

## *Ajar Shells and Hidden Dragons—Chinese Women’s Strategies of Talent Readjustment in Late Imperial China (1550-1850)*

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### ABSTRACT

This article employs the life trajectories and the literary works of two erudite ladies, Wu Zao (1799-1862) and Gu Ruopu (1592-1861), in late Imperial China (1550-1850) to present the origin of the combination of women’s literary pursuits, feminist influence, and sentiments of nationalism. By analysing features in the literary productions, domestic arrangements, and social impacts of two educated women, this article argues that the birth of the connection between feminist power and patriotist emotion remained implicit from 1550 to 1850 due to some strategies deliberately adopted by the talented female literati to layer their genuine concerns. However, their radical intents and hidden sentiments were revealed explicitly in their poetries or play scripts, for they created virtual feminist and nationalist leadership images in their literary formation surpassing their spatial and temporal confinement.

This article contends that before the interaction of feminism and nationalism occurred overtly in early twentieth-century China, women’s literary narrative was commonly imbued with nationalism and patriotism in late Imperial China (1550-1850) through strategic cloaks blurred this narrative hidden within restricted spheres.

### INTRODUCTION

During the Late Qing Dynasty in China, literary skills and scholarly pursuits of a daughter would be either bliss or a curse to the whole family, and mothers are often at a loss of what to teach such a child. As easy and as simple as possible, the mother would suggest her beloved to “hide” her talents, addressing her talents in a secret place and letting it be only for talents’ sake. Though others may notice this daughter’s specialty, it will not bring any troubles to the entire family and the daughter. This solution does not, in any way, mean that the mother does not value her daughter’s talent, nor does it imply that the mother does not understand or comprehend such talent. In fact, the mother fully acknowledges and highly complements the daughter’s talents and pursuits, and an elegant poem was even written by a mother to instruct her daughter, (actually her daughter-in-law), about the redirection of female talents:

“Be a hidden dragon, do not act,  
The hen who crows brings shame upon herself.  
Take heed, my daughter of the inner chambers,

Be gentle and docile, and you will have no worries.”<sup>1</sup>

“Hidden Dragon” in *Book of Changes* exclusively refers to Qian hexagram, which represents the power of men and male characters. In this poem, the mother, Cai Jingyi, considered her daughter as having a male character and suggested that she be modest and still instead of using her special ability to do the exact same things that males do. If the daughter followed the mother’s instruction, according to the poem, the rewards of redirecting talents would be for the daughter to have an undisturbed place as protection and a mantle to develop her own interests and speciality.

The abovementioned description between literature talents and the mother-daughter relationship in Dorothy KO’s *Teachers of the Inner Chambers* is inspiring because of three diverting manifestations abstracted from the description: Why are some characters or talents defined as male kind and how could talented women unleash their male characteristics from their limited circumstances? How could erudite women articulate their talents and desires in their literary works and how can we interpret female images presented in those literary works to ponder deeply over a genuine self-constructed female avatar with authentic literary features? Lastly, why could “to hide your talents” be the most appropriate solution to fine-tune male-kind characteristics that dwell in female bodies and win opportunities for female development and even achieve self-realization?

An investigation of poetries produced mainly by talented women of the late Qing Dynasty and research published by sinology researchers to reconstruct the life trajectories of women in the Qing Dynasty is conducted to shed some light on the birth and the origin of the Chinese feminist leadership, especially the relation between Chinese feminist leadership and nationalist sentiments. When reading through literature related to female social movements in the Republic of China (after 1912-1949), it was found that feminist and nationalist adroitly connected and closely interlaced with one another to breed feminist leadership. However, while examining the literature of the Ming-Qing Dynasty, only a few types of research provided the relationship between leadership, feminism, and patriotism. This paper concentrates on tracing

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<sup>1</sup> Ko, Dorothy.1994. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-century China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

the nationalist sentiments in the feminist narrative in order to scrutinize whether the combination of feminist leadership and nationalist sentiments merely derived from threats of dynastic subversion in the Republic of China, or whether a foundation for connection between feminist leadership and nationalist sentiments had existed at least since late Imperial China (1500-1900). It also documents how talented women searched covers to camouflage their talents—an ability to create a feminine narrative and feminist power against male dominance—and how those women pleaded for a privileged place to advance their own literary interests. In the presentation of Wu Zao's impressive writing skills in part 1 of the paper, her experience is extracted from other erudite women of her era to outline a leading female narrative of nationalist sentiments in the Qing Dynasty. In part 2, Gu Ruopu's brief life trajectory is demonstrated to scrutinize Gu's domestic leadership in structuring her sons' civil examination preparation and daughters' early education.

To extend “the true nature of woman's calling”<sup>2</sup> in Dorothy Ko's “pursuing talent and virtue: education and women's culture in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century China,” this paper will present that the combination of feminist leadership and nationalist sentiments would be an irresistible concern to women's calling of the Qing Dynasty. To enlarge the research capacity of what gender-related issues<sup>3</sup> Western scholars have explored in Paul S. Ropp's “women in late imperial: China a review of recent English-language scholarship,” one category of gender-related issues in late Imperial China is added to the discussion; this is patriotism potential in literary discourse as well as in social practices.

### **HIDE AVANT-COURIER NATIONALIST SENTIMENTS: WU ZAO, A REPRESENTATIVE AND A SPOKESPERSON**

Wu Zao (1799-1862), one of the rarely-seen female professional writers during the Qing Dynasty, produced over 400 classical poetries<sup>4</sup> during her professional life as a writer. Most of the poetries she had written were published in two poetry collections. One is named *Shades*

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<sup>2</sup> Ko, Dorothy.1992. “Pursing Talent and Virtue: Education and Women's Culture in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century China.” *Late Imperial China* 13, no. 1 (1992):9-39.

<sup>3</sup> Ropp, Paul.1994. "Women in Late Imperial China: A Review of Recent English-language Scholarship." *Women's History Review* 3, no. 3 (1994): 347-83.

<sup>4</sup> Hua Wei.2003. *Selection of Play Scripts of the Ming-Qing Female Writers* 明清妇女戏曲集. Tai Pei: China Sinica.

of Flowers; the other is Fragrant South and Snowy North. As a feminine and a feminist writer, Wu's works are both criticized and praised by male writers of her age, as "beauty who does not fall short of outstanding ancient scholars."<sup>5</sup> Born to a merchant family and later married to a businessman, Wu seemed to have neither sound writing environment nor any practical purpose of writing; for example, to write for the pride of her family. However, businessmen were new social groups in the late empire China; they had no political power or lands for farming, but occupied a great deal of social capital, so a merchant family was also one of the new-born families formed in the nineteenth century. In the Jiangnan region, a scholar addressed that "for enterprising commoner families, girl's education was no different from boys' as a ladder of success for the family."<sup>6</sup> In this sense, Wu's family, though lacking a literary background, still supported Wu's education before she married. After her marriage, she was also granted freedom to develop her interests, so much so that she could publish books under her own name. She was unlike other female scholars in previous dynasties who had no choice but to bury their poetries or female scholars in Wu's ear who delegated others to publish their pieces on their behalf. It is no wonder that Wu is called "a pioneer of female social movement"<sup>7</sup> and "a lady with a gentle man's dedication."<sup>8</sup>

### ***A female representative co-existed with the male's literary imagination***

While Wu enjoyed a wide range of freedom in her ordinary life, she presented an even much freer style in her literary creativity. One of her significant, but controversial works, is a one-act play performed by one actress with an eye-catching cross-dressing scenery. It is hard to summarize a storyline for this one-act play, because there is no explicit plot, and yet it does have a conflict between two sexes. Wu uttered an emotional conflict between being a man and being a woman by using an actress who dresses in a man's costume and proclaims her

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<sup>5</sup> Hua wei.2003. *Selection of Play Scripts of the Ming-Qing Female Writers* 明清妇女戏曲集. Tai Pei: China Sinica.

<sup>6</sup> Ko, Dorothy.1992. "Pursuing Talent and Virtue: Education and Women's Culture in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century China." *Late Imperial China* 13, no. 1 (1992): 9-39.

<sup>7</sup> Zhang, Huaizhen.1997. *Selected Anthropology of Female Poets in the Qing Dynasty* 清代女词人选. Tai Pei: China Sinica.

<sup>8</sup> Zhang, Hongshen. 2000. "Wu Zao's Qiao Ying and External and Internal Factors for its Creation," *Journal of Nanjing University* 37, no. 4 (2000):38-46.

depression and tussle of “what I cannot wait to do” due to her gender limitation. From the first few lines of the play, the protagonist, Xie Caiyun, sings in a sex-ambiguity tune:

I have a man’s ambition and a woman’s sorrow and frustration.  
I carry a copy of “Encountering Sorrow.”  
Bushes of red flowers wind around the steps.<sup>9</sup>  
-- Wu Zao’s Disguise Reflection

The first line, she directly announced her sorrow and frustration without any hesitation, whereas she skillfully defined her ambition as “man’s.” In Wu’s age, a man and a woman were nurtured with different domestic duties and social expectations. When the protagonist claims her ambition as being that of a “man’s,” she seems to challenge domestic and social boundary endowed upon two sexes as the norm in the surface; however, in the deeper level, she admitted that some ambition should be labeled as “male” only; she knows it clearly and agrees with the category and the definition completely. Presumably because of this reason, male scholars of Wu’s age, praised literary aesthetics of this play more than they criticized the design of improper cross-dressing scene; they welcomed the protagonist’s advent with surprising happiness more than with a hostile feeling as if they were hurt by women’s challenges. That is to say, Wu’s deliberately prepared a more inclusive and less conflictive platform around the audience of both sexes for her protagonist in this play before the cross-dressing show started.

Based on a platform appealing to the male and female audience Wu then developed another image that extended the platform to a remote literature memorial that awakens in audience and readers a familiar image of cross-dressing behavior—Qu Yuan, a nobleman of Ch’u, who served as a high minister to King Huai of Ch’u (328-299 BC).<sup>10</sup> Despite being a faithful servant of Ch’u, Qu Yuan was assigned to a lesser official position and was banished from the capital.<sup>11</sup> As said, he had drowned himself in a rush of anger and a fit of hopelessness<sup>12</sup>. *Li Sao* or *Encountering Sorrow* is considered the model of remonstrative poetry

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<sup>9</sup> Volpp, Sophie. 2001. “Drinking Wine and Reading ‘Encountering Sorrow’: A Reflection in Disguise by Wu Zao (1799-1862).” In *Under Confucian Eyes: Writing on Gender in Chinese History*, edited by Susan Mann and Yu-Yin Cheng, 239-250. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>10</sup> Watson, Burton. 1984. *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early times to the Thirteenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>11</sup> Sukhu, Gopal. 2012. *The Shaman and the Heresiarch: A New Interpretation of the Li Sao*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

<sup>12</sup> Watson, Burton. 1984. *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early times to the Thirteenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press.

to criticize sovereignty because of its impressively high quality.<sup>13</sup> In *Encountering Sorrow*, the protagonist “seems to change sex, imagining himself as one of the women in the king’s harem; at other times, he is seen earnestly searching for a beautiful woman to be his companion. This quest for an ideal mate presumably symbolizing his longing for a ruler who will recognize his true worth.”<sup>14</sup> That Wu chose to link her emotional conflicts with Qu Yuan is no less than an implicit cue to ease the unexpected shock of cross-dressing performance, and is a literary foundation to highlight her political ambition and nationalist sentiment. According to Pauline YU, “particularly during the Qing dynasty, to divide ‘Encountering Sorrow’ into sections and discern in it a logical pattern of events, no arrangement emerges as necessarily more convincing than any other.”<sup>15</sup> Obviously, Wu adopted a cross-dressing pattern and a plot of imagining a beautiful wife from the *Encountering Sorrow* and created a more radical feminist utterance for her dynasty. On an inclusive platform for both men and women, using a feminist expression with the cover of Qu Yuan’s story, Wu finally embarked on romancing an ideal but isolated realm for the outcry of women’s nationalist sentiment.

I will look at the Green Duckweed sword and whistle before the lamp.  
Ah, I’ll lower a long rainbow into the depths of the sea and fish golden turtles with it.  
I will tune my cinnabar strings to play the “secluded orchid tune.”<sup>16</sup>  
-- Wu Zao’s Disguise Reflection

The protagonist, Xie, explains her “man’s ambition” and what the “man’s ambition” can enable her to do this scene. Xie has changed her clothes and altered her tune, uncovering her desire, therefore given a virtually male identity, Xie spoke of her passion as Wu’s literary representative. Despite the lines not describing Wu’s political standpoints frankly, a few keywords in these rhapsody style lyrics implicitly disclose her national aspiration.

According to Sophie Volpp, Green Duckweed in line 1 is the name of a famous ancient weapon, usually used to depict a longing for serving the nation. Golden turtles of line 2

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<sup>13</sup> Sukhu, Gopal.2012. *The Shaman and the Heresiarch: A New Interpretation of the Li Sao*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

<sup>14</sup> Watson, Burton.1984. *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early times to the Thirteenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>15</sup> Yu, Pauline.1987. *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

<sup>16</sup> Volpp, Sophie. 2001. “Drinking Wine and Reading ‘Encountering Sorrow’: A Reflection in Disguise by Wu Zao (1799-1862).” In *Under Confucian Eyes: Writing on Gender in Chinese History*, edited by Susan Mann and Yu-Yin Cheng, 239-250. Berkeley: University of California Press.

represent success in national service examination, and secluded orchid tune refers to “freshing ‘male wind.’”<sup>17</sup> Starting from the platform and the link of an ancient scholar in the first few lines, Wu boldly addressed her admiration for serving the country by military prowess and literary pursuits in the middle of this one-act play. However, military prowess and literary pursuits, suggested by Louie Kam, are the ideal masculinity components in Chinese society<sup>18</sup>. Though Chinese men have constantly shared literary and aesthetic pursuits with women, like, some opportunities to master literary skills of drawing or writing poetry or prose from eminent scholars, the combination of both military power and literary talents are still applicable to men exclusively due to its “potentiality for ultimate power in a way that femininity does not have.”<sup>19</sup> So Wu not only wanted to play the same literary role as Qu Yuan in *Encountering Sorrow*; she also hopes to grasp a source to challenge some kind of “ultimate power” regardless of her gender. Recognizing to what extent the military power and literary talents would be able to shake the foundation of the nation, Wu clarified her deep unease and painful struggle of gender inequality under the literary mantle of renowned scholar Qu Yuan.

Poetries of female writers living in Wu’s era employed heroic images and sex-changing shows as Wu; nevertheless, Wu’s writing style was more flexible<sup>20</sup> and less feminine. That’s why when male literati read through the play script or watched the play, they were easily attracted and moved by man-like female ambition for this female ambition is chanted by an actress. Still, its prototype is based on a man’s perspective. So instead of being insulted by challenges coming from their counterpart, male literati encountered male’s ambition and desolation in this one-act play in the first place, and then came the gender issue. For this reason, apart from play script initially published by male scholar, 16 male literati highly complimented Wu’s *Disguise Reflection* after watching the show, adopting “beauty” (6 times), “lady (1 time)”

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<sup>17</sup> Volpp, Sophie. 2001. “Drinking Wine and Reading ‘Encountering Sorrow’: A Reflection in Disguise by Wu Zao (1799-1862).” In *Under Confucian Eyes: Writing on Gender in Chinese History*, edited by Susan Mann and Yu-Yin Cheng, 239-250. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>18</sup> Louie, Kam. 2002. *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>19</sup> Louie, Kam. 2002. *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>20</sup> Zhang, Huaizhen. 1997. *Selected Anthropology of Female Poets in the Qing Dynasty* 清代女词人选. Tai Pei: China Sinica.



“young lady (1 time)”, “bring shame or shock to male scholars (7 times)” to express their thrilled excitement.<sup>21</sup> If famed scholar Qu Yuan’s literary cover enables Wu to create a realm for talented women’s outcry, male literati’s empathy covers scaffolds Wu to enrich the context of the outcry and make a spiritually literary reunion engaging both man and woman.

### *A flexible spokesperson outlined feminist and nationalism*

Wu is not only a reconciled banner and a stylish female representative of bridging male scholars through cross-gender performances but also an inquiring seeker of the radical new narrative. At least two female writers were passionate about nationalism like Wu during the Qing Dynasty, echoing Wu’s sentiments in their poetry and play. One is Shen Shanbao,<sup>22</sup> and the other is He Peizhu.<sup>23</sup> This signifies that the deep unease and painful struggle for gender imbalance is an ascending trend in the late Qing China among erudite women.<sup>24</sup> Most of the educated women like Wu Zao used literary patterns to draw readers’ attention to their nationalist potential, although Wu still stood out for her vision of dynastic history and statement of political crisis. In the opening lines of one poem, out more than 400 poetries written by Wu, a traumatic picture depicts national fear after the fall of the Ming Dynasty:

Half of my country never returns to place fill with orioles, flowers, and antique estate.

半壁江山，渾不是，鶯花故業。

One-meter Jiaowei Zither omits left-over songs of former dynasty as a relic;

三尺焦桐遺古調，

A handful of clay consecrates to tombs of those loyal to our motherland.

一懷黃土埋忠穴。

-- Wu Zao’s The Whole River Red 滿江紅

It would have been very difficult to identify the gender of the author had we not known who it is. The words selected by Wu in this poetry, are least relevant to feminine writing tradition, which I will discuss later by using another female writer as a contradicting example.

In line 1, the author apparently steers readers through a bird’s-eye view of the whole

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Zhang, Hongshen. 2000. “Wu Zao’s Qiao Ying and External and Internal Factors for its Creation,” *Journal of Nanjing University* 37, no. 4 (2000):38-46.

<sup>23</sup> Hua Wei. 2003. *Selection of Play Scripts of the Ming-Qing Female Writers* 明清婦女戏曲集. Tai Pei: China Sinica.

<sup>24</sup> Zhang, Hongshen. 2000. “Wu Zao’s Qiao Ying and External and Internal Factors for its Creation,” *Journal of Nanjing University* 37, no. 4 (2000):38-46.



country experiencing collapse and conquest. Despite opting images like orioles and flowers, the focus of the first sentence is nothing less than the country of the author. Orioles and flowers only add weights to visualize the beauty and the flourishing of a country and estate as a foil to grieve greatly for losing this beauty because of the enemies' outrage. The antique estate refers to an invisible spiritual continuity behind visible buildings and venues which constitute core values of Chinese Confucian elites, who keenly aspire to "pass a civil examination and take on their social responsibilities"<sup>25</sup> like watching over or protecting their country by holding brushes or swords. No matter what actions are taken to guard the country, they are man's accountability, since women are restricted from being part of making the decision for the country—the civil examination, solely for male scholars. In Wu's vision and poetry, the country reveals its extrinsic scares—the despair of the palace and instinctive historical disruption—the dynastic shift of Ming-Qing, to her regardless of gender and spatial restriction.

In following line 2 about a zither, Wu concentrated on whether the zither belongs to the past, the present, or neither. Jiaowei ("Jiaowei" means "burned tail-end") Zither is an extraordinary Jin Dynasty seven-string zither, one of the so-called "four legendary zithers of ancient China." According to *Hou Han Shu* (The History Book of Hou Han Dynasty), Cai Yong, rescued phoenix woods from fire for those woods, sounded excellent for making a musical instrument. Later on, Cai Yong crafted a supreme zither and named it "Jiaowei" because of some burning marks in its tail-end.<sup>26</sup> "Jiaowei," after that, became a fixed term applied in poetry or prose by later dynasty literati to specially refer to gifted persons experiencing trials and tribulations or "hidden talents in unlikely places."<sup>27</sup> Moreover, a relic former dynasty, Jiaowei Zither can function in Wu's poem as Judith T. Zeitlin elaborated:

"A historical musical instrument of this sort, especially one played at a former imperial court, becomes the perfect metaphor for the inevitable vanishing of the past; yet as a fragile physical object that has survived against all the odds, it is also a perfect metonym for the resilience of the past and a symbol of cultural and national continuity."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Louie, Kam. 2002. *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>26</sup> Fan Ye. 2001. *The Book of the Later Han*. Zhe Jiang: Zhe Jiang Ancient Books Publishing House.

<sup>27</sup> Zeitlin, Judith T. 2009. "The Cultural Biography of a Musical Instrument: Little Hulei as Sounding Object, Antique, Prop, and Relic." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 69, no. 2 (2009): 395-441.

<sup>28</sup> Zeitlin, Judith T. 2009. "The Cultural Biography of a Musical Instrument: Little Hulei as Sounding Object, Antique, Prop, and Relic." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 69, no. 2 (2009): 395-441.

Historical objects as literary metaphors projecting the past from the present, Jiaowei Zither together with orioles, flowers, and tombs in line 3 generate a remembrance collection; other Ming or Qing literati revealed their nostalgia in their literary works, for example, Zhang Dai in his *Dream Reminiscences of Tao'an*, in which Zhang's "writing has an evocative power."<sup>29</sup> This remembrance collection, Philip A. Kafalas addresses, "is both reminiscences and reminiscence, which is to say that its individual remembered moments become, in the reiteration of thoughtful recollection, part of a larger tendency of mind."<sup>30</sup> In the creation of the timeless collection and the powerful tendency, and utilizing an assertive male-like tone like Xie Caiyun in *Disguise Reflection*, Wu seemed to transform into a cross-dressing silhouette in her poetry to stare at the breakdown of her country, actively practicing what she cannot wait to do at the end of *Disguise Reflection*, again in a literary realm.

Throughout this poetry, Wu reinforced her political vision of dynasty shifts and inferred talents and suffering of a loyal person from the historical background and literary metonym when reading between the lines. The poet did not treat her gender and her vision equally in her account of how tragic panorama was when the country was subverted. Rather than reconciling with conflicts between her gender and her vision, the poet allowed these two elements to transit, confer, and construct one another. This brings me back to the question of what strategies Wu employed to cover her nationalistic sentiments. The answer is apparently in her narrative style: to blend her pioneering feminist into a literary realm, in which dynastic conflicts between the past and the present overwhelms gender inequality.

### **JUSTIFY VISIBLE POWER: GU RUOPU, A MATRIARCH AND AN OPINION LEADER**

Gu Ruopu (1592-ca.1681), before being defined as a talented poet, dedicated teacher, and powerful leader, she was a chaste wife, a virtuous widow, and a filial family member<sup>31</sup>. Born into a traditional literati family in the Jiangnan Region, Gu learnt to read and write at a very young age. At fifteen, she married Huang Maolin, who was a civil examination candidate<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Kafalas, Philip Alexander. 2007. *In Limpid Dream: Nostalgia and Zhang Dai's Reminiscences of the Ming*. Norwalk: East Bridge.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Hu Xiao Lin. 2008. "Perfect Combination of Virtue and Talents: Xi Leng Female Celebrity Gu Ruopu." *Chinese Literature and History*, no.10 (2008).

<sup>32</sup> Volpp, Sophie. 2001. "Drinking Wine and Reading 'Encountering Sorrow': A Reflection in Disguise by

and who had been sick and weak for years before marriage.<sup>33</sup> After marriage, Huang suffered from a long illness and a failure from the civil examination. Because of her husband's physical and mental tortures, Gu Ruopu took the responsibility to take care of Huang and support his examination preparation wholeheartedly; she was in charge of the whole family with assertiveness and reverence. As she claimed in her later poetry: "and when after my marriage, I became responsible for running the household of a well-known family, I was constantly fearful of bringing even greater shame to my father and mother."<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, thirteen years after the marriage, Huang passed away, leaving Gu in tremendous sadness, and it had been 20 years later when Gu wrote an elegy for "my deceased husband." Because of Huang's untimely death and the substantial burden of the children's education, Huang's father Huang Ruheng, Gu's father-in-law retired from his official position in the Hangzhou government, familiarizing Gu Ruopu with *Book of Changes*, *Book of Sings*, *Zhuangzi (book)*, *Chu ci*, and *proses of "eight literati of Tang and Song Dynasty"*<sup>35</sup> for seven years to prepare Gu to be the teacher of her two sons and two daughters. However, far beyond Huang Ruheng's expectation, apart from successfully fulfilling duties of nurturing her own children and influencing "the entire patrilineal family"<sup>36</sup> as an intelligent matriarch, Gu even took part in supporting and mentoring female literati across the spatial boundary in a poetry club, called Five Banana Garden Club in Jiangnan Region, which is considered to be a role model club for other female-dominated literary communities established later in Beijing and Suzhou.

### ***A disciplined matriarch expanded boundaries of both sexes***

Similar to Wu Zao, in Gu's natal family, she had sufficient opportunities, probably given by her parents, to learn literary skills and was endowed a personal space after marriage to keep

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Wu Zao (1799-1862). " In *Under Confucian Eyes: Writing on Gender in Chinese History*, edited by Susan Mann and Yu-Yin Cheng, 239-250. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>33</sup> Wu Lin. 2013. "Comment on Hangzhou Female Talent Gu Ruopu Wo Yuexuan Gao: Also on her Place in the History of Female Poetry in Qing Dynasty." *Journal of Zhejiang Shuren University (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, no. 2(2013).

<sup>34</sup> Idema, W. L., and Beata Grant. 2004. *The Red Brush: Writing Women of Imperial China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center.

<sup>35</sup> Guo Deying. 2009. "Never too Tired to Learn: Literary Home Schooling for Adults in the Ming-Qing Dynasty." *Social Science Research*, no.2 (2009).

<sup>36</sup> Ko, Dorothy.1994. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-century China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

writing and reading. Unlike Wu Zao, Gu, though talented in writing poetry, never viewed herself as equal to Confucian male scholars; there is no mentioning of her not trying to participate in the civil examination or national service system. She completely affirmed her role in Huang's family according to the traditional female ideal and practiced this ideal her whole life. However, she did not cease committing to rewrite the boundaries of gender roles<sup>37</sup> by involving other female family members into domestic duties or by nurturing male family members with literary teaching and moral paradigm "based on her understanding of human feelings."<sup>38</sup>

A deferential and gifted female family member, following a fundamental assumption that "literary cultivation is a pivot element of Huang's family education,"<sup>39</sup> Gu's domestic service could be separated into four periods according to what roles Gu played in Huang's family: a wife, a widow, a matriarch, and a retired matriarch respectively.

### *First period: A loving wife*

As Wu Lin rightly notes, in the Tang Dynasty, Lady Zhao, a wife of a Confucian scholar, showed her extreme disappointment in her husband due to his failure in the civil examination by writing a satire poem, describing her husband's failure publicly as "shameful to her." Compared with her Tang precursor, Gu set a positive example to encourage Huang from self-condemnation; it is called *Advisement for Husband*:

古来嶮巇自英雄，

From ancient times, a defile and narrow pass gives birth to a true hero;

明珠灼烁泣江汜。

A brilliant pearl is crying but still shining at a stream, which leaves the main branch but later will return.

且尽君前一杯酒，

Why not, my dear husband, drink a cup of wine with me;

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<sup>37</sup> Ko, Dorothy. 1994. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-century China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

<sup>38</sup> Ko, Dorothy. 1994. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-century China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

<sup>39</sup> Wang Lijian. 2007. "Family Education Letter: Women Writing of Epistolary Prose by the Qing Dynasty's Female Celebrities." *Academic Journal of LIYUN (Literature Volume)*, no.1 (2006).

蛟龙雌伏岂常守。

A scaly dragon lying down at an ordinary place, how can the place be its permanent position?<sup>40</sup>

After her marriage and throughout her lifetime, Gu never earnestly used her talents of writing poems as a means to realise personal ambition or win fame for her family because her value was intensely affected by a Confucian motif: peaceful for poverty, joyful for truth; this motivates Gu to retreat from complexity and luxury.<sup>41</sup> Gu's sons and her whole family were affected by this motif as well, especially after the shift of the Ming-Qing Dynasty; Gu encouraged all families to retreat from serving the Qing Dynasty, but stayed in the West Garden, secluded from official recruitment of Qing Dynasty. Despite this fact, before the fall of the Ming Dynasty, Gu put all her heart to prop up her husband's literary pursuits. To her disappointment, trying for many times, Huang failed the examination though it is very unlikely to conclude whether these failures were out of his physical weakness or deficiency in examination preparation based on current literature or historical records. It is imaginable that Gu would be dreadfully shocked by Huang's lack of success. Yet, rather than waiting for being comforted by husband, partly indicating her competent potential of taking the matriarch role someday, Gu cheered up her husband by writing a poem with ancient anecdotes: a defile and narrow pass and true hero in line 1, brilliant pearl and main branch in line 2, a cup of wine in line 3, and dragon in line 4.

“Despite her (Gu Ruopu) claim she wrote only for diversion,” Dorothy KO argues, “many of her poems, essays, and letters were clearly written with a specific audience and educational purpose in mind.”<sup>42</sup> This rule applies to the poem Gu had written for Huang. Making judgement of a husband's defeat or triumph is not Gu's priority; presumably, never will she consider herself as an authority assigned by the Huang family or any traditional values to teach her husband how to succeed in the civil examination. What Gu, in her poem, aimed to do

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<sup>40</sup> Wu Lin. 2013. "Comment on Hangzhou Female Talent Gu Ruopu Wo Yuexuan Gao: Also on her Place in the History of Female Poetry in Qing Dynasty." *Journal of Zhejiang Shuren University (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, no. 2(2013).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ko, Dorothy. 1994. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-century China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

is to enable her husband to recognize his provisional failure and eventual victory.

Famous for its tough and rigid selection criteria, the civil examination is nothing less than “a defile and narrow pass” in line 1, which hindered or smashed thousands of Confucian scholars’ dreams of serving country or winning fame and fortune. Applying this “pass” metaphor, Gu conspicuously revealed her comprehensive understanding of the process and the consequence of taking the civil examination. Regardless of numerous struggles or pitfalls necessary for final accomplishment, “a true hero” in the end of line 1 confidently reaffirmed her unshakable trust in her husband that “you will become a hero someday” in terms of a devoted wife’s perspective. A sharp comparison to Lady Zhao’s cynical poem, as sympathetic and poised as she can, Gu provided her husband with a spiritual and literary realm to ease his struggle and dilute his bitterness. To Wu Zao, a spiritual and literary realm was erected for her unattained self-realization, whereas to Gu, a realm of this kind was for communication and with others, like her husband in this poem, and families and mentees in her subsequent anthropology.

A pliable resonance with “true hero” in line 1, “a brilliant pearl” in line 2 reinforces her husband’s value and talents in his literariness, whereas a “stream” in line 2 juxtaposes with “a narrow and defile pass” in line 1, attributing Huang’s lack of success to severe competitions in civil examination. Conclusively, also paralleling to what Gu trusted would someday be accomplished by her husband, “main branch” in line 2 unfolds Gu’s steady agreement with Confucian values, which prioritizes literary pursuits and service for the government among other social duties, and Gu’s full assurance of her husband will have a decent position in Ming government eventually. The usage of “brilliant pearl” in line 2, traditionally refers to an accepted allusion of precious treasures wasted for undesired use in Chinese literary. Li Bo in one of his impressive masterpieces, writing “as a guest from remote places gives thanks to the master of this house 遠客謝主人, fervently I want to say it is impossible for a brilliant pearl to be in an undesired corner for all the time 明珠難暗投,” is the identical treatment of “brilliant pearl” as Gu adopted in this poetry.

Similarly, “scaly dragon” in line 4 is the third-time reinforcement of “hero” in line 1

and “brilliant pearl” in line 2; and “ordinary place” and “permanent position” clarify author’s intention more straightforwardly than “stream” and “main branch” in line 2 because of its candid connection to vocation and duties. A loving wife and a sophisticated writer, Gu seemed never to save her genuine compliment to eulogise her husband and never display misuse and deficiency in selecting the most appropriate literary anecdotes to describe the ideal image and the proud achievement she wished her husband and the entire Huang family would have in a predictable future.

What noticeable in this *Advisement for Husband* is Gu during her whole life, I suppose, is not fully affected by Tao Qian as Maureen Robertson addresses, nor did she emulate both Tao Qian and Liu Zongyuan as Wu Lin suggests. I would argue based on a comparison among explicit themes of poetries written by Gu in her different life periods to indicate Tao Qian and Liu Zongyuan are not always Gu’s literary role models. It is partly because of her husband’s death that made Gu experienced the ephemeral of life that consequently stimulated her to engage deeper and seek solace from Tao Qian’s rural utopia,<sup>43</sup> but before that, she also aspired to scholarly attributes and high-ranking civil posts through the examination system<sup>44</sup> as other female writers living in her era.

### ***Second period: A diligent widow***

Gu’s first period in Huang’s family as a caring wife ended after thirteen years of generous sacrifices for carrying her husband’s physical and mental burdens, following a long but painful reticence—twenty years, that Gu opened to the public about her sorrow of losing her husband by writing a series of *Elegy for a Deceased Husband*, which presents Gu’s “poetic innovation”<sup>45</sup> that she “establishes a voice and identity that asserts itself as one able to control self-representation and language, moving flexibly in and beyond topoi and back again.”<sup>46</sup> In

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<sup>43</sup> Robertson, Maureen.1992. "Voicing the Feminine: Constructions of the Gendered Subject in Lyric Poetry by Women of Medieval and Late Imperial China." *Late Imperial China* 13, no. 1 (1992): 63-110.

<sup>44</sup> Louie, Kam. 2002. *Theorising Chinese Masculinity: Society and Gender in China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>45</sup> Ko, Dorothy. 2001. " 'Letter to My Sons' by Gu Ruopu (1592-ca.1681). " In *Under Confucian Eyes: Writing on Gender in Chinese History*, edited by Susan Mann and Yu-Yin Cheng, 149-154. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>46</sup> Robertson, Maureen.1992. "Voicing the Feminine: Constructions of the Gendered Subject in Lyric Poetry by Women of Medieval and Late Imperial China." *Late Imperial China* 13, no. 1 (1992): 63-110.



the creation of poems, Gu selected Tao Qian, a Jin Dynasty prominent poet's ideas and scenarios<sup>47</sup> to enrich her contents. From this period onwards, a tender but somehow prescient shift from an aspiring female supporter of Confucian values to a serene female leader following Tao Qian and Liu Zongyuan's doctrines<sup>48</sup> occurred to Gu and affected at least three generations of the Huang family a couple of years after the Ming Dynasty came to its end.

Before entering the third period, Gu, as a powerful matriarch in control of the everyday life and future course of Huang's family, experienced an informal but seminal training offered by her father-in-law, Huang Ruheng, a Late Ming famed prose writer and successful government officer in Hangzhou, when Gu just lost her beloved husband. As Susan Mann identifies, in the Qing Dynasty, "women who refused to remarry, refrained from suicide, and remained in faithful service to their deceased husband's family"<sup>49</sup> and this speedily mounts up into a great number, constituting a "long list of names of the so-called chaste widow."<sup>50</sup> In such a "stem family," namely "a family comprising three generations, with the middle generation consisting of only one married couple. If the senior couple in the family were old or infirm when their son died, the young widow would temporarily become the virtual household head."<sup>51</sup> It is noted that "in such families, the achievements of the son depended heavily on his mother's constant self-denial and solicitude."<sup>52</sup> In Gu's case, her father-in-law Huang Ruheng foresaw the heavy responsibility and equipped Gu with the same classic knowledge as that of other male scholars; he did this for seven years before he died. In other words, Huang Ruheng keenly sacrificed his last days to transform his daughter-in-law into a man-like scholar for the sake of the next generation of the Huang family. While Gu was training, her younger brother described a repeated scene of how Gu read and learnt: "Every single night, my elder sister recites and sings thoroughly, with a book in her hand." Maureen Robertson addresses, "Gu Ruopu saw herself as a teacher and transmitter of literary knowledge and skill, with a responsibility to oversee the continuity of a line of poets in her family, both

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Hu Xiaolin. 2008. "Banana Garden Club in Early Qing." *Classic Literary Knowledge*, no.2 (2008).

<sup>49</sup> Mann, Susan.1987. "Widows in the kinship, class, and community structures of Qing dynasty China." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 01 (1987): 37-56.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

men and women—a line that began in her grandfather’s generation.” Gu fully perceived herself as a knowledge channel and through reading and meditating upon *Book of Changes*, *Book of Sings*, *Zhuangzi (book)*, *Chu ci*, and *proses of “eight literati of Tang and Song Dynasty”*<sup>53</sup> for years, “a lady of miracles” labelled for her in her later years, Gu has become knowledgeable in the discussion of the canal, farming, logistics, and reserve in frontier defence.

As a result of being educated by a notable male scholar and supportive family elder, Gu was well prepared to be a “wise mother who was capable of instructing her children in classic books and taking part in her son’s early education” according to Susan Man’s summary of “a wise mother.” However, unlike other wise mothers who had fewer or no chances to access the same textbooks their male families read, Gu not only attended her children’s early education but also supplied life-long mentorship to all family members.

### ***Third period: A forceful matriarch***

With cultivation from life experience and edification from classics and histories, an independent characteristic and a thoughtful insight became part of Gu’s idiosyncrasy, which also progressively became an intangible house beam to the entire Huang family.<sup>54</sup> For more than 20 years, Gu organized daily routines and special ceremonies, protecting the inner territory of the Huang family and wrestled with outside hard toils through her feminine resilience and feminist jurisdiction.

What is intriguing about Gu’s education philosophy and application is that she separated her daughters’ and sons’ education though Gu herself mastered both knowledge of scholarly pursuits on the boys’ side and expertise of inner chambers on the girls’ side. It is reasonable to assume that Gu’s father-in-law allowed her to impart knowledge of classics and histories to male descendants exclusively; otherwise, it will be totally Gu’s ideas to limit her daughters’ understanding within a given space. Regardless of the reason for the provision of female education, Gu’s application of it on her daughters provoked severe criticism from an

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<sup>53</sup> Guo Deying. 2009. "Never too Tired to Learn: Literary Home Schooling for Adults in the Ming-Qing Dynasty." *Social Science Research*, no.2 (2009).

<sup>54</sup> Wu Lin. 2013. "Comment on Hangzhou Female Talent Gu Ruopu Wo Yuexuan Gao: Also on her Place in the History of Female Poetry in Qing Dynasty." *Journal of Zhejiang Shuren University (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, no. 2(2013).

elder generation of women when Gu decided to hire a teacher for her daughters.<sup>55</sup> Poetry written by Gu and translated by Wilt Idema and Beata Grant presents:

Now some old crone has lambasted me:  
“You’ve fallen short to the Wifely Way!  
You have hired a teacher for your daughters,  
As if she were going to sit for the exams.”

How can we, just because we’re women,  
Refuse to take the ancients as our teachers?

...

If I did not instruct them in their youth,  
The reputation of our family would suffer.  
How could I be thinking of luster and glory?  
I wish only to admonish against error and wrong!<sup>56</sup>

In facing a channelling and hostile question of how to educate daughters properly, Gu defenced her stances by using three layers of justification: the first one is from the historical perspectives in terms of supportive evidence in the classics and the orthodox. She mentioned King Wen and King Wu of the Zhou Dynasty, the beginning of Chinese imperial society, and the original sources of literary orthodox. Apart from male leaders, Gu emphasised female’s contribution by including ‘Inner Quarters Rules’ and its author. The two historical icons are too renowned for refusing, so the advent of two icons in the poetry set up an inevitable foundation as a fence to consolidate her intent and to concentrate on her following particular opinions. Then she skilfully moved to the next layer, “family reputation,” this is also her responsibility and priority. To ensure her daughters were instructed with textbooks and teaching contents separated from her sons, Gu indicated the “Four Virtues and Three Obedience,” a classics slogan for woman education as supplement idea to support Confucian-based male education, would “remain the norm” in her daughters’ teaching plan and she reconfirms that the education outcome of her daughters would be “one person’s pure and good.” Her particular but personal ideas on women education, which is also commonly observed in the Qing Dynasty, especially the definition of “virtue women,” was presented in this third layer. In Gu’s regards, the “virtue women” are not only thinking of “luster and glory;”

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<sup>55</sup> Idema, Wilt L., and Beata Grant. 2004. *The Red Brush: Writing Women of Imperial China*. Vol. 231. Harvard Univ Council on East Asian.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

she wanted to eliminate potential wrongdoing and problems by giving her daughters a correct model from which to learn and a proper means to employ. Though a sensitive writer and a peaceful lady, she had clear and convincing logic and so-called argumentation of modern days to protect the right of instructing daughters by presenting both solid historical celebrities, and pros and cons, to redefine others' understanding of woman education. In doing this, Gu also rewrote the relationship of female observers and female educators and extended the boundary of mentorship in the Qing Dynasty, literarily and practically.

In Gu's other education-focused poetry, *Parking a Book-Reading Boat Established for my Son Can under the Broken Bridge in Autumn*, writing to express her concerns and arrangements for her sons—the hope of the whole family to heritage family's literary tradition, she deliberately emulated a virtue mother documented in *The New Official History of Tang Dynasty* for her wisdom of choosing an appropriate means for her son to concentrate on learning:

<秋日为灿儿修读书船泊断桥下赋诗>

Parking a Book-Reading Boat Established for my Son under the Broken Bridge in Autumn

闻道和熊阿母贤，翻来选胜断桥边。

Heard the “bear bile” mother was virtuous, I chose deliberately a superb place—under the broken bridge for my son, Can.

亭亭古树流疏月，漾漾轻舄泛碧烟。

Graceful is the old tree, where moonlights stream from old tree's leaves; rippling are the waves, while green mist rises from water.

Compared to the aggressive poetry written for defending her daughter's educational opportunities, this poem reveals Gu's meek motherhood in terms of a general perspective and wise decision-making aptitude from distinct details.

In the first line, the “bear bile” mother is a less known anecdote in Chinese literary tradition. It was originally recorded in one chapter of an official history book compiled in the North Song Dynasty, as a piece of background information about a government officer of the Tang Dynasty; this officer was fortunate enough to have a wise mother using bear bile as a

refreshment to motivate him to stay up late for the civil examination preparation. This anecdote was mainly used to identify wise and dedicated motherhood in literary works, but only two less-familiar literati in the Ming Dynasty used it in their less-famous poetry. It is impossible to pinpoint which was Gu's reference book—the official history book compiled in the North Song Dynasty or the two less-famous poetries of the Ming Dynasty. However, it is plain to see Gu's knowledgeable ability from this anecdote because *The New Official History of Tang Dynasty* was a standard textbook of boys' early education, and the two less-famous poetries were circumscribed literary resource rather than some public or popular information for erudite women to access in the Qing Dynasty. However, since the late Ming Dynasty, a commercial publishing trend affected the whole society due to their “growing effort to collect and organize practical information for an individual's reference”<sup>57</sup> and “offered more detailed explanations of social practices.”<sup>58</sup> Additionally, this publishing trend had lasted until the Qing Dynasty, “the very definitions of womanhood and gender differences were being articulated in a new context generated by commercial publishing.”<sup>59</sup> Affected by this publishing trend, more books related to virtue motherhood were published to cultivate young women and married ladies. “Mother of bear bile” might be included in books published during the Ming-Qing Dynasty as one of the moral stories for the cultivation of ideal womanhood. In this sense, aside from the official history book compiled in the North Song Dynasty or the two less-famous poetries of the Ming Dynasty, a third reference resource was used by Gu to write this poem, which is the popular moral stories printed in the Ming-Qing Dynasty. Inserting a moral story well-known to female readers and writers of her era—if the moral story was absorbed from popular printed storytelling—Gu not only resonated with the commercial publishing trend outside of the inner chambers but also reflected a common sense and prevalent understanding that the idiosyncrasy of a virtue mother in the Ming-Qing Dynasty would be a self-sacrificing woman with a creatively supportive heart and one that consents to social and literary hierarchy established by the civil examination system.

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<sup>57</sup> Wei, Shang. 2005. “The Making of the Everyday World: Jin Ping Mei Cihua and Encyclopedias for Daily Use.” *HARVARD EAST ASIAN MONOGRAPHS* 249 (2005): 63.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ko, Dorothy. 1994. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-century China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

The overall writing style of this poetry and the aura created through the writing are feminine and delicate, particularly by displaying an array of continued nouns in line 3: old trees, moonlights, waves, and green mist. These nouns are widely adopted by poets of all dynasties in all kinds of poetries, for the nouns have no specific indication or implicit metaphors. They are merely typical scenic views of nouns available for depicting natural surroundings. On the contrary, the action in the poetry—choosing a quiet place for her sons' reading and writing, and the intent of writing this poetry—is an encouragement for her son to pass the civil examination and enter the career track of serving the nation through the government. These are entirely feminist, showing that with a forceful hand controlling the future course of the whole family, Gu was authorized to engage deftly in the decision-making process as a dependable elder. Throughout this poetry, a buoyant mood of satisfying what Gu decided for her sons and the family is palpably presented to confirm Gu's endeavour of directing the family and the dominion of nurturing consummate male offspring between lines. A feminist action interwove with feminine voices and tones, the family-driven ambition of Gu was mantled with light-hearted tones and vindicated her intents and ambition by an analogy between well-accepted virtuous motherhood and her emulation of being an incentive family leader.

When recalling Gu's life trajectory, though experiencing three periods and playing at least three roles and other combined positions in the Huang's family, until her later years, Gu remained "a teenage girl's brightness and coloration in her poetry."<sup>60</sup> Particularly, Gu retained her feminine traits in her own literary exploration and injected these feminine traits into her family education as a predictable consequence to reveal her general inclusion and subtle equilibrium of regulating feminine identity and feminist provocation in one body. This draws a sharp line between Gu and Wu since, conversely, Wu transformed feminine features into male characters in her literary realm and dislodged women's domestic duties and functions from a literary image created. How an exemplary woman responds to household duties and feminine revelation conflicts the most between Gu's and Wu's literary creativity in the

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<sup>60</sup> Wu Lin. 2013. "Comment on Hangzhou Female Talent Gu Ruopu Wo Yuexuan Gao: Also on her Place in the History of Female Poetry in Qing Dynasty." *Journal of Zhejiang Shuren University (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, no. 2(2013).

construction of female voice and personal quest in quotidian life.

## CONCLUSION

The historic shift and the formative transformation of gender-related issues in late Imperial China are progressive and linear in terms of a general and holistic perspective. From Gu Ruopu's era (1592-1681) to Wu Zao's era (1799-1862), feminist leadership unleashed from domestic territory to overt platform, and the persons involved in this process stretched from family members to joint audiences. The women's calling in early 1500 was not solely a calling for women in late 1700, but a calling for a larger social spectrum; the feminist leadership in early 1500 did not develop into full prosperity merely in household or uniquely among female literati, but necessary promulgation to incorporate with historical progress and a traceable signal to prefigure women's roles in their future actions, which is active and even drastic female community leaders participating in social movements after 1912. In this sense, literarily and theoretically, this paper links Dorothy KO's observation of "the hidden dragon will in due time leap up, fly and exceed limits"<sup>61</sup> of women and culture in seventeenth-century China to Joan Judge's research of "while a virtuous Confucian woman would only use her talents to benefit her family, an early twentieth-century female patriot would exclusively use hers to benefit the nation"<sup>62</sup> at the beginning of twentieth-century China as a preliminary embryo period hidden in a cultivated shell before the combination of nationalism and feminism reached its culmination 100 years later.

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<sup>61</sup> Ko, Dorothy.1994. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-century China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

<sup>62</sup> Judge, Joan.2001. "Talent, Virtue, and the Nation: Chinese Nationalisms and Female Subjectivities in the Early Twentieth Century." *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001).



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