

**POETRY,
HISTORY,
MEMORY**

Wang Jingwei
and China in Dark Times

ZHIYI YANG

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*To my grandparents
and all survivors of devastating wars.*

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Conventions

This book uses pinyin to consistently romanize Chinese characters, except for Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, given the general acceptance of the spelling. Names of Taiwanese scholars are romanized in their own spelling, if known to the author.

Acknowledgments

This book was first conceived in 2015. At the time of its going to press, the world had become a very different place. A pandemic, a global recession, inflation, the assassination of a Japanese politician, and a war of choice—halfway through the year, 2022 already felt like an eerie echo of the early 1930s, when discontented powers sought to divert attention from domestic crises through territorial expansion. Unwittingly, this project has acquired unforeseen urgency, as it reexamines decisions that agents of history made in times darker than ours, in the hope that we may learn from their insights, fortitudes, and failures in dealing with recalcitrant plights.

My interests in Wang Jingwei, China's chief wartime collaborator, began with research for an article, eventually published as "The Road to Lyric Martyrdom: Reading the Poetry of Wang Zhaoming (1883–1944)" in *Chinese Literature: Essay, Articles, Reviews* 37 (2015): 135–64. More publications followed while working on this book: "A Humanist in Wartime France: Wang Jingwei during the First World War," *Poetica* 49, nos. 1–2 (2019): 163–92; "The Memory of an Assassin and Problems of Legitimacy in the Wang Jingwei Regime (1940–1945)," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 80, no. 1 (2020): 37–83; and "Site: The Impossibility of Remembering the Past at Nanjing," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 32, no. 1 (2020): 233–78. I thank the journals for permitting me to reuse some of the material, primarily in chapters 1, 5, and 6.

For years, I could not resolve to write this book, not only because, as a student of classical Chinese poetry, I hesitated to venture into the vast and unmapped waters of history, but also because of its political sensitivity. Some of my former Chinese teachers also tried to dissuade me from this project, out of the kind intention to protect me—or to protect the

established norms of moral conduct in times of national crisis. I sincerely thank them. My final decision to pursue this project was not driven by disdain for norms that exist for a reason, or for truths that some hold sacred, but by the belief that mnemonic justice is possible and only possible when all facts are presented, examined, and constantly reevaluated in expanded contexts. Besides, I could not resist the fascination of a case where the gap between the poet's self-portrait and history's verdict was so glaring that it demanded the reconsideration of both truths: the poetic and the historical.

On the way, I received support and encouragement from countless colleagues. I first thank my fellow researchers of Chinese collaboration, including Timothy Brook, Jeremy Taylor, Ko Chia-Cian, Liu Wei-Chih, Chiu Yi-Hsuan, Yuan Yidan, Wang Mengchuan, Seki Tomohide, Jonathan Henshaw, Sven Saaler, Tsuchiya Mitsuyoshi, David Serfass, Hans van de Ven, Susan Daruvala, Liu Jie, Yung Yuk Fung, and many others. Over the years, they have shared research material, organized panels and workshops, and co-published in special issues with me. As a literary scholar whose research focus had been the Song Dynasty, my trepidation upon entering a new field melted in the warmth of this open-minded intellectual community. Special thanks go to David Der-wei Wang, for our inspiring discussion on “dark times” in unusually wintry Taipei.

The completion of this book was facilitated by the generous sabbatical policies of the Goethe University Frankfurt, a two-month guest professorship (2018–19) at National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU), and a one-year residential fellowship (2019–20) at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin), where the first draft of this monograph was completed just as the pandemic began to tear through the fabric of global civil society. I thank my colleagues, Iwo Amelung and Dorothea Wippermann in particular, for supporting my leaves of absence, and Carsten Storm for taking over the teaching. Chen Deng-Wu, Hsu Chun-Ya, Liu Tsang-Long, and many more colleagues at the College of Liberal Arts, NTNU, invited me to Taipei and generously hosted me there. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Daniel Schönplflug, Thorsten Wilhelmy, and the staff of the Wissenschaftskolleg's library and dining services made my stay in Berlin productive. Of the Wissenschaftskolleg cohort who listened to, vetted, and improved my ideas, I thank in particular Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Daniel Schönplflug, and Elena Esposito, for reading parts of the raw draft; Efraín Kristal, for the constant exchange of ideas; and Luca Giuliani, for bringing up the concept of *damnatio memoriae*. Friederike Oursin kindly edited the entire manuscript. To all colleagues

at Frankfurt, Taipei, Berlin, and beyond who have intellectually inspired me, to all who invited me for lectures or gave me insightful feedback, and to all students who participated in my seminars, my infinite gratitude. All errors, of course, are mine.

Other colleagues and individuals who helped me identify or acquire research material include Olga Lomová, Wen-hsin Yeh, Martin Hejdra, Clemens Büttner, Sun Jiang, Zhang Ke, Xie Ren, Liu Tianyuan, Du Feiran, Zhang Yuan, Han Xiao, Wang Nan, Liu Haochen, Luo Ling, and many, many more.

There is a long list of archives and libraries to thank. These include Academia Historica (Taipei), Kuomintang Party Archives, National Archives at College Park (United States), Hoover Institution, National Archives of Japan, Archives nationales (France), Le fonds chinois (Lyon), Archives du département du Rhône et de la métropole de Lyon, Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office (Germany), Heidelberg University Archives, University of Hong Kong Archives, Hessian State Archives (Darmstadt), and the municipal archives of Bad Nauheim and of Tübingen. My feelings toward mainland Chinese archives are complicated, given their jealous protection of politically “sensitive” material from scrutiny. Nevertheless, the Second Historical Archives of China at Nanjing and the municipal archives at Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Chongqing yielded precious research material. The libraries I visited to view original documents include the National Library of China, Shanghai Municipal Library, Nanjing University Library, Fudan University Library, National Diet Library, Toyo Bunko, Hosei University Library, Harvard-Yenching Library, Princeton University Library, the New York Public Library, and others. X-Asia, the National Library of Austria, and archive.org provided digital access to historical newspapers and journals. I thank all the unsung heroes working at these institutions, whose dedication is indispensable to evidence-based research.

I thank the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall at Taipei, the Hawaii Times Photo Archives Foundation, the C.H. Foo, Y.W. Foo, and Special Collections at Bristol University Library, the Heidelberg University Archives, the East Asia Library Special Collections at Stanford University, as well as the artist Xue Lei for providing images for this book. Cindy Ho (He Chongjia), daughter of Wang Wenxing and He Mengheng, had previously made photos in her family’s holding available for my published articles. Unfortunately, the consent to publish these images in this book was withdrawn. Readers may refer to my other publications or to the six-volume set published by Ms. Ho in Taipei for more pri-

vate photos of the Wang Jingwei family. Between the completion of the first draft and the publication of this monograph, descendants of Wang Wenying made a generous donation of manuscripts and artwork to the Hoover Institution, known as the “Wang Jingwei Papers.” Hsiao-ting Lin, Rayan Ghazal, and Chris Marino at Hoover have facilitated my access to this precious collection. A few private photos of Wang Jingwei as well as images of his manuscripts were also made available for this book by this branch of the Wang family. I thank the Hoover Institution for providing access to the Wang Jingwei Papers and to the Wang family for their support of this monograph.

Last but not least, I thank my husband Michal for his loving support throughout this journey, sharing my joys and listening to my nightmares, which were sometimes literal.

I dedicate this book to my grandparents, all five of them, and to all survivors of devastating wars. My grandparents lived through the Japanese occupation in rural Jiangxi. My *yeye*, who briefly served as a second lieutenant of the secretariat of the Kuomintang army during the civil war, almost never spoke about his youth. He suffered from dementia in the last years and passed away in the last hours of 2020. I missed the chance to give a voice to his memory after all. To me, the silence of my grandparents’ generation symbolizes the spell of aphasia that survivors of wars live under. May the publication of this book restore a piece in the fragmented jigsaw puzzle of their wartime memory.

Abbreviations

- LQC Liang Qichao 梁啟超. *Liang Qichao quanji* 梁啟超全集. 21 vols. Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1999.
- SZL Wang Jingwei 汪精衛. *Shuangzhaolou shici gao* 雙照樓詩詞藁. Edited by Wang Mengchuan 汪夢川. Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu, 2012.
- SZSQJ Sun Zhongshan 孫中山. *Sun Zhongshan quanji* 孫中山全集. 11 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981.
- WZQ Jin Xiongbai 金雄白 [Zhu Zijia 朱子家]. *Wang zhengquan de kaichang yu shouchang* 汪政權的開場與收場. 5 vols. Hong Kong: Chunqiu zazhishe, 1959–65.
- ZFH Zhou Fohai 周佛海. *Zhou Fohai riji quanbian* 周佛海日記全編. Edited by Cai Dejin 蔡德金. 2 vols. Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2003.

Archives

Academia Historica, Taipei, Taiwan (Republic of China)
Archives du département du Rhône et de la métropole de Lyon,
Lyon, France
Archives nationales, Paris, France
Chongqing Municipal Archives, Chongqing, China
Guangzhou Municipal Archives, Guangzhou, China
Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt, Darmstadt, Germany
Hoover Institution, Stanford CA, United States
Kuomintang Party Archives, Taipei, Taiwan (Republic of China)
Le fonds chinois, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, Lyon, France
National Archives of Japan, Tokyo, Japan
Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin, Germany
Second Historical Archives of China, Nanjing, China
Shanghai Municipal Archives, Shanghai, China
Stadtarchiv Bad Nauheim, Bad Nauheim, Germany
Stadtarchiv Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany
Universitätsarchiv Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
University of Hong Kong Archives, Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of the PRC)

Timeline of Events

May 4, 1883	Birth of Wang Zhaoming in Sanshui, Guangdong
1894–95	The First Sino-Japanese War
1896	Death of Wang’s mother, Madame Wu
1897	Death of Wang’s father, Wang Shu
1898	Hundred Days’ Reform
1905–6	Wang studies at Hosei University, Tokyo
August 20, 1905	The foundation of Tongmenghui in Tokyo
November 26, 1905	The foundation of <i>Minbao</i> . Wang adopts the pen name Jingwei.
April 1910	Wang’s failed assassination of the prince regent
October 10, 1911	The Wuchang Uprising
November 6, 1911	Wang is released from prison
January 1, 1912	Foundation of the Republic of China. Wang drafts Sun Yat-sen’s oath of office.
April 1912	Wang formally married to Chen Bijun
November 1912–January 1917	Wang’s sojourn in France
May–December 1913	Wang returns to China to join the Second Revolution
June–December 1915	Wang returns to China to join the National Protection War
1917–1925	Wang acts as Sun Yat-sen’s personal secretary and chief lieutenant

April–November 1919	Wang observes the Paris Peace Conference
July 1921	The foundation of the Chinese Communist Party
March 12, 1925	Sun Yat-sen passes away in Beijing. Wang drafts Sun's last will.
July 1, 1925	Wang Jingwei is elected chairman of the Guangzhou GMD Government
March 20, 1926	SS Zhongshan Incident. Wang resigns two days later.
May 1926–March 1927	Wang takes sick leave in France
April–July 1927	Wang leads the leftist Wuhan government in opposition to Nanjing
August 1, 1927	Communist Nanchang Uprising. The foundation of the People's Liberation Army.
December 1927– September 1929	Wang seeks political retreat in France
June 1928	Chiang announces the success of the Northern Expedition and the unity of China
November 28, 1928	The foundation of the Reorganization Clique
October 1929–July 1930	Wang stays in Hong Kong and builds a propagandist base
July–October 1930	Wang joins the anti-Chiang Central Plains War
October 27, 1930	Taiyuan Government promulgates a provisional constitution drafted by Wang
May 5, 1931	Nanjing Government promulgates the provisional constitution
September 18, 1931	The Mukden Incident
December 1931–December 1938	Chiang-Wang Coalition
January–March 1932	The Shanghai Incident
September 1932– March 1933	Wang takes sick leave in Germany
January–May 1933	The Defense of the Great Wall
November 1, 1935	Wang survives an assassination attempt
February–December 1936	Wang takes sick leave in Germany

December 12–25, 1936	The Xi'an Incident
July 7, 1937	Outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War
December 13, 1937	The Fall of Nanjing
December 18, 1938	Wang escapes from Chongqing to launch the Peace Movement
March 21, 1939	Zeng Zhongming is assassinated in Hanoi
May–December 1939	The Wang group negotiates with Japan on terms of collaboration
March 1940–August 1945	The Reorganized National Government in Nanjing
December 7, 1941	Japan attacks Pearl Harbor
January 9, 1943	RNG joins the Great East Asian War
November 5, 1943	The Greater East Asia Conference is convened in Tokyo
March 3, 1944	Wang is flown to Nagoya for operation
November 10, 1944	Wang passes away in Nagoya
November 23, 1944	Wang is buried in Nanjing
August 15, 1945	Japan surrenders, ending the Second World War
January 1, 1946	Wang's tomb is destroyed

Introduction

The War in Memory

In the late afternoon of November 10, 1944, an emaciated Chinese man lay dying in the Nagoya University Hospital. Heavy Allied shelling of the city confined him to a cellar ward in the suburban campus. These metallic angels' drumbeats forebode the downfall of the Empire of the Sun and his own trial by history on the charge of treason.

He was Wang Zhaoming 汪兆銘 (1883–1944), better known by his sobriquet Jingwei 精衛 and one of the most controversial figures in modern Chinese history. Through four decades he had been at the center of China's national politics, rising to fame first as a brilliant polemist and then an attempted assassin of the prince regent, father of the Last Emperor. Seen as Sun Yat-sen's political heir, he was elected the first president of the Nationalist government in 1925, but his status was quickly eroded by military strongman Chiang Kai-shek. The cause of death was complications resulting from the removal of a bullet rusting in his spine, courtesy of a patriot who shot him three times on November 1, 1935, when he was China's premier and chief diplomat handling a national crisis caused by Japan's aggressions. Though he survived the assassination attempt, the unremoved bullet served as a daily reminder of the popular disaffection with the appeasement policy that he and Chiang together implemented. Yet neither his near-death nor public damnation stopped him from escaping from the wartime capital Chongqing in December 1938 to Hanoi to start a "peace movement," or from eventually founding a client regime in the raped city of Nanjing—an act, as this book shows, that was no less puzzling than it was ignominious.

The nature of the Wang regime, known as the Reorganized National Government (RNG, 1940–45), remains a subject of debate. Scholars follow the Western denomination and call it “collaborationist,” but the Chinese term was *wei* 偽, or “illegitimate,” which implies a censure of its moral and legal *being* rather than a description of its *doing*. Historians working outside of mainland China generally concur that the Wang regime operated somewhere “between collaboration and resistance”¹ and that it was neither fascist nor particularly violent. Nonetheless, in historical narratives dominated by resistance discourse, its transgression against a “united front” was tantamount to sacrilege. In mainland China, Wang Jingwei’s name has achieved the unique notoriety of becoming synonymous with Hanjian 漢奸, or “traitor to the Han nation.”² With academic research on Wang discouraged and archive access restricted, his role in Republican China’s nation-building is virtually forgotten. The unrelenting force of *damnatio memoriae* aims to instigate Wang’s second death: that of his memory. As Diana Lary observes, to this day, among senior Nationalist Party (Guomindang, or GMD) leaders, Wang Jingwei is the one “still hovering in historical obscurity.”³ Regrettably, the redaction of such a crucial figure from popular Republican Chinese history makes our understanding of it often incomplete.

Perhaps in anticipation of posthumous damnation, Wang Jingwei on his deathbed asked his family and followers not to publish his speeches or essays. A collection of his classical-style verses alone, he declared, would serve as his testament.⁴ An editorial committee duly compiled and published his poems as *Poetry on the Double-Shining Tower* in May 1945,⁵ three months before Japan’s surrender. While his late prose writings often reflected Japan’s war propaganda, the portrait that many elicit from Wang’s poems is that of a martyr and romantic figure ready to sacrifice not just his life, but even his reputation, to save the nation. This lyric persona was embodied by his very sobriquet Jingwei. It was adopted in 1905 when he was a nationalist revolutionary against the Qing Dynasty (1644–1910), ruled by an ethnically Manchu imperial house that conquered China following scenes of carnage and bloodbath. In an ancient myth recorded in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*,⁶ the namesake bird is the reincarnation of a young princess, drowned in the Eastern Sea. In wrathful vengeance, it tirelessly carries pebbles in its bleeding beak to fill up a surging ocean. This mythological symbol contains a powerful pathos that is a complex of trauma, revenge, and redemption. Wang’s last will thus contains a double entendre: of memory and of oblivion, an entreaty to be remembered in the way that he had understood the

purpose of his life—the rest to be forgiven if not forgotten. These poems constitute a counter-memory, through which the poet’s lyric voice reveals to future temporalities his most intimate subjectivity, a persistent murmur that resists the verdict of history.

How much trust can we place in a poet’s self-portrait? Does poetry deserve a place in historiography? Can the poetic truth and the historical truth be reconciled or at least coexist? All these factors make the writing of this book a delicate, even dangerous, task. When the gap between the poet’s self-portrait and the verdict of history is so glaring, it demands the reconsideration of both truths: the poetic and the historical. My book takes issue equally with the punitive historiography on Wang and with his romanticized literary image. It tells a complicated story of poetry, history, and memory. Its purpose is threefold. First, it sheds light on a historical figure long neglected due to moral and ideological biases. An objective study of Wang Jingwei recovers a fuller picture of the Republican Chinese political and literary landscape. Second, it investigates ways of bringing disparate methodologies into a fruitful dialogue, including a sophisticated exegetical method that allows historians to use poetry while maintaining the latter’s ambiguity and hermeneutical openness. Third, it addresses the problem of justice in mnemonic practices and explores ways of reconciliation and forgiveness. I argue that Wang’s lyric poetry, as the public performance of a private voice, played a central role in constructing his political identity and posthumous memory. By examining a genre practiced by both Chinese and Japanese elites, I also problematize the nation-state paradigm that dominates the scholarship on cultural production in wartime China.

This long overdue project is also timely. With the recent republications of Wang Jingwei’s poetry in Hong Kong (2012) and of his manuscripts in Taipei (2019),⁷ and with the Hoover Institution’s acquisition of Wang Jingwei’s “personal papers” in 2021, interest in Wang Jingwei is rising among readers and scholars, creating a new battlefield of memory. Since we cannot speak of memory without having a basic understanding of history, Part I of this book offers a critical biography of Wang Jingwei. Drawing on archives (in East Asia, Europe, and North America), memoirs, historical journals and newspapers, interviews, and scholarly works, this is the first biography of Wang to address the political, the literary, and the personal in critical light and with sympathetic impartiality. Poetry gives a glimpse, however imperfect, into Wang’s subjectivity when biographical information about him is scarce, especially in the last years of his life, due to the archival censorship in mainland China.

Given the linear and fluid narrative demanded by a biography, however, Part I may raise but cannot fully address hermeneutical issues such as the question of authenticity in lyric poetry, nor can it offer comprehensive readings of some poems that are intensively allusive or have highly complex discursive contexts. Part II thus consists of thematic explorations of the “poetics of memory,” primarily investigating poems written by Wang during the period of collaboration and his coded lyric conversations with other elite collaborators. Rather than reading his poetry as courtroom evidence bearing on a verdict on Wang’s collaboration, I propose an open-ended exegetical strategy that redeems the literariness of these poems as multivalent utterances of a complex lyric subjectivity. History and memory are united in poetry, which is further invested with the power of resisting the punitive forgetting that victor’s history inflicts on the variously vanquished. The introduction and the epilogue, meanwhile, contextualize the book in the research on the Second World War’s memory culture, in particular the discursive framework that concerns the censorship and justice of memory, as well as forgiveness, forgetting, and reconciliation.

Throughout the book, the Manichaeic binary of patriotism versus treason is rejected as an inadequate description of lived reality, under any historical circumstances but in particular under foreign occupation. Taking inspiration from the French process of reconciliation with the country’s own history of wartime collaboration, I hope this small book may contribute to China’s dialogue with its checkered past.

Traitor or Martyr?

In the words of Viet Thanh Nguyen: “All wars are fought twice, the first time on the battlefield, the second time in memory.”⁸ Wang Jingwei’s case epitomizes a war in memory that is still being waged.

The polemical stakes of Wang’s legacy as a “traitor” or “martyr” are high, as the answer will affect how China remembers its role in the hagiography of an antifascist world war, its unfolding global memory culture having fundamentally shaped the world power structure, national identities, and concepts of international justice. One price of historical Manichaeism is the capacity to understand tragedy. In Hegel’s words, tragedy results from the inevitable collision of two partial truths, each asserted with equal intensity by a heroic individual who claims a monopoly on virtue and justice; only the recognition of the hero’s partiality and profound guilt can make possible an eventual

reconciliation.⁹ This view is conducive not to moral relativism, but to critical self-reflection.

The spirit of self-reflection, however, is painfully lacking today in East Asia. More than seventy years after Japan's unconditional surrender, the Great East Asian War continues to be waged in textbooks, memorials, museums, and mass media in a region that is quickly rising to become a cultural, economic, and political powerhouse, with each nation capable of producing its own polished, big-budget memories. The end of the Cold War did not change the picture, but rather removed the sense of urgency to form strategic alliances and exposed unresolved animosities. While Western European nations are on their way to constructing a reconciled memory of the war, scholarly efforts to write a common history of the Second World War in East Asia have been frustrated. Instead, mainland China, Taiwan, Japan, and the two Koreas all adhere to their invested narratives—mythologies that are essential to their postwar identities. There is no consensus even on fundamental issues like responsibility or victimhood, and demands for reparation are still creating frictions.

There is no doubt that Japan, the aggressor, should be excoriated for its lead role in memory contamination. In the summer of 2016, I visited the Yūshūkan Military and War Museum located within the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, where convicted war criminals are still honored. At the entrance, I was confronted by a bronze statue depicting a heroic young Japanese male holding a sword in one hand while helping a starved Asian slave onto his feet. Named *Great East Asia*, it was not monumental in size, but defiant. Such an unapologetic celebration of Japan's war of aggression as a purported liberation of Asian nations from Western imperialism shows the tenacity of history's specters. Wang Jingwei in this story was a "good friend" of Japan's, a willing accomplice in its imperial exploit.

But the specters live inside the victors too. In mainland China today, discursive construction of the war is empowered by state violence, top-down media control, and increasingly the capitalist logic of the cultural market. Salacious, patriotic, and sometimes fantastical war stories are produced for mass consumption. Through mass media, institutionalized memory is quickly consolidated to replace actual history. Research on wartime collaboration is unfunded, if not entirely forbidden, and publication censored. Because for China to emerge as a heroic victor of the war, it must underline its capacity to defeat Japan on its own, with or without Allied assistance. This leads to the retrospective dismissal of the collaborators' concern, before Pearl Harbor, that the war might have already been lost as baseless defeatism. The Chinese Communist Party



Fig. 1. "Great East Asia," at Yushukan, Yasukuni Shrine, Tokyo. Photographed by the author, September 2016.

further justifies its ultimate victory over the GMD in the subsequent civil war by its purported moral credential of defeating the Japanese through guerrilla insurgence in the occupied territories. Since the rural pacification campaigns against communist infiltration were mostly waged by collaborationist forces, the “guerrilla warfare” narrative must delegitimize the collaborators as mere proxies fighting the invaders’ war, if not erase their very existence.

From a comparative perspective, the vehemence of China’s condemnation of its wartime collaborators is unique on a global scale. In contrast, leading Asian collaborators in neighboring nations, such as Burma, India, Thailand, and the Philippines, experienced little or no punishment at all during the postwar years.¹⁰ As these countries were former Western colonies, Japan’s claim that its war was “liberation” had a greater resemblance to reality there than in China. European collaboration in the Second World War has been extensively revisited and reexamined in the last decades. In France, the struggle to reconcile with the memory of collaboration constituted an alleged “Vichy syndrome,”¹¹ stimulating extensive media discussion as well as philosophical soul-searching. But in postwar China, there was little if any debate over judicial procedure, over the nature of collaboration, over the legitimacy of collaborative regimes, or over the ethical ambiguities of accommodation. There was no collective reflection, no such legal and media events as the Brasillach trial, the Barbie trial, or the Aubrac affair, which aroused intensive emotions and public debates in France decades after the end of the war,¹² and no such public intellectuals as Hannah Arendt, Susan Sontag, Julia Kristeva, or Paul Ricoeur who attempted audacious answers to the uncomfortable ethical questions that war crimes, totalitarian horror, and collaboration always raise.¹³ Weaponized memory has institutionalized collective amnesia and intellectual aphasia. The fervor of prosecution may signal a lasting “Chinese syndrome” too, which is the pathological inability to reconcile with the past. Coerced forgetting begets remembrance in the form of haunting. As memory is closely bound to identity, to this day the ghosts of history continue to haunt China’s imagination of its nationhood.

In the reality that the postwar mechanism of weaponized remembrance refuses to revisit, living under occupation often necessitated moral compromises and dubious allegiances. Werner Rings’s study of Nazi-controlled Europe identifies four degrees of “collaboration,” ranging from neutrality, in order to secure basic needs for survival, to unconditional, conditional, and tactical collaboration, the last characterized by

a hostile stance toward the invader.¹⁴ Such contextualized narrative and ethical nuances, however, find no place in a victor's narrative.

As Christopher Lloyd argues, especially because it is virtually impossible to think or write about the Second World War without making moral judgments, it becomes imperative for historians to study autobiographies and literary narratives to understand "the material and psychological reality" that individuals faced.¹⁵ Paul Fussell, a veteran-turned-historian, studies literary responses to the war as ways of revealing the uncertainty, fear, desperation, and human errors that defined the actual experience of living through it.¹⁶ As no other leader of a wartime regime was an acclaimed poet like Wang, his poetry deserves particular attention. Such a study not only is of interest to historians, but further enriches our understanding of autobiographical poetry and its relation to historiography and memory construction.

Arguably, if the force of punitive forgetting were triumphant, it would be the ultimate fulfillment of what Wang's followers and sympathizers believe to be his "martyrdom," as only through oblivion would his sacrifice become complete. The gesture of preserving his poetry as counter-memory instead reveals a sliver of hope for redemption, thereby contradicting the heroism of sacrifice. But, in a last twist, no sacrifice will be perceived as such unless people remember what has been sacrificed. In this sense, Wang Jingwei's poems become testaments to the ethical ambivalence of his life and of his enterprise. They are central, therefore, to this war in memory. Ironically, since research on Wang Jingwei remains discouraged in China, among lay readers his poetry has assumed greater currency to speak for him. In 2012, *Poetry on the Double-Shining Tower* was republished in Hong Kong. It has been bootlegged and pirated, both in print and in digital forms, throughout mainland China, reigniting interest in Wang's poetry and his person, which occasionally find expression in cyberspace. The collection is prefaced by Yu Ying-shih and Yeh Chia-ying, two preeminent scholars broadly respected in English- and Chinese-speaking academia. Yeh, a poetry scholar, contributes a quatrain on Wang that plays upon Wang's pen name and laments that he would forever be a "wronged bird." The editor Wang Mengchuan goes further and praises Wang as a "hero of the nation." Yu Ying-shih cites Wang's poetry as proof of his altruistic motives for collaboration, explicitly endorsing the classical paradigm of poetic exegesis according to which "Poetry speaks one's mind" (*shi yan zhi* 詩言志).¹⁷ Yu's comment is interpreted by bloggers and commentators as an effort to "reverse the verdict" on Wang, sanctifying a revisionist history of collaboration. Censorship on memory thus feeds its nemesis: counter-memory.

Unlike institutionalized historical memory, countermemory often articulates private individual experience, or witness memory. Yeh (b. 1924) and Yu (b. 1930) both lived their formative years under Japanese occupation. Yu recalls that he first read Wang's poems in the wartime countryside and was deeply moved by them; no one told him that Wang had become a "traitor."¹⁸ In other words, his "innocent" experience with "Wang Jingwei" the poet contradicts the contextualized historical knowledge of Wang the politician, which Yu would acquire later and which would shed new exegetical light on his experience. Yeh gave a more extensive account of her experience during and after the war: abandoned in the occupied Beijing by her father (and fatherland) and exploited by the spiteful policies that the returned National Government imposed on the repatriated area.¹⁹ More than half a century later, reading Wang's poetry, Yeh was convinced that he suffered from "a martyr complex" (*lieshi qingjie* 烈士情結) that drove him to sacrifice himself to relieve the pain of people living with the enemy. The Freudian term "martyr complex" was borrowed from Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962), a friend of Wang's. In his diary, upon hearing the news of Wang's death, Hu writes: "Throughout his life, Jingwei suffered from the fact that he began his career as a would-be martyr, so he always had a martyr complex. He thought: 'I disregard even my own life, so how could people not trust me?'"²⁰ By reevaluating Wang's enterprise, Yeh perhaps also gives expression to her own long-suppressed anger that was silenced by the resistance discourse. The actual circumstances of occupation blurred the lines between resistance, accommodation, and collaboration, and Wang Jingwei's moral profile of altruism and sincerity became a cornerstone of his regime's claim of legitimacy. Yeh's and Yu's defense of Wang Jingwei thus reflects their own experience of living with ambivalence.

The reductionist portrayal of Wang as an identical twin of his poetic persona, however, is a precarious reading strategy. As an exegetical principle, I follow German literary critic Käte Hamburger's position that the relationship between the lyric "I" and the poet is indeterminate. "The much disputed lyric I is a statement-subject" and its statements are real propositions of the experience of an object. The statement-subject is not a personal "I" but a linguistic function. Thus "the concept of subjectivity will be eliminated from the theory of the lyric."²¹ As Jonathan Culler further clarifies, this removal has no bearing on whether "the lyric I" corresponds with the experience of the author, and the lyrical reality statement cannot be compared with any reality. "The relationship between the lyric 'I' and the poet is indeterminate because of this incommensurability."²² The subjectivity at work in the lyric may be understood as "a

formal principle of unity” that subjects a series of poems by the same author to a coherent interpretation.²³ In this book, whenever a poem is discussed, I restrict my task to analyzing the lyric “I,” without the pretense of assessing the intimate subjectivity of the historical Wang Jingwei. The question of the relationship between the persona and the person is left open.

And yet this lyric “I” does relate to history: it responds to history, is inspired by history, and, most importantly, participates in the writing of history. Wang’s poems were and continue to be an essential means of his communication with the reading public during and after his time. The memory that it carries is not merely the personal memory of the poet, but also collective and cultural. Through a dialogue with the lyric “I,” we may aspire to write a history consisting not of numbers and exploits, but of the unspoken and the unspeakable, of the ambivalent and of the duplicitous, of the battles lost and the ideals corrupted.

Methodology and State of the Field

As an interdisciplinary project that seeks to bridge the boundaries between historical, literary, and memory studies, there are three paradigmatic “windmills” that this book charges against, though windmills are never to be confused with intellectual giants who have fundamentally shaped and defined the fields.

First “Windmill”: On History

The first windmill is the historians’ negligence of poetry. Modern Chinese political figures, in particular, often fondled a poetic brush. But even when these poems are noted, they are often treated as a minor category of evidential texts, purportedly attesting to the author’s feelings or actions at the moment of composition. But if historians abandon the comforting certainty of prosaic evidence, the fruitful ambivalence of a poem will greatly enrich the subjective dimension of historiography.

The moving power of poetry comes from its capacity to reach into the abyss of the nameless and the formless. In Paul Celan’s metaphor, the poet goes into “the deep sea of a soul” and to bring us a new and pure language, which refreshes the mundane words covered by “the ashes of burned-out meanings.”²⁴ In such poems, the nuanced lyrical expression cannot be reduced to a simple message. Take, for instance, a *ci* 詞 poem (“lyric song”) written by Wang Jingwei in the fall of 1942 to “Measures in Court”:²⁵

On the Double-Ninth Day I climbed the Polaris Pavilion. While reading Yuan Haowen's *ci* poem, I was struck by the line "Like a painting: mountains and rivers in my lost fatherland; / In drunkenness I forget about the rise or the fall [of states]." ²⁶ It stirred endless sorrow in my heart. So I composed the following song.

重九日登北極閣，讀元遺山詞至“故國江山如畫，醉來忘卻興亡”，悲不絕於心，亦作一首

城樓百尺倚空蒼	A soaring city tower leans against a gray sky;
雁背正低翔	Wild geese glide leisurely below.
滿地蕭蕭落葉	Across the land the rustle of fallen leaves;
黃花留住斜陽	Yellow chrysanthemums hold back the sinking sun.
闌干拍徧	My palms have pounded all the railings;
心頭塊壘	My chest weighs heavy with a lump;
眼底風光	An airy landscape stretches before my eyes.
為問青山綠水	I ask the green mountains, the emerald waters:
能禁幾度興亡	How many rises and falls can you stand?

The Double-Ninth Day celebrates longevity, and it is the custom to climb high on this day. The Polaris Pavilion (Beijing 北極閣) is a hill in Nanjing with an ancient meteorological observatory perching on its top. In late 1942, the failure of Japan's venture in the Pacific was increasingly evident. Wang in the preface cites a line from a poem by Yuan Haowen 元好問 (1190–1257), which was similarly written on a Double-Ninth Day. Yuan Haowen, a poet born under the Jin Dynasty (1115–1234), refused to serve after the Mongol Conquest. He spent his last years in retreat, editing Jin Dynasty literature and history. Yet even a loyalist like Yuan Haowen is allowed to momentarily “forget” about the inhuman force of history that determines human fate, expressed as cyclical time defined by the “rises and falls” of states, like the rotation of seasons. But human life is defined by linear time. Sorrow arises when a moral and sentient subject is confronted with amoral history and insentient nature. By evoking the cultural memory of Yuan Haowen, the poem hints at what Wang may not say: what if the history of conquest repeats itself? The Jin Dynasty to which Yuan Haowen had pledged his loyalty was ruled by Sinicized Jurchens, once a nomadic people to the northeast. Yuan's own ancestry was the Sinicized Xianbei people. Yet none of the facts prevented Yuan from using the elite Chinese language and literary forms to preserve the cultural legacy of the Jin. Since Confucian political philosophy sees the

rise of a new dynasty as the transference of the “Mandate of Heaven,” barbarians may become Chinese as long as they adopt the latter’s elite culture—an attitude that Joseph Levenson famously terms “culturalism.”²⁷ Were that the case, if the current Japanese conquest were to succeed, would it not become just another episode of “rise and fall”?

The line “My palms have pounded all the railings” was borrowed verbatim from a *ci* poem by Xin Qiji 辛棄疾 (1140–1207).²⁸ It is worth noting that Xin, too, was born under the Jurchen Jin. Though Xin’s grandfather served under the Jin, Xin chose to join the resistance, escaped to the south, and died a patriotic poet in the Southern Song. He wrote the song while standing by Yangtze, the river that served as the natural border separating the two states, to gaze at the lost north. Yuan Haowen, born fifty years later, would be instead commemorated as a Jin loyalist. Their different loyalties attest to an unspoken truth, namely, time legitimizes conquest. Feeling a lump in his chest, Wang Jingwei hints at his sentiments through allusion. To the mountains and waters surrounding Nanjing, the ancient capital that has seen many rises and falls of dynasties, he asks whether the apparent permanence of nature is only a beautiful illusion that will ultimately be marred by human time.

This poem demonstrates the limit of evidential research, as these are ideas that Wang would never admit in his speeches or other writings. As a powerful work of linguistic art, a poem assumes a timeless quality of its own, speaking to sensitive readers across time and space. A poem declines to convey a prosaic message. The sentiments of an inflicted lyric subjectivity are intimated to an individual reader, caught in the act of reading. In her silent contemplation, the reader might allow herself a moment of honesty and admit having entertained the same thoughts. Thereby a connection is established between the authorial voice and the reader’s experience, making the lyric reality transtemporal. Through his poetry, Wang Jingwei tries to transcend the historicity that will judge him. And precisely here lies his duality: politician and poet, patriot and traitor, torn between action and contemplation.

To fight a windmill does not mean to ignore actual giants in the field of historical research on the Chinese collaboration. I have greatly benefited from pioneering works by Howard L. Boorman, John Hunter Boyle, Cai Dejin, Timothy Brook, David P. Barrett, Larry N. Shyu, Sven Saaler, Hsu Yu-Ming, Tsuchiya Mitsuyoshi, Shibata Tetsuō, Charles Musgrove, Jeremy Taylor, Li Zhiyu, Yuan Yidan, Seki Tomohide, and David Serfass, among many others. Their findings are cited and introduced throughout the book.

Second “Windmill”: On Poetry

The second windmill is the exclusion of classical-style poetry from the research on modern Chinese literature. As a result, much archival research is needed. A particular challenge is to contextualize poetry in history while preserving its multivocality.

The standard narrative of modern Chinese poetry is a saga of liberation. In this saga, Chinese poetry, after a millennium of decline or stagnation, was finally breaking the shackles of the reified classical literary language (*wenyan* 文言, literally “embellished language”) to embrace the freedom afforded by a modern written vernacular (*baihua* 白話, literally “plain speech”). Starting from the 1917 New Culture Movement, the call for a “literary revolution” was associated with the progressive causes of freedom and democracy. Its proponents, like Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879–1942), believed that elite language, cultural practices, and their implied social hierarchy must be abolished to save the Chinese nation from permanent subjugation to an imperialist international order. To do that, vernacular needed to be recognized as not only useful, but also beautiful; as fitting not just for didactic prose, but also for aesthetic verse.²⁹ This narrative depicts the rise of vernacular poetry as fulfilling a teleological purpose, a course predestined by the natural law of language. With the victory of the proletarian revolution in 1949, the primacy of “plain speech” over “embellished language” was finally sealed with political authority. Classical-style poetry continues to be written, but it is seldom included in collections of modern Chinese literary canons or treated in textbooks of literary history.

The academic negligence of modern classical-style poetry risks overlooking a vast and vibrant field of literary production, which continues to assume multifaceted literary, political, and sociological functions. In recent years, more scholars have begun to devote their attention to this field, mapping its landscape and studying its canonical works. Among North American scholars, monographs by Jerry Dean Schmidt, Jon von Kowallis, Shengqing Wu, and Haosheng Yang are the most notable.³⁰ Important contributions to this emerging field have also been made by scholars like Stephen Owen, Xiaofei Tian, Kang-I Sun Chang, David Der-wei Wang, Nanxiu Qian, Lam Lap, and Tsung-cheng Lin, to name but a few.

As a literary figure, Wang Jingwei actively participated in the literary debates of his time. He was a member of the Southern Society (Nanshe 南社, active 1905–23), a broadly influential group of classical-

style poets. In his 1923 preface to the selected anthology of the society, Wang called its poetry genuine “revolutionary literature, for it had the capacity to revive the spirit of the Chinese intelligentsia, once sickened under the Manchu rule.”³¹ The term “revolutionary literature” (*geming wenxue* 革命文學) was a tongue-in-cheek reversal of the term “literary revolution” (*wenxue geming* 文學革命). According to Wang, classical-style poetry carried the noblest soul of the nation. Even though it may deteriorate into an exquisite parade of clichés, it also has an extraordinary capacity to evoke cultural heroes of the past through subtle linguistic codes, reviving them as literary precursors and moral heroes to serve contemporaneous (and revolutionary) needs. He was not against vernacular poetry per se. As he proposed in an essay published in 1924: “What is properly called ‘poetry’ is not in its being old or new, but in its being good.”³² He saw no need to abolish classical-style poetry, as long as it could still stir readers to aspire for moral nobility. The same opinion was reiterated in *Talks on Poetry of the Southern Society*, a series of anecdotes and comments published under a pseudonym.³³ Here Wang made a provocative suggestion: if the history of Chinese literature was indeed a Darwinian one (as Hu Shi argues), then the “old” and the “new” literatures should coexist and compete in peaceful terms, as only competition would bring about progress; in a fair competition based on literary merit alone, vernacular poetry would not necessarily vanquish those purportedly old styles.³⁴

The writing of classical-style poetry saw a revival during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Scholars and modernist writers alike borrowed strength from the literary tradition, especially from the eras when China faced similar existential crises.³⁵ Collaborationist regimes, too, were staffed by many elite men of letters. Since most Qing loyalists and Beiyang bureaucrats did not follow the Nationalist government to relocate to the hinterland, they were among the first recruits by the Japanese. Elite collaborators thus tended to show a traditionalist political and cultural profile. Primary examples included Wang Yitang 王揖唐 (1877–1948) and Liang Hongzhi 梁鴻志 (1883–1946). Both had collaborated before Wang Jingwei and joined his rival regime only reluctantly under Japanese pressure. Coded literary dialogues among elite collaborators are analyzed in detail in the last two chapters of the book.

Wang’s poetic talent was useful for him as a politician in the Republican era, which was still shaped by the legacy of literati politics. Chapter 2 of this book, in particular, shows how his conformity to the

literati ideal explains his staying power in Republican politics, while chapter 4 shows its multifaceted functions to different readers. Literary network also built alliances. A few of Wang's literary correspondents, such as Zhao Zunyue 趙尊嶽 (1898–1965) and Long Yusheng 龍榆生 (1902–1966), ultimately became his followers in the “peace movement.” Notably, in the period of collaboration, the readers of Wang's poems included his Japanese patrons too. Evidence suggests that he turned his poems into devious devices of remonstrance.

All these diverse functions of classical-style poetry support its claim to a place in the history of modern Chinese literature. Research on classical-style poetry by collaborators, in particular, has been inadequate. Predominant attention on Chinese wartime literature has been on resistance literature. As some scholars argue, wartime resistance literature, though politically necessary, often suffers from literary poverty. Poshek Fu and Paul Fussell have made similar observations on Chinese and Anglo-American resistance literature from the Second World War, which tends to dehumanize the “other,” perpetuate a vision of moral Manichaeism, revive traditional and absolutist values, and promote unironic high-mindedness at the cost of critical intelligence.³⁶ The writings by many collaborators and accommodators, in contrast, tend to emphasize individual circumstances, internal experiences, and moral ambiguities. Such literature thus may interest later readers and researchers when the urgency of artistic utilitarianism is no longer keenly felt. Pioneering works on literature under the Japanese occupation, by scholars like Edward Gunn, Poshek Fu, Prasenjit Duara, Norman Smith, and Nicole Huang, mostly focus on fiction and essays in occupied Shanghai, Beijing, or Manchuria.³⁷ In recent years, some Taiwanese scholars have begun to study the Nanjing circle of classical-style poets. Ko Chia-Cian's research on the *Accord Monthly* (*Tongsheng yuekan* 同聲月刊, a journal devoted to the writing and research of classical Chinese literature edited by Long Yusheng) and two doctoral dissertations, by Liu Wei-Chih and by Chiu Yi-Hsuan, are the most notable.³⁸ Nicholas L. Chan's recent book on the classical-style poetry by “the last generation of Qing poets” includes two collaborators born between 1890 and 1910.³⁹ In mainland China, it is difficult for scholars to publish their research on collaboration without tactful negotiations, but Wang Mengchuan's editorship of Wang Jingwei's poetry has made a major contribution to the field. Systematic investigations of poetry by elite collaborators, however, remain overdue.

Third “Windmill”: On Memory

The third windmill is the insufficient attention that the current field of memory studies has paid to the cultural particularities of Chinese traditions. I argue that classical Chinese poetic tradition should be treated as a rich repertoire of cultural memories in its own right. The role of poetry in creating historical memory and countermemory constitutes a research lacuna despite a spate of recent works, mostly by cultural historians, that examine modern Chinese monuments and contemporary rituals of commemoration.

Cultural memory refers to the long-term, collective memory of a group about its past, which informs its identity. Culture is essentially a social memory, and individual memory is actualized only in a collective framework. As Maurice Halbwachs in his groundbreaking research on collective memory argues, in society people normally acquire their memories; in society they recall, recognize, and localize their memories. “It is in this sense that there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection.”⁴⁰ In other words, it is the social framework, a schemata, that makes individual memory possible. Drawing from this insight, modern memory research has blossomed and diversified into many fields of disciplines. Jan and Aleida Assmann’s theories, in particular, provide a conceptual tool to describe “the interdependences among cultural memory, collective identity, and political legitimation.”⁴¹

Jan Assmann’s influential research on ancient Egypt and Jewish culture proposes that a group’s sense of identity is essentially tied to its cultural memory, or “what we must not forget.” The sacred past is reenacted by the memory group through acts of ceremonial commemoration, which renew its normative and formative power.⁴² Cultural memory in this sense is an essential resource of legitimization. Memory of the shared past also creates group membership. In Jan Assmann’s words: “Both the normative and the narrative elements of these [acts]—mixing instruction with storytelling—create a basis of belonging, of identity, so that the individual can then talk of ‘we.’ What binds him to this plural is the connective structure of common knowledge and characteristics—first through adherence to the same laws and values, and second through the memory of a shared past.”⁴³ As chapter 5 shows, China’s cultural memory was a crucial intellectual resource for the Wang regime from which to derive its legitimacy and construct its political “we.”

In the field of Chinese literature, Martin Kern has introduced Jan

Assmann's theory to describe ancient Chinese literary classics, the *Book of Odes* in particular, as a repertoire of cultural memory.⁴⁴ I would like to broaden his use and regard the whole corpus of classical Chinese poetry as such a repertoire.⁴⁵ The form, diction, style, and allusions of a high-register poem, as exemplified by Wang's "Measures in Court," all refer to a shared and memorized textual culture. Such intertextual references may be understood as mnemonic codes, which by triggering recognition create a sense of camaraderie between the author and the reader as members of the same cultural community. In other words, intertextuality creates intersubjectivity.

By tapping into the repertoire of China's collective cultural memory and by asking to be remembered through his poetry, Wang Jingwei has turned his poetry into a site of memory (*lieu de mémoire*). In Pierre Nora's words, a *lieu* contains three dimensions: the material, the symbolic, and the functional. It is "created by the interaction between memory and history, an interaction resulting in a mutual overdetermination. A will to remember must be present initially."⁴⁶ It is precisely this will to remember that tells *lieux de mémoire* from *lieux d'histoire*. In Wang Jingwei's case, the material and discursive space of his poems offers a nexus where China's collective historical and cultural memory, the author's individual memory, and the reader's memory of him collide and converse with each other. His poetry serves as a mnemotechnical device not for the triumphant nation state,⁴⁷ but for the "losers of history," whose narratives are often too fragmented, traumatized, and private to befit the victor's narrative of national history.

Chapter Outline

As this highly complex topic demands an interdisciplinary approach to engage with fields that should, but seldom do, talk with each other, this book is divided into two parts in six chapters. Part I is an intellectual, political, and literary biography of Wang Jingwei, and Part II investigates entangled questions concerning historiography, poetics, and memory. The methodological difference between the two parts reflects a conscious decision. Since there has not been an objective full-length biography about Wang in any language, Part I not only helps shed light on this history, but is structurally necessary for an in-depth examination in Part II of the entangled questions concerning historiography, poetics, and memory. Below is a chapter-by-chapter description.

Part I, "The End of Literati Politics," examines Wang as a transitional figure between a traditional literatus and a modern nationalist

politician. His belief in democratic centralism betrayed the influence of idealist Confucianism, and his collaboration was partially motivated by the search for existential meaning in action. I use Wang's diverse writings, historical newspapers and journals, and archival materials to write this comprehensive, albeit concise, biography. Some of the well-known stories of the Republican China are defamiliarized by restoring Wang Jingwei's indispensable role in them.

Chapter 1, "The Revolutionary," begins with Wang's rise from orphanhood to icon of the Nationalist revolution, culminating in his failed attempt to assassinate the prince regent and his imprisonment. He played a central role in the compromise that consolidated the presidency of Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859–1916). After the foundation of the Republic, he surprisingly decided to abandon politics and recommit to study. He played a crucial role in creating the work-study program for Chinese students in Europe. After witnessing the Paris Peace Conference as an unofficial Chinese delegate, he finally acknowledged the urgency of more pragmatic programs in nation-building and devoted himself once again to politics, accepting thereby the inevitable moral contamination.

Chapter 2, "The Statesman," delineates Wang's career as China's foremost civil leader. From 1917 to 1925, he served as Sun Yat-sen's lieutenant and ghostwriter. Sun's premature death thrust him into the spotlight. From 1925 to 1931, he was broadly perceived as Sun's political heir and leader of the GMD Left, but sustained repeated defeats in intraparty rivalry with Chiang Kai-shek. After the Mukden Incident of 1931, the Chiang-Wang coalition government was born. Wang was responsible for implementing an unpopular appeasement policy toward Japan, while his pleas for intervention were repeatedly rejected by Western democracies. The series of crises culminated with the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

Chapter 3, "The 'Traitor,'" examines Wang's path to collaboration. Convinced that a protracted war would be mutually destructive for China and for Japan, Wang was enticed by the Konoe Cabinet's promise to seek a peaceful solution and eventually established a client regime in Nanjing in March 1940. The ideological character of the Wang regime was ambivalent, committing simultaneously to nationalism and Pan-Asianism. Its program of nation-building and its early attempts to reorganize under the principle of democratic centralism, however, had long-term postwar consequences. The chapter ends with Wang's death, funeral, and the postwar trials of collaborators, contextualized in contemporaneous global treason trials.

Part II, "The Poetics of Memory," consists of three case studies that

show the textuality, temporality, and spatiality of poetic memory. By reconstructing their contexts and recovering the rich ambiguity of their texts, I argue that these poems should not be read under the exegetical principle of “authenticity.” Instead, Wang Jingwei is here shown as the “poet-in-chief” of his highly literary regime. His lyric performance of authenticity carried far-reaching political resonances.

Chapter 4, “Poetry as Mnemonic Atlas,” takes a close look at the poem “Night Onboard” that Wang wrote in 1939. The patriotic pathos evoked by the poem caused a controversy among historians. In this chapter, I instead propose reading this poem as a mnemonic text with historiographic functions, in order to transcend classical exegetical criteria such as “authenticity” or “revelation.” Under closer examination, “Night Onboard” contains multiple forms of memories, each with its own purpose and function. The poem resists a singular reading, but is revealed to be a mnemonic atlas, a rich and ambivalent open space of creative cacophony.

Chapter 5, “The Iconography of an Assassin,” explores a 1942 poetry exchange around a painting on the motif of Jing Ke’s 荊軻 (d. 227 BCE) attempted assassination of the king of Qin. I investigate the function of Wang’s iconography as an assassin in constructing the legitimacy of the RNG. The cultural memory of Jing Ke had changed over time, and his image had morphed into that of a republican and national hero in the twentieth century, eventually standing for resistance. These poems thus raise intriguing questions, especially considering their potential Japanese readership. I argue that, while cultural memory can be evoked as a legitimizing discourse to serve actual political needs, it is also malleable and versatile. Wang’s iconography as assassin was a floating symbol that assumed meaning in accordance to contexts, simultaneously justifying resistance and collaboration.

Chapter 6, “The Impossibility of Remembering the Past at Nanjing,” examines the poetic memory of Nanjing, an ancient capital that has sustained repeated cycles of prosperity and conquest. I demonstrate that, throughout the Republican period, poems “remembering the past at Jinling,” instead of being generic variations of clichés, were well chronicled to reflect actual horrors and hope. Few such poems, however, were written after the 1937 massacre. I argue that the narrative of an impersonal force of history, the “rise and fall,” risked reducing the immediate and unique historical event to a *déjà vu*. In this sense (and to paraphrase Adorno), “remembering the past” after the Rape of Nanjing was barbaric. The weight of memory at Nanjing was reflected particularly in the classical-style poems by Wang Jingwei and other RNG poets. For a regime

struggling with its own legitimacy, “remembering the past” would suggest that it, too, would suffer the fate of conquest. Memory thus may turn into prophecy. The poets’ reactions to the burden of literary tradition ranged from self-defense to wistful denial, but most commonly involved a pregnant aphasia.

The epilogue, “Poetry against Oblivion,” begins with my visit to Wang Jingwei’s kneeling statue in Chongqing. I examine monuments, museums, textbooks, and films to explore the censorship of memory and to analyze the mechanism of punitive forgetting, powered by ideological and market forces alike. At the same time, censorship creates fragmented memories that may come back to haunt through unexpected channels. In the end, by drawing comparisons to France’s postwar experience with the legacy of Vichy, I explore the possibility of reconciling obligations toward the justice of memory and toward the truth of history. Reading Wang Jingwei’s writings, including his poetry, is an intrinsic part of this process of mnemonic justice, as it allows the defendant to speak in his own voice in the court of history. Only after the justice of memory is served may we finally reach a happier memory: a more confident memory capable of forgiving and forgetting.

I hope this book speaks to readers discontented with monuments. After all, my own grandparents, like most Chinese in their generation, were survivors of the Japanese occupation without performing acts of extraordinary valor. But it was through their silent tenacity that the nation survived and recovered. While the survivors bear the duty of remembrance, their rights to remembrance are neglected in a victor’s narrative that glorifies death. I do not condone aggression, nor do I question resistance. Rather, by writing a book on Wang Jingwei, a man whose purported “sacrifice” is highly contested, I wish to convey a sense of compassion for imperfect lives lived and lost, under historical circumstances darker than ours. “Dark times” (*finstere Zeiten*) is a term that Hannah Arendt has borrowed from Brecht’s poem “To Posterity” (*An die Nachgeborenen*). It refers to the concealment of the truth in public realm emanated from and spread by systematic and institutional forces. In such times, entering public life, in whichever capacity, inevitably means moral contamination. And yet, “the uncertain, flickering, and often weak light” that some men and women kindle may still illuminate their world for the sake of the later-born.⁴⁸ Wang Jingwei’s failure to emerge gloriously out of the darkness was perhaps one of the most human stories of his time. His poetry serves as his dubious monument.

PART I | The End of Literati Politics

In the west wing of Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, Taipei, a mural shows the “Father of the Nation” surrounded by comrades and followers (who form the Republic of China map of China) and leading them into the future. It visually evokes the iconography of a Buddhist pantheon, with an oversized Buddha surrounded by smaller bodhisattvas and divine beings. Chiang Kai-shek stands on Sun’s right like a guardian angel. Wang Jingwei is painted spatially separated from Sun by a few figures standing on Sun’s left. And while virtually all figures look straight ahead, Wang’s downcast gaze seems to evade the viewer’s inquisition in shame. Completed in 1998, this mural is a pictorial expression of the ongoing marginalization and damnation of Wang in the historiography of Republican China on both sides of the strait. While acquiescing to Wang’s centrality in Nationalist politics, it also strives to distance and contain him, making his presence simultaneously a kind of absence. The following chapters thus attempt to offer a fresh focus on Wang Jingwei’s agency in some defining events in Republican Chinese history, with heretofore unseen aspects revealed and connections reestablished.

The six decades that Wang witnessed and shaped were crucial in China’s turn from an ancient empire to a nation-state. The country was on the cusp of modernization, though the direction of its modernity remained unclear. Wang manifested the intellectual hybridity typical of his times. He had been attracted to persuasions ranging from anarchism, nationalism, to socialism. But he was never a disciple of fascism or militarism. After he took over the GMD party leadership after Sun Yat-sen’s death, his ideological position is best described as leftwing democratic centralism. He firmly believed that the GMD must act as a vanguard party in leading a democratic coalition based on constitutionalism and



Fig. 2. Li Bin, *Father of the Nation* (mural), Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, Taipei. Wang Jingwei in the middle of the second row on the right with his gaze downcast.

in guiding mass movements to instigate social change. Another constant factor was his faith in the idealist Confucian tradition represented by the Ming philosopher Wang Shouren 王守仁 (1472–1529; known as Yangming 陽明), which believes in the world-changing power of an individual's self-cultivation. His failure exemplifies the limits of literati politics in modern China.

Part of his failure lay in being a civilian politician in the age of military strongmen. He would have been a skillful parliamentarian. He radiated warmth and commanded people's attention. He was handsome, tall, and upright, fastidiously dressed in Western-style suits or relaxing in Chinese scholarly robes. He was a natural leader, and his hidden pride prevented him from striving for anything less, but his leadership style was conciliatory and consensus-seeking. His idealism was often fused with pragmatism, principles combined with negotiations. His lifestyle was that of comfort but not luxury, a distinction in a government broadly perceived as corrupt. He was a faithful husband who fathered six children with his wife Chen Bijun 陳璧君 (1891–1959), to whom he dedicated many affectionate poems. A poet and calligrapher, an appreciative drinker with a

weakness for French red wines, and an affable host who put every guest at ease, he turned his house into a salon for literature, art, and politics. In all of these aspects, he was the opposite of Chiang Kai-shek, his rival and partner. The national outrage at his act of perceived betrayal reflected the dismay and mortification over the fall of an idol of the Chinese Revolution.

There is an ethical challenge in studying a collaborator who worked with a hostile foreign power. Some senior Chinese scholars, following the Confucian tradition, believe that punitive historiography serves a moral purpose to admonish future traitors. But the task of a historian differs from that of a judge, characterized—in Paul Ricoeur’s words—by their respective aims of truth and of justice.¹ Historical judgments are always provisional, readily subject to change along with our enriched understanding of historical contingencies and of their consequences. As for legal justice, it is worth remembering that the legitimacy of the modern treason trial (unlike a criminal trial) is based on the nation-state paradigm. It condemns a collaborator for violating the nation’s collective will for security through unity. But a nation is not immobile. When the nation changes, the judicial judgment may also change. Therefore, this biography responds to Timothy Brook’s thoughtful call to “hesitate before the judgment of history.”² Its purpose is not to condemn or forgive, but to seek understanding, in the best of hope for impartiality.

Another challenge is documentation. Access to mainland Chinese archives related to wartime collaboration is restricted, though some archives have been compiled and published in more liberal climates. Second, for a person—let alone a poet and politician—who lived his whole life in public view, Wang was curiously private: he did not keep a diary.³ That is why at times his poetry is the only, albeit highly subjective, source that helps account for him as a private man. This inevitably raises questions about authenticity and the role of poetry in historiography. The hermeneutic question will be more carefully addressed in the second part of the book.

The most difficult challenge of all, however, is to overcome the historian’s hindsight bias. Narratives and recollections by mainland Chinese biographers and memoirists are tarnished by ideological agendas. But the tendency of teleology is manifested in otherwise neutral histories too. Rana Mitter’s excellent account of the Second World War in China, for instance, refreshingly treats the RNG as a wartime Chinese regime on equal footing with Chongqing and Yan’an, each allied with an imperialistic force (Japan, the United States, and the USSR, respectively). It

nonetheless seeks to draw a direct line from Wang's youth to his later actions. Following an account of Wang's record as a young assassin, the author comments: "Driven, ambitious, vain, and also shaped by a streak of recklessness, Wang's willingness to throw the dice when the odds were long would shape his political life all the way into wartime."⁴ This approach neglects complicated circumstances that conditioned both decisions, made three decades apart, as well as the cast of actors whose collective political will found a public face in "Wang Jingwei." Describing choice as fate creates consistency for the historical narrative, through which history gains its explanatory power.⁵ To be sure, Wang Jingwei's own accounts of his life, either in prose or in poetry, seek to create consistency too. I endeavor to resist this temptation by attempting to contextualize Wang's decisions meticulously.

This account is primarily built upon archival material, letters, diaries, memoirs, contemporary reports, and scholarly studies. Contaminated postwar recollections of Wang are used only judiciously. I seek to redeem—if only partially—the precarious uncertainty of an individual life in parlous times, when he waded through a liquid labyrinth of traditions, ideologies, and ethical conundrums. In the end, as Theodore Adorno declared, "The meaning that history has as the logic of events is not the meaning of individual destinies."⁶ There is a tragic beauty in Wang Jingwei's struggle for moral purity that ended in contamination and damnation. Except it was not dictated by character or destiny, but was only a probable result of imperfect choices.

1 | The Revolutionary

A Cantonese Orphan Goes to Tokyo

In the fall of 1904, a group of young men boarded a steamship from Guangzhou to Tokyo. They were newly recommended by the viceroy of Guangdong (Canton) for a modern legal and political studies program at Hosei University, on a government scholarship set up in the hope of educating talents to rejuvenate the aging dynasty. The orphan Wang Zhaoming found himself in brilliant company, soon to be joined in Tokyo by classmates hailing from all over China. Contrary to the dynasty's expectations, these young men would soon become its gravediggers and vanguards of a new Chinese nation, born out of the ashes of the empire.

The Qing Dynasty was founded by the Manchus, once a northeastern nomadic people, who conquered China in 1644 and expanded their territory to include Manchuria, Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet. While practicing a policy of ethnic hierarchy, the Manchu ruling house was deeply Sinicized, ensuring Han cultural dominance and the stability of the Confucian bureaucratic state. Since the mid-nineteenth century, a series of defeats in conflicts against expansionist European powers resulted in unequal treaties that would drain the dynasty's finance and prestige. From 1861, the empire was effectively ruled by Empress Dowager Cixi (1835–1908), a capable regent with conservative instincts.

Eight years into the child emperor Guangxu's doomed reign, on May 4, 1883,¹ Wang Shu 汪珮 (1824–1897) welcomed a fourth son into his modest house in the Sanshui County, a quiet town in the vicinity of Guangzhou. Hailing from Shaoxing in the southeast of China,² Wang

Shu practiced the family trade of providing consultancy on administrative and legal affairs to local governments, a profession known as *shiyē* 師爺. Around 1846, he sought his fortune in Guangdong. After his first wife died, leaving behind a son, Zhaoyong 兆鏞 (1861–1939), he married Madam Wu 吳 (1852–1896). Zhaoming was the youngest of ten children. *Zhao* 兆 is a genealogical marker, meaning “a prophetic sign”; *ming* 銘 means “to engrave (in metal)” so as never to forget. Intended or not, the name Zhaoming already encoded an appeal to the memory of future generations. He would be given the polite name (*zi* 字) Jixin 季新: *ji* means “the fourth (son),” and *xin* means “renewal.”

As the battlefield of two Opium Wars and the first treaty port, the region around Guangzhou pioneered the import of modern goods and thoughts. Many of Wang’s future comrades in arms also hailed from the region. Missionary schools pioneered Western-style education in Guangzhou, followed by government ventures such as a Western Language School (founded in 1864) and an Army and Navy School (founded in 1887).³ A majority of their earliest students came from poor families or Christian believers. But the influence of modern education was seldom felt beyond Guangzhou. Zhaoming’s childhood education was entirely conservative.

A precocious child, Zhaoming entered a traditional school at the age of four.⁴ Every day after school his father expounded to him the moral philosophy of Wang Yangming, as well as poems of the recluse Tao Qian 陶潛 (365?–427?; or Tao Yuanming 陶淵明) and the patriot Lu You 陸遊 (1125–1210). These ancient paragons’ influences would remain with Zhaoming for his whole life. His fondest childhood memory was studying under his gentle mother’s supervision on an autumn morning under a blooming hibiscus tree, a scene which he later repeatedly commissioned artists to paint.⁵ Madam Wu, a diligent housekeeper who made her best to maintain the family’s appearance and well-being, died of the plague when he was thirteen. Wang Shu died one year later of cholera.

The orphan was put under the guardianship of his eldest brother, Zhaoyong. A stern scholar and fine poet, Zhaoyong would later become a Qing loyalist, refusing to recognize the Republic that his brother helped to found. The relationship between the two seemed strained. As Zhaoyong practiced his family trade and served in various county administrations, Zhaoming spent his formative years in a semiperegrine life around the province. The only piece of writing surviving Zhaoming’s teens is a seven-syllable regulated verse expressing his longing for his deceased parents.⁶ A capable, though timid, composition of a young stu-



Fig. 3. Fang Junbi 方君璧, *A Morning Class in the Autumn Courtyard* 秋庭晨課圖 (part). Courtesy of Wang Wenyong's family.

dent, it shows that the boy was versed in traditional literary arts. The lacunae in his curriculum were modern disciplines such as mathematics, sciences, foreign languages, and physical education. These deficiencies would become his lifelong regrets.

But a chance presented itself. At the age of sixteen, Zhaoming began to study for the imperial examination and moved to the metropolitan Guangzhou to live with his second brother Zhaohong 兆鉉 (1878–1904?). Accounts on the years when he took the exams vary. Most likely, he passed the county-level exam in 1901 and the prefectural exam in 1904, both times as the top candidate. The chief examiner in the prefectural exam was the famous poet Zhu Zumou 朱祖謀 (1857–1931), who began his tenure as Guangdong educational commissioner this year. As a traditional practice, those who passed the exam under the supervision of a particular examiner would address the latter as “teacher.” Wang thus recognized Zhu Zumou as his teacher, a relationship that

would bring him prestigious connections in traditionalist literary circles. Zhaoming's feats in examinations made him a coveted tutor for elite families. The Guangdong navy commander Li Zhun 李準 (1871–1936), who would later become one of Wang's targets in plotted political assassination, hired him to teach his children. As a top student, Zhaoming also received scholarships from local academies. As both his full brothers, Zhaojun 兆鈞 (1879–1901) and Zhaohong, passed away early, he began to provide for their survivors.

Fortunately, Zhaoming found another family and kindred spirits in Guangzhou. His late uncle Wang Quan 汪璩 (1828–1891) served as foreign-affairs adviser to Liu Kunyi 劉坤一 (1830–1902), a prominent reformer and viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi. Zhaoming was greatly impressed by Wang Quan's erudition and vast collection of books. His best friend was Zhu Zhixin 朱執信 (1885–1920), son of his cousin and also an orphan, who would later become his comrade in the Nationalist revolution. The uncle and nephew met other students regularly to study "practical knowledge." They called their group Mass Wisdom Society (*Qunzhishe* 羣智社), subscribed to newspapers and journals promoting Western knowledge, and shared books like Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (1762), Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), and Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (1893), all freshly translated into Chinese.⁷ They freely exchanged opinions concerning political events of the last decade. China's loss in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95), which resulted in the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895), which conceded Taiwan to Japan, was seen in particular as a great humiliation. The decimation of the first modern Chinese navy further proved the futility of piecemeal modernization without systematic political reforms. It also shook China's cultural confidence, as for centuries it had treated Japan as a vassal state. Now the student had become the teacher. Everyone saw that the dynasty was crumbling. The question was whether to save it or to bury it. While their fathers chose to preserve the political structure through reforms, the young men were not so sure that an ethnically foreign dynasty was worth saving.

In the aftermath of the First Sino-Japanese War, the Qing government began to dispatch students to Japan to learn from the neighbor's success story of modernization without full democratization. The first class of sixteen students arrived in Tokyo in 1896. The Japanese government actively supported the plan, seeing it an opportunity to increase its influence in China.⁸ In September 1904, Zhaoming succeeded in passing the exam for this program. Other successful candidates included Zhu Zhixin

and their friends Gu Yingfen 古應芬 (1873–1931) and Hu Hanmin 胡漢民 (1879–1936). Hu was a native of Panyu County and already a fledgling rebel after his last trip to Japan.⁹ They departed for Tokyo in the fall. Their decision could not be timelier: the imperial exam system, which had dominated the lives and thoughts of Chinese literati for over a millennium, was abolished the next year.

The Young Revolutionary

In May 1905, these young Cantonese entered Hosei University's "crash program" (*sokuseika* 速成科), a two- to three-semester program taught in Chinese, with Japanese professors assisted by interpreters. The reading materials were also written in a style of Japanese heavily infused with Chinese vocabulary. It was designed specifically for students to gain insights into modern laws and politics as deeply and quickly as possible, in the expectation that they would return to China to aid the dynasty's reform efforts. The program began in 1904 and ended in 1908, with five classes of 262 graduates in total. The curriculum for the 1905 class included civil, administrative, penal, procedural, and international law, as well as political science. Hosei University attached great importance to this program: the introductory course was taught by the famous legal scholar and university president Umē Kenjirō 梅謙次郎 (1860–1910). A number of Wang's classmates, including Chen Tianhua 陳天華 (1875–1905) and Song Jiaoren 宋教仁 (1882–1913), became prominent figures in modern Chinese history. Always a model student, Zhaoming graduated as number two of his class.¹⁰

The rapidly modernizing city of Tokyo, with its large department stores, bustling streets, and efficient transportation system, deeply impressed the Chinese students. It showcased the potential that a traditional East Asian society could unleash once it embraced Western-style reform programs. Despite his financial dependence on the government fellowship, Wang became a rebel the moment he arrived at Japan. He cut off his queue, symbol of loyalty to the Manchu ethnic dominance. He embraced the teachings of democracy and liberalism. He came to admire Saigō Takamori 西鄉隆盛 (1828–1877) and Katsu Kaishū 勝海舟 (1823–1899), intellectuals and statesmen whose thoughts heralded the Meiji Reform. He was also swayed by the fervent patriotism that the Japanese public showed in the Russo-Japanese War. Even professors stopped their classes to buy newspapers whenever the peddlers outside of the window rang their bells to announce "Extras!"¹¹



Fig. 4. Portrait of the young Wang Jingwei. Reproduced from *Huanqiu* 環球 no. 8 (1918): 17. Public domain.

In retrospect, Japan's victory was a turning point in world history. It encouraged Japan to seek overseas expansion, which would soon mean encroaching on continental Chinese territories. The Russian defeat spurred the population to realize the need for reform, resulting in the establishment of the Duma, the promulgation of the first Russian constitution in 1906, and eventually the 1917 revolution that overthrew the monarchy. It ushered in an age of world revolutions. For the Chinese nationalists, Japan's brilliant accomplishment was at first inspiring. It was a symbolic triumph of the "yellow race" over a European power, proving the fallacy of a "natural" racial hierarchy. Wang was elated, despite the unpleasant fact that the war was fought on Chinese soil. He saw nationalism as a powerful ideology that could be used to unite the whole nation around the cause of self-strengthening. He determined to cultivate this sentiment in his compatriots.

On July 19, 1905, Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925; born Sun Wen 孫文) arrived at Tokyo. Born in Xiangshan, Guangdong, he followed his family to Hawaii at the age of twelve. He received an education in Christian schools and eventually graduated with a degree in medicine from Hong Kong. The body that he would like to cure, however, was that of the Chinese nation. In 1894, he founded the Revive China Society (Xingzhonghui 興中會) in Hawaii, the first Chinese nationalist revolutionary society. Fluent in English, he became the face of Chinese nationalism in the West. This time, he came to Japan to visit philosopher Miyazaki Torazō 宮崎寅藏 (1871–1922). Wang and Zhu immediately went to meet Sun. The senior revolutionary was impressed by Wang’s natural grace and intelligence. On July 30, Sun announced that a new organization, Tongmenghui 同盟會 (The Revolutionary Alliance, 1905–12), would be founded to replace the Revive China Society in the hope of uniting disparate anti-Manchu groups. He recommended Wang for an eight-person Tongmenghui Charter draft committee. On August 20, when the Tongmenghui was formally founded, Wang was elected chair of the arbitration council. Since Sun had received a scanty education in the Chinese classics, from then on Wang often served as his ghostwriter to grace revolutionary ideas with his elegant prose. Many of Wang’s early writings were also inspired by Sun’s ideas.¹² Theirs was a symbiotic relationship between a visionary and a polemist.

The Qing government, alarmed by the rising revolutionary sentiment among Chinese students abroad, requested the Japanese government to clamp down. The latter duly complied and issued regulations restricting their civil liberties. Chen Tianhua, in protest, committed suicide and became the first martyr of the Nationalist revolution. Song Jiaoren joined Qiu Jin 秋瑾 (1875–1907) to rally students to leave Japan. Fearing that the nascent revolutionary forces would be rounded up in one sweep once they returned to China, Sun Yat-sen ordered Wang and Hu to stop the exodus. Through dialogue and debate, they accomplished the mission. It was an important victory that made them Sun’s most trusted lieutenants. Ironically, the Qing government, unaware of their actual loyalty, commended their endeavors too.¹³

On November 26, 1905, Tongmenghui published its first official newspaper in Tokyo, the *Minbao* 民報 (*People’s Journal*, 1905–10). It was in the paper’s first issue that Sun proposed the “Three Principles of the People” (*sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義), namely, nationalism (*minzu* 民族), democracy (*minquan* 民權), and “the livelihood of the people” (*minsheng* 民生).¹⁴ Zhaoming became the paper’s main contributor and

began to publish articles under the sobriquet Jingwei. The ancient myth of its namesake bird (see introduction) resonated with the anti-Manchu nationalists, as they saw their action as karmic retribution for the violent Manchu Conquest. Jingwei was thus at once a *nom de plume* and a *nom de guerre*. His essays, written in a rational, structured, and historically informed style, became instantly popular among intellectuals.¹⁵ He quickly rose to national recognition by defending republicanism against Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929), the intellectual lion of that age.

The Han nationalists saw their greatest rivals not in the conservatives who rejected any change, but in constitutional monarchists like Liang Qichao. Liang was himself in exile after the failed Hundred Days' Reform. A world tour through Japan, Europe, and the United States, however, convinced him that liberal democracy fostered the malaise of inequality and corruption; the parochialism of overseas Chinese communities further served as evidence that the Chinese were not ready to become modern citizens.¹⁶ Instead, constitutional monarchy was the best solution to China's problems, as it offered the most viable and structurally stable path to democracy.¹⁷ In 1905, while living in Japan, Liang actively supported the constitutionalist movement within the Qing government. He argued that Chineseness was not an ethnic but a cultural concept.¹⁸ China was weak not because of Manchu rule, but primarily because of its national culture, custom, and autocratic institutions, all having been formed over millennia.¹⁹ Ultimately, the path to national strength lay in adopting the "imperial strategy" to melt all Chinese ethnicities into one metanation.²⁰

In essence, Liang Qichao was not a monarchist. Rather, he respected the stabilizing effect of an existing power structure and feared the price of overthrowing it. Later, when Yuan Shikai, the first president of the Republic of China, pronounced himself emperor, Liang vehemently opposed him for the same reason. But in late Qing China, when problems of ethnicity, monarchy, and democracy were all bundled together, and when the threat posed by imperialist powers was seen as imminent, the young nationalists found little patience for Liang's gradualist approach.

It was in his debate with Liang Qichao that Wang's polemist talent first dazzled his readers. In "Citizens of the Nation," serialized in the first two issues of the *Minbao*,²¹ he first defined "nation" and "citizenry" as different concepts: the first formed by history, the latter by law. Only a democracy had citizens, while an autocracy had only slaves. For a multiethnic state like China, racial integration under a dominant majority nationality would be the best scenario to make the boundaries of the

two concepts commensurate. A “constitutional monarchy” would only eternalize ethnic hierarchy, and Han reformers like Liang failed to see this because they confused the nationalistic and the democratic revolutions. As for Liang’s opinion that the Chinese people were not “ready” to become modern citizens, Wang’s argument suggests institutions make people. While acknowledging that civil and military powers were at odds, Wang argued that the revolutionary military should sign a contract with the Chinese people and promise to build a constitutional democracy after the necessary stage of military governance. Notably, his vision of the concrete steps taken to create democratic institutions already portended Sun Yat-sen’s later official theory of the tripartite stages of state-building, namely military rule (*junzheng* 軍政), political tutelage (*xunzheng* 訓政), and finally constitutional democracy (*xianzheng* 憲政). Possibly, this theory, or at least the articulation of it, was born out of their collaboration.

For Wang, anti-Manchuisism was a necessary condition to restore China’s national pride, an argument that reflected the opinion of Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1869–1936; or Zhang Taiyan 章太炎).²² Wang’s vision was also influenced by the Japanese interpretation of the nation as a racially pure cultural community and political polity.²³ It would take the success of the 1911 Revolution for him, and for Chinese nationalists in general, to embrace China’s multiethnic imperial legacy. By doing so, they had in effect accepted the metanationalism of the constitutional monarchists.²⁴

Wang’s articles were immensely popular among *Minbao* readers. The polemic rivalry between a young student and the formidable Liang Qichao was quite a spectacle. One avid reader was Jiang Ruiyuan 蔣瑞元 (1887–1975), a trainee at the Tokyo Shinbu Gakko military academy hailing from a hamlet in the southeast Zhejiang Province, to be known by Sun Yat-sen’s Cantonese pronunciation of his polite name as Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石. Despite Chiang’s contacts with some members in the nationalist circle like Chen Qimei 陳其美 (1878–1916) and Dai Jitao 戴季陶 (1891–1949), he had yet to meet Sun in person.²⁵ The newspaper also enjoyed a broad circulation in China and Southeast Asia through a network of regional distributors, spreading the name “Wang Jingwei” among its fervent readers. The young Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893–1976), who grew up in the rural backwater of Hunan, must have heard this name by 1912 at the latest, the year he entered a normal school in Changsha. Decades later, in the cave of Yan’an, he would tell the Canadian journalist Edgar Snow that a teacher gave him some old copies of *Minbao*, which he read zealously. From them he first learned of the Tongmenghui’s proposals.²⁶ Wang’s articles, then, must

have been part of Mao's early political education. Soon, however, Wang had to pursue a new path.

Wang graduated from the crash program in June 1906. He chose to stay in Japan in the hope of pursuing a regular university degree and started supporting himself through translating Japanese legal books into Chinese. The Japanese government, however, yielded to the request from the Qing court and deported Sun Yat-sen in February 1907. Sun asked Wang to follow him into exile and set up Tongmenghui branches around Southeast Asia. Wang first went to Singapore. He contacted sympathetic local Chinese leaders and helped found a progressive newspaper, *Zhongxing ribao* 中興日報, in August, which again became immensely popular among local readers.²⁷ Wang had hoped to return to Japan to continue his studies, but instead Sun ordered him to launch a fundraising tour. Suddenly, a star was born.

Democracy is innately related to the freedom of public speeches, so much so that Jürgen Habermas describes the moral dimensions of democracy as an "ideal speech situation."²⁸ In early twentieth-century Japan and China, oratory was increasingly seen as a skill to be cultivated by modern education.²⁹ There is no evidence that Wang Jingwei deliberately practiced this skill prior to his Southeast Asian tour, but he seemed to possess a natural gift. The proud Hu Hanmin came to realize that Jingwei was the best orator of their age. Recalling this twenty years later, he still remembered the thrill of listening to Jingwei speaking to the public for the first time, a feat of oratory enhanced by his impassioned voice and bold gesticulations, which were crucial in moving an audience before the age of microphone and video camera.³⁰ Wang's first two speeches, delivered at the New Stage Theater in Singapore on January 11 and March 15, 1908, were sensational successes. The handsome young preacher of revolution captured the diaspora's imagination. In front of an audience of thousands, he delivered hours of speech without a script, in a vernacular with such clarity and eloquence that the transcription purportedly could be published without editing. He could arouse the audience into a rapture or bring them to tears. As the local Chinese leader Teo Eng Hock 張永福 (1872–1957) recalled, before Wang showed up, the hall was already packed with expecting audience; the moment he stood at the podium, it became so quiet that one could hear a pin drop; his speech was frequently interrupted by roaring cheers and applause.³¹ He was credited for arousing the political consciousness among the Chinese diaspora in Singapore and Malaya.³²

It should be noted that Wang spoke Cantonese, while the local Chinese mostly spoke Hokkien. Before standardized modern Mandarin



Fig. 5. Six poses of Wang Jingwei during a speech, ca. 1940. Nippu Jiji Photo Archives, “Gaijin” Collection. Copyright holder: Hawaii Times Photo Archives Foundation; digitization: Denso; bilingual metadata: Hoover Institution Library and Archives and National Museum of Japanese History. <https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/A-G388-015.1.1>

became the lingua franca, people likely possessed a greater capacity to understand dialects, a sort of multilingualism. Enthusiastic audience responses were reported decades later when he gave his speeches in places like Nanjing or Shandong, despite his heavy Cantonese accent.

Throughout the rest of the year, Wang continued to tour Southeast Asia, setting up Tongmenghui branches and giving speeches in Kuala Lumpur and Penang. Of his many converts, one was his future wife, Chen Bijun.

In his late teens, Wang had a marriage arranged for him by Zhaoyong. His fiancée, né Liu 劉, came from a local gentry family. When news of his activism reached home, Zhaoyong was scandalized. Jingwei thus asked his brother to legally cut family ties and to annul the engagement, so as not to implicate them. Zhaoyong duly complied. Liu swore to remain single all her life: following traditional paragons of chastity, she stayed faithful to a fiancé whom she had never met.

Chen Bijun was a different character. Her father, Chen Gengji 陳耕基, hailed from Xinhui, Guangdong. He sought his fortune in Malaya, began as an apprentice to a rice merchant, and finally made millions in rubber and tin. Of the many children he sired, Bijun was the second child between him and his wife Wei Yuelang 衛月朗 (1869–1945). The children were schooled at home in traditional Chinese learning before receiving an English education at Catholic boarding schools. Growing up in this prosperous and boisterous household, Bijun was a strong-willed child. Her brother Chen Changzu 陳昌祖 (1904–1994) called her “the *enfant gâté* of the family,” to whose whims the parents always conceded.³³ An early subscriber to *Zhongxing ribao*, she was moved by Wang’s writings. When he came to Penang at the end of October, she went to his speech and was star-struck. Changzu recalled that she climbed over the wall of the convent at dusk to surreptitiously join the meetings. She was finally introduced to him in person in the garden of the local Tongmenghui leader Goh Say Eng 吳世榮 (1875–1944). They talked to each other for a full hour. Admiration turned into love. She broke her engagement to her cousin Leong Yew Koh 梁宇皋 (1888–1963) and followed Wang to Singapore to meet Sun Yat-sen. Her royalist father knew nothing of this, as her doting mother financed her activism. Soon Chen declared her love. Wang was shocked, as he only considered her a friend and comrade; besides, knowing that Miss Liu had sworn celibacy for him, he thought it was only fair to reciprocate. But Bijun was resolute. She told Wang that loving him was her decision, which needed no reciprocation. Since she was following him in his steps, they decided that, to save her honor, after Wang’s death—which they thought was imminent—she would tell her family that they were betrothed.³⁴

This bizarre arrangement was made when Wang, having spawned the seeds of a revolution and raised funds to finance it, was increasingly gripped by an obsession: he wanted to throw himself into the furnace of the revolution to feed a wildfire. Words no longer sufficed. Revolutions have a steep price paid in human lives, and he was not prepared to ask others to pay without paying his own.

The Assassin

Nineteenth-century Europe saw a surge of political murders that characterized the advent of modernity. Virtually every European monarch, head of state, and prominent politician was targeted by assassins, and the period was rife with rumors of assassination. It was the most radical form

of political protest, ideologically armed by the anarchist “philosophy of the bomb.”³⁵ According to Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876), a corrupt society can only be cleansed by sword and fire; the revolutionary should have but one thought, that is, merciless destruction. A few individuals’ spectacular crimes alone seldom achieved the desired political effect. Nonetheless, this form of “propaganda by deed” quickly spread around the world, from Turkey to India, in tandem with the rise of democracy and nationalism.³⁶

In China, the dawn of the twentieth century was also characterized as the “Age of Assassination,” the title of the testament of Wu Yue 吳樾 (1878–1905), published in *Minbao* in 1907.³⁷ Wu died in a suicide bombing attack in a crowded train station, where a group of high officials were sending off five ministers to study modern political institutions abroad. His action was meant to scupper the Qing from transforming into a constitutional monarchy. In that tense era of emotional politics, assassination was ardently plotted by men and women itching to accelerate the country’s speed of change. More than fifty attempts took place in the last decade of the dynasty.³⁸ Intellectuals with statures no less than Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940) and Chen Duxiu joined terrorist cells. Qiu Jin, having returned to China in February 1906, was captured as a coconspirator of the assassin Xu Xilin 徐錫麟 (1873–1907) and was executed. The assassins’ heroism was broadly celebrated across progressive newspapers and seen as the Chinese response to global events such as the assassinations of Alexander II of Russia (1881), of Umberto I of Italy (1900), and of Alexander I of Serbia (1903). Wu Yue reasoned that there were two ways to carry out the anti-Manchu movement, namely assassination and revolution. The former could be accomplished individually, the latter, only collectively. He pronounced assassination a more urgent task, since only a malicious cycle of terror and vengeance could eventually engulf enough people in the vortex of revolution. He hoped that his own death would stimulate others to act, just like the Russian nihilists whose red terror had inspired incessant waves of uprisings against the czarist autocracy.³⁹

The young assassins were idealists. Similar to their international peers, they subscribed to a motley collection of (mostly leftist) ideologies, including nationalism, republicanism, communism, and anarchism. Anarchism was particularly popular among the revolutionaries. As Edward Krebs argues, it “held great appeal for Chinese intellectuals because it offered scientific basis for a moral system that emphasized well-being for all members of society. Furthermore, anarchism’s attack

on all forms of authority entered into the thinking of Chinese activists at a point of growing disillusionment with authority.”⁴⁰ What was uniquely Chinese was the inspiration from Confucian moral philosophy that glorifies the world-changing effects of an individual’s self-cultivation and endeavors.⁴¹ The Chinese tradition of noble tyrannicide (see chapter 5) also inspired the positive press and the favorable public response to such attempts.⁴²

Anarchism appealed to Wang Jingwei’s romantic streak. Most likely, he was first exposed to the theory of anarchism in Japan. But his resolution to become an assassin was also consolidated by pragmatic reckonings. Tongmenghui-led uprisings were failing everywhere. From December 1906 to April 1908, seven military insurrections were crushed by the superior Qing government force. Many frustrated comrades escaped to Southeast Asia. They also articulated discontent with the Tongmenghui leaders’ measures to cope with the aftermath. Zhang Binglin began to promote the Guangfuhui 光復會 (Restoration Society, 1904–12), which had partially merged into the Tongmenghui but remained its rival. Wang Jingwei, ordered by Sun to raise funds from the Hakka Chinese community in Muntok (Indonesia), found himself caught in the cross-fire of his own comrades. The Qing government, meanwhile, started a publicity campaign that accused Tongmenghui leaders of cowardice. In August 1908, it further announced a ten-year plan to gradually transform the country into a constitutional monarchy. The Guangxu emperor and Empress Dowager Cixi subsequently died in mid-November, which enhanced hopes for the dynasty’s change from within. Wang worried that the majority of the population, including many nationalists, would become resigned to complacency. He decided to use his rising stardom for “propaganda by deed”: by becoming a romantic martyr, a darling whose death would be mourned by the whole nation.

Wang confided his thoughts to Sun Yat-sen, Huang Xing 黃興 (1874–1916), Hu Hanmin, and Zhu Zhixin. All tried to dissuade him. Sun, in particular, found dramatic actions distasteful, as he preferred a gradualist revolution starting from the periphery. But Wang was adamant. In a letter to Hu Hanmin, written in his own blood, he declared that he had been obsessed with this idea for two years and would not change his mind. Hu Hanmin argued that such attempts would only stimulate the government to strengthen its police forces and to accelerate its constitutionalist movement. Wang answered that both would happen anyway; human sacrifices were necessary to expose the government’s cruelty. He likened the revolution to cooking: to feed the people with rice, both

firewood and an iron pot were needed, and burning the firewood was necessary. He, of all people, should make an example to show that no comrade was less “expendable” than others.⁴³ The success of the revolution demanded both sacrifice and endurance. In effect, it was harder to “endure the heat” and bring food to the mouths of the people. In other words, he had no illusion that his act was anything more than a publicity stunt; rather, the success of the revolution ultimately relied on mass mobilization and patient organization. He asked Hu to publish this correspondence as his testament after his death.⁴⁴

Wang Jingwei’s statement that “courage for the revolution is born from the heart of benevolence” 革命之勇氣由仁心而生者也⁴⁵ betrayed the influence of Wang Yangming’s moral philosophy. According to Yangming’s exegesis of the *Great Learning*, the Great Man shares one body with the Heaven, the Earth, and the Myriad Things; this unity is not the result of intention, but of the root of benevolence in every human heart. Though the Petty Man shares the same oneness with the universe, his selfish desires create distinctions between his self and other things. Everyone, however, can become a Great Man. The path is through inner reflection and self-cultivation. One needs to clear the delusion of selfish desires and to recover one’s innate illustrious virtue, and the result follows spontaneously. As prescribed in the *Great Learning*, one starts with the cultivation of one’s person and ends with bringing peace to the All-under-Heaven.⁴⁶ The cognitive effort to recognize the “heart of benevolence” lays the foundation for ensuing benevolent actions. The “benevolent heart” is also the “unmoving heart” (*budongxin* 不動心), which provides the basis for the “surging vital force” (*haoran zhiqi* 浩然之氣).⁴⁷ As Mencius declares, this vital force enables one to perform acts of ultimate bravery, just like Confucius’s disciple Zengzi, who dared to withstand tens of thousands (*Mencius* 3.2). Such courage is the moral courage grown out of inner reflection, self-cultivation, and conviction. Once a man is convinced of the altruism of his action, he will gain the moral courage to attempt unlikely deeds and to resist majority opinion. Throughout Wang Jingwei’s life, he repeatedly referred to this ethical doctrine to strengthen his belief in his chosen course of actions.

In the summer of 1909, Wang returned to Japan and recruited a cell consisting of Fang Junying 方君瑛 (1884–1923), Zeng Xing 曾醒 (1882–1954), Huang Fusheng 黃復生 (1883–1948), Li Zhongshi 黎仲實 (1886–1919), Yu Peilun 喻培倫 (1887–1911), and Chen Bijun. Chen had come to Japan that summer on the pretext of study and had formally joined Tongmenghui.⁴⁸ Fang came from a progressive family and was in charge

of coordinating terrorist actions in the Tongmenghui. Zeng Xing was her widowed sister-in-law. Huang was the ringleader of Tongmenghui in Sichuan. Yu and Li were both trained in explosives. As Japan was well policed, they went to Hong Kong to experiment with bomb-making. To avoid the obstruction of disapproving comrades, Wang led his group north. Yet they did not have a target for the assassination. They first thought of Li Zhun, the Guangdong navy commander and Wang's former employer. But since the Tongmenghui was planning an uprising in Guangzhou, their attempt might alert the government and scupper the action. Then they considered Viceroy Duanfang 端方 (1861–1911), who sentenced Qiu Jin's coconspirator Xu Xilin to death by a thousand cuts and had already survived one attempt on his life by Wu Yue. They went to Hankou to waylay him at a train station on his trip to Beijing. Duanfang, however, suddenly decided to travel by ship instead.

Wang Jingwei, now twice frustrated, decided to go straight to Beijing, the citadel of worthy targets. The capital's strict security and its distance from the southern centers of revolution promised almost certain martyrdom. Bijun's mother again footed the bill. The explosives were transported from Japan to Tianjin and then packed into small waterproof parcels, sewn inside the padded robes to escape searches on the train.⁴⁹ A bomb was assembled in Beijing. Their preferred target was Prime Minister Yikuang 奕劻 (1838–1917), the most powerful among the princes. But security around him was tight. Then they turned their attention on two princes returning from a European trip, but Wang failed to initiate the attempt due to the crowd at the train station. They thus decided to target Prince Regent Zaifeng 載灃 (1883–1951), father of the Last Emperor, Puyi 溥儀 (1906–1967). It would be a symbolic act of regicide.

Their cover was a photo studio at the Liulichang 琉璃廠, adjacent to the Forbidden City. As Zaifeng went to court every morning following a fixed route, they planned to place the bomb, a custom-made iron vessel filled with fifty pounds of explosives, under a small bridge south of the Sweet Water Bridge (Ganshui qiao 甘水橋) across a canal.⁵⁰ Only one side of the bridge had a few residential houses. The canal dried up during the winter months, exposing a riverbed where the bomb could be buried. But being southerners, they did not expect the soil in Beijing to be frozen at that time of the year. It took them three nights to dig a hole to place the bomb. The third night, April 2 and the planned eve of the strike, they were discovered.⁵¹ A vigilant neighbor tipped off the police.

The next day, there was an explosion of news about a bomb in the

Beijing papers. The names of various princes were flaunted as suspects in a potential coup. The recently founded Capital Police force sprang into action. There was tension in the air, but Wang refused to give up. He sent Yu Peilun to Japan to buy more explosives and others to raise more funds. He and Huang Fusheng stayed behind in Beijing. The police quickly traced the trademarked vessel to its ironsmith. Then they located the photo studio and the two young men with fake queues. On April 16, a fortnight after the plot failed, Wang, Huang, and a third coconspirator were arrested.

It was as if Wang had willed his arrest, thereby achieving the second-best outcome: martyrdom. He kept copies of his best-known articles sewn inside his robe. When the police asked why, he replied that, if he were to be executed, his blood would stain those writings, making them truly written in blood.

The police could hardly believe they had caught a famous rebel with a bounty of a hundred thousand taels of silver on his head. A dozen Hosei University graduates were asked to confirm his identity.⁵² The assassins received a rather deferential treatment. Instead of the death penalty, on April 29, Wang and Huang were sentenced to life.

The government was making a show of leniency. Wang's main benefactor was Shanqi 善耆 (1866–1922), Prince Su 肅親王 and chief of the Capital Police. Shanqi was believed to have been moved by Wang's unrepentant "Confession," thousands of words in length and valiantly defending the necessity of a Nationalist revolution. The prince argued that leniency would prove the magnanimity of the royal court and its commitment to democratic reforms.⁵³ There were other felicitous factors too. Shanqi's adviser Cheng Jiacheng 程家樞 (1874–1914) was an underground Tongmenghui member, and many officials in ministries were sympathetic to the revolution, as they were constitutional monarchists who shared Tongmenghui's agenda, though propagating different means. Furthermore, Tongmenghui leaders threatened retaliations if Wang should become a martyr, which appeared to have intimidated the venal Prince Yikuang.⁵⁴ Prince Zaifeng, a polite creature, was not in the habit of dissenting with other strong-willed princes. As a result, Wang's determination to achieve martyrdom ironically saved him from its fulfillment.

It was in the prison of Beijing that Wang finally became a poet. Thirty poems that he wrote in captivity under twenty-three titles are extant. They were published as a collection after his release and instantly

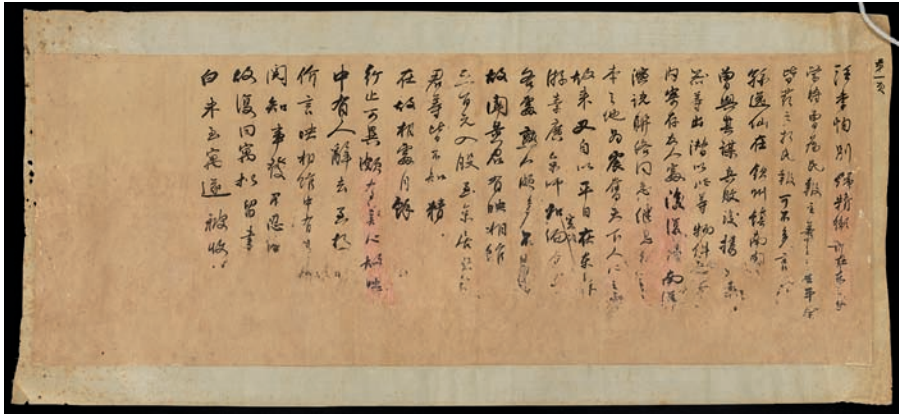


Fig. 6. Wang Jingwei's "Confession," 1910. "Wang Jingwei Papers," Hoover Institution. Courtesy of Wang Wenying's family.

became popular.⁵⁵ His image would be forever defined by the following four quatrains, titled "Orally Composed upon Being Captured,"⁵⁶ which to date are broadly memorized and cited (see epilogue). They read:

銜石成癡絕	Carrying pebbles in its beak—what extreme folly!
滄波萬里愁	Over ten thousand miles of dark waves spreads its sorrow.
孤飛終不倦	Its tireless wings empower a solitary flight,
羞逐海鷗浮	Ashamed to follow the seagulls or float with the tide.

姹紫嫣紅色	Shades of rich purple and of crimson scarlet—
從知渲染難	These bright colors, I know, are hard to dye.
他時好花發	One day when the tender blossoms bloom,
認取血痕斑	Please recognize on them stains of my blood.

慷慨歌燕市	With heroic abandon I sing in the market of Yan;
從容作楚囚	At utmost ease I become a prisoner from Chu.
引刀成一快	The blade drawn turns into a sharp thrill,
不負少年頭	That truly deserves this fine young head!

留得心魂在	I will preserve only my heart, my soul,
殘軀付劫灰	And let the maimed body incinerate in the flames of kalpa.
青燐光不滅	Its blue ghost-light will never die—
夜夜照燕臺	Night after night, it shines upon the Terrace of Yan. ⁵⁷

The title suggests a swift, spontaneous composition upon being captured. In these quatrains, Wang expects nothing but a martyr's death. He compares himself to his namesake, the *jingwei* bird; to the azalea flower, allegedly dyed red by the blood of a cuckoo bird;⁵⁸ the ancient assassin Jing Ke, who attempted to kill the First Emperor of Qin;⁵⁹ and Zhong Yi 鐘儀, a prisoner in Jin who kept playing Chu music as a reminder of his southern homeland.⁶⁰ If since 1905 Wang had already envisioned himself being a *jingwei* bird, in these poems he was truly becoming one. This image of a romantic martyr would later become Wang's iconography (see chapter 5).

When Wang realized that he would not die, he began to face the prospect of a life in captivity, lived day by day. He was assigned two cells with books and writing material. Prince Shanqi often visited him to talk about poetry and politics. Though his efforts to make Wang abandon the revolution were futile,⁶¹ his statesmanship might have helped Wang see the Manchus as human and fellow Chinese too. In a poem titled "Stirrings,"⁶² the second couplet reads:

瓜蔓已都無可摘 When melons on the vines are all harvested, none is left;
豆其何苦更相煎 Why are the beanstalks still burned to fry their brethren
beans?

The "melon" metaphor refers to a song attributed to Crown Prince Li Xian 李賢 (654–684), fearing for his life after his elder brother was poisoned by their mother, Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (624–705). The song protests that excessive harvesting of the melons would leave the farmer with nothing but vines.⁶³ The second line refers to a story of Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232), who was ordered by his brother and king Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226) to write a poem within the time of walking seven steps, or face death. Cao Zhi's quatrain, thus composed, mourns the beans being cooked by burning dried beanstalks.⁶⁴ Wang's couplet bespeaks as much an internecine fight as ethnic brotherhood: after all, the melons and the vines, or the beans and the beanstalks, grow from the same root. It implies that Wang no longer saw Manchus through the narrow lens of a racial feud.

Wang's action shocked and inspired. Comrades followed suit to become "firewood" in successive assassination attempts.⁶⁵ Sun Yat-sen embarked on a rescue mission. Hu Hanmin stepped up military pressure on the Qing and raised funds among the overseas Chinese.⁶⁶ But the

greatest loyalty was shown by Chen Bijun. Upon hearing news of his capture, she hurried back from Japan and bribed her way to send him a few words. In a preface to a *ci* poem, Wang Jingwei recounted the moment of receiving Bijun's message:

When I was in a cell in Beijing, under a wintry snowstorm, I could not sleep at night. Suddenly a guard poked me and thrust a piece of paper into my hand. It was so crumpled that the lines were hardly legible. Inspected under a lamp, the handwriting turned out to be Bijun's. The guard whispered in my ear that this note was passed on to him through others, and I should promptly write my reply! . . . I was worried that she would stay in Beijing and get herself in trouble. Hence my poem sternly urged her to leave. I could not possibly keep Bijun's handwritten note, nor could I bear to discard it, so I swallowed it.⁶⁷

According to a recently published letter by Fang Junbi, Wang and Chen were betrothed one or two days before the assassination attempt and held an informal wedding.⁶⁸ Their camaraderie became the bedrock of their lifelong companionship, through hardship, glory, sickness, death threats, and damnation.

While Wang was taken out of the world of action, the world kept moving forward. He wrote about hearing the news of the assassination of General Fuqi 孚琦 (1857–1911) on April 8, 1911, after which the assassin was caught and executed; of the failed Guangzhou Uprising on April 27, which led to the death of nearly a hundred elite Tongmenghui members; of hearing the news of Hu Hanmin's death, which luckily turned out to be false.⁶⁹ He was tormented by survivor's guilt, for not joining his comrades in action or in death.

On October 10, 1911, another uprising broke out at Wuchang. This time, however, it refused to fail. Its success spread like wildfire.⁷⁰ Within seven weeks, fifteen of the eighteen interior provinces declared independence. To make amends with the revolutionaries, the Qing government issued a general amnesty for political prisoners. On November 6, Wang Jingwei regained freedom.

As a dramaturgic coincidence, the 1911 Revolution was literally triggered by Wang Jingwei. The explosives that his terrorist cell left in Wuchang were entrusted to Sun Wu 孫武 (1879–1939). On October 9, 1911, Sun Wu was using the material to build a bomb in the Russian Concession in Hankou, in preparation for an uprising. Its explosion

injured him and alerted the Russian police to raid the house. To strike before the Chinese government would, Sun's coconspirators mounted the insurrection the next day.⁷¹

The Mediator

One of the post-1945 accusations leveled against Wang Jingwei was that he "betrayed" the 1911 Revolution by engineering Yuan Shikai's presidency.⁷² This aspersion lacks merit, as it fails to acknowledge that Yuan's presidency was the result of necessity and of consensus, reflecting as much the popular will as the Tongmenghui leaders' collective decision.

Four days after the outbreak of the Wuchang Uprising, the Qing court commissioned Yuan, a capable general who had fought Japan in Korea and had trained China's largest modern army, to crush the revolutionary forces. The Nationalists had neither the military nor the financial means to sustain a large-scale military campaign. As early as late October, voices across the Nationalist ranks supporting reconciliation through Yuan Shikai's presidency grew louder. On November 9, Huang Xing wrote a letter to Yuan from the Wuhan front, urging him to be the Chinese Napoleon or Washington. On November 16, even Sun Yat-sen telegraphed from London his support for this option. Other senior leaders, including Song Jiaoren, Hu Hanmin, and Zhang Taiyan, expressed the same attitude.⁷³ Wang's ensuing course of actions, therefore, implemented the collective will of Tongmenghui leaders.

After his release from prison, Wang became the celebrity revolutionary in Beijing. Yuan Shikai, who triumphantly returned to the capital on November 13 to become the first Han-ethnic prime minister of the Qing, invited him to his mansion "to study the theories of republicanism." Wang recommended that Wei Chenzu 魏宸組 (1885–1942), a Tongmenghui member and skilled negotiator, join those late-night study sessions. Yuan seemed to be convinced that China would be better served by becoming a republic than remaining a monarchy. On November 15, Wang Jingwei co-organized a Joint Council for State Affairs (Guoshi gongji hui 國事共濟會) with Yang Du 楊度 (1875–1931), a constitutional monarchist. They published a joint statement to mediate the south-north conflict, arguing that the two factions shared the agenda of democratization, equality, and multiethnic unity. Their conflict risked a bloodbath and the disintegration of the country. They proposed to form a provisional national congress to find a peaceful solution.⁷⁴

For some Tongmenghui leaders, Huang Xing and Wang Jingwei first

and foremost, there was an idealistic reason to endorse Yuan's presidency too. As Huang Xing told Wang: "Starting the campaign but not harvesting its success: this is the true spirit of the Revolution!"⁷⁵ Similar noble indifference to power would soon be manifested in Wang Jingwei's actions. Their moral purism reflected the altruistic streak of the literati tradition and was perhaps fundamentally naive in the modern context, since party politics is guided by the belief that everyone's pursuit of self-interest results in common good.

On December 18, the south-north negotiation began in the British Concession in Shanghai. Wang Jingwei was appointed counselor to both southern representative Wu Tingfang 伍廷芳 (1842–1922) and northern representative Tang Shaoyi 唐紹儀 (1862–1938). His special position not only reflected the high confidence he enjoyed from both parties, but was key to the success of the negotiation, as he convinced both sides to make crucial concessions.⁷⁶ This experience must have greatly heartened Wang, making him believe in his unique strength as a disinterested mediator as well as in his skills in averting violence through negotiation and compromise.

Sun Yat-sen was elected provisional president. He assumed the position on January 1, 1912, in Nanjing. The oath of office was drafted by Wang Jingwei, which Sun delivered without changing a single word. Aside from announcing China's unity, it contained the following statement: "After the provisional government is founded, China must fulfill the duties of a civilized nation, in order to expect to enjoy the rights of a civilized nation." It was inspired by a lecture on international law that Wang had attended in Hosei University.⁷⁷ The reciprocity of rights and duties would become a staple feature of Wang's thought. Puyi abdicated on February 12. Sun's tutelage ended, and Yuan Shikai was duly elected provisional president four days later.

Another episode in which Wang played a contested role was the establishment of the national capital in Beijing. In February 1912, the Provisional Senate voted to locate the Republic's capital at Nanjing, a decision meant to force Yuan Shikai to abandon his military strongholds in the north. Cai Yuanpei and Wang Jingwei led a delegation to Beijing to "welcome Yuan." A mutiny that began in Beijing in the night of February 29 and spread to other northern cities, however, gave Yuan Shikai the excuse to stay in Beijing to pacify the north. Many suspected that Yuan staged the mutiny, and the delegates were too weak-kneed to concede. It should be noted, however, that the motion to move the national capital never enjoyed much popular support. Even the Nanjing Assembly's

initial vote on February 14 decided for Beijing. Unsatisfied with the vote, Sun Yat-sen compelled the Provisional Senate to reverse the result, an authoritarian move that caused resentment.⁷⁸ After the delegation arrived in Beijing, a newspaper founded by Zhang Taiyan even accused Sun of attempting to undermine Yuan's presidency to please Japan.⁷⁹ Thus, upon the delegates' request, the motion to move the national capital was easily reversed. The Beiyang government was founded in Beijing.

Wang Jingwei was in the prime of his life. He proved himself a capable mediator between factions with seemingly irreconcilable interests and ideals. He cultivated the image of an impartial arbiter. He oversaw party affairs in North China. In April, he formally married Bijun in Shanghai and held a wedding in Guangzhou, with Hu Hanmin presiding over the ceremony. But Wang decided to stay faithful to his anarchist persuasion. In mid-February he founded the Society for Advancing Virtues (Jindehui 進德會) together with Wu Zhihui 吳稚暉 (1865–1953), Cai Yuanpei, and Li Shizeng 李石曾 (1881–1973), fellow Tongmenghui members known as the Paris Anarchist Group.⁸⁰ Intellectually they were mostly influenced by the Russian thinker Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921), whose social ideal is based on the free and voluntary cooperation among autonomous communes.⁸¹ Though by subscribing to anarchism they were formally against nationalism, they had previously managed to suppress their conviction for the purpose of a racist and republican revolution. Now they decided that it was time to discard violence, together with military anarchism, and employ social education as the revolutionary method.⁸² Their idealism and pacifism attracted Wang. The erudite and eccentric Wu Zhihui in particular exerted intellectual mentorship over him during those years. Wu was rustic, iconoclastic, and blasphemous, traits that charmed Wang Jingwei, whose urbane surface of politeness thinly disguised passionate rebelliousness. Epistles between Wang and Wu, now preserved in the GMD Party Archives in Taipei, offer precious glimpses into Wang's life and thoughts through the 1910s. Members of the society committed themselves to different degrees of "virtues." The strictest criteria prohibited not only common vices like drinking, gambling, opium, and concubinage, but also the pursuit of government or parliamentary careers. Wang Jingwei pledged to the strictest precept. The purpose was to improve China's social mores and to educate a modern citizenry. His allergy to institutional power betrayed an obsession with moral purity.

At the same time, inspired by the anarchist doctrine of the dignity of labor, Wang also jointly founded the Diligent Work and Frugal Study

(*qingong jianxue* 勤工儉學) program. Through this program, more than fifteen hundred Chinese students would go to study in France in the following decade. Given their immediate contact with the French labor movement, many would become communists.⁸³

Wang was showered with offers. Yuan Shikai entertained the idea of nominating him for vice president and then secretary-general of the presidential office, while Sun Yat-sen was determined to make him the governor of Guangdong.⁸⁴ But Wang was resolved to leave politics and continue his study in France, the birthplace of modern revolutions. As he declared in a letter to Southeast Asian comrades, even though the Republic had been founded, the Chinese mind still needed to be reformed to become that of a democratic citizen; he thus wanted to follow the Buddha's teaching of enlightening himself first before enlightening others.⁸⁵ That summer, he boarded a ship from Shanghai to Penang, where he met Bijun's family, and then to Marseille.

The next few years, till the end of the First World War, would become his *Lehr-* and *Wanderjahre*, a period often overlooked by Chinese biographers.⁸⁶ The following account uses rarely examined materials to reconstruct Wang's intellectual transition to a humanist, a crucial link to his later persuasions, including his brief alliance with Chinese communists and his apparent endorsement of Pan-Asianism. Far from being the idyllic pastorals some biographers assume them to be,⁸⁷ his poems of that period show a man torn by conflicting ideologies, agonizing over unfulfilled commitments, and tormented by inner demons.

A Humanist in France

On the trip to France, the seafarer had plenty of time to reflect upon his short but eventful life. Traversing the Indian Ocean, he wrote two poems onboard, which read:

低首空濛裏	My head lowers among the gray mists on the ocean;
心隨流水喧	My heartbeats chime with the thrusting waves.
此生原不樂	This life of mine is never acquainted with joy;
未死敢云煩	But yet undead, I dare not say it is burdensome.
淒斷關河影	Sadly fade the shadows of [China's] fortresses and rivers;
蕭條羈旅魂	Utterly desolate is this road-trapped traveler's soul.
孤蓬秋雨戰	A lonely boat battles autumn rains;
詩思倩誰溫	Who would gently warm the poet's thoughts?

鐙影殘宵靜	Shadows of the lamp calm in the remnant night;
濤聲挾雨來	The sounds of tides rise under the power of the rain.
風塵隨處是	Wind and dust fill every nook and cranny;
懷抱幾時開	When will this chest and bosom ever alight?
肱已慚三折	A thrice-broken arm knows frustration;
腸徒劇九迴	Intestines in anguish twist nine times in vain.
勞薪如可爇	If a tired piece of firewood can still be lit,
未敢惜寒灰	It dares not decline to become cold ashes. ⁸⁸

In these poems, Wang betrays a melancholic bend and lingering survivor's guilt. In actual fact, he did not travel alone. He was accompanied by Chen Bijun, Fang Junying, and Zeng Xing. The four young adults further brought with them four children: Fang Junying's sister Junbi 方君璧 (1898–1986), Zeng Xing's brother Zhongming 曾仲鳴 (1896–1939), her son Fang Xianshu 方賢淑 (b. 1900), and Bijun's brother Changzu. This small group, bound by blood ties, friendship, and idealism, would in later years become Wang's most faithful coterie of supporters, separable only by death. From then on, Wang would regard them as his extended family. Among them, the orphan would mature into a family man. Despite their intimate and at times raucous company, however, Wang's lyrical self-image is that of a traveler trapped on an eternal journey of life, a lonely boat battling cosmic adversities, or a tired piece of firewood yearning to be burned into ashes.

When they arrived at Sri Lanka, Wang went to see the famous reclining Buddha statue in Degaldoruwa Temple. Moved by the atmospheric tranquility, he wrote a long poem, from which four lines are cited below:

回頭問臥佛	I look back to ask the reclining Buddha:
爾乃能安眠	How could you sleep so contently?
問佛佛不應	I ask the Buddha but the Buddha does not respond;
自問亦茫然	Asking myself, I too find no answer. ⁸⁹

The Buddha, Wang suggests, is taking a restful break despite his resolution to save the world from its suffering and despite the fact that the world never ceases to suffer. The poem ends with a silent image of ripples on a deep pond. It indicates a temporary resolution to find inner peace, by emulating the Buddha who settles in the transience of being. This poem also signals the intrusion of the realm of absolute transcendence—the cosmic inhumanity—into Wang's poetry, which refuses to give an answer to ethical questions that are too human. Through questioning

the relation between the realm of transcendence and the individual human fate, Wang's poetry eventually acquired a certain philosophical character.

When they arrived at Marseille on a cold November morning,⁹⁰ the man who welcomed them on the deck was Li Shizeng, descendant of a Mandarin courtier's house, pioneer of vegetarianism, and entrepreneur.⁹¹ They boarded a train to Paris the same evening, arriving at the Gare de Lyon. Riding a horse-drawn carriage to their hotel, the Capital of the World left a strong impression on the young Chinese—not by its grand edifices, but in its quotidian moments: the sound of hooves on paved stones, the hotel beds with soft mattresses and countless layers of sheets, two-foot-long breakfast baguette, the *métro*. The next day the ladies immediately went shopping, trading their Chinese clothes for Victorian-style attire. Their local guide in Paris was Chu Minyi 褚民誼 (1884–1946), a student of pharmacology who would later gain notoriety in China for his doctoral thesis on the rabbit vagina⁹² and for his shirtless photos brandishing shining muscles in a public health campaign. He would also become Wang Jingwei's brother-in-law and RNG foreign minister. A few days later they left for Montargis, renting a house on Rue Gambetta, close to Li Shizeng's home. They lived on scholarships from the Chinese government, four hundred gold francs per month for each of the four adults.⁹³ To put that into perspective, in 1911–12, a female French vineyard worker's annual income was just 445 francs.⁹⁴ It was a generous scholarship awarded to the founders of the Republic. Soon, however, due to the escalating conflict between Nationalists and the central government, the latter stopped paying. The Cantonese provincial government appears to have picked up the tab.⁹⁵

With the residence of prominent Chinese intellectuals and the eventual arrival of students, the quiet French town of Montargis transformed into the center of the Chinese work-study program in Europe. Many Chinese students registered in its agricultural, technical, and preparatory schools. According to a document submitted on February 21, 1921, by La Société franco-chinoise d'éducation to the French Foreign Ministry, 101 Chinese students were registered at the Collège de Montargis, the largest Chinese student group in a single French school.⁹⁶ Today, the city is proud of this history. Li's home at 31 Rue Gambetta bears a brass plate, commemorating his sojourn. In contrast, no record of Wang's house number is found. The *damnatio memoriae* in China's mainstream historiography works equally effectively for the French tourist industry.

Half a year later, in April 1913, Chen Bijun gave birth to a boy, named

Ying 嬰 (later changed to Wenying 文嬰; 1913–2011). “Ying” was a homophone to the name of Fang Junying. The timing was inopportune. On March 20, Song Jiaoren, now the GMD parliamentary leader, who won a decisive victory in China’s first parliamentary election, was shot at the Shanghai train station. He died two days later. Yuan Shikai was immediately accused of being responsible for the assassination.⁹⁷ A civil war was brewing. Wang Jingwei was summoned by Sun Yat-sen to join his comrades in arms. In May, the new parents left for China, leaving their baby to the care of Zeng Xing and Fang Junying.

Again, Wang Jingwei tried to mediate between the south and the north. As the media held Huang Xing to be the chief culprit behind the south’s rebellion, Sun Yat-sen and Wang Jingwei jointly sent a telegraph to Yuan Shikai to defend Huang, expressing their willingness to mediate the conflict.⁹⁸ On June 2, Wang issued another joint statement with Cai Yuanpei to seek a ground of compromise. All efforts were to no avail. A civil war, known as the “Second Revolution,” broke out on July 12. The ill-equipped GMD army was handily crushed. In the aftermath, Sun sought asylum in Japan while Wang escaped to Penang.⁹⁹

The assassination of Song Jiaoren was a turning point in Wang’s relation to Yuan Shikai. As he related, after the foundation of the Republic, he and his comrades had truly rooted for Yuan’s success. The “Song case” and its aftermath had shattered their trust.¹⁰⁰ He thought of assassinating Yuan Shikai, but the latter would not meet him any more.¹⁰¹ The government army’s massacre and looting of Nanjing, in particular, convinced Wang that the Republic had to be saved from Yuan Shikai.¹⁰²

Toward the end of this year, Wang returned to Europe. He visited Wu Zhihui in London, and they returned together to Montargis in the spring of 1914. Traveling in Europe was an eye-opening experience. As Wu Zhihui accounted, modern Europe’s mundane luxuries constantly reminded him of China’s “backwardness”; reading news about European nations’ pursuit of colonial interests in China added to his sense of distress and shame. They saw in Fontainebleau an exhibition of Chinese treasures looted from the Summer Palace.¹⁰³ The Chinese intellectuals’ admiration of Europe was coupled with a constant sense of humiliation as citizens of a third-class nation. Modern European nations revealed their duality: as pioneers of industrial capitalism and custodians of liberal democracy, and as colonial empires ruthlessly seeking and defending their self-interests.

With Bijun’s mother coming to help with the baby care, Wang became the male head of an extended family. As the house on Rue Gambetta

became overcrowded, the Wangs moved to another house by the canal, leaving the Gambetta house to the Zengs and the Fangs. The following quatrain describes the beauty of the trees around the canal house:

榭葉深黃楓葉紅	The oak leaves have turned dark yellow, maples red;
老松奇翠欲擎空	An old pine, emerald wonder, holds up the sky.
朝來別有空濛意	The dawn brings an atmosphere of misty rains;
只在蒼煙萬頃中	It stands amid ten thousand acres of gray mists. ¹⁰⁴

In this peaceful surrounding, Wang Jingwei began to teach the young Changzu classical Chinese poetry, to no success.¹⁰⁵ Chen Changzu would later become a German-trained aeronautical engineer with an allergy to classical Chinese. More fruitful was Wang's education of the elder Zeng Zhongming, who received a doctorate in literature in 1922 from the University of Lyon, with a dissertation on the history of Chinese poetry.¹⁰⁶ Fang Junbi was attracted to the fine arts. She would later study in the *École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts* in Paris and become an acclaimed painter. The youngsters were assimilated into a cosmopolitan European life.

In July 1914, the Wang, Fang, and Zeng families vacationed in Lucerne, Switzerland. They stayed in a hotel on Mount Pilatus with a majestic view over the valley and lake.¹⁰⁷ It was truly beautiful. "Then in the evening some people coming up by the last train brought the shocking news that war had been declared,"¹⁰⁸ Changzu recalled.

They promptly ended the vacation and crossed the frontier to France via Geneva, just a few hours before the border was closed to traffic. The two-day train trip back to Montargis gave Wang a close brush with the Great War, as the tracks were jammed with troop trains leaving for the battle zone up north. Wang decided to leave Montargis, as it was close to Paris. They moved first to Nantes and eventually to Laon, into a farmhouse without utilities. In melancholic poems written in Laon, his beautiful Europe is transformed into deserted gardens, dimming sunrises, and abandoned fortresses, a steep decline into chaos that must have deeply shaken him, causing dismay as well as reflection on the relation between strength and weakness.

In actual fact, Laon fell on September 2, 1914, and was under German occupation until late 1918.¹⁰⁹ Montargis, in contrast, never fell. But the few Chinese behind the western front did not seem to attract much attention. When winter came, the group migrated south. In November they made their way to Toulouse to join Cai Yuanpei and Li Shizeng.¹¹⁰

In December, Wang and Chen's daughter Xing 惺 (later changed to Wenxing 文惺; 1914–2015) was born, prematurely at only twenty-six weeks. “Xing” was a homophone to the name of Zeng Xing.

On the Chinese front, after the failure of the Second Revolution, the Nationalists splintered into factions. Sun Yat-sen insisted that the only way to overthrow Yuan Shikai was violence, while most other leaders preferred institutional and legal means represented by the late Song Jiaoren. On July 8, 1914, Sun formed the Chinese Revolutionary Party 中華革命黨 (1914–1919) in Japan, demanding that members should pledge loyalty to him by having them fingerprinted. This act signaled his disillusion in parliamentary democracy. He had come to believe that only by autocratic personality cult could the revolution truly succeed. He further announced that, after its success, citizens would be divided into three categories; the highest category, “Founding Father Citizens” (*yuanxun gongmin* 元勳公民), would consist of the most senior party members. Many who would qualify found it repulsive. The European anarchists rejected Sun's measures, satirizing the term “Founding Father Citizen” as a grotesque oxymoron.¹¹¹ Wang Jingwei in a few emotionally agitated letters vehemently denounced Sun and suspected his lust for power.¹¹² It was the closest he came to breaking with Sun.

With Japan imposing the Twenty-One Demands on China in early 1915 and Yuan Shikai plotting to pronounce himself emperor, Wang Jingwei responded again to his comrades' call to arms, against his senior friends' insistence that he should not abandon his study for short-term political utility.¹¹³ Wang and Chen left France and arrived at Shanghai in June. Not much is known of Wang's activities in this anti-Yuan campaign, which escalated into the National Protection War. He found Sun Yat-sen enmeshed in scandal. Hoping for Japanese aid, Sun proposed a series of terms to Japan that seemed to surrender more Chinese sovereignty than Japan had ever asked of Yuan Shikai. Sun was accused of selling out the country, was deserted by many of his followers, and was at the lowest point of his career.¹¹⁴ Wang believed that Sun had no intention to fulfill his promises to Japan, but he was against Sun's military campaign, worrying that Japan would exploit the power vacuum caused by the European war to interfere.¹¹⁵ He also forgave Sun's autocratic measures on the ground of necessity.¹¹⁶ He tried to mediate among the government and competing factions of nationalists, again in vain. There were no verifiable accounts of his whereabouts, but rumors had him spotted in Hong Kong, Japan, Shanghai, Shandong, and Yunnan, possibly making alliances or plotting insurrections.¹¹⁷ None of these endeavors bore fruit.

He did, however, visit his family in Guangdong that summer, the first reunion since he left for Japan in 1905. He felt awkward about meeting his brother Zhaoyong, not so much because the latter had remained a Qing loyalist, but because the Republic had failed to live up to its ideals.¹¹⁸ To loyalists like Zhaoyong, their old world was shattered for naught.

Wang Jingwei finally decided to return to France, squeezing through the German U-boat net in the Mediterranean and at Marseille on January 12.¹¹⁹ He bitterly regretted the distraction from his studies. He swore that he would not return to China before succeeding in his studies; if China fell, he would commit suicide facing east.¹²⁰ He must have not kept this dramatic resolution for long. In hindsight, his dilemma was characteristic. He was naturally prone to negotiations and deal-making. He preferred exhausting pacifist alternatives before resorting to violence; and in the latter case, radical individualist actions, such as assassination, was preferred over military campaign and collective sacrifice.

As the young adults of the group wanted to take university classes, they moved to Bordeaux. Contrary to popular accounts, however, Wang never overcame the linguistic barrier to register in a university, a deep disappointment to himself. On June 6, 1916, Yuan Shikai died, temporarily relieving the crisis in China. In the following months, Wang redirected his energy to organization. On June 22, La Société franco-chinoise d'éducation was officially founded in Paris. Cai Yuanpei was elected its Chinese director, and Wang its vice director.¹²¹ The same day a Chinese labor school was opened, which received support and funding from the French government.¹²² Because of the war mobilization, France was in a labor shortage. Yuan's adviser Liang Shiyi 梁士詒 (1869–1933) proposed to send Chinese workers to France, a proposal accepted by the French War Ministry in November 1915.¹²³ Now, with Yuan's death, Cai Yuanpei, Li Shizeng, and Wang Jingwei took over the cause. They jointly asked Chinese provincial governments to recruit and send Chinese workers, as it would also benefit the domestic labor force through knowledge transfer.¹²⁴ An unstated reason was for China to join the Allied war effort without violating its neutrality. More than 140,000 Chinese laborers eventually came to France and England during the war. Their contribution, however, was rarely acknowledged. Inter-Allied victory medals, awarded to everyone who served in combat or worked as civilians contracted to the armed services in every Allied country, were denied to them.¹²⁵

Wang also began to promote Chinese-language publishing in France. He was the chief editor and contributor to *Study in Europe*, a Chinese-

language biweekly published in Tours. He founded a Chinese printing press at Tours, known as *Imprimerie chinoise*.¹²⁶ This press was later transported to Lyon after the Institut Franco-Chinois de Lyon (IFCL) was founded in 1921, also under Cai, Wang, Wu, and Li's initiative. Zeng Zhongming became the first and longest-serving secretary-general of IFCL. He married Fang Junbi in 1922 and went back to China in 1925 to become Wang's secretary.

Finding China's Place in the Postwar World

In September 1916, Cai Yuanpei was appointed president of Peking University. In December he invited Wang to head the Chinese literature department. Wang accepted the invitation and left for China in mid-January 1917.¹²⁷ To observe the revolution in Russia and to avoid German submarines, Wang took the alternative route through St. Petersburg and Siberia to Beijing. He did not, however, record any personal impression of the communist movement.

Upon arrival, he was immediately caught in the vortex of domestic politics. On February 8, 1917, President Li Yuanhong 黎元洪 (1864–1928) and Premier Duan Qirui 段祺瑞 (1865–1939) consulted him on his observation of the European war and on China's strategies. Wang advised them to join the Allied powers and declare war on Germany.¹²⁸ He had three reasons: first of all, he had a principled resistance to militarism; second, a German victory would turn China into its colony, even if China stayed neutral; but if Germany should lose, being a victor would help China resist Japan's claim on the German colony in Shandong.¹²⁹ Only Duan was convinced. The long conflict between the two factions intensified as a result. On June 13, Li Yuanhong dismissed the congress.¹³⁰ The loyalist warlord Zhang Xun 張勳 (1854–1923) entered Beijing on the pretext of solving the crisis, and on July 1 announced the restoration of the Manchu monarchy, only to be driven out of Beijing twelve days later by Duan Qirui. Having nominally recovered the Republic, Duan Qirui declared that he would abolish its provisional constitution. On July 17, Sun Yat-sen started the Constitutional Protection Movement. On September 1, Sun, seeking to launch a northern expedition, was elected grand marshal (*da yuanshuai* 大元帥). Though Sun was against China's joining the Great War, Wang was summoned to be his deputy secretary-general. With China descending into an unprecedented level of chaos, lost in a vortex of partial claims to legal and moral authorities, Wang Jingwei did not find the leisure to become a scholar after all. Had he

indeed assumed the professorship at Peking University, he might have joined the New Culture Movement that started in the same year.

On November 11, 1918, the First World War ended with the Allies' victory. On that day, Wang was working, once again, toward a north-south compromise with each regime acknowledging the other's authority over its domain of control.¹³¹ The Guangdong Military Government wanted to send a competing delegation to the Paris Peace Conference and appointed him their chief representative, which he declined. It was likely because he did not want to assume a formal diplomatic position for Guangdong, which could sabotage the central government's mission and damage his cultivated image of impartiality. Nonetheless, he went to Paris as an observer, funded by the Ministry of Education on a purported mission to study postwar European education.¹³² Gu Weijun 顧維鈞 (1888–1985), Chinese minister (head of the diplomatic legation) to the United States and its representative at the Paris Peace Conference, recalled the tension and stress among the competing Chinese delegates. Wang Jingwei played a reconciliatory role when the conflict became personal.¹³³

Wang Jingwei left China in March 1919 and eventually arrived in Paris after a detour through Japan and San Francisco. There was also a Japanese diplomat who took the chance of attending the peace conference to gain firsthand experience of the United States, whose future career would intertwine with Wang's: Prince Konoe Fumimaro 近衛文麿 (1891–1945), heir of the most senior branch of the august Fujiwara clan, which for a millennium had acted as regents of Japan. Saionji Kinmochi 西園寺公望 (1849–1940), leader of the Japanese delegation, took his noble protégé to Paris to apprentice him in international diplomacy. But before his trip to Paris, in December 1918, the young prince rebelliously published a controversial essay with the title "Reject the Anglo-American-Centered Peace" in a nationalist journal. It was a mixture of idealism and hawkish nationalism, arguing that the League of Nations would be nothing but a tool to perpetuate the status quo of an Anglo-American-centered world order; according to the prince, the true nature of the present conflict was a struggle between the established powers and powers not yet established. "In this sense pacifism does not necessarily coincide with justice and humanity. Similarly, militarism does not necessarily transgress justice and humanity." Should Western imperialist policy prevail at the peace conference, resource-poor Japan would have no resort but to destroy the status quo for the sake of self-preservation, just as Germany did.¹³⁴ Saionji reprimanded him for the imprudence. At the conference, the

Japanese delegation's request to include the principle of racial equality in the League Covenant was rejected. The Japanese press reported the Allies' rejection with outrage, while also expressing their concern as the conference discussed Japan's wartime seizure of the German colony in China's Shandong Province. The German kaiser's exile in Holland further worried them about the future of Japanese monarchy, deepening a sense of crisis in trying to maintain the "essence of the Japanese nation" in the dawning global era.¹³⁵

The Paris Peace Conference turned out to prelude the Second World War. It was a great disillusion to a world whose hopes had been raised high by the American president Woodrow Wilson's proposal of Fourteen Points, outlining a policy of peace, free trade, democracy, and national self-determination. It was broadly applauded and then politely ignored. The European powers rejected the Chinese claim on German rights in Shandong and awarded them instead to Japan, based on secret treaties that Russia, Britain, France, and Italy had signed with Japan in early 1917.¹³⁶ The Treaty of Versailles codified the victors' self-serving justice. Symbolically, the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles multiplied this moment infinitely, reflected in national histories around the world after the war. In Europe, the punishing terms imposed on Germany buried the seed for the rise of fascism. In Asia, the demands for independence by French and British colonies were rejected, leading to their embrace of the Japanese occupation as liberation in the Second World War. In China, when the news from Paris trickled home, the May Fourth Movement broke out. It became a watershed event in Republican China's history. The intelligentsia became politically energized and increasingly radicalized, leading to the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. The appeasement policy of Western powers also emboldened Japan to encroach upon mainland China, a process that culminated in the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, when Prince Konoé Fumimaro became prime minister.

Wang Jingwei, an eyewitness to the unfolding diplomatic fiasco, was equally outraged. He learned that China's crisis was never a domestic affair, but must be solved internationally. He regretted not having played a bigger role in Chinese politics in the last decade to make a difference. His scholarly detachment from China's domestic politics was no longer justifiable.¹³⁷

But Wang did learn through contemplative observations. He was strongly impressed by the French national unity that transcended class or ideological divisions. Nationalism had the power to mobilize all mem-

bers of society to sacrifice their comfort, assets, personal agenda, and lives, even when victory looked remote and outcome unpredictable.¹³⁸ Yet he also bore witness to the destructive power of militarism, a viral brand of nationalism. In essays written after 1916, he visualized nations and states as ranking linearly on a scale of social evolution. Darwinian competition among nations, however, only led to endless aggressions and annexations, so much so that even an imperial power like France was barely able to defend itself. He asked: What should China, a weak country with an aspiration to national renaissance, do?¹³⁹

China's weakness was constantly on its patriots' mind. For the young Wang Jingwei, devoted to the anti-Manchu Nationalist revolution, "weakness" was simply the state of degeneration that the Chinese nation found itself in, to be overcome by revolution. During his stay in France and especially after the outbreak of the war, however, he began to reflect further on the ethical dimension of "weakness," as demonstrated in "A Translation of De Florian's Fable," a poem inspired by the French poet Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian's (1755–1794) fable "La Brebis et le chien."¹⁴⁰ In a preface to his translation, he states:

In my opinion, in the supposed scenario—"The meat of the weak is the fodder of the strong"—though the sin lies with the strong, the weak share the sin too. The reason that sin and evil exist between Heaven and Earth is that there are always two parties involved: the doer and the receiver. Without a receiver, who can be the doer? This is what I would like those who think of themselves as weak to think about.

The term *ruorou qiangshi* 弱肉強食 (literally, "the meat of the weak, the fodder of the strong") is Yan Fu's 嚴復 (1854–1921) translation of the Darwinian "survival of the fittest." But Wang's comment complicates the relation between weakness and strength. He seems to say that, though the strong commits a crime, the weak is complicit too. It represents a further development of the reciprocity of rights and duties that he describes in Sun Yat-sen's oath of office in 1912. To break the cycle of violence, one must practice the doctrine of "human co-existentialism" (*renlei gongcun zhuyi* 人類共存主義).

"Human Co-existentialism" was the title that Wang reassigned to an essay that was first written and published in 1919 as "The Co-existence of Humanity."¹⁴¹ Under the influence of Kropotkin's theory of "mutual aid," he argued that the principle of the survival of the fittest, if applied to the

human society, would only encourage negative competition and reduce social diversity. As he had previously argued in an essay “The Meaning of Sacrifice,” published in 1916, weakness and strength alternate over time and nations develop in uneven speeds. A currently weak nation or civilization could evolve into a strong one in the future.¹⁴² Social Darwinism, however, regards the process of evolution as linear, ignoring the reality of uneven development and eliminating the possibility of catching up. Second, a global society that develops according to the social Darwinian vision would see cultural diversity reduced, leading to the dominance of a single culture, a single race, or a single person. Thus the doctrine of survival of the fittest becomes its own enemy, ultimately eliminating competition all together. Human co-existentialism was needed to encourage positive competition and collaboration. China, a weak country, first had to promote human co-existentialism to protect its own existence; and second, since equality applied not only to rights but also to responsibilities, it must strengthen itself and fulfill its obligations to the international society and to its own citizens.

The archenemy of human co-existentialism, in Wang’s opinion, was militarism. The Great War had shown that militarist Germany could not be defeated by similarly militarized Russia, but only by democratic and liberal countries like France and the United States, since only democratic citizens had something to fight for. Individualism and collectivism, therefore, can and should unite. Wang concluded that human independence relied upon justice and not upon violence, and that the best national defense was to promote knowledge and learning, in the hope of making China a democratic civil society. Wang regarded the Paris Peace Conference as marking a transition from the era of militarism to the era of human co-existentialism. In this sense, Japan’s encroachment on China’s territories was therefore not just an existential threat to China, but also a grave challenge to this emerging new global order.¹⁴³ But the reason for Japan’s aggression was partly found in China’s weakness, which should be acknowledged by every honest Chinese as a source of shame.¹⁴⁴ Thus, despite his disappointment about the injustice meted out on China, Wang nonetheless believed that the Paris Peace Treaty could become the ground for future work toward global peace. His faith in the League of Nations would be lost only decades later, when he was pleading with the latter to mediate the Sino-Japanese conflict.

Wang’s comment on the victims’ co-responsibility for their victimhood resembles Hannah Arendt’s chilling observation: “The so-called scapegoat necessarily ceases to be the innocent victim whom the world

blames for all its sins and through whom it wishes to escape punishment; it becomes one group of people among other groups, all of which are involved in the business of this world. And it does not simply cease to be co-responsible because it became the victim of the world's injustice and cruelty."¹⁴⁵ Wang's answer to his own share of co-responsibility was to embrace the life of action, even if it would mean contamination. As he writes in a poem on the famous cascade at the Bridge of Spain in the Hautes-Pyrénées, in the summer of 1919:

由來泉水在山清	Since olden times, water in the mountain stays pure;
莽莽人間盡不平	But it turns into a turbid torrent in a vast world of injustice.
風雷萬古無停歇	Over eons, the wind and thunder on the precipice never cease;
和我中宵悲嘯聲	They chime in unison with my midnight song of pathos. ¹⁴⁶

The systematic injustice (literally, “unevenness”) of the world forces the stream to lose its purity in the mountain (the proverbial place of reclusion in Chinese poetry). Hannah Arendt, citing Heidegger, remarks that, in a time of darkness, only a total withdrawal into philosophical solitude can protect one from the obscuring light (a perverse-sounding oxymoron) of the public life.¹⁴⁷ Yet here Wang felt that he had no choice but abandon his quiet studio in France to respond to the fatherland's thunderous call. He had the presentiment that embracing a public life would have inevitable consequences, including tactical compromises and moral contamination. He was ready to enter the darkness.

2 | The Statesman

Sixteen years after Wang returned to China from the Paris Peace Conference, on November 2, 1935, a profile of the “Premier of China” appeared in *Le Petit Parisien*, an influential newspaper with over two million subscriptions across France. The contributor was a certain Ms. Gasc, its Shanghai correspondent. Walking into the living room of the premier’s residence in Nanjing, she was welcomed by Zeng Zhongming, now the deputy minister of railways, in impeccable French. A few minutes later, “A door opened; a very young man, dressed in a Chinese robe, walked toward me. The face was beautiful, gentle, and solemn. The gaze was direct, penetrating, and radiant, releasing rare magnetism.”¹ She was in the presence of charisma. This was Wang Jingwei, age fifty-two, president of the Executive Yuan, minister of foreign affairs, and now Chiang Kai-shek’s junior partner in a coalition government. Facing the accusation of appeasing Japan despite the latter’s growing territorial appetite in China, Wang explained to his French guest the importance of maintaining peace for China’s nation-building, economic development, and ultimately democratization. For that purpose, he fiercely stated, he was willing to brave the accusation of cowardice.

On the front page of this same issue, an attempt on Wang’s life was reported. It happened on November 1 during a photo session in Nanjing, which was arranged as a patriotic act against Nanjing’s appeasement policy. Representing the popular voice in a nation similarly under military threat from a resource-hungry neighbor, *Le Petit Parisien* appeared to sympathize with Wang’s dilemma.² No one, in China or in France, could have foreseen that years later Wang would become “the Arch-Traitor of the Nation” or that he would earn the distinction of a “Chinese Pétain,”

namesake of the French president who gave the word “collaboration” its negative connotation.

Wang’s coalition with Chiang Kai-shek was a response to the national crisis after the Mukden Incident, but was also necessitated by the need to save the GMD from internecine factionalism after Sun Yat-sen’s untimely death. Perceived as the leader of the GMD Left, Wang endeavored to implement principles of democratic centralism. Without money or guns, he could not but make compromises. His appeasement policy toward Japan was an unpopular stance that cost his reputation—his only political capital. Yet he declared that his fickle course of actions was given consistency by his sincere conviction in moral altruism. This critical examination of Wang Jingwei’s career in China’s national politics, therefore, begins with a close look at the legacy of literati politics in Republican China.

Literati Politics in Republican China

Late Qing and early Republican thinkers, as scholars note, in general tended to share an overoptimistic view of democracy. It was above all instrumentalized as a means and not necessarily treated as an end.³ This trait reflected the hybridity of their political conviction that combined features of modern liberal political philosophy and traditional idealist Confucianism.

As Zhang Hao argues, Western liberal democratic tradition is influenced not only by the Enlightenment thinkers’ progressivism and optimistic view of human nature, but also by a “dim consciousness” (*you’an yishi* 幽暗意識) of the fundamental sinfulness and depravity of it; thus the liberal hope for the human future is not blindly optimistic, but rather full of “caution and fear.” Confucianism, especially the tradition influenced by Mencius’s notion of human nature, tends to emphasize the attainability of sagehood through self-cultivation. A belief in the innate goodness of human nature serves as the ethical foundation of Wang Yangming’s philosophy. Though it arguably manifests a certain “dim consciousness” in seeing humans as needing guidance and correction, the optimism of this philosophy is fundamental. Thus, as Zhang argues, Confucian thinkers tend to believe that politics can be trusted to the hands of a few individuals who have perfected their virtues, an elitist inclination incompatible with democracy.⁴ Thomas Metzger terms it “the problem of optimistic this-worldliness”: thinkers who embody this problem insist on “the sublime ideals of political life, including a high degree of moral-

intellectual consensus throughout society and a governmental process free of the power of selfish interests.”⁵ Zhang’s and Metzger’s sweeping argument may have oversimplified the Chinese political tradition, which in its institutional design absorbed a variety of philosophical influences, including the dark moral visions of Xunzi and the Legalists. Nonetheless, all the main modern Chinese ideologies, including the Three Principles of the People, arguably betray a certain epistemological optimism in positing that “objective, impersonal, universal moral standards are available on which to base society.”⁶ This is the epistemological foundation in understanding Wang Jingwei’s vision of democratic centralism, defined as a democratic coalition led by the vanguard GMD party.

Huang Kewu argues that, for late Qing and early Republican democratic thinkers, democracy would realize the traditional Chinese ideal of “treating the people as the root” (*minben* 民本); the arrival of Western democracy only provided institutional means for realizing this ancient ideal. The Confucian utopian spirit is embodied by the goal of building a government committed to an altruistic moral vision and thorough social transformation. To realize democracy, intellectuals play a prophetic role, to “awaken” and “renew” the common people. Even though their professed goal was to build an egalitarian society without privileged classes, this vision was fundamentally elitist.⁷ As Sun Yat-sen puts it, there are three kinds of people by birth: those who awake first (*xianzhi xianjue* 先知先覺); those who do so later (*houzhi houjue* 後知後覺); and those who never do (*buzhi bujue* 不知不覺). Nevertheless, equality can be realized if all develop “an awareness of service as moral obligation.” Sun considers this inherently hierarchic vision, paradoxically, the essence of *egalité*.⁸

Wang Yangming’s influence was similarly pronounced on Wang Jingwei and Chiang Kai-shek. Their emphases, however, differed. Chiang’s initiation began during his military training in Japan, mediated by the theory of Bushido. As Yangming’s philosophy was regarded as one of the intellectual resources of the Meiji Reform, Chiang considered it the foundation of renewing the Chinese nation and of creating a “national soul,” along the model of the Japanese Yamato-Soul.⁹ Wang’s emphasis, in contrast, was on individual moral cultivation and self-sacrifice. His initial contact with the Yangming philosophy began with his father’s teaching in his early teens, which continued during his education in Japan, where he also received the influence of Zen (Chan) Buddhism. He even translated a Japanese work, “Yangming and Chan” (*Yōmei to Zen* 陽明と禪), first published in 1904 by Satomi Jōjirō 里見常次郎, into Chinese. In his postscript to the translation, he confesses

belief in Yangming's doctrine that "what one knows about but does not act upon is not true knowledge,"¹⁰ which emphasizes that true moral knowledge must necessarily translate into action. Satomi argues that it was based on the belief in the immanent moral truth that Yangming could defy "vulgar opinions" and behave in unerring accordance with his innermost feelings and fundamental convictions. There are not "two hearts" inside one person: the "heart of man" and the "heart of the Way" are just two phases of the same heart. The former is clouded by selfish interests, while the latter is unclouded through inner reflection to reveal the universal truth. Since "moral knowledge" is nothing but the immanent "principle of Heaven," the whole cosmos is united in one person through one's moral knowledge. Satomi argues that an insight into transcendence helps the practitioner maintain a tranquil and meditative heart, even in the face of death. Only this kind of moral knowledge makes the unification of knowledge and action possible.¹¹ The tranquility while facing death is central in one's moral education. Wang Jingwei's writings throughout his life often betray the influence of Satomi's interpretation.

Wang began the translation in 1909 in Tokyo as part of his philosophical studies. In December 1937, his library in his Nanjing villa was burned during the Japanese advance on the city. This unfinished translation, however, survived among the books that he brought to Wuhan, where he completed it. The wartime situation, undoubtedly, was constantly on his mind when he translated this Japanese work expounding Chinese philosophy into Chinese. The translation was finally published in 1942 in Nanjing. In the preface, Wang expatiates upon the centrality of "exerting one's best to act" to the doctrine of practicing "humane-ness": though such an action itself does not equate to humaneness, without it nothing can be done. He further cites Mencius's famous argument that morality is innate, proven by the fact that one spontaneously feels empathy upon seeing a toddler about to fall into a well. This spontaneous moral feeling must result in immediate action: one must exert one's best to save the proverbial "toddler," regardless of the result. This line of argument apparently was meant to justify his collaboration with Japan as an attempt to save not just the abstract notion of "China," but individual Chinese people living under the occupation. By comparing the nation to a toddler in need of salvation, however, he also aggrandizes himself as the moral and historical agent, capable of action.

Wang Yangming's philosophy of moral knowledge, measured not by external standards but by internal reflection alone, was an intel-

lectual source of confidence for Wang Jingwei. At times of frustration and despair, he often referred to Yangming to regain his courage. A frequently reoccurring image in Wang's poetry is a piece of firewood, burning to provide warm food for the populace. Aside from the previously cited letter to Hu Hanmin in 1909, he reuses the image in a poem written in 1910 in prison, purportedly upon seeing a worn wheel being chopped into firewood. As it states:

年年顛蹶關山路	Year after year it tumbled down mountains, over passes;
不向崎嶇歎勞苦	And never confided its weariness to the cragged road.
只今困頓塵埃間	Now in its final station trapped among dusts,
倔強依然耐刀斧	It remains a stalwart resister to knives and hatchets.
輪兮輪兮	Oh wheel, oh wheel!
生非徂徠新甫之良材	Never born to be the fine timber on mighty mountains,
莫辭一旦為寒灰	You embrace turning into cold ashes!
君看擲向紅鑪中	Behold, sir! When it is cast into a red-hot oven,
火光如血搖熊熊	Flames ablaze like gushing blood.
待得蒸騰薦新稻	When newly harvested rice is steamed upon the fire,
要使蒼生同一飽	All the black-headed folk are fed to their hearts' content! ¹²

To Wang, the old wheel simultaneously embodies the qualities of endurance and sacrifice. Though it is no fine timber to build edifices, its final utility as firewood continues to serve people's mundane needs. He again resorted to the metaphor in an April 1941 poem on a calligraphic scroll written by Chen Bijun, which bore his 1910 poem and a letter by Wang Yangming expatiating upon the doctrine of "attaining innate moral knowledge."¹³ It contains the couplet

心似勞薪漸作灰	My heart, like a tired piece of firewood, slowly turns to ashes;
身如破釜仍教爨	This body, like a broken pot, endures the tyrannical chore of cooking.

Clearly, Bijun wrote the scroll to encourage him not to abandon the "peace movement" despite the broad denunciation. Wang's poem restates his youthful resolution of martyrdom, except that, now, he is not

only the burning “firewood,” but also the enduring “pot.” Yangming’s philosophy, as it appears, served to inspire his moral confidence and to defy worldly opinions.

Both the firewood and the pot embody the idealized and romanticized image of a *shi* 士, a term commonly translated in English as “literatus,” but in Wang’s use it may be better understood as a “scholar-warrior.” Another poem in prison that elaborates this ideal states:

士為天下生 The scholar-warrior is born for All-under-Heaven,
亦為天下死 And should die for All-under-Heaven.
方其未死時 Just as he is yet undead,
怦怦終不已 On and on his heart throbs, never at rest.¹⁴

According to the “Liyun” 禮運 chapter in the *Book of Rites*, when the Great Way is practiced, the All-under-Heaven serves public good (*tianxia weigong* 天下為公), and the political system is a nonhereditary meritocracy serving universal welfare. The resurgence of this ideal in Republican China shows an endeavor to borrow Chinese autochthonous intellectual resources to support imported notions such as democracy.

Wang Yangming’s political philosophy of altruism and authenticity is crucial in understanding Wang Jingwei’s staying power in politics. As this chapter is to show, Wang repeatedly resigned from the pinnacle of power, sometimes to extricate him from a political crisis, sometimes facing a backlash in public opinion. Every time, however, he would see his reputation rehabilitated despite or precisely because of his absence, preparing therefore the stage for his comeback. This curious dance between Wang and the public shows the legacy of literati politics in Republican China. Simply put, Wang’s alacrity to resign served as proof of his moral purity, incorruptible by power; the recluse and the statesman were one and the same. This pattern was only broken by the urgent sense of national crisis caused by Japan’s military aggression. Suddenly, detachment from desire for power appeared pedantic, and lofty reclusion dangerous. United resistance demanded all individuals devote their utility value, in whatever capacity, to the survival of the nation. The Second Sino-Japanese War, in this sense, finally created the Chinese nation by putting an end to the elitist tradition of literati politics.

In the Shadow of Sun Yat-sen

Wang Jingwei came back to a China in agitation and factionalist division. Despite Yuan Shikai’s dictatorial dispositions, his strongman rule

was the only check on regional military separatism. With his death, the country splintered apart. The Paris Peace Conference also marked a turning point in China's relation to European powers. The world came to be dominated by a kind of British-US axis, with some room made for Japan in East Asia. The "Washington system," however, did not recognize Russian or Chinese interests.¹⁵ Sun Yat-sen learned this lesson the hard way. Ever since the late nineteenth century, China's custom tariffs were collected by the Maritime Customs Service under foreign control. It had the first claim on revenues to repay indemnities, before the surplus (known as *guanyu* 關餘) was transferred to the Chinese government. In the autumn of 1923, Sun pleaded with London to receive the custom surplus and was rejected; when he threatened to take it by force, British gunboats entered the Guangzhou Harbor in a display of naval power. Sun, deeply embittered and disappointed, began to speak the language of anti-imperialism. The perception that the Washington system was controlled by hypocritical and imperialist nations increasingly radicalized the Chinese urban intelligentsia. May Fourth Marxists became communists. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was founded in Shanghai in July 1921. But the Comintern deemed the CCP too weak to start a proletarian revolution of the urban industrial working class. Instead, given its backward economy, Lenin saw China as ready for a kind of popular, multiclass revolution. As the effort to find support among the northern warlords failed, the Comintern turned its attention to Sun Yat-sen.¹⁶

During this period, Sun's primary objective was to overthrow the Beiyang government, for which military support was desperately needed. At first he tried to win over the southern warlords. While the National Protection War (1915–16) had thwarted Yuan Shikai's monarchist ambition, it had strengthened regional military forces. The Guangxi army, which Sun summoned into Guangdong to assist him in the Constitution Protection Movement, turned against him very soon. In October 1920, Sun accused the Guangxi warlords of colluding with Beijing. He instead supported the local strongman Chen Jiongming 陳炯明 (1878–1933) to expel the "guest army." On November 29, the Guangdong Military Government was founded. On April 10, 1921, Sun was elected extraordinary president by the Guangzhou Congress. Soon he began to prepare for a northern expedition.

Publicly, Wang Jingwei was yet to entirely abandon anarchist ideals. He repeatedly declined government positions, a stance that was praised by the press as his refusal to "break the precept" prescribed by the charter of Society for Advancing Morality.¹⁷ In effect, he worked in Sun's shadow. His ostensible nonofficial status facilitated his tasks in represent-

ing Sun Yat-sen in open or secret errands to build political and military alliances, especially with southwestern warlords from Guangxi and Yunnan. He also mediated between Sun and Chen Jiongming when the two clashed over their visions for China in general and for Guangdong in particular: Sun increasingly contemplated building a centralized government under GMD control, while Chen preferred a federal system in which provinces enjoyed broad democracy and great autonomy. The mediation failed in mid-June 1922 and on June 16, Chen ousted Sun from Guangzhou. Sun took refuge on SS *Yongfeng* 永豐艦 and summoned a rising GMD military star, Chiang Kai-shek, to his rescue. This event convinced Sun of the need to assert direct military command. The forty days that Chiang protected Sun were decisive in elevating the young soldier to party leadership. The next year, he would represent Sun as leader of a GMD mission to the Soviet Union, and in 1924 he would become head of a new military training school for soldiers—the Whampoa Academy.

Lenin needed a strong and united China to be a bulwark against Britain and Japan. The previous year, the Comintern agent Henk Sneevliet (1883–1942), known by his code name Maring, had contacted Sun on the possibility of building a united front with the nascent CCP, in exchange for Soviet aid.¹⁸ It was a marriage of convenience. A joint announcement issued by Sun and Soviet diplomat Adolph Joffe (1883–1927) on January 26, 1923, declared the annulment of China's unequal treaties signed with czarist Russia. Though Lenin had renounced these treaties back in March 1920, new territorial treaties were yet to be negotiated, and this announcement gave Sun the sheen of a diplomatic victory. Soviet interests in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia, however, continued to be acknowledged.¹⁹ Most importantly, the Soviets pledged to provide the money, weaponry, and knowledge to train a GMD army. On February 21, 1923, after Chen Jiongming's force was ousted from Guangdong by the Yunnan and Guangxi armies, Sun founded the Army and Navy Marshal stronghold in Guangzhou and again assumed the title of grand marshal. The GMD presidential system was replaced by a military dictatorship.

When the *Yongfeng* incident happened, Wang Jingwei was in Shanghai. He reunited with Sun on July 3, or four days after Chiang Kai-shek rode to rescue. Wang drew the lesson that politics took primacy over education in contemporary China. Toward the end of 1922, he began to argue that improving politics was the premise of educational reform.²⁰ This marked a decisive departure from the anarchist ideal of reforming society from the battlefield of the classroom. Under Soviet pressure, in April 1923 Sun sent Wang Jingwei to Manchuria, for the ostensible purpose of

making the warlord Zhang Zuolin 張作霖 (1875–1928) conclude a railway settlement with the USSR. Neither Sun nor Zhang, however, was committed to the talk, and Wang’s monthlong mission bore no fruit.²¹

Despite Wang Jingwei’s reservations about the alliance with CCP, he was put in charge of reorganizing the GMD. The first “United Front” was thus institutionalized. On January 20, 1924, the reorganized GMD held its First National Congress at Guangzhou. Wang Jingwei and Hu Hanmin were both appointed to the presidium board. Through the reorganization, the previously loosely structured GMD adopted the Bolshevik model of an ideologically united, top-down controlled Leninist party. Democratic centralism became its organizational principle. In the years to come, the spirit embodied in the 1924 “reorganization” would serve as the credo for the GMD faction around Wang Jingwei, on which he staked his claim of party orthodoxy against rival factions. Ideologically, loyalty to the Three Principles of the People was emphasized.²² As Peter Zarrow remarks, with the Comintern’s help, “Sun came to control an efficient political machine for the first time in his life,” seemingly at a small price.²³

Though Sun announced at this conference that the “livelihood of the people,” an essential doctrine in the Three Principles, meant simply “socialism,” the published declaration rejected the Soviet suggestion to confiscate lands.²⁴ Instead, Sun declared the realization of the principle of the “livelihood of the people” was a gradualist, nonviolent process. The landowners would retain the original value of their land, but when the society’s general well-being increased, the added value of the land would belong to the state and be distributed evenly among the social classes.²⁵ This showed that Sun was willing to strategically adopt some communist discourse without sacrificing his own vision of a Chinese path.

After the party reorganization, Wang Jingwei finally agreed to lead the Shanghai GMD branch. On June 16, 1924, when the Whampoa Military Academy was founded in Guangzhou, Wang took part in teaching GMD political doctrines and party history. The new GMD army built around the Whampoa graduates would be thoroughly politicized and instilled with party discipline, a crucial feature that distinguished it from other warlord armies and underlay its combat efficiency. On June 30, he was appointed minister of industries; on August 14, he was reassigned to be minister of propaganda. This was the first time that he assumed any institutional role since 1910.

Meanwhile, the political situation in the north continued to shift. In

June 1923, Cao Kun 曹錕 (1862–1938), a Beiyang military leader, ousted President Li Yuanhong from Beijing. In October, the third presidential election was held, which Cao won through bribery. The public uproar opened a chance for Sun Yat-sen. Wang Jingwei's contact with Zhang Zuolin was bringing Guangdong and Manchuria closer, widening the support for Sun. In late October, General Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 (1882–1948) staged a coup and occupied Beijing. A Christian, leftist, neo-Confucian warlord who baptized his troops by water hose, Feng soon broke the contract between the Qing royal house and the Republican government and drove the abdicated emperor Puyi out of the Forbidden City. He then invited Sun Yat-sen to Beijing to discuss the terms of national reunification. Sun was overjoyed. On November 14, he took off on a Japanese mail liner to Beijing. Wang was among Sun's entourage as his secretary and confidant. Within days, however, the situation began to change. Unable to maintain his control, Feng invited Zhang Zuolin into Beijing, who in turn supported Duan Qirui's return to power. After arriving at Shanghai, Sun thus took a detour to Japan to gather more international support, while Wang went to Tianjin in preparation for Sun's arrival. A speech that Sun delivered at Kobe on Pan-Asianism²⁶ will be analyzed in greater detail in the next chapter.

This trip marked the end of the life of Sun Yat-sen. He arrived at Tianjin on December 4, welcomed by more than five thousand people at the harbor, and fell severely ill. The news that Duan Qirui had reached an agreement with the imperialist powers to respect the unequal treaties in exchange for their support enraged him. On December 31, he went to Beijing and immediately checked into the Peking Union Medical College Hospital. The diagnosis was late-stage liver cancer.²⁷ At half past nine o'clock, March 12, 1925, he passed away in Beijing. His widow Song Qingling 宋慶齡 (1893–1981) and his son Sun Ke 孫科 (1891–1973) would continue to play prestigious roles in Chinese politics.

In Sun's hospital ward, Wang Jingwei's star rose above his peers. He became Sun's voice in giving press conferences, making speeches, and explaining Sun's positions.²⁸ When he gave a speech at Peking University to an audience of three thousand, reasserting the GMD's dedication to parliamentary democracy, the standing ovation lasted for half an hour.²⁹ Wang also stayed with Sun through his surgery and sat by his sickbed, communicating his messages to an anxious party and public. He was elected to draft Sun's last will, which Sun signed one day before his death without altering a word.³⁰ This solemn document, to be known as "The

Premier's Testament," would acquire a near-religious status in the GMD, recited in gatherings and carved into monuments. It codified the centrality of Sun's writings as well as his commitment to convene a National People's Assembly and to abolish the unequal treaties. Wang's function in drafting the testament was a well-known fact, though how active a role he played in speaking in Sun's voice, instead of being a mere recorder, was not disclosed.

During the GMD reorganization, Sun's three major lieutenants rose in rank: Liao Zhongkai 廖仲愷 (1877–1925), Hu Hanmin, and Wang Jingwei.³¹ The left-leaning Liao followed Sun's CCP policy the closest, but his credentials in the early stages of the Tongmenghui were less impressive than those of Wang and Hu. The stubborn and right-leaning Hu Hanmin was an unpopular leader. Wang, the moderate, further enjoyed the support of military leaders like Xu Chongzhi 許崇智 (1887–1965) and Chiang Kai-shek. On July 1, Liao, Xu, and Chiang put forward a joint motion to nominate Wang for the chairmanship of the Standing Committee of the National Government Council, and he was duly elected with nine of the eleven votes.³² Two days later, Wang was elected chairman of the Military Council. Hu Hanmin, aside from a seat in the Standing Committee, only became foreign minister, a position of no consequence, as the Guangdong government was yet to be recognized by foreign powers. Since the grand marshal's office was abolished on June 19, the regime was collectively led by a sixteen-member council, and Wang was the first among equals—the *de facto* president of the first Nationalist government in Guangzhou. The discord between Hu and Wang was sowed.

It was in this period that the paths of Wang Jingwei and Mao Zedong crossed for the first time. Since Wang remained minister of propaganda but no longer had the time for this job, he nominated a bright young communist to be the acting deputy minister. This propaganda genius was Mao Zedong, who was gaining recognition after his success in mobilizing the Hunan peasantry. It is, however, unclear how closely they worked together during this period.

The summer of 1925 represented the pinnacle of Wang's power and prestige. His previous detachment created an image of purity. He had no assets, no army, no radical persuasions. His private life was beyond reproach. Indeed, since he had been at the center of national politics for so long, people tended to forget that his leadership qualities were yet untested.



Fig. 7. The KMT Political Council, Guangzhou, July 1925. From left to right in the front row: Zhu Peide 朱培德 (in military uniform), Wang Jingwei, Hu Hanmin 胡漢民, Wu Chaoshu 伍朝樞, Liao Zhongkai 廖仲愷, and Chen Youren 陳友仁 (in military uniform). Mikhail Borodin and Vasily Blyukher (“Galen”) are in the second row. Photograph by Fu Bingchang. Image courtesy of C. H. Foo, Y. W. Foo, and Special Collections, University of Bristol Library (www.hpcbristol.net).

Wang Jingwei and the GMD Left

After the death of Sun Yat-sen, factionalism in the GMD intensified. Sun’s coalition policy with the CCP had already aroused objection and resistance in the party, which had been suppressed under Sun’s authoritarian leadership. Wang as his successor commanded much less uncontested loyalty. Despite his studious endeavors to cultivate an image of impartiality, he was increasingly viewed as the leader of the GMD Left.

As historian Li Zhiyu argues, Wang’s leftism was rooted in his interests in socialist ideals; he insisted on GMD party control of the military, on its leadership of mass movements, and on harnessing the discursive power of the “revolution.”³³ So Wai-chor argues that the development of the GMD Left went through two phases. If the “old GMD Left” was only a loosely structured group with few other distinctions than championing the coalition policy with the CCP, following Wang’s rupture with the



Fig. 8. From left to right in the front row: Vasily Blyukher, Mikhail Borodin, Zhang Taili 張太雷 (the interpreter), and Wang Jingwei, all clad in white. Photograph by Fu Bingchang. Image courtesy of C. H. Foo, Y. W. Foo, and Special Collections, University of Bristol Library (www.hpcbristol.net).

communists in 1927, a “new GMD Left,” more ideologically and institutionally unified, was formed. Its activities could be further divided into phases. In the first phase, from 1927 to 1929, the leftist alternative was formulated by Chen Gongbo 陳公博 (1892–1946), a founding member of the CCP. Though Chen left the CCP soon after its founding and no longer subscribed to Leninism, his ideas carried strong Marxist overtones. In the second phase there was a shift in emphasis as Wang Jingwei took the helm. In the stead of leftist ideas with Marxist connotations, striving for democracy became the dominant ideological theme for the GMD Left.³⁴ From 1929 to 1931, they waged repeated political and military anti-Chiang campaigns. Lloyd E. Eastman views their advocacy of autonomous mass organizations, land reform, democratic procedures within the GMD, and GMD control of the government and army as providing a possible base for a popular and efficient government.³⁵ In the very least, it represented a viable path the GMD might have taken in competing

with the CCP to rally mass support through social movements. For half a decade, the intraparty rivalry expressed in words and arms created fractures in Chinese politics and society, which were deftly exploited by the GMD's domestic and international foes.

Wang Jingwei attempted to enshrine his ideal of democratic politics as an interpretation of Sun Yat-sen's teachings, a tactical choice to stress his legitimacy as Sun's political heir. The emphasis and the program, however, evolved over time. In the months following Sun's death, he defined the national revolution as a struggle against the warlords and the imperialists. The purpose was for China to be freed from unequal treaties and gain equality with other nations.³⁶ While acknowledging the importance of constitutional democracy,³⁷ he did not propose concrete steps for its realization, focusing instead on the right to a decent life, defined primarily in terms of material needs. To realize "the Principle of People's Livelihood," the government had to evenly distribute land-ownership through gradualist practices as Sun prescribed and curb the excess of capital.³⁸ The path to democracy, in other words, was through the development of national economy.

After 1926 Wang began to argue that democracy gives life meaning and is the premise of people's livelihood.³⁹ The Three Principles were inseparable, though to practice them the GMD as a revolutionary party had to follow the steps prescribed in the "Program of National Reconstruction."⁴⁰ Said program, which Sun drafted in 1924, prescribed a three-phase procedure to achieve national reconstruction: that of military rule, that of political tutelage, and finally, that of constitutional democracy. The "political tutelage" phase would automatically start after national unification. The third phase would begin when county-level democratic autonomy was fully realized, followed by the drafting of a constitution and general elections. The elected National People's Assembly would approve the constitution and appoint a central government. The GMD government would dissolve within three months after the general elections, and this would also signal the end of one-party tutelage of the state.⁴¹

By embracing this gradualist program, which bears a certain similarity with the two-step program of nation-building that he advocated as early as 1905 (see chapter 1), Wang sought a middle ground between liberals, who demanded immediate and full democracy, and conservatives, who saw the party's monopoly on power as indispensable to the success of the revolution. He argued that, in the "political tutelage" phase, the government should play an educative role, which does not

mean dictatorship. On the contrary, freedom of assembly and of association, of speech and from censorship, and other fundamental rights are protected. To foster democratic forces, the party must recognize itself as part of the people and not a privileged class; its struggle is anti-imperialist and antifeudalist.⁴²

Wang was not a Marxist. He regarded the theory of class warfare as the most devious enemy of the national revolution, as it sows division among the population. However, he also used populist rhetoric to divide the “corrupt classes” from the “productive classes.” The former included warlords, former bureaucrats, exploitive landowners, and mob proletarians. Only through the productive classes’ pursuit of self-interest would democracy be realized.⁴³ Like Sun Yat-sen, he postponed the issue of practicing a multiparty democracy to the “constitutional democracy” phrase. The transition from one-party rule to a multiparty democracy was guaranteed only by the ruling party’s altruistic commitment to its revolutionary mission.⁴⁴

Wang’s vision of democracy was eclectic and elitist, something between Western liberal democracy and Soviet socialism. His convictions stayed rather consistent throughout his political career, from the mid-1920s through the period of collaboration, as the next chapter will show. In 1927, he defined his future economic policy as “state capitalism.”⁴⁵ In 1940, he called it “state socialism,” a version similar to the Soviet’s New Economic Policy.⁴⁶ However, since the transition toward democracy is guaranteed only by the altruism of a revolutionary party led by altruistic leaders, there always lurks the danger of dictatorship.⁴⁷ Wang’s belief in the civil leader’s capacity to rein in the military also appeared too optimistic.⁴⁸ He would soon learn his lessons the hard way.

The First Debacle

Throughout the summer of 1925, China lay in the throes of student protests and workers’ strikes. A wave of radicalization swept over the nation. The May Thirtieth Movement, led by the United Front, contributed to the hand-in-hand rise of the GMD and the CCP as “newly legitimate *national* representatives of China’s future.”⁴⁹ The GMD intraparty conflict, however, came to public view through a high-profile tragedy. On August 20, 1925, Liao Zhongkai was assassinated. An investigation committee, consisting of Wang Jingwei, Xu Chongzhi, and Chiang Kai-shek, was formed. It soon turned out that the coup was orchestrated by the Rightists, and Hu Hanmin’s cousin was a primary suspect. Since the

cousin had fled before he could be questioned, public suspicion turned to Hu. Hu soon left for Russia to “study its institutions,” a de facto exile from the corridors of power.⁵⁰ Since Wang was leading the investigation, Hu took it personally. In a poem titled “Reading History,” Hu lamented:⁵¹

摘瓜有句唐臣泣 The line “harvesting melons” made Tang ministers
weep;
煎豆無詞漢室憂 The silence after “frying beans” doomed the House of
Han.

Notably, this couplet uses a pair of allusions identical to those in Wang’s poem “Stirrings,” written in the prison of Beijing. Through the intertextual reference, Hu expresses resentment against what he perceives to be Wang’s betrayal.

Thrust into a position of power, Wang made a few miscalculations. Despite Hu’s disaffection, he and Wang could look back on a long friendship, once sealed in blood. To Hu, Wang’s attempt at impartiality signaled arrogance and indifference, turning him into an embittered rival. The removal of Hu also weakened the civil branch of the GMD. Chiang Kai-shek turned out to be a major beneficiary of the Liao case: not only was he among the investigation committee triumvirate, but the investigation also discovered an alleged plot by a group of conservatives to liquidate the Leftists. Senior officers under General Xu Chongzhi, the third member of the triumvirate, were executed as coconspirators. Chiang took the chance to oust Xu, who left for Shanghai. Now Chiang suddenly found himself second only to Wang Jingwei in the GMD and solely in charge of military affairs. The resultant image of him as a stoic soldier led to a rapid increase in his popularity. In January 1926, at the Second National Party Congress, Chiang was formally elected to the Central Executive Committee.

As the Guangdong government was seen as steadily sailing left, a group of disaffected GMD members decided to secede. In November 1925 they summoned their own party plenum in Beijing. They became known as the “Western Hills Faction” (*Xishan pai* 西山派), named after the location of their meeting. Since after Liao’s death Wang had become the sole party leader whose image was solidly associated with the pro-Soviet policy, he was singled out by the Western Hills Faction in the attack and accused of conniving with the communists. The ideological fracture in the party had become public.

Wang’s position as party leader was reaffirmed on the Second

National Party Congress. Its official declaration contextualized the Chinese national revolution as an integral part of a worldwide revolution for the first time. Left-leaning party members, including Chen Gongbo and Gu Mengyu 顧孟餘 (1888–1972), were elected to the Central Executive Committee. They were to become core members of a “Wang faction” that was nearly tantamount to GMD Left.⁵² The congress also approved Wang’s motion to follow Sun’s will of unifying China and to continue the Northern Expedition. Chiang Kai-shek was appointed to lead the National Revolutionary Army. It was to consolidate all military units controlled by the GMD, including those of the allied warlords. Built after the model of the Soviet Red Army, which focused as much on military training as on ideological indoctrination, the system of political commissars was implemented, with communists often serving in this capacity.⁵³

Barely two months later, Wang found himself sidelined in an armed struggle. As the Western Hills Faction was spreading rumors that the CCP, Wang Jingwei, and the Russians were conspiring to oust Chiang, Chiang grew suspicious.⁵⁴ He also began to resent Wang’s perceived reliance on Russian advisers. Convinced that the communist commander of the SS *Zhongshan* 中山艦 (previously the SS *Yongfeng*) was plotting to arrest him, he preemptively started a coup on March 20 by declaring martial law in Guangdong. Communists were rounded up.⁵⁵ Out of mistrust, he informed Wang only the next day post factum.⁵⁶

Wang happened to be bedridden with illness. Hearing the news, he was shocked, confused, and outraged.⁵⁷ But his next move was most curious: instead of reprimanding Chiang for disobedience, he promptly resigned from all posts in protest. Part of the reason was perhaps the sense of betrayal, as he and Chiang had previously sworn brotherhood, at the latter’s insistence.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Wang was assailed by a series of personal misfortunes. Zhu Zhixin was killed in armed conflict on September 21, 1920. Chen Bijun, on a fundraising trip through America to open a memorial school named after Zhu, gave birth to a son in Chicago in May 1923. Since she could not take care of the baby, she left him at a local nursery, where the baby died two weeks later. A month later, on June 12, Fang Junying attempted suicide and passed away after two days. The cause was depression triggered by both political and personal distress.⁵⁹ All these deaths deeply grieved Wang. But his voluntary exile was also motivated by his subscription to the politics of authenticity that required proof of his purity. A five-syllable-line verse illustrates his moral position, of which four lines are cited here:⁶⁰

處事期以勇 I hold myself to the standard of being brave in action,
 持身期以廉 And being incorruptible through self-cultivation.
 責己既已周 Only he who is thoroughly critical with himself
 責人斯無嫌 Can expect to command others without suspicion.

This poem amounts to a public statement of Wang's moral integrity. If his voluntary resignation from power may appear somewhat naive, he argues here that it is a step taken only out of principle.

Tan Yankai 譚延闓 (1880–1930) succeeded Wang as chairman of the Standing Committee and Chiang Kai-shek that of the Military Council. In early May, Wang left for Paris with his family. Throughout the summer, Chiang continued to consolidate party, civil, and military powers in his hands. In June, he was named commander in chief of the National Revolutionary Army and, one month later, its supreme commander. Western media began referring to him as “Generalissimo.” Hu Hanmin, back from the Soviet Union, became leader of the GMD Right. Despite Chiang's endeavor to dissociate himself from the Rightists, he was identified as their best potential ally. The power struggle between the two camps of the GMD was “epitomized in the rivalry between Wang and Chiang.”⁶¹

The Second Debacle

But Wang Jingwei was a politician of his time who felt its idealist pulses. His abrupt departure was in effect a boost to his reputation among party members and the public. He was seen as China's best hope for an altruistic leader who would not trade principles for power. Despite his military exploits, Chiang's ascension was far from uncontested. A campaign to “welcome Chairman Wang to resume duties” was waged by the GMD Left, the CCP, and Chiang's rivals. Hundreds of telegrams were sent by provincial party branches to Wang Jingwei's ward, asking him to end his “sick leave” and to come back to preside over the civil government. In mid-October, the Central Executive Committee approved the motion to welcome Wang back. Because of an appendectomy, however, Wang had to extend his stay in Europe.

This ill-timed delay was perhaps fatal, as the domestic situation continued to shift. On November 26, with the progress of the Northern Expedition, the GMD government decided to move the capital to Wuhan. But in December, when Tan Yankai and the central government staff were on their way to Wuhan, Chiang Kai-shek suddenly detained



Fig. 9. Wang family vacation photo: Wang Jingwei, Chen Bijun, Wang Wenying, and Wang Wenxing in Lausanne, September 1926. Courtesy of Wang Wenying's family.

them in Nanchang, forcing the government to relocate there. The Comintern envoy Mikhail Borodin (1884–1951), who came to Wuhan on December 10, decided upon an anti-Chiang strategy.⁶² A greater tide of telegrams petitioning Wang to return reached his ward. Even Chiang was compelled to join the chorus, declaring that he was willing to resign if doing so would remove an obstacle to Wang's ending his self-imposed exile. Wang thus took his departure in early March. He and Chen Bijun traveled incognito through Russia by train.⁶³ They met Soviet leaders in Moscow and took the Trans-Siberian Railway to Shanghai, arriving on April 1. Whom he met in Moscow and what exactly was discussed, however, remain unclear.

With a majority of party leaders eventually having arrived in Wuhan, a Third Plenum was summoned, and measures to contain Chiang's power were introduced. Despite Wang's absence, he was elected to all decision-making bodies of the party, the government, and the military. The communists had a pronounced influence on the Third Plenum.

Wang Jingwei was sympathetic to communism and to mass movements. He regarded mass movements as indispensable in the struggle against warlords and imperial powers as well as in the process of nation-building. But he never subscribed to the credo of communism and was particularly against the doctrine of class struggle. Thus, he characterized the GMD's policy as *rong-Gong* 容共 ("accepting the communists") and not *lian-Gong* 聯共 ("uniting with the communists"), the latter term preferred by the CCP.⁶⁴ He defined Sun's slogan "Treating Russia as the teacher" as learning from Karl Marx's intentions and not from his methods, since although both men wanted to eliminate class struggle, Sun's method was not through violence, but through the rule of law and state capitalism. It would harvest the benefits of capitalism without suffering from its excess.⁶⁵ Wang emphasized that the GMD collaborated with the Soviet Union because it was the only country that had voluntarily abolished unequal treaties, not because of its ideological program.⁶⁶ Since Sun Yat-sen in his testament had only stated that China should unite all nations in the world that would treat it as an equal, without specifying which nations, this gave Wang the freedom to define and redefine China's allies. Besides, he was in a unique position to interpret Sun's testament on the strength of his being its drafter.

Fundamentally, Wang and Chiang were both centrists, if on different sides of the center. Upon Wang's return to China, they held secret meetings in Shanghai. They agreed to eventually end the communist presence in the GMD, though they continued to disagree on a timetable. Wang did not consider the current situation untenable and preferred a democratic solution by convening a party plenum.⁶⁷ It was possible that Wang missed an important chance to consolidate his control by pedantically insisting on a technicality.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, the CCP leader Chen Duxiu suddenly materialized in Shanghai. Wang challenged him with the rumor that the communists had decided to rebel against the GMD, an accusation that Chen denied. They thus published a joint statement to assure members of both parties that the union remained strong. But Wang was imprudent to ignore the symbolic significance of such a joint statement. He was expected to mediate between the GMD Left and Right, and now he was accused of siding with the Leftists, violating his own rule of impartiality. Furthermore, the statement struck a very different tone than his agreement with Chiang. The right-wing faction became alarmed. By that time, the "Paris anarchists" had all become supporters of a strongman government under Chiang. Wu Zhihui openly accused Wang of capitulation. Wang thus left Shanghai for Wuhan to avoid fur-

ther confrontations. Another purpose was to summon a party plenum in Wuhan, where most members of the Central Committee were staying.

In Wuhan, he was overwhelmed by an enthusiastic show of support. Chiang Kai-shek decided not to wait for Wang to join him in Nanjing for the Fourth Plenum. Instead, on April 12, he began a bloody purge of the CCP, turning Shanghai into a slaughterhouse. Many innocent bystanders also lost their lives. In turn, the communists retaliated by executing veteran union leaders and businessmen with foreign connections in Wuhan and Changsha. An undeclared civil war began, which would be fought on covert and open battlefields for the next twenty-two years. On April 20, Chiang established a rival regime in Nanjing, electing Hu Hanmin as its chairman. The Nanjing and Wuhan GMD branches declared each other to be illegitimate. On May 3, Wang signed a telegram denouncing Chiang for the massacre and expelling him from the party. The GMD formally split into two rival regimes.

Within days of his arrival in Wuhan, however, Wang Jingwei was alarmed by the degree of communist influence in the GMD-controlled areas and especially by the violent uprisings in Hunan and Hubei. Workers' unions seized factories without knowing how to run them; foreign capital was fleeing; banks were closed; the currency system was thrown into confusion. As the land owned by officers' families was confiscated and redistributed, the army mutinied and attacked the peasant militia. To Wang (and even to some CCP leaders) the mass movements were out of control. On May 23, the Wuhan government issued an order to "correct the mistakes of the peasants' and workers' movements." It asked the factions to peacefully resolve the conflict between capital and the labor, forbidding the unions to threaten or arrest factory or shop owners. It especially forbade the confiscation of soldiers' family assets. Meanwhile, a telegram from Stalin arrived at Wuhan that ordered the communists to seize property in the countryside, to eliminate "unreliable generals," to arm twenty thousand CCP members and create a new army of fifty thousand revolutionary workers and peasants, to infiltrate the GMD Central Committee, and to organize a revolutionary court that would bring "reactionary" bureaucrats to trial. These tasks were so ludicrously unrealistic that the CCP leaders, when the telegram was read at a meeting, did not know whether to laugh or to cry. Stalin's order appeared to be a face-saving tactic to boost his failing China policy, since Chiang's coup had vindicated Trotsky's criticism of his previous support of the GMD. The CCP decided to resist the order. Yet, for inscrutable reasons, the newly arrived Comintern representative, M. N. Roy (1887–

1954), showed Wang the telegram. Wang took it literally and was gravely shaken. He was in favor of a peasant movement, but not an insurrection. He accused the communists of betraying the spirit of the Sun-Joffe announcement, since the purpose of the coalition was not to turn China into a Soviet country, but to realize the goals of its own national revolution.⁶⁹ He deemed the continued presence of the CCP inside the GMD no longer tolerable. He left Wuhan and declared and intent to peacefully “expulse the communists” on July 14.⁷⁰ After the August 1 Nanchang Uprising, a symbolic event in CCP history that would become the day of founding the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), the Wuhan government decided to “cleanse the party,” this time with violent means. Wang Jingwei, and the GMD at large, formally parted ways with the CCP. The First Coalition had failed, and with it the hope of a multiparty government.

As Tsuchiya Mitsuyoshi argues, though Wang continued to champion a “national revolution” after the purge of communists, his definition of revolution evolved. Previously, he had defined the purpose of the national revolution to be “freedom and equality” for the Chinese nation as well as for all suppressed nations in the world. The method was to “awaken the people” (especially farmers and laborers) in a struggle against the imperialists and the warlords. Afterward, the purpose would eventually be defined as “the establishment of democratic forces,” relying on all “productive classes,” including not only farmers and laborers, but also merchants, industrialists, the self-employed, and intellectuals. The struggle was against all “corrupt” and “evil” forces. The “corrupt” included the autocratic forces in the GMD (Chiang’s faction), and the “evil” now included the communists. This transformation helped to define the institutional character of the GMD Left as a democratic coalition.⁷¹

Under the pressure of Wuhan and rival military leaders, Chiang resigned on August 13 to remove the last obstacle to party reunification. He took advantage of this hiatus to marry Song Meiling 宋美齡 (1898–2003), sister of Sun Yat-sen’s widow. This happy liaison welcomed Chiang into one of the best-connected families in modern China.

While Chiang was enjoying his honeymoon, Wang was busy containing the damage to his reputation. Within months of his high-profile return to China, he had already changed his stance toward the communists twice. He was wanted by the right-wing faction of his own party, while the liberal press questioned whether he (and the GMD party) was mature enough to lead China.⁷² Wang tried to theorize his conviction

to prove the consistency of his actions. As Arif Dirlik notes, in his first public address after the Wuhan purge, Wang Jingwei pointed to mass movements as the guarantee of the Left's revolutionary integrity.⁷³ The purpose was to justify his moves by distinguishing the GMD Left both from the CCP and from the GMD Right. On September 5, Wang arrived at Nanjing. A party reunification conference was scheduled to be held. To prove his sincerity, Wang invited the Western Hills Faction to the conference. It turned out to be another pedantic mistake. When the conference was convened in Shanghai from September 11 to 13, Wang found his faction outnumbered and decided to walk out. The conference denied the legitimacy of the Third Congress at Wuhan and called for convening another Third Congress. The elected Special Committee was dominated by the Western Hills Faction and by Nanjing, which was now controlled by the Guangxi clique of military leaders.⁷⁴ Receiving the information that the Guangxi clique was about to detain Wang, the GMD Leftists immediately departed for Guangzhou.⁷⁵

Ideologically, Chiang and Wang remained in disagreement, but they found a common cause in opposing the Special Committee. In early November, when both Chiang and Wang reappeared in Shanghai, their coalition looked imminent. At this juncture, however, Zhang Fakui's 張發奎 (1898–1980) army mutinied in Guangzhou. Welcomed into Guangdong by the GMD Left to counter the Guangxi warlord Li Jishen's 李濟深 (1885–1959) influence, Zhang seized the moment of Li's departure to Shanghai to strike. Since the communists in Zhang's army were fully involved in the coup, and since the Rightists were yet to forgive Wang's alliance with the communists at Wuhan, Li Jishen accused him and the GMD Left of colluding with the communists. Then an unexpected event entirely discredited the Left in the eyes of the party. On December 11, the underground communists in Zhang's army, led by the future PLA grand marshal Ye Jianying 葉劍英 (1897–1986), initiated the Guangzhou Uprising.⁷⁶ Though Zhang Fakui managed to retake Guangzhou in three days, Wang was accused of having facilitated the riot. Five days later, an exhausted Wang decided once again to leave China for France. Chiang Kai-shek was reinstated as the commander in chief of the National Revolutionary Army, and the Fourth Plenum was to be held in Nanjing.

This was a year of frustrations for Wang Jingwei and of disappointments for his sympathizers. He exposed his naivete and inconsistency. In good times, his eclecticism and impressionability would have helped him play the role of unifier. But 1927 was not one of those times. With

the northern warlords' power waning, schisms among the revolutionary coalitions deepened. A violent divorce between the GMD and the CCP became inevitable. The GMD itself was increasingly polarized. Having spent a year overseas, Wang came back to an unfamiliar landscape. He swiftly made a few grave mistakes within days of his return, and his effort to salvage the situation inevitably appeared opportunist. In the end, he was forced to retreat and wait for another chance.

The Third Debacle

While Wang was in France, China's domestic and international situations saw dramatic changes. In June 1928, Zhang Zuolin's army retreated to Manchuria, and Chiang announced the success of the Northern Expedition. Chiang was formally elected president. In December, Zhang Zuolin was assassinated by the Japanese Kwantung Army. His son Zhang Xueliang 張學良 (1901–2001), the “Young Marshal,” announced that he would accept leadership of the national government. China was nominally united. Chiang began to slowly but steadily eliminate regional military powers, making strides in transforming China.

Few records remain to account for Wang Jingwei's activities in the long twenty months between January 1928 and September 1929. Rumors of his being spotted in Hong Kong or Shanghai cannot be verified. A letter dated May 16, 1929, shows that Wang was being treated for diabetes in Vienna,⁷⁷ but otherwise the Wang couple stayed mainly in Paris. Unlike his previous periods of retreat, however, he did not entirely withdraw from Chinese politics this time. He sent essays, telegrams, and letters to Chinese newspapers, expressing his prodemocratic opinions on party affairs, perhaps as an attempt to rehabilitate his reputation. He wrote an autobiography en route to France, which served as the basis of Tang Liangli's 湯良禮 (1901–1970) English biography of him, published in 1931 in an international campaign to boost Wang's prestige.⁷⁸ All these signals show that Wang was actively seeking a chance for a comeback. His cause célèbre was democracy.

While Wang was in France, his marginalized faction continued to attack the GMD leadership for corruption and Chiang for being a new warlord and dictator. They argued that, to counter the communist influence, the GMD must reassert its leadership among laborers and peasants. Mass movements, moreover, were necessary in a continuous anti-imperialist struggle. Around Chen Gongbo and Gu Mengyu, a group calling itself “Reorganization Comrades Association” (hereafter the

Reorganization Clique) was founded in Shanghai on November 28, 1928.⁷⁹ Given the broad dissatisfaction with Chiang's autocracy, this group grew rapidly throughout China and overseas. It presented Wang as the democratic alternative to Chiang Kai-shek, even though he never explicitly acknowledged himself as the leader of this clique. He continued styling himself as the leader of the whole GMD party.⁸⁰

In March 1929, Chiang substantiated the accusations against him as an autocrat by personally appointing more than half of the representatives to the GMD Third National Congress. The Reorganization Clique made this the focal point of its opposition. Since warlords like Li Zongren 李宗仁 (1891–1969), Feng Yuxiang, and Yan Xishan 閻錫山 (1883–1960) were also united by their opposition to Chiang, their coalition became likely.

In the summer of 1929, while the Wang family was on holiday at Lake Geneva, Wang “was flooded with telegrams from his associates in China requesting his immediate return.”⁸¹ He probably made a partial translation of Victor Hugo's poem “À l'obéissance passive” (To Passive Obedience) in this period. It is a fine composition in the archaic *gexing* 歌行 style that expressed his resolution to continue the republican revolution. The first stanza states:

吁嗟共和二年之戰士	Sigh! Soldiers in the second year of the Republic;
吁嗟白骨與青史	Sigh! White bones and a history evergreen!
萬人之劍齊出匣	Ten thousand men all at once draw their blades
誓與暴君決生死	And swear to duel the cruel kings in a battle of life or death!
暴君流毒遍四方	The monarchist poison spreads broad and wide;
日普日奧遙相望	Standing face to face: Prussia and Austria!
狄而斯與蘇多穆	Tyrus and Sodom—
就中北帝尤披猖	Of whom the Sovereign of the North is the savagest.
此輩封狼與瘦狗	These fellows are like giant wolves and mad dogs,
生平獵人如獵獸	Used to hunting men like hunting beasts!
萬人一怒不可回	The furor of ten thousands cannot be thwarted.
會看太白懸其首	Look, the heads shall be hung on the Morning Star! ⁸²

Wang took the first line of Hugo's poem “Soldiers in the Second Year of the Republic” as the title of his poem, thus emphasizing the parallel between the war of 1793 to defend the new French Republic and China's civil wars after the 1911 Revolution. The “monarchist poison” refers to Yuan Shikai's imperial ambitions as well as warlords after him, including

Chiang Kai-shek, who displayed dictatorial dispositions. The Sovereign of the North (“le czar du nord” in Hugo’s poem) clearly refers to Soviet Russia. This poem shows that Wang made up his mind to defend the Republic not only in words, but also with swords.

Again, he and Bijun traveled incognito, using fake passports, eventually arriving in Hong Kong in October.⁸³ He rented a house on Shan Kwong Road in the Happy Valley area to receive guests. He himself first lived in a villa in Shau Kei Wan and then moved to Stanley Beach. Aside from contacts with military powers, Wang re-exercised his propagandist genius. He first sponsored the publication of a small satirical newspaper, *Pepper* (*Hujiao* 胡椒), to which he contributed sarcastic anecdotes on the Chinese military and political luminaries under various aliases.⁸⁴ In early 1930, he directed Lin Baisheng 林柏生 (1902–1946), a Soviet-educated protégé, to found the *South China Daily News* (*Nanhua ribao* 南華日報). Hong Kong with its rule of law and free press would thereafter serve as Wang’s major base of propaganda.

Privately Wang expressed scruples about partnering with warlords, since a costly military campaign was burdensome to the common people and he would be obligated to the warlords.⁸⁵ Publicly, however, he sounded more optimistic, expressing his hope to realize democracy in China and democratic centralization in the GMD.⁸⁶ In the spring of 1930, while in Hong Kong, Wang began to seek an alliance with Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan. In April, he published a series of editorials and letters in Tianjin *Dagongbao* to test the reception of his positions, including the party’s control over the army, freedom of speech, and the necessity to promulgate a provisional constitution (*yuefa* 約法) during the “political tutelage” period.⁸⁷ It was his first reintroduction to the domestic public in two years. The liberal media and intellectuals showed avid support, which likely convinced him that the timing was opportune.

On May 1, 1930, the Central Plains War between Chiang and a coalition of warlords broke out. Despite (or precisely because of) his sabbatical from domestic politics, Wang remained extremely popular, especially among young students.⁸⁸ The warlords thus insisted on inviting Wang north to “preside over party affairs.” On July 13, the anti-Chiang coalition convened an “expanded conference of the GMD Central Executive Committee” at Beiping, with the purpose of uniting the Reorganization Clique and the Western Hills Faction. Ten days later, Wang arrived at Beiping to join forces. It was the first time he had come to Beiping since Sun’s death. Expectations for his efforts were again high. Wang provided

the loosely organized anti-Chiang coalition with an ideological foundation and with a claim to the “orthodoxy” of the GMD party. Nonetheless, the most pressing challenge was military, which determined that his role was only auxiliary. He supported the presidency of Yan Xishan in a new “national government” in Beiping. On September 18, however, the “Young Marshal,” Zhang Xueliang, announced his decision to take Chiang’s side. Given the proximity of Manchuria to Beiping, the Beiping Conference decided to relocate westward to Taiyuan. On October 27, the draft of a provisional constitution with eight chapters and 211 clauses was passed.⁸⁹ It was published in *Dagongbao* on November 1, under the title “Provisionary Constitution Drafted by Wang Jingwei et al.” The title suggested Wang’s continuous appeal as the preeminent GMD democrat. An editorial commended the draft constitution for its many merits, despite some insufficiencies. For instance, it would limit the central government’s concentration of power, eliminate local private armies, and protect basic civil rights.⁹⁰ Later scholars considered this draft to be a model that struck the balance between principle and necessity.⁹¹ The foreign press responded favorably to Wang’s newest venture. The *New York Times* reported that Wang wanted the GMD to return “to the bosom of the people” and “would end class conflicts and provide for real self-government.”⁹²

Despite the lofty ideals, when the war ended on October 15, it had already inflicted 300,000 casualties. It took a heavy toll on China’s chance to recover from its previous internecine struggles. In fact, Chiang and Wang had more agendas in common than they admitted. On the eve of Chiang’s military success, he surprisingly announced his willingness to convene a national congress and promulgate a provisional constitution.⁹³ Wang claimed ideological victory.⁹⁴ But Chiang’s means for realizing the professed goal were once again violence. Since Hu Hanmin was a vocal critic of constitutionalism, on February 28, 1931, Chiang invited Hu to dinner and put him under house arrest. This cleared the way for the passage of the “Provisionary Constitution of the Political Tutelage Period” in May. Despite the law’s reassertion of one-party rule and its limited protection of civil rights, it provided a foundation for ideological consensus within the GMD.

Chiang’s detention of Hu Hanmin was broadly condemned, seen as evidence of his dictatorial disposition.⁹⁵ The Guangdong faction rebelled. Wang, back in Hong Kong, took this chance to revive the battered anti-Chiang coalition. On May 27, another “national government”

was founded in Guangzhou, with Wang Jingwei its leader. On July 21, the Guangzhou government announced the launch of an expedition against Chiang. On September 13, the Guangdong and Guangxi armies advanced into Hunan Province. A new civil war was brewing.

But suddenly, on the evening of September 18, rogue Japanese officers detonated a small bomb under the railway of Fengtian in Manchuria. The explosion, known as the Mukden Incident, became the pretext for a full-scale invasion. Within months the Kwantung Army cut a swath across Manchuria. It was the most brazen invasion that China had seen since the Manchu Conquest of 1644. The national crisis provided the splintered GMD factions with a chance to put aside their pride and work together. For Chiang, it was also a pragmatic decision, since a unified national government was more persuasive in inviting international mediation.⁹⁶ On September 20, Nanjing telegraphed Guangzhou, proposing to jointly solve the national crisis. Guangzhou promptly agreed. Wang Jingwei went to Shanghai to meet Hu Hanmin and Chiang's representative. Wang's proposals of transforming the presidency into a ceremonial position and abolishing the Generalissimo's office, among others, were accepted. These proposals embodied Wang's ideal of democratic centralism that sought to foster "the power of the people" under the leadership of a vanguard party to control the military. Thousands of people went to the harbor of Shanghai to welcome Wang and Sun Ke, showing their high hopes for a Chiang-Wang coalition.⁹⁷ After further negotiations, a unified Fourth National Congress was held in Nanjing on December 22. Chiang, Wang, and Hu were all elected to the Central Executive Committee. Sun Ke's new cabinet, however, failed to gain broad support, and Hu again refused to cooperate with Chiang.⁹⁸ In January, Sun, Wang, and Chiang met in Hangzhou to work out the terms of a unified government. Wang was elected chairman of the Executive Yuan (known since as "China's premier" in the Western press), Chiang that of the Military Committee, and Sun that of the Legislative Yuan. Previously, Chiang had amassed a powerful array of posts: president, chairman of the Executive Yuan, and chief commander. Now, at least nominally, the administrative, legislative, and military powers were separated. Wang oversaw the civil government and Chiang, military affairs. In effect, as the civil and the military affairs were often intertwined in times of crisis, Chiang made all the important decisions. The president of the national government, elected by the Central Executive Committee, was Lin Sen 林森 (1868–1943), an elder affiliated with the Western Hills Faction.

The Chiang-Wang Coalition

After years of bitter rivalry, the splintered GMD factions finally united under a Chiang-Wang coalition government, this time with Wang Jingwei playing the junior partner. Wang Jingwei assembled a young and highly educated cabinet, with most members having studied overseas. Reorganization Clique members were concentrated in ministries of industry, railroads, and the interior, and later the foreign ministry.⁹⁹ Wang's return to power greatly helped improve Nanjing's relation with intellectuals. The new coalition faced herculean challenges: a weak national economy with extreme regional disparities in the degree of modernization, the chronic threat of separatist warlordism and communist military forces, and, above all, Japan's growing appetite. But it also achieved many milestones in state-building, such as tariff autonomy, currency reform, roadbuilding, and the slow but steady elimination of regional military powers. The escalating conflicts with Japan, however, threatened these gains.

Official Chinese historiography tends to portray the Japanese invasion of China as an inevitable, full-scale war long in the planning. The appeasement policy that the Nanjing government carried out from 1931 to 1937 is thus criticized as treacherous acts of "selling the nation" (*maiguo* 賣國). A reevaluation of the Chiang-Wang government's policy toward Japan thus cannot be thorough without a brief overview of the complex tugs of war among conflicting forces within Japan.

In the sense that no tragic figure is a simple hero or villain, Japan's saga of the "Great East Asian War" was a tragedy. Its idealistic opportunity for racial equality was corrupted by a militarist quest for glory: of individuals and of the nation. Rising spectacularly through emulating the West, this island country absorbed the toxic dream of imperialist splendor. Having defeated China (1895) and Russia (1905), annexed Taiwan (1895) and Korea (1910), and nibbled away the former German colonies in Shandong, it dexterously extended its tentacles all over China by instigating internecine conflict. The power vacuum in Manchuria and Mongolia left by preoccupied Chinese regimes offered further chances for extending its influence, though at the risk of confrontation with Soviet Russia. Its encroachment into central China also set it on a collision course with Western imperialist interests. A sensible policymaker would have tried to contain the young empire's ambitions, but statesmanship was woefully amiss. The civil government was per-

閒 偷 裏 忙
Private Life of Great Men
(活 生 私 之 人 要)



兩公子
行政院秘書長褚民誼肩土之梅梅與綠綠，為汪院長之男女

(曾仲鳴攝)

煙裏斜陽處，樓西
風落尊前人慾死
飄泊歸何處，此江山
又暮秋

仲鳴



Yang Chung-ying, the politician of
Taiwan and the poem

鐵道部
次長曾
仲鳴氏
之題詩

Chu Minyi, secretary general of the Executive
Yuan, with Wang Ching-wei's son and
daughter on his shoulders



Wang Ching-wei taking a Mikano-bath (攝 汪民誼) 氏衛精汪之內池浴山干莫

Kuo Hsing-yun, minister of
Railways, playing tennis

Ping Hsiang-jun, Chief of
the Judicial Affairs
Department or the Executive
Yuan, swimming



鳴一打餘長鐵
道部曾氏頌道
一打球之孟部

General Ma Chao has given commands of
Mantshew-ling on the beach



行政院政務次長
彭學溥氏之游泳
在海濱沙灘攝
(東北社)



汪精衛氏在頌道部打球
(曾仲鳴攝)

Fig. 10. The private life of the Wang faction. Upper left corner: Zeng Zhongming 曾仲鳴; upper right corner: Chu Minyi 褚民誼 lifting Wang's children onto his shoulders. Wang is shown in a swimming suit (left in the middle row) and playing tennis (right in the lower row). Reproduced from *Liangyou huabao* 良友畫報 no. 30 (1932): 10. Public domain.

ceived as controlled by the zaibatsu 財閥 conglomerates, about which, particularly after the Shōwa financial crisis of 1927, the impoverished working class and peasantry grew increasingly discontent. The media meanwhile drew an image of the Western powers as hostile to a rising Japan, rejecting its rightful claims to a place under the sun. Overseas expansion was seen as the only solution to a deepening domestic crisis, as it would give space and opportunity to a swelling population, as well as resources and a market to its hungry industry. The army, which recruited from the impoverished and saw itself as representing the underclasses, was on a course of collision with the civil government, over which its power steadily grew by way of intimidation and political maneuvering. The army itself consisted of regional expeditionary troops vying to accomplish feats of glory. All these factors created the dangerous situation where a driverless but efficient machine of mass destruction was left to test its own clout, on a continent depleted by decades of external exploitation and internal discord.¹⁰⁰

It should be emphasized that the Mukden Incident of September 18, 1931, was an unauthorized venture of the Kwantung Army. The cabinet's demand to limit the expanse of hostilities was ignored. Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi 犬養毅 (1855–1932), an old friend of Sun Yat-sen's, tried to solve the crisis peacefully. He refused to recognize the client regime Manchukuo, set up on March 1, 1932, under the nominal rule of the Last Emperor, Puyi, whose Manchu ethnicity gave the regime the sheen of a nation-state. Soon after he reached a secret agreement with the Nanjing government to make Manchuria an autonomous zone under Chinese sovereignty,¹⁰¹ on May 15, 1932, Inukai was assassinated by young militarists. The public sympathized with the agitators: 110,000 petitions for clemency, signed or written in blood, inundated officials of the trial. Nine young men volunteered to die in the place of those on trial, and, as proof of their good faith, sent in their own little fingers pickled in a jar of alcohol. In the end, all forty agitators who received sentences were freed within a few years.¹⁰² The Mukden Incident and its aftermath illustrated the phenomenon of *gekokujo* 下剋上, a form of military disobedience ailing early twentieth-century Japanese politics. Since the Meiji Era, patriotic duties had been defined as every individual's direct loyalty to the emperor. The sanctity of patriotic feelings, in addition to the cult of courage and purity engrained in Japanese society, led to the strange public support for crimes of disobedience, if committed in the name of the emperor or of Japan's national essence, which were seen as one and the same. Civil politicians faced the choice between yielding to the

public's pressure and risking mortal danger. The future Wang "peace movement" faced the same dilemma, as while Wang tried to exploit the rational self-interest of Japanese politicians, they were unable to deliver on their promises against a hawkish military and public.

When the news of the Mukden Incident spread, spontaneous boycotts of Japanese merchandise broke out throughout China. The besieged communists effectively propagated the demand that the government should stop its civil war and turn their guns against the Japanese. Wang's slogan "Resistance on the one hand and negotiation on the other" (*yimian dikang yimian jiaoshe* 一面抵抗一面交涉), however, became the government's guiding Japan policy. To keep the window of negotiation open, diplomatic ties with Japan were not severed.¹⁰³ This appeasement approach severely damaged the Nanjing government's image and credibility in the opinion of the Chinese public. In the years to follow, Wang Jingwei's moral credits were slowly spent in a series of incidents, negotiations, and concessions.

The Shanghai Incident

On January 28, 1932, the very day the new Nanjing government was formally elected, Japan attacked Shanghai. This time it was the navy, jealous of the Kwantung Army's exploits in Manchuria and eager to claim glory of its own. Chiang deemed China to be not yet ready for a full-scale war against Japan. Despite the fierce resistance of the Nineteenth Route Army and the reinforcement that Chiang Kai-shek eventually sent to Shanghai, the superior Japanese air force and artillery rendered the defense unsustainable. Against the public opinion demanding resistance at all costs, Wang asked instead "those not in office" to stop singing "a high key," arguing that resistance without firepower would become a second Boxer Movement.¹⁰⁴ Mediation by the British minister to China Sir Miles Lampson (1880–1964) began. On May 5, the Shanghai Ceasefire Agreement was signed. The Nanjing government agreed to demilitarize Shanghai and its surrounding areas, while allowing the presence of a few Japanese units in the city. Wang Jingwei represented the Chinese government to sign the treaty. An uproar followed. Overnight, Wang saw the public turn against him. Newspapers accused him of selling out China, and the Control Yuan motioned to impeach him, chastising Wang for signing the treaty without the approval of the legislative branch. The motion was ultimately denied, since the ceasefire was a collective decision made on the Central Political Conference.¹⁰⁵ Even so, Shanghai citi-

zens' groups called Wang "China's jinx" and "Japan's lackey," demanding his resignation.¹⁰⁶

Through the decades in politics, Wang's reputation was his sole political capital, warranting his repeated comebacks. Now, for the first time, he bore the nation's outrage and frustration. Despite his conviction of the necessity to play this part, he was eager to rehabilitate his reputation. On August 6, he sent out five consecutive telegrams, "inviting" Zhang Xueliang to resign together with him. The trigger was Zhang Xueliang's request for more weapons and funding from Nanjing, even though he procrastinated for weeks before defending Rehe against Japan in the most recent crisis. Wang's dramatic gesture was perhaps a publicity coup to call people's attention to those who were actually capable of, and culpable for, losing wars. It also showed that performing patriotism was easy, a task that Wang excelled in accomplishing; winning a war, however, was hard. Wang acknowledged his exhaustion to his colleagues, apologizing: "Ever since I became the head of the executive branch, I had thought of using all I had to save the nation from its crisis. Now, a few months have gone by, and everything runs against my will."¹⁰⁷ He recommended that deputy chairman Song Ziwen 宋子文 (1894–1971), Chiang's brother-in-law, take over.

Knowing that Wang was indispensable to the stability of the regime, Chiang sought to mediate the conflict. He asked for Zhang Xueliang's resignation to placate Wang. Wang eventually agreed to stay. Some speculated that Chiang did not want "his own people," like Song Ziwen, to take bullets for negotiating with Japan.¹⁰⁸ Another theory suspected it to be a two-man show, or at least an act of tacit understanding, between Wang and Chiang.¹⁰⁹ The outcome of Wang's protest was that Chiang increased his control over the northern army, though Zhang Xueliang was reappointed as acting deputy commander. Nevertheless, in late September 1932, Wang decided to leave for Europe. The official reason was to recuperate from diabetes, cirrhosis, and gallstones.

Before his departure, he made a statement criticizing the Lytton Report. In March, the League of Nations sent a commission led by Victor Bulwer-Lytton (1876–1947) to investigate Japan's occupation of Manchuria. Wang received them in Nanjing. He proposed ten basic principles for solving the crisis, including the dissolution of Manchukuo and the restriction of the Japanese army to the areas adjacent to the railroads.¹¹⁰ The Lytton Report published on October 2, however, was yet another disappointment to China. Despite its objective summary of facts, it failed to penalize Japan for the aggression and proposed appeasement.

Wang's request to impose sanctions on Japan was ignored.¹¹¹ Nonetheless, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations out of pride. This postwar body of peace had become an opprobrium.

On the strength of the recommendations by his German doctor, Wang Jingwei was to spend six weeks in a clinic for tropical diseases (Tropengenesungsheim) in Tübingen, Germany. He left Shanghai on October 22 on the French steamer *André Lebon* and arrived in Tübingen in early December. Since he traveled incognito, the clinic devoted a whole wing to his care. Despite the secrecy, the local press caught wind and published multiple reports on this new celebrity in town.¹¹²

Known in Chinese sources as Nuo-er 諾爾, Dr. Kurt Noll (1900–1955) from Giessen had opened a clinic in Shanghai and had a successful career in the Far East.¹¹³ He was not only Wang's primary family doctor till the end of his life, but also the reason for Wang's connection to Germany. Until then, Wang's activities in Europe had been restricted to the francophone area. From 1932 on, he mainly visited the German-speaking zones for their spas and clinics. There is, however, no evidence that he was infected with the rising zealotry of fascism in his host country.

The Defense of the Great Wall

On January 2, 1933, the Japanese army attacked the Shanhai Pass, annihilating the battalion stationed there. The defense of the Great Wall began. Wang gave an interview to a Tübingen newspaper to state China's resolve over self-defense as well as his hope for Sino-German friendship.¹¹⁴ He left Tübingen in January for Carlsbad (in Czech, Karlovy Vary), where he convalesced till early February.¹¹⁵ He must have received the news of Hitler's becoming the new chancellor of Germany there. On March 17, he was back in Shanghai. As he initially declined to resume office, the press criticized him for denying the country the assistance it needed to survive the crisis.¹¹⁶ Under public pressure, on March 30, Wang Jingwei was back in office once again. He declared that he returned not because he had any reassurance of success, but solely because he felt obligated to "jump into the firepit" (*tiao huokeng* 跳火坑) of the inferno with the whole nation.¹¹⁷ Some commentators likened him to the compassionate Kṣitigarbha bodhisattva, savior of the sufferers, who vowed not to achieve Buddhahood until all hells were emptied, stating: "If I do not enter hell, who is the one that should enter hell?" 我不入地獄誰入地獄者。¹¹⁸ Again, Wang's reputation was partially rehabilitated by strategic retreat.

In Europe Wang had leaned toward a full-scale resistance against Japan. His first assignment after resuming office was to petition the League of Nations to impose sanctions on Japan and to strengthen the League's economic and technical support for China.¹¹⁹ In late April, he sent Chen Gongbo to inspect the front line. The report was heart-wrenching. Despite individual heroism by Chinese soldiers, they were only fodder for the superior Japanese air forces. They died in large numbers without seeing the enemy, because the Japanese canons had a much longer fire range.¹²⁰ The hope of a coordinated international intervention also evaporated, as no Western power was willing to offend Japan for China's benefit. On May 16, Wang finally asked the Chinese delegation to stop requesting international aid.¹²¹ It would be the last time that Wang petitioned the League of Nations to mediate the Sino-Japanese conflict. His faith in Western democracies was irrevocably eroded.

The battles at the Great Wall ended in early May 1933. Neither Chiang, fighting the communists in Jiangxi, nor southern regional military powers lent their support to the resistance. Again, Wang took the responsibility to formally concede. He telegraphed Huang Fu 黃郛 (1880–1936) on May 22, authorizing him to start peace negotiations, barring territorial concession or acknowledging Manchukuo. The Tanggu Truce was signed quickly on May 31, creating a demilitarized zone south of the Great Wall. Wang made a public speech to defend the treaty as only a local compromise and not one that put China's territorial sovereignty in jeopardy.¹²² Since the truce treaty tacitly acknowledged the de facto autonomy of Manchukuo, Wang's statement once again created an uproar. Within months of his return to China, Wang found himself in a familiar plight.

In Chen Gongbo's account of events, the heavy losses in the defense of the Great Wall were an important psychological factor in Wang's decision to pursue a course of appeasement. Given the technological gap between China and Japan, it seemed to him inhumane to ask soldiers to die for no tactical gain. But public opinion held Wang responsible for being weak-kneed in facing the Japanese.¹²³ When the foreign minister resigned in August, Wang took it upon himself to be foreign minister as well. The media attack on him intensified.

Valiant gestures of self-sacrifice aside, Wang was tormented under the duress of political and moral compromise. A *ci* poem, written to the tune of the "Hundred Words Song," was composed in the late spring of 1934:

茫茫原野 Vast, vast, the unfolding wilderness!
 正春深夏淺 Just when the spring is deep and the summer shallow.
 芳菲滿目 All corners of the earth brim with fragrant blossoms.
 蓄得新亭千斛淚 I have in store a thousand goblets of New Pavilion tears,
 不向風前根觸 Which shall not be poured into the wind.
 渲碧波恬 Waves, dabbed in emerald, softly billow;
 浮青峯軟 Mountain peaks, in shades of blue, melt in haze;
 煙雨皆清淑 Mists and rain are pure and gentle.
 漁樵如畫 Fishermen and woodsmen are like a painting—
 天真只在茅屋 Innocence lives only in thatched huts.

堪嘆古往今來 Sigh! From the beginnings to our times,
 無窮人事 The inexhaustible affairs of man,
 幻此滄桑局 Like a mirage, transform oceans into mulberry fields.
 得似大江流日夜 Just like the great Yangtze, flowing day and night,
 波浪重重相逐 Wave after wave chasing each other without end.
 劫後殘灰 Remnant ashes after the flames of kalpa,
 戰餘棄骨 Abandoned bones churned out by wars,
 一例青青覆 Find sleep beneath a spread of lush green.
 鶉鷓血盡 After the cuckoo bird has spent its blood in singing,
 花開還照空谷 The azalea flowers bloom, rekindling fire in an empty
 valley.¹²⁴

Nanjing, the ancient capital of many southern dynasties, had seen repeated cycles of civil prosperity, conquest, and destruction. In Wang's eyes, the peaceful field reveals itself to be a battlefield stained by the blood and tears of fallen soldiers. As a student of history, he recalls that, after the Western Jin (266–316) fell, ministers who fled south often gathered at the New Pavilion by the Yangtze River to drink. One day, a man sighed that the landscape had not changed, but the regime had. The merry drinkers all began to shed tears. The statesman Wang Dao 王導 (276–339) was displeased and admonished them that their proper duty was to recover the north, not to cry over its loss.¹²⁵ Wang Jingwei in his poem sees himself as another Wang Dao who must not cry. Insentient nature, however, remains indifferent and beautiful, and the common folk continue to live outside of history in seeming “innocence.” In contrast, as an agent of history, the poetic subject is destined to throw itself into the flow of time (symbolized by the river), if only to become “remnant ashes” and “abandoned bones.” The “cuckoo bird” in the last couplet is an image of martyrdom, which has appeared in Wang's qua-

train in prison. The flowers dyed red by its blood only bring life back into an “empty valley,” where no one bears witness to its sacrifice. Arguably, his view of the common people’s externality to the flow of history again betrays a certain Confucian elitism that contradicts the fundamental credo of modern nationalism, which views every single national as responsible for the nation’s fate.

Wang Jingwei’s Japan strategy reflected his belief that a national economy was the foundation of military resistance. The policy that he and Chiang cosponsored was popularly known to implement the slogan “To resist foreign aggression, one must first achieve domestic peace” (*rangwai bi xian annei* 攘外必先安內). While Chiang was in charge of the military, Wang’s function lay primarily in finance, diplomacy, and propaganda.¹²⁶ Disappointed by the Western powers, Wang’s next attempt was to work directly with Japanese nonexpansionists. He tried to build a trusting relationship with the new Japanese minister to China, Ariyoshi Akira 有吉明 (1876–1937), a pacifist.¹²⁷ As a result of their joint effort, in December 1934, Nanjing announced the terms for establishing train and postal communications with Manchukuo. Though they benefited the residents, symbolically the step was seen as further acquiescing to Manchuria’s de facto independence. The young diplomat Gao Zongwu 高宗武 (1905–1994) shone in making bold decisions, assuming a level of responsibility above his rank.¹²⁸ This trait of audacity would let him play a pivotal role in the future in creating Wang Jingwei’s “peace movement.” On December 10, the Fifth Plenary Session of the Fourth GMD Central Committee was held in Nanjing. Of the 167 delegates, 130 belonged to the Chiang-Wang coalition faction. Chiang’s authority was enhanced by the victory of driving the Red Army out of Jiangxi, and Wang chaired the meeting without any dispute. Their coalition had reached a new level of strength.

Indeed, in the spring of 1935, the Sino-Japanese relationship saw some hope of normalization. Responding to the Japanese foreign minister Hirota Kōki’s 廣田弘毅 (1878–1948) new guidelines for relations with China, the Nanjing government established a policy that banned anti-Japanese activities. Given the lack of aid from Western powers, it also tried to increase economic cooperation with Japan to develop the domestic economy.

Wang had not entirely given up on the West. In effect, when Guo Taiqi 郭泰祺 (1888–1952), a member of the Reorganization Clique and the Chinese minister to Great Britain, proposed the strategy of “uniting with the Soviets to restrain Japan” in May 1934, Wang rejected the pro-

positional in favor of a Sino-American coalition.¹²⁹ As a result of his effort to court US support, on March 18, 1935, Wang was put on the cover of *Time* magazine. He was praised for being a “versatile and brilliant Premier of China” forced to carry “the awful onus of secret negotiations with Japan.” The article reassured American readers that China, with its fine cast of politicians including the pliable but resilient “Whalebone Wang,” would not lose the fight.¹³⁰ In May 1935, the US-China diplomatic mission was elevated from minister to ambassador level. Wang immediately sought to reassign Gu Weijun, a stellar diplomat, to this position. Wang was secretly preparing a new proactive and constructive US policy, which was to strengthen the two countries’ economic and political ties. The appointment, however, was blocked by finance minister Kong Xiangxi 孔祥熙 (1880–1967), who needed the current minister in Washington, DC, to complete a deal of selling Chinese silver.¹³¹ Other powers quickly followed suit to upgrade diplomatic relations. In June, Ariyoshi became the first Japanese ambassador to China, which was positive news for Wang Jingwei’s diplomatic offensive.

Despite the rapprochement between Nanjing and Tokyo, however, China’s concession was taken as a sign of weakness by the Japanese militarists. Seeking opportunities for personal glory, they staged a string of provocations in northern China. On June 27, General Doihara Kenji 土肥原賢二 (1883–1948) engineered a deal with General Qin Dechun 秦德純 (1893–1963), who agreed, among other things, to move Chinese troops south to two counties north of Beiping. On July 6, General He Yingqin 何應欽 (1890–1987), under Wang Jingwei’s directive, lent his name to the infamous He-Umezu Agreement, agreeing to withdraw all Chinese troops and military police from Beiping and Hebei. On November 24, the client regime East Hebei Autonomous Government was established under Yin Rugeng 殷汝耕 (1883–1947). It became the first of a string of regional client regimes that Japan set up in Chinese territories south of Manchuria.

Facing criticism in and outside of the party, an exhausted Wang went on sick leave. He flew to Qingdao to recover and, on August 8, asked once again to resign from all positions. Chiang hastened back from Jiangxi to rein in his faction, insisting on the necessity of keeping Wang in office. As the Japanese Army High Command observed, for Chiang to unite China, it was crucial for Wang to execute (and bear blame for) the appeasement policy.¹³² On August 23, Wang resumed office.

Wang felt trapped in a loop. Huang Fu under similar attack retired in the spring of 1935, leaving Wang alone to assume the responsibility

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Fig. 11. Wang Jingwei on the cover of *Time* magazine, March 18, 1935. Public domain.

for the diplomacy of appeasement. Yet he barely exerted control over the bickering factions. His views became increasingly pessimistic. In an interview with journalist Matsumoto Shigeharu 松本重治 (1899–1989) in June, Wang declared that China could not defeat Japan, but still had the capacity to severely make it bleed. He appealed to Japan’s rational self-interest to curb its greed and work with China for their common good.¹³³ He was aware that the splintered Japanese cabinet lacked the capacity to rein in the army, but it remained his best hope for peace. That fall, he wrote a poem on a sheep painting, which laments:

The sheep grows wool just as a silkworm spins out silk.
Cutting it, shearing it—
Come! Can he not refuse!
But whatever remains between his skin and bones—
Seems too little to feed the hungry mass for even a single day!

羊之有毛兮亦如蠶之有絲，翦之伐之，其何所辭！恐皮骨之所餘，曾不足以療一朝之饑也！¹³⁴

In *Zhuangzi*, the utility of things leads to their demise; only the “useless” can survive.¹³⁵ In a reversal of the Zhuangzian doctrine of self-preservation, Wang’s sheep welcomes his utility and sacrifice. Within months, this metaphor of death almost came true.

On November 1, 1935, the Fourth Central Committee of the GMD held its Sixth Plenary Session. Wang Jingwei gave the welcome speech. At about ten o’clock, after the committee members finished taking a group photo in front of the hall, a journalist suddenly pulled out a gun and fired at Wang Jingwei. Wang, hit by three bullets, collapsed to the ground. The assassin was shot by the guards and died in the hospital the next day. He was identified as Sun Fengming 孫鳳鳴 (1905–1935), a veteran of the Nineteenth Route Army and hero of the resistance at Shanghai. Chiang Kai-shek was not present for the group photo, but only emerged after Wang was hit. The distraught Chen Bijun ran up to Chiang and, in distress, accused him of plotting the assassination. Chiang, embarrassed, ordered his spymaster Dai Li 戴笠 (1897–1946) to get to the bottom of things. More than a hundred people were implicated in the investigation, many perhaps innocent.¹³⁶ Chiang turned out to be the original target, but he was saved by intuition: noting the disorderliness of the photo session, he worried about security, retreated to the upstairs lounge, and advised Wang to do the same. Wang found it

inappropriate for both chairmen to be absent, so he joined the session anyway and literally took the bullet for Chiang.¹³⁷

Wang was rushed into the hospital. Of the three bullets, one hit the corner of the left eye, dangerously close to the temple; one hit the left arm; the third bullet stuck precisely between the fourth and the fifth vertebra, luckily slowed by the thick fabric of crossed suspenders and turned upward in the flesh, leaving the vertebra unbroken. It was a miracle that he survived. The doctors, however, failed to remove all bullets. Dr. Noll, at the time on a hunting trip in Xi'an, hurried back and took out the bullet in the head. A second attempt by a Chinese doctor to remove the bullet lodged between the vertebra failed, and Wang was severely impaired by the surgery. Since he developed arrhythmia and a worsening of his diabetes and cirrhosis, Dr. Noll recommended convalescence in German spas.¹³⁸ He left once again for Europe in February.

It was ironic that Wang, an erstwhile patriot who saw terrorism as a legitimate path to save the nation, himself became the target of patriotic assassins. The irony was not lost on him. When the coconspirators went to trial in 1937, he surprisingly petitioned the court to pardon them, citing the need to encourage patriotism. The press lauded his generosity, but the judges dismissed his request, since the cell was involved in a series of plots and attempts, including one at the life of Song Ziwen, who was less forgiving. Six conspirators received prison sentences and three ringleaders, capital punishment.¹³⁹

This incident had side effects. In the aftermath, the Shanghai financial market experienced significant turmoil. Finance minister Kong Xiangxi seized the chance to push through a long-planned currency reform, against Japanese protest.¹⁴⁰ In the afternoon of November 3, Kong announced that all currencies on the market were to be replaced by the *fabi* 法幣, effective the next day. It was the first modern Chinese currency not pegged to silver. It gave Nanjing an essential tool to exert financial control over China's domestic economy, at least until a vicious inflation was triggered by the massive military spending and mismanagement during the civil war. The new currency also created financial pressure on the Japanese army stationed in northern China, which so far had been issuing its own military banknotes. The Japanese army subsequently forbade the local Chinese troops from sending silver to Nanjing. It became an incentive for Doihara to start a series of secret maneuvers to engineer North China autonomy.¹⁴¹

As a result of Wang's incapacitation, Chiang regained dictatorial power. On December 6, 1935, the First Plenary Session of the Sixth GMD

Central Committee was convened. Chiang was formally elected chairman of the Executive Yuan. Though Wang remained chairman of the Central Political Committee, Chiang was the acting deputy chairman. Now Chiang asserted total control over the party, the military, and the executive. He then directed his attention to eliminating the northwestern CCP base.

The Xi'an Incident

On March 31, 1936, Wang arrived at Bad Nauheim, a small spa town in the central German state of Hesse. His arrival was kept secret. No message or photo was released to the press. He and his entourage stayed in Kurhaus Carlton, a palatial building no longer standing today. The original plan had been to stay for four weeks, but the weeks grew into months. In early May, Wang began to receive guests. As a German police report shows, he was visited by Chinese diplomats, including Guo Taiqi and Tang Liangli. The document also mentions that Hitler planned to welcome Wang with a reception after his convalescence.¹⁴²

One reason for Wang to choose Germany was to test the possibility of a grand Sino-German-Japanese anticommunist alliance, through which Germany would mediate the peace between China and Japan. Before his departure, however, Chiang called off the plan, possibly because of his secret negotiations with the USSR.¹⁴³ On May 28, Gu Weijun, Chinese ambassador to France, and Liu Wendao 劉文島 (1893–1967), Chinese ambassador to Italy, visited him in Bad Nauheim. Gu noted in his diary that Wang looked very healthy. The purpose of their visit was to discuss Italy's proposal to relinquish extraterritoriality in China, in exchange for China's support at the League of Nations for ending the sanctions on Italy, imposed after its occupation of Ethiopia. Wang shared Gu's opinion that Great Britain and the United States should first be informed of such a move, and that China must not acknowledge Italy's illegal occupation.¹⁴⁴ Relinquishing Western extraterritoriality had been a priority for the GMD in the last decades. Getting Italy to do so not only would be an important symbolic victory, but could also pressure other powers to follow suit. Nonetheless, Wang and Gu understood the importance of not antagonizing the British and the Americans. In June, Britain took the initiative to lift the sanction.

Before Wang's departure to Europe, he met Hu Hanmin in Hong Kong and asked Hu to join the Nanjing government, so as to keep Chiang's power in check. But Hu had declined, on account of his health.

On May 9, Hu had a stroke; three days later he passed away. The news reached Wang in Bad Nauheim. Twenty-five years earlier, in prison, Wang had written three poems mourning Hu Hanmin's death, which luckily turned out only to be a rumor. He wrote, back then,

馬革平生志 Dying a martyr's death is the resolution of our lives;¹⁴⁵
 君今幸已酬 Lucky, you who have first realized the wish!
 卻憐二人血 What a pity that blood from we two
 不作一時流 Does not flow together into the same stream!¹⁴⁶

This time the news was real. There would not be another chance to repair their friendship, tried and tarnished by rivalry, misunderstanding, and differences in persuasions. The heptasyllabic octave that he wrote this time shows ambivalent sentiments:

劍掛墳頭草不青 As I hang my sword on your grave, grasses turn colorless;
 又將拂拭試新硯 I wipe the blade again to test its new shine.
 紅旗綠柳隨眸見 Everywhere I cast my glance: red banners and green
 willows;
 鳥語笳聲徹耳聽 Chiming in my ears: chirping birds and pipe music.
 松鼠忘機緣散策 Squirrels, oblivious of chicanery, follow my walking
 cane;¹⁴⁷
 天鵝貪餌逐揚舲 Swans, hungry for food, chase raised sails.
 春來萬物熙熙甚 The spring breathes exuberant life into myriad things;
 那識人間戰血腥 Who recognizes in the world of man the stench of battle
 blood?¹⁴⁸

The first line refers to the story of a Warring States diplomat who hung his sword on a friend's grave to keep an unspoken promise.¹⁴⁹ Wang thereby alludes to a wish to hang his "sword" in mourning, even though its aura of killing may turn the grasses on the grave colorless, as if in autumn, the season of cosmic killing. He cannot do so because the world is not yet at peace. The stench of blood from battles hangs in the air: the "red banners" most likely refer to the Nazi flags in Hitler's Germany; the squirrels' innocence and the swans' greed could well cost them their lives. Notably, this poem implicitly responds to Hu Hanmin's poem for Wang in 1910, titled "To Jingwei from Southeast Asia."¹⁵⁰ Not only does it reuses multiple rhyme words in Hu's poem, but it similarly begins with the imagery of spring grasses. Hu wrote his poem to send Wang on a journey of no return to Beijing; and now, Wang bid Hu farewell to step on his own journey of no return.

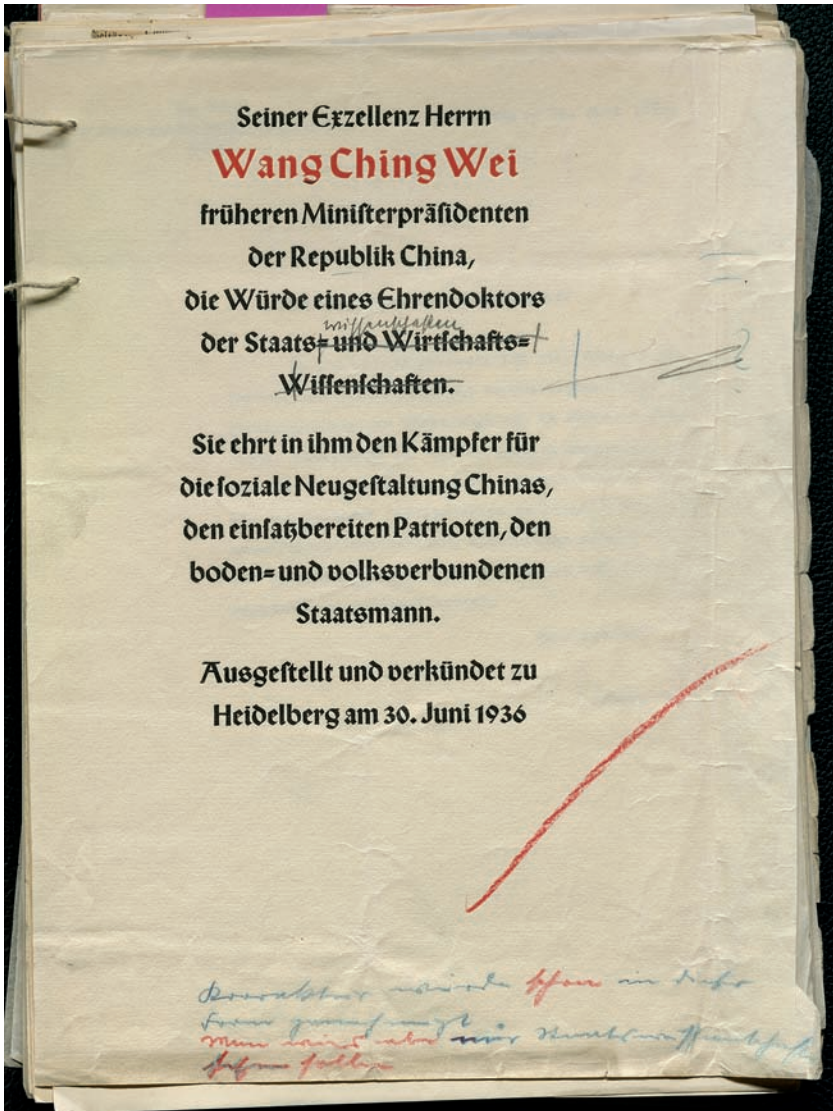


Fig. 13. Wang Jingwei's honorary doctoral certificate from the Heidelberg University. Courtesy of Heidelberg Universitätsarchiv. It states: "To His Excellency Mr. Wang Ching Wei, former prime minister of the Republic of China, the dignity of an honorary doctor of political and economic sciences. It honors in him the fighter for the social reorganization of China, the patriot ready for action, the statesman close to the soil and the people. Issued and proclaimed at Heidelberg on June 30, 1936."

Despite Wang's repeated visits to Germany for health reasons, there did not seem to exist any enduring rapport between him and the Third Reich. The Germans, for their part, had made some attempts. He was awarded an honorary doctoral degree in political economics (*Staatswissenschaften*) by Heidelberg University on June 30 to celebrate its 550th anniversary. But he excused himself from the ceremony and never used the title.¹⁵¹

Not much else is known about his activities in Europe. Toward the end of June, Wang left Bad Nauheim for Carlsbad. In early July, he was found among the guests at Alcron Hotel, Prague.¹⁵² It is unclear whether the visit to Prague was official or private. On November 25, Germany and Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, a pact that could potentially damage the Sino-German military cooperation that was crucial to Chiang. Chinese diplomats closely observed their rapprochement and were actively involved in minimizing its impact on China.¹⁵³ There was a rumor, spread by the Soviet paper *Pravda*, that Wang had a highly secretive meeting with Hitler in Berlin to discuss the possibility of China joining the Axis, in exchange for Germany's substantial expansion of its aid to China.¹⁵⁴ But when Oskar P. Trautmann (1877–1950), German ambassador in Nanjing, inquired on January 12, 1937, about the veracity of the rumor, he received a definite no for an answer from Berlin. To the knowledge of the German Foreign Office, Wang Jingwei “never sought an audience with the Führer, and there was in any case never a reception.”¹⁵⁵ Given that Hitler had extended an invitation to Wang upon his arrival in Bad Nauheim, most likely Wang never responded to the invitation, possibly because, unlike Chiang Kai-shek, Wang did not admire Hitler. Soon after his return from Germany, he publicly expressed his distaste for German and Italian fascism, as it contravened his democratic principles.¹⁵⁶ Another reason might be his Francophilia. In March 1936, Nazi Germany began to remilitarize the Rhineland, a move that gravely compromised France's sense of security. Nevertheless, given his wish for Germany's mediation of the Sino-Japanese conflict, neither factor should have prohibited him from meeting Hitler. The exact reason remains unclear.

This time, it was the Xi'an Incident that brought Wang back to China. On December 12, 1936, when Chiang was inspecting the troops at Xi'an to prepare for the final onslaught against the communist base in Yan'an, Zhang Xueliang and General Yang Hucheng 楊虎城 (1893–1949) held him hostage, demanding a stop to the civil war and a united front of resistance. Chiang's captivity sent a seismic quake across the globe.

The GMD leadership was divided on how to deal with the mutiny. Wu Zhihui and General He Yingqin insisted on continuing the anticommunist campaign, while Madame Chiang, Song Ziwen, and Kong Xiangxi worried that it would endanger Chiang Kai-shek's life. The global press rumored his murder.¹⁵⁷ Again, contrary to the speculation that Wang was returning to China to seize power, it was the GMD Central Executive Committee that promptly informed Wang of Chiang's captivity and requested his immediate return. He left Germany the next day and was already in the French coastal city of Cannes by noon. The following few days, however, his pace slowed. Wang was informed (or misinformed) that the kidnapping was only blackmail and not political. The Chinese ambassadors in Europe requested Wang, China's best-known leader after Chiang, to issue a statement to reassure the world that China would not descend into anarchy. He thus drafted a statement, its content approved by Nanjing, to be published in English and in French. In essence it insisted on the importance of continuing the anticommunist campaign and underlined China's capacity to do so without external aid. It refuted a Russian *Pravda* editorial, which charged Wang and Zhang Xueliang of conspiring with Japan.¹⁵⁸ The Chinese ambassador to Moscow, Jiang Tingfu 蔣廷黻 (1895–1965), opined that the Soviets were trying to exploit the incident to prevent another comeback by Wang, since the escalation of the Sino-Japanese conflict into a total war would reduce the likelihood of Japan's northward attack on the Soviets.¹⁵⁹ This implies that the Soviets opposed Wang precisely because he might prevent a war through diplomacy and appeasement.

Wang, however, did not publish the statement because he received news on December 18 that an envoy from Chiang had arrived at Nanjing to halt any military action.¹⁶⁰ On December 21, Madame Chiang flew to Xi'an in person on a risky mission to rescue her husband. The next day, Wang departed from Genoa, issuing a farewell statement that freeing the Generalissimo was his first objective.¹⁶¹ He insisted on the priority of anticommunism, but he was aware of the necessity of Chiang's leadership under current circumstances. When the incident was resolved on December 25, with Chiang pledging to build a united front, Wang was about to pass through the Suez Canal. Via Singapore and Hong Kong, he finally arrived in Shanghai on January 14 and returned to Nanjing three days later. Zhou Fohai 周佛海 (1897–1948), a rising theorist in the GMD and another key player in the future "peace movement," was among the official envoys who went to welcome him in Hong Kong.

Zhou was a founding member of the CCP. He had studied economics

in Japan and was fluent in Japanese. In 1924 he returned from Japan, left the CCP, and joined the GMD. His brilliant treatise on the theoretical system of the Three Principles of the People was well appreciated by Chiang Kai-shek,¹⁶² whose close coterie Zhou aspired to enter. A medium-built, plain, bespectacled technocrat who looked like a middle-school teacher, Zhou was an avid fan of Peking Opera and Hollywood films, with a confessed weakness for alcohol and women. It was the first time that he had an extended conversation with Wang Jingwei. Zhou must have informed him of the internal debates among GMD ranking members on the pros and cons of an alliance with the communists. As Zhou recorded in his diary,¹⁶³ the best scenario would be that Japan did not dare make a rash move on China if all forces would indeed unite in national defense and if the USSR was sincerely committed to aiding China. The worst scenario, however, would be a preemptive strike by Japan, with the Japanese occupying China's most important coastal cities, while the Soviets, wary of being dragged into a war on the eastern front, refrained from military intervention. Zhou's premonition would become a crucial factor in his pursuit of a peaceful solution to the war.

Upon his arrival in Shanghai, Wang restated the same points delivered in Geneva and Singapore to the press, declaring that the most urgent task for China was to save itself from decline, and this relied on strengthening "the power of the people," both spiritually and materially. In Geneva, he had spoken of the Xi'an Incident as potentially destroying the gains so far made in nation-building. In Singapore, he had insisted that the government's strategy should not change because of a coup.¹⁶⁴ In short, Wang perilously positioned himself against the opinion of a patriotic public. He defended his position in a series of speeches, arguing that the CCP would be a Trojan horse within the GMD, that its slogan of "united resistance" only bred separatism, and that working together was to "quench thirst by drinking poison."¹⁶⁵ His return was enthusiastically welcomed by party members, who found his presence and consistency reassuring.¹⁶⁶ As Chen Kewen 陳克文 (1898–1986), a mid-level civil servant, recorded in his diary, after Wang gave his impassioned speeches, "The cloud of confusion and depression since the Xi'an Incident has suddenly lifted."¹⁶⁷

On February 15, on the Third Plenary Session of the Fifth GMD Central Committee, the Second United Front was approved. The Red Army would be renamed and put itself under Nanjing's leadership, a subjugation that proved to be nominal. Though Wang Jingwei contin-

ued to dissent from the United Front, he won significant support among party elders and drafted the final statement of the plenary session, which reaffirmed the points that Wang had made in Shanghai and in Nanjing. It reasserted the importance of preventing a communist takeover. As for foreign policy, it read: “As long as peace [with Japan] is not entirely hopeless, we shall never give up on peace; unless the nation comes to the critical juncture when sacrifice is absolutely necessary, we shall exert the uttermost effort to sustain peace while cherishing the resolve to make self-sacrifice and the final sacrifice.” In short, “The resolve to sacrifice and the hope for peace are not in contradiction.” It also reaffirmed the government’s policy in the last few years as the only path toward international coexistence and toward domestic peace and unification.¹⁶⁸ As Matsumoto noted, this statement was a public demonstration that Wang’s influence in the party remained strong.¹⁶⁹ Wang was reelected chairman of the Standing Committee. The resolution of this plenary session demanded the CCP accept the Three Principles of the People, a condition that could potentially break the United Front. Ultimately, Mao Zedong made the call. At the May 2 party congress, using historical dialecticism, Mao argued that the Three Principles were not unchanging and were necessary at the current stage of the anti-Japanese resistance.¹⁷⁰ The Second United Front was built.

Ironically, five years earlier Wang had demanded Zhang Xueliang’s resignation to apologize to the Chinese people for nonresistance. Now, in a strange twist of fate, he became the face of appeasement, while Zhang was under house arrest for patriotic disobedience.

Patriotism surged among the public after the Xi’an Incident. Domestic media daily demanded government action. Now Wang was assigned the task of implementing the new policy of the United Front, a task that he neither believed in nor knew how to carry out. Two quatrains written in early June on his trip to Hangzhou betrayed his sentiments. They were on the Fishing Terrace commemorating the famous Eastern Han recluse Yan Guang 嚴光 (39 BCE–41CE), who resisted the emperor’s call to service:¹⁷¹

盛時出處自從容	Men living in prosperous times may choose to serve or to retreat;
留得高臺有釣蹤	A high terrace bears the trace of your holding a fishing rod.
卻憶山川重秀日	I think of the day when the Kingdom of Yue recovered its lost glory;

鷓夷一棹五湖東 The day when Fan Li sailed away, to the east of the Five
Lakes.

苔蘚侵尋蝕舊碑 Mosses crawl inch by inch, eroding an ancient stele;
江山風雨助淒其 The landscape besieged by wind and rain deepens my
sorrow.

新亭收淚猶能及 We may still spare shedding tears at the New Pavilion,
莫待西臺慟哭時 And wait not for mourning on the Western Terrace.

Wang longs for better times when political service was a matter of personal choice, which made Yan Guang's lofty detachment possible. Fan Li 范蠡 (536–448 BCE) helped the king of Yue to recover the land once conquered by the kingdom of Wu and then retired. He sailed onto the Five Lakes and assumed the alias Chiyi Zipi 鷓夷子皮, or “the leather bag” (used for floating). This name commemorated Wu Zixu 伍子胥 (d. 484 BCE), a minister of Wu who advised his king not to be deceived by the king of Yue. The king of Wu ignored his advice and had his skin made into a leather bag.¹⁷² While in the first quatrain Wang ponders his own choice, in the second quatrain he thinks of China's fate. The “New Pavilion” allusion also appears in the “Hundred Words Song” (1934) cited earlier. The Western Terrace was where, after the fall of the Southern Song, a loyalist mourned the martyred prime minister Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236–1283), who was captured and killed by the Mongols. Wang, China's premier, swears to do his best to prevent the nation's total downfall.

In hindsight, Wang's implicit self-comparison to Fan Li has another layer of meaning. Yue recovered its lost land because Fan Li advised its king to endure the humiliation and serve the conqueror, while quietly building its power before finally defeating Wu. One year later, this became the precise strategy that the French ambassador Henri Cosme (1885–1952) advised. In 1938, before the fall of Wuhan, Cosme urged the Chinese government to negotiate with Japan. He cited the historical experience of France after losing the war with Prussia in 1870. Then, France had wanted revenge, but it had no capacity to achieve it. It eventually took four decades for France to vanquish the old enemy in 1918. The implication was that China should similarly bide its time.¹⁷³ In this sense, Wang's appeasement, and perhaps even his later collaboration, might have been inspired by Yue's strategy. One month after the poems were written, on July 7, 1937, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident broke out.

The Marco Polo Bridge Incident

The Marco Polo Bridge Incident happened a mere month after a reluctant Prince Konoe Fumimaro, whose path had crossed Wang's in Paris in 1919, took over the helm as prime minister of Japan. Handsome, eloquent, elegant in bearing and polished in manners, he was in many aspects an aristocratic and more cynical version of Wang Jingwei. Both cultivated an open-mindedness to opinions, were prone to deliberate, and consequently were often irresolute. Both enjoyed the high opinions (or overestimations) of their contemporaries and were pushed into positions of leadership. Both, perhaps, were aware that these were not their times. And despite Konoe's idealist promulgation of racial equality, he also believed that it was only natural for China to sacrifice the sparsely populated Manchuria for the sake of Japan's social and industrial needs, a belief that made him a prestigious ally for the hawkish military. His lack of strength in character soon proved fatal for both nations.¹⁷⁴

During the night of July 7, a skirmish broke out between a local Chinese garrison and the Japanese army, which had been stationed outside of Beiping based on an agreement with the Qing Dynasty after suppressing the Boxer Rebellion in 1901. Despite de-escalation efforts by commanders on both sides, the provocations continued. Probably emboldened by his German military adviser, General Alexander von Falkenhausen (1878–1966), who offered an optimistic evaluation of China's military capacity, Chiang ordered his best German-trained divisions to cross the Yellow River and venture deeply into the area of North China that the Tanggu Truce had preserved as a demilitarized zone. Further miscommunication led Tokyo to preemptively demand on July 17 that China stop sending troops north and recognize the puppet government that Doihara had engineered. Konoe, assured by the military high command that the Chinese problem could be “solved in three months,” felt compelled to go along, lest his cabinet fall. On July 27, he announced in the Diet that his government must now create a “new order” in East Asia.¹⁷⁵ By that, however, he probably did not mean a total war with China, but a solution of the incident through negotiations on the assumption of Japan's quick and overwhelming victory. By the end of the month, the ancient capital Beiping and its sister city Tianjin fell into Japanese hands. As neither side had officially declared war, few realized a total war had just broken out.¹⁷⁶

In mid-June, government offices in Nanjing entered their annual

summer recess. All GMD top leaders, from Chiang and Wang down, gathered on Mount Lu, a scenic resort featuring cliffs, clouds, and summer villas in northern Jiangxi, south of the Yangtze. Though Chiang went to Mount Lu every summer, it was the first time that virtually the whole central government was there. Analysts suspected it to be an exercise of moving the government inland in case of a total war.¹⁷⁷ Dozens of the nation's top intellectuals were invited to convene on Mt. Lu to discuss strategies for dealing with Japan's ambition. The forum was planned to begin on July 15, and it was to last for twenty-seven days, divided into three phases. The bridge incident, however, caught them by surprise. Unlike Manchuria, Beijing had been the nation's capital for centuries. The shockwave gave the meeting a new sense of urgency. When the forum, chaired by Wang, finally opened on July 16, there was much speculation about whether it was yet another regional conflict or a harbinger of full-scale warfare. The media demanded the government take a resolute stance of resistance. To end the agitated confusion and perhaps his own indecision,¹⁷⁸ Chiang gave a solemn speech on July 17, announcing that if the incident could not be peacefully solved, China would have to confront the "critical juncture" of national survival and take up the option of military opposition; if the war were to start, every single individual Chinese from every patch of the land and every walk of life would have to sacrifice everything to defend the nation.¹⁷⁹

Chiang's "Mount Lu Speech" is now generally regarded as the declaration of China's final resolution of resistance. Contemporaneous observers, however, did not take Chiang's public stance too literally. Tao Xisheng 陶希聖 (1899–1988), a Peking University professor of law, was among the invitees. He recollected that, after the speech, people gathered in Hu Shi's room to discuss whether a peace option was still on the table. Chiang left the mountain on July 20, leaving Wang to chair the conference. The discussion continued after they came back to Nanjing and set up a National Defense Conference in mid-August.¹⁸⁰ It was the first time that Tao made acquaintance with Wang Jingwei. A "peace faction," consisting mainly of civil officials and intellectuals, began to take shape around Wang, a group that preferred diplomatic solutions to costly and possibly ineffective military actions.

In this period, both Chiang and Wang in open speeches called for resistance, while both harbored the hope for a peaceful solution. Their emphases, however, differed. On July 29, Wang Jingwei gave a radio speech, "The Critical Juncture," at Nanjing, its title corresponding to Chiang's slogan. He similarly declared that, after repeated concession

and retreat, the critical juncture had come for China to finally rise up against Japan. It would be a cruel resistance, since a weak nation had no other means than proffering every citizen's life and scorching every inch of land. Resolute though it sounded, toward the end, Wang's speech took a somewhat ironic turn. He declared: "The so-called resistance demands sacrificing the whole land and the whole nation to resist the invader. If there is no weakness in the world, then there is also no strength. Once we are complete in the sacrifice, we also realize the purpose of resistance. We hail 'the critical juncture'! We hail 'sacrifice'!"¹⁸¹ It almost sounded satirical. He appeared to doubt the meaning of total sacrifice and could not keep the question to himself. His pessimism did not go unnoticed.

The hope for containment was crushed by Japan's continuous advance. On August 13, the Battle of Shanghai broke out. General Matsui Iwane 松井石根 (1878–1946), a Sinophile and Asianist, adopted an aggressive strategy, guided by the belief that Japan ought to take Shanghai and Nanjing to bring China to its knees. Upon his insistence, troop reinforcement was approved at the end of August.¹⁸² It marked an important, though unpremeditated, change in Japan's attitude from regional provocation to total war with China. Major cities in the Lower Yangtze region, including Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Nanchang, were all under Japanese air-raid threat. A week later, the Sino-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact was signed. But the war was still undeclared, which left some room, however narrow, for diplomacy and wishful thinking.

The Battle of Shanghai was the first major urban engagement of the Second World War. Unlike in North China, where the Nationalist government's control was weak and the Japanese invasion met little resistance, here the resistance was fierce and popular. The war was fought alley to alley and house to house. Chiang Kai-shek's elite troops were committed to the battle and suffered terrible losses. The Western press's sympathetic coverage of Chinese resistance, its heroism in full sensational display on the doorsteps of the foreign concessions, did not, however, change the West's determination to avoid a dispute with Japan, a new world power. China would be fighting alone in the next four years, flesh against steel.

On November 12, Shanghai fell. Chiang's great gamble resulted in an estimated 187,200 casualties among Chinese soldiers, including some thirty thousand of the officers expensively equipped and trained by German standards. The Japanese casualties were estimated to be a third or a half of the Chinese, still enough to make it their deadliest single battle so far.¹⁸³ The heavily wounded Japanese Imperial Army and Navy, long convinced of their invincibility, were seized by revengeful bloodthirst.

The army advanced quickly from Shanghai to Nanjing, leaving a trail of murder, rape, arson, and plunder through China's heartland. Knowing that the fall of Nanjing was only a matter of time, the central government announced on November 20 that it would relocate to Chongqing, a city upstream on the Yangtze defended by impenetrable cliffs. The preparation of Chongqing as a reserve capital had already begun in 1935. The midway station was Hankou. To save elite troops for the future, while also saving face, Nanjing was left for General Tang Shengzhi 唐生智 (1889–1970) and his one hundred thousand largely untrained soldiers to defend. It fell on December 13. Despite the victory, Japan's optimistic hopes of ending the China Incident in three months were shattered. Frustration found perverse catharsis in horror.¹⁸⁴ Like Auschwitz, the atrocious war crimes known as the Rape of Nanjing weigh on the conscience of humanity as a moral question.

A mass exodus from the coastal provinces to the hinterland began. People left by boats, trains, buses, rickshaws, and wheelbarrows. Universities, factories, and common households were relocated halfway across China, piece by piece, mile by mile. The nation was resolved to continue resisting, in the remotest mountains and deserts if necessary. In Sichuan alone some 9.2 million refugees were officially registered with government relief agencies during the wartime years.¹⁸⁵ Chiang Kai-shek, after bidding farewell to Sun Yat-sen's mausoleum, flew out to Mount Lu with Song Meiling. The Second Couple chose a more plebian route: like most refugees, the Wang family traveled upriver along the Yangtze. On November 21, they reluctantly left Nanjing, abandoning a newly renovated suburban home and books collected over three decades.

Coincidentally, the ship that escorted Wang Jingwei from Nanjing to Wuhan was none other than SS *Yongsui* 永綏, the former SS *Zhongshan* that escorted Sun Yat-sen to safety and witnessed Wang's downfall from the pinnacle of power.¹⁸⁶ Ironically, its new name, *sui*, means "peace," while the compound word *suijing* 綏靖 is the official term for the policy of appeasement. It was rich with symbolism that Wang should be carried away from Nanjing by a ship named "Eternal Peace." This name foreshadowed his eventual return to the city as champion of a "peace movement."

3 | The “Traitor”

Wang Jingwei’s escape from Chongqing in December 1938 to eventually collaborate with Japan was one of the most dramatic events in modern Chinese history. In memoirs, popular histories, and academic writing, sensationalism and moralism abound. The actual story, however, had few, if any, defining moments of heroism or villainy. Wang was neither the “shameless traitor” nor the “resolute martyr” that his detractors or defenders alternatively portrayed him to be. Many actors with varying stakes in the enterprise of collaboration drove him to make the decision, an extremely difficult one that slowly cemented over months. Even after that his defection became a *fait accompli*, his ultimate course of action was guided by many choices at crossroads. Gradually, the anguish over the unfolding consequences ate Wang from within, reducing him to a shadow of the man he had once been. The intense psychosomatic torment likely precipitated his premature death, which, in addition to the decisions made by his reluctant successor, Chen Gongbo, sealed the downfall of the RNG and its cast of complicated characters.

As historian Timothy Brook points out, the term “collaboration” took on its negative connotation due to the rather modern idea “that an individual could collaborate with a nation.”¹ The crime of wartime collaboration is existentialist, as it first of all violates the imperative of absolute loyalty to one’s nation, and second deflates the myth of united resistance. The irony, however, is that Wang’s and his followers’ statements throughout the period of collaboration remained nationalistic. They fundamentally agreed that a person’s existential worth derives from loyalty to the nation. But they also advocated the idea of collaboration *as* resistance, which saw peace with Japan as a means to save both nations, including Japan from its worst self. But in the postwar trials, many of the

same collaborators would assert instead that their collaboration was tactical, a kind of resistance *through* collaboration. They contended that they worked with the enemy only to undermine the latter's war efforts from within. Unsympathetic judges, from those presiding over the treason trials to Chinese historians today, dismiss their apologies as self-serving. And yet, possibly, motivations were mixed, and all defenses and charges were simultaneously true, to an extent.

A Narrow Path to the Deep South

After the Mount Lu Forum, Hu Shi and Tao Xisheng could no longer return to Beijing, now under Japanese occupation. They went with the government to Nanjing. Starting mid-August, Japanese bombers began raiding Nanjing. The air force, a novel weapon of mass destruction, brought doom from the sky to a mystified and awed Chinese citizenry, most of whom were seeing airborne machines for the first time. By engaging the expensive air force on a target that was not in its immediate interest to take, Japan was showing off its world-class military power, a tactic of psychological warfare on the Chinese government and people. Since Zhou Fohai's villa at Xiliuwan 西流灣 had a fortified cellar that could double as an air-raid shelter, a group of like-minded intellectuals and civil servants sought refuge there. They preferred a peaceful solution to the conflict, subscribing to the doctrine of trading space for time, namely building China's industrial and military strength before its final confrontation with Japan. Tao Xisheng and Mei Siping 梅思平 (1896–1946), old friends of Zhou Fohai's, lived in his house. Another frequent guest was Luo Junqiang 羅君強 (1902–1970), an ex-communist. The former CCP leader Chen Duxiu, newly released from prison, joined their gatherings a few times.² The house of Gao Zongwu was another meeting place. Hu Shi, himself a guest, jokingly named this group the “Low-Key Club” (*Didiao julebu* 低調俱樂部), a nomenclature that emphasized their defiant pragmatism in deliberate dissension to the high-key rhetoric of all-out resistance, demanded of the government by a patriotic public and media.³ Many members of this group would become central players in a conspiracy to be known as the “peace movement,” with Wang Jingwei as its leader and poster figure.⁴

As Gerald Bunker summarizes, the peace scheme was originated “not by Wang but by certain associates of Chiang, certain elements in Japanese military intelligence, and certain members of ‘liberal’ Japanese political circles” with connections to Konoe himself.⁵ Zhou

Fohai was a member of the Chiang-loyalist CC faction, named after their leaders Chen Guofu 陳果夫 (1892–1951) and Chen Lifu 陳立夫 (1900–2001). Zhou strongly believed, however, that under current circumstances resistance was suicidal. He sought to influence Chiang through people surrounding him, including through Wang Jingwei. He found Chiang impervious but Wang impressionable. He began to frequent Wang's salon.⁶ Gao Zongwu, head of the Asian Department in the Foreign Ministry, felt in particular sidelined by Chiang's no-negotiation policy. Their common impression was that Chiang was willing to talk, but was afraid of Japan's steep price, which could include Chiang's leadership. They were disappointed by the perceived absence of a far-sighted plan for the war, except for the resolution to sacrifice.⁷ Their consensus was that the longer it took to reach a deal, the worse the terms would be, as China kept losing on the battlefield; that the war was fought not for China but for Soviet Russia, and not for the GMD but for the CCP.⁸ The subsequent fall of Shanghai and then of Nanjing only vindicated their pessimism. Chiang's autocratic fashion of decision-making increased their dissatisfaction. They feared that China was falling again to a foreign invader, a modern conquest from which it might not be able to recover.⁹

Wang became the center toward whom these disaffected individuals gravitated, for his pacifist preference, intellectual disposition, and consensus-seeking leadership style. Later, after the exiled national government was relocated to Hankou, he would provide guidance to the Literature and Art Research Society (*Yiwen yanjiu hui* 藝文研究會), a propagandist organ led by Zhou Fohai and Tao Xisheng. Its purpose was to guide public opinion on issues like the war of resistance and anticommunism. In particular, it was instructed to promote the opinion that the government must be able to retain both peace and war as options. Many thought it to be Wang's private organ; in actual fact, Chiang financed its activities.¹⁰ At least through much of 1938, Chiang's belligerent rhetoric of resistance and Wang's reconciliatory gesture of peace were two sides of the GMD strategy. Of the various regional branches of this society, the Hong Kong branch prospered under the direction of Mei Siping and Lin Baisheng. Aside from editing *South China Daily News*, Lin also founded the publishing house Azure Books (*Weilan shudian* 蔚藍書店) and the International Compilation and Translation Society (*Guoji bianyi she* 國際編譯社) as their major propagandist organs.¹¹ Ironic enough, Mei Siping was a coming-of-age radical himself. During the 1919 student protest, he had been among the patriotic students who set the house

of the deputy foreign minister on fire, accusing the latter of selling the nation to Japan.

Wang Jingwei also actively engaged in the international efforts to broker a peace deal between Japan and China, the best-known one being the German ambassador Trautmann's mediation. Since the outbreak of the war, various Western powers entertained the idea of playing middleman. All talks, however, came to naught. Nazi Germany eventually emerged as China's likeliest friend because it was Japan's ally in an anti-Soviet partnership. For its own interests, Germany did not like to see Japan squandering its might in China or China compelled to seek aid from the Soviets. On Japan's side, the prolongation of the war and China's unexpected strength in resistance made a swift conclusion through diplomacy an increasingly appealing option. Ambassador Trautmann thus met Wang Jingwei multiple times from October 31 to early November 1937, to confirm China's wish for peace before proceeding to negotiate with the Japanese. The deal that Trautmann brought to Chiang Kai-shek on November 5 contained the following conditions: autonomy of Inner Mongolia; expansion of the demilitarized zone in North China; expansion of the cease-fire zone around Shanghai; bringing a stop to anti-Japanese movements; construction of an anticommunism alliance; the lowering of tariffs on Japanese goods; and respecting foreigners' rights in China. Though Japan did not make explicit territorial claims, there was a wide gap between these terms and Chiang's demand to restore the status quo before the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. With the fall of Shanghai, however, Chiang became less insistent. On December 5, the fifty-fourth meeting of the National Defense Conference was held at Hankou and it was agreed to begin peace negotiations based on Trautmann's deal. The meeting was chaired by Wang Jingwei; Chiang approved its decision.¹² But it was too late: the fall of Nanjing on December 13 significantly raised the bar. The next day, a client regime provisional government was founded in Beiping, led by Wang Kemin 王克敏 (1876–1945), a former Beiyang bureaucrat. It signaled Japan's increasing support of separatism in China's heartlands. On December 24, an emboldened Japanese government gave the ultimatum for a much harsher new deal to be approved swiftly by January 10. As a gesture of apology, Chiang resigned as chairman of the Executive Yuan on January 1, 1938, and was succeeded by his in-law Kong Xiangxi. Chiang declared that death in failure was preferable to death in disgrace, refusing to concede under coercion. The Konoe

Cabinet thus announced, on January 16, that Japan would never negotiate with Chiang Kai-shek. Trautmann's mediation had failed.¹³

Konoe's announcement was a serious faux pas, as it made mediation between the two nations engaged in a deadly, no-win situation much more difficult. Secret contacts through multiple channels between the two governments, however, continued, sometimes under the directive of their government leaders, sometimes initiated by a cast of dubious actors of official or quasi-official distinction. Many such covert attempts were directed by Chiang himself.¹⁴ Wang in late 1937 also sent Chen Gongbo to Rome to evaluate the chance of an Italian mediation between China and Japan. After meeting Mussolini and Foreign Minister Ciano, however, Chen concluded that Italy did not have genuine goodwill toward China and was siding with Japan. His conversations with other leaders of Western democracies (Belgium, France, Britain, and the United States) were equally futile.¹⁵ Zhou Fohai and Chen Kewen both noted in their diaries the mood of pessimism permeating ranks of the national government in Hankou and then in Chongqing. Though few dared to openly champion negotiating with Japan, many trumpeted the tune that China was about to fall, while secretly entertaining the hope that someone would start peace talks soon. Gao Zongwu's mission was born in this nervous atmosphere.

Since the Konoe Cabinet refused to negotiate with Chiang, many considered Wang the best candidate for a diplomatic solution. Still, Wang sustained an impression of loyalty to Chiang and to his policy. The Italian ambassador came to Wuhan to express willingness to mediate between Wang and the Japanese government, an offer that Wang declined. The daughter of Tang Shaoyi also came to Wuhan to forward the Japanese government's intention of negotiating with Wang and was similarly turned away. Even Chen Bijun, now in Hong Kong, asked Wang to join her and to start the peace negotiations. Wang again demurred. Tao Xisheng recollected that, in a quiet night after dinner, Wang confided to him: "This time I will cooperate with Mr. Chiang till the very end, regardless how the war develops."¹⁶ His position remained unchanged when Gao Zongwu brought the news that the Imperial Japanese Army General Staff Office would like him to head the peace talks.

Gao Zongwu's deal was brokered by Dong Daoning 董道寧 (1902–?), head of the Japan Affairs Section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Two days after the Konoe statement, Dong went to Shanghai to meet Nishi Yoshiaki 西義顯 (1878–1941), representative of Mantetsu (South

Manchuria Railway), and Matsumoto Shigeharu, a Dōmei Tsushin (Federated News Agency) journalist. Nishi and Matsumoto then introduced Dong to Kagesa Sadaaki 影佐禎昭 (1893–1948), head of the Strategy and Tactics Department in the General Staff Office. In turn, Kagesa introduced Dong to the deputy director, General Tada Hayao 多田駿 (1882–1948), as well as to his colleagues Ishiwara Kanji 石原莞爾 (1889–1949) and Imai Takeo 今井武夫 (1898–1982), who concurred that a peaceful solution to the unfortunate “China incident” was in Japan’s interests.

It would be wrong to characterize the cast of Japanese characters as “pacifists.” Ishiwara, for instance, had engineered Manchukuo, but he saw further inroads into China as a threat to Japan’s risky gains. They suggested that Chiang temporarily resign, so that Konoe did not have to take back his pronouncement of never negotiating with Chiang, and let Wang lead the negotiation instead. In short, the purpose of this elaborate scheme was to save face for Konoe. Dong returned to Hong Kong and handed the letter to Gao Zongwu, who had been stationed there since February under Chiang’s directive to preside over intelligence and communication with Japan. Luo Junqiang, who acted as Gao’s handler, testified that Gao was given USD 2,000 per month from Chiang’s secret military fund.¹⁷ Gao came back to Hankou twice, on April 2 and May 30. The second time, he personally brought Japan’s conditions to Chiang.¹⁸ Gao later admitted that Chiang never gave him precise instructions, but encouraged the impression of tacit approval. At no point did Gao consider the deal that he brokered to be a betrayal of Chiang.¹⁹ In any case, as long as Chiang’s control of the military forces was not challenged, Wang’s leadership could only be titular and temporary. Wang did not seem to know that Gao Zongwu was personally in Hankou or his connection to Chiang. He received the report only through Zhou Fohai. Shocked, he promptly handed it to Chiang Kai-shek. He confided to Tao Xisheng: “It is impossible that I brokered peace alone with Japan. I will never deceive Mr. Chiang.”²⁰ Given that Tao would later leave the Wang camp to rejoin Chiang’s entourage, his recollection here can be considered faithful.

A mere two months later, however, Wang abandoned Chongqing to seek a peace deal. One possible factor could have been the continuous lobbying by Zhou, Gao, Mei, Tao, and most importantly, his wife Chen Bijun. Luo Junqiang recollected that, because of Kong Xiangxi’s protest that Gao acted without his knowledge, Chiang ordered Gao to stop his secret activities, an order that Gao defied.²¹ Instead he and Mei Siping

continued to seek a deal. Gao secretly spent three weeks in Japan in July and had extensive meetings with Kagesa and Imai. The result was the first serious articulation of the Wang peace movement as a joint Sino-Japanese plot to end the "China incident."²² On November 26, Mei flew from Hong Kong to Chongqing. He brought a draft of Japan's conditions and Konoe's planned announcement. This agreement stated that the Japanese army was to completely withdraw from China within two years, once peace was reached. Its conditions, however, included that China formally recognize Manchukuo. Wang was to leave Chongqing to Kunming by December 5 and then to Hanoi. Once the Japanese government received the telegram of his arrival at Hanoi, it was to publish the "peace conditions."²³ This critical moment apparently threw Wang into excruciating agony. Daily Zhou went to Wang's house, and daily Wang deferred a decision, much to Zhou's exasperation.²⁴ Ultimately, it seemed that Chen Bijun made the final judgment on Wang's behalf.²⁵ On this matter, just as on many occasions of the past, Wang became the victim of an idealized image of himself that he cultivated. In the eyes of his family, followers, and believers, he was a larger-than-life figure. They overestimated his character and capacities, obligating him to pursue a mission impossible to accomplish but too momentous to fail.

But Wang's decision was not entirely involuntary. As Imai Takeo points out, fundamentally, he disagreed with Chiang's tactics of resistance.²⁶ The "scorched-earth resistance" strategy inflicted great suffering on the Chinese people. Three instances stood out. One was the 1938 Yellow River flood created by the army in defense, which, under Chiang's secret directive, destroyed a dike in an attempt to stop Japan's advance. The flood, as well as the epidemics and starvation that resulted from it, kept nearly two million acres of good farmland out of dependable production until 1947, created four million refugees, and killed as many as nine hundred thousand people.²⁷ Despite the horrendous suffering it unleashed, the ploy failed. The flooding did not prevent the Japanese troops from advancing toward Wuhan by going upstream along the Yangtze River. Wuhan fell in October.²⁸ In October, Japan began to attack Guangzhou and occupied the city without encountering much resistance. The defenders, however, set the city on fire before evacuation. Since Guangzhou was his hometown, Wang was deeply distressed and disturbed.²⁹ The third instance was the Changsha fire that broke out in the wee hours of November 13. Almost thirty thousand people lost their lives, and over 90 percent of this ancient city was wiped out, earning it a tragic distinction as one of the most destroyed cities of the Second World War.³⁰ Wang began to risk

open dissent with Chiang on the defense strategy, especially its reckless execution that at times caused wanton destruction and unconscionable cruelty. In late November, he made consecutive speeches to advocate his thoughts on the war. He argued that “guerrilla warfare” was a harassment to the locals and wasted the nation’s own power that could be reserved for a future counterstrike.³¹ Resistance relied on people’s support. If the national leaders squandered it, people in the occupied areas would find the war effort pointless. Moreover, a prosperous city, even if left occupied, would be important for China’s postwar reconstruction. He asked the soldiers to exercise individual judgment and listen to their reason.³² He attributed the human toll of the guerrilla tactics mainly to the communists, but since Chiang’s German adviser, General von Falkenhausen, was now advising him to switch tactics from conventional troops to small-unit mobile warfare,³³ Wang appeared to be criticizing Chiang’s military decisions—a perilous kind of intervention that he had so far eschewed. Apparently, if resistance meant calling for the nation’s total sacrifice, Wang was not ready to make that call. As Margherita Zanasi argues, Wang Jingwei and Chen Gongbo had long shared a vision of an anti-imperialist “national economy.” They believed that China had not successfully completed economic nation-building “and thus lacked the highest form of power (the power of a modern nation).” This conviction motivated them to compromise with the enemy to save the national economy.³⁴

As historian Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley argues, “Chiang’s willingness to bring about a major flood in order to slow the Japanese advance may have derived in part from his conflation of the people’s livelihood and national defense.”³⁵ Individual human lives were subsumed under the nation writ large. Such an understanding of total war was indeed modern, a tactic possible only in the era of nationalism. Chiang’s stoicism, even cruelty, was perhaps necessary for China to hold out through these eight long years of resistance, mostly alone. Wang Jingwei, however, deemed such excessive and reckless sacrifice unacceptable, since a nation could not exist without its individual nationals. His argument reflected the humanist disposition that he had articulated during his earlier French sojourn. His compassion now became a liability in an all-out war of resistance.

Wang and Zhou also feared that resistance would empower the communists and that true international assistance would not materialize, at least not in time. When Nazi Germany occupied Czechoslovakia, Wