲，建州兇賊范汝為因飢荒嘯聚，至十餘萬。是時朝廷以邊境多故，未遑致討，遂命本路官司姑務招安。汝為聽命，遂領其徒出屯州城。名曰招安，但不殺人而已，其劫人財帛，掠人妻女，常自若也，州縣不能制。[109]

[108] V. Spike Peterson, "Gendered Identities, Ideologies, and Practices in the Context of War and Militarism," in *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives,* eds. Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 27.

[109] *Zhiqing zashuo* 摭青雜說, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 2, 218. Circuit, or *lu*, was a unit for administrative regions at the time.

Again, we would see how women were treated as war booty. The central government did not allocate military resources to stop the bandits, and the local governments failed to manage and stop the disturbances. The bandits were described to still "rob people of their riches" and "kidnap people's wives and daughters." Importantly, the two actions are placed in juxtaposition.

In other, more gruesome examples, women were murdered for rituals and sacrifices. When the Jin military commander, Wushu, suffered a devastating defeat, to show the Jin emperor that he was determined to fight and conquer the Song Empire, he "sacrificed a white horse, cut a woman's heart out [as offerings], and Wushu himself pierced his own forehead [and took his] blood in order to offer a sacrifice to the heaven" (刑白馬，剔婦人心。兀朮自割其額血祭天).[110]

In another example, we see the nuances of how the subordinated group was objectified. When Shao Qing, a bandit-turned-military commander, revolted and launched an attack in the hope of seizing the capital city of Taiping Zhou 太平州 (now south-eastern Anhui), he

> mobilised the people to cut down trees [in order to] build a slope. The ones who were lethargic and slow were killed and were [filled together with the timber] and built [into] the road. In one day, [the highest point of the slope] reached the same level as the city [walls]. The bandits finished setting up their attacking equipment, then they set fire and burned the watch towers, dissected a pregnant woman, and took the foetus out to divine [if the war would end up] good or bad [for them].
>
> 調民伐木爲慢道，怠緩者殺而并築之。一日之閒，與城相平。賊攻具畢施，遂縱火焚樓櫓，刳孕婦，取胎以卜吉凶。[111]

[110] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 1562.
[111] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 3, 805.

All people who were seized, thus feminised, risked being objectified. In this case, horrifyingly, they could be the builders or the building materials, depending on what the authority saw fit. The woman's body, while being enslaved, abused, sexualised, and/or dehumanised, seemed to have a supernatural quality, and for this they were used as ceremonial objects. By no means did this mythical quality empower the women. Instead, it was the men who would exploit the quality and hope to benefit from it.

It should be noted that they were not only objectified and exploited by the enemy/bandits but also by their own state/army — the ones who were expected to protect them. We have already seen how the state failed to protect the women in the previous example of the bandit Fan Ru. As mentioned in Wang Xiaodi's memorandum quoted before, the Song court was struggling to pay for the financial restitution to the Jin Empire, and they never managed to raise that much money. They were so desperate that they decided to use women as currency to repay the Jin army. As listed in *Kaifeng fuzhuang* 開封府狀 (The testimony of the Kaifeng prefecture):

> [For] princesses by birth and by marriage: One is equivalent to a thousand *ding* of gold.
>
> [For] princesses of commanderies by birth: One is equivalent to five hundred *ding* of gold.
>
> [For] princesses of counties by birth: One is equivalent to two hundred *ding* of gold.
>
> [For] princess of commanderies by marriage: One is equivalent to five hundred *ding* of silver.
>
> [For] princesses of counties by marriage: One is equivalent to two hundred *ding* of silver.

[For] maidens from decent families: One is equivalent to a hundred *ding* of silver.

帝姬、王妃一人準金一千錠。

宗姬一人準金五百錠。

族姬一人準金二百錠。

宗婦一人準銀五百錠。

族婦一人準銀二百錠。

良家女一人一人準銀一百錠。[112]

These, of course, were not the only women handed over to the Jin army. The Song court was so desperate to pacify the Jin army; there was this frantic scene recorded in *Sanchao beimeng huibian*: When the Jin army asked for people of different specialities, and the Song court could only gather a thousand courtesans, procuresses, and matchmakers were ordered to hunt the retired ones down.[113] No one could save them from this humiliation as it was the state which made the decision to surrender them to the enemy.

This leads to the last part of this section. At the moment of utter despair, cases of suicides would be found, as shown in the excerpts quoted before. At times, it was an act to avoid humiliation and a symbol of loyalty. For example, this was the case with Xu Huiyan 徐徽言 (1093–1129), who was a commander defending Jinning 晉寧 (now Jia County, Shaanxi). When the enemy polluted the river in order to cut off their water supply, he knew the city would fall to the hands of the enemy soon, and as he was losing the battle with the Jin army, he put

[112] *Kaifeng fuzhuang* 開封府狀, *Jiankang baishi jianzheng*, 121–122. One *ding* equals around twenty-five grams.
[113] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 583.

his wife and children in a room and set the room on fire. Then he went to see the generals and soldiers and stated that he should not die in the hands of the Jin army and attempted suicide.[114]

Note that Xu did not die with his family. Instead, he essentially murdered his own family before going to address his official engagements the last time. In two extreme cases recorded in the *Zhongyi zhuan* 忠義傳 (Biographies of the loyal and the upright) in *Songshi* 宋史 (The history of Song), knowing that they would definitely lose the war, Shi Kang 史抗 (?–?) and Zhu Zhao 朱昭 (?–?) decided to murder their own families before fighting their last battles.

In Shi Kang's biography, he predicted the city would definitely fall the next day, so he summoned his sons, Qigu 稽古 and Qizhe 稽哲, and said,

> Now, [the enemy has] solidified and heavily surrounded [the city], [and] the outside help hasn't come; I used the method of the six *ren* and made divination, and [predicted that] tomorrow the city will surely fall. I am going to die [performing my] official duties. You also should not betray your state because of your affection for your wives and children. [If you] listen to my words, [you] should order your family to commit suicide, then [we should] accord with our values of righteousness [by dying fighting for the country].
>
> 今重圍既固，外援不至，吾用六壬術占之，明日城必陷，吾將死事，汝輩亦勿以妻子為念而負國也。能聽吾言，當令家屬自裁，然後同赴義。[115]

The two sons sobbed and agreed. One of the reasons why they had to kill their families first could be the same as the concerns Maiden Cheng's parents had: If their wives and/or children were left unprotected, they would fall into the hands of the enemy and be humiliated.

[114] Tuotuo 脫脫 et al., *Songshi* 宋史 (The history of the Song dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), juan 446, 13192–13193.
[115] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi*, juan 446, 13172.

But more importantly, Shi Kang was speaking from the perspective of a military man who could be affected and distracted by his family and therefore could fail to properly carry out his duties.

Ideally, there should not be any women in military camps, for women would have a negative effect on military morale. For example, scholar Fan Jun (1102–1150) wrote an article on the policies and arrangements of the military and stated the following:

> [Your] vassal has also witnessed [how] the army was mobilised and troops were dispatched; the old and the weak would follow the army and become a burden to the warriors. This does not seem to be a gain. [During] the Han dynasty, Li Ling [?–74 BC] led the soldiers and entered [the territory of] Xiongnu. The wives of the soldiers followed the army, and they mostly hid in chariots. Ling said, "The morale of my soldiers is weakened, and [the sound of] the drum cannot lift [their spirits]; why is that so? How could there be women in the army?" [Even if] the wives of the soldiers hiding in chariots would still malfunction the drums, not to mention if [they have their] camps connected [as they] followed [closely] behind, what would it do to the military morale?
> 臣又觀行軍出師，老弱隨之，爲戰士累，似未爲得。漢李陵提兵入匈奴，士卒妻婦隨軍者大匿車中，陵曰：「吾士氣少衰，而鼓不起者，何也？軍中豈有女子乎？」士卒妻婦匿車中猶鼓不起，况連營踵其後，兵氣當如何哉？[116]

In another random jotting, Xie Caibo 謝采伯 (1168–1231), a scholar-official, also used the same concept that "when women are in the military, the military morale could not be raised" (婦人在軍中，兵氣恐不揚), and even went as far as to say, "women should not be mentioned

[116] Fan Jun, "Quan wu," *Quan Songwen*, 194, 109.

in the military" (軍中不言婦女), linking the early deaths of Sun Ce 孫策 (175–200) and Zhou Yu 周瑜 (175–210) with their marriages to the Elder Qiao 大喬 and the Younger Qiao 小喬 in order to demonstrate how women would adversely affect military men.[117]

Although from many records including the ones quoted earlier we know it was not the case in reality, it does show us what the ideal militarised masculinity in the Song army was: It completely rejected femininity. That could explain why Shi Kang advised his sons to request their families to commit suicide. This mentality most probably caused this most terrifying scene to happen as another military man, Zhu Zhao, realised that they would not win the war:

> Zhao retreated [and] sat in [his] office, [and he] summoned all the military officers and told them, "The city is going to be captured. Our wives and children cannot be depraved by the bandits. [If I am] fortunate enough to kill my family first and fight till my death at the city walls, [when we] win; [we could march] towards the east to pursue the great merit, [when we] lose [we would] have our skeletons exposed within this area; [either way] the ambition of a great man would be completed." The crowd did not respond. [At the time,] Zhao's youngest son was playing at the stairs. Zhao suddenly stood up and killed the young boy. His eldest son, shocked, [could only] stare at [him]. [He] then [proceeded to] kill him. He directly led several soldiers to kill their own families, carry the bodies, and put them in a well. His subordinate Jia Zongwang's mother just passed by. Zhu Zhao stood up and called her, "[You,] old lady, [are a] local person. I don't want to kill you. Please get into the well by yourself." The old woman followed his order. He then covered the well with dirt. The wives and children of the military officers were then all killed. Zhu Zhao then told the crowd, "You all and I are now completely without burden!"

[117] Xie Caibo 謝采伯, *Mizhai biji* 密齋筆記 (Notes from the study Mi), *Quan Song biji*, vol. 7, bk. 8, 132.

昭退坐廳事，召諸校謂曰：「城且破，妻子不可為賊污，幸先戕我家而背城死戰，勝則東嚮圖大功，不勝則暴骨境內，大丈夫一生之事畢矣。」眾未應。昭幼子戲階下，遽起手刃之，長子驚視，又殺之，徑領數卒屠其家人，舁屍納井中。部將賈宗望母適過前，昭起呼曰：「媪，鄉人也，吾不欲刃，請自入井。」媪從之，遂併覆以土。將士將妻孥者，又皆盡殺之。昭謂眾曰：「我與汝曹俱無累矣！」[118]

Zhu Zhao led his men to slaughter all women and children in the city, so that the military men would no longer be burdened. The account also shows us the nuance and tension between the family hierarchy and the military system. While the military men showed deference to the mother of Jia Zongwang, she did not question them but simply obeyed their order and committed suicide. In the face of war, her identity as a mother and an elder was overpowered by the authority of the military men, as the military system requires all feminised "others" to subordinate to the ideal militarised masculinity. This is the ultimate marginalisation not only of women but all who were feminised. By eliminating all femininities physically, namely, their mothers, wives, and children, and mentally, namely, their affections and fears for their families, the men could finally become the embodiment of the perfect warriors.

7. Conclusion

Being captured is the typical women's war experience we could find in historical sources. Nonetheless, related records are often very brief and highly generalised. Women, or more accurately, anyone feminised, would become marginalised, victimised, and even objectified. When we dig deeper into the texts, however brief the depictions are, we can see the nuances between multiple masculinities and femininities, and therefore the texts allow us

[118] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi*, juan 446, 13171.

to catch a glimpse of how women were positioned in a society where all social orders have been broken down.

Among this group of feminised people, young women often seemed to be more desirable and thus more at risk of experiencing such war atrocity. While sex is part of the reasons, as war, as well as the language of war, are highly sexualised,[119] the demanding environment and harsh lives in military camps should also be added into consideration as the enemy selected their victims. Hence, young women became the perfect victim: socially inferior yet physically strong enough to endure the extremely poor conditions in military camps. As a result, they became the typical example of victims who were captured, abused, and enslaved by the enemy/bandits.

Sadly, until today, women are still the group of people most affected by war. In the words of Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via,

> Women are the majority of civilian casualties of war, before, during and after the conflict. They are the primary targets of those who use rape and forced pregnancy as weapons of war. They make up the majority of refugees displaced from homes, farms, and sources of livelihood. Women also experience hardship and discrimination as members of state militaries and insurgent groups, which often replicate and exaggerate social inequalities.[120]

While these records do show us how social inequalities were replicated and exaggerated, the texts tell us more about why they were treated in such manner instead of truly revealing their war experiences as human beings. In these depictions, they were often stripped away of their sense of agency. What were their hopes and fears? How did they overcome their struggles? These will be the focus of the following chapters.

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[119] Kilshaw, *Impotent Warriors*, 194.
[120] Sjoberg and Via, "Introduction," in *Gender, War, and Militarism*,10.

Chapter Two

Constructing the Voice of the Seized Women in Twelfth-Century China

While the previous chapter examines the images of captured women who, in a highly militarised society during the time of war, were marginalised to such an extent that they were often dehumanised and objectified, in this chapter, they would be given a voice. This chapter focuses on a collection of poems in which male poets assumed the personas of the abducted women and imagined how their sorrowful lives would be as captives in a foreign land, thus constructing a collective voice of these captured women. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, women were not the only group of people who suffered from the violence at the hands of military men. However, once again, captured women were selected to be the representative of war victims who suddenly found themselves trapped in an alien land under the rule of the Jin Empire. As this voice of the captive women is being constructed, a multilayered notion of otherness also emerges in these poems, revealing diverging views towards these female captives.

Writing about these captured women undoubtedly is a direct response of the poets to contemporary affairs. However, the theme of these poems is not exactly an invention of the Song poets. These poems in fact share a very similar theme to the poems in which poets write in the voices of Han princesses and/or ladies who were sent to neighbouring states under the policy of marriage diplomacy (*heqin* 和親), spotlighting the sadness and helplessness induced by cultural estrangement and deepened by interstate conflicts. Reinventing a popular theme with an established framework could allow the author to drop subtle hints of their own political views while still being able to avoid political complications in unpredictable times.

The chapter, therefore, focuses on two main aspects. First, it analyses the literary traditions and related discussions on literary tools and themes that helped shape the image of contemporary female war victims. Second, it examines how otherness is conveyed in these poems and how the multilayered depictions of otherness uncover the underlying perspectives towards these women. By comparing the constructed voices of both the contemporary seized women in twelfth-century China and the princesses entering diplomatic marriages in the past written retrospectively in the Song dynasty and the interrelation between the two types of poems, we might be able to better understand the nuanced attitudes towards these women and even the changing moral landscapes that would in turn shape expectations towards women.

1. The Established Feminine Voice and the Theory of Narrative

To understand why female war victims at the time were depicted as such, I would like to first introduce briefly how the feminine voice has been employed in literature and how long-established topical genres and literary trends at the time could have contributed to the shaping of images of these contemporary female war victims.

There has been a long-standing practice of male poets to write using a feminine voice. The voice given to the female figures, however, does not truly represent the women themselves. Maureen Robertson coined the term the "literati-feminine" voice to describe how the feminine voice written by men was used to represent "the masculinised consciousness" and the fact that "women's subjectivity is most often being represented by men."[121]

This literary tradition originated from folk songs, was reinforced in *Yutai xinyong* 玉臺新詠 (New songs from the jade terrace), and later became one of the most significant elements that constitute the canonical style of *ci* genre, combining the usage of a certain language and/or

[121] Maureen Robertson, "Voicing the Feminine: Constructions of the Gendered Subject," *Late Imperial China* 13, no. 1 (June 1992): 69.

descriptions of certain objects considered to be feminine, male poets used feminine voices to express private, unmasculine emotions, erotic love and sexual desire, as well as to invite the gaze from his male audience towards the female figure centred in the piece.[122] As Ronald Egan has observed, the author could switch between the viewer's perspective and the feminine voice, while the female subject remains to be observed under the male gaze.[123]

On the other hand, the feminine voice assumed by men can also be highly politicised. Influenced by Qu Yuan's 屈原 (340–278 BC) works, the feminine voice has also been used as a tool for male poets to express their ambitions and frustrations in politics based on the love metaphor in which the king/emperor is the husband/lord and the minister is the wife/beauty longing for her lord's love and affection.[124] The minister relies on his lord to discover his talents and yearns for his trust, and a woman awaits her lord to notice her beauty in order to win his affection. Their greatest tragedy will then be losing their lord's trust/love, or worse, if their talent/beauty is left totally unrecognised. As discussed in the previous chapter, if femininity is what the idealised masculinity rejects, the feminine voice, in a broader sense, would be used to express everything that is considered not sufficiently masculine, ranging from romantic love to feelings of inferiority.

Moreover, a narrative is created naturally through the process of writing in a feminine voice itself. All literary works written in a feminine voice should at least contain two perspectives, with the feminine revealing the internal perspective and the author expressing the external perspective.[125] Furthermore, since there is an established literary tradition of male writers writing in feminine voices, there could be a third perspective in such writings — a

[122] Grace S. Fong, "Engendering the Lyric: Her Image and Voice in Song," in *Voices of the Song Lyric in China*, ed. Pauline Yu (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 109.
[123] Ronald Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1994), 312.
[124] Yanning Wang, "Fashioning Voices of Their Own Three Ming–Qing Women Writers' Uses of Qu Yuan's Persona and Poetry," *Nan Nü* 16, no. 1 (2014): 60. See also Song, *The Fragile Scholar*, 57.
[125] Please refer to the Introduction for a more detailed explanation of the production of the narratives.

collective perspective that is created by accumulated traditions and expressed through fixed sets of metaphors. In this case, what we call “the feminine voice” as a part of Chinese literary tradition can also be viewed as an established narrative. Hence, the notion of femininity constructed and presented while male writers wrote in the feminine voice, or even simply while they were writing about the feminine, is multifold.

2. Characterising Wang Zhaojun: The Changing Female Images in an Established Theme

After discussing how a certain language considered feminine is employed and fashioned by male writers, an established literary theme that could help shape the images of contemporary female war victims will be examined in this section.

Among all reports of princess brides and female war victims, the story of Wang Zhaojun has always been a popular topic in Chinese literature. Wang Zhaojun, in a way, is the quintessential princess bride or perhaps the quintessential feminine literary figure that perfectly embodies the masculine consciousness masked in the notion of femininity. Beautiful but disregarded because of her refusal to bribe the court painter, Mao Yanshou 毛延壽, she volunteered to be married off to the Xiongnu as the Han Empire once again entered a marriage alliance. Her neglected beauty, her implied romantic longing for the Han emperor, her patriotism and her misfortune of having to leave her homeland and dying alone in an estranged land all fit perfectly into Qu Yuan’s love analogy.

With Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086) writing his famous poem, *Mingfei qu er shou* 明妃曲二首 (The song of the brilliant lady: Two poems), in 1059 and scholars at the time matching (*he* 和) Wang Anshi’s poem, Wang Anshi’s intention to make new arguments as he wrote on an old theme quickly caught the attention of the literati, sparked a new wave of poems written about the Wang Zhaojun legend, and thus started a whole new discourse on the Wang

Zhaojun legend.[126] Wang Anshi's poems were so controversial that the discussions and writings on the theme, or rather, their criticism, would continue even after the collapse of the Northern Song dynasty.

We must put the writings on the Wang Zhaojun legend in the Song dynasty in general or the discussions of Wang Anshi's poems in two main contexts: 1) the ever-changing interstate relations between the empires of Song, Liao, and, later, the rising Jin, which means that perspectives towards the Wang Zhaojun legend could have changed over time accordingly while the contemporary writers expressed their own views on interstate situation as they wrote about the Han-Xiongnu relations; and 2) the aspirations of Song poets to create something different from previous literature, and consequently, in the words of Yan Yu 嚴羽, the Song poets "consider [the usage of peculiar] language and/or wordings, [the exhibition of] talent and knowledge, [and] the presentation of one's argument and/or reasoned discourse as poetry" (以文字為詩，以才學為詩，以議論為詩).[127]

Theoretically, if there is any reasoned discourse to be found in their writings on the Wang Zhaojun legend, analysing these poems allows us to see how the notion of femininity is presented under this particular established theme and thus how it could in turn influence the writing about the contemporary female war victims. It shows us what aspects of femininity had been frequently discussed under this established theme and therefore also gives us a glimpse of what was deliberately added to or left out in the new theme on contemporary female war victims.

[126] Yang Xiaoshan, "Wang Anshi's 'Mingfei qu' and the Poetics of Disagreement," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 29 (2007): 55, 80.
[127] Yan Yu 嚴羽, *Canglang shihua jiaoyi* 滄浪詩話校釋 (Canglang Poetry Talks), ed. Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1983), 26.

As mentioned, the femininity presented in these poems is multilayered. Wang Zhaojun would be the obvious subject in these poems to be depicted to have possessed feminine qualities. Take Yao Kuan's 姚寬 (1105–1162) *Zhaojun qu* 昭君曲 (The song of Zhaojun) as an example:

> The Han palace, heavily locked thousands of [beauties with] silk moth-like eyebrows,
>
> Jealous of the [emperor's] favourites, fighting to be [the most] beautiful [one], the lord would not know [about these scandals.]
>
> Zhaojun [was] self-assured [that] her beauty was so unusual in the crowd,
>
> [Not willing to bribe, and so] the painter was cruel enough to deceive [the emperor] for gold.
>
> At the time, [she] hoped for [the emperor's] favour [yet] he did not look back [and notice her].
>
> Tears moisten the flower branch, she laments the lack of a keeper.
>
> One day, [the emperor tried to choose a maiden] according to the paintings [and] marry her off to the distant lands.
>
> Ardently, before the wine goblet, [she volunteered to] leave for her lord.
>
> [With the horses] neighing, the vehicles and horsemen [moved] like flowing water.
>
> The dim, desolate wind and sand stretch for countless *li*.
>
> In past years [even] a princess was married off to Wusun.
>
> Not to mention my humble self is just a maiden [born in a] decent [yet ordinary] family.
>
> Lamenting her own [situation], [for] her fate [is] doomed. [This is] a path of no return.
>
> Weak in nature, how could [she] serve the powerful lord?

Pitifully, from her silk court [dress, she] changed into a felted fur coat.

Enduring [sorrow] she switched from her natal tongue to a new language.

On her horse, [the sound of] *pipa* was carried afar.

They heard it, [and] like [he,r they were] heartbroken.

[Wanting to] send letters [back,] unavailingly, she handed her words to the wild geese heading south.

Only her mournful song was circulated back to the Han Empire.

The Han court, without [a good] policy, has nothing to gain.

The Yulin archers, unavailingly, had their hair turned white.

The white jade and the fine horses; there isn't a time you are not able to get them.

[However, it is] difficult to obtain [a beauty that can cause] the downfall of cities and states once again.

漢宮深鎖千蛾眉，妒寵爭妍君不知。

昭君自恃色殊眾，畫師忍為黃金欺。

當時望幸君不顧，淚濕花枝怨無主。

一朝按圖聘絕域，慷慨尊前為君去。

蕭蕭車騎如流水，慘澹風沙千萬里。

昔年公主嫁烏孫，妾身況是良家子。

自嗟薄命無歸路，弱質安能事強主。

可憐宮錦換穹裘，忍變故音作新語。

馬上琵琶送將遠，行路聞之亦淒斷。

寄書空懷雁南飛，只有怨歌傳入漢。

漢家失計何所獲，羽林射士空頭白。

白璧駿馬無時無，傾國傾城難再得。[128]

This poem touches upon almost every possible trait Zhaojun was described to have in many other poems. Although it was reported that she had volunteered to marry the Xiongnu leader, she was often described as a reluctant bride. Her forlornness and unwillingness to leave her homeland or change to foreign customs were often placed at the centre of the narrative in nearly every poem that is written about her as if she had become an outcast like Qu Yuan. Her tragic fate is sometimes intensified by the depiction of her own arrogance. She thought she would be able to make her own way by relying purely on her beauty, so she refused to bribe the court painter; she decided to marry the northern tribal leader when she found herself neglected by the emperor, only to find herself being totally powerless in an estranged land. In fact, in several poems, she was depicted as having misjudged the situation because she had no idea how difficult life would be among the Xiongnu, and ended up regretting her decisions.[129] To conclude, Wang Zhaojun is generally depicted as innately weak, emotional, and often delusional, as opposed to the idealised form of masculinity, which is to be strong, decisive, logical, and intelligently informed.

Interestingly, the Song authors often used the term *liuli* (流離) or *liuluo* (流落), which can be roughly translated as "wandering in destitute," to describe the misfortune she endured as she left her homeland. The representations of Wang Zhaojun in these poems do not necessarily reflect her actual experience among the Xiongnu or even in the western regions. As Liu Jingzhen has suggested, it is possible that Wang Zhaojun was not as passive as she was portrayed in these poems, since according to both *Hanshu* 漢書 (The book of Han) and *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (The book of the later Han), the children and even the nephew of Wang

[128] Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, Ni Qixin 倪其心, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* (The Complete Poetry of the Song) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1998), 35, 22061. *Li* 里 is a unit used to measure distance; one *li* in the Song dynasty was about 0.265 km.
[129] See Appendix 3 for another example.

Zhaojun became key political players at the western regions, positioning her at the centre of the political affairs in the area, although she herself was not mentioned in the historical records.[130] However, in these poems, she was generally described as having no control of her life among the Xiongnu, being deserted due to the insufferable cultural differences, and very often she was also depicted to be neglected by her new husband, quite like how she was ignored by the Han emperor back in her homeland. Her beauty had once again failed her.

Admittedly we know very little about Wang Zhaojun's political activities among the Xiongnu, and here I am not trying to evaluate the authenticity of Wang Zhaojun's own voice in these poems. The authors did not seem to be very interested in her political roles and activities in the western region either. More often, they seemed to value more the new idea they happened to come up with and the excitement that they could change the existing narrative of the Wang Zhaojun legend.[131] While the authors tried to create a new discourse for her story, Wang Zhaojun's own authentic voice, already frequently ignored, was doomed to be reshaped in order to fit into the narrative set by the authors.

Yao Kuan's poem also touches upon another aspect that would become a much-considered aspect in poems on Wang Zhaojun's legend written in the twelfth century: It neatly ties the frustration of Wang Zhaojun and the frustration of the military men who were probably not given a chance to fight and had aged for nothing, or even the unspoken pain of the literati who opposed to the policy of marriage diplomacy. By doing so, it effectively connects the underlying male consciousness with this feminine narrative. It then leads us to the other underlying aspect of the notion of femininity — the feminised state/court.

[130] Liu Jingzhen 劉靜貞, "Lishi jishu yu lishi lunshu: qianhou Hanshu zhong de Wang Zhaojun gushi bianxi" 歷史記述與歷史論述——前後漢書中的王昭君故事辨析, in *Zhongguo funüshi duben* 中國婦女史讀本, eds. Deng Xiaonan 鄧小南, Wang Zheng 王政, and You Jianming 游鑒明 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2011), 53.
[131] Yang Xiaoshan, "Wang Anshi's 'Mingfei qu,'" 80.

Yang Xiaoshan has pointed out that Wang Anshi's contemporaries were less critical towards his poems, claiming that "denunciation of Wang Anshi's 'Mingfei qu' was at its most vociferous at the beginning of the Southern Song."[132] It should also be noted that even if some of these eleventh-century writers raised questions on the effectiveness of the policy of diplomatic marriages, the focus of the poems written at the time was on Wang Zhaojun's bitterness over leaving her homeland. However, poets of twelfth-century China had become more critical towards the marriage alliance policy.

The reason why Wang Zhaojun had the opportunity to leave the Han court, often depicted as the first plight she was in, and marry the Xiongnu leader was that the Han dynasty was trying to maintain peace with Xiongnu by forging alliances via marriage. The policy had been heavily criticised by many authors who had written about the Wang Zhaojun legend and was often seen as a sign of weakness of the Han dynasty. Some of the authors gave Wang Zhaojun credit for her contribution towards maintaining peace between the two states; for example, Liu Zihui 劉子翬 (1086–1157) compared her to the famous military commanders of the Han dynasty, Wei Qing 衛青 (?–106 BC) and Huo Qubing 霍去病 (140–117 BC) and praised her for pacifying the situation with a smile for her lord.[133] The only tool she could utilise was her beauty, a significant marker of her femininity, which ironically was also often described to be greatly dampened due to the harsh environment of Xiongnu as well as her own sorrow.

Moreover, if war reinforces the concept of idealised masculinity, using femininity as a weapon against the enemy would certainly be a sign of weakness, for femininity had no place in war. The weaponisation of femininity was a futile act since her beauty would not be of any use. The authors of these poems often express their criticism of the marriage alliance policy. It

[132] Yang Xiaoshan, "Wang Anshi's 'Mingfei qu,'" 62.
[133] See Appendix 4.

was questioned if Wang Zhaojun could make it among Xiongnu. At times, some authors even emphasised that there was not much that Wang Zhaojun could do because she was just a woman, and a woman was seen to be innately weak.[134]

If Wang Zhaojun was depicted as powerless and isolated — in other words, othered and foreignised — at the Xiongnu court, the political goal of the Han court would then be deemed to be a failure, implying that the marriage alliance was indeed ineffective. The desolation, bitterness, and helplessness of Wang Zhaojun echoed the unspoken anguish of the military men or even the literati, who were not assigned to a proper mission and thus were not able to achieve their political aspirations — that is, to defend their own state against the enemy. The forging of the marriage alliance would only add pain to both parties while making them both useless and miserable in this situation.

3. The Complexity of "Otherness": Reconciliation or Alienation

Since we have discussed common literary themes related to poems about Wang Zhaojun, we shall now take a look at Wang Anshi's two poems:

> Poem I
>
> In the beginning, when the Brilliant Consort came out of the Han palace,
>
> Her tears drenched the spring breeze, her temple locks drooping,
>
> Pacing up and down, gazing at her own shadow, so pallid,
>
> She still got the emperor to lose control [for her].
>
> When he returned, he blamed the painter:
>
> In his lifetime, how often had he [met beauties] that could please his eyes?
>
> It is always impossible to draw how people express and carry themselves,
>
> [Therefore] at the time, Mao Yanshou was wrongly killed.

[134] Liu Jingzhen, "Yiyu de xiangxiang," 197. See also Appendix 5 for an example.

Once she departed, she knew in her heart she would not return;

What a pity, she packed all of her Han palace clothes.

She wished to send a messenger to ask about the matters in the south of the border.

But year after year, there were only wild geese flying by.

Word came from her family ten thousand *li* away,

“Take care in the city of felt tents — don’t think of us.”

Haven’t you seen how Ajiao was confined in the nearby Changmen Palace?

In life’s disappointment, there is no south or north.

Poem II

When the Brilliant Consort was just about to be married to the barbarian fellow,

A hundred felt-canopied coaches were all filled with barbarian beauties.

Holding in her emotions, she wanted to talk about them, only [ending up] not having a location to talk about it.

She conveyed through the pipa what only she knew in her heart.

Her hands, which plucked the spring breeze with golden poles,

Played [the pipa] while looking at the wild geese and urged others to drink the barbarian wine.

As maids from the Han palace shed tears furtively,

Passer-by on the desert, however, turned around.

Han’s favour is shallow, and the barbarian’s is deep.

The joy of life lies upon the hearts that know you.

What a pity, the green mounds have disappeared beneath the weeds,

Still, the sound of the sorrowful strings lingers on to this day.

其一

明妃初出漢宮時，淚濕春風鬢腳垂。

低徊顧影無顏色，尚得君王不自持。

歸來卻怪丹青手，入眼平生幾曾有。

意態由來畫不成，當時枉殺毛延壽。

一去心知更不歸，可憐着盡漢宮衣。

寄聲欲問塞南事，只有年年鴻雁飛。

家人萬里傳消息，好在氈城莫相憶。

君不見咫尺長門閉阿嬌，人生失意無南北。

其二

明妃初嫁與胡兒，氈車百兩皆胡姬。

含情欲說獨無處，傳與琵琶心自知。

黃金捍撥春風手，彈看飛鴻勸胡酒。

漢宮侍女暗垂淚，沙上行人卻回首。

漢恩自淺胡恩深，人生樂在相知心。

可憐青塚已蕪沒，尚有哀弦留至今。[135]

Scholars have identified the two most criticised sentences of Wang Anshi's poems: the first one being "Haven't you seen how Ajiao was confined in the nearby Changmen Palace? / In life's disappointment, there is no south or north" (君不見咫尺長門閉阿嬌，人生失意無南北), while the second one being "Han's favour is shallow and the barbarian's deep; / the joy of life is to be with your heart-to-heart intimate" (漢恩自淺胡自深，人生樂在相知心).[136]

[135] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 10, 6503. The translation is based on Yang Xiaoshan's. See Yang Xiaoshan, "Wang Anshi's 'Mingfei qu,'" 55–57.
[136] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 10, 6503. For example, see Yang Xiaoshan, "Wang Anshi's 'Mingfei qu,'" 58.

Wang Anshi's poems and the reactions, or to be exact, criticisms towards them truly demonstrate the complexity of the notion of "otherness," as defined by Jonathan Hart:

> Otherness includes a comparison in which something or someone is not the self but is compared to the self and thus defines the self. Self and other define and distinguish and are engaged in metaphor, in a yoked comparison. […] Otherness provides alter egos, other or possible worlds, choices. Otherness opens up possibility but also, if taken negatively, leads to senses of estrangement and alienation.[137]

What Wang Anshi was trying to show in his poem was that Wang Zhaojun could live a good life among the Xiongnu, despite the difficulties she encountered. Wang Anshi's attempts at reconciliation between the Han and the barbarians reflected the relatively peaceful relations between the Song and Liao at the time, as evidenced by the less critical responses at his time, but it is purely philosophical. Human experiences can be universal despite cultural differences. On the other hand, the cultural differences are somewhat unreconcilable.

In Wang Anshi's poems, as he attempted to console Wang Zhaojun by trying to eliminate the differences between the north and the south, he recognised that his words had come too late and that "Sadly, Green Mound has disappeared beneath the weeds, / Still, the sound of the sorrowful strings lingers on to this day" (可憐青冢已蕪沒，尚有哀弦留至今).[138] Wang Zhaojun's voice, or words, was often replaced by pipa music because of the language barrier she encountered.[139] However, even the musical instrument pipa itself is foreign to Han China. In Wang Anshi's poems, Wang Zhaojun was depicted to be wearing her Han court dresses when she was seriously homesick.[140] Otherness always exists in the poems

[137] Jonathan Hart, *The Poetics of Otherness: War, Trauma, and Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1.
[138] Translated by Yang Xiaoshan; Yang Xiaoshan, "Wang Anshi's 'Mingfei qu,'" 57.
[139] See Appendix 5 for another example.
[140] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 10, 6503.

on the Wang Zhaojun legend, and clothing, language, and even music are often the most common signifiers of cultural differences in poems about princess brides or captured women.

Wang Anshi's implication that it is possible to overlook the differences between the south and the north, or the Han and the foreigners, was viewed to be pernicious, especially during the early years of the Southern Song:

> Moreover, a lot of poets who write "Songs of the Brilliant Lady" would view losing one's chastity as an endless pain. For Anshi, [when] he wrote the "Song of the Brilliant Lady", he said, "Han's favour is shallow and the barbarian's deep; / the joy of life is to be with your heart-to-heart intimate." And if so then [what] Liu Yu [has done] is more than committing a crime. Nowadays, [those who] betray His Majesty's grace and turn to submit themselves [to the enemy] and become bandits are all conforming to Wang Anshi's idea. This is what [we] call [the intention that] corrupts the mind of all people under the heavens.
>
> 且如詩人多作《明妃曲》，以失身為無窮之恨。至於安石為《明妃曲》，則曰「漢恩自淺胡自深，人生樂在相知心」，然則劉豫不只罪過也，今之背君父之恩、投拜而為盜賊者，皆合於安石之意，此所謂壞天下人心術.[141]

By emphasising the differences between the Han and the barbarians, the loyalty of the Han people towards the Song court would be reinforced. What Fan Chong 范沖 (?–1141) has suggested while discussing what harm Wang Anshi had done to the people implied that the writings on the Wang Zhaojun legend were didactic, with the literati as the targeted audience, and more importantly, the differences between the Han and the barbarians should never be

[141] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 5, 1290.

erased. With this understanding in mind, I now move to analyse the poems about the Song captured women written contemporaneously.

4. The Use of the Feminine Voice and the Feminisation of War Victims

This section focuses on a collection of poems written in the voice of contemporary captive women. None of them were of royal background. Stories or records of suffering of royal princesses, wives, and concubines endured during war time usually appear in a longer form with more details. Those writings will be analysed in later chapters. Most of the captured women written in the poems analysed in the following section were anonymous.

Pan Wenhu 潘文虎 painted a picture of four scenes of the lives of abducted women in his suite of poems, which he titled *Wei beilu fu zuo sishou* 爲被虜婦作四首 (Written for the captured women: Four poems):

> poem I
>
> How it chirrups, the mulberry-finch![142]
>
> Mulberries overgrow in the shadow of the wall towards the end of the third month.
>
> Last year, when the silkworms [spun cocoons, I] was in deep quarters,
>
> This year, as the silkworms [spin cocoons, I] wade across long distances.
>
> At the side of the road, [I] suddenly hear people picking mulberry [tree leaves].
>
> Regretfully, [I] could not carry the shallow basket together [with them].
>
> On my whole body, there isn't a piece of silk clothing, and I am willing to freeze to death.
>
> [I] only fret upon [the fact that my] sons and daughters don't have clothes.

[142] Translated by Arthur Waley in *The Book of Songs* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 180. Also known as the Chinese grosbeak, the mulberry-finch is a direct translation of 桑扈.

Poem II

"I might as well return! I might as well return!"[143]

My home is east of the shore of the Zhejiang River.

The more I drift away from my home, the further away I am.

The food is different here, as well as the language.

Today, the ones [who are my] so-called family used to be my enemies.

[I] opened my mouth and forced a laugh, but my heart is filled with worry.

[I] wish to return home, yet [I] can't return [home].

[I] might as well be [like one of the] foxes, who could have their heads facing the hill [where] they were born when they die.

Poem III

"The slippery, slippery mud! The slippery, slippery mud!"[144]

[I] took off my embroidered shoes, then my embroidered socks.

The military men in the forefront leapt onto their horses, hurriedly setting off.

The brigades at the back, riding on camels, hastily coerced [everyone to] start moving.

[We have] already walked for several *li*, and the sun is already setting.

Looking northwards, Yanjing is at the sky's end.

In the morning, a strange order has been transmitted,

"Those who fall behind or delay would be axed to death."

Poem IV

"Coo, coo," coos the doves.

In the meadow that is filled with yurts, the doves noisily call for each other.

[143] The chirping of Indian cuckoos was considered to resemble the pronunciation of the words 不如歸去, which is directly translated as "I might as well return" here.
[144] The Chinese bamboo partridges chirp as if they are saying 泥滑滑, which is directly translated as "the slippery, slippery mud" here.

The elder sister, with shame, faced her younger sister.

The sister-in-law, in tears, looked at the sisters.

The whole family, unfortunately, were all seized,

Luckily, they got to be together as wives in the same household.

I hope you would pity each other instead of being jealous of each other.

This is not your real husband.

其一

交交桑扈，交交桑扈，桑滿牆陰三月暮。

去年蠶時處深閨，今年蠶時涉遠路。

路傍忽聞人采桑，恨不相與携傾筐。

一身不蠶甘凍死，祇憶兒女無衣裳。

其二

不如歸去，不如歸去，家在浙江東畔住。

離家一程遠一程，飲食不同言語異。

今之眷聚昔寇仇，開口强笑心懷憂。

家鄉欲歸歸未得，不如狐死猶首丘。

其三

泥滑滑，泥滑滑，脫了繡鞋脫羅襪。

前營上馬忙起行，後隊搭駝疾催發。

行來數里日已低，北望燕京在天末。

朝來傳令更可怪，落後行遲都砍殺。

其四

鶉鴿鴿，鶉鴿鴿，帳房徧野相喧呼。

阿姊含羞對阿妹，大嫂揮淚看小姑。

一家不幸俱被虜，猶幸同處爲妻孥。

願言相憐莫相妬，這箇不是親丈夫。[145]

The suite was written in a folk song style, and the language used leaned towards the vernacular side, imitating the thoughts and words of the seized women. Male captives were not mentioned in the suite at all. Unlike poems written about Wang Zhaojun, the captured women depicted in the poems were not involved in court politics or policy making. The suite focuses on the lives of commoners.

While living conditions in the north have always been depicted as harsh, these poems also touch upon the cruel treatment of captives while being escorted to the north, echoing related records and rumours analysed in the previous chapter. The captives struggled to keep up with the fast-paced military lifestyle during their long and difficult journey to the north, risking death if they fell behind.

Their lives in the north seemed to be much calmer in comparison to their tormenting journey. Again, the differences between the two cultures, including food, languages, and styles of dwellings or architecture, were mentioned. However, their pain and resistance were hidden as they seemingly settled down in a new domestic setting, participating in social gatherings during which they forced their smiles. The only way to gain agency was to silently resist the idea of becoming a member of this new "family" while pitying each other's fate, as the author had suggested.

While these women largely remained silent in the suite; all poems began with the chirping of Chinese grosbeaks, Indian cuckoos, Chinese bamboo partridges, and doves, respectively. Unlike the wild geese, which often appear in poems related to foreign lands, these

[145] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 72, 45319.

are small birds. Most of them are commonly seen across China, except for the Chinese bamboo partridges, which are more common in the south. Wild geese are usually depicted as flying towards a destination where the poets wish to be, sometimes along with their honking. On the other hand, smaller birds like the ones mentioned are often recognised in literature by their sounds instead of their actions.

It is natural for birds to chirp, while these captive women could not express their own feelings freely and therefore were silenced in these poems. For example, in the fourth poem, the doves chattered as the heroines sat in silence with grief and shame. Some of the chirping even adds meaning to literature as their chirping resembles the pronunciation of certain words, such as the sounds of Indian cuckoos ("[I] might as well return!") and Chinese bamboo partridges ("The slippery, slippery mud!"), indicating the hardship the heroines in the poems had to endure and expressing their sorrow on their behalf.

Three out of four poems begin with direct imitations of the sounds of birds, except for the first poem, in which the author directly quoted the poem *Sanghu* 桑扈 (Mulberry-finch) from *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of songs). The most obvious reason that the author chose to quote this particular line is that this bird is obviously linked with mulberry trees, which would remind the readers of one of the important duties of women that helped maintain the economy and even the well-being of the state: weaving.[146] As the captured women were forced to leave their homeland, they were also forced to abandon their social and familial roles as weavers and as wives and mothers.

However, there might be more as to why the author chose to quote this line. *Sanghu* is a poem picturing the banquet held by the king of Zhou (Zhou dynasty: 1046–249 BC) as the feudal princes gathered at the capital to have an audience with the king. It does not only

[146] Francesca Bray, "Textile Production and Gender Roles in China, 1000–1700," *Chinese Science* 12 (1995): 115.

celebrate the occasion and praise the feudal princes' capability to protect the states from foreigners, but it also serves as an admonishment to the feudal princes, reminding them of the importance of practising certain virtues for the states to continue to prosper.[147] The beautiful feathers of the bird are a metaphor for the brilliance of the feudal princes. It is, then, quite ironic to quote this sentence in this suite of poems, which depicts the tragedies of women caused by the defeat and downfall of the state as the ministers and military failed to protect the land and its people.

While the anonymous female captives depicted in Pan Wenhu's poems remained silent, some of the seized women, allegedly, did manage to leave their words behind; for example, *Qinnü xing bing xu* 秦女行並序 (A song of the maiden Qin with preface), a poem written by Zeng Jili 曾季貍 (?–?)[148] about a maiden who was allegedly the daughter of the famous poet, Qin Guan 秦觀 (1049–1100):

> During [the era of] Jingkang [1126–1127], [there] was a maiden taken captive by the Jin people. [She] claimed [that she was] the daughter of the Scholar Qin [i.e. Qin Guan], [and] wrote a poem during her journey [to the north], [which] said, "Before [my] eyes, even if [there] is a path [that leads] back to my home, [my captors] on horseback had never had any interests [in] freeing me." People who had read [her poem] would be saddened. When I was young, [I] once wanted to document her story. [However I] have been putting it off for several decades, not being able to write it. In the ninth month of the year of Renchen [the ninth year of Qiandao, 1172], while reading Cai Yan's *Hujia shiba pai*,

[147] Cheng Junying 程俊英 and Jiang Jianyuan 蔣見元, *Shijing zhuxi* 詩經注析 (Annotation and analysis of the *Book of Songs*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), 680–683.
[148] Zeng Jili was the great-grandson of Zeng Zai 曾宰 (1022–1068). He was a poet and scholar active during the Qiandao 乾道 (1165–1173) and Chunxi 淳熙 (1174–1189) eras of Xiaozong's 孝宗 (b.1127–1194, r. 1162–1189) reign.

mournfully [I] had this deep emotion in my heart, [and] so [I] look back [and] write about her story for her, and name [the poem] *The Song of the Maiden Qin*.

My family has lived in Huaihai for generations; my father's reputation is spread within the [four] seas.

Since [he was] demoted and died in the ancient prefecture of Teng, the family status has fallen and faded for thirty years.

Sweet and delightful, [I] grew up in the deep quarters.

My ears and my eyes immersed [in my cultured family I] have learned to read and write.

[I] have also tried and exerted myself to learn the art of Xie Daoyun's poetry,

For a woman like me, I dare not call myself a learned scholar.

Since I've grown older, I run into troubled times.

The yellow-headed Xianbei came and entered the Han lands.

I then fell [into the hands of] the military,

I could not bear to look back to the past.

Faltering, [I was all] alone, following the barbarians.

[I was] disenfranchised, as if I am no different from dogs and chickens.

[I] ran for a million *li* to the desert,

As perpetual as how long the heaven and the earth have lasted, the day when I can finally return does not seem to exist.

[While] the wind whistles, the Yi River is cold,

Snowflakes cover the ground [as I] pass the Yan mountains.

How would a thousand goblets of barbarian wine get me drunk?

I could not bear to play a musical piece using *pipa*.

Swallowing my cries, enduring my sorrows, to whom could I express [my regrets]?

By chance, I blurted out a line of poetry.

Before [my] eyes, even if [there] is a path [that leads] back to my home,

[My captors] on horseback had never had any interest [in] freeing me.

Once the poem is concluded, as I finished chanting, [I was] only perplexed.

How could [anyone] know [that this line] would be circulated in the lands of the Han?

The emotions at the time [the poem was made] could also be imagined,

Till now people [who have] seen [this] would feel bitter and sad.

[People could still] remember [in the past] the General of the Household had a daughter,

[She was] also trapped in the barbarian lands for twelve years.

In her later years, unexpectedly, she encountered Aman [nickname of Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220)],

[Who] offered a huge sum of money to ransom her, [so she could] return to her homeland.

What a pity! This maiden did not [get the opportunity] to be like [the daughter of the General of the Household].

She eventually grew old and died staying in the yurts.

In vain, only her poem and notes were [left behind] expressing her heartache.

[Her misery] is no less than [what is expressed] in the Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute.

靖康間，有女子為金人所掠，自稱秦學士女，在道中題詩云：眼前雖有還鄉路，馬上曾無放我情。讀之者淒然。余少時嘗欲紀其事，因循數十

年，不克為之。壬辰歲（乾道八年 1172）九月，因讀蔡琰《胡笳十八拍》，慨然有感於心，乃為之追賦其事，號《秦女行》云。

妾家家世居淮海，郎罷聲名傳海內。

自從貶死古藤州，門戶凋零三十載。

可憐生長深閨裏，耳濡目染知文字。

亦嘗强學謝娘詩，未敢女子稱博士。

年長以來逢世亂，黃頭鮮卑來入漢。

妾身亦復墮兵間，往事不堪回首看。

飄然一身逐胡兒，被驅不異犬與雞。

奔馳萬里向沙漠，天長地久無還期。

北風蕭蕭易水寒，雪花席地經燕山。

千杯虜酒安能醉，一曲琵琶不忍彈。

吞聲飲恨從誰訴，偶然信口題詩句。

眼前有路可還鄉，馬上無人容我去。

詩成吟罷只茫然，豈意漢地能流傳。

當時情緒亦可想，至今聞者猶悲酸。

憶昔中郎有女子，亦陷虜中垂一紀。

暮年不料逢阿瞞，厚幣贖之歸故里。

惜哉此女不得如，終竟老死留穹廬。

空餘詩話傳悽惻，不減胡笳十八拍。[149]

[149] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 38, 24245.

Zeng Jili had never become an official, and according to the preface he wrote, it seemed that he had only read the Maiden Qin's poem, which did not survive except for the two lines he quoted. It was most likely that he had never met the maiden Qin in person. However, by borrowing sets of imageries from the established traditions, he (re-)constructed the tragedy of a captured woman with only two lines of a poem she wrote and a lack of details of her real-life story.

Zeng Jili claimed that he had always wanted to preserve her story. However, he did not do so until he read and was inspired by *Hujia shiba pai* 胡笳十八拍 (Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute), a poem allegedly composed by Cai Yan 蔡琰 (177–249) about her life as hostage among the Xiongnu. Cai Yan, like Wang Zhaojun, was an important historical figure representing the suffering of alienated women who were forced to live in a foreign world. Cai Yan was one of the daughters of Cai Yong 蔡邕 (132–192), a man of letters. Cai Yan herself was very accomplished in literature and music as well. While the marriage between Wang Zhaojun and the leader(s) of Xiongnu was part of a political alliance, Cai Yan was taken as a captive, was forced to marry the Wise King of the Left of Xiongnu (*zuoxianwang* 左賢王), and gave birth to two of his children.[150]

Nonetheless, similar imageries appear in the poems about them: the devastation of leaving their homeland, their sufferings in a harsh, foreign environment, the constraints on their self-expression, and even the ways they used to communicate their feelings using pieces and songs related to certain musical instruments. Just like how pipa became a metonymy of Wang Zhaojun, the nomad flute became a metonymy of Cai Yan. All of the said features became the fundamental elements of the image of a captured woman.

[150] Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu* 10, 2800.

It was easy for both the author and the audience to draw the similarities between Cai Yan and the Maiden Qin. Both Cai Yan and the Maiden Qin were daughters of famous scholars. Both had literary talents. They were both abducted by the foreign army. The major difference was that Cai Yan was fortunate enough that Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220), the infamous warlord who happened to be good friends with her father, Cai Yong,[151] was willing to pay the ransom so that she could return to her homeland, while the Maiden Qin, without anyone to rely on, was stuck in a foreign land for the rest of her life.

Other than drawing connections between contemporary women and historical female figures, Zeng Jili also made a subtle analogy between the maiden Qin and Jing Ke. The author used an allusion to the story Jing Ke 荊軻 (?–227 BC), an assassin who was sent by the crown prince of the Yan 燕 kingdom to assassinate Ying Zheng 嬴政 (259–210 BC), the king of Qin 秦 towards the end of the Warring States era (475–221 BC), recorded in *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the grand historian). By quoting the song Jing Ke sang before he left Yan, "[While] the wind whistles the Yi river is cold" (風蕭蕭兮易水寒), it was not just a mere description of the harsh conditions the Maiden Qin had to suffer in the north. Zeng Jili also hinted that Maiden Qin, like Jing Ke, would never be able to return, as the next line of the song read, "once the heroic warrior leaves [he] could not return ever again" (壯士一去兮不復還).

Comparisons between men and seized women were often made. Another example of such comparisons would be *Yuannü qu* 怨女曲 (Song of the Doleful Maiden), written by Liu Zihui 劉子翬.

> [On the] empty meadows, the bitter wind blows on the medicks.
> The barbarians [let] their horses drink at the bend of the Sanggan river.
> Who is this maiden, in this city of serge,

[151] Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu* 10, 2800.

Whimpering at night, looking at the galaxy, crying.

Her quarters were built with gold and jade.

She had always [stayed in her quarters], not going out, [and therefore] people rarely saw her.

Her parents cherished her and called her by her nickname,

[They carefully] chose [her potential husbands from] prominent families and did not hastily affiance her.

[During] war time, [she] drifted, as if she was a sojourner.

Dark-haired and rosy-faced, [her beauty] had become [her] burden instead.

In the morning, she followed the hunting horsemen roaming through the grass,

At dusk, she followed the barbarian lord, getting drunk in the desert.

The neighbour's sister-in-law, who used to live west of her household, had also been captured,

[Living in] poverty, seriously homesick, her heart was even more bitter.

What she brought with her was only the clothes [she wore] when she got married,

In life or death, they would all [eventually] become dust and ashes at the Yellow Springs,

[You will find] roads [if you] walk out of your door, yet [there is] no date of return.

[You will] constantly be dispirited [for] not being able to return, [but even if you can] return [to your homeland], you would still be bitter.

A woman is weak [and therefore it is] difficult [for her] to act on herself.

If a strong man [surrenders and] obeys the barbarians, he would be an even lesser person than [the captured] women.

空原悲風吹苜蓿，胡兒飲馬桑乾曲。

誰家女子在雒城，嗚嗚夜看星河哭。

黃金為閨玉為宇，平生不出人稀覩。

父憐母惜呼小名，擇對華門未輕許。

干戈漂蕩身如寄，綠鬢朱顏反為累。

朝從獵騎草邊遊，暮逐戎王沙上醉。

西鄰小姑亦被虜，貧賤思家心更苦。

隨身只有嫁時衣，生死同為泉下土。

出門有路歸無期，不歸長愁歸亦悲。

女身軟弱難自主，壯士從胡不如女。[152]

Like Maiden Qin, the heroine in this poem is most likely from a decent family. She was a beloved daughter, and the fact how much her parents treasured her was brutally contrasted by her tragic fate of being captured by the north. The imagery of the road that could lead her back home was once again emphasised and added to the misery that she could never return. By stating that she had no agency due to her weakness and helplessness, the author implied that strong men should be able to navigate the situation and therefore concluded that if strong men were to surrender to the enemy, they would be even more inferior than the female captives. Compared to the subtle correlation of the similar fate suffered by both men and women in *Qinnü xing bing xu* in chaotic times, *Yuannü qu* stresses the gender difference(s) of moral judgements by contrasting the nature of the two sexes. While the poem tells the story of an anonymous female captive, it ends with a moral lesson directed to the male audience. This is no surprise when stories of women often served as teachings for men.[153]

[152] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 34, 21353.
[153] Sherry J. Mou, *Gentlemen's Prescriptions for Women's Lives: A Thousand Years of Biographies of Chinese Women* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 191.

The poem written by Cao Xun 曹勛 (1098?–1174) might be an excellent example of the multilayered purposes of writing stories of seized women and the complexities of underlying gender politics. The ambassador wrote a suite of two poems recording how he encountered the "southern people" living in the Jin lands during his diplomatic mission. He used the foreword as the title for the suite:

> As I held the ambassador's token [and went to the] northern imperial court, northwards from Yan Shan, [if you] divide the [population of] settlers [there] into three, two-thirds would be southern people. They heard that the southern ambassadors would pass by [the area], [many gathered on the streets. It was so crowded that] their shoulders rubbed against each other [as they] craned their necks [to watch the ambassadors]. They choked [on their tears and] could not say a word, [and could only] cry several streams of tears. [We] often lamented over them, [and] I would cry for them every time and would dread if I saw them. For this, I compose [these two poems titled] "entering and leaving the foreign land" as a record of this incident, [and I would like to] show [the poems] to people who had the determination and morals and grieved for the national tragedy.
>
> 僕持節朔庭，自燕山向北。部落以三分為率，南人居其二。聞南使過，駢肩引頸，氣哽不得語，但泣數行下，或以慨歎。僕每爲揮涕憚見也，因作〈出入塞〉紀其事，用示有志節、憫國難者云。[154]

He stated that his targeted audience was "people who had the determination and morals and grieved for the national tragedy," or in other words, people who were loyal to the Song court. Although he claimed that he wrote this as a record of his own experience as he saw

[154] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 33, 21082.

devastated people on the streets who were originally the Song people, the first poem in the suite, titled "Entering the Foreign Land," was in fact written in the persona of a woman captured by the Jin army from the capital city:

I [was in the capital city] in the early years of the Jingkang era,
when the dust [kicked up by] barbarians had dimmed the capital city,
As the city fell, [I] came across the [Jin] army [who was] entering [the city],
[and was] seized [and was forced to] follow the barbarians [to the north].
[I] suddenly heard that the southern ambassadors would pass by [the area].
[I was] ashamed [as I was] wearing a black ram leather [hat].
I stood at the highest point,
Hoping to see the graceful apparel of the Han officials.
Several days [after seeing them entering the foreign land, once again], I saw their horses returning [to the homeland].
Their repeated arrivals [at the area had saddened me] in the wind, I grieved.
妾在靖康初，胡塵蒙京師。
城陷撞軍入，掠去隨胡兒。
忽聞南使過，羞頂羖羊皮。
立向最高處，圖見漢官儀。
數日望回騎，薦致臨風悲。[155]

Since he stated that the people were too emotional when they saw the ambassadors, they could not even speak, and in the poem, the anonymous woman claimed that she was not standing close to the road thus was highly unlikely to be able to talk to the ambassadors in

[155] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 33, 21082.

person, it is most likely that it is an imaginary account rather than a true confession of a female captive who was forced to move to a foreign land.

The title, "Entering the Foreign Land," refers to the war experiences of the southern people who then lived under the rule of the Jin Empire, instead of the author's own experience of entering a foreign state for a diplomatic mission. On the contrary, the second poem, titled "Leaving the Foreign Land," was a description of how the southern people cried as they watched the ambassadors leave, and it was quite similar to what had been depicted in the title of the suite, but with added elements of imagination.[156] The title of the second poem refers to the departure of the southern ambassadors instead, and by describing the devastation of the southern people while watching the ambassadors leave, their strong desire to return to their homeland was also implied.

In the title of the suite, he did not indicate that these southern people mainly consisted of women. Nor did he use a gender-specific voice in the second poem. Why, then, did he choose to use a feminine voice when he wrote about the experience of these people entering the foreign land?

If we compare the two poems, the first poem touches upon the submission of war captives to foreign rule, and the second poem focuses on the emotions of the southern people. While the desire to return to the homeland is an emotion that is seen as universal and gender neutral, being passive and obedient and submitting oneself to foreign rule would be associated with feminine qualities, and by being submissive, the feminine voice representing the southern people in the first poem effectively put herself into a shameful situation in the eyes of the author. If we use Goldie's theory here, when the feminine voice claimed that she felt ashamed wearing that leather hat, a kind of foreign clothing, it does not only show the internal perspective of the

[156] See Appendix 6 for the second poem.

narrative, the one of the feminine character; it also reveals the external perspective, the author's perspective in this case.

As a result, we see different layers of the notion of otherness depicted in the suite. The observer and the observed were both southern people — the author being one of the southern ambassadors, the people being southern people who were forced to live under the rule of the Jin Empire. They all belong to the same collective self as the southerners, while the barbarians are the other. However, by submitting themselves to foreign rule, signified by the clothing they are wearing or the action of the feminine figure admiring the apparel of the Han officials while wearing foreign clothing, the feminine figure effectively becomes the "other" in contrast to the pure Han "self." Since the author had a targeted audience and an implied political agenda indicated in the title of the suite, writing war experiences in a feminine voice could be a tactic — feminising the war victims and assigning them with a feminine voice enables the author to normalise the submission of the war victims while maintaining a certain level of moral judgement of this kind of behaviour.

5. Conclusion

The feminine voice is a convenient tool for poets to express their ideas while masking their own perspectives under the internal perspective of the feminine figure. It can be used to normalise problematic behaviours that are normally considered morally wrong while maintaining the didactic functions of poetry. Nonetheless, it could also mean that moral impurities that both men and women had were then shifted onto women alone, and in turn this could lead to a tightening of moral standards for women, which is evident in some of the poems on the Wang Zhaojun legend. For example, Zhou Zizhi 周紫芝 (1082–?), a scholar-official and a renowned poet, ignored the political missions Wang Zhaojun was given and denied her contribution to maintaining peace, claiming that "it is without a doubt that buying the favour

of the emperor using gold is shameful, [but] submitting herself to the barbarian leader? It might be better for her to die instead" (捐金得寵固可恥，委身胡酋不如死). This, of course, is a direct response to the collapse of the Northern Song dynasty and as a resistance against the invading Jin army. However, it also shows the heightened importance of keeping one's purity to avoid turning into the "other."

It should be noted that the notion of otherness can also be found in poems written by people who escaped from the war zone and fled to the southern part of the empire for refuge. By depicting a climate and scenery of the southern part of the empire different from what they were used to seeing in the now-fallen capital, the emphasis on otherness effectively expresses the sadness of witnessing the decline of their homeland.

The portrayal of the seized women is therefore a display of gender ideologies, political propaganda, and literary traditions. While this is the common narrative concerning women's war experience, it does not necessarily attempt to document the truth. One must question if there is agency within and beyond the much-perceived narratives of collective victimhood. Other than the captured women, there were refugees trying to escape the battle zones and people who lived in areas outside of the seat of war. They were all inevitably affected by war. How did they react to war? This will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Coping with Victimhood: An Evaluation of Women's Reactions to War

The first two chapters discuss how women's war experiences were highly generalised and stereotyped. Shaped by propaganda narratives and literary traditions, there was a tendency to other, foreignise, and even objectify women as writers portrayed the images of abducted women in war at the time. This chapter turns the focus to depictions of women's reactions to war outside of established sets of discourses and narratives. Beyond the conventional image of women as victims of war, collective sentiments beneath, and possible agendas behind it, there must be more to what women experienced in war. By examining different aspects of women's lives during war time and a range of women's reactions towards different situations, I hope to get a more comprehensive picture of women's war experience(s) at the time.

In the first two chapters, we saw how the distinct image of women as victims, more specifically, the image of captured women, is depicted. The violence inflicted on the women, the humiliations that came with it, and their deaths are most often the focus of existing materials. This is a response or a reflection against the diplomatic situation and/or war at the time and is created to fit into the political narrative(s). As discussed in Chapter One, women were targets of not only the Jin army but also the bandits and even the Song soldiers. The abduction of women is part of a narrative to reveal the illegitimacy and depravity of certain parties. If we compare records of the war captive's journey to the north and the refugee's journey to the south, we can find many similarities in the themes written about them and even in the activities they had been depicted to do.

Instead of the political implications and ideologies behind the images of these women, the chapter focuses on how women survived in a war-torn state. Therefore, the chapter aims to

achieve a more detailed understanding of the female war experience by examining depictions of such in different texts and studying different narratives about female war experiences, including random jottings, fiction writings, and historical records.

As mentioned, this is often not the focus of historical records; therefore related materials tend to be relatively scattered and brief. Hence, I would like to use the stories of the two empress dowagers at the court of Gaozong, Empress Meng 孟皇后 (1073–1131) and Empress Wei 韋太后 (1080–1159), to lead into discussions on a more common female war experience at the time.

1. The Two Empresses

There is, undeniably, a bias in official narratives, and history often focuses on people of the higher class. Likewise, there are more detailed records about these two empresses. Nonetheless, by tracing the footsteps of the two empresses, we would inevitably touch upon the war experiences of the ones around them. I start by looking at these imperial women of higher status, and from there, I would also like to include the unknown women who appeared on the scene with these important figures but were not the focus of the story, and however brief the records might be, to see what had possibly happened to them as well.

During the reign of Gaozong, the two empress dowagers exercised their political and personal influence over the court as the official "mothers" of the emperor. The stories of these empresses are important in the context of women's war experiences, not only because they were among the most powerful of their time but also because both empresses had survived the torment of war and were able to "return" to court, or rather, to arrive at the newly established court of the Southern Song dynasty. However, they were forced into different paths as the Northern Song capital fell. Empress Wei became a captive of the Jin army, while Empress

Meng was able to escape. Before I start my analysis, I would like to make a brief introduction of the two empresses and their war experiences.

Empress Dowager Wei was the birth mother of Gaozong. She was an imperial concubine of Huizong and was given the title *Longdegong xianfei* 龍德宮賢妃 (the Able Consort of the Palace of Dragon's Virtue) because her son, at the time Kangwang 康王 and later Gaozong, volunteered to be held hostage in the Jin military camp in 1126.[157] She was captured along with other imperial family members in 1127 as the Jin Empire war captives. After the Treaty of Shaoxing was signed in 1141, the empress was able to return to the Southern Song court in 1142.[158] She was also the only member of the imperial family among the captives who was able to return to the Song Empire alive. Before her return, she was given the title *Xuanhe Huanghou* 宣和皇后 after Gaozong ascended to the throne. Her posthumous title was *Xianren Huanghou* 顯仁皇后.[159]

Empress Meng was the first empress of Gaozong's uncle, Zhezong 哲宗 (1077–1100, r. 1085–1100). She was first dethroned by Zhezong but later regained her status as the empress when Huizong ascended to the throne. She was later once again dethroned due to political conflicts.

Since she was such a marginalised member of the imperial family, the Jin army did not take her as a captive. The entry recording the events happening on the day of Wuzi 戊子, the second month of the first year of the Jianyan reign (11 April 1127) in *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要録 (Annual records of key events since the Jianyan period) recorded the following:

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[157] Li Xinchuan 李心傳, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji* 建炎以來朝野雜記 (Miscellaneous notes on the court and the commonalty since the Jianyan period), *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 7, 26.
[158] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要録 (Annual records of key events since the Jianyan period) 9, 2288; 2351–2353.
[159] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, 26.

> On that day, a fire broke out in the Palace of Yanning. Empress Yuanyou Meng walked and lived outside of the palace at her private residence in front of Xiangguo Temple.
>
> 是日，延寧宮火。元祐孟皇后徒步出居相國寺前之私第。[160]

It was believed that she was not captured because she did not have a title at the time: "Up till then, people who had titles in the six palaces would all follow the two emperors to move to the north. Only the empress got to remain due to her dethronement." (至是六宮有位號者皆從二帝北徙，惟后以廢得存).[161] A concubine of Gaozong was also able to escape for the same reason: "While Empress Xing left for the north, due to the fact that the concubine did not have a title or a position, she was the only one who stayed" (及邢后北去，妃以無名位，獨得留).[162]

The story of her lucky escape was seen as a blessing for the Song Empire.[163] She was reinstalled as empress and announced the new successor of the throne after the collapse of the Northern Song dynasty. It was not until Gaozong finally decided to establish the new court at Lin'an (now Hangzhou) that she was finally able to settle down. Her posthumous title was *Zhaoci shengxian huanghou* 昭慈聖憲皇后 (Empress of Glory, Mercy, Greatness, and Propriety). She was also referred to as *Yuanyou huanghou* 元祐皇后, since she was installed as empress during the years of Yuanyou (1086–1094), which was the first era name Zhezong used during his reign, and *Longyou taihou* 隆祐太后 in various texts.

Fate pushed the two empresses in different directions. One became a captive of the Jin Empire for over a decade, and the other took flight and sought refuge in different places. They

[160] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 1, 62. Several entries from different records were also included under this entry.
[161] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 1, 62.
[162] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 1, 129.
[163] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 1, 62.

endured long and difficult journeys and suffered from instability. Even though they finally settled down in the new capital city of Lin'an 臨安 (now Hangzhou, Zhejiang), they were uprooted from Bianliang 汴梁 (now Kaifeng, Henan) and would never be able to return.

It should be noted that they were never alone in their journeys. Empress Meng was accompanied by other consorts and palace women, and Empress Dowager Wei was with other female captives. While most of the women who were also there remain nameless and faceless in the stories, from the very brief descriptions of their existence and/or experiences and the contrasts and/or similarities they shared with these empresses, we would be able to understand more about what women could face at the time. On the other hand, we would be able to find scattered pieces of records about war stories of women other than these imperial women. Through reading records of different narratives, we could catch a glimpse of how women experienced war at the time.

2. The Difficult Situation of the War Victims

While we retrace the stories of the survival of these two empresses, we will inevitably touch upon the violence they and their companions had to endure and many more cases of deaths that happened during their journeys.

The previous chapters have focused on the tough journey and the violence the captives had to endure. There were very few records about what happened to Empress Dowager Wei during the journey to the north, but we could still grasp how torturous it was, both physically and mentally, for the captives just by looking at the records of the deaths of female captives.

According to *Jingkang baishi jianzheng* 靖康稗史箋證 (Notes and evidence regarding the accounts of Jingkang), most of the captives would not even manage to make it to the Jin's

Shangjing Huining Prefecture 上京會寧府 (now Baicheng, Ha'erbin).[164] When the Jin army left the Northern Song capital for Jin's Supreme Capital, Shangjing, they brought along around 3,400 female captives with them; by the time they arrived at Yanshan 燕山, only around 1,900 female captives had survived.[165] So many had died that "[regarding] who had died [and] who had survived, [people were] oblivious [to the situation and could] never know" (孰存孰亡，曹莫復知).[166] As we have seen in previous chapters, the journey to the north was notoriously difficult. Many did not survive it.

In fact, since the captives had entered the military camp, so many people had died before the Jin army even left Bianliang that within a month, a group of fifty-four monks were summoned to cleanse the military camp. The work of the monks must have been put to waste because the day after the monks chanted sutras at the military camp, more deaths happened:

> [On the] nineteenth day [of the second month], two supreme commanders [Wanyan Zonghan and Wanyan Zongwang] — considering that in the camps ghosts and demons were not pacified — assembled fifty-four Buddhist monks [to] chant sutras. [On the] twentieth day, the princess consort of Song's Prince Sincerity committed suicide at the Camp of the Green Enclosure. Women in each camp died one after another, and [the soldiers] searched [and] found gold and silver jewellery [the women] brought [with them]. The supreme commanders' office ordered city officials [to] continue to pillage gold and silver [from these women] as [they did with other] members of the imperial family.

[164] See footnote 87 in Chapter 1 for information about *Jingkang baishi jianzheng*.
[165] Kegong 可恭, *Songfu ji*, 244.
[166] Kegong, *Songfu ji*, 244.

二月]十九日，二帥以寨中鬼魅不靖，取禪僧五十四人諷經。二十日，宋信王妃自盡於青城寨，各寨婦女死亡相繼，並搜得所攜金銀飾物，帥府令城官續括金銀並宗屬。[167]

It is unclear if all the deaths were related or if they were all suicide cases, as the cause of a lot of deaths of these female captives was not even mentioned, as seen above. In many cases, only deaths of imperial members of higher ranks, such as princesses by birth or by marriage or concubines of higher ranks, would be recorded.[168] Most of the death records were extremely brief. The harsh reality is that we will never know exactly how and why they died.

That being said, there were records of the violence women suffered at the time. The remarks about sexual violence women suffered during war time in the twelfth century were appalling, although usually brief. For instance, this is a short but horrid record from *Shenyin yu* of how a lot of women died while being escorted to the north, "Continuously, [for] days, [it] rained. The carriages were all leaky. [The women] who [took] shelter [from] rain [in] the barbarian soldiers' tents [were] mostly teased [and] died." 連日雨，車皆滲漏，避雨虜兵帳中者，多嬲斃。[169] Did they commit suicide because they had to preserve their virtue? Were they tortured to death? The violence hidden behind this sentence, which only consists of less than twenty words, was unspeakably horrifying. Here I would like to focus on the war experiences that are excluded from the political narratives, which are discussed in Chapter One.

In Chapter One, we have discussed how women were "sold off" to the Jin army as compensation. Records of how women, along with elderlies and children, were abandoned when the capital city fell to the hands of the Jin army. On the other hand, there were women who had successfully escaped.

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[167] Kegong, *Songfu ji*, 156.
[168] For example, in *Nanzheng luhui jianzheng* 南征録彙箋證 (Notes and evidence on compiled records of the southern expedition) and *Shenyin yu*, the deaths of imperial members of higher ranks would be recorded under the entry of a certain date.
[169] "Tease" is most likely a subtle way of implying sexual violence.

Admittedly, these refugees surviving the war were less of a focus in official histories, in which we see the focus was put on women's political influences and personal virtues. Only women of higher ranks within the imperial family and exemplary women would be given a spot in biographies of empresses, imperial concubines, and exemplary women in official histories. In epitaphs, we will also see how women were depicted taking on their familial responsibilities. I will focus on discussing female virtues and familial duties in Chapters Five and Six. Records of other women's war experiences as refugees are scattered and often blended in with their male relatives. However, from these pieces of records, we could still be able to catch a glimpse of what they had to go through.

3. Self-Preservation, Problem Solving, and Decision-Making

Among the women who escaped, there was Empress Meng. Because of Empress Meng's recovered status as the dowager queen, her journey from Bianjing to Lin'an 臨安, starting from 1127 to 1130, was well-recorded in historical records, such as *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* and *Sanchao beimeng huibian*. The captives' journey to the north was difficult and marred with violence imposed by the Jin army, but the refugees' journey to the south could be just as torturous.

People who were fleeing from warzones were still threatened by the Jin army. Other than the enemy, their fellow people and even the Song army could become new and more dangerous threats. As mentioned in the first chapter, Song soldiers and bandits were huge threats to the safety of the people at the time, and could be just as disruptive as the Jin army.

It was, of course, even more so for Empress Meng. It would not be the only time Empress Meng had faced danger on her voyage until she arrived at Lin'an. I would like to focus on her journey from Jiankang 建康 to Nanchang 南昌 and further investigate her journey to Nanchang using texts in *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu*. Three aspects of this journey will be

examined: 1) The reason she had to set off to Nanchang; 2) the problems they met; and 3) the aftermath.

First, I discuss the reason why she was sent to Nanchang. The empress was supposed to be sent away from the battlefield for protection, and she had a mission with her. After the rebellion of Miao Fu 苗傅 (?–1129) and Liu Zhengyan 劉正彥 (?–1129), the Song government decided that the empress should take the ancestral tablets and portraits of the ancestors of the Song imperial family, lead the imperial women and all officials, and set off to Nanchang.[170] On the other hand, the emperor should stay with his advisers and generals to fight the enemy.[171] On the day of renqu 壬戌, the eighth month in the third year of the Jianyan reign (1 September 1129), the empress set sail from Jiankang.[172]

It was not unusual for women to be sent to or stay at a safer place when the household was threatened by some sort of enemies, as discussed in previous chapters. It should be noted that families of the elite class would be wealthy enough to afford to hire "strong servants" (壯丁) to protect their own family. As the most important woman of the Song Empire and the symbolism of continuity between the fallen imperial family and the newly established court at the time, bringing objects that represented the imperial heritage and being pursued by the Jin army, Empress Meng had soldiers to protect her.

However, the Jin army was not the only threat the empress was facing at the time. For Empress Meng, the soldiers who were supposed to be there to protect her could turn against her at times. There was a chain of disasters during her journey when her group was attacked, and her guards deserted their duty. *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji* 建炎以來朝野雜記 (Miscellaneous notes on the court and the commonalty since the Jianyan period 1127–1130)

[170] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 2, 502, 515.
[171] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 2, 502.
[172] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 2, 522.

had an entry titled 'Jianyan xunxing liugong shu 建炎巡幸六宮數' (The number of people in the six palaces who had gone on the tour of inspection during the Jianyan reign). It provided us with the number of people who had gone on the journey with the empress. However, it also pointed out that many of them did not survive it, pinpointing the major incident that had caused many of these people to go missing and even die:

> In the autumn of the Jiyou year of the Jianyan reign (1129), Gaozong was going to Zhexi from Jinling (now Nanjing) to avoid the foreigners. Before [leaving,] he asked Empress Dowager Longyou to serve and assist the ancestral tablets and portraits to go to Nanchang, and officers of the six palaces should all follow. At the time, many things were still at the beginning stage; altogether there were not more than four hundred people of [imperial women in] the six palaces and the people from the former reign. There were fifty-two people in the palace of the empress dowager, a person from the Zhezong reign; thirty-five people in the place of the Able Consort Pan, the mother of the Crown Prince Yuanyi; twenty-one people in the place of the Madame Zhou, [whose identity was] unknown; fifteen people in the place of Lady of Beauty, Murong, a person from the Zhezong reign; sixteen people in the place of Lady of Cultivated Countenance, Zhang, a person from the Yingzong reign; nineteen people in the place of the Madame of Shuguo, Wang; seventeen people in the place of the Madame of Kangguo, Xiao; sixteen people in the place of the Madame of Heguo, Wang; fourteen people in the place of the Madame of Jiaguo, Zhu; fifteen people in the place of the Madame of Chengguo, Wu; nineteen people in the place of the Madame of Runguo, Zhang; fourteen people in the place of the Madame of Huiguo, Sun; eighteen people in the place of the Servitor of the Pen, Zhang, fifteen people in the place of the Responsible for Words; twenty-

four people in the place of the Servitor of the Pen, Liu; twenty-three people in the place of the Administer of the Imperial Wardrobe, Madame Zhu. Above were the people who were in charge of duties. Twenty-three people in the place of the Lady of Talent, Zhang, who had assumed the position of the Able Consort. In total, there were 383 people. The enemy was approaching Nanchang, the imperial guards all ran away and got separated. The empress dowager headed to the south in haste. The empress and the consorts were all carried in sedan chairs by villagers when they ran away. Among the people of the six palaces, there were many who had died or gone missing.

建炎己酉秋，高宗自金陵將幸浙西避狄，先請隆祐皇太后奉祖宗神主、神御往南昌，六宮百司皆從。時庶事草創，六宮洎先朝舊人，通不滿四百：皇太后殿五十二人，哲宗朝人。潘賢妃位三十五人，元懿太子母。周夫人位二十一人，未詳。慕容美人位十五人，哲宗朝人。張修容位十六人，英宗朝人。淑國王夫人位十九人，康國蕭夫人位十七人，和國王夫人位十六人，嘉國朱夫人位十四人，成國吳夫人位十五人，潤國張夫人位十九人，惠國孫夫人位十四人，張直筆位十八人，孫典字位十五人，劉直筆位二十四人，尚服朱夫人位二十三人，以上並禁中有職掌者。張才人位二十三人，即張賢妃位。總三百八十三人。虜薄南昌，衛尉皆潰，太后倉卒南去，后與賢妃皆村夫荷轎而馳，六宮死亡散失者甚眾。[173]

Within these three hundred and eighty-three people, we could only be sure that the empress dowager and the able consort, Lady Pan, had survived until much later, as we could still be able to find historical records about them after Empress Meng returned to Gaozong's court.

[173] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, 64–65.

From the incident mentioned, even if these imperial family members still enjoyed some sort of privilege, as shown in multiple records, a lot of them had died or gone missing because of turmoil. The entry in *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji* only shows us the most serious incident and a brief depiction of how difficult the situation had been for these imperial women. The two women of the highest status among them, Empress Meng and Able Consort Pan, were still able to ride on sedan chairs carried by villagers, but it also meant that their servants had somehow gone missing or even died. Unfortunately, other details, such as the number of deaths and missing persons, were not available in existing accounts.

These soldiers, as mentioned in Chapter One, might create disturbance. The government had recruited bandits to be soldiers, and they would become bandits once again if they decided to abandon their duties as soldiers.[174] One of the examples could be found in the epitaph of Hu Zhao 胡昭 (?–?), an official under the superintendency of penal affairs in Jiangxi, as an aftermath of the aforementioned incident:

> The guards of Longyou, the empress dowager, had fled from the ships and lodged at the areas of Qianzhou [now Ganzhou, Jiangxi] and Jizhou [now Ji'an, Jiangxi]. The judicial commissioner asked Hu to investigate [the incident] and capture [the guards]. In ten days, he managed to hunt down two-tenths of what had been lost, which was worth 400,000 *min*.
>
> 隆佑皇太后從衛喪舟中軍於虔吉之間，憲司委君究捕，浹日獲所失十之二，蓋直四十餘萬緡。[175]

While Empress Meng and other palace women and servants fled to safety, many soldiers ran away with valuables. The epitaph praised Hu Zhao for his efficiency. It also

[174] Chen Xuelin, "'Shuikou' yi 'yijun,'" 192–193.
[175] Hu Zhao 胡昭, "Rulinlang Hu jun muzhiming" 儒林郎胡君墓誌銘, *Quan Songwen*, 190, 213. *Min* 緡 means "a string of copper coins" worth 1,000 *wen* (文).

showed the large amount of valuables that were lost because of this turmoil. And as shown in Chapter One, robbing and even kidnapping were not a rarity in that period of time.

Apart from being hunted by the Jin army and betrayed by her own guards, just like any other form of travel, there is always a risk of accidents and natural disasters. During her journey, there was a disaster causing many deaths:

> On the day of Yiwei of the intercalary month following the eighth month in the third year of the Jianyan reign [4 October 1129], the Empress Dowager Longyou's yacht was passing by the Luoxing Temple, several dozens of yachts of the six palaces and the rear palaces were puffed away and tipped over. Only the empress dowager's yacht was safe.
>
> [建炎三年閏八月]乙未，隆祐皇太后舟過落星寺，六宮及後宮舟飄覆者十數，惟太后舟無虞。[176]

At times, people had to face dangerous situations created not just by the enemy but purely by chance. It seemed that Empress Meng was incredibly lucky to have survived the disaster, as many other ships had sunk in this incident.

Of course, survivors did not simply rely on luck. It is also worth pointing out that these war experiences — being attacked by the enemy, affected by the disturbance caused by the Song soldiers, and even having accidents on their way to escaping from chaos, were indeed universal and not only suffered by women.

However, as mentioned, Empress Meng had a mission with her — she brought with her not only the majority of members of the inner palaces but also the ancestral tablets and portraits. In emergency situations, women might have to fulfil certain responsibilities when they were left at home without their male relatives. Therefore we would find some women to be the decision makers, taking centre stage in war-time stories. Among all responsibilities, especially

[176] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 2, 550.

for elite families, the preservation of family heritage was important. And in the epitaph of Lady Shang 尚氏 (?–1152), wife of a scholar-official, Zhou Lijian 周利見 (?–1151), the objects she decided to take with her as they fled to safety were emphasised twice in her epitaph:

> In the reign of Jingkang, [she] followed my uncle who governed Shanfu [the ancient Jingzhou area, now areas in Hunan and Hubei]. The enemy's cavalry came at night. [She] abandoned all family properties. [She] only took the books, writing brushes and inkstones my uncle liked and ordered the maids to carry them and run away. When the chaos was settled, my uncle saw and happily said, "I was only thinking about these. Luckily, you have saved them. The others did not matter." As a result, he valued her virtues even more. […] In the spring of the Xinwei year [1151], my uncle passed away in Qian [now Ganzhou, Jiangxi]. The family was so poor they did not have food. The madam did not mind or worry at all, and she increasingly encouraged her sons and nephews to study and not to forget their predecessors' will. The family had an old *hu*. It was an item [existing in the family] since the great-grandfathers' time. Later, [for generations, family members] had inherited [the determinations of] the ancestors and passed the imperial examinations, and in turn the item was given to each other and passed down in the family. In the autumn of this year, the soldiers in the Qian area had an internal conflict. The family escaped in haste and brought nothing other than themselves. When they reached the door, only the madam was frustrated and said, "The ancient *hu* must not be left behind." [She] immediately ordered stronger ones to go back and take it to go with them. Her knowledge and magnanimity were as such.
>
> 靖康間，從伯父守官陜服，虜騎夜至，盡捐家資，獨取伯父所好文籍筆硯使婢挾之以逃。亂定，伯父見而喜曰：「吾獨念此，君幸全之，他不

> 足計也。」由是益重其賢。……辛未春，伯父即世於虔，貧無甔石，夫人殊不介念，而益勵子姪以學，使無忘前人之志。家有故笏，蓋曾高時物，其後繼世擢第，轉以相授。今年秋，虔卒內訌，蒼皇出奔，身外無復一物。及門，夫人獨悵然曰：「古笏不可棄也。」亟命健者反取之以行。其識度類如此。[177]

She was praised for having tried her hardest to preserve their family tradition. In times of emergencies, she took books, writing brushes, inkstones and a *hu* (笏), a tablet held by officials in court, with her. In both times, she was the one who made the decision to keep these objects. They were symbols of scholarly traditions, and preserving these objects was a way to show that she did not forget about "the purpose and determination of the ancestors." While it was assumed that women and/or children would have to rely on others to survive, there would be times when the family would rely on women to protect and preserve family properties and traditions, like what Empress Meng and Lady Xiang did.

Due to the abilities that women were assumed to have, or more importantly, lack, the journey could be more difficult for women. It would also mean that women would have to be resourceful when the choices seemed to be even more limited for them.

4. Shifting Focus to the Anonymous Women

Empress Meng and Lady Xiang were the focus of their stories. However, in their accounts, we would often catch a glimpse of what happened to the many others. In the following, I would like to shift the spotlight to the unknown women who were left nameless

[177] Zhou Bida 周必大, "Bomu Anren Shangshi muzhiming" 伯母安人尚氏墓誌銘, *Songdai zhuanzhuang beizhi jicheng* 11, 5715–5716.

and at times faceless. Here is a story about how Ye Zong'e 葉宗諤 (?–?), an official who was working at the Directorate for Palace Buildings at the time, escaped from the Jin army:

> In the early years of the reign of Jianyan, Gaozong stopped over at Weiyang [now Yangzhou]. The enemy's cavalry had suddenly arrived, and the six horses [of the imperial carriage] immediately ferried to the south that day. Hundreds of officials hid themselves at the ford of the Yangtze River. Boatmen seized the opportunity and strived for money. They stopped their paddles at the water. For each person they ferried, a *liang* [forty grams] of gold must be paid, then you could get onto the boat. At the time, Ye Zong'e was an official of the Directorate for Palace Buildings and had escaped to the river shore, and he certainly did not bring any money with him. He was worried and helpless. He suddenly saw a woman by his side. She was beautiful and voluptuous. She talked to Ye, and said, "There are things that are suitable to do. I also wanted to cross the river. I have two golden hairpins. Each weighs one *liang* and could be used to pay for two people to be ferried. And yet swimming is not what women should learn. If you could carry me to cross the river." Ye followed [her suggestion] and lifted the two hairpins to show [them to the boatman]. The boatman nodded and let them move forward. The woman lay on his back as they walked. As he grabbed onto the side of the boat, he accidentally slipped, and the woman fell into the water and sank. Ye alone was able to escape death, and he got to the south shore feeling bitter. Later, Ye would administer Jiankang as [the scholar of the chamber of] the Dragon Totem. In the hall of worship at his home, he had set up a memorial tablet, [on the tablet] said, "The anonymous woman at the shore of the Yangtze River." Didn't the supernatural beings and deities use this to save his life? [The story was] told by Xu Yanzhou.

建炎初，高宗駐蹕維揚，虜騎忽至，六飛即日南渡。百僚竄身揚子江津，舟人乘時射利，停橈水中，每渡一人，必須金一兩，然後登船。是時葉宗諤為將作監，逃難至江澨，而實不攜一錢，徬徨無措。忽覩婦人于其側，美而艷，語葉云：「事有適可者。妾亦欲淩江，有金釵二隻，各重一兩，宜濟二人。而涉水非女子所習，公幸負我以趨。」葉從之，且舉二釵以示。篙師肯首令前，婦人伏于葉之背而行。甫扣船舷，失手，婦人墜水而沒。葉獨得逃生，悵然以登南岸。葉後以龍圖帥建康。其家影堂中設位，云「揚子江頭無姓名婦人」。豈鬼神托此以全其命乎？許彥周云。[178]

The story showed a universal problem at war time — a boat ride suddenly became extremely expensive, but a lot of people, like Ye Zong'e, might not be able to carry that much money or did not even have time to bring that many valuables with them in cases of emergency.

In came the anonymous woman. We could see the limitations she faced in this situation — she stated that "swimming is not what women should learn." Nonetheless, she had a bargaining chip and was trying to be persuasive in her short statement. To convince Ye Zong'e to carry her to safety, she emphasised that this was something "suitable to do" and offered to pay for his boat ride too. Unfortunately, the woman died nonetheless because of an accident.

The story also showed us something that was very restrictive for women — the lack of skills that were required to survive situations like this. Women were not allowed to learn survival skills like swimming because it was seen to be improper. They could only rely on kind strangers to help them. In Ye Zong'e's story, the woman had something to bargain with, and Ye Zong'e agreed to help. However, it would not be the case every time.

[178] Wang Mingqing 王明清, *Huizhu houlu* 揮麈後錄 (The latter records of waving a duster), *Quan Song biji*, vol 6, bk. 1, 196. Xu Yanzhou was Xu Yi 許顗 (?–?), a military officer in Yongzhou 永州.

The story of the anonymous woman was not the only time women were shown to be alone in need of urgent help during war time. Here we will take a look at more examples of similar images of women who were left alone and investigate what it would mean to them.

Zuo Wei 左緯 (?–?), who was still alive during the Jianyan period, but his actual year of death could not be confirmed, was a poet who gave up on imperial examinations and never became a bureaucrat.[179] He wrote a suite of thirteen poems about what he heard and encountered during the invasion of the Jin army. The suite was titled "Writing on the Events during the Escape from the Evildoers: Thirteen Poems" (*Bizei shushi shisan shou* 避賊書事十三首).

As the name of the suite suggests, this is a set of poems about refugees escaping from the "evildoers." By piecing the thirteen poems together, we could see his observations about the sufferings of the refugees and the wrongdoings of different people. He touched upon the experiences that were discussed earlier in this chapter. There were soldiers who were too afraid to fight and would "throw away their spears when they encountered the enemy" (逢敵先棄戈). Refugees "packed up their clothes and ran for the hills" (囊衣入山谷). "Children were so hungry, and others had to cover their mouths so the children would not cry loudly, and they would not be discovered by the bandits" (小兒饑火逼，掩口俾勿號). "The wealthy abandoned their properties as if they were rubbles as the bandits suddenly came one day" (惡賊一朝來，棄之如瓦礫).[180] The suite was basically a depiction of a common war experience.

However, a gendered war experience was depicted in the last two poems, which were about a lost maiden and a travelling official, respectively. While both were portrayed to be alone and had come to the end of the road, we would find many more details of the man's story

[179] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 29, 18816, 18819.
[180] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin et al., eds., *Quan Songshi*, 18818–18819.

in the thirteenth poem than the woman's in the twelfth: An official, whose whole family was living in another area of the country, was stuck in the capital city as it was about to fall into the hands of the enemy. There would be no escape, and he could not contact his family. There would be no way out for him.[181]

However, it would be very different for the lost maiden. It was an anonymous lone woman he met on his way fleeing to safety, and he knew nothing about her background:

> There was a maiden — her clothes were already broken.
>
> Her complexion still looked fine.
>
> She hadn't eaten for some time,
>
> and she blubbered [in the midst] of the wilderness.
>
> I asked her what family she was from,
>
> She hung her head low and couldn't bear to speak.
>
> I was heading to the mountains, and it was almost twilight.
>
> I had to leave and had no time to investigate.
>
> 有女衣已穿，顏色猶自好。
>
> 無食未幾時，呦呦哭荒草。
>
> 問之誰家女，低頭未忍道。
>
> 前山欲黃昏，吾行不暇考。[182]

This was the only poem that had a female as the sole focus within the suite. He noticed there was a maiden standing alone in the wilderness. Although she still looked fine at that moment, it was clear that she might not make it for long — her clothes were broken, and she was out of food. Even if he stopped to ask her about her family, he had to leave the maiden behind as it was getting dark.

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[181] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin et al., eds., *Quan Songshi*, 18819.
[182] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin et al., eds., *Quan Songshi*, 18819.

It is worth pointing out that his first concern was where her family was. I would like to compare this image of this lost maiden with the other kind of female image depicted in other poems in the suite, a wife as a refugee, parting from her family due to the situation. In these two poems, the wife is depicted alongside with the children from the perspective of a husband and a father. She is included in a family unit. In the eighth poem, he described how family members were separated as chaos ensued:

[I live with] my wife and my son together in a hut,
Day and night, we carefully depended on each other.
From afar, we were startled by the white flag coming,
Unwarily, in all directions, we ran and got separated.
If you die, I would not know.
If I die, how would you be the one to be blamed?
Across the forest, I hear the cries.
It would be a rarity if we ever see each other again.
妻兒共一區，日夜謹相守。
遙驚白旗來，不覺四散走。
汝死吾不知，吾亡汝何咎。
隔林聞哭聲，相見真成偶。

It described a painful situation in which war separated a family and how one could expect to never see and hear from the missing family members ever again. To echo the situation depicted in the eighth poem, in the ninth poem, he contemplated what he should do if he were to die, and he came to the conclusion, “To be separated while being alive is worse than to be parted by death, I would rather follow my family into death” (生離過死別，不如還相隨).

The maiden who stood in the wilderness alone was facing this difficult situation. No one knew where her family was. Others could not afford to stop and help. Regarding what the poet had written, she was facing something that was considered worse than death.

The suite showed both men and women could lose contact with their families and go missing. It was acknowledged that the people who went missing or became captive would most probably never come back. The situation would be even worse for women and children. They lacked survival skills and relied on others to protect them, and as shown in Chapter One, they were often abandoned in extreme situations.

5. The Innocence and Guilt of the Ones Who Returned

In this part, I will focus on the accounts of women who had once been separated from but eventually could return to their families during war time, and the possible moral judgements, despite subtle, the returning women would face.

While we would see in extreme cases they were killed even by their own family to preserve honour in Chapter One, in the epitaph of Xiang Zishao 向子韶 (1079–1128), an official who died protecting the Huaining Prefecture 淮寧府 (now in Henan Province) when the Jin army invaded the area, it was shown that his colleague, Chen Yan 陳掞 (?–?), memorised the place Xiang Zishao got buried and took his imperial appointment edict before the Jin soldiers got to his residence to preserve it. The servants tried to protect his son and daughter from the enemy:

> The lord's younger brothers, Zibao, who was the grand master for palace attendance and the new administer for Tangzhou affairs, Yan, who was the gentleman of court audience, and one whose name was lost and was the gentleman for meritorious achievement, were all killed. The family was broken and separated. Yan entered his residence, took his imperial edict of appointment

and hid it. His youngest son, Hong, was six. The wet nurse held the child in her arms and left and met the enemy soldiers. [The soldiers] took the wet nurse and threw the child into a well. Someone tried to get the child out [of the well and], a soldier, again, hit him. Very quickly, he recovered. Some days later, he was taken and hid in a commoner's family. Later, the lord's son, Shen, hurried home for the mourning. He then got the corpse of the lord, the edict, and [his younger brother] Hong to return with him. Two years later, Shuai, the other son of the Lord, guarded Yizhen [now Yizheng, Jiangsu]. He sent people to Huaining [now in Henan] to inquire [for the whereabouts of the lord's youngest daughter] and found her at a commoner's family. She was eleven at the time.

公弟中奉大夫、新知唐州事子褒，朝請郎子兗，迪功郎子某，皆見害，家已破散，掞入其府，取公誥勅藏之。季子鴻六歲，乳母抱去，遇寇兵，奪其母，棄兒井中，有出之者，兵又擊之，一夕復活，他日過，復抱藏民家。後公子沈奔喪，乃得公遺骸并誥勅及鴻以歸。後二年，子率守儀真，遣人至淮寧訪尋得公季女於民家，時年十一。[183]

This description of what happened to his children fit what was stated in the political narrative examined in Chapter One: The enemy would take the woman and kill the children. However, his young son survived the attack and was rescued and cared by a family of commoners. His sister was later also found in a household of civilians.

By preserving the imperial edict, Chen Yan, like Lady Shang, was trying to preserve the Xiang family's tradition, and he would later return it to the son of Xiang Zishao. At the time, Xiang Zishao and his brothers had all died in the battle, and that is why the help of others was important. The survival of Xiang Zishao's young son and daughter, as well as the

[183] Yang Shi 楊時, "Zhongyi Xianggong muzhiming" 忠毅向公墓誌銘, *Songdai zhuanzhuang baizhi jicheng* 10, 4544.

preservation of his family traditions, were both thanks to the help from others, namely, Chen Yan, the wet nurse and the families who took the children in.

This story also showed us an example of missing females being able to return to their families. Losing one's family members during war time and being separated from one's family were indeed a universal war experience, as shown in Xiang Zishao's epitaph and Zuo Wei's suite. However, also shown in the excerpt of Xiang Zishao's epitaph and explained in the first chapter, as women were targeted and taken by enemies, there could be another concern for the women who were abducted: chastity. For example, *Shenyin yu* recorded that:

> Women were distributed into noble families. [If they] did not care about their reputations and propriety, [they would] still manage to survive. [If they were] allocated into [families of] miŋgan moumukə or below, among ten of them, nine [would become] prostitutes. Once their reputations and propriety were lost, their lives would also be lost. A neighbour [who is a] blacksmith used eight pieces of gold to buy a prostitute, [and she] was actually a granddaughter of a prince, the spouse of a chancellor's niece, the wife of an imperial scholar. Once they left the entertainer household, [they] immediately got onto the Book of Ghost; others were more or less the same.
>
> 婦女分入大家，不顧名節，猶有生理；分給謀克以下，十人九娼，名節既喪，身命亦亡。鄰居鐵工，以八金買倡婦，實為親王女孫、相國侄婦、進士夫人。甫出樂戶，即登鬼錄，餘都相若。[184]

[184] *Shenyin yu*, 199. The miŋgan moumukə system, often transcribed as Meng'an mouke in Chinese, was a sociomilitary organization in the Jurchen society, See Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank eds, *The Cambridge History of China Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 273: "*Meng-an* means "thousand"[…] *Mou-k'o* is explained by the *Chin shih* as the leader of one hundred men. […] The basic unit was the *mou-k'o*. The number of households attached to one unit varied. In theory it should have been three hundred households but unreality was frequently smaller. Nor did the *meng-an* have one thousand households, as the name implies. Normally, a *meng-an* was composed of several to ten *mou-k'o*."

Other than objects that carried special meanings, chastity was part of what constituted the reputation of the family and themselves, and that was why they chose to commit suicide if they had lost it. Their bodies would then become the objects they needed to preserve. I will further explore the virtues and responsibilities women were given or expected to hold during the period in Chapters Five and Six.

Here I would like to focus on something other than social expectations towards women. Other than the portrayal of female virtues, we could often find other details in stories about chastity. In the following story, we would see Woman Chen, the martyr, and the other women and children who were caught together with her:

> The wife of Tu Duanyou, Woman Chen, was from Fuzhou Linchuan. In the ninth year of Shaoxing, bandits insurged. She was driven into the Huangshan temple. The bandits tried to force her, but she did not comply. When the bandits used a blade and put it against her neck, she scolded, "You people only steal like mice, and your lives are like mayflies. I am a daughter from a good family, how is it suitable for me to be humiliated like this? Even if you kill me, the officers and soldiers would come soon. How will you be excused [from this]?" The bandits knew she would not yield, so they locked and kept her in a cavity wall. In several days, the people within the clan who got released had gathered all the gold and silk that was needed to ransom the wives and children. The bandits then got Duanyou's wife, a virtuous one, out. She said, "I heard that chaste maidens don't go out of her chamber. Now I am driven into this place; what reputation [do I have left] to enter the halls of the Tu family!" Then she proceeded to scold the bandits without stopping and ended up being killed for this.

> 涂端友妻陳氏，撫州臨川人。紹興九年，盜起，被驅入黃山寺，賊逼之不從，以刃加其頸，叱曰：「汝輩鼠竊，命若蜉蝣，我良家子，義豈爾辱！縱殺我，官兵即至，爾其免乎？」賊知不可屈，乃幽之屋壁。居數日，族黨有得釋者，咸齎金帛以贖其孥。賊引端友妻令婦。曰：「吾聞貞女不出閨閣，今吾被驅至此，何面目登涂氏堂！」復罵賊不絕，竟死之。[185]

It was understood that Woman Chen could have lived. Her family members had already gathered enough money to ransom the rest of those who were still confined. First, it meant that there was a possibility that people who were kidnapped could return to their families if their families were willing to pay ransom. At times, one could ransom hostages taken by the Jin army; for example, it was recorded that "Wanyan Zongwang had kidnapped about seventy women and taken them out of the capital city, and some of them were wives of officials. On the next day, they were ransomed with gold and got to return to their families" (斡離不掠婦女七十餘人出城，左言妻亦被掠，翌日，以金贖還).[186]

And more importantly, it showed us the nuance of how people at the time felt about the reputation of kidnapped women. In *Huizhu disan lu* 揮麈第三錄 (The third record of waving a duster), a random jotting with anecdotes compiled by Wang Mingqing 王明清 (1127–?), a scholar-official who was famous for his historical records and random jottings, there was another story about women kidnapped by bandits during the period, and she would later return to her family and live in prosperity for several decades:

> The wife of Qian Yi [?–?], the Madame of Deguo, Lady Li, was the granddaughter of Hewen [Li Zunxu 李遵勖, 988–1038]. In her youth, she was

[185] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 38, 13487.
[186] *Wengzhongren yu*, *Jingkang baishi jianzheng*, 69–70.

beautiful. In the early years of the Jianyan reign, [she] attended her mother-in-law, the Princess of Qinlu, to escape from the enemy and towards Huai. [When they] stopped by Zhenzhou (now in Jiangsu Province) and were offended and plundered by the notorious bandit, Zhang Yu. [As a result,] family members were separated. [She] crossed the river and arrived at the territory of Jurong [in Jiangsu Province]. [She] was kidnapped by a gang of a dozen that had run away from the bandit. At the same time there were six or seven women who were also kidnapped. All their beauty was outstanding. They drove the women into a place in the village where there were no human traces and placed them in an ancient temple. Every day before sunrise, the gang of bandits would get out. The door-bar and the lock were very sturdy. They would then come back late at night, and they would bring back gold, silk, alcohol, and meat every time — they got those by killing and burying people. For a month, the women had no way to escape. One day at noon, they suddenly heard the sound of someone coughing outside. All women got out to peep through the door crack and saw a man sitting on a rock. They immediately called the man to come [nearer] and talked to him across the door. The man said, "I carried my shoulder pole here. [I am] what people would call 'a pedlar.'" The women each told him the truth, begged [him] in order to seek a way to survive, and promised to repay him with a generous reward. That man then said, "This place was only ten or so *li* from the department of petrol and inspection. I shall immediately go and inform them to rescue you all. This will certainly be successful tonight. If all goes well, there will not be any scary incidents. Why would I need to be rewarded?" Until night fell. The bandits returned, got drunk and fell asleep. Suddenly, they heard very loud gong sounds. It was the inspectors leading soldiers arriving [at the place],

and they caught all the bandits. No one escaped. They asked the women, and the women each told them about their families, which were all rich and powerful. So people were dispatched to send these women home according to proper courtesy and aid. Madam [Li] later would enjoy prosperity for several decades. Just this year, her son, Jundao, and Duanying passed the Tiantai Mountain with her being carried in a vehicle. The madam was already quite old, and she personally told me [Wang Mingqing] the story.

錢義妻，德國夫人李氏，和文之孫女，早歲人物姝麗。建炎初，侍其姑秦魯大主避虜入淮，次真州而為巨寇張遇衝劫，骨肉散走。渡大江，抵句容境上，復為賊之潰黨十餘人所略。同時被虜儕類六七輩，姿色皆勝。歐之入村落閭無人跡之境，悉置一古廟中。每至未曉，則群盜皆出，扃鐍甚固，至深夜迺歸，必携金繒酒肉而來，蓋椎埋得之。逾旬，無計可脫。一日午間，忽聞廟外有嗽咳之音，諸婦出隙中窺之，一男子坐于石上，即呼來，隔扉與之語。男子云：「我荷擔于此，所謂貨囊者。」婦各以實告，且祈哀以求生路，許以厚圖報謝。其人復云：「此距巡檢司才十餘里，吾當亟往告之，以營救若等。今夕必濟，幸無怖也，何用報乎。」至夜，盜歸，醉飽而寢，忽聞鑼聲甚振，迺巡檢者領兵至矣，盡獲賊徒，無一人脫者。詢婦輩，各言門閥，皆名族貴家，於是遣人以禮津送其歸。夫人後享富貴者數十年。頃歲，其子雋道端英奉版輿過天台，夫人已老，親為明清言之。[187]

It was not specified what happened to these women, but it was obvious the bandits were not looking for money when they kidnapped these young and beautiful women. Their families

[187] Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu disan lu*, 264–265.

were never contacted, although they were all from rather privileged families. It was not until they accidentally got help from a hawker that they were rescued. From this particular story, it did not seem like the women who were involved were blamed or punished because of this tragic experience. It was said that Lady Li returned to her home and enjoyed her privileged life for the rest of her life. She did not lose her status because of this tragic experience. The author even claimed that she was the one who had told the author about her own experience herself. This could be a way to convince his audience that the story was authentic. Nonetheless, by depicting the victim herself to be this openly talking about the kidnap and writing about the victim being able to gain peace and prosperity after being able to return home, it did not sound like being kidnapped was something the society made the victims to be ashamed of.

We might be able to see more nuances in the following story in which an engaged couple was able to reunite and get married after being separated by war. It was a short fiction written anonymously. The previous story pointed out that the reputation of the female main character was tarnished — it was specified that the maiden had become a prostitute due to unfortunate circumstances. In this story, we can see the reflection of the maiden on her own misfortune and the reaction of her supposed fiancé. It started with explaining why the two were betrothed to each other and how they were separated:

> In the summer of the bingwu year of the Xuanhe reign [1126], Xing brought his family to go to the Shunyang County in Dengzhou [now in Xichuan County, Henan Province] and took office. Shan also went to Yangzhou with his whole family to wait for a vacancy for the post of a judge. They agreed that [their two children] should return and get married when their terms of office ended. That winter, the enemy's army created serious chaos. The Xing couple were both killed. Chunniang was kidnapped by the bandits. The bandits turned and sold her to a brothel in Quanzhou [now in Guangxi]. She was named Yang Yu.

宣和丙午夏，邢挈家赴鄧州順陽縣官，單亦舉家往揚州待推官闕，約官滿日歸成婚。是冬，戎寇大擾，邢夫妻皆遇害，春娘為賊所虜，轉賣在全州倡家，名楊玉。[188]

Years after Chunniang was abducted and sold to a brothel, the two reunited. It was said that Fulang fell for Chunniang when they met, and one night, he decided to pretend he was drunk so he could "fulfil what he had desired" (以遂所欲).[189] It led to the conversation below which made Fulang realise that the maiden before him was his ex-fiancé. They would have a conversation which would be quite instrumental for him to decide to marry her properly:

> The administrator of the census expressed his sympathy for [Yang Yu] and said, "Today you get to have pretty clothes and good food. The current officials all love and value you and would not look down on you. Why is it you feel that it is not worth it?" Yu said, "I heard that women were born to hope to have a home. Even if I marry a lowly commoner and wear cotton skirts and short clothes, eat beans and drink only water, I am still someone's wife. Now I'm here, meeting someone new while waving regulars goodbye. How depressed it is!" The administrator for census knew she was Chunniang, but he could not find a suitable time, so he did not dare to talk. One day later, the administrator for census prepared wine to return the favour of the administrator for public order, and again he summoned Yang Yu to accompany him when drinking. He then no longer acted inappropriately close to her. He then asked her properly with kind words, "The day before, you said you would be satisfied even if you could marry only a lowly commoner. I currently have lost my partner and don't have a wife. Are you willing to marry me?" Yu said, "To have ample clothes

[188] *Zhiqing zashuo*, 224.
[189] *Zhiqing zashuo*, 225.

and enough food, not having to send off people who leave and welcome people who come, this is also my wish. I'm only afraid if a new wife is married into the family, and she can't tolerate my existence. If there will be a new wife, I will go report to her and explain, and things should be decided in one conversation." The administrator of the census knew she hated harlotry, and the feelings were out of genuineness. He then sent a letter to tell his father. Initially, when the chaos of the Jingkang reign happened, Xing had a younger brother who was nicknamed the Fourth Service Renderer, who had crossed the river and ended up in Lin'an and still had contact with Shan. Shan was an assistant official at the ministry. He then let the Fourth Service Renderer prepare an official document and send it directly to Quanzhou by official administrators to request for [Yang Yu] to be given back her status as a commoner to proceed on the old marriage agreement. Once the official document was sent, Shan sent a letter to the prefect [of Quanzhou]. The Fourth Service Renderer personally brought the official document and Shan's letter to go to Quanzhou. […] Soon after, the prefect ordered the prefectural officers to carry Yu [in a sedan chair] out from his own house and [let her] return to the official residence with the administrator of the census. The administrator for census acted as the matchmaker, and the Fourth Service Renderer as the officiant. The two got married according to the law.

司戶慰勞之，曰：「汝即日鮮衣美食，時官皆愛重，而不肯輕賤，有何不可？」玉曰：「妾聞女子生而願為之有家，若即嫁一小民，布裙短衾，啜菽飲水，亦是人家媳婦。今在此迎新送故，是何情緒！」司戶心知其為春娘也，然未有所處而未敢言。後一日，司戶置酒回司理，復招楊玉佐樽，遂不復與狎妮，因好言正問曰：「汝前日言為小民婦亦所甘心，

我今喪偶，無正室，汝肯嫁我乎？」玉曰：「豐衣足食，不用送往迎來，此亦妾所願也。但恐新孺人歸，不能相容。若見有孺人，妾自去稟知，一言決矣。」司戶知其厭惡風塵，出于誠心，乃發書告父。初，靖康之亂，邢有弟號四承務，渡江歸臨安，與單往來。單時在省為郎官，乃使四承務具狀，經朝廷徑送全州，乞歸良續舊婚。符既下，單又致書與太守，四承務自賫符並單書到全州。……既而太守使州司人從自宅堂擡出玉，與司戶同歸衙。司理為媒，四承務為主，如法成婚。[190]

After confirming that Chunniang was indeed his fiancée, his following words almost sounded like a test: Chunniang could enjoy all the splendour of being a prostitute, and all the officials she served liked her. Why would she not want to continue? Chunniang gave the answer Fulang wanted to hear. It should be noted that people seemed to be lenient to women who had fallen into a terrible situation due to unfortunate circumstances, but it was somewhat still important to know that they had not enjoyed and abused the new-found privilege they gained and rather got out of the situation. It was so important that she made the statement that she disliked the situation she was in, and it was emphasised twice.

It was also emphasised that the marriage was done in an appropriate way. Once Fulang had confirmed that she was indeed genuine about her feelings, there was a detailed description of how a marriage was to be done properly. Again, it was portrayed that the whole family was fairly transparent about the situation, and everyone thought he did the right thing by marrying Chunniang. He was depicted to be this honourable person, trusted by his superiors and praised by his peers:

Every time when there were official matters that could not be finished, and the superior needed to supervise and account [for his responsibilities] [because the

[190] *Zhiqing zashuo*, 226.

superior] had known about this incident and thought he knew what was righteous to do, more than often doubts would be dispelled. […] Every time he would explain the incident to other scholar-officials and did not hide anything or dodge the topic. People all think he's righteous.

每有不了辦公事，上司督責，聞有此事，以為知義，往往多得解釋。…… 每對士大夫具言其事，無有隱諱，人皆義之。[191]

While it was made clear that the women mentioned were all victims of war, the situation would be further complicated if the captives were forced to become accomplices. A judicial case was recorded in the *Huizhu houlu* 揮麈後錄 (The latter records of waving a duster), again, written by Wang Mingqing. They were to decide whether the women kidnapped by Miao Fu (?–1129) and Liu Zhengyan (?–1129) should also be counted as their accomplices:

In the Jiyou year of the Jianyan reign [1129], Gaozong temporarily stopped at Jiankang. Miao Fu and Liu Zhengyan were captured in the area of Min [Fujian]. The prisoners were presented at court, and [there were] several hundred carts [containing these prisoners]. First, they were sent to the prison in the Court of Judicial Review, and they were to be all killed at the markets. Wang Yi 王衣 [?–1134] requested to report to the emperor to explain. He said, "According to law, they should all be executed. However, some of the women among the prisoners were bought or kidnapped, [by that they had to] comply. If the court decided to kill them [as well] when they were in fact innocent, I wish Your Majesty would show them mercy." His Majesty quickly realised and said, "Your words were extremely right. I haven't thought about that." He then

[191] *Zhiqing zashuo*, 227.

decreed that all should be released other than the wives and children of the two culprits. They all happily cheered and left [the prison].

建炎己酉，高宗蹔駐蹕于建康。閩中禽苗傅、劉正彥，獻俘于朝，檻車幾百兩。先付之大理獄，將盡尸諸市。子裳請對以陳，云：「在律俱當誅死，然其中婦女有雇買及鹵掠以從者，倘殺之，未免無辜，願賜哀矜。」上矍然曰：「卿言極是，朕思慮之所不到。」即詔除二凶妻子之外，餘皆釋放，歡呼而出。[192]

It was then decided that all women who were kidnapped or bought would be released. Again, it was emphasised that these women were innocent, even if Miao Fu and Liu Zhengyan had committed one of the worst crimes possible at the time — they plotted to overthrow the emperor and take control of the court, and these women were forced to play a part in their plan. And this could be applied to Lady Li, who was kidnapped, or Chunniang, who was abducted and then sold to a brothel. They deserved to go back to their families and resume their lives.

The emphasis on their innocence was often linked with their helplessness in the situation. In these stories, they had no choice, and they had to rely on others' help. They were portrayed as merely trying to survive the situation.

6. The Story of the Returned from the Perspective of the Others

As Zuo Wei's poem shows, especially for a woman, to be left alone without any of their family members and to go missing might mean that they might never see their families ever again. In this case, the victims and their families would be powerless unless there was a miracle and they were reunited. *Yijian zhi*, written by Hong Mai, recorded a story that almost felt like a miracle:

[192] Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu houlu*, 210.

In the third year of the Jianyan reign [1129], the emperor's imperial carriages were stationed at Jiankang. A military officer, Xu Xin, went out to the market with his wife and children at night and rested a little next to a teahouse. A man sneakily squinted at his wife. His eyes did not leave Xin's wife for even a short moment, as if he had something to tell Xin's wife. Xin felt odd, so they left [the teahouse]. That person followed them. When they were at the door, the man was [seemingly] reluctant to leave. Xin asked for his reason. [The person] made obeisance and subserviently explained, "I had the truth hidden in my heart, and I am going to explain it to you. If you [promise to be] not angry, then I would dare to tell you. I hope we will move a bit to a quieter place at the lane ahead, and then we can talk." Xin followed. The person then started to talk, "Isn't your wife from a certain clan of a certain country in a certain province?" Xin was surprised and said, "Yes!" That person covered his face and cried, "This is my wife. My home was in Zhengzhou. I had just married her two years ago, and there was chaos caused by the Jin enemy. We became displaced and ran [for our lives], and in the end, we were separated. How would I know she's at your home?" Xin was also touched and saddened and said, "[I], Xin, was a person from Chenzhou. I experienced the chaos and lost my wife. It was by chance that I went to a village inn in Huainan, and I met a woman. Her clothes were broken and her hair was messy. She sat outdoors on the floor, and she said she was kidnapped by the defeated soldiers. When she was there, she could not walk anymore. I then took off my clothes [to give them to her], gave her some food, and stayed with her for one or two days. Then we got together. Initially, I did not know she was your wife. What should we do now?" The person said, "I have already remarried now. I relied on her property to support myself. There

is no way I would seek for a reunion again. If I can have a brief meeting [with her] to talk about our sorrows and say our goodbyes, even if I would have to die, I would have no regrets." Xin was certainly a generous, high-minded man. He agreed immediately and arranged to meet the next day, and he requested the man to bring his new wife too, so the neighbours would not be suspicious. The person happily bowed and left. The next day, the husband and wife visited Xin's house. Xin came out to welcome them, and once he saw them, he cried. It was because whom the guest brought with him was Xin's wife. The four people faced each other, feeling sorrow. They clutched their chests and wailed loudly. On that day, each went back to their current spouses. Their families remained in contact as if they were relatives by marriage.

建炎三年，車駕駐建康，軍校徐信與妻子夜出市，少憩茶肆傍。一人竊睨其妻，目不暫釋，若向有所囑者。信怪之，乃捨去，其人踵相躡，及門，依依不忍去。信問其故，拱手巽謝曰：「心有情實，將吐露於君，君不怒，乃敢言。願略移步至前坊靜處，庶可傾謁。」信從之。始言曰：「君妻非某州某縣某姓氏邪！」信愕然曰：「是也。」其人掩泣曰：「此吾妻也。吾家於鄭州，方娶二年，而值金戎之亂，流離奔竄，遂成乖張，豈意今在君室！」信亦為之感愴，曰：「信，陳州人也，遭亂失妻，正與君等。偶至淮南一村店，逢婦人，敝衣蓬首，露坐地上，自言為潰兵所掠，到此不能行，吾乃解衣饋食，留一二日，乃與之俱。初不知為君故婦，今將奈何？」其人曰：「吾今日已別娶，藉其貲以自給，勢無由復尋舊盟。倘使暫會一面，敍述悲苦，然後訣別，雖死不恨。」信固慷慨義士，即許之，約明日為期，令偕新妻同至，庶於鄰里無嫌，其人懽拜而去。明日，夫婦登信門，信出迎，望見長慟，則客所攜，乃

信妻也。四人相對悽惋，拊心號咷，是日各復其故，通家往來如婚姻云。[193]

This was a story in which both men were able to reunite with their families, and it was a happy ending for the four of them. We would still see the reoccurring themes when it came to the stories of the wives — being abducted, left alone, and becoming totally helpless until they met their second husbands. However, unlike the previous stories, this story focuses on the husbands, their emotions, and their points of view. We saw the anonymous man showing how attached he still was to his first wife while understanding that they would not be together anymore. On the other hand, Xu Xin, due to his similar experience, showed sympathy. They both showed how powerless they were in this tragedy. War took away their agency, and when they had a choice, they would choose to reunite with their first wives, despite the fact that they both had already married another woman and had accepted that they would probably never meet their first wives again. It was acknowledged that this kind of happy ending was rare.

If we go back to look at what happened to Dowager Empress Wei and how people wrote about the story of her return, her luck was often juxtaposed with the misfortune of her peers, who did not get to return to the Song Empire. In *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, there was this scene in which the dowager empress was saying goodbye to other female captives since she was going to return to the Song court while others would be left behind in the Jin Empire:

> Initially, the empress dowager and the Noble Consort Qiao were both [serving] at the palace of Empress Zheng. They called each other sisters and had an agreement that who became favoured by the emperor would help the other and recommend [the other to the emperor]. After a while, the Noble Consort first encountered [the emperor's favour], then she recommended the empress dowager. The empress dowager also became favoured [from the emperor].

[193] Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi* 4, 1651.

Therefore, the two got along very well. [When] Huizong went hunting in the north, the two both followed. When the Jin people considered to [let] the empress dowager return [to the Song Empire] […] The Noble Consort then raised the wine cup to urge the empress dowager to drink, “My sister, this time when you get back and see your son, you will be the empress dowager. You should take good care of yourself. I will never get the date of return and will die here.” The empress dowager cried loudly, and the Noble Consort also cried. The empress dowager raised her hand to take the cup from Qiao and wanted to drink. The Noble Consort grasped the cup with one hand, but then withdrew it, using her other hand to restrain her, saying, “Not yet. I still have something to tell you.” The empress dowager said, “What is it?” The Noble Consort said, “When you get to the happy place, do not forget the miseries you’ve suffered here.” The empress dowager said, “I would not dare to forget [what happened] today.” The Noble Consort then gave her the cup. The empress dowager held the cup and drank all the wine in it, and she could not stop crying. The other members of the imperial family aside all cried.

初，皇太后與喬貴妃皆在鄭皇后殿中，相敘為姊妹，約先遭遇者為援引。既而貴妃先遭遇，遂薦太后，太后亦得幸，故二人相得甚歡。徽宗北狩，二人皆從。及金人欲還太后……貴妃乃舉酒以勸太后曰：「姊姊此歸，見兒郎為皇太后矣，宜善自保重。妹妹永無還期，當死於此。」太后慟哭，貴妃亦哭。太后舉手接盃欲飲，貴妃一手執盃而復縮，以一手止之曰：「未可，妹妹更有一語。」太后曰：「如何？」貴妃曰：「姊姊到

快活處莫忘了此中不快活。」太后曰：「不敢忘今日。」貴妃方授盃，太后執盃飲醽，大慟哭不止。天眷之在旁者皆哭。[194]

Dowager Empress Wei was the only living imperial family member who officially returned to the Song court from the Jin Empire. Different from the aforementioned stories, which mainly expressed the horror and helplessness of being abducted and the relief and joy of being released, it depicted the farewell scene the between dowager empress and other captives, especially the parting words between the Noble Consort Qiao and Dowager Empress Wei. For almost their whole lives, in good and bad times, Qiao and Wei had been together. They shared a similar fate: They were court maids at Empress Zheng's palace at first, both became Song Huizong's concubines, were captured by the Jin army, and followed the whole imperial family to the north together. By highlighting how they were inseparable before, their parting was depicted to be devastating.

Her sadness depicted in the record might not only be because of her having to separate from her friend. The records, at times, focused on her survivor's guilt.

In another story recorded in the anonymously written *Chaoye yiji* 朝野遺記 (The omitted records on the court and the commonalty), a collection of anecdotes, her affliction of leaving without the others was even depicted to be a physical one:

> As the peace treaty was established, Empress Xianren (Wei, empress of Huizong) was about to return. Qinzong pulled at the hem of her skirt and stopped her. He said, "If I am to be allowed to go back to the south, even if I only get to be a master of the Taiyi Temple, I will be satisfied. I have no other requests for the ninth brother. (Gaozong is the ninth son of Huizong)." The empress could not decline his request and made a vow for him, "I would go

[194] Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian*, 1517.

back first. If I don't get you back, my eyes shall go blind!" She then got onto the carriage. Once she arrived [at the Song territory], she then started seeing awkward visions at the place. Not long after, the empress lost her sight. None of the cures suggested by the doctors who were summoned could work. There was a Daoist priest who came forward. The eunuchs led him to enter the palace. The priest used a golden needle and moved aside [the affected area that blinded her eye], and the clouded area in her left eye fell off, and she regained her sight. The empress was very happy and said, "My eyes have been blind for so long. It's your grace who has made me see once again. Please cure my right eye, and your payment would be immeasurably large." The priest laughed and said, "It was enough for Your Majesty to use one eye to see. [You] can use the other eye to keep your promise." The empress realised this, got up, and bowed, "Your grace, you are a saint. You know my secret." She set up a banquet, asking him to stay so she could thank him. He refused all her requests. He just drank tea and asked to leave at once. The empress therefore asked how she could repay his favour. He casually said, "If Your Majesty doesn't forget about me, it would be enough if you could slightly repair the Zhuxian Temple in Lingquan County." He shook off [the dust on] his clothes and left immediately. At the time, His Majesty [Gaozong] was just starting to hold the court assembly. As the guard of honour retreated from the assembly and the emperor entered the Changle Palace, he was greatly amazed and immediately asked about his whereabouts. They got nothing. Later, Wang Gangzhong became the military commander in Chengdu. He received an imperial decree and money and headed east to repair the precious, ancient, hidden [temple]. He then drew a portrait of the deity

Zhuxian and sent it into the palace. The deity looked just like the priest who appeared that day.

和議成，顯仁后（徽宗后韋氏。）將還，欽廟挽其裾而蹈之曰：「第與吾南歸，但得為太乙宮主足矣，它無望於九哥也。（高宗第九。）」后不能卻，為之誓曰：「吾先歸，苟不迎若，有瞽吾目！」乃升車，既至，則是間所見大異。不久，后失明，募醫療者莫能奏效。有道士應募，中貴導之入宮，金鍼一撥，左翳脫然而復明。后大喜，曰：「吾目久盲，是師重朗，更煩終治其右，報當不貲。」道士笑曰：「后以一目視，足矣。彼一目存誓言可也。」后惕然起拜曰：「師，聖人也。知吾之隱。」設几而留謝之，皆不答。方啜茶，遽索去，后因詢其報德萬一者。謾曰：「太后不相忘，略修靈泉縣朱仙觀足矣。」拂衣即出，時上方視朝也。仗下，入長樂，大驚，急跡訪之，寂無所得。後王剛中帥成都，而得旨受金，東朝來修玉珍故隱，既圖朱仙像進入，儼然當日道士也。[195]

Her blinded right eye was depicted as a reminder of her promise to Qinzong or even an indicator marking the suffering of the war captives, her own included. Her illness would continue if she could not fulfil her promise. And as history would tell us, Qinzong would not be able to return to the Song court alive. It was as if the wishes of Qinzong and the words of the Noble Consort Qiao had materialised to be her blinded eye and that the miseries would follow her to the end of her life.

The two stories did not elaborate on the physical torture or psychological distress they had suffered in the Jin Empire. It was just hinted by the tears they shed, the pleas and the reminders from both Qinzong and the Noble Consort Qiao. Qiao only told the soon-to-be

[195] *Chaoye yiji* 朝野遺記 (The omitted records on the court and the commonalty), *Quan Song biji*, vol. 7, bk. 2, 268.

Dowager Empress Wei, "Do not forget the miseries you've suffered here." While they struggled to survive under extreme distress, how did they seek comfort? In the following section, I would like to elaborate on how they handled the mental torture they had gone through.

7. Seeking Comfort under Extreme Stress

The psychological distress was skated over as "miseries" by the Noble Consort Qiao, but at times, negative emotions would be harmful to physical health. It could even be fatal. In an epitaph for Chen Jin 陳戩 (?–1133) written by Zhang Shou 張守 (1084–1145), Chen's wife "died of fear or panic" (悸卒) when a bandit, Fan Zhong (?–?), rampaged the area.[196]

Their illness and death caused by distress were often directly linked with "the evildoers" (寇), as both the Jin army and the bandits created such a threat to the women. There were medicines for this particular kind of illness caused by extreme anxiety recorded in *Taiping huimin heji ju fang* 太平惠民和劑局方 (Recipes to Benefit the People from the Pharmaceutical Bureau of the Taiping Reign):

> The pill for the symptoms caused by being frightened: It cures the *qi* accumulated by being scared and worried, which causes the heart to be affected by outside evil. When it flares up, one's teeth would be clenched tightly, saliva would flow [from the mouth], and [the patient would] lose consciousness. [The patient] would become deranged when awakened. They should then really take this pill. […] This formula, in the year of Wushen, there was a person in the army who had breached the law. His clothes were stripped off, and he was going to take the knife. He got released, and he lost his mind as if he was deranged. He was given a pill. After he took it, he fell asleep. When he woke up, the illness

[196] Zhang Shou 張守, "Huiyou Ge daizhi zeng zuo zhengyi dafu Chen gong muzhiming" 徽猷閣待制贈左正議大夫陳公墓誌銘, *Quan Songwen* 174, 42.

was gone. The wife of Zhang Zaiyang, the minister of military training in Jiangdong, was escaping from the enemy and lost her mind for several years. She took this formula and recovered without finishing the course of treatment.

驚氣圓：治驚憂積氣，心受風邪，發則牙關緊急，涎潮昏塞，醒則精神若痴，大宜服之。……此方，戊申年軍中一人犯法，褫衣將受刃，得釋，神失如痴，與一粒服訖而寐，及覺，疾已失，江東提轄張載陽妻避寇，失心數年，受此方，不終劑而愈。[197]

This medical book recorded three cases in which the medicine worked. It seemed that the medicine was for very serious cases in which patients had gone through extreme stress and even near-death experiences. One of which was a woman who unfortunately had some sort of mental disorder for several years due to her experience as a refugee.

Interestingly, a story of a female refugee suffering from a similar kind of illness caused by the same reason was recorded in *Yijian zhi*:

In the Shuiyang village, which is under the administration of Xuancheng, there was a doctor named Lu Yang, and his literary name was Yiruo. He was famous for his skills. In the reign of Jianyan, Zhu Xinlao, a compilator of histories from the north, escaped from the chaos and went to the south. He brought his whole family and lived on a boat. His wife fell ill and restless, and she called Lu to cure her. The wife had a word with Lu, "My *qi* and blood have been weak all my life, and I couldn't take medicines that are of cold nature. Although I feel restless now, I [do not have the symptom of] being thirsty. That is because I have been scared and worried while escaping from the enemy, and it was caused by my not eating properly. You must not give me cold medicines just because

[197] Chen Shiwen 陳師文 et al., eds., *Taiping huimin heji jufang* 太平惠民和劑局方 (Recipes to Benefit the People from the Pharmaceutical Bureau of the Taiping Reign) (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 34–35.

of the symptoms on the surface. The compilator of histories likes to drink, and he had the illness of thirstiness. Every time he is in charge of the medicines, he sees the cold medicines to be superb. You do not need to discuss this with him. I have pearls which I have privately owned. They could be used as a payment for the medicine. You should just buy good medicines that would work and cure me. I would like you to know the real situation of my health. That's why I give careful instructions to you first." Lu felt the pulse and thought the symptom on the surface was the coldness invading the body. He cooked a decoction of *Bupleurum chinense* and came to the wife. The wife said, "The fragrance [of the medicine] smelled like *Bupleurum chinense*. You should carefully consider this. If I take this, I will die immediately." Lu said, "No, I hope you would just drink it in peace." The woman, again, professed anxiously, and Lu was not moved. Just as she swallowed the medicine, she started to vomit and have diarrhoea at the same time. The woman then became weary, but she still yelled, "Assistant Lu, I will deal with you in the underworld!" She died after saying this.

宣城管內水陽村醫陸陽，字義若，以技稱。建炎中，北人朱莘老編修避亂南下，挈家居船間。其妻病心躁，呼陸治之。妻為言：「吾平生氣血劣弱，不堪服涼劑，今雖心躁，元不作渴，蓋因避寇驚憂，失飢所致，切不可據外證投我以涼藥。編修嗜酒，得渴疾，每主藥必以涼為上，不必與渠議也。我有私藏珍珠，可為藥直，君但買好藥見療。欲君知我虛實，故丁寧相語。」陸診脈，認為傷寒陽證，煮小芵胡湯以來。婦人曰：「香氣類芵胡，君宜審細，我服此立死。」陸曰：「非也，幸寧心飲

之。」婦人又申言甚切，陸竟不變。才下咽，吐瀉交作，婦遂委頓，猶呼云：「陸助教，與汝地獄下理會！」語罷而絶。[198]

It should be noted that the female patient had quite an understanding of medical knowledge. She also knew her own body and healthy situation enough to know what medicine she could not take. She could also identify the reason why she got ill — she was terrified and worried as she and her family were trying to escape from "the evildoers."

While Lady Zhu's tragedy was caused by a bad doctor, we would have to take into account that at times it would be difficult for people to find doctors and medicine during war time. Take Hu Yin's 胡寅 (1098–1156) wife, Zhang Jilan 張季蘭 (?–1137) as an example. This was the epitaph he wrote for his wife:

> Yin left home and worked as an official in the western capital. He had a wide circle of friends, and his salary was so low that sometimes he might not have enough money. He spent her dowry and used it up, and she did not mind. Later, because of the chaos and the separations, the family got poorer. There would be a lack of grains in a meal and no salt or cheese for vegetable soups, but she could still be calm about it. Ever since she'd married Yin, she would fall sick every year, and she would recover quickly. Later, she would get sick more frequently. She did not meet a good doctor, and lacked nourishment. She lived to the age of thirty. That was on the fourth day of the ninth month in the seventh year of the reign of Shaoxing [20 September 1137]. Yin was then stationed at the border and left her to serve and accompany his mother who lived in Mount Heng. Therefore he did not get to see her when she fell ill and died.

[198] Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi* 2, 619–620.

寅筮仕西京，交遊廣，薄祿不時得，費君奩具且盡，君不以為意。於後亂離，家益空乏，飯脫粟，菜羹或無鹽酪，君能安之。自歸寅，歲必一病，尋輒愈。後乃病益數，不遇大醫，又缺補養，享年三十，寔紹興七年九月四日。寅時守嚴，留君侍先君居衡嶽，病與死遂皆不見。[199]

While this chapter mainly focuses on war captives and refugees, the epitaph offers a glimpse of how women who were seemingly not as directly affected experienced war at the time. While the previous women were said to have fallen ill due to anxiety as they were escaping from "the evildoers," the Hu family had settled at Hengshan at the time. However, due to political complications, Hu Yin was sent to the borders at the time.[200] His wife stayed to take care of Hu Yin's mother. As a result, he never got to see her when she was sick, and he was not there when she died.

He talked about how his family's financial condition had turned worse due to the war. Her health condition also worsened, and she succumbed to death due to a lack of nourishment and the fact that they were not able to find a good doctor.

She was depicted to be untroubled even when the family could not manage to eat a proper meal during war time. On one hand, it was Hu Yin's way of amplifying her virtue. On the other hand, a lack of food has always been a problem for people who are facing war. Other than a lack of food, as shown above, there were so many reasons for people to feel troubled. Other than taking medicines, it was quite common for people to rely on religion to relieve their worries. It was believed that deities and supernatural beings would help people in need. In the aforementioned story of Ye Zong'e's story, some suspected that the woman was a being who was there just to help Ye Zong'e survive. On the other hand, we would see stories about women

[199] Hu Yin 胡寅, "Wangshi Zhangshi muzhiming" 亡室張氏墓誌銘, in *Quan Songwen* 190, 201.
[200] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 37, 12922.

being protected by holy beings, too. For example, in *Yijian zhi*, there was this story about a woman being protected by the Guanyin Bodhisattva while escaping from the Jin army:

> The wife of Xu Shuwen, a commoner of Pingjiang County, encountered the situation in which the Jin people had invaded the city. She got away from the hands of the evildoers alone, got out of the city walls, and swam in the water, only chanting the name of the Guanyin Bodhisattva. There was a golden hairpin she had on her head. She was worried that it would become her burden, so she threw it into the water. Halfway through, she got lost and could not find the directions. There was a white-clothed old woman at the shore and called for her to get onto the shore. The old woman pointed and showed her the directions and said, "Stop once you meet the monks." She also said, "I'm worried if you don't have any money to travel. I'll give you a golden hairpin." She looked at the hairpin, and it was the one she threw away. She went into a forest and stopped when she saw a temple. She then made offerings to pray for blessings. The next day, she unexpectedly met her son-in-law, Jiang Shiyong, and he brought her back home.
>
> 平江民徐叔文妻，遇金人破城，獨脫身賊手。出郭，於水中行，惟誦觀音佛名。首插金釵，恐為累，擲置水中。半途，迷所向，有白衣老媼在岸，呼之令上，指示其路曰：「遇僧即止。」又云：「恐汝無裹足，贈汝金釵。」視之，蓋向所棄者。至一林中，見寺遂止，乃薦福也。次日，其婿蔣世永適相值，乃攜以歸。[201]

Because of her piousness, the Bodhisattva responded to her prayers, therefore she was able to escape and reunite with her husband. As more notable examples, both Dowager

[201] Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi* 1, 89.

Empresses Wei and Meng had piously worshipped different religious figures whom they believed had protected them during war time. Empress Dowager Meng believed that another Bodhisattva, Marichi, protected her during her escape:

> Initially, the Longyou Empress Dowager Meng was going to leave her homeland and head to the south. She asked senior monks for a method to preserve herself at the ritual place. There was one who taught her to worship the bodhisattva, Marichi. As the court established the new capital at the area of Wumen [another name for the Jiangzhe area], she thought about the kindness of the goddess who had silently protected her, so she respectfully placed the goddess's statue at the Zhongtianzhu temple at Xihu. Thus, a stone tablet was inscribed to mark the event.
>
> 初隆祐太后孟氏，將去國南嚮求護身法於道場大德。有教以奉摩利支天母者。及定都吳門念天母冥護之德，乃以天母像奉安於西湖中天竺，刻石以紀事。[202]

Empress Dowager Meng was not the only one who set up a place for worship in the area of Xihu. After Empress Dowager Wei's return, her piousness for the Daoist figures, Sisheng zhenjun 四聖真君 (the Four Saint Transcendent Lords) caused controversies, which would not only tell us how people feel about the empress as a war victim who was lucky enough to return to the Song Empire but also was the reflection upon the fall of the Northern Song dynasty and even the current political situation.

[202] Zhipan 志磐, *Fayun tongse zhi* 法運通塞志, 563, *Fozu tong ji* 佛祖統紀, http://buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/sutra/chi_pdf/sutra20/T49n2035.pdf. Last accessed 3 August 2024.

8. The Complications and Controversies behind the Stories of Empress Meng

While the attitude towards other war victims tended to be quite lenient, the stories of Empress Wei showed us another perspective towards the surviving victims. In contrast to the happy endings in other stories, Empress Wei's sufferings continued her life after she returned. We could catch a glimpse of why there was a difference in attitudes towards her return by looking into the records related to her religious support. Two anecdotes about her establishment of a Daoist temple would be examined below.

The first story was recorded in *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*:

> Yanxiang Temple was built in the fourteenth year of the Shaoxing reign [1144] to worship the Four Saints Transcendent Lords. Towards the end of Jingkang, His Majesty served as an envoy to the north from his official residence of the Prince of Kang. He was going to get onto the horse, a young maid, Zhao'er, saw four golden armoured men, each held bows and swords to guard [His Majesty]. His Majesty pointed at [them] to the people, and all said they could not see [the golden armoured men]. Empress Xianren heard about it and said, "I worshipped the four saints quite piously. It must be them who had helped in secret." Later, she was trapped in the lands of the enemy. Every night, when it got late, she would bow forty times [at the four saints]. After a while, Cao Xun returned to the south, and the empress ordered him to report to His Majesty that he should worship the four saints in further reverence and grandly bestow on them. The temple is now in West Lake, and it is extremely magnificent. The statues were carved using Chinese eaglewood. The expenses of building the temple were all paid by Cining Palace. The government officials were not involved.

延祥觀，紹興十四年建，以奉四聖真君。靖康末，上自康邸北使，將就馬，小婢招兒見四金甲人，各執弓劍以衛，上指示衆人，皆云不見，顯仁后聞之曰：「我事四聖香火甚謹，必其陰助。」及陷敵中，每夕夜深，必四十拜，及曹勛南歸，后令奏上，宜加崇祀以景貺云。觀今在西湖上，極壯麗，其像以沉香斲之，修繕之費，皆出慈寧宮，有司不與焉。[203]

In this story, we can see why she was devout to the deities. She believed that they would protect her son, Gaozong, and herself, and she diligently worshipped these deities. The belief that the deities had protected Gaozong seemed to be officially recognised and was even mentioned in an ode praising Gaozong, and by extension, Empress Dowager Meng, written by Cao Xun 曹勛 (1098–1174) when he was the chief military officer and the chief of the imperial guards.[204] After her return, she built a magnificent temple using purely her own money without the involvement of the treasury or the government.

At first glance, we might think this was just a story about a pious woman being safeguarded by the deities she worshipped, and she would later repay her debt of gratitude by building a grand temple for the deities. However, the second record tells a different story about the temple:

> Empress Dowager Wei returned from the north. She had a portrait of the four saints, and she quite ardently worshipped it. She requested the eunuch, Zhang Quwei, to build a temple for the four saints. Prime Minister Qin [Kuai] occasionally saw the eunuch and asked what he was doing. He retreated and used a *tangtie* [a document that was only signed and sent by the prime minister] to summon Zhang Quwei. Zhang was very embarrassed and told the empress dowager about the incident while crying. After the court assembly ended, Siling

[203] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, 64.
[204] Cao Xun 曹勛, "Shengrui tu zan bing xu" 聖瑞圖贊並序, *Quan Songwen* 191, 104.

[the name of Gaozong's mausoleum; here it was used as another name for Gaozong] talked about the details from start to finish of the building of the temple for the four saints. Prime Minister Qin reported [to Gaozong] and said, "[Regarding] the previous court politics, because of their eagerness to build Daoist temples, it had led to the Jingkang incident. The [people from] the inner palace were trying to build something; how could it be tolerable that the officials in the outer court had not been informed about it? Eunuchs acting without authorisation was not something good or fortunate for the state." On the same day [Zhang] was dismissed of his duty and changed [his workplace to] a lodging. Three years later, Siling issued an edict to order the Prime Minister Qin "to build a temple for the Four Saints at Gushan." Until now, the halls of the temple are still simple and crude.

韋太后自北歸，有四聖一圖，奉之甚嚴。委中官張去爲建四聖觀。秦相偶見之，問所以然。退以堂帖呼張去爲，張窘甚，泣告太后。思陵因朝退，語及建四聖觀本末。秦相奏云：「先朝政以崇建宮觀，致有靖康之變。內庭有所營造，豈容不令外臣知之？中貴自專，非宗社之福。」即日罷役，改爲都亭驛。後三年，思陵諭秦相，「以孤山爲四聖觀」，殿宇至今簡陋。[205]

The process of building the temple did not seem to be smooth at all — it was delayed for three years, and the temple, different from what the first record claimed, was said to be simple and unadorned.

Qin Kuai had raised a concern in the second story. One of his arguments was that the Northern Song dynasty collapsed because Song Huizong was obsessed with building temples

[205] Zhang Duanyi 張端義, *Gui'er ji* 貴耳集 (Collection of Gui'er), *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 10, 285.

and that the outer court was not informed of the empress dowager's intention of building a temple. This was not the first time Empress Dowager Wei's actions or words reminded people of the fallen Northern Song court. In *Sichao wenjian lu* 四朝聞見錄 (The records of hearsays of the four courts), an entry titled "Xuanzheng gongzhu" 宣政宮燭 (The palace candles of the Xuanhe and Zhenghe reign) recorded how different the Northern and Southern Song courts seemed to be, and the melancholy and frustration caused by the differences:

> At the peak of the Xuanhe and Zhenghe reigns, in the palace it was a regret that the fancy candles from Heyang did not smell of anything. Therefore, they used tiny pieces of ambergris, ligumaloes, and borneol to make the candles. The candles were arranged into two lines, and there were several hundreds of them. The flame was bright and the fragrance was strong. Even the heavens would not have [candles like these]. In the reigns of Jianyan and Shaoxing, for long they could not offer it at court. Except when the empress dowager's carriage returned from the desert, and it was her birthday, His Majesty exhausted the support from all under heaven and deliberately according to the old rules in the reigns of Xuanhe and Zhenghe. However, there were only a dozen of these candles. The empress dowager acted if she did not see or smell [the candles]. His Majesty arrived, offered [the empress dowager] a wine cup, and asked the empress dowager, "Do the candles please your heart?" The empress dowager told His Majesty, "Your father would have several hundreds of these lit up every night, as well as the consorts in different chambers." While the empress dowager got up and went to change her clothes, His Majesty secretly talked to Empress Xiansheng, "How could I compare with father in terms of wealth?"
>
> 其宣、政盛時，宮中以河陽花蠟燭無香為恨，遂用龍涎、沈腦屑灌蠟燭，列兩行數百枝，焰明而香滃，鈞天之所無也。建炎、紹興久不能進此，

惟太后旋鑾沙漠，復值稱壽，上極天下之養，故用宣、政故事，然僅列十數炬。太后陽若不聞。上至，奉卮，白太后以「燭頗愜聖意否」？太后謂上曰：「你爹爹每夜常設數百枝，諸人閣分亦然。」上因太后起更衣，微謂憲聖曰：「如何比得爹爹富貴？」[206]

Gaozong tried to recreate the spectacle of the Northern Song court to please his recently returned mother. She was not impressed. The newly established Southern Song court, which had only gained peace not long ago, was hardly comparable to the Northern Song court in the Xuanhe and Zhenghe eras. Empress Dowager Wei returned to her homeland, but she did not return to what things were.

The Treaty of Shaoxing was signed in 1141, and the Song court agreed to conditions that were viewed by many as disgracing and that it was signed at the expense of many others; in exchange, there would be a ceasefire, and the coffins of Huizong and Empress Zheng, as well as Empress Dowager Wei who was still alive, would be returned to the Song Empire.[207] In a letter to Gao Kang 高閌 (1097–1153), it was stated why her return was not exactly the happy reunion we would see in other stories, "The empress dowager is the mother of all under the heavens. Her release was in accordance with the order of the Jin people. This is a huge humiliation for the Middle Kingdom and something the ministers cannot bear to talk about" (太母，天下之母，其縱釋乃惟金人之命，此中華之所大辱，臣子所不忍言者也).[208]

The political complications behind the Treaty of Shaoxing are not the focus of this dissertation, and therefore I will not dive deeper into the matter. However, it was important to note that Empress Dowager Wei was one of the two biggest reasons why Gaozong decided to sign the treaty. As a result, she would inevitably share the blame with people who opposed the

[206] Ye Shaoweng 葉紹翁, *Sichao wenjian lu* 四朝聞見錄 (The records of hearsays of the four courts)*, Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 9, 298.
[207] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 9, 2350–1. See Appendix 7.
[208] Hu Hong 胡宏 (1105–1161), "Yu Gao Yichong shu" 與高抑崇書, *Quan Songwen* 198, 260.

decision. She served as a symbol of what the Song court used to be, how the Northern Song dynasty had fallen, and what the imperial family had suffered. If the blame put on the women in the aforementioned stories was subtle and nuanced, and even non-existent, the emotions towards the return of Dowager Empress Wei were more overt and at times negative.

While she did receive half a cure and was said to be protected by the deities she worshipped, her illness and her religious beliefs were also reminders of how the state and the people were humiliated and tormented. In these stories, she would be punished and made to live with the painful fact that she was the sole survivor to have the opportunity to go home and that her luck was built upon the many sufferings of others, symbolised by the parting words with Noble Consort Qiao or her blinded eye.

9. Conclusion

When women's agency was so denied in the historical narratives, did it mean they were entirely passive? This chapter tried to include different narratives outside of the political narratives discussed in Chapter One, and the literary traditions discussed in Chapter Two. Official histories often focus on upper-class women who had the chance to participate in the decision-making and the exemplary women who were praised for their virtues. These women were inevitably portrayed to be conforming to a standard created by the male writers who recorded their stories.

This chapter is dedicated to the ones who were excluded from both categories. They were victims of war, but they had struggled to survive the chaotic situations. They often had very few options according to the skills they had — for instance, Lady Zhu's medical knowledge — or the limitations they faced — such as the anonymous women who asked Ye Zong'e for help because she did not know how to wade — it was not proper for women to learn to do so. It sounds painfully obvious that war victims suffer a loss of agency, and it was made

severe due to an established gender order. Even for the two empress dowagers, there would be moments when their experiences echoed the ones of all women, regardless of their status. Nonetheless, however few options they had, we would still catch a glimpse of their voice.

The chapter aims to offer a glimpse of the challenges women faced to survive the tragedies and horrors and their aftermath. While society seemed to be rather lenient towards these women, there were underlying judgements sometimes left unsaid in the texts.

Ultimately, by examining the different narratives, we would see the nuances in how the ideals and the realities were interpreted, and in turn, I hope that we could take a step closer to understanding how people really felt about the suffering of women at the time.

Chapter Four

Crossing the Class Lines: Seizing Opportunities in Chaotic Times

Previous chapters have focused on women who struggled to regain agency. However, war is not only about survival. The boundaries between social classes seemed to diminish during chaotic times. While previous chapters focused on female war experiences and how they had changed women's lives, this chapter focuses on four case studies — two imposters pretending to be princesses who had escaped from the hands of the Jin army, two prostitute-turned-ladies, and an empress whose father was a bandit-turned-military commander — and explores how the chaotic situations created opportunities for them to move up the social hierarchy.

Admittedly, these case studies could represent a minority among women at their times. However, the stories of their initial successes and possible failures could tell us much more than just how chaotic situations could serve as opportunities. By investigating how they were able to take advantage of the situation and how their stories were depicted and/or interpreted, we would be able to see the flexibility and rigidity of pre-existing social order, including social hierarchy and gender order.

1. Imposters

The most peculiar cases of social climbers at the time were the fake princes and princesses. The chaotic situation that arose after the devastating defeat of the Northern Song and the capture of almost the entire imperial family gave imposters the opportunity to assume the identities of these lost or captured princes and princesses. The cases of the imposters were interesting, especially the ones of the fake princesses, because they echoed what women would

suffer at the time as indicated in previous chapters, but they grabbed the opportunities and took advantage of the pain caused by the situation and the sympathy others had for war victims.

In *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, there was an entry dedicated to recording the incidents related to the impostures of the imperial family members. I will also add details using materials from *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* in my analysis later:

> In the fourth year of the Jianyan reign, His Highness was in Kuaiji. There was a person who had escaped from the barbarians and claimed that she was Princess Roufu. The princess was the daughter of Daojun [Huizong], born of the same mother as Prince Xin, Zhi. [The emperor] decreed Feng Yi, the commissioner for advocating doctrines, and Wu Xin'er, a palace woman, to examine and see her. Then she was taken back to the palace and gained the title of the Royal Princess of Fuguo. [She] married Yongzhou [now in Hunan] Defence Commissioner, Gao Shirong [?–?]. The year after, there was a person who claimed to be Prince Xu, Di. Han Di [?–?], [posthumously titled] *renshou*, the governor of Kuizhou [now in Chongqing], had notified [the emperor] at the court. The emperor sent Li Yuan, the director of education, to welcome him. When he arrived, [the emperor sent people to] investigate and verify [his identity]. And [he] was Li Bo, a man from Fushun [now in Sichuan]. Thus, he was sentenced to death. At the time, there was, again, another woman who claimed herself to be Princess Rongde. [When] the princess was in the east capital [Bianjing, now Kaifeng in Henan Province], she was once married to Cao Cheng [1104–1127]. Jie Qian [?–?], the suppression and pacification commissioner of Jingnan [now in Hubei], reported to his superiors. After investigations, [it was found that she] was [in fact] a woman named Yi. [She was] also flogged to death. Whereupon, Shi Bangyan [?–?] from Shanyin [now

in Zhejiang], a case reviewer, quoted the words of Tang Daizong [Li Yu 李豫, b. 726–779, r. 762–779] and reported to the emperor, "I would rather endure with a hundred frauds, hoping to get one of my real [family] back." In the spring of the third year [of the Shaoxing reign; 1133], [the emperor] then decreed that [if there were any] imperial family members who had escaped from the barbarians and returned, [under his] order, the [local governments] of prefectures and provinces should verify if it was true and notify the court. [He] promised [the notifiers] promotions and rewards. The year when Empress Xianren returned, there was a medical official who served at the inner court named Xu Zhongli. [He] claimed that Roufu had moved to the north and died after marrying his son, Huan. [The emperor then] decreed that the Royal Princess of Fuguo was obviously a fraud and had to face a joint trial at the Court of Juridical Review. The Court of Juridical Review determined, "The one who claimed herself to be the princess was Li Jingshan, a nun at Qianming in the east capital. Nuns and monks who were charged with fraud and pretended to be an official should be exiled in a two thousand *li* distance. He falsely claimed imperial stipends and rewards, amounting to over 479,000 strings of coins, which was a fraudulent misappropriation of official funds and property. According to the laws, this is considered theft, and the heaviest punishment is to be exiled 3,000 *li*. For every time she entered the inner court and dwelt there, [the charge] would be trespassing on the location where the emperor was. [The punishment] would be beheading. All of the above [charges] should be excluded from remission. When Feng Yi carried out the identification progress by decree, Jingshan sat across Yi and called the emperor her older brother. It was to work against an imperial messenger with no propriety of a subject. Great irreverence

[was one of] the Ten Abominations. [It was] punishable by death and should not be pardoned." [It was] decreed and decided that she should be sentenced to death by heavy flogging. Yi denied [his wrongdoings] when he went to jail. After investigations, he then pleaded guilty. The Court of Juridical Review determined, "[Even after] Yi was pardoned, for his fake and false assessment, he should be fined gold. Due to aggravating circumstances, it should be reported to the emperor for His Highness to decide." It was decreed that he should be expelled and be listed in the registration of Zhaozhou [now in Guangxi]. Before he left [for Zhaozhou], he was then released.

建炎四年，上在會稽，有自虜中逃歸，稱柔福帝姬者。帝姬，道君女，莘王植同產也。詔宣政使馮益、內人吳心兒驗視，遂取入宮，封福國長公主，下降永州防禦使高世榮。又明年，有自稱徐王棣者，知夔州仁壽韓迪聞於朝。上遣國子監丞李愿逆之。既至，審驗，則云富順男子李勃也，遂坐誅。時又有婦人自稱榮德帝姬，姬在東都，嘗適曹晟。荊南鎮撫使解潛以聞，按驗，則婦人易氏也，亦杖死。於是大理評事山陰石邦彥引唐代宗之言告上曰：「吾寧受百欺，冀得一真。」三年春，乃詔皇族有脫虜來歸者，令州縣驗實以聞，許推賞。顯仁后來歸之歲，有入內醫官徐中立者，言柔福北遷，適其子還而死。詔福國長公主顯屬詐冒，下大理雜治。大理言：「稱公主者，乃東都乾明寺尼李靜善也。法寺當詐假官，流二千里；冒諸俸賜計錢四十七萬九千餘緡，為詐欺官私以取財物，準盜論，罪止流三千里；節次入內起居，為闌入至御在所者，斬。以上並該赦外，馮益被旨識認之時，靜善與益對坐，謂上為兄，係對捍制使而無人臣之禮，大不恭，十惡，罪至死，不赦。」詔決重杖處死。

益至獄不承，訊問乃伏。法寺言：「益赦後，制勘虛妄，當罰金，情重，奏裁。」詔除名，昭州編管。未行，複釋之。[209]

At least three people, including one man and two women, tried to pose as members of the imperial family. In all three cases, the imposters had met with either a eunuch or a palace maid who could teach them about the people who they were pretending to be.[210] On the other hand, there would be certain procedures to make sure that the people who had made the claims were really the person they had claimed to be. The people who made the claims would at least have to face two rounds of investigations. Before they were presented at the court, there would be investigations. The emperor would then appoint palace servants, attendants, and imperial relatives to participate in the identification process.

The fake Prince Xu was investigated by a servant who worked at Prince Xu's household.[211] The fake princesses were all questioned by female relatives — while the fake Princess Rongde failed the investigation with a team including only one named female relative, Lady Wong, the Madam of Chongguo, the fake Princess Roufu succeeded in convincing the two people who had come to verify the authenticity of her identity, a chief eunuch, Feng Yi, and a lady who had married into the imperial family, Wu Xin'er.[212]

It was not recorded in *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* how the fake Prince Xu had responded when he was determined to be a hoax, but weirdly we would see similar actions taken by the fake princesses. When the fake Princess Rongde was determined to be a fraud and was sent to the Court of Judicial Review (*dalisi* 大理寺), she yelled out to the emperor, trying to appeal to him, "The lord and I are family — we are of the same blood! Why does he not carry any

[209] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji, Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 7, 44–45.
[210] For the fake Prince Xu, who he had met with a eunuch named Yang Gongjin and changed his claim from being Prince Qi 祁王 to being Prince Xu, see Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 4, 932–933; for fake princesses met former palace maids kidnapped by the soldiers in military camps, see Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 4 *juan* 61, 1043 and Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 9, 2357.
[211] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 4, 1006.
[212] Lady Wang was not mentioned in *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu*; see Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 4 *juan* 53, 1043.

brotherly love [for me]?" (我與主上親同氣，何無手足情耶？).[213] The fake Princess Roufu was described to also have used the same tactic: n *Sichao jianwen lu*, she had learned about the nickname of Gaozong from another palace maid she met in the Jin military camp, and she called him that nickname when she had an audience with him.[214] Both of them made use of the loss that was suffered by Gaozong since almost his whole family was captured by the enemy — at least it would be how he presented himself to be. It was recorded that the fake Princess Roufu enjoyed the favour of Gaozong, "for Huizong only had this one daughter who had remained, when the emperor deals with her, for that reason he couldn't bring himself to be ungenerous" (蓋徽宗僅有一女存，上待之，故不忍薄也). So much so that even after the incidents of the fake Prince Xu and the fake Princess Rongde, the court still held onto hope, "I would rather endure with a hundred frauds, hoping to get one of my real [family] back" (吾寧受百欺，冀得一真).[215]

All three of them failed eventually and were exposed as fakes. However, Li Jingshan 李靜善 (?–1142), a nun who pretended to be Princess Roufu, had been able to maintain her fake identity for over a decade. She first made her claim in 1129[216] and entered the palace in 1130.[217] She was able to retain her imposture until the return of Gaozong's birth mother, Empress Dowager Wei, and was executed in 1142.[218]

I found the fake Roufu's story to be particularly interesting because she had so successfully played the role of a princess. People had tried to make sense of how she succeeded in lying to the investigators and the emperor. *Helin yulu* 鶴林玉露 (Jade dew from the forest of cranes) recorded a detail about how she tried to explain to Gaozong that she was indeed the

[213] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 4 *juan* 53, 1043.
[214] Ye Shaoweng, *Sichao wenjian lu*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 9, 299.
[215] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 7, 44–45.
[216] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 3, 573–574.
[217] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 3, 688.
[218] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 9, 2357.

princess, in which she weaponised the common female war experience and used the sympathy of the emperor to achieve her goal:

> During the Jingkang incident, Princess Roufu followed [the two emperors, Huizong and Qinzong, and went] hunting in the north. In the fourth year of the Jianyan reign, a woman visited the palace and claimed [that she was] Roufu and had secretly returned from the barbarians. [The emperor] decreed and sent an old palace maid to investigate the matter. Her appearance certainly looked like [the princess]. [When the palace maid] asked [the woman] about the former matters of the court, she could more or less talk about it. The only doubt was her feet were long and big. The woman frowned and said, "The Jin people had forced and driven us [to the north] as if we were cows and sheep. We walked barefoot for tens and thousands of *li*. How would my feet still look as they were before?" His Highness was pitiful and no longer doubted that she was a hoax and immediately decreed her to enter the palace. He gave her the title of the Royal Princess of Fuguo and married her to Gao Shirong. Wang Longxi [Wang Zao 汪藻, 1079–1154] wrote a lyric poem then that said, "When Pengcheng was on the verge of falling, Princess Luyuan [?-187 BC] found herself in difficulty due to a swift dispatch. When the court thrived at the east of the Yangtze River, Xie Hun 謝混 [381?-412] was matched with a princess." [She was] funded with eighteen thousand strings of coins as her dowry. In the twelfth year of the Shaoxing reign [1142], Empress Xianren returned in her carriage and said the princess had died in the enemy's land a long time before. Only then did the emperor learn about her scam. [She was] arrested and sent to prison by decree. She was [discovered to be] a female occultist. She once met a palace maid who told her, "You look like Roufu very much." Because of that, [the

maid] told her about things about the palace and taught her how to commit fraud. [She] was then executed. From the beginning till the end, the salaries and gifts [she received] were worth 479,000 strings of coins in total. From ancient to modern times, there have been similar cases, like Cheng Fangsui [?–?] meeting Jun Buyi [?–?], and that's why her fraud did not work. If it had not been for the return of Empress Xianren, the female occultist would have lived in prosperity for her whole life.

靖康之亂，柔福帝姬隨北狩。建炎四年，有女子詣闕，稱為柔福，自虜中潛歸。詔遣老宮人視之，其貌良是，問以宮禁舊事，略能言仿佛，但以足長大疑之。女子顰蹙曰：「金人驅迫如牛羊，跣足行萬里，寧復故態哉？」上惻然不疑其詐，即詔入宮，授福國長公主，下降高世榮。汪龍溪行制詞云：「彭城方急，魯元嘗困於面馳；江左既興，益壽宜充於禁臠。」資妝一萬八千緡。紹興十二年，顯仁太后回鑾，言柔福死於虜中久矣，始知其詐。執付詔獄，乃一女巫也。嘗遇一宮婢，謂之曰：「子貌甚類柔福。」因告以宮禁事，教之為詐。遂伏誅。前後請給錫賚計四十七萬九千緡。古今事未嘗無對，成方遂遇雋不疑，故其詐不行。此女巫若非顯仁之歸，富貴終身矣。[219]

What was interesting about this record was that both Gaozong and Woman Li tried to logicalise what a princess should look like, why Woman Li's appearances might not fit, and how female suffering during war time became an excuse for the changes. The only doubt

[219] Luo Dajing, *Helin yulu*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 8, bk. 3, 304. Luyuan was the daughter of Han Gaozu 漢高祖 (r. 206-195 B.C.). She and her brother, later Han Huidi 漢惠帝 (r. 195-188 B.C.), were pushed off the cart by Han Gaozu as they were trying to escape from the Chu 楚 army. See Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (The book of Han) 1, 36. Xie Hun was the husband of Princess Jinling (?-?), daughter of Jin Xiaowudi 晉孝武帝 (362-396). See Liu Yiqing 劉義慶, *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian* 世說新語校箋 (Annotations on a new account of the tales of the world), 439-440 for the allusion.

Gaozong had was that her feet looked too big, and her explanation was that the shape and size of her feet had changed because she was forced to walk barefoot to the north when she was captured by the Jin army. It did fit the description of war victims at the time, as there were quite a few records and even fiction describing women being extremely exhausted and tortured due to the long journey on foot, and they could even be abandoned and killed if they failed to walk and withstand the torturous journey. It was a female war experience that was so commonly recorded and depicted, and therefore Gaozong was portrayed as showing his commiseration and not questioning the authenticity of her identity further.

When discussing the questions of forgery, Jack Lynch stated, "Any study of deception is really a study of authenticity, for misrepresentation always depends on notions, whether explicit or unspoken, of genuine representation."[220] Both fake princesses tried to use familial love and intimacy to appeal to Gaozong. The fake Princess Roufu even made use of the chaotic situation in which thousands of women were captured in the north and capitalised on what could have happened to female war victims to rationalise why her appearance might not fit the image of a princess. If we compare Gaozong's response to the hoaxes with the reactions of the family members of the kidnapped women, we might be able to catch a glimpse of a wider effect of a supposedly gendered war experience.

It should also be noted that the fake princesses and the palace maids who told them about the real princesses and the stories of the Northern Song court were all war victims — both pairs were met in military camps. The fake Princess Rongde was kidnapped by a mob of rebel soldiers and was said to have stayed at the camp of a rebel, Liu Chao 劉超 (?–?), for a time. She decided to pretend to be the princess after she met a former palace woman who

[220] Jack Lynch, *Deception and Detection in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), viii.

seemed to be quite familiar with the affairs of the Song court.[221] Similarly, the fake Princess Roufu was said to have been kidnapped by the Jin army, where she met a former palace maid who had told her that she looked like the princess.

They were also war victims, thrown into military camps, and mingled with other war victims who had come from all walks of life. What they weaponised was not only the war experiences of the captured princesses or the palace women who had been scattered and kidnapped, ending up in different military camps. They also made use of their own experiences in the military camp and tried to take them as opportunities.

2. The Prostitutes-Turned-Ladies

These fake princesses were not the only ones who tried to find opportunities during chaotic situations. As seen in previous chapters, women were often the target of various military parties at the time. The Jin army, the rebels, and even the Song military men would aim to get money and women when they struck. Sometimes, local officials would send women to rebels and military men, attempting to pacify them. For example,

> At the time when Li Yu invaded Yizhou [now in Shandong], the prefect, unnamed, shut the city gate, resisted [Li Yu], defended [the region], and sent him ten official courtesans. Yu then left. He arrived at Teng Prefecture [now Tengzhou, Shandong] and kidnapped Maiden Dong, a commoner. She had beauty, and he wanted to marry her. Maiden Dong denounced him and died.
> 時李昱犯沂州，守臣某閉門拒守，以官妓十人遺之，昱乃去。至滕縣，掠民董氏女，有美色，欲妻之，董氏罵昱而死。[222]

[221] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 4, 1043. Details about Liu Chao can also be found in Wang Shizong, *Nan Song Gaozong chao bianluan zhi yanjiu*, 73.
[222] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 1, 173.

History focuses on exemplary women like Maiden Dong, who died rejecting, scorning, and scolding Li Yu in the story, but we would not know what happened to the ten prostitutes who were sent to pacify him. The women who complied often remained faceless and nameless in history. It should be noted that there was still a social hierarchy between the prostitutes and Maiden Dong. As pointed out by Beverly Bossler, there was a "widespread understanding that courtesans were both valuable and expandable."[223] However, there was this one rare case in which a prostitute who was taken by a military man as a booty had her name marked in history.

The story of Zhang Nong 張穠 (?–?) was a combination of two narratives: One was part of how the female war experience was perceived at the time, as discussed in the previous chapters; and the other was related to the traditions of writings about exemplary women when she later gained ladyship. It showed us how she incorporated herself into both a military family and the elite class.

Zhang Nong's name first appeared under an entry of the year 1128 in *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu*. After Wang Yuan 王淵 (1077–1129) and Zhang Jun 張俊 (1086–1154) successfully took back control of the city of Hangzhou and killed the bandit, Chen Tong 陳通 and his gang. As a result, when Zhang Jun left the city, he took a courtesan from Hangzhou named Zhang Nong with him.[224]

When she reappeared in history in 1141, she had already become a favourite concubine of Zhang Jun's. This time, she appeared as a virtuous woman who encouraged him to serve the country:

> Zhang, Zhang Jun's favourite concubine, was the courtesan from Hangzhou, Zhang Nong. She was quite well-educated. During the Battle of Zhegao [now in Anhui], Ju had given her letters to give instructions on family matters. Zhang

[223] Bossler, *Courtesans, Concubines, and the Cult of Female Fidelity*, 166.
[224] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 1, 248.

replied to his letter, quoting the records about Huo Qubing [?–117 BC] and Zhao Yun [?–229], not asking about family matters in order to encourage him to repay the state. Jun presented her letter to the emperor, and the emperor was delighted. He personally wrote a decree to praise her and bestowed it upon Lady Zhang. […] Only in the following year, Zhang was promoted from Lady of Virtue to Madam of Prefecture.

張俊之愛妾章氏，即杭妓張穠也。頗知書。柘皐之役，俊貽書囑以家事。章答書引霍去病、趙雲不問家事為言，令勉報國。俊以其書進，上大喜，親書獎諭，賜之章氏。……章氏明年方自淑人進封郡夫人。[225]

At first glance, her story could be read as a story of a courtesan-turned-concubine who was able to shed her base status and successfully gained recognition from her husband and thus the court because of her virtue. We saw how she had been fully integrated into Zhang Jun's family as a concubine and had shifted away from her previous status/identity. The record depicted her as a valued family member and focused on writing about her virtue — something that would be commonly seen in writings related to exemplary women. She was intelligent and loyal as a concubine and a helpful assistant in the inner quarters. She adhered to what the elite class asked of a woman, therefore she was recognised for her virtue and gained a higher status and was granted a ladyship title from the emperor.

However, this was not how her story started. If we read it in a larger context, she was also a war victim. As shown in previous chapters, all women could be targeted and taken as a booty or trophy. Beverly Bossler furthermore explained why courtesans like Zhang Nong would be particularly vulnerable in this situation, "Courtesans were among the lowest-status members of society, but at the same time they had desirable attributes: this combination left

[225] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 8, 2235.

them particularly vulnerable in such times of chaos," as "entertainers continued to be regarded as symbols of power and privilege."[226] She was a trophy that Zhang Jun decided to bring home with him.

That, however, is still not the full story. Both narratives belong to a larger social context, and there was a missing link between the two narratives. We would find that the relationship between Zhang Jun and Zhang Nong was multifaceted: Their relationship implied in the first narrative was commonly portrayed as a negative and harmful one which would happen between a perpetrator, usually a bandit or a military man, and a female war victim, at times kidnapped or even being trafficked or gifted to other men. However, the one depicted in the second narrative was a positive one, and some could argue that it was depicted to be an ideal relationship between a master and his wife or concubine in the elite class.

The key to finding the missing link lies in Zhang Jun and the group of people he belonged to and represented. Zhang Jun was involved in another story in which a prostitute gained ladyship due to her marriage with another military man, later one of the most important military commanders at the time, Han Shizhong 韓世忠 (1089–1151). If Zhang Nong's story was one that followed the literary traditions of writings about exemplary women, and her ladyship was well-deserved, Prostitute Zhou's 周娼 story recorded in *Huizhu disan lu* written by Wang Mingqing, a scholar-official, was quite the opposite.

The focus of the anecdote recorded in *Huizhu disan lu* was not actually on Zhou but on the death of a good official, Zhao Shujin 趙叔近. He was the governor of Xiuzhou 秀州 (now Jiaxing, Zhejiang). Due to a false accusation, another official, Zhu Fu 朱芾, was sent to replace him. However, Zhu Fu was cruel to the people in the area, and therefore soldiers decided to gather the people, imprison Zhu Fu, and reinstate Zhao Shujin as governor. Zhao Shujin knew

[226] Bossler, *Courtesans, Concubines, and the Cult of Female Fidelity*, 165, 167.

the people were so enraged that he would not be able to reverse what had been done, so he chose to comfort them and sent the court a memorial to ask for a replacement for Zhu Fu. Before the memorial had reached the emperor, an army was already sent to quench what seemed to be a rebellion.[227]

This was where she became important in the story — she was portrayed to be the immediate cause that had led to the murder of the innocent Zhao Shujin:

> Before this, Wang Yuan was a lower-ranked official in the capital city. He often visited an exposed terrace [to see] Prostitute Zhou. They were very close. After the crisis, she was obtained by Shujin. Yuan often ground his teeth [and showed his anger] at others. At the time, it happened that Yuan was a commander at the imperial defence command, and Zhang and Han were both Yuan's subordinates. Yuan ordered Zhang to lead the army and head [to Xiuzhou]. Zhang had always treated Yuan like a father, and he bowed to bid [Yuan] goodbye at the courtyard [before he left]. Yuan said, "Zhao Shujin was there." Zhang quietly understood what he meant. When the army almost arrived at the area of Xiuzhou, Shujin rode on an open sedan chair and received them formally in the etiquette of a prefectural governor at the Shen's Garden located north of the prefecture. Zhang immediately reprimanded him and ordered him to confess. Just as [Zhao] started writing, a mob of [soldiers with] knives had all moved forward and severed his right arm. Shujin cried out, "I am a member of the imperial clan!" The mob said, "If you had already complied with the bandits, how were you still a member of the imperial clan?" [By then, Shujin's] head was already snapped off and [thrown onto] the ground. The soldiers of Xiuzhou saw Shujin was murdered; only then did they angrily turn their weapons [towards the army] and surround

[227] Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu disan lu, Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 1, 265–266.

the city to resist the enemy, setting fire to drive people away and robbing the city. Within the prefecture, [all were] tormented by bloodshed. The next day, [Zhang] killed the culprit. Although they called it a suppression to stabilise [the situation], it had caused great disturbance. The army returned in triumph; at the palace gate they were rewarded according to their merits. Among the mutinous soldiers, Zhang had found Prostitute Zhou to present her to Yuan. Yuan expressed appreciation towards Zhang and said, “You have done quite appropriately. However, how would it be appropriate for me to take this woman? You should take her yourself.” Zhang said, “If Papa would not take her, how would I dare to take her?” At the time, Han was by their side. Yuan looked at him and said, “You keep her. Don’t be bothered.” Han bowed twice and accepted the offer. Since his return, he bestowed favour on her quite a lot, [and she] bore him sons. Since Han became distinguished, Zhou then enjoyed the honour of gaining the title of Madame of Kingdom.

先是，王淵在京為小官，時狎露臺娼周者，稔甚，亂後為叔近所得，攜歸家，淵每對人切齒。是時，適淵為御營司都統制，張、韓俱為淵部曲。淵命張提師以往。張素以父事淵，拜辭于廷，淵云：「趙叔近在彼。」張默解其指。將次秀境，叔近乘涼輿，以太守之儀郊迎于郡北沈氏園，張即叱令供析。方下筆，而羣刀悉前，斷其右臂。叔近號呼曰：「我宗室也！」眾云：「汝既從逆，何云宗室？」已折首于地。秀卒見叔近被殺，始忿怒返戈，嬰城以距敵，縱火毆略，一郡之內喋血荼毒。翌日，破關，誅其首惡。雖曰平定，然其擾尤甚。凱旋行闕，第功行賞焉。張於亂兵中獲周娼以獻于淵，淵勞之曰：「處置甚當，但此婦人吾豈宜納，君當自取之。」張云：「父既不取，某焉敢耶？」時韓在旁，淵顧曰：

「汝留之，無嫌也。」韓再拜而受之。既歸，韓甚以寵嬖，為韓生子。韓既貴盛，周遂享國封之榮。[228]

Unlike Zhang Nong, Zhou was portrayed as very passive in this record. Every change in her life was signified by unrest or *luan* (亂), and every time the situation would be concluded by a new man taking her in afterwards. One could say she was the reason why Zhao Shujin died, even if she did not have a voice or a choice in this whole ordeal.

It was not a love story in which Wang Yuan fought and tried to get her back — on the contrary — both Wang Yuan and the person Wang used to kill Zhao Shujin, Zhang Jun, knew they could not get Zhou because she was the reason why Wang held personal grudges against Zhao Shujin and had caused Zhao's death. Both Wang and Zhang had commented on the unsuitability of taking Zhou. That was how Zhou ended up in Han Shizhong's household. Even being entirely submissive, Zhou had gained the same rank as Zhang Nong by gaining Han's favour and bearing him son(s). Her luck was based upon the misfortune of Zhao Shujin and the selfishness, unruliness, and violence of the military men. The record hinted somewhat subtly at the criticism towards the military men and even the connivance towards these military men from the court at the time.

We must then touch upon a larger topic: The world of the scholar-officials and the one of the military men were hugely different, and the rise of the military men inevitably created conflicts.[229]

On the one hand, we discussed how the Song army, even though it should be responsible for protecting its own people, could create a huge disturbance, especially for women, because of the kidnappings. On the other hand, as the court heavily relied on the army to fight against the Jin at the beginning of the Southern Song dynasty, there was a rise of the military

[228] Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu disan lu, Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 1, 266–267.
[229] For the differences between the two worlds, see Alyagon, *Inked*, 206–207.

commanders who were previously from a lower class or even were bandits. Their female family members were also gaining a social status because of them. In the previous two examples, we also saw a rise in the social status of their female family members, although we would find an obvious difference between the two: Zhang Nong gained her title because her actions adhered to the standard of the elite class, while Zhou was almost pictured to be responsible for the death of the nobleman and gain her title because she was lucky.

Therefore, in the next section, I focus on the rise of the military men, the conflict between the newly risen military men and the established elite class, and how female family members of military families would be affected by this. The final case study will be examined in the next part: Other than just climbing up the social ladder and gaining titles, things did not go as smoothly for Empress Li, wife of Guangzong.

3. The Rise of the Military Men

Empress Li was never a popular empress. More importantly, she was never viewed as an ideal candidate for an empress or even a princess right from the very beginning. In this section, I will focus on her family ties with the military men and her qualities, which could remind contemporary people that she came from a military family. Previous chapters focused on the female war victims whose lives were threatened by the military men. However, using Empress Li as an example, here, I will discuss their female family members, who had benefitted from their rising status.

However, before I start, to understand how Empress Li's image was depicted and perceived in history, we must first look at how palace women were viewed by the court at the time.

Palace women have always played an important role on the political stage throughout history. However, for the women in the Song court, the route to power was proven to be more

difficult compared to the ones of their counterparts in the previous dynasties. It is generally agreed upon that Song people emphasised on restraining palace women and their relatives so much because of the lesson they learned from the Tang dynasty and were well aware of the potential harm powerful imperial women could bring to the nation.[230] Behaviour of empresses and imperial concubines in the palace was constantly monitored by the watchful eyes of the emperors and ministers. There were numerous stories of palace women who tried to interfere with political matters being stopped, reprimanded, and even punished.[231]

Song people's effort to restrain palace women and imperial relatives was a success. Authors of *Songshi* viewed the nonexistence of political disasters caused by women as one of the commendable achievements of the Song dynasty:

> During the three hundred years of Song reign, there were neither threats [imposed by] imperial relatives outside [the palace walls] like the clan of Wang Mang in the Han dynasty, nor disasters within the imperial family [caused by palace women like] Empresses Wu and Wei in the Tang dynasty. Isn't that exceptional and admirable?
>
> 宋三百餘年，外無漢王氏之患，內無唐武韋之禍，豈不卓然而可尚哉。[232]

Empress Li was the exception. She was said to have caused a rift between father, Xiaozong, and son, Guangzong. She was said to have killed two palace women, the Honoured Concubine Huang, Guangzong's favourite, and an anonymous palace maid, whose hands were chopped after being appreciated by Guangzong. The murder of Huang led to the mental illness

[230] McMahon, *Celestial Women*, xvii.
[231] Zhuge Yibing 諸葛憶兵, "Lun Songdai houfei yu chaozheng" 論宋代后妃與朝政, *Nanjing Shida xuebao (Shehui kexue ban)* 4 (1998): 135–137.
[232] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 25, 8606.

of Guangzong, and as a result, Empress Li was able to take control of the government on behalf of the very ill emperor.[233]

According to *Songshi*, *Sichao wenjian lu*, and *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, Empress Li was selected to become the wife of Guangzong, still a prince at the time when they got married, because of a fortune teller, Huangfu Tan, who claimed that she would become empress in the future.[234] According to *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, another lady, Qian 錢氏, was also selected for the palace and was viewed to be a more favourable candidate than the would-be empress, but somehow she was not chosen to marry Guangzong.[235] While *Songshi* and *Sichao wenjian lu* claimed that it was Gaozong who selected Li to be his granddaughter-in-law, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji* reported that it was Xiaozong's decision. *Sichao wenjian lu* offered a juicier account of how Li was selected, and later *Songshi* adopted this version:

> Later [Huangfu Tan] once again got out of the mountain and came to see [Gaozong]. His Highness asked his reason for coming, [Hungafu Tan] then said, "[I] came to make a match. I found a good granddaughter-in-law for Your Highness." His Highness asked who that was, and he responded Empress Li, who was a child of a high-ranking general, born in a military camp. When she was born, a black phoenix was attracted [and landed on] a big black rock in front of the camp. People called it a phoenix, but in fact it was a cormorant, and the rock was cinnabar. Empress Li was nicknamed "phoenix maiden," which may have possibly originated from this [incident]. The [would-be] empress then became crown princess, and she complained about the crown prince's concubines to the two emperors, Gaozong and Xiaozong. Gaozong was upset

[233] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 25, 8654.
[234] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 7, 30–31.
[235] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 7, 30–31.

and told Empress Wu, “After all, [she] is the spawn of a general. I was misled by Huangfu.”

後[皇甫坦]又自出山來見[高宗]，上叩其所以來，則曰：「做媒來。臣為陛下尋得個好孫息婦。」上問為誰，則以慈懿皇后大將之子，生于營中，生之日有黑鳳儀于營前大黑石上。人謂鳳實鸑鷟，石則元王。慈懿小字鳳娘，蓋本于此。后既為太子妃，則訴太子左右于高、孝兩宮，高宗不懌，謂憲聖曰：「終是將種，吾為皇甫所誤。」[236]

This version might explain why Empress Li was not a favourable candidate from the start. She was “the spawn of a general.” The tricky part was that it was not uncommon for daughters from military families to become empresses — in fact, fourteen empresses in the Northern Song dynasty were from military families.[237] However, Empress Li did not come from an ordinary military family.

When the Southern Song dynasty was first established, the imperial court was not only under attack by the Jin Empire, but it also had to deal with rebellions within the nation. Short of troops, the Song army was unable to outpower the bandits, so Gaozong decided to offer to pardon their offences and even award them with government positions in order to negotiate peace.[238] Bandits, along with low-born military men, rose through the ranks as they helped Gaozong rebuild armies strong enough to fight against the Jin.[239]

Li Dao 李道 (?–?), Empress Li’s father, was one of the bandits-turned-generals. The military men we had mentioned in Zhou’s story, Wang Yuan, Zhang Jun and Han Shizhong,

[236] Ye Shaoweng, *Sichao wenjian lu*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 9, 273–274.
[237] Chen Feng 陳峰, “Bei Song huangshi yu Jiangmen tonghun xianxiang tanxi” 北宋皇室與「將門」通婚現象探析, *Wen shi zhe* 3 (2004): 104.
[238] Wang Shizong 王世宗, *Nan Song Gaozong chao bianluan zhi yanjiu* 南宋高宗朝變亂之研究 (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue chubanshe weiyuanhui, 1989), 142.
[239] Wang Shizong, *Nan Song Gaozong chao bianluan zhi yanjiu*, 162–163.

were all either bandits or lower-ranked military officials who had climbed up the social ladder through the army.[240]

However, were these bandits who surrendered and received the summons truly trustworthy? Thirty-five per cent of these bandits who received summons reneged and rebelled again.[241] Moreover, they were not known to have a good reputation. There was a saying at the time: "If you want to be rich, stay in the capital and sell wine. If you want to be an official, kill people, set fire, and receive the summons" (若要富，守定行在賣酒醋；若要官，殺人放火受招安).[242] Being a bandit could be a bargaining chip to gain titles.

On the other hand, as we can see in the story of Prostitute Zhou, even the military men who proved their loyalty could still be unruly. Take Zhang Jun as an example:

> Your humble subject had heard about Zhang Jun's army. It was called the Army of the Unrestrained. In peaceful times when there were no emergencies, [the army] never once underwent inspections or training. They would even kill people to pursue the victims' properties. Only the forces of Han Shizhong's and Yue Fei's camps were orderly and serious, [but] they had their drawbacks of being too strict.
>
> 臣聞張俊一軍，號曰自在軍。平居無事，未嘗閱習，甚至於白晝殺人而圖其財者。惟韓世忠、岳飛兩軍人馬整肅，其失有傷於太嚴。[243]

However obvious it is, it should be noted that the lack of discipline of these military men had created large disturbances suffered by all people, which was not touched upon often since this research focuses on the aspect of female war experience. It is undoubtedly one of the reasons the newly formed social group was despised by some and still very much marginalised

[240] See Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 33 *juan* 369, 11469, 11485; *Songshi* 32 *juan* 364, 11355.
[241] Wang Shizong, *Nan Song Gaozong chao bianluan zhi yanjiu*, 142.
[242] Zhuang Chuo 莊綽, *Jile bian* 雞肋編 (The collection of chicken ribs) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983) 2, 67. Translated in Alyagon, *Inked*, 186.
[243] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 7, 1843.

in court.[244] The loyalty and righteousness of these generals were often doubted. In another example, after the death of Yue Fei (1103–1142), some tried to praise Yue Fei by comparing his possessions to those of other generals:

> After Yue Fei's death in the prison, [the court] recorded [the property of] his family, [finding] a few gold-, jade-, or rhino horn–decorated belts and [weaponries and tools such as] armours, helmets, bronze crossbows of southern barbarians, glaives cast from fine iron, bows, swords, saddles, bridles, about three thousand bolts of cloth, about five thousand *hu* units of grains, a hundred thousands of coins, some thousands of books. Compared to other generals of the same period, like so and so, never did they not fill their parlours and bedchambers with luxuries [and not have] manors [so large that they seemed to] occupy several counties. [They] enjoyed [all kinds of] pleasures and longevity, [with their] wives and children crowded before them. In weal or in woe, to settle or to be kept dangling, there naturally would be unpredictable occurrences along the heavenly way.
>
> 岳少保既死獄，籍其家，僅金玉犀帶數條，及鎖鎧兜鍪南蠻銅弩鑌刀弓劍鞍轡，布絹三千餘匹，粟麥五千餘斛，錢十餘萬，書數千卷而已。視同時諸將如某某等，莫不寶玩充堂寢，田園占幾縣，享樂壽考，妻兒滿前，福禍頓懸，天道亦自有不可知者。[245]

By comparing Yue Fei to other generals, the author hinted that other generals were corrupted. In general, these generals were not popular figures at the time. However, even if Yue Fei was highly regarded among the generals because of his martyrdom, his virtues, and

[244] Alyagon, *Inked*, 185.
[245] Ding Chuanjing 丁傳靖, ed., *Songren yishi huibian* 宋人軼事彙編 (The compilation of Song people's anecdotes) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 800. One bolt of cloth is equal to 4 *zhang* (丈) units, which is approximately equal to today's 1,228.8 cm. One *hu* (斛) unit approximately equals to 67.95 kg.

his close relationship with scholars,[246] he did not qualify as a model for the statesman, given his humble background and his unorthodox and informal education.[247]

It was true that the military men had caused disturbances. Nonetheless, when we examine the impact of the rise of the military men at the time, we should also consider the differences between the elite class, which was filled with scholar-officials, and these rising military men. Regarding the relationship between the elite class and the low-born military men, Elad Alyagon has pointed out their differences in terms of the inked tattoos marked on the skin of soldiers:

> Elites interacted with the sons and daughter of the penal-military complex as superiors, as masters, and as clients, but elite men and the men of the penal-military complex did not share the same "imagined community." The application of penal and military tattoos to an illiterate population by a small literate elite became one clear manifestation of the different, even opposing, ways social groups were tied to the Sinitic-script world. In the interaction between the literate and the illiterate, Sinitic script represented power, control, and exclusion.[248]

As mentioned, even Yue Fei, who enjoyed a relatively close relationship with scholar-officials, did not receive a formal education. It would be even harder for other military men who could still be illiterate to fit in. The discourse, however, would be controlled by the literati. Naturally, Li Dao, originally a bandit and probably completely uneducated, would not fit in the imperial court.

Elad Alyagon also pointed out that the military culture did not only create a divide between the two groups. It also had an effect on the military families, including the women in

[246] Deng Guangming, *Yue Fei zhuan*, 55.
[247] Liu, *China Turning Inward*, 106.
[248] Alyagon, *Inked*, 213.

it.[249] Therefore, as his daughter, it was natural that the imperial court would see Empress Li as unfit to become a member of the imperial family. In fact, the empress was later portrayed to be violent, unruly, uneducated, controlling, and greedy — all the stereotypical negative qualities thought to be possessed by military men. This is also where the difference between Zhang Nong and Empress Li lies. Zhang Nong was able to reinvent herself because she adhered to what was expected of a woman of the elite class, while Empress Li retained the "unrefined" qualities of the military family.

More importantly, the Song court felt threatened by these generals. As explained by James T. C. Liu:

> At the beginning the Southern Sung, with no regular army to speak of, resisted the Jurchen invasions largely by relying on generals who expanded their personal followings and absorbed former bandit groups into sizeable armies. These generals had become accustomed to controlling their own regions without much supervision from the central government.[250]

The Song dynasty had long followed the policy of restraining the military men. However, the Song court must have given considerable power to the generals in order to fight against the Jin army.[251] From the records of *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, we see many revivals as well as creations of military ranks in the early years of the Southern Song dynasty because of the chaotic situation. As the nation was stabilised, either these positions were demolished or the military officers in such positions were replaced by scholar-officials.[252] Gaozong was determined to make peace with the Jin Empire and started to remove these generals from office.[253] The most extreme case would be the execution of Yue Fei. However, the tables were

[249] Alyagon, *Inked*, 128–132.
[250] Liu, *China Turning Inward*, 88–89.
[251] Wang Shizong, *Nan Song Gaozong chao bianluan zhi yanjiu*, 163.
[252] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 7, 158–165, 172–179, 183–187.
[253] Liu, *China Turning Inward*, 89.

turned towards the end of Gaozong's reign. The Song court saw an opportunity to launch an attack against the Jin Empire as the Jin court sank into chaos after the coup that killed Wanyan Liang.[254] Gaozong soon abdicated, and Xiaozong, Gaozong's successor, was very eager to regain the lost lands from Jin.[255] In 1163, the Song launched an attack against the Jin.[256]

This is when Empress Li came on the scene. According to *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 (The compilation of manuscript of the compendium of the Song dynasty), in the fourth month of the second year of Longxing (1164), the would-be empress married Xiaozong's third son, Guangzong.[257] In the early stages of the Northern Song dynasty, intermarriage between the imperial family and military families was seen as a tool to form alliances, but it became a set practice towards the end of the Northern Song dynasty.[258] Nonetheless, at the time when Empress Li became Guangzong's wife, intermarriage once again became a practical way to win over the military men, many of whom were dismissed or displaced in Gaozong's reign. Even if the Northern Expedition ended in the twelfth month of 1164, and the Song court and the Jin Empire maintained a long period of peace until 1206, Xiaozong never gave up the hope that one day the Song army could regain the lost lands.[259]

There were no details recorded about her life in the years when she was still a princess. Problems started when she became the crown princess. When she married Guangzong, Guangzong's eldest brother, Zhao Qi 趙愭 (1144–1167), was still alive and would be made crown prince in 1165.[260] No one could foresee that the then crown prince would suddenly die in his prime — he suffered from heatstroke and was given the wrong medicine after falling

[254] Yuan-kang Wang, *Harmony and War: Confucian Culture and Chinese Power Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 92.
[255] Kuan-chung Huang, *Shishi, wenxian yu renwu* 史事、文獻與人物——宋史研究論文集 (Taipei: Dong D da, 2003), 8.
[256] Wang, *Harmony and War*, 91–92.
[257] Xu Song 徐松, ed., "Houfei 1 of 9," *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 (The compilation of manuscript of the compendium of the Song dynasty) (Beijing: Guoli beiping tushuguan,1936), 19311, 3.
[258] Chen Feng, "Bei Song huangshi yu 'jiangmen' tonghun xianxiang tanxi," 105.
[259] Wang, *Harmony and War*, 93, 95.
[260] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 7, 37–38.

ill.[261] She might have been good enough to be a princess but definitely not regarded to be qualified to be an empress. Years later, when Xiaozong was considering abdicating, he was stopped by one of his ministers, Huang Qia 黃洽 (1122–1200), for the would-be Empress Li was not qualified to be "mother of all under heaven."[262]

War gave her father the opportunity to climb up the social ladder and gave her the chance to become the empress. However, they were never approved and accepted in high society. The conflict between the newly risen militants and old standards backfired on the empress. As a result, a bizarre image mixing different qualities of wicked women and unrefined militants was created.

4. Conclusion

It goes without saying that wars and conflicts are often life-threatening situations for all people. However, some people would find opportunities to benefit from these situations. This chapter was about them, such as the fake princesses who had found opportunities in military camps and the courtesans and prostitutes who had found opportunities in their relationships with military men.

The stories about these women who were linked to military men and had become members of military families told us less about their agency and even more about social categorisation at the time and, therefore, different expectations that were placed on them. The rise of the military men inevitably created a clash in the value systems and the pre-existing rules well-established in the elite class before the sudden collapse of the Northern Song dynasty. The images of the women in military families were crafted to fit into different narratives accordingly.

[261] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 7, 37–38.
[262] Ding Chuanjing, *Songren yishi huibian*, 89.

This would then lead to other questions. Social expectations were not rigid rules. They were fluid and would readjust according to the situation. If so, how did the conflicts shape the value systems and therefore the social expectations towards the women at the time? This will be the focus of the remaining chapters.

Chapter Five

A Makeshift Ideal: Investigating the Image of the Masculinised and Militarised Women

The previous chapters have focused on the construction of political narratives and literary traditions regarding female war experiences at the time and explored a wider female war experiences outside of the dominant narratives. This chapter moves away from the depictions of their "experiences" and focuses on their heroic qualities that were praised and celebrated during war time.

What were considered heroic qualities for women at the time? How were these qualities categorised as masculine or feminine? What did these accounts tell us about the gender order at the time? After examining the two kinds of female participation in defending their families and even the state, the chapter will then focus on the case study of Empress Wu 吳皇后 (1115–1197), second wife of Song Gaozong 宋高宗 (b. 1107–1187, r. 1127–1162), and her warrior-like qualities.

1. The Strength of Women Who Fought Back

In the previous chapters, we saw women being portrayed as passive and weak. They rarely took active roles in chaotic situations, and people at the time had shown sympathy towards the misfortune the victims had suffered. However, although uncommon, there were women who had shown admirable courage in times of crisis, and their bravery was often compared with men's.

An entry in *Yijian zhi* written by Hong Mai showed us how women would cooperate with villagers to catch and kill the invaders:

In the *gengxu* year of the Jianyan reign [1140], the foreign calvaries invaded Jiangxi. The people of the prefectures, provinces, and villages would get scared of them upon seeing them. Many would die helpless, as if their hands were tied. At times there would be people who rose up without caring for their own lives, and they often would achieve their goals. Even some women would also **be** brave enough to do it. When the enemies traversed the area of the Pond of Swords in Fengcheng [now in Fengcheng, Jiangxi], the armoured calvaries used the main road, travelling non-stop throughout the night. This had caused the crowd on our side to only hear their sounds and not be able to estimate the number of enemies. Cavalrymen grabbing two maidens were galloping through the forest alone. A maiden pointed at and talked with the ones who were avoiding the horseman and said, "You should be able to attack him." Thereupon, the crowd all rose and struck against him, and he fell off his horse. They then immediately shattered his brain. The horse neighed relentlessly and seemed to be looking for his owner. They chased after it and threw it into a well, and therefore they escaped. Another barbarian had kidnapped a woman. He demanded her to draw water from the well. The woman had always been a wealthy person. She refused, claiming that she was not able to do that. The barbarian started nagging, scolding her angrily. He snatched the pitcher and bowed his head to get the water. The woman pushed his back, and he tripped and fell into the well. The entire family of a revered Mr Ai, a commoner in Yugan, had suffered from the robbing and kidnapping. Two barbarians were lighting a fire and going to burn his house down. Ai quietly thought, "If [this place] is annihilated and turned into ruins, even if we escape, we will have no place to go back to." He then called for his sons, and they all strived to use clubs

and swiftly hit [the invaders]. As the two barbarians became weary and struggled, they took the barbarians' broadswords at their waists and cut their heads off. Their family was therefore preserved.

建炎庚戌，胡騎犯江西。郡縣村落之民，望而畏之，多束手就斃。間有奮不顧身者，則往往得志焉，雖婦女亦勇為之。其過豐城劍池也，鐵騎行正道，通宵不絕，蓋使我眾聞其聲而不測多寡耳。一騎挾兩女子，獨穿林間。女指謂避者言「可擊」，於是眾舉挺撦之而墜，旋碎其腦。馬嘶鳴不已，似尋其主，眾逐而委之井，遂脫。又胡掠一婦，使汲井。婦素富家子，辭不能。胡呶呶怒罵，奪瓶器低頭取水。婦推其背，失足入于井中。餘干民艾公子全家遭劫虜，兩胡然火，將焚厥居。艾默念：「若盪為丘墟，萬一獲脫，將無所歸。」乃呼其子，齊奮梃縱擊，垂困，取胡腰刀截其首。一家遂全。[263]

In this account, the people who rose to the occasion without caring about their own lives were celebrated, and "Even some women would also **be** brave enough to do it." In addition to recognising the types of virtues that would be needed in order to keep the family together, it showed us the different expectations towards different genders. Hong Mai had actually elaborated on how he viewed these heroic women in his random jotting, *Rongzhai xubi* 容齋續筆 (Random jottings of the Rong study). In an entry titled "Furen yinglie" 婦人英烈 (Heroic women), he commented on several accounts of heroic women, and he prefaced by writing the following:

Women and maidens are attached to the inner quarters. The qualities of gentleness, agreeability, chastity, and loyalty are considered to be their virtues.

[263] Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi* 3, 1192.

> They encounter heartbreaks and sorrows, face situations and become confused, and tread over death and get scared. This is, after all, the natural and proper course of action. For [a woman] to be able to cut off attachments in accordance with justice, determine strategies using wisdom, mediate important situations, and view death as merely one's own homecoming, then she could practically be comparable with a heroic man.
>
> 婦人女子，婉孌閨房，以柔順靜專為德，其遇哀而悲，臨事而惑，蹈死而懼，蓋所當然爾。至於能以義斷恩，以智決策，斡旋大事，視死如歸，則幾於烈丈夫矣。[264]

In this preface, we could see that there was a comparison between the qualities of heroic women and those of men. Hong Mai defined what was considered feminine and the qualities that were considered to be almost masculine. By subtly pointing out the inferiority of women and praising their behaviour as "almost comparable to gallant men," a masculine quality was celebrated. Such quality could be possessed by women — to quote Sandra Via, "Masculinities are prized in political and military leadership, even when that leadership is performed by women."[265] Women who could maintain this quality of masculinity in times of crisis were thus considered extraordinary.

Hong Mai further commented on the women in history whom he considered heroic. Among the fifteen examples, he regarded Princess Pingyang 平陽公主 (?–623) to be the most extraordinary, for she offered amnesty to bandits and organised an army of seventy thousand people to help stabilise the state.[266] She was the only one who actually took action in person and participated in the war, while others only assumed the roles of advisers for their husbands

[264] Hong Mai, *Rongzhai xubi juan* 12, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 5, bk. 5, 357.
[265] Via, "Gender, Militarism, and Globalisation," in Sjoberg and Via, eds., *Gender, War, and Militarism,* 43.
[266] Hong Mai, *Rongzhai xubi juan* 12, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 5 bk. 5, 359.

and/or sons. Therefore, he claimed that "this is how brilliant and gallant she is, and others cannot hold a candle to her" (此其偉烈，又非他人比也).[267]

It was rare for women to participate in military action. Another model figure which was often praised and discussed was Hua Mulan 花木蘭, a heroic maiden who pretended to be a man to join the military for her old father.[268] This epilogue of "Dama fu" 打馬賦 (The rhapsody of capturing the horse) written by Li Qingzhao, a female poet, the daughter of a literatus, Li Gefei 李格非 (?–1106), and the daughter-in-law of Zhao Tingzhi 趙挺之 (1040–1107), might explain the political meanings behind the reiterations of accounting and commenting on these heroic women:

> Foli will definitely die in the *mao* year [451],
> Our high-ranking officials and commoners still flee in all directions.
> The great steeds Hualiu and Lu'er fill my eyes,
> In dangerous times where can we find real horses like these?
> Mulan holds her lance crosswise, a fine warrior woman!
> Aged now, who still has ambitions that stretch a thousand miles?
> All she wants is to cross with others the Huai River once more.[269]
> 佛狸定見卯年死，
> 貴賤紛紛尚流徙。
> 滿眼驊騮雜騄駬，
> 時危安得真致此？
> 木蘭橫戈好女子！

[267] Hong Mai, *Rongzhai xubi juan* 12, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 5 bk. 5, 359.
[268] For a brief introduction to further discussion on Hua Mulan, see Lan Dong, *Mulan's Legend and Legacy in China and the United States* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 1–3.
[269] Translated by Ronald Egan. See Egan, *The Burden of Female Talent*, 184-185.

老矣誰能志千里？

但願相將過淮水。[270]

Concluding the rhapsody, which was filled with historical allusions to military figures and terms, the epilogue described a scene that happened in the Jin dynasty (266–420) on the surface.[271] Nonetheless, contemporary people would definitely recognise how similar the situation was then: A mass migration, with people running away from the war zones and crossing the river.

Even if she did not directly criticise or comment on the political situation at the time, it was quite clear what she was calling for. She placed two images of heroes together: one of a woman and the other of an old hero.[272] The two figures would be ordinarily considered to be weaker or more inferior than a regular man in his prime, but their courage and aspiration were greater. In the words of Roland Altenburger, "[t]he heroic woman then did not represent female strength as such, but by negative implication pointed out a deficit of male strength and male inability to act."[273] She then ended this epilogue with her wish: "I only hope the ministers and generals would cross the Huai River." It was an encouragement intended for the ministers and generals of her time: She used Mulan and the old hero as examples from which the court and officials could learn.

There were indeed women like Mulan at the time. The most notable one was Lady Liang 梁氏 (?–1135), wife of the military commander, Han Shizhong 韓世忠 (1089–1151), who once was at the battlefield beating the war drum for the Song army.[274] The other was Lady Wang, who was important in helping the Southern Song court to stabilise the southern part of

[270] Li Qingzhao, *Li Qingzhao ji jianzhu*, 356.
[271] For the allusions she used, see Li Qingzhao, *Li Qingzhao ji jianzhu*, 359–371.
[272] For the related allusion to the image of an old hero, see Li Qingzhao, *Li Qingzhao ji jianzhu*, 371.
[273] Roland Altenburger, *The Sword or the Needle: The Female Knight-Errant (xia) in Traditional Chinese Narrative* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2009), 44–45.
[274] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 3, 623.

the state, where ethnic minorities resided. Her story was included in *Lingwai daida* 嶺外代答 (Representative answers from regions beyond the mountain ranges), written by Zhou Qufei 周去非 (1134–1188):

> Among the ethnic minorities in the south, there was Wang Erniang [?–?]. She was the leader of the Li people. Her husband's name was unknown. Her family was financially abundant and was good at administering her people. She has the capability to bring all Li people under control. The court bestowed the title of Lady of Suitability on her. When the governors of Qiongzhou [now in Hainan] had any orders for the Li people, they would hand them down to Lady Wang, and not once the Li people disobeyed. After the death of Er'niang, her daughter was able to inherit her position.
>
> 峒中有王二娘者，黎之酋也，夫之名不聞。家饒於財，善用其眾，力能制服羣黎，朝廷賜封宜人，瓊管有令於黎峒必下王宜人，無不帖然。二娘死，女亦能繼其業。[275]

Her case was even more peculiar because not only did she gain a title for her own merit, but the court also allowed her daughter to inherit her title and position after her death. However, it was still highly unusual for women directly participate in battles. In *Yan Fanlu* 演繁露 (The extrapolation of the luxuriant dew), written by a scholar-official Cheng Dachang 程大昌 (1123–1196), while Mulan was still admired because "women could accomplish such achievement; her righteousness and gallantry were superior to [Chunyu] Tiying's [206–?BC]"

[275] Zhou Qufei, *Lingwai daida*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 3, 109.

(女子能為許事，其義且武，在緹縈上).[276] Again, her masculine qualities were highlighted and praised. However, it was considered to be "also a strange [case]" (亦異哉).[277]

Many scholars pointed out the problematics of women possessing this quality of masculinity were never ignored, and the narratives about these women would "consistently try to dissolve the threat she poses," to quote Manling Luo.[278] While the author recognised Mulan's virtues because all her virtues and behaviours portrayed in the story aligned with what society deemed commendable, he still considered her case to be out of the ordinary.[279] On the flip side of the coin, we would see militaristic women to be considered bizarre. For example, in *Yijueliao zaji* 猗覺寮雜記 (Random records from the dwelling in the temple) by Zhu Yi 朱翌 (1097–1167):

> In the Han dynasty, two women in Jianzhi [now in Vietnam], Zhang Er and Ce rebelled. They created disturbances in sixty or so cities in the regions southern to the Five Ridges. In the Tang dynasty, a woman in Muzhou [now in Hubei], Chen Shuozhen, rebelled. She captured two prefectures, Muzhou and Shezhou [now in Anhui]. A woman capable of being a bandit is bizarre.
>
> 漢交阯女子徵貳、側反，擾嶺外六十餘城。唐睦州女子陳碩貞反，破睦、歙二州。女子能作賊，可怪也夫。[280]

[276] Cheng Dachang 程大昌, *Yan Fanlu* 演繁露 (The extrapolation of the luxuriant dew), *Quan Song biji*, vol. 4, bk. 9, 147. For the story of Tiying, the filial daughter, see *Shiji* 2 *juan* 10, 427–428.
[277] Cheng Dachang, *Yan Fanlu*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 4, bk. 9, 147.
[278] For the quote, see Luo, "Gender, Genre, and Discourse: The Woman Avenger in Medieval Chinese Texts," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 134, no. 4 (2014): 597.
For other related discussions, also see Edwards Edwards, "Women Warriors and Amazons of the mid Qing Texts *Jinghua yuan* and *Honglou meng*," *Modern Asian Studies* 29, no. 2 (1995): 225–255; and Wai-Yee Li, "Heroic Transformations: Women and National Trauma in Early Qing Literature," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 59, no. 2 (Dec 1999): 363–443.
[279] See Pei-yi Wu, "Yang Miaozhen: A Woman Warrior in Thirteenth-Century China," *Nan Nü* 4, no. 2 (2002): 137–169.
[280] Zhu Yi, *Yijueliao zaji*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 3, bk. 10, 79.

These were the women who rebelled against the government, controlled armies, and occupied places. They were the opposite of Mulan, who fought to protect the state. They seemingly represent the negative side of the militarised women, but the moral judgement was somewhat ambiguous.[281] Their martial skills, no matter which side the women took, were mainly considered to be out of place at the time.

2. Female Leadership and Masculinity

It should also be noted that Lady Liang and Lady Wang were not from the elite class. There was a different expectation towards women of different social classes or groups. Lady Wang's case was unique because she was the leader of the ethnic minority groups in the area. Her story was recorded in "The Records of the Foreign Kingdoms" in *Songshi*.[282] As long as their actions were beneficial to the state and/or the sovereign, it would then be possible for these women to be recognised by the state. An example would be another Lady Wang recorded in *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu*:

> Wang, the wife of Tian Chengkuan, the former Gentleman for Granted Trust, was exceptionally bestowed the title of the Lady of Suitability. Chengkuan was originally a leader of ethnic minorities who had pledged an alliance to the Song Empire. He lived in the Guangyou region [now Guangxi]. Lady Wang always sent her servants with provisions and funds to help the government army suppress bandits and defeat them. The commissioner for judicial affairs reported her case to the court. Thus, she gained her title.
>
> 故承信郎田承寬妻王氏特封宜人。承寬本歸明寓居廣右。王氏常遣家丁自備糧餉，助官軍討賊破之。提刑司上其事於朝，故得封。[283]

[281] For related discussions, see Wu, "Yang Miaozhen," and Altenburger, *The Sword or the Needle*, 97–99.
[282] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 40 *juan* 495, 14220.
[283] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 5, 1268.

While it was not mentioned if this Lady Wang enjoyed as much political influence as the other Lady Wang, her action of sending her servants and food to help the state army was the reason why she gained her title. It did not seem that she had joined the battlefield, but she still made an impact and thus was considered to have worked towards protecting the state.

As seen in *Rongzhai xubi* mentioned in the previous section, this was a masculine trait. Women were still praised for their leadership, despite indirect participation in the war effort. Their actions did not need to be purely about the military leadership. Instead, in many examples, the initial aim of the women was to protect their families. According to "Wei Anren Hushi xingzhuang" 魏安人胡氏行狀 (The account of the life of Hu, lady of composure, [wife of] Wei), a young girl led her clan to settle at a place of safety:

> In the early years of Shaoxing, the Huai region was filled with thieves. The people did not get a moment of peace. It just happened that there were bandits who were nearing the region [they lived in]. At the time the governor had gone on an inspection, the master stayed at the official residence of Ningguoalone. The son was too young and not mature enough to be sensible. The relatives looked at each other and did nothing as if their hands were tied. No one came up with a plan. The lady was still unmarried. Determined, she said, "We should not make our father abandon his official business because of his worries for the household. This is the responsibility of us siblings." Then, in righteousness, she gathered the relatives by marriage and chose a village where they could load off and settle. She also said, "My life alone was not worth worrying. How could my father and the clan be neglected?" They made a pact to live and die together, and no one would dare to break the promise. Because of this, the Hu clan got to rest easy, and till now, they are still grateful.

紹興初，淮饒於盜，民弗寧止，會有迫於境者，適別駕公獨留寧國官居，子幼未解事，親戚束手相顧，無有出計者。夫人猶在室，毅然曰：「不使我父惟家之憂以廢官事，此吾兄弟姊妹之責也。」乃以義糾媚族，擇村落可辟地者，弛擔以就，且曰：「吾一身不足恤，吾父與族何可忽也？」相期以同生死，遂亡一人敢戾約，胡族因以奠枕，至今德之。[284]

Lady Hu's father was away, and her relatives did not give any support or advice to keep their family and even the whole clan safe from the bandits. Therefore, Lady Hu, as the eldest daughter of the family, not wanting to worry her father, decided to take up the responsibility and protect the clan.

A common reason for women to step up was usually due to the need to safeguard their family, especially when the father and/or the husband were absent. However, as seen in the previous account, it would not necessarily mean that men would automatically take control and be the manager of the household or clan. On the contrary, from the depictions of moments of emergency, we would catch a glimpse of how people perceived gender roles and hierarchies at the time. In the epitaph of a Lady Murong 慕容氏 (?–1142), Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077–1148) wrote about how she negotiated with the bandits in person even when her adult son was with her at the time:

> On the way, she had a severe encounter with bandits and was encircled for several layers. All turned pale. Lady Murong called out to the leader to come close to her sedan carriage and told him, "The capital city has fallen. The two emperors have gone to the north hunt. This is the time for loyal ministers and righteous men to obtain ranks and fame. Moreover, you all are sons of the state. How is it worth it to do this? My eldest son has already led his soldiers to serve

[284] Yuan Shuoyou, "Wei Anren Hushi xingzhuang," *Songdai zhuanzhuang beizhi jicheng* 3, 1193.

the emperor. This is my second son. If you could follow my son, you could turn this unfortunate situation into fortune." The crowd surrounded her and bowed, "We know our ma would come, so we are here to wait and welcome you. It is not for other reasons." The lady ordered the managing administrator to gather them and make a pledge among them. […] Other than managing to survive the crisis alone, she ended up saving the lives of the whole city. The lady's courage and strategy were something even some heroic men could not possess.

道劇遇寇，圍之數重，皆失色。夫人呼其首至輿前，告之曰：「京城失守，兩宮北狩，正忠臣義士取功名之秋。況汝等皆國家兒郎，何苦作此？我長子已率兵勤王，此次子也，能從吾兒，可轉禍為福。」衆羅拜曰：「知吾母來，故迎侯耳，非有它也。」夫人命幹辦君統之，誓於衆。……不獨免於難，卒保一城生聚，夫人膽略，烈丈夫有所不能。[285]

In this case, Lady Murong's persuasion seemed to be an extension of her authority as a mother, and when the bandits accepted her offer, they, too, called her "mother." While she showed qualities that would be considered masculine, she still stayed in her role as a mother. We could see not only the relation between the concepts of being filial within the family and being loyal to the state but also the intersection between masculinity and femininity.

The previous examples in the section all happened at times of emergency, a time when women had to step up when they became the highest authority within the family in the absence of the male family members. It would be something more common for wives of military men. Sandra Via pointed out the roles that were expected of military wives:

The role of military wife involves a willingness to relocate quickly and frequently, self-sufficiency to raise children and take care of the home when the

[285] Ye Mengde 葉夢得, "Furen Murongshi zhiming" 夫人慕容氏誌銘, *Quan Songwen* 147, 354.

> soldier is sent on a tour of duty, support for male troops and other military wives, and service as motivation for the soldier to fight well and return home safely. In these militarised feminine roles, women must act and perform as (stereotypical) women (Enloe 1990).[286]

These qualities were more or less demonstrated in the examples shown above, as the situation at the time called for men to fight the enemy. Nonetheless, they were more emphasised in accounts of wives of military commanders. For example, Lady Xiang 向氏 (?–1151), wife of Liu Guangshi 劉光世 (1086–1142), gained her title by managing not only the Liu household but also the families of Liu's soldiers:

> The lady encouraged [her husband] with loyalty and filial piety, and she never stopped talking about it. Every time she talked about the favour bestowed by the state, she would raise her hand and place it on her forehead three times. Therefore, the Grand Preceptor respected her as if she were his revered guest and relied on her as she was a decent friend. Every time he received orders to concentrate on an expedition, he could not care for his family. Several hundreds of people inside and outside of the family, plus the families of the soldiers in the military camp in total of more or less several thousands, and ten thousand of them would depend on the lady [to take care of them]. During the Jianyan reign, the enemy entered the Jiangzhe region. The Grand Preceptor guarded Jiangzhou [now in parts of Jiangxi and Zhejiang] as the vice-commissioner of the Imperial Defence Command. He left his family in Jiangxi. At the time bandits rose from all around. They robbed and kidnapped at the regions nearby, and the subordinates [of the family] frightenedly treaded around and could not calm themselves down. The lady comforted them and said, "You all, don't be

[286] Via, "Gender, Militarism, and Globalisation," 45.

scared! When the bandits come, I will meet them in person. When they know it is my home, they certainly will not dare to be presumptuous and violent." And when the bandits came, after they knew it was the Grand Preceptor's camp, they immediately ran away. […] [After] the enemy retreated, their contributions were being set down in writing. For she was able to help her husband to settle the subordinates down, motivating the soldiers not to turn around to look [and worry about their families] and be ready to give their lives to defeat the enemies, His Highness conferred an additional title of the Madame of Weiguo on her; thus she was bestowed a stipend paid monthly as if she has an official rank in the inner court.

夫人勉以忠孝，不絕於口，每言國恩，舉手加額者三。故太師禮之如賓，賴之如良友朋。每奉命專征，不顧其家，內外數百口，合屯營部曲室家，無慮數千萬，繫夫人是賴。建炎中敵入江浙，太師以御營副使鎮江州，留家江西。時寇盜四起，摽掠旁近，部曲惶踐少自安，夫人勞之曰：「爾等無恐，寇至我躬見之。彼知吾家，必不敢肆暴也。」而寇至，知太師營，旋即散去。…… 敵退，策勳，上以夫人能相其夫綏靖部曲，致士卒無返顧，效死克敵，加封魏國夫人，仍月賜湯沐貲如內職。[287]

Lady Xiang was depicted as extremely loyal to the Song court, a trait that provided her ability to support her military commander husband and exercise her authority over the soldiers. She was recognised for her contribution, even if she was still restricted to a "militarised feminine role."

[287] Liu Yizhi 劉一止, "Song gu Weiguo taifuren Xiangshi muzhiming" 宋故魏國太夫人向氏墓誌銘, *Quan Songwen* 152, 285.

As we have seen in the previous examples, the masculine traits of these women were celebrated because it was key to surviving the war and protecting their families. The tactics they used to survive were therefore usually recorded and praised. However, possessing masculine traits did not mean that the women had to be militarised themselves. I use Lady Zhao Zizhen 趙紫真 (?–1150), wife of Yang Cunzhong 楊存中 (1102–1166), as an example:

> Amid war, while people fight, set fire and rob, Lady Zhao took the children with her, travelling north and south. When they encountered miscreants, she would lower her sack to show them to stop their plans; when she encountered the hungry and the weak, she would divide her dried food and give some to them to share their sufferings. [She had been] covered by frost and dew, treaded upon thistles and thorns, and partaken in hundreds of difficulties. For several years, she had experienced [suffering], and in the end, she was able to preserve her home.
>
> 夫人提携諸幼於兵戈焚剽之中，周走南北。道遇強梗，則垂橐示之，以寢其謀；遇飢羸，則分餱糧與之，以同其患。蒙霜露，踐荊棘，間關百難，涉閱數載，卒保其家。[288]

Contrary to the previous accounts where women were depicted as handling an emergency caused by a certain threat, this account depicted a common war experience and focused on the shared suffering of war victims. Instead of fighting back, she was able to avert crises by being perceptive and showing empathy. As a result, she was able to protect her family. What made her different from the women mentioned above was that she was portrayed to be actively against militarism:

[288] Sun Di 孫覿, "Yangguo furen Zhaoshi mubiao" 楊國夫人趙氏墓表, *Quan Songwen* 161, 138.

> Lady Zhao said, "My son must engage in scholarship and advance his career by taking the imperial examination." […] Lady Zhao had married into a family of military commanders. [However,] she did not like the arts of military tactics and battle arrays. Instead, she taught her sons using literature and history. She also did not treat her son only with love and was more like a strict teacher.
>
> 夫人曰：「吾兒當力學問，繇科第以進。」…… 夫人歸將帥之家，不喜兵書戰陣之法，而以詩書教其子，亦不主於愛，如嚴師。[289]

We would often see women overseeing the education of their children in elite families.[290] Lady Zhao was a member of the imperial clan. Even if Lady Zhao married into a military family and was given these "militarised feminine roles" at times of chaos, she was still portrayed to have valued the literary more than the military when it came to her sons' education, revealing a subtle tension between the court, the literati and the military men, as mentioned in Chapter Four.

3. Case Study: Empress Wu

The following section examines the records of Empress Wu and how her image in historical records changed over time. Empress Wu was considered a good empress, displaying qualities such as courage, loyalty, and generosity. Her story shows us the opportunities for women during the war, the extent and limits of the power an imperial woman could wield in chaotic times, and the changing expectations of women as the nation slowly recovered from the war.

Like the majority of imperial concubines at her time, Empress Wu was not from a prominent family. Also similar to the imperial favourites before her, her cultural abilities were

[289] Sun Di, "Yangguo furen Zhaoshi mubiao," *Quan Songwen* 161, 139.
[290] An Guolou 安國樓, "Songdai jiazu wenhua tezheng yu Wenshi jiazu," 宋代家族文化特徵與溫氏家族 *Taiwan yuanliu* 33 (2006): 54. 8

effectively deployed, helping her to gain the emperor's affection and gradually increase her rank.[291] Nonetheless, her road to power was highly unusual. Undoubtedly, the war gave her the opportunity to climb up the social ladder. It was the unfeminine warrior-like qualities she displayed in chaotic times that made her stand out from the crowd. She gained the favour and trust of Gaozong after the fall of the Northern Song dynasty and eventually became his empress.

However praiseworthy her heroic acts facing battles and coups were, as the nation gradually settled in, her unfeminine qualities did not fit in the archetype of a good empress. As the interstate relations as well as her own status changed, her image changed accordingly. It is interesting to see how different qualities are emphasised in different stages of her life. In her early years as Gaozong's concubine, she was often portrayed to be soldier-like. However, this masculine side of her was less mentioned and even hidden after she became empress. Instead, she was fitted into a somewhat more conventional image of an empress.

This section focuses on examining the images of the empress in different stages of her life and investigating how her images were rendered to fit into the model of an ideal empress as interstate relations changed.

3.1 The Rise of the Empress and Her Image as a Warrior

According to *Sichao wenjian lu*, Empress Wu was one of Gaozong's concubines bestowed to him by his father, Huizong 徽宗 (b. 1082–1135, r. 1100–1126), when he was still a prince.[292] Little is known about her life before entering the palace. She was most likely born into a humble family, entered the palace through selection and became a palace servitor.[293] When the Northern Song dynasty fell in 1127, Gaozong's wife, Lady Xing 邢氏, was captured

[291] Lee, *Empresses, Art, and Agency*, 130.
[292] Ye Shaoweng, *Sichao wenjian lu*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 9, 60.
[293] Beverly Bossler, "Gender and Entertainment at the Song Court," in *Servants of the Dynasty: Palace Women in World History*, ed. Anne Walthall, 261–79 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 262–263.

along with other members of the imperial family in the north. The future empress, along with Gaozong's other concubines, accompanied Gaozong as he escaped from the Jin army and finally settled down and re-established the Song court in Lin'an.

She caught Gaozong's attention while they were escaping from the Jin army. Interestingly, her image in the early years of Gaozong's reign, depicted in *Songshi* and other miscellaneous records, was continuously associated with the military. According to *Songshi*:

> Gaozong acceded to the throne, and the empress always wore military clothing and served by his side. The empress was very well read. [Once she] followed [Gaozong] and visited Siming [the alternative name of Zhejiang Ningbo prefecture], the imperial guards schemed to mutiny and entered [the palace] asking for the whereabouts of the emperor. The empress deceived them and thwarted their plan. Not long [after the incident], the emperor went on a sea voyage. A fish jumped into the imperial vessel. The empress said, "This is an auspicious sign of the Zhou people and the white fish." The emperor was jubilant and conferred her the title of the Lady of Hexi Prefecture. [After they] returned to Yue [an alternative name for Zhejiang], she was promoted to the rank of Lady of Talent. The empress increasingly read broadly and studied the classics and the histories, and she became good at calligraphy. As a result, [she was] increasingly favoured and recognised [by the emperor]. She became Lady of Kind Deportment, sharing the same rank with Zhang, and later she was promoted to the rank of Honoured Consort.
>
> 王即帝位，后常以戎服侍左右。后頗知書，從幸四明，衛士謀為變，入問帝所在，后紿之以免。未幾，帝航海，有魚躍入御舟，后曰：「此周

人白魚之祥也。」帝大悅，封和義郡夫人。還越，進封才人。后益博習書史，又善翰墨，由是寵遇日至，與張氏並為婉儀，尋進貴妃。[294]

Like many of the imperial women who became favoured by emperors throughout Chinese history, Wu was depicted as quick-witted and eager to learn. However, it was her qualities that were particularly useful in chaotic times and made her stand out among Gaozong's consorts. Among all Gaozong's wives and concubines, she was the only one who was portrayed as warrior-like. She was recorded as having worn soldierly clothes, given wise advice on military issues, and even protected the emperor in battles and coups. She was courageous, loyal, and resourceful and was able to stay calm even when she was facing a coup. Most importantly, she stood out from the rest of the imperial concubines because of her not-so-feminine side.

The empress not only wore military clothing, she was also good at martial arts:

> Empress Wu once followed His Highness on a sea voyage. Suddenly, tens of the enemy's cavalry unexpectedly appeared and planned to take the imperial vessel. The empress calmly shot an arrow. One of them collapsed as the bow [was released], [and] all of the others retreated.
>
> 憲聖嘗從上航海，倏敵騎數十輩掩至，欲拏御舟。后徐發一矢，其一應弦而倒，餘悉引去。[295]

Here Wu was depicted almost as a warrior empress. Scholars such as Hui-shu Lee theorised that she came from a military family, as it was common for the imperial family to select palace women from military families, and Wu's father did receive a low-ranking military position after Empress Wu became an imperial concubine.[296] However, at the time, cases of

[294] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 25, 8646–8647. The auspicious sign of the Zhou people and the white fish originated from the story of the rise of Zhou Wuwang 周武王 (b. ?–1043 BC, r. 1046–1043 BC).
[295] Ye Shaoweng, *Sichao wenjian lu*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 9, 85.
[296] Lee, *Empresses, Art and Agency*, 128.

women learning martial skills might not be as rare and surprising as we thought they would be. There was a record of Huizong putting on a rare display of palace women performing martial arts during a banquet:

> In the fourth month of the fifth year of Zhenghe [1115 AD], [Huizong] held a banquet at the Xuanhe Hall, with his ministers as his guests. He first proceeded to the Chongzheng Hall to inspect five hundred young soldiers performing horse riding and archery. They used powerful bows and were well armed. After the performance, [the emperor] granted the soldiers permission to sit. [A group of] palace women were summoned and assembled at the hall, beat drums, hit wood blocks, rode horses, and shot arrows quickly, cut willow branches, shot at silk balls, played hitting-ball, shot arrows using the Bows of Godly Arms while riding horses. [Their skills] were incomparably marvellous. The soldiers all looked ashamed. His Highness said, "Although these are not womanly duties, [if] women can be good at these, then everyone in this world can be taught [these skills], can't they?" Ministers [Cai] Jing and others appealed to the emperor, saying, "Gentlemen are capable of using powerful bows. Women are capable of riding horses and shooting arrows. [Your Highness] does not forget [to get prepared to face potential] dangers at peaceful times. The nation is very fortunate."
>
> 政和五年四月，燕輔臣於宣和殿。先御崇政殿，閱子弟五百餘人馳射，挽強精銳。畢事賜坐，出宮人列於殿下，鳴鼓擊柝，躍馬飛射，剪柳枝，射繡球，擊丸，據鞍開神臂弓，妙絕無倫。衛士皆有愧色。上曰：

「雖非婦事，然女子能之，則天下豈無可教。」臣京等進曰：「士能挽強，女能騎射。安不忘危，天下幸甚。」[297]

It would be far-fetched to assume that it was common for women to learn martial arts at the time, but it showed that martial arts could be a valuable skill set serving an entertaining purpose, which women, most probably from a lower social rank, were allowed to learn at a time when the nation was threatened. It should be noted that the year 1115 was not only the year when Empress Wu was born; it was also the year the Jin Empire was officially founded. Although Huizong's ministers at the time claimed that it was a peaceful time for the Song Empire, the rise of the Jin Empire proved to be a huge threat to the Song dynasty, and the Jin army eventually crushed the Northern Song Empire twelve years later. It is clearly unusual and far from mainstream for women to receive such training, and undoubtedly they were not expected to serve in the army and go to war. Women were not supposed to engage in such activities, as the emperor had suggested. Nonetheless, allowing women to learn martial arts was a sign of a deepening sense of insecurity at the time. So it might not be surprising that Wu knew how to shoot an arrow, but it was still astonishing that she was courageous and composed enough to use the skills at critical moments.

Moreover, among all Gaozong's wives and concubines, Empress Wu was not the only imperial consort of Gaozong to voice opinions on military affairs, but she seemed to be the only one whose advice was praised:

> Gaozong was concerned with the issues related to the supervision of the army. The empress painstakingly urged that he must go himself, going so far that she even knelt down and said, "Even if I [have to be] dressed in black thin silk, 1.5 feet in length, [you] must go."

[297] Zhou Hui, *Qingbo zazhi*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 5, bk. 9, 92. Ball-hitting was a kind of sport, and cutting willow branches was in fact a game in which a willow branch would be stuck on the ground, and people would have to shoot an arrow towards it.

高宗重于視師之役，后苦諫，必往，至跪奏曰：「若臣妾裹尺五皁紗，必須一往。」[298]

The black silk mentioned above could either be a scarf used by men to wrap around the head or a veil used by women when they had to leave the inner quarters and travel.[299] Either way, she was depicted as fearless and loyal, unafraid to go to the battlefield and confront the enemy troops. It was very rare for women to be portrayed as being, or claiming to be, ready to go to war. The author did not specify when this happened, and it is not clear if Gaozong accepted her advice. The validity of the story might seem questionable, but depicting Empress Wu in such a manner also revealed the approval and appreciation of the Song people towards her unusual qualities.

The war gave Empress Wu chances to cross the gender barrier, display masculine qualities, and, most importantly, be justified and recognised for her unfeminine actions, which would be viewed as improper in a more peaceful time, just as Huizong suggested after the palace women performed martial arts and sports in front of his ministers and soldiers. The fact is it might not be surprising for women to display such qualities and be praised in war times. However, Empress Wu, like all imperial consorts, enjoyed influence over the emperor due to their intimate relationship. I believe that her war experience was instrumental in her enthronement — while it was recorded that other imperial consorts gained Gaozong's affection because of their cultural abilities, it was Wu who eventually became his empress.

[298] Ye Shaoweng, *Sichao wenjian lu*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 9, 85.
[299] The black silk can indicate a hat worn by men, *putou* 幞頭, or a veil worn by women, *gaitou* 蓋頭. See Gao Cheng, *Shiwu jiyuan*, 137–138, 141.

3.2 Becoming Empress

Wu's war experience had earned her the position of "mother of all under heaven" (母儀天下). However, her unfeminine qualities might not be compatible with the conventional ideal of what an empress would be in the Song dynasty.

The story of the empress giving advice on military affairs in fact was recorded in the same thread with two other stories. One was the story about Wu displaying her martial arts during the voyage, which has also been discussed in the previous section. The second one was about another concubine, Liu, who tried to persuade Gaozong to stop the war:

> Gaozong received a memorial from Liu Qi [notifying the emperor that] the rebel [Wanyan] Liang was going to cross the river. His Highness found [the news] concerning. The Honoured Consort Liu happened to be serving [Gaozong at the time] and said, "Liu Qi falsely delivered the news from the border, making Your Highness miserable." His Highness put on a stern face and reprimanded the consort, saying, "You [are just a] woman! How would you understand [these]? There must be someone instructing you to deceive me." He banished her and never summoned her again.
>
> 高宗得劉錡奏逆亮將渡江，上以為憂。劉貴妃適侍，進曰：「劉錡妄傳邊事，教官家煩惱。」上正色責妃曰：「爾婦人女子，如何曉得？必有教爾欺我者。」斥妃出，不復召。[300]

By putting the three stories together, the author compared the Honoured Consort Liu with Empress Wu and concluded, "The glorious queen surpasses the consort" (妃不逮聖后矣).[301] The empress was considered to be better than the concubine not only because she gave

[300] Ye Shaoweng, *Sichao wenjian lu*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 9, 85.
[301] Ye Shaoweng, *Sichao wenjian lu*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 9, 85. In *Songshi*, a similar but more detailed story was recorded in the biography of an imperial consort Liu, who bore the same surname but had a different title: She was a Lady of Kind Deportment instead of an Honoured Consort.

wiser advice that probably also coincided with the author's view; it might have something to do with her looks. The Honoured Consort Liu appeared in two other records, both claiming that she was one of the targets Wanyuan Liang (b. 1122–1161, r. 1150–1161), the emperor of Jin at the time, was aiming at when he was planning a southern expedition to seize the rest of the Song lands because of her beauty.[302] It was said he even had new blankets and mattresses prepared for her so she could use them on the way back to the north once he conquered the Southern Song Empire.[303]

On the contrary, the appearance of Empress Wu was seldom mentioned. It was even emphasised that she was favoured not because of her looks. It might be a way to show that she was more trustworthy than other beautiful concubines, as it was common for imperial women to be taken as trophy wives after their countries were defeated. Beautiful women were always viewed as femme fatales because they were distractions for emperors from their duties, but the story of Honoured Consort Liu told us that beauties at the time were seen to be far more dangerous because they were not only distractions for emperors of their own countries, they could also invite invasions from other countries.

More importantly, looks were never a necessity for empresses. A very detailed account of how Empress Wu was enthroned was recorded in *Sichao wenjian lu*:

> In the beginning, Empress Wu was favoured not for her beauty. Since the southward retreat, up till she became the mother of the nation, most of the time when she had a chance to get promoted continuously, she would use illness as an excuse to attempt to decline them. Gaozong appreciated her lasting resoluteness. Every time when he wanted to right the positions of the six palaces [by making her empress], since the empress dowager was far away in the desert,

[302] The most shocking examples would be the account of erotic paintings about rapes of the empresses of Southern Tang and Jin by Taizong and Song generals, respectively, painted in the Song dynasty. See Ding Chuanjing, *Songren yishi huibian*, 997–998.
[303] Ding Chuanjing, *Songren yishi huibian*, 82.

he didn't dare to carry it out. His Highness once spoke to Empress Wu, saying, "I know well the hardships you have endured for us, but you are treated the same as the newcomers. I am deeply regretful. When Mama comes back, you will be my choice [of empress]." Empress Wu made obeisance twice and replied, "Mama is far away in the north. I failed to attend to her. Often when the weather is sunny and lovely, I serve Your Highness in banquets. The thought of it just pops up in my mind, and my tears would drop into the pit of my stomach. I honestly never dreamed about being promoted to such a position." His Highness shed a few streams of tears for this and increasingly considered her to be virtuous. [It was] until the empress dowager's imperial carriage had returned. Since she and Empress Wu were both once by Huizong's side [serving him] when Huizong bestowed Empress Wu on Gaozong, she was afraid of Empress Wu remembering the times when she was lowly, so she did not have the desire to help her be enthroned. When His Highness was serving the empress dowager, he made obeisance and enquired, "Wu, the Virtuous Consort, has served [the imperial family] for a long time. [According to] the consultations of the outer court, [Wu is] considered to be suitable to be in charge of the matters of the imperial kitchen. I shall obtain your imperial consent." The empress dowager overtly professed to His Highness, "This decision is up to you." However, covertly [she] truly did not assent. Thus, His Highness gave [orders] to the outer court, saying, "I have received orders from the empress dowager" and so on, "Wu, the Virtuous Consort," and so forth, "shall be enthroned as the empress". Hence, the empress began her contributions by supporting and protecting the three reigns.

憲聖初不以色幸，自渡南以來，以至為天下母，率多遇魚貫以進，即以疾辭。思陵念其勤勞之久，每欲正六宮之位，而屬以太后遠在沙漠，不敢舉行。上嘗語憲聖曰：「極知汝相同勞苦，反與後進者齒，朕甚有愧。俟姐姐歸，爾其選已。」憲聖再拜，對曰：「大姐姐遠處北方，臣妾缺於定省。每遇天日晴美，侍上宴集，纔一思之，肚裏淚下。臣妾誠夢不到此。」上為泣下數行，愈以后為賢。暨太后既旋鑾馭，以向嘗與憲聖均為徽宗左右，徽宗以憲聖賜高宗，太后恐憲聖記其微時事，故無援立意。上侍太后，拜而請曰：「德妃吳氏，服勞滋久。外廷之議，謂其宜主中饋。更合取自姐姐旨。」太后陽語上云「這事由在爾」而陰實不欲。上遂批付外庭曰「朕奉太后之命」云云，「德妃吳氏」云云，「可立為后」，后遂開擁佑三朝之功云。[304]

It was known that she was highly educated and was fearless at war. However, these were not the qualities empresses had to possess. An empress did not need to be very cultivated, beautiful, or courageous. In the story shown above, when Empress Wu was to be made empress, the author stressed that she was resolute, modest, and unambitious. As she moved further on the road to becoming empress, the image of her wearing military clothing and fighting the enemies faded. Instead, the more conventional empress-like qualities were emphasised in records and stories about the later years of her life. More importantly, she was made empress after the Song court signed a peace treaty with Jin. The nation was no longer at war, meaning that she did not need to be the warrior she used to be.

However, we might find glimpses of her self-identity as the protector of the nation and the emperor hidden behind the records about her life. According to *Songshi*, she "had drawn

[304] Ye Shaoweng, *Sichao wenjian lu*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 6, bk. 9, 60.

artworks of ancient exemplary women and put them in the centre [of her palace], serving as teachings [for herself]" (嘗繪《古列女圖》，置坐中為鑒). What the text did not tell us was that it was a drawing illustrating the story of Lady Feng, an imperial concubine of Han Yuandi 漢元帝 (b. 75–33 BC, r. 49–33 BC), protecting the emperor from a bear attack.[305] She might still present herself as fighting to protect the nation after she became empress, but the image of her as a warrior was somehow hidden behind the texts and left out of historical records, probably because it was not something conventional for women to do.

It did not mean that she ceased to protect and support the newly re-established nation. She helped stabilise the country in a more traditional way. There were in fact very few records of her participating in government affairs because women were not supposed to do so. However, she played an important role when Gaozong chose his successor and facilitated the relationship between Gaozong and Xiaozong. The empress was childless, and no child of Gaozong was born after the death of Gaozong's only son. Two boys, both of the imperial lineage, were selected to enter the palace as candidates for Gaozong's successors. While *Songshi* recorded that Empress Wu supported Xiaozong to succeed the throne, there were also writings claiming that she was supporting the other adopted son to become the crown prince and simply accepted the fact when Gaozong made the decision that Xiaozong would be his successor.[306] Either way, she was always depicted to be smoothing over the relationship between father and son, particularly after the abdication of Gaozong, for example:

> Gaozong was in the Southern Palace. Xiaozong served Gaozong with filial respect and did his best to gratify Gaozong's wishes. One day, [Xiaozong] drunkenly promised [to offer Gaozong] two million strings of coins. A long time

[305] Lee, *Empresses, Art, and Agency*, 128. The painting "Lady Feng's Act of Self-Sacrifice" was painted by Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 (?–?) and is currently at the British Museum. See Appendix 8.
[306] There are several versions of the story. *Songshi* claimed that Empress Wu was the one who suggested making Xiaozong crown prince, see Tuotuo et al., *Songshi*, 8647. There are also other sources claiming that she supported the other prince; see Ding Chuanjing, *Songren yishi huibian*, 84.

had passed, and he still hadn't given [Gaozong the money]. Gaozong asked Empress Wu [about the money]. The empress said, "[The money] has been here for a long time! [Xiaozong] randomly said it when he was drunk and did not know [if you want] silver or coins, [so he] dared not hastily present [you the money]." Gaozong said, "I could use some coins." Empress Wu paid two million strings of coins on behalf of [Xiaozong]. Xiaozong was touched by Empress Wu's thoughtfulness [and her effort to] bring harmony to [the relationship between] father and son, [so he doubled the money] and gifted [Empress Wu] four million strings of coins.

德壽在南內，壽皇奉之孝，極盡其意。一日醉許奉二十萬緡，久而未進。德壽問吳后，后曰：「在此久矣，偶醉時奏，不知是銀是錢，未敢遽進。」德壽云：「要錢用耳。」吳后代進二十萬緡。孝宗感吳后之意，調娛父子之歡，倍四十萬以獻。[307]

Xiaozong was depicted as a model of filial piety, but there were times when Gaozong was not particularly satisfied with him, and Empress Wu was always the one who helped to pacify Gaozong. Maintaining the harmony between the abdicated emperor and the new ruler proved to be essential to stabilising the nation, especially when the nation was still greatly threatened by the neighbouring Jin. A stable government and adequate administration had to be ensured in order to strengthen military power.[308]

Decades later, Guangzong caused political instability in the government because his relationship with his father, Xiaozong, turned sour, and he had not visited Xiaozong for a long time even when Xiaozong was dying. Once again, Empress Wu stood out and stabilised the

[307] Ding Chuanjing, *Songren yishi huibian*, 80. One *wen* (文) unit of currency was equal to one coin. One *min* (緡) unit of currency was a string of coins, which was equal to 1,000 coins.
[308] Wang, *Harmony and War*, 79.

situation by forcing Guangzong to abdicate and supporting Ningzong in ascending to the throne.

It was the last time the empress acted as the protector of the nation. The empress acted according to the social expectations, wielding her authority and ruling behind the curtains for a short time only to end the chaos.[309] Amicable and unambitious, she seemed to have moved away from her previous valiant image, which was only scarcely found in texts and drawings. Despite her exceptional display of her unfeminine qualities in times of danger, she was portrayed to be the epitome of a "worthy" empress in the later years of her life.

As the imperial court settled in and started to recover, there was no need for the empress to fight, or to be shown fighting, which must be a powerful tool to motivate men to fight against the enemies, just like how Huizong's palace women were trained to perform sports and martial arts in front of young soldiers. Women slipped back to their assigned gender roles. As the motherly model of the people, the image of a good empress, echoing traditional accounts of womanly virtues, would also be beneficial while social orders were being rebuilt.

The narrative of the life of Empress Wu did not only show us how women were allowed to cross the gender barrier in times of chaos, but it also revealed how women retreated back to the old order after the chaos. As much as the heroism of Empress Wu was praised and valued, it was never something to be recorded in great detail, either in standard historical records or in random jottings. The image of Empress Wu might not faithfully reflect reality, but it revealed how flexible gender expectations could be in times of chaos and where the limits of such flexibility were.

[309] There are also two versions of this story. According to *Songshi* it was her nephew who reminded her that she should not be ruling for too long. See Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 39, 13592. In another story, she was the one who told the nephew that she did not want to rule. See Ding Chuanjing, *Songren yishi huibian*, 877.

4. Conclusion

Women were driven outside of the inner quarters and were forced to become more involved in matters of the outer sphere.[310] Such actions still benefitted the family and the society in times of chaos, and therefore a group of women has marked their names in history for their courage and righteousness.

The accounts showed us the blurred boundaries between gender roles and the flexibility in social conventions in times of chaos. When society had become highly militarised due to wars, women who carried masculine qualities were believed to have helped them safeguard their families and even protect the state. Hence, they were honoured for the efforts they made for the families and the state.

In some of the cases, we would see women being militarised. However, women would still be praised for showing leadership even without participating in battles and fights. Moreover, the accounts often portrayed that the women would have to return to their previous gender roles.[311] The threat posed by women showing masculine traits was often dissolved by depicting them returning to or emphasising their feminine roles.

[310] Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams, *Women and War: Gender Identity and Activism in Times of Conflict* (Sterling: Kumarian Press, 2010), 16.
[311] Luo, "Gender, Genre, and Discourse," 582.

Chapter Six

Chastity and Integrity: The Images of Chaste Women in Literature

This chapter examines how female chastity was linked with the moral integrity of officials in the Song writings. Some of the poems about women facing difficult situations reportedly written by women in the twelfth century will be analysed. Records in *Nanjin jiwenlu* 南燼紀聞錄 (Record of the southern ashes), *Jingkang baishi jianzheng*, and other accounts of the Song-Jin war will be explored, followed by a case study based on poems about Xiannü ci, in which the virtue of a chaste maiden was often compared to the immorality of men, especially the ones who succumbed to the enemy, and therefore, had their reputations tarnished.

1. The Many Endings for Chaste Women

Female chastity has long been one of the most discussed questions in Chinese gender studies. How was female chastity represented in writings in the twelfth century? What was the purpose of praising chastity? The academic discourse on this issue has certainly changed significantly over the years. Before the 1980s, scholars used to see the Song dynasty as a turning point in Chinese gender studies when women faced harsher repression due to the rise of neo-Confucianism.[312] Later on, scholars argue that women had rights that had not been enjoyed by their counterparts in previous and later

[312] For example, see Chen Dongyuan, *Zhongguo funü shenghuo shi* and Ayscough, *Chinese Women* (1937).

dynasties.[313] There is a great deal of textual evidence suggesting that women in the Song dynasty were free to remarry, and their remarriage was not scorned upon.

That being said, although female chastity was not harshly enforced upon women in real life, the concept was celebrated very early on in the literature. Early didactic writings for and/or about women show that the idea of what makes a good woman (i.e. daughter and wife) does not seem to have changed much, particularly when it comes to handling the relationships of women with their husbands and in-laws.[314] As many scholars have observed, stories of chaste women began to become more and more violent starting from the Song dynasty. In the words of Beverly Bossler:

> Over the course of the Southern Song, texts like these, highlighting the fidelity of upper-class women in often dramatic and entertaining style — became more numerous. Most were inspired by the traumatic fall of the Northern Song in 1126, which both rendered the issue of loyalty one of the most pressing concerns of the day, and provided numerous instances of heroic deaths by women who refused to submit to the invaders.[315]

It is recognised that chastity had not yet become a cult in the Song dynasty. Nevertheless, many scholars, like Beverly Bossler, have also observed how the chastity cult began to sprout — the dramatic performance and the heroic death mirror the tales of exemplary women in the late imperial era. However, does the act of chastity always have to end in tragic death? In *Liangxi manzhi* 梁谿漫志 (Random records of Liangxi),

[313] For example, see Yu Hui Yuan, *Songdai minfu de juese yu diwei*.
[314] Olivia Milburn, "Instructions to Women: Admonitions Texts for a Female Readership in Early China," *Nan Nü* 20, no. 2: 196.
[315] Beverly Bossler, "Fantasies of Fidelity: Loyal Courtesans to Faithful Wives," In *Beyond Exemplar Tales: New Approaches to Chinese Women's Lives*, Joan Judge and Ying Hu, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 172.

a story of a maiden trying to commit suicide when she was captured and faced the threat of being sexually assaulted took a strange turn:

> Lord Yan Yuanxian [Yan Shu 晏殊, 991–1055] [had a] great-great-granddaughter whose father, Xiaoguang, was the county magistrate of Nanyang County in Deng Prefecture. The maiden was nicknamed Shigu. [When she was] fifteen years old, [she] followed her uncle, Xiaochun, to [take] office in Guangling County. In the third year of Jianyan [1129], [she] had fallen into [the hands of] the barbarians and was taken to the north. Every time [the barbarians] wanted to assault and humiliate her, [she] would always throw herself to the floor. Going all stiff, she caught her breath. [She tried to] either hang herself or [to] jump into the well, [but] every time [she] was saved and therefore [her life] was spared. Her mistress loved her and raised [the maiden] as her own. Amongst the barbarians, [her virtue was] ardently preached and praised.
>
> 晏元憲公四世孫女，其父孝廣為鄧州南陽縣尉。女小字師姑，年十五，從叔孝純官于廣陵。建炎三年，陷於虜，係以北去，每欲侵陵之，輒擲身于地，僵仆氣絕，或自經，或投于井，皆救而獲免。其主母愛之，撫育如己出，虜中爭傳誇焉。[316]

In this account, the action of the maiden, Yan, to protect her chastity could certainly be described as "dramatic and entertaining." However, in contrast to stories where heroines died a violent death to protect their chastity, for Yan, there was a happy ending. It seemed that she was very much appreciated by the "barbarians," gained a good reputation because of her virtue, found herself a second home, and ended up

[316] Fei Gun 費袞, *Liangxi manzhi* 梁谿漫志 (Random records of Liangxi), 218–219.

settling down in a “barbarian” place. In so many ways, this story was fascinating because it showed us that the meaning of chastity is layered, and the interpretation can be flexible.

That being said, we have to admit that this happy ending was definitely not a normality at the time. While Yan was able to escape from the attempted assaults, that was not the case for many others. As seen in previous chapters, many female captives could not even make it to Shangjing Huining Prefecture 上京會寧府 (now Ha’erbin Baicheng). Stories of deaths associated closely with acts of defiance were often emphasised among all records of deaths. Their disobedience often met with a violent response. *Nanzheng luhui jianzheng* 南征録彙箋證 (Notes and evidence on compiled records of the southern expedition) recorded several violent deaths of the imperial concubines who refused to comply with the orders of Jin generals:

> [On the] fifth day [of the second month] […] That night, the state chancellor [Sinicised name: Wanyan Zonghan 完顏宗翰; Jurchen name: Nianmohe 粘沒曷; also known as Nianmohan 粘沒罕, Nianhan 粘罕 or Nikan 尼堪, 1080–1136] treated all generals [to a feast] and ordered the palace ladies et cetera to change into open-stage singing girls’ clothing inside out [to] mingle [and] sit [among the generals in order to] serve [them] wine. Three women, Zheng, Xu, and Lü defied [his] orders [and were] beheaded [and] sacrificed. [After the other women] went behind the curtains, one woman used an arrowhead to pierce her throat [and] died. The martyrs, Zhang, Lu, and Cao, opposed the wishes of the second prince [Wanyan Zongwang 完顏宗望, Jurchen name: Wolibu 斡離不, ?–1127]. [They were] impaled on a metal rod, placed in front

of the tents, [and were left to] bleed for three days. [On the] seventh day, the princesses [by marriage] and princesses [by birth] entered the military camp. The prince pointed [at the martyrs] as a warning [for the princesses]. Everyone begged for their lives. [The prince then] ordered the princess [Zhao] Fujin 趙福金 [?–1128; title: Princess Maode 茂德帝姬 (Lavish and Virtuous)] to solace them [and] commanded them to use ointments [to bathe themselves and] change into dance costumes of harems [to] enter the tent [and] serve at the banquet.

[天會五年（宋靖康二年、建炎元年）二月初五日][317]是夜，國相宴諸將，令宮嬪等易露台歌女表裏衣裝，雜坐侑酒，鄭、徐、呂三婦抗命，斬以徇。入幕後，一女以箭鏃貫喉死。

烈女張氏、陸氏、曹氏抗二太子意，刺以鐵竿，肆帳前，流血三日。初七日，王妃、帝姬入寨，太子指以為鑒，人人乞命。命福金帝姬撫慰之，令施膏沐，易後宮舞衣入帳侍宴。[318]

It seemed that the more violent the deaths were, the more they were praised. The seven women all tried to defy the orders of the Jin army commanders. Zhang, Lu, and Cao suffered the most and were called "martyrs." Zheng, Xu, and Lü also sacrificed their lives for the country but were not called "martyrs." The name of the woman who committed suicide backstage without showing openly any disobedience before her death was not even recorded. This is in line with what Richard L. Davis has suggested that in biographies of "notable women" in *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (New book of Tang)

[317] See *Nanzheng luhui jianzheng*, 132, 140. *Nanzheng huilu* was a compilation of nine different records on the Jin-Song war. Notes and annotation were done by Cui Wenyin 崔文印 (1941–). See *Jingkang baishi jianzheng*, 10.
[318] *Nanzheng luhui jianzheng*. 146.

written in the Song dynasty, there is a link between heroic virtue and bodily pain that is "in a manner unique to women and to a degree unprecedented."[319]

Among the many unrecorded deaths of female captives, why were certain stories recorded? Did they survive into the present day other than simply because of "sheer luck"? What are the messages in these stories and why are they more important than the many unwritten and forgotten stories? Of course, this would be too big a question to be answered in this dissertation. Nonetheless, at the very least, we would see how images of women in such writings were situated in a certain condition and constructed to suit a certain narrative. By analysing these writings, I aim to explore how chastity is interpreted and utilised via the construction of the images of chaste women.

2. Presenting Chastity in Writing

This section shall examine how chastity was presented in writings that are allegedly written by women and explore how virtues are interpreted and gendered via the images of women they produced.[320]

Death by suicide seemed to be very common among the captured women. Grace Fong traced the gendered practice of female suicide writings back to the section of "Biographies of Virtuous Women" in *Songshi* and explained that writing suicide writings was more than a confession of why these women chose to end their lives but rather a declaration and by writing suicide writings the women tried to write themselves into history:

> Simply to die, to sacrifice oneself in silence is not enough — these women desire to *tell*, to *state*, to *enunciate* the particulars of their

[319] Richard L. Davis, "Chaste and Filial Women in Chinese Historical Writings of the Eleventh Century," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121, no. 2 (2001): 206.
[320] Please refer to the Introduction for the discussions regarding the authenticity of authorship.

identities, life circumstances, motivation, and moral and individual values.[321]

However, the two poems claimed to be composed by Empress Zhu, wife of Song Qinzong 宋欽宗 (b. 1100–1156, r. 1126–1127), could be seen as a manifesto that is very likely to be fictional, and therefore it was not her own voice that "told, stated or enunciated" her own story. The difference between Empress Zhu and the women whose poems were analysed by Grace Fong is that Empress Zhu is a much more important political figure. She would be written into history anyway. That is why her actions and words would have a bigger impact on men as female suicide writings could serve the function of "calling men into action," according to Grace Fong, whether or not they were fake.[322]

Of all women who were captured by the north, the tragic experience of women from the ruling class attracted the most attention. And among these women, Empress Zhu became a symbol of chastity and resistance, although it remained unclear how and when she actually died.

It is highly unlikely that Empress Zhu is really the composer of the two poems because the credibility of *Nanjin jiwenlu*, the book in which these poems are recorded, has long been doubted.[323] Despite the fact that the book might be simply fictional, in *Quan Songshi* 全宋詩 (The Complete Poetry of the Song) Empress Zhu was still named the author of the two poems.[324]

[321] Grace Fong, "Signifying Bodies: The Cultural Significance of Suicide Writings by Women in Ming–Qing China," *Nan Nü* 3, no. 1 (2001): 122.
[322] Fong, "Signifying Bodies," 141.
[323] Xin Qiji 辛棄疾, *Nanjin jiwenlu* 南燼紀聞錄 (Hearsay of the southern remnants), *Quan Song biji*, vol. 4, bk. 4, 17. It is unlikely that Xin Qiji (1140–1207) is really the author of the book, although he is named as such.
[324] Fu Xuancong etc. ed., *Quan Songshi* 33, 21278.

Nanjin jiwenlu recorded the journey of the captured emperors, Huizong and Qinzong, and their empresses, Empress Dowager Zheng 鄭太后 (1079–1131) and Empress Zhu, to the north. The book focused on the humiliations the emperors faced. One of the humiliations was the fact that the emperors could not protect the female imperial members of the family and had to watch or hear them being sexually harassed or even abused. Unfortunately, Empress Zhu was one of the female imperial members who had to endure other men's sexual advances. She was luckier than the others in the sense that she was not actually sexually assaulted while others were "distributed" to and became wives, concubines, or slaves of different Jin generals[325] because the Jin emperor had commanded that all four emperors and empresses should be going to Shangjing to have an audience with him, and the Jin officials did not want to push too far and kept them alive.[326] However, as the youngest female in the group, Empress Zhu endured sexual harassment. The emperors were powerless and could only weep whenever bad news got to them. According to the book, the poems were composed when Empress Zhu was forced to entertain a Jin nobleman, Zeli 澤利,[327] on the way to the north:

> Zeli took [the opportunity of being] drunk [to] command Empress Zhu [to] urge [the guests to drink] wine and sing songs. Empress Zhu used her inability [as a] response. Zeli angrily said, "You four people's lives are in my hands, how can you disrespect me like this?" [He] used the whip he held, wanting to hit her. The empress could not help but cry, and [she] held the cup and composed a song, which said, "[When I was]

[325] Xin Qiji, *Nanjin jiwenlu*, 28.
[326] Xin Qiji, *Nanjin jiwenlu*, 32.
[327] *Nanjin jiwenlu* stated that Zeli came second among his brothers and was a brother of Nianhan 粘罕 (Sinicised name: Wanyan Zonghan 完顏宗翰; see *Nanjin jiwenlu*, 20–21) and therefore the second son of Wanyan Sagai 完顏撒改 (?–1121). He was recorded as 扎保迪 in *Jinshi* 金史, vol. 5, 1362.

young, [I] disliked silk dresses. For a long time, [I have] entered the palace, accompanied, and served the honourable sun. Now, weary, [I am] drifting away to an alien land. [I] sighed for my fate, [I] shall die quickly, [and] it would be best." The song ended, [she used] both her hands to hold the cup and said to Zeli, "Commander, [please] drink your wine." Zeli laughed and said, "The lyrics and sentences of the song are the best. [You] can sing one song to persuade the county administrator to drink." The empress once again sang, [and the lyrics] read, "In the past [I] lived in the sky, [where] palaces [are made] of pearls and buildings of jade. Now [I] fall into grasses and underbrush, what else can [I] say? With my body shamed and my mind humiliated, when can my anguish be cleared? [I] swear to return to the [Yellow] Springs quickly, and my sorrow shall end." Then [she] raised [her] cup to the administrator of the county and drank [the wine]. Zeli got up, pulled the empress' clothes, and said, "Sit here and drink with me." The empress was angry [and] wanted to [use her] hands to stop him, [but her] strength was not enough [to stop him] and was hit by Zeli. The administrator of the county [named] Lai urged her to stop and said [to the empress], "[You] can once again sing to urge the commander [to drink] wine." Then [he] raised a cup and put [the cup] into the empress's hands and said, "Urge the commander [to drink] wine." The empress said, "I can't. [I] hope the commander would kill me. [If I] die, [I have] no regrets." She turned her body, wanting to throw herself [into] the well in front of the garden. [People near her] left and right saved her and stopped her. The administrator of the county said, "Commander, [you] should not

force her like this. The emperor of the north wants these four people alive to have an audience with him. The official business is not trivial." After drinking, the crowd dispersed.

澤利乘醉命朱后勸酒唱歌，朱后以不能對。澤利怒曰：「汝四人性命在吾掌握中，安得如是不敬我？」以所執鞭欲擊之，后不勝涕泣，乃持杯作歌曰：「幼富貴兮厭綺羅裳，長入宮兮陪奉尊陽。今委頓兮流落異鄉，嗟造化兮速死爲强。」歌畢，兩手持杯向澤利曰：「元帥上酒。」澤利笑曰：「歌中詞句最好，可更唱一歌勸知縣酒。」后再歌曰：「昔居天上兮珠宮玉闕，今入草莽兮事何可說。屈身辱志兮恨何時雪，誓速歸泉下兮此愁可絕。」乃舉杯向知縣飲之。澤利起拽后衣曰：「坐此同飲。」后怒，欲手格之，力不及，為澤利所擊，賴知縣勸止之曰：「可更唱歌勸將軍酒。」復舉杯付后手中曰：「勸將軍酒。」后曰：「妾不能矣，願將軍殺我，死且不恨。」回身欲自投庭前井，左右救止之。知縣曰：「將軍不可如此迫他，北國皇帝要此四人活底朝見，公事不小。」酒罷各散去。[328]

The four people were tortured after this banquet. Zeli had also become more watchful because of the suicide attempt of Empress Zhu, trying to keep all of them alive to make it to the capital city. Later in *Nanjin jiwenlu*, Empress Zhu made another suicide attempt, but again she failed to kill herself.[329] According to the book, she fell ill and died on the way to the north.[330]

[328] Xin Qiji, *Nanjin jiwenlu*, 32.
[329] Xin Qiji, *Nanjin jiwenlu*, 33.
[330] Xin Qiji, *Nanjin jiwenlu*, 40–41.

Other than being likely to be fictive, these poems are interesting in two ways. First, they could be viewed as female suicide writings, judging that the empress was said to have several suicide attempts after composing these poems, according to *Nanjin jiwenlu*, although her suicide attempts were all unsuccessful. Second, she composed the poems not because she felt the urge to leave some words behind before her suicide. These lyric poems were composed because the empress was forced to sing, and she improvised at the scene. Even if Empress Zhu was not the author of the poems, she was chosen to speak these words and enact them. While her husband did not even dare to cry loudly and only wept in silence when she died, afraid that the supervising officials would yell at him,[331] Empress Zhu grabbed every chance she had to use her words as a weapon and voice her anguish. The empresses were described to be physically weaker, and it seemed that in the book the empresses fell ill more easily than their husbands. However, they were also the ones who suggested death as a way to end their humiliations while their husbands wept and chose to endure the difficult situation. Even if that meant they would potentially face physical and mental tortures of beatings and insults, their solution was simply to try to avoid further abuse.

It should be noted that a different version of the two poems was recorded in another book, *Qinggong yiyu* 青宮譯語 (A translator's observation of the green enclosure), but they were composed by Empress Zhu and the Cautious and Moral Consort Zhu 朱慎德妃, respectively.[332] The poems recorded in *Qinggong yiyu* were less dramatic and had less emotion, although the empress's part of the poem still mentioned "returning to the [Yellow] Springs [to] end her sorrows."[333] The account of the circumstances of how and why the poems were composed in the two books were

[331] Xin Qiji, *Nanjin jiwenlu*, 41.
[332] Wang Chengdi, *Qinggong yiyu*, 179.
[333] See Appendix 9 for the poems recorded in Wang Chengdi, *Qinggong yiyu.*

quite similar — in *Qinggong yiyu,* the empress and the consort were forced to compose and sing at a banquet, and eventually they simply composed and read their new poems without singing.[334] In at least two other accounts, Empress Zhu made it to the Supreme Capital and died there.[335] This will be further discussed in the following sections.

Nonetheless, death was not the only solution to hardship, and female chastity was not always associated with suicide. Let us take a look at another poem written by an anonymous woman titled *Ti Huanglianbu Jieguanting bi* 題黃連步接官亭壁 (Writing on the walls of the officials greeting pavilion of Huanglian dock):

> I [am a] person [from] Poyang. Other than female work, [I also] engage in [matters related to] poetry and propriety. Unfortunately, severe snow fell, and Mount Tai itself collapsed. Wandering alone, that [man I] married is not a [good] spouse. [Like putting] fragrant things and fetid objects together in the same container, how can this situation be endured? In the recent past, my family sailed on Dongting Lake, [as] the sail rumbled [to] unfurl, [my] husband abruptly become [enlisted] on the register of ghosts. Alas! Officials do not serve two lords; women do not serve two husbands; how can I deal with this! Incidentally, [I] bring [my] young son to ascend the guest pavilion, lamenting the moment aches my heart; thus, [I] completed a short quatrain. The [only] one who knows me might be the heaven!
>
> My homeland seemed desolate at a glance.
>
> This body wanders; [I] sighed as [I have] returned for nothing.

[334] Wang Chengdi, *Qinggong yiyu*, 179.
[335] See *Shenyin yu* and *Songfu ji*.

Lamenting the moment, [I] have regrets [but there is] no one [I can] talk to.

In sorrow, [I] furrowed my two eyebrows against the hills at dusk.

妾鄱陽人也，女工之外，從事詩禮。不幸嚴霜下墜，泰山其頹。飄泊一身，所適非偶，薰蕕同器，情何以堪。昨浮家洞庭，怒張一帆，良人倏為鬼錄。吁！臣不事二主，女不事二夫，其奈何哉！偶攜幼子，來登客亭，感時傷心，遂成小絕。知我者其天乎！

故里蕭條一望間，此身飄泊嘆空還。

感時有恨無人說，愁歛雙蛾對暮山。[336]

Empress Zhu in *Nanjin jiwenlu* and this anonymous woman faced the same difficulty: Their husbands were morally flawed and were either utterly helpless or totally absent. They no longer had protectors who could shelter them from the outside world. In *Nanjin jiwenlu*, one of the Jin officials named Guludu 骨碌都 asked Qinzong to tell Empress Zhu to serve him. It was not clear if Qinzong refused Guludu, but when Guludu saw Qinzong weeping day and night, he told the emperor that he was once a commoner of the Song dynasty but suffered because of the policy of *huashigang* (花石綱) introduced during Huizong's reign and claimed that the suffering of the emperors was karma. Qinzong could not even refute him.[337]

[336] Fu Xuancong et al., ed., *Quan Songshi* 33, 20921. Mount Tai was where the emperors *fengshan* (封禪) to proclaim the legitimacy of their reigns by reporting to the heavens and earth their achievements as emperors. See *Shiji*, 4 *juan* 28, 1355.

[337] Xin Qiji, *Nanjin jiwenlu*, 30–31. The policy of Huashigang was to transport expensive flowers and naturally formed strange-looking stones to the capital city for the emperor. It had created a huge disturbance for the people at the time and was seen to be one of the important factors that had led to the rapid decline of the Northern Song dynasty. For more details, see Tuotuo et al., *Songshi*, 13 *juan* 179, 4361.

The preface of the poem written by the anonymous woman revealed a very tricky problem: She knew her husband was not a good man, and it was quite obvious that she despised him, but for some reason, she still wrote the words, "Officials do not serve two lords; women do not serve two husbands." It seemed that no matter what, women should be loyal to their husbands, as officials should be loyal to the emperor, even if the emperor was not competent. Women should not do anything to shame their husbands, so Empress Zhu chose to commit suicide when she was humiliated, and this anonymous woman chose to stay widowed rather than remarry. It would be a difficult decision since she still had a young son to raise, and she was a young woman without a husband trying to survive in a time of chaos, but this seemed to be her only solution.

3. Comparing Female Chastity and Male Loyalty

It brings us back to the question: What does *zhen* originally mean? A different version of Empress Zhu's death might lead us to the answer. Among all the existing accounts of the Song imperial family's journey to the north, Empress Zhu seemed to be the only imperial woman who was highly regarded by the Jin court for her virtue. In *Qinggong yiyu,* it was explained why Empress Zhu gained the respect of the Jin generals:

> [On] the second day [of the fourth month in the fifth year of Tianhui, 1127] […], at noon [the troops] then stationed and lodged. The commanders garrisoned [at the area] offered wine and food. The two princes ordered [Wang] Chengli to translate [as they] asked about palace affairs: Daozong [an informal title for Huizong] would most certainly lie with a virgin every five or seven days; [if the virgin] get to be mounted once, [she] would immediately be given a title; [with] each

recurrent favours [she would be] promoted a rank upwards. After [he] abdicated, [he] dismissed six thousand palace women. [He] deserved to have lost his empire. The young emperor [was] virtuous, [was] committed to reading books, [and] did not accustom himself to sonance and pulchritude. [Since he] received [the throne due to Huizong's] abdication for half a year, [he] had not arranged [any] ladies-in-waiting [for himself]. [He] eventually conferred [titles on] one consort [and] ten ladies, [and] only three people became favoured. [Apart] from [this his] other temperate virtues [were so many that they] cannot be raised and counted. The character of Prince of Yun was frail, and his body was weak; [this] heretofore [was] why [he] did not agree to travel to the north. The Prince of Kang [had] blazing gaze like torches, [and he] indulged in beauties like his father, [among his] maids, [there were] many who died. Since then, the two princes presented respect [towards] Empress Zhu with more politeness.

[天會五年四月][338]初二日……午即屯宿，守帥供酒食，二王令成棣譯詢宮中事：道宗五七日必御一處女，得御一次即畀位號，續幸一次進一階。退位後，出宮女六千人，宜其亡國。少帝賢，務讀書，不邇聲色。受禪半載，無以備執事，迺立一妃、十夫人，廑三人得幸，自餘儉德不可舉數。鄆王性懦體弱，先故不肯北行。康王目光如炬，好色如父，侍婢多死者。自是，二王致敬朱后有加禮。[339]

[338] Wang Chengdi, *Qinggong yiyu*, 176–177.
[339] Wang Chengdi, *Qinggong yiyu*, 177.

Here, different from the cowardly man depicted in *Nanjin jiwenlu*, Qinzong was described to be a more honourable man compared to other male members of the Song imperial family. He was studious and not prurient, and as a result, his wife, Empress Zhu, was treated with respect. Maybe it was simply a result of the extension of the respect for Qinzong. It is also possible that Empress Zhu was seen as one of the main factors that made Qinzong a better man compared to his father and siblings — aiding the husband had always been seen as one of the most important duties of a wife. As shown in a lot of epitaphs written in the Song dynasty, by observing one's household, the virtue of the mistress of the household would also become visible to outsiders.[340]

More importantly, *Shenyin yu* and *Songfu ji jianzheng* recorded that she was officially given the title Lady of Chastity 貞節夫人 at the Jin court in 1130 after her death in 1128.[341] The two books also reported the date of Empress Zhu's death. Both sources stated that Empress Zhu made it to the Jin Supreme Capital. *Songfu ji jianzheng* simply stated that Empress Zhu died on the twenty-fourth day of the eighth month in 1128 at the Supreme Capital but without any further details.[342] The details of how and why Empress Zhu died were recorded in *Shenyin yu* — Empress Zhu died by suicide in the north after participating in the surrender ceremony:

> On the twenty-fourth day, the barbarian lord took the two emperors [and] presented [them] at the ancestral temple. At the time, the imperial relatives and nobility had already been left for Tongsai Prefecture. Other than home slaves and military prostitutes, those thirty-some princes and some 1,300 imperial consorts and princesses all followed the emperors and empresses [to] live in temporary imperial tents. At dawn, several

[340] See Appendix 10 for more examples.
[341] See *Shenyin yu*, 217 and *Songfu ji*, 264.
[342] *Shenyin yu*, 217.

thousands of barbarian soldiers noisily entered [the campsite] and forcefully approached the temple, [their] body bared outside the temple doors. The two emperors [and] two empresses only removed [their] outer gowns; the rest [of the imperial family] all were stripped and bared their upper bodies, draping sheepskins [which hung down] to their waists [over their bodies and] tying strips of fur garments at their hands. The two emperors were led into the curtained hall, and the Rite of Leading the Sheep on a Leash was held. At the hall, purple curtains were put up, precious objects and hundreds of seats were arrayed. Barbarian music was variously played. The barbarian lord and [his] wives, concubines, ministers, and servants, in a barbarian way, knelt there several times. The emperors, empresses, [and the imperial family members ranked] below them all knelt in a barbarian way. The barbarian lord personally slaughtered two sheep and [placed them] as offerings at the temple. The barbarian soldiers then again advanced [on them, and they] went to the imperial camp. The barbarian lord ascended the Hall of Heavenly Origin. [His] wives, concubines, and various tribal chiefs attended upon him aside. The two emperors [and the ones ranked] below them all knelt. [The barbarian lord] issued a decree [and offered] four pardons. The two emperors received their titles of nobility and their gowns and exited [the hall], with all princes [they] sat and waited at a little tent outside the hall. Empresses, concubines, and the rest entered the palace and were granted ablutions for a moment. [The barbarian lord] decreed Empresses Zheng and Zhu to return to their residences. At the hour of *yi*, [the empresses] changed into barbarian clothing and exited

[the palace]. A thousand women and maidens were bestowed [to live in] the palace near [the barbarian lord], still [having their] upper bodies bared. The two empresses, Wei and Xing, and [the ones ranked] below them, around three hundred people, stayed at the Court of Rinsing Clothings. Empress Zhu returned to her residence and hung herself. [She was rescued and] roused, but [she later] drowned [herself and] died.

二十四日，虜主以二帝見祖廟，時宮親戚貴已發通塞州編管，家奴、軍妓外，此皇子等三十人、妃主等一千三百人皆隨帝后居行幄。黎明，虜兵數千洶洶入逼至廟，肉袒於廟門外。二帝、二后但去袍服，餘均袒裼，披羊裘及腰，縶氈條於手。二帝引入幔殿，行牽羊禮。殿上設紫幄，陳寶器百席，胡樂雜奏。虜主及妻妾、臣僕胡跪者再，帝后以下皆胡跪。虜主親宰二羊入供殿中。虜兵複逼赴御寨，虜主升乾元殿，妻妾、諸酋旁侍，二帝以下皆跪。宣詔四赦，二帝受爵服出，與諸王坐候殿外小幄。后妃等入宮，賜沐有頃，宣鄭、朱二后歸第。已，易胡服出，婦女千人賜禁近，猶肉袒。韋、邢二后以下三百人留洗衣院。朱后歸第自縊，甦，仍投水薨。[343]

According to Winston Lo, this Qianyang rite (The rite of leading the sheep on a leash) was "a perversion or travesty of the ancient tradition" of presenting war

[343] *Shenyin yu*, 209. It was depicted in more humiliating details in another account, *Yanren zhu* 燕人麈 (The elk of the Yan people), in which Empress Zhu was also recorded to commit suicide after participating in the ceremony. The complete version of *Yanren zhu* has been lost. Some of the content of the book was used as amendments for *Jingkang baishi jianzheng*. See Appendix 11 for the details recorded in *Yanren zhu*. Regarding where Tongsai Prefecture was located, some believe that it is now Yimian (一面城) in Siping city (四平市), Jilin Province (吉林省), while others believe that it should locate at today's Liao Jin gucheng 遼金古城 in Qujiadian Xiang 曲家店鄉, Changtu County 昌圖縣. See Wang Mianhou, Piao Wenying, *Zhongguo dongbei yu dongbei Ya gudai jiaotongshi*, 353.

captives at the ancestral temple originated from the early Western Zhou dynasty (1045–771 BC), carefully altered and designed to humiliate the captives so that "the vanquished were deprived of all their dignity and held up to public scorn."[344] In the ceremony, except for the idea of the rite itself, everything was foreign to the Han. From the music played in the ceremony, through the way they knelt, to the clothes they changed into after the ceremony, everything was "barbarian."

The changing of clothing seemed to be one of the highlights of the ceremony, where the emperors and empresses had to remove their outerwear before entering the temple and changed their clothes after the ceremony. The emperors received new gowns, which symbolised their newly endowed lordship in the Jin Empire, while the empresses changed into "barbarian dresses." Other captives were stripped topless and had to bare the upper part of their bodies like the Jin soldiers did. Being half-naked in public was certainly demeaning but being forced to be incorporated into a foreign culture and giving up the Han apparel was even more humiliating. She felt so humiliated afterwards that she committed suicide.

The Han Chinese apparel has a deeper symbolic meaning. The most famous quote that linked the Han apparel with the Han Chinese ethnic identity was spoken by Confucius (551–479 BC): "Without Guan Zhong (725–645 BC), my hair would be let down [and my] lapel [would be wrapped towards] the left-hand side" (微管仲，吾其披髮左衽矣).[345] Wearing "barbarian" clothing would also mean losing the Han ethnic identity. A note from Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166) further explained what dressing in foreign clothing and losing the Han ethnic identity meant, "Without Guan Zhong, then

[344] Winston W. Lo, "Wan-yen Tsung-han: Jurchen General as Sinologist," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies*, no. 26 (1996): 109–112.
[345] Liu Baonan 劉寶楠, *Lunyu zhengyi* 論語正義 (Correct meaning of the *Analects*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 578.

the ruler is not the ruler, the minister not the minister, all would be barbarians" (無管仲，則君不君，臣不臣，皆為夷狄).[346] Indeed, for Empress Zhu and the other captives, Ma Rong's note had become a reality. To see her fellow captives, both male and female, being stripped of their outerwear or even being half-naked, the humiliation was not only personal, physical, and possibly sexual; more importantly, it was political and cultural.

The pain, fear, and anger of being forced to surrender the Han Chinese attire echoed throughout Chinese history whenever the ruling position of the Han Chinese was threatened by the conquest dynasties. Guojun Wang 王國軍 pointed out:

> During the long period of disruption known as the Song-Jin-Yuan transition, clothing was not only a cultural language for the Han Chinese but also a ritualistic language for the non-Han conquerors. All the rulers of these conquest dynasties attempted to inflict their ethnic clothing and hair-style on Han Chinese.[347]

Apparently, the ceremony, or the record of the ceremony itself, was not the only attempt to surrender the Han Chinese attire. The surrender ceremony can be compared to another scene in *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* when Qinzong was forced to abdicate, and Xiao Qing 蕭慶 (?–1140) forced Qinzong to strip off his imperial robe after Gao Qingyi 高慶裔 (?–1137) delivered an imperial decree from Jin Taizong 金太宗 (1075–1135, r. 1123–1135) to Song Qinzong:

> [Gao] Qingyi finished reading the decree. [Xiao] Qing forced the emperor [Qinzong] to change his imperial robe. At the time, the

[346] Liu Baonan, *Lunyu zhengyi*, 578.
[347] Wang Guojun, *Staging Personhood: Costuming in Early Qing Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 28–29.

situation came up out of nowhere, and [He] Li [1089–1127] and others were all [so] shocked and petrified [that they] did not know what to do. The Vice-Minister of Personnel Li Ruoshui [1093–1127] [was] the only one [who stepped] forward to guard the emperor, [and] said, “The emperor cannot change [his] robe.” The enemy ordered a few people to drag him away. [Li Ruoshui] then yelled and said, “My lord [is] the legitimate master of the central domains. [How dare] you people intend to inflict [such] obscenity [on my lord]!” The enemy hit him, [and his] face and eyes were wounded. Ruoshui caught his breath and fell onto the floor, [and it took him] a while to only rouse. After this, every [minister] in office were monitored by two Jin soldiers, and every rescriptor-in-waiting were watched by two Yan soldiers. All were separated. Except [that] several dozen of armoured cavalries stayed [behind], [and] delivered the order of Zongwei [another name for Wanyan Zonghan] [that] said, “[You] must keep Vice-Minister Li unimpaired.” Thus [Li Ruoshui was] taken by his arms to the gallery [connected to the] gatehouse of the Green Enclosure. [Every] day [Li Ruoshui’s] three meals were force-fed [to him]. Ruoshui refused [and] didn’t eat, [and] was sickly as if [he] suffered a stroke. [He] Li also lay prostrate on the floor [and] firmly appealed for [not crowning a new emperor of a different surname]. The enemy [was] furious, [and] imprisoned him. Ruoshui’s mother, Woman Zhang, heard about the incident, cried and said, “My son will die in this incident for sure.” Later, [her assumption] turned out to be accurate.

慶裔讀詔已。慶迫帝易御服。時事出不意，桌等皆震懼不知所為。吏部侍郎李若水獨前持帝曰：「陛下不可易服。」敵命數人曳以去。復大呼曰：「吾君華夏真主，若輩欲加無禮耶！」敵擊之，面目為傷。若水氣結仆地，良久乃蘇。於是每執政監以二金兵，每侍從監以二燕兵，各分散。獨留鐵騎數十，傳宗維令曰：「必使李侍郎無恙。」遂掖至青城門廡下，日三飯飲之。若水絕不食，病如中風狀。桌亦伏地固請。敵怒，囚之。若水母張氏聞變，哭且言曰：「吾子死難必矣。」已而果然。[348]

In the commentary section of this part, the author quoted other books and demonstrated how devastating and critical this scene was to the witnesses and also the readers to come,

> Ding Teqi's *Guchen qixue lu* [The record of the solitary minister crying blood] recorded [that] "The Jin people forced [His] Majesty to take off [his] ochre robe; [the robe was] all ripped and torn." [In] Cai Tao's *Guoshi houbu* [Subsequent amendment of the state history], he claimed [that] the state and the home were ruined and humiliated; [it] all [happened] at the Hall of Upright Sincerity. That is referring to this [incident].
>
> 丁特起《孤臣泣血錄》云：「金人迫上脫去赭袍，盡皆撦裂。」蔡絛《國史後補》所謂國家破辱，皆在端誠殿，即指此也。[349]

The surrender ceremony that happened in Shangjing and the abdication that happened in *Qingcheng zhaigong* 青城齋宮 (The green enclosure) were both

[348] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu*, *juan* 2, 38. See Appendix 12 for another version of the same scene where Qinzong's imperial robe was stripped off, recorded in *Sanchao beimeng huibian*.
[349] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu*, *juan* 2, 38.

ceremonial in nature. Both included the action of the robes of the surrenderer(s) being taken off. Both scenes ended with violence. The symbolic meaning of being stripped of the Han Chinese attire intertwined with the tragic yet Sinocentric sense of the Han Chinese losing both the leading position in central Asia and the Han Chinese ethnic identity. Both Li Ruoshui and Empress Zhu tried to commit suicide right after witnessing how the Han Chinese attire was removed. Coincidently, both of them were given posthumous titles of *zhong* (忠) and *zhen* (貞), respectively.[350] As recorded in *Shenyin yu*, two years after Empress Zhu's death, Jin Taizong issued a decree giving her the posthumous title of chastity 貞節:

> [In the fourth year of Jianyan, which is the eighth year of Tianhui, 1130] the barbarian […] decreed, "Zhu, wife of Zhao [Huan], [whose] heart [is] clear [while] stepping [on the path of] purity [when] all were muddled, she was sensible. Without deflection, [she consisted in] her rectitude. [Her virtues would] always be passed on till eternity. [It is] suitable to give [her] titles of commendation. [She] shall be given the title of the Lady of Chastity of the County of Jingkang. Refined [and] solemn, [let the vice be] eliminated [and virtue] exalted, together [the title] shows my mind."
>
> [建炎四年即天會八年][351]虜……詔：「趙[桓]妻朱氏，懷清履潔，得一以貞。衆醉獨醒，不屈其節。永垂昉邺，宜予嘉名，可封為靖康郡貞節夫人。典重激揚，共喻朕意。」[352]

[350] Li Ruoshui was given the posthumous title Zhongmin 忠湣; see Song Gaozong 宋高宗, "Li Ruoshui cishi zhongmin zhi," *Quan Songwen*, 201 juan 4440, 124; and Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 38, 13162.
[351] *Shenyin yu*, 213.
[352] *Shenyin yu*, 217.

It should be noted that *zhen* here does not seem to refer to female physical chastity. When other female captives were forced to be topless during the ceremony and became palace slaves afterwards, she was spared from the humiliation and was allowed to be with her husband. Empress Zhu was praised because of her loyalty and moral chastity, most probably referring to her suicide as there were no other further records about her in *Shenyin yu*. The virtue she showed was not gendered. The praise she received resonates with the praise Song Gaozong bestowed on Li Ruoshui: "Going in and out of the barbarians' camps, from beginning to end [he held onto his] Han Chinese integrity. Compelling force could not deflect [him]. [His] will and spirit remained as is" (出入虜營，始終漢節。威武不屈，意氣自如).[353]

That brings us back to the discussion that *zhen*, even when it is bestowed on a woman, does not always specifically refer to the bodily loyalty a woman shows to her husband. Scholars have made attempts to reveal the connection between gendered ideals and to identify how masculine ideals shaped concepts of female virtues. For example, Bret Hinsch tried to link the root of the concept of female chastity in China with ideal masculinity, stating that "[b]ecause female kin belonged to a man's in-group, and therefore influenced his public reputation, it was in his interest to demand female abstinence in order to protect his own honour."[354] He also recognised that political situation might heighten the sense of masculinity and in turn would influence how female chastity was contemplated, pointing out that [m]en gripped with political anxiety often blame fundamental political problems on female immorality," and such perspective would lead to "a long series of attempts by subsequent governments to legitimise and strengthen their rule by invoking female chastity."[355]

[353] Song Gaozong, "Li Ruoshui cishi zhongmin zhi," 124.
[354] Bret Hinsch, "Male Honor and Female Chastity in Early China," *Nan Nü* 13, no. 2 (2011): 200.
[355] Hinsch, "Male Honor and Female Chastity," 203–204.

Yuet Keung Lo also identified that *zhen* "was essentially regarded as a political virtue,"[356] pointing out that it originally referred to "the appropriate fit, as it were, between a moral dilemma and its solution,"[357] and that when the ideal was gendered and applied to interpret female virtues, *zhen*, which he translated as rectitude, in the term *zhennü* (貞女), is "firmly tied to the strict observance of the rites of matrimony" in early China.[358]

The efforts of these scholars trying to associate female ideals with masculinity, or at the very least to make restitution of the original meaning of words that are closely associated with female virtues, are important because writings about female virtue were not entirely written for female education. There is a general agreement that biographies of women and didactic writings for/about women also served as teaching for men.[359] They could be produced as a response to political situations by men, not only reflecting the social expectations for women but also mirroring what was expected of men, or to be precise, men of the ruling class, to be.

More importantly, there has always been a metaphorical connection between female chastity and male loyalty since early China. For example, in *Shiji* 史記 (Record of the grand historian), Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–86 BC) quoted the words of Wang Zhu 王蠋 after the defeat of the Kingdom of Qi 齊 by Yan 燕, which says "A loyal official will not serve two lords, just as a woman of rectitude will not take a second husband" (忠臣不事二君，貞女不更二夫).[360] In other words, *zhen* is not a virtue that is purely

[356] Yuet Keung Lo, "Conversion to Chastity: A Buddhist Catalyst in Early Imperial China," *Nan Nü* 10, no. 1 (2008): 29.
[357] Lo, "Conversion to Chastity," 26.
[358] Lo, "Conversion to Chastity," 42.
[359] Mou, *Gentlemen's Prescriptions for Women's Lives*, 191.
[360] Lo, "Conversion to Chastity," 41.

gendered, allowing comparisons of male moral chastity and female physical chastity to be made.

The metaphor between male loyalty and female chastity has been frequently reused. For example, when Bianjing was captured, Liu Ge 劉豁 (1067–1127) refused to serve the Jin court and committed suicide. He left a suicide note for his family, in which he wrote: "Alas! A chaste maiden does not serve two husbands, and a loyal minister does not serve two rulers. Moreover, [when] the ruler is worried, [it is] the minister's disgrace; [when] the ruler is disgraced, the minister [should] die. To consider compliance to be correct is the way of women. This is why I must die" (夫貞女不事二夫，忠臣不事兩君；況主憂臣辱，主辱臣死，以順為正者，妾婦之道，此予所以必死也).[361]

In his suicide note, Liu Ge not only uses the analogy between female chastity and male loyalty, but it also compares the correct courses of men and women. He quoted Mencius' (372–289) "Teng Wengong" 滕文公 (Duke Wen of Teng), "[t]o consider compliance to be correct is the way of women."[362] In the original essay, after briefly explaining what the way of women was, Mencius elaborated on what the correct course for men was, where he concluded with this famous quote: "He cannot be led stray by riches and honour, moved by poverty and privation, or deflected by power or force. This is what I call a great man" (富貴不能淫，貧賤不能移，威武不能屈。此之謂大丈夫).[363] In both *Mencius* and Liu Ge's suicide note, it is implied that men had a higher principle to adhere to. That is why men must not conform themselves to unrighteousness. On the other hand, if women were able to resist submitting themselves

[361] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 38, 13164.
[362] Jiao Xun, *Mengzi zhengyi*, 417. The text was translated by Irene Bloom, *Mencius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 62.
[363] Jiao Xun, *Mengzi zhengyi*, 419. The text was translated by Irene Bloom, see *Mencius*, 62.

to a superior force in order to pursue righteousness, they could become exemplars for men to look up to. In other words, men who failed to follow this correct course should be ashamed, especially when women, who were not expected to follow this path, were able to adhere to this higher principle. Therefore, in stories of chaste women, disloyal ministers were often mentioned and even shamed, such as the story of one of Huizong's concubines, Lady Wang:

> [When] Huizong [went] to the north [to] hunt, the fourth prince [Wanyan Zongbi 完顏宗弼; Jurchen name: Wushu 兀朮, ?–1148] requested Wang Wanrong [to] become Nianhan's son's wife. His Highness sent her [off and] said, "Serve your new master well." By the time [she had to] leave, Wanrong bawled and said, "How [do I] bear to serve two lords with one body!" In the carriage [she] used a knife [in her] vanity case [to] cut her throat. The prince said, "[Among] the Song ministers of the South, there is not a person like this." [He] selected a place [to] bury her and erected a memorial tablet that said "The Tomb of the Chaste Women" [on it].
>
> 徽宗北狩，四太子請王婉容為粘罕子婦。上遣之曰：「好事新主。」及行，婉容大哭曰：「何忍一身事二主！」就輿中以奩刀自刎。太子曰：「南宋大臣未有如此者。」擇地葬之，立碑曰貞婦冢。[364]

A statement similar to Wanyan Zongbi's remark on Wang's death asserting that too few officials were able to sacrifice for the fallen state could also be seen in Li Ruoshui's biography in *Songshi*:

[364] Yu Wenbao, *Chuijian lu xulu*, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 7, bk. 5, 39.

> The Jin people said within themselves [that] "[during the time of] the collapse of the Liao Empire, [the count of death of] martyrs who died [to persist in] righteousness [reaches] well over ten. [As for the] southern dynasty, [there was] only Vice-Minister Li — the only one [who martyred]."
>
> 金人相與言，「遼國之亡，死義者十數，南朝惟李侍郎一人。」

It also mirrors the comments of Jin Taizong on Empress Zhu in his imperial decree issued in 1130, mentioned earlier in this essay, where she was praised for her sensibility and rectitude, making her stand out of the flustered crowd who assumedly was unable to persevere in the way of righteousness. In fact, the approval and commendation of chaste women often intermingled with the condemnation of the officials who had relinquished their duties, abandoned their values and surrendered to the enemy in different writings. The stories of Wang and Empress Zhu were certainly not the only ones that used one's chastity to shame others' unrighteousness.

This brings us to another question. How is female chastity compared with male integrity in the Song dynasty? I will like to use a collection of poems about Xiannü ci to answer the question.

4. The Virtuous Maiden and the Disgraced Ministers

In this section, the focus would be the comparison between female and male virtues, the emotions provoked by the story in these poems, and how the poems reflected the politics that led to the downfall and eventually the collapse of the Northern Song as well as how the Southern Song Empire dealt with the war, and how the image of the Virtuous Maiden was used to shame the ministers in twelfth-century China.

Xiannü ci was a shrine that worships a maiden, Liu 劉氏, who committed suicide in Xiannü pu 賢女浦 (The shore of the virtuous maiden), named in memory of her suicide as an act of resistance when her father changed plans for her marriage several times. The shrine was located in the Nankang Prefecture 南康縣 (now Nankang District of the city of Ganzhou) in the Jiangxi Province 江西省 and was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

The shrine was said to have been established to commemorate her during the reign of Duangong 端拱 (988–989); nonetheless, not until the reign of Shaoxing 紹興 (1131–1162), a magistrate had her biography carved on a stone tablet.[365] Having her biography carved on stone should be seen as a reaction to the political propaganda in the early Southern Song dynasty when Gaozong's court established excessively shrines for virtuous people, especially the patriots, in order to encourage moral behaviour and reconstruct the moral system in a time of peril.[366] The propaganda is a response to the perception that too few had shown their loyalty and sacrificed for the country while too many had forfeited integrity (*shijie* 失節) during the Song-Jin war.[367] However, it does not seem that the cult of the Virtuous Maiden had received any official titles from the Song court, or to say, state-approved ones.[368] It is more likely that the cult was endorsed by the local government and elites to promote values they deemed important.[369]

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[365] Zhao Zhiqian 趙之謙, ed., *Jiangxi tongzhi* 江西通志 (Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1967), bk. 4, juan 78, 1712.

[366] Yang Junfeng 楊俊峰, *Tang Song zhijian de guojia yu cisi: yi guojia he nanfang Sishen zhifeng hudong wei jiaodian* 唐宋之間的國家與祠祀：以國家和南方祀神之風互動為焦點 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2019), 189.

[367] Yang Junfeng, *Tang Song zhijian de guojia yu cisi*, 202–206.

[368] State-approved female deities would be organized into hierarchal ranks and recorded in *Song huiyao*. See Sumei Yi, "The Making of Female Deities in North China" (PhD diss., University of Washington, Seattle, 2009), 91.

[369] For further information on the roles and reasons of local governments and elites in the promotion of different cults, see Yang Junfeng, *Tang Song zhijian de guojia yu cisi*, 219, 230.

Liu was commemorated for her chastity, and there are at least four versions of the story of this virtuous maiden. Information about the Virtuous Maiden was scarce and scattered, either because she was an object of a local minor cult and not considered to be a very important deity figure in the province, maybe due to the remote geographical location of where Xiannü pu is situated, or simply because related texts were destroyed during chaotic times. The Jiangxi Province was severely affected by the war between Jin and Song, as well as riots and uprisings during the early Southern Song period.[370]

The first one was recorded in *Nenggai zhai manlu* 能改齋漫錄 (Miscellaneous Notes Written in the Nenggai Studio), stating that Liu lived in the reign of Xiangfu 祥符 and committed suicide when she was forced to remarry after her husband's death.[371] Another version claimed that she committed suicide because she was forced to marry her late fiancé's brother.[372] However, these two versions were deemed to be incorrect. Under the entry of "Xiannü pu" 賢女舖 in *Lupu biji* 蘆浦筆記 (Jottings of the reed shore):

> The *Random Records* recorded [that in] Nankang there is the Shore of the Virtuous Maiden, as during the reign of Xiangfu [there was a] maiden, named Liu, when her husband died, [she] vowed [that she] would not marry again. [Her] father and elder brother forced her; hence she drowned herself in a lake, [and] the shore thus got the name. However, I have once stopped by it. At the wall [there] is a tablet [with] inscriptions. To sum up, it seemed to say that initially [the maiden's

[370] See Appendix 13 for examples.
[371] Wu Zeng 吳曾, *Nenggai zhai manlu* 能改齋漫錄, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 5, bk. 4, 40.
[372] Liao Gang, "Ti Xiannü pu" 賢女舖, *Quan Songshi* 23, 15397. The story was recorded as an introduction to the poem.

family] held negotiations [about her] marriage. [A marriage agreement] had been settled, but her fiancé's family was poor, [so] her father and brother breached the agreement and turned to betroth [her to another] person. The maiden said, "[I have] one body yet twice betrothed. Even if I haven't married [any of them yet], how [do I deal with my] integrity?" Her father and brother forced her, thus [she] drowned [herself and] died. [Some] also said the former name [of the shore was] the Chaste Maiden. [The Chaste Maiden Shore is] totally different from this. How can you trust the errors of hearsay?

《漫録》載南康有賢女鋪，蓋祥符間女子，姓劉氏，夫死誓不再嫁，父兄強之，因自沉於水，鋪因得名。然予嘗過之，壁間有碑記，其大略似謂初嘗議昏，已定而夫家貧，父兄悔之，別以許人，女曰：「一身而二適，雖未嫁，柰節何！」父兄強之，乃溺死。亦云舊名貞女，全與此不同。豈信傳聞之誤耶？[373]

The fourth version, which is the "official" version recorded in local gazetteers, stated that she was first betrothed to Cai 蔡. For unknown reasons, her father changed his mind and turned to arrange a marriage to Wu 吳 for her. Unfortunately, Wu died before the marriage took place, and once again, her father tried to resume the previous engagement with Cai. The maiden was deeply ashamed and committed suicide.[374]

The five poems that were written in memory of her show us a glimpse of how the Song people reacted to stories of chaste women. While her virtue was celebrated in

[373] Liu Changshi 劉昌詩, *Lupu biji* 蘆浦筆記 (Notes written in Lupu), juan 4, *Quan Song biji*, vol. 7, bk. 2, 201.
[374] See *Jiangxi tongzhi*, bk. 8, juan 176, 3771; *Jiajing Nanan fuzhi (Jiangxi)*, juan 34, 1308–1309; Chen Yu 陳郁, *Cangyi huayu* 藏一話腴 (The fine words of Cangyi), *Quan Song biji*, vol. 7, bk. 5, 9; and the introduction of the poem "Xiannü ci": Dai Fugu, "Xiannü ci," *Quan Songshi* 54, 33478.

all five poems, her actions were not devoid of judgement. In the poem "Ti Xiannü ci" 題賢女祠 (Writing a poem on the shrine of the virtuous maiden), while celebrating her chastity, Zeng Yuanyi (?–?) also criticised that she should have stopped her father from annulling her original betrothal with Cai in the beginning, and questioned, "[When] money boxes from the Wu family were laid out at the hall, she [fell] silent, why didn't she speak?" (吳家箱幣羅堂前，女兮脈脈胡不言).[375]

While the twists and turns in the official version added the complexity of the meaning of chastity and invited possible criticisms, the many versions of Liu's suicide story were essentially the story of every chaste woman or, even, every martyr who died for the values of which they eventually embody: Injustice was inflicted on them, and in death they gained agency and were transformed from victims to hero/ines and were written into cultural and historical memory.[376] The final outcome is the most critical part of the story.

Among the five poems that were written in memory of her recorded in *Quan Songshi*, four mentioned the shame and guilt that is, or should be, induced by men after reading the story of the Virtuous Maiden, and three directly shamed men by comparing her virtues with men who failed to pursue such virtues. This was not only because of the long literary tradition of comparing female chastity and male virtues but also due to a combination of political factors that appeared as a result of the downfall and collapse of the Northern Song dynasty and triggered a specific reaction to the story of the maiden.

The first poem to be analysed is technically two quatrains but is combined into a poem in *Quan Songshi.* The two quatrains were also recorded in *Nenggai zhai manlu.*

[375] Zeng Yuanyi, "Ti Xiannü ci" 題賢女祠, *Quan Songshi* 62, 38827–38828.
[376] Fong, "Signifying Bodies," 142.

It was written by Wang Ge 汪革 (?–1110) definitely before the collapse of the Northern Song dynasty considering the author died before the Jin-Song war even started:

> The virtuous maiden has marked her name for several autumns,
> [As] passers-by recollect the incident, till this day, they sorrow.
> The clouds of the Xiang [river] and the rains of Chu, [who] knows where they are?
> [With] the moon cold, the wind bitter, the river flows on its own.
> A woman could leave her [good] name behind,
> [while] shame-concealing, humiliation-enduring ministers are everywhere.
> [How] pitiful the sobbing water at the shore [sounds],
> Just like the [weeping] sound of Cao E on the river.
> 賢女標名幾度秋，行人撫事至今愁。
> 湘雲楚雨知何處，月冷風悲江自流。
> 女子能留身後名，包羞忍恥漫公卿。
> 可憐嗚咽灘頭水，渾似曹娥江上聲。[377]

The poem is a self-revelation rather than a celebration of the virtues of the maiden(s) or a mere record of the author's travel to the shrine. Wang Ge came first in the central government exam (*huishi* 會試) held by the ministry of rites (*libu* 禮部). Unfortunately, he never became a minister of higher ranks as he refused to serve under Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047–1126).[378] When he died, he was a teacher at the Chu prefectural school.[379] The great sorrow he revealed in the poem was caused by the corrupted

[377] Fu Xuancong et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 22, 14758–14759.
[378] Fu Xuancong et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 22, 14758.
[379] Fu Xuancong et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 22, 14758. Also see Xie Ke, "Ji Wuyi xiong wen," *Quan Songwen* 136, juan 2945, 371.

ministers in power at the time, and his noncompliance led to the tragedy he shared with Qu Yuan 屈原 (c.340–278 BC) as he drifted among "the clouds of the Xiang [river] and the rains of Chu." The virtue of the maidens, the Virtuous Maiden and Cao E, who died for filial piety instead of chastity, which he celebrated in the poem, was one of a broader sense. It did not have to be chastity, filial piety, or any specific virtue. It simply represented a quality that the maidens possessed and the ministers lacked.

Wang Ge was not the only one who sensed that Cai Jing's administration was jeopardising the empire. Liao Gang 廖剛 (1070–1143), who also wrote a poem about the Shore of the Virtuous Maiden, intentionally requested to leave the central government and became a magistrate in the military prefecture of Xinghua 興化軍 (now Putian in Fujian Province). Liao was known to be upright and outspoken and was not afraid to speak against Cai Jing and later Qin Gui 秦檜 (1090–1155).[380] In his poem, he explained the importance of the virtue he saw in the Virtuous Maiden:

> [Within] the area of Nan'an military prefecture, there was the Shore of the Chaste Maiden. [According to] hearsay: There was a maiden [who] received betrothal [gifts], had not [yet] married, and her fiancé died. Her family [had a] change [of mind and] betrothed [her to] her fiancé's brother. The maiden, using righteousness [as a reason], did not agree and refused, [but her request] was not complied with; thus [she] threw [herself into the] water and died. The shore was located at the lake; therefore, because of this, [the shore] was named [after her]. Later, to avoid the naming taboo, [its name was] changed to today's name. Xie Xiaolian, the distinguished master who administered the Nankang

[380] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 33, 11590, 11592.

County, traced and wrote about this story. [The county] lieutenant Zeng Dingmin [wrote] a poem [in which he] reused Xie's rhyme and matched Xie's writing. [If you] travel to Qianzhou, [the shore is] its famous site.

In this world, [within all] men, half of them should be ashamed,

[She has a] chaste demeanour; who wished to send [her] to follow the flow?

For a hundred years, [I] bear the shame: [What has] my life contributed to?

[If] a promise is difficult to be fulfilled, death immediately ends [everything].

The bright moon and the green stream, together, would be constantly clean.

The lonely cloud and the setting sun always contain sadness.

Conceivably, [I] know for all eternity [they] sorrowed [for] the passing,

[And] would not wait for the tree leaves by the shore [to fall in] autumn.

南安軍之境，舊有貞女舖。相傳云：有一女子受聘，未嫁而夫卒，其家更許其兄弟。女以義不可，辭不獲從，遂投水而死。舖在鐔上，因以得名。後避諱改今名。謝孝廉名師知南康縣，追記其事。尉曾定民詩，次其韵和之。往虔州之大觀也。

世上男兒半可羞，貞姿誰欲遣隨流。

百年負愧生何益，一諾難酬死即休。

明月碧溪長共潔，孤雲落日自含愁。

懸知萬古悲行客，不待亭皋木葉秋。

The introduction to the poem revealed that there were poetic exchanges on the same topic, but the poems did not survive to the present day. In this poem, chastity was interpreted as the refusal to yield to injustice in order to pursue righteousness. Liao asserted that it is better to die if one is unable to fulfil a promise rather than to "follow the flow," live and endure the shame. Here, even for the maiden herself, chastity was depicted as a sense of spiritual purity, which both men and women could strive to be, rather than a gendered analogy between integrity and fidelity.

However, in poems that were composed after the Song-Jin war came to an end, the fidelity of the Virtuous Maiden is highlighted and takes centre stage when the maiden's chastity was set to compare with male loyalty, especially in a time when the state was in grave danger. The poem titled "Xiannü ci" 賢女祠 (The shrine of the virtuous maiden) written by Dai Fugu 戴復古 (1167–?) is the most outspoken one in using the story of the Virtuous Maiden to criticise the disloyal officials, presumably the ones during the collapse of the Northern Song dynasty:

> Outside the prefecture of Nankang, twenty *li* [away from the prefecture, there is] a shrine [worshipping] a maiden. Once [there was] a maiden Liu. [She was] young and bright. [Her] father [and] mother initially used [her] to deceive Cai [by] groundlessly rejecting Cai in order to promise Wu [a marriage with the girl]. Wu died; again [the parents] used [her to] deceive Cai. The maiden said, "[I,] the maiden, was one initially betrothed to Cai. [My parents] have taken me away to be betrothed to Wu for two years already. Now Wu died, again [my parents] arranged a marriage [with] Cai. [How does] a maiden twice betrothed still [have] the decency to tread on one's doorstep?" [She] threw [her] body into a pond and died.

[There are] gentlemen [who] have corrupted their character and integrity,

[Their] ashamed spirits [were] buried [in] the Nine Plains.

[Whereas the maiden in the] secluded [inner] quarters holds [a sense of] high moral rectitude,

[for] thousands of years [her] glorified name [is] marked.

[The] father did not give weight to his promises,

[However, the] daughter was able to make light of the matter of death and life.

[In] the cold pond sinks the autumn moon,

[her] heart and [her] story both [shining] clear and bright.

南康縣外二十里有女祠。昔有劉氏女少而慧，父母初以詐蔡，無故絕蔡而以許吳。吳亡，又以詐蔡。女曰：女子身初許蔡，奪以許吳二年矣。今吳亡，復以許蔡。一女二許人，尚何顏面登人之門。投身于潭而死。

士有敗風節，慙魂埋九京。

幽閨持大誼，千載著嘉名。

父不重然諾，女能輕死生。

寒潭墮秋月，心跡兩清明。[381]

Here the definition of chastity is further narrowed down. The introduction of the poem emphasises that the maiden was ashamed that she was betrothed to two men, implying that the gentlemen who surrendered to the enemy and served two states should be ashamed as well. The belief that a woman should only serve and be loyal to one

[381] Fu Xuancong et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 54, 33478.

husband was parallel to the notion that a minister should only serve and be loyal to one state. The idea of chastity in the poem becomes gendered in the context of war. The same gendered interpretation can also be found in the poem written by Zeng Yuanyi 曾原一, who lived around the same period of time as Dai Fugu, in which having two husbands also is the focal source of the maiden's shame: "Alas! [She was] betrothed to Cai, then to Wu. Marrying Wu, rejecting Cai, eventually [she would have] two husbands" (嗟嗟許蔡復許吳，女吳絕蔡成二夫).[382]

It should be noted that the criticisms towards the surrendered officials during the Jin-Song wars are usually subtle. In *Cangyi huayu* 藏一話腴 (The fine words of Cangyi), Chen Yu 陳郁 (1184–1275) asked a rhetorical question to shame historical figures who served two or more states after telling the story of the Virtuous Maiden and quoting Dai Fugu's poem,

> I ponder about Wang Jian [452–489], who had [good] knowledge [and was capable in handling] political affairs, received high positions from [the dynasties of] Jin [266–420] and Song [420–479] and [still] personally took [the imperial] seal and handed it to Qi [479–502]; Feng Dao [882–954], a high-ranked minister willing to serve various dynasties, peculiarly could not compare with women who possessed [more sense of] righteousness [than he did]. [Are Wang Jian and Feng Dao] ashamed of that?
>
> 余謂王儉有文學政事，受晉、宋高爵，而躬執璽以授齊；馮道身為大臣，而甘事數姓，曾不若女子之有節誼也，愧諸？[383]

[382] Fu Xuancong et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 62, 38828.
[383] Chen Yu, *Cangyi huayu*, 9.

The criticism he expressed for Wang Jian and Feng Dao was exactly the same people in the Southern Song dynasty had for the Northern Song officials who surrendered to the Jin Empire. In 1127, Song Gaozong issued a decree reprimanding these disloyal officials, stating that the Song court had always treated the literati well, but many of them failed to show loyalty to the Song Empire when the Northern Song dynasty collapsed.[384]

However, the issuing of the decree was more likely a balancing act — while he tried to encourage moral behaviours by removing the titles of some of the disloyal ministers, a lot more were pardoned.[385] Gaozong is exceptionally generous when it comes to pardoning the officials who surrendered to Jin and/or their family members. In 1134, he even issued another decree, stating that if officials who were forced to serve the Jin Empire during the Song-Jin war were willing to return to the Song court and pledge allegiance, they could keep their original positions and salaries.[386]

Gaozong's generosity, of course, was not well received by everyone. Ironically, anyone who openly opposed his decisions would risk their own positions. Take Liao Gang as an example. Gaozong appointed the grandsons of Zhang Dun 章惇 (1035–1106) to take up positions in the government while Zhang Dun was held accountable for jeopardising the country at the time. Liao Gang was the supervising secretary (*jishizhong* 給事中) at the time, and he returned the imperial decree to the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu sheng* 尚書省), stating that if the sons and grandsons of Zhang Dun can still take up posts in the government, the Song court would fail to show the public that there was any punishment for jeopardising the country. Liao Gang was

[384] Song Gaozong, "Cuanchu tousheng sangjie shidafu shouzhao 竄黜偷生喪節士大夫手詔," *Quan Songwen*, 201 juan 4440, 123.
[385] Song Gaozong, "Cuanchu tousheng sangjie shidafu shouzhao," *Quan Songwen*, 201 juan 4440, 123.
[386] Song Gaozong, "Yu Jingkang panchen neng shushen yigui dangfu juezhi shouzhao," *Quan Songwen*, 201 juan 4484, 348–349.

demoted and eventually had to request to give up his post in the central government and was relegated to the position of a prefect of Zhangzhou Prefecture 漳州 (now the southern part of Fujian Province).[387]

Literary inquisitions were common in the Southern Song dynasty, and the absolutist style of rule became normality, starting when Qin Gui came to power, followed by the autocratic rule of Xiaozong 孝宗 (1127–1194, r. 1162–1189), and continued by the dominance of powerful ministers, such as Han Tuozhou 韓侂胄 (1152–1207) and Shi Miyuan 史彌遠 (1164–1233).[388] Thus, analogies and allusions became useful tools that helped express one's opinion, as shown in the example in *Cangyi huayu* mentioned earlier. The fact that Dai Fugu did not want to take imperial examinations and become an official might allow him to be more outspoken on such sensitive political issues.[389]

Contrastingly, political complications caused by the aftermath of how the Song court dealt with the war with Jin and the shame induced by the final decision made by the Song might lead to extra subtlety, which makes the poem written by Luo Yuan 羅願 (1136–1184) about the Virtuous Maiden seem difficult to decipher at first glance:

> [Being] promised marriage, the maiden has just been betrothed.
> In the past, people truly admired [her].
> This person has already been occupied,
> How could [she] be forcefully given the wild goose?
> Alas! Her father was foolish,

[387] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 33, 11591.
[388] See Shen Songqin 沈松勤, *Nan Song wenren yu dangzheng* 南宋文人與黨爭 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2005), 406–425; Nap-Yin Lau, "The Absolute Reign of Sung Hsiao-tsung; and Chu Ming-kin, "The Secret of Long Tenure: A Study of Zheng Gangzhong's Letters to Qin Gui's Associates," *T'oung Pao* 102, no. 1–3 (2016): 123.
[389] Jin Zhishan, ed., *Dai Fugu shiji*, 1–2.

Abandoning a covenant, hoping to find [another one] anew.

Dead or alive, [the couple] would once again be reunited,

Everyone says [she] has fulfilled her original wish.

Who knew that poor girl

[Has the] righteousness and uprightness [that] move fragrant minds.

Of late she had felt deep shame,

and now she had been overcome with thick remorse.

With an upright nature, she would not betray anyone,

Her priceless body perished in the flowing river.

I came [to] visit the temple in the wilderness,

My eyes dazzled by the cold, deep lake.

At the desolation of this lone river,

I, the wandering traveller, hear the one who truly understands me.

許嫁女始字，昔人良所欽。

此身有所屬，安得強委禽。

嗟哉乃翁愚，棄盟欲重尋。

死生還復合，世謂遂初心。

誰知彼寒女，義烈動芳襟。

頃來已一慚，厚愧方在今。

正性不負物，臨流殞千金。

我來弔叢祠，目眩寒潭深。

淒涼一川上，行客聞知音。[390]

[390] Fu Xuancong et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 46, 28967.

While the idea that a woman belongs to one husband is still mentioned, in line with the trend of a narrowing definition of chastity after the collapse of the Northern Song, it is not used to compare with the loyalty of ministers or to be depicted as the essence of chastity. As a result, it sounded less critical. The poem contains a perplexing blend of emotions such as admiration, guilt and a sense of personal connection he felt that linked him with the maiden. His poem was not written to shame anyone. Instead, he was the one who felt ashamed when he visited the shrine. Curiously, he also saw the maiden as one who would understand him.

His father, Luo Ruji 羅汝楫 (?–?), might be the reason why he felt this way. Luo Ruji rose to power by supporting Qin Gui's policy of peace negotiations with the Jin Empire. Luo Yuan was reportedly deeply ashamed of the fact that Luo Ruji was one of the ministers who framed Yue Fei 岳飛 (1103–1142).[391] The core value he celebrated here was *yi* 義 (righteousness), the virtue the maiden succeeded in pursuing and his own father failed to achieve. Was he ashamed because he disagreed with the Song court's final decision to negotiate peace? Or was he ashamed simply because his father framed an innocent man? Either way, it would be unfilial if he openly and directly criticised his own father, although he understood that the actions of his father were wrongful. The shame could only fall on Luo Yuan himself.

It seemed that he quietly took the side opposite to his father's camp, as it was recorded that he only stepped foot inside the temple commemorating Yue Fei after he felt that he had done well in his official position, implying that he must have felt that Yue Fei's contribution to the state was so significant that only by doing good to the state and the people he could help wash away his father's sins.[392] More importantly,

[391] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 33, 11723–11724.
[392] Tuotuo et al., *Songshi* 33, 11723–11724.

both he and the maiden shared the same pain of having fathers who failed to do the right thing, and as a consequence they had to suffer because of the misdeeds of their fathers, but at least they could redeem themselves by trying to do the right thing.

5. Conclusion

Chastity has always been emphasised and promoted throughout Chinese history, but the definition of chastity and its application have shifted according to changing times. *Zhen* was not necessarily linked to a certain gender and did not necessarily end with death. It could be described as reacting appropriately and aligning their actions with *yi*, making the interpretation of chastity incredibly flexible.

However, the notion of *zhen* became gendered with the analogy between the loyalty of ministers and the chastity of women. This analogy was particularly emphasised in times of chaos to reprimand the disloyal ministers. By highlighting stories of chaste women, immoral men who betrayed the dynasty of the Han people were shamed. The death of the Virtuous Maiden was initially illustrated as her reaction to injustice and her pursuit for righteousness, but as the Song dynasty went to war with the Jin, her death was interpreted as a realisation of her sexual virtue and loyalty towards her husband/fiancé. Even in Luo Yuan's poem, while the pursuit of righteousness was still a common virtue both men and women shared, the perception of women's righteous behaviour leaned towards her bodily loyalty towards her husband/fiancé. The analogy between a loyal minister and a chaste woman was implied. The emphasis of such analogy certainly fostered the establishment of and paved the way for the chastity cult.

Conclusion

The representations of women related to war, including the ones in the period 1100-1200, has been shaped by gender notions in which the war victims were often feminised, marginalised and even objectified. The dissertation demonstrates how their images are produced, interpreted, and transformed over time in the midst of the everchanging interstate relations, and how such images in turn shaped the social expectations for women. More importantly, the research shows how they situate themselves in the most challenging situation, and we are able to view them more than mere victims.

The research is divided into three parts. The first part examines the political narratives and literary traditions at the time. They were the official and/or popular narratives at the time. In these narratives, women were portrayed to be utterly passive and submissive. The research argues that these narratives produce generalised images of female war victims and reveal how femininities were marginalised and even objectified by masculinities, including the invading Jin army, the rebelling bandits, and even the Song soldiers during war time. Even if male poets tried to write about contemporary female war victims, their images were made to fit into the literary tradition of depicting female war victims, especially those who were forced to leave their families and even their homeland.

However, the images constructed in the said narratives did not include many other realities lived by many others. Therefore, the second part focuses on “the others”. The images examined in the second part can be divided into two groups. The first group is most often nameless and voiceless, who were neglected or excluded by the narratives mentioned. Admittedly, all human beings who had to face war were stripped off some

part of their agency and were left with few options. Nonetheless, this part shows the readers more details of their lives at the time: The difficulties they faced as they struggled to survive and the ways to seek hope and comfort to support themselves during the darkest moments. This part demonstrates how the second group of women made use of the situation, grabbed the opportunities they have found, and tried to climb up the social ladders. They were mostly linked with military camps or military men. The research shows the effects social changes and ideological conflicts have on women of military families, and how their depictions differ in accordance with whatever was seen fitting to the elite narratives and social expectations.

The third part would then be about the female virtues that were celebrated at the time. Chapter five focuses on the heroic qualities of women at the time when writers tried to negotiate and balance the feminine and masculine qualities portrayed by women. While women would still be praised for their excellent leadership in emergencies, those who were overly masculinised or militarised could be viewed as strange. On the other hand, Chapter Six explores how the notion of *zhen* moved slowly to be more feminised as the allusions between loyal ministers and chaste women became exceedingly emphasised. While these accounts about exemplary women served as teachings for men, we would see how ideals of masculinity in turn moulded the concepts of feminine integrity and the female roles in society and the family.[393]

The existing accounts most often had a focus on specific types of women: 1) Women of the elite classes, especially the ones who could exercise political influence at the court and 2) exemplary women, especially martyrs. The research examines "the others" and their experiences. By including the "othered women", the research offers new perspectives on female war experiences and the feminine virtues of the

[393] Mou, *Gentlemen's Prescriptions for Women's Lives*, 191.

contemporary people by investigating historical allusions and contemporary re-evaluations of historical female figures.

In this research, I argue how femininities and masculinities were portrayed at the time, especially when society had become highly militarised due to war. The extremities of the two ends stretched from the marginalised femininities, with examples of female captives being murdered as sacrificial offerings or execration objects as shown in Chapter One, to the honoured masculinities, with examples of women actively participating in warfare, as shown in Chapter Five.

Via the negotiations between how femininities and masculinities should be depicted in these women's stories, it was revealed that the boundaries between these notions were ambiguous, especially at times of chaos. However, we would also see a tightening of moral standards towards women, which would lead to the chastity cult in later periods.

There have been discussions and counterarguments on whether the turning point in gender history of China happened in the Song dynasty. By investigating the effects war had on women, I connect the gap in the research on women's history in several ways.

First, I add to the discussion about whether the turning point in Chinese history, including gender history, takes place in Song dynasty. However, even when this idea suggested by early scholars has mostly been challenged in more recent studies, the Song dynasty is still placed at a focal point in debates regarding historical transitions, as historians have coined terms such as the Tang-Song transformation and the Song-Yuan-Ming transition.[394] This dissertation offers a new perspective to look into the changes

[394] Smith, "Problematizing the Song-Yuan-Ming Transition," 1, in Smith and von Glahn eds, *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, 1-34.

happening in the twelfth century China, and sheds light on how these changes would affect the social expectations towards and status of women in later periods.

Previous studies have focused on many aspects of women's lives in pre-modern China, such as their family lives, legal standing, and gender roles. However, scholars seldom focus on their lives at wartime. There are a few exceptions, mainly focusing on the war victims, especially the ones who have been kidnapped or captured. I believe that war would have a bigger impact on women's lives. By focusing on the writings related to women and femininity at the time and analysing the images and impressions of women related to war, the dissertation examines the roles of and the social expectations towards women, and investigates the changes, however subtle they are, in them.

Other than studies regarding women living in the Song dynasty, I also hope to bridge the gap between related studies of the mid-imperial era, the late imperial era and the modern era. While scholars focusing on women of the Late Imperial China are able to base their studies on works that were written by women, this study focuses on indirect narrative representations due to problems, such as the authorship questions and the poor preservations of women's works at the time.

On the other hand, there have always been a strong link between literati and women, or to be more exact, women's works, in studies on women's voices in pre-modern China. As this dissertation focuses on the representations of women instead of women's voices, it allows the women from other social classes to share the spotlight with those who are from the literati families and be one of the focuses of this study.

There have been efforts of including women's participation in decision making "in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention,

management, and resolution of conflicts".[395] Other than the recognition of women's agency in peacemaking, scholars have also been trying to reevaluate women's roles and experiences in modern warfare.[396] The dissertation explores the roles of women other than looking at them as mere victims. We learn more about their lives through their hopes and fears, ambitions and beliefs even in their utmost desperation.

Last but not least, there were still aspects that were not explored as they were beyond the scope of this research, for example, for the stories of the Song women in the Jin Empire, how some of the virtues were considered to be universal and were celebrated in the foreign lands, how the idea of "others" and the sense of universality affected their perspectives at the time, as well as the preservation, compilation, and circulation of related writings, etc. It would take a step further from existing studies, such as Linda Cooke Johnson's *Women of the Conquest Dynasties: Gender and Identity in Liao and Jin China* (2011), and Hilde de Weerdt's *Information, Territory, and Networks: The Crisis and Maintenance of Empire in Song China* (2015). Nonetheless, these topics represent fruitful avenues for further research.

[395] Mayanja, "Armed Conflict and Women - 10 Years of Security Council Resolution 1325," https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/armed-conflict-and-women-10-years-security-council-resolution-1325. Last accessed 29 August 2024.
[396] For example, see Laura Sjoberg, *Women as Wartime Rapists: Beyond Sensation and Stereotyping* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

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Appendix

1. 〈貧婦歎〉呂南公
   昨日良人死窮獨，糧空子幼身自哭。賣衣葬罷急謀嫁，富翁立待封居屋。夫妻寒賤恩亦深，縗麻終制非無心。飢腸雷鳴無可奈，禮法雖存何足賴。[397]

2. 然偏裨遠去，紀律漸疏，臣所目擊者，試言其略：凡稱統領，兵數不多，家口隨行，一聞賊至，擇其精銳，護送老小，其用以自隨者，祇辦走計耳。此當議者一也。家糧口券，贍給無餘，虜掠婦女，軍中多有，養既不足，寧免作過。此當議者二也。所至州軍，邀求犒設，稍忤其意，公肆劫持。守令憚於生事，竭取於民而奉之。此當議者三也。詭名虛券，隨在批請，死亡逃竄，開破不明，枉費官物，誰敢檢察？此可議者四也。悠悠之徒，或假關節，或行賄賂，寄名軍籍，規冒功賞，用命之人安得不怨？此可議者五也。事類此者，未可悉數。[398]

3. 〈昭君〉呂本中

   凍雲霾空風折木，烏孫公主歌黃鵠。
   昭君請自嫁單于，當時各倚顏如玉。
   露鬢雲鬟胡地塵，帳中誰是可憐人。
   左抱琵琶右揮手，胡地漢宮能幾春。
   嗚呼古來出婦嫁鄉曲，何曾肯望秦雲哭。[399]

4. 〈李伯時畫十古圖鄭尚明作詩詩辭多振絕因為同賦·明妃出塞〉劉子翬
   羞貌丹青鬪麗顏，為君一笑靜天山。西京自有麒麟閣，畫向功臣衛霍間。[400]

5. 〈和介甫明妃曲〉梅堯臣
   明妃命薄漢計拙，憑仗丹青死誤人。
   一別漢宮空掩淚，便隨邊馬向邊塵。
   馬上山川難記憶，明明夜月如相識。
   月下琵琶旋製聲，手彈心苦誰知得。
   辭家只欲奉君王，豈意蛾眉入虎狼。
   男兒反覆尚不保，女子輕微何可望。
   青冢猶存塞路遠，長安不見舊陵荒。[401]

6. 〈僕持節朔庭自燕山向北部落以三分爲率南人居其二聞南使過駢肩引頸氣哽不得語但泣數行下或以慨歎僕每爲揮涕憚見也因作出入塞紀其事用示有志節憫國難者云·出塞〉
   曹勛

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[397] Fu Xuancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 18, 11838.
[398] Ji Ling 季陵, "Lun shengfei yuguo qiangbing ximin zhi ce shu" 論省費裕國強兵息民之策疏, *Quan Songwen* 161, 239–240.
[399] Fu Xancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 28, 18078.
[400] Fu Xancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 34, 21401–21402.
[401] Fu Xancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 5, 3338.

聞道南使歸，路從城中去。
豈如車上鉼，猶掛歸去路。
引首恐過盡，馬疾忽無處。
吞聲送百感，南望淚如雨。[402]

7. 呂中大事記曰：紹興十年，金人渝盟，軍民皆歸咎於秦檜，而檜傲然不動。順昌既捷之後，先竄趙鼎，而人無敢言矣。柘皐既捷之後，盡罷諸將而兵隸御前矣。向者戰敗而求和，今則戰勝而求和矣；向者戰敗而棄地，今則戰勝而棄地矣；向者使命之費猶有限，今歲幣銀帛各三十五萬匹兩，而賀禮又有金器千兩、銀器萬兩、錦綺千匹矣。岳飛復唐、鄧，張俊、吳璘復商、秦，吳玠復方山、和尚原，皆間關百戰而後得，今吾不能有其地，反盡割入於敵，聽其分畫矣。世忠田金陵，岳飛田鄂，王之奇田兩淮，吳玠田梁、洋，樊賓、宗剛田荊州，皆累年經理而後成，今吾不能屯田，反使敵創屯田軍於河南矣。吾國之民，不肯入敵，殺之猶不從，而朝廷必以與敵，使遺黎飲泣內恨，而中原之人心失矣。李世輔不顧其親來歸，烏珠引避其忠，今乃置之謫籍，而中原豪傑之心失矣。士大夫陷沒敵中，家屬有在中國者，狥敵人之情而悉還之，方其去時，如赴井阱，而吾國衣冠之氣沮矣。張俊深忌劉錡、岳飛，每言飛赴援遲而錡戰不力，遂與檜謀斥錡而殺飛，而天下忠憤之氣皆沮矣。何俌龜鑑曰：我高宗皇帝所以狥奉春之拙謀，壞祖生之壯志，蓋仁孝之心，有所感觸，而不能不爾也。故寧忍嫚書之恥而不忍廢務在養民之事，寧割鴻溝之半，而毋寧輟未央稱壽之儀，敬觀聖訓有曰：朕兼愛南北之民，屈於講和，非怯于用兵也。若敵國交惡，天下受弊，朕實念之，知此則可以知吾君之仁。又曰：北望庭闈，踰十五年，幾於無淚可揮，無腸可斷，所以頻遣使指，屈己奉幣者，皆以此也。知此則可以知吾君之孝。[403]

Gu Kaizhi, “Lady Feng’s Act of Self-Sacrifice.” Last accessed August 19, 2024.https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Admonitions_Scroll_Scene_4.jpg



[402] Fu Xancong, Ni Qixin, et al., eds., *Quan Songshi* 33, 21082.
[403] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 9, 2350–2351.

8. 十一午，抵真定，入城，館於帥府。二王令萬騎先馳，助攻中山，觀動靜。千戶韶合宴款二王，以朱妃、朱慎妃工吟詠，使唱新歌。強之再，朱妃作歌云：「昔居天上兮，珠宮玉闕，今居草莽兮，青衫淚濕。屈身辱志兮，恨難雪，歸泉下兮，愁絕。」朱慎妃和歌云：「幼富貴兮綺羅裳，長入宮兮侍當陽。今委頓兮異鄉，命不辰兮志不強。」皆作而不唱。[404]

9. 夫婦人之行，不出於閨房窔奧之間，飲食衣服之事，其迹甚微，而其賢不肖，則家道或以盛衰，士行或以成毀。此無它，其迹微則其積著也。繇簞食豆羹見於色而移於事，則可使親戚離；無爭求媚妬之端而充其類，則父子、兄弟、夫婦、長幼可使得其道而天下平。[405]

10. 金帝、后、諸王郎君大僚乘騎，前繼以契丹樂一行，後導白旂五：云「俘宋二帝」，云「俘宋二后」，云「俘叛奴趙[構]母、妻」，云「俘宋諸王、駙馬」，云「俘宋兩宮眷屬」。繼以珍玉八十席，兵士呵殿其後。宋帝、后均帕頭、民服，外襲羊裘。諸王、駙馬、妃嬪、王妃、帝姬、宗室婦女、奄人均露上體，披羊裘……是夜，少后朱氏自縊，救免，仍死於水。[406]

11. 是日讀詔罷，粘罕使蕭慶脫御服，若水向前抱持上，令不可脫。云：「這賊亂做，此是大朝真天子，你等狗輩不得無禮。」左手抱上，右手指粘罕以罵之，被數番人打破口面流血，扯過一邊。見上脫了御服，即時氣絕倒地。[407]

12. 《建炎以來繫年要錄》卷四十二
閩中之盜不可急，宜求所以消之。江西之盜不可緩，宜求所以滅之。[408]
李光〈應詔論盜賊事宜狀〉
本路[江西]自經金人蹂踐，繼以李成、曹成、劉忠輩驅擄劫掠，十室九空，其被害比他路尤甚。[409]
韓璜〈陳民間疾苦奏〉
自江西至湖南，無問郡縣與村落，極目灰燼，所至破殘，十室九空。詢其所以，皆緣金人未到，而潰散之兵先至。金人既去，而襲逐之師繼至。官兵盜賊，劫掠一同，城市鄉村，搜索殆盡。[410]

[404] Wang Chengdi, *Qinggong yiyu*, 179.
[405] Cheng Ju, "Song fengyilang ruren Zengshi muzhiming," *Quan Songwen*, 155 juan 3343, 407.
[406] *Shenyin yu*, 209–210.
[407] Xu Mengxin, *Sanguo beichao huibian*, bk. Yi, 219.
[408] Li Xinchuan, *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu*, 772–773.
[409] Li Guang, "Yingzhao lun daozei shiyi zhuang," *Quan Songwen*, 154 yuan 3310, 125.
[410] Han Huang, "Chen minjian jiku zou," *Quan Songwen*, 179 juan 3925, 213.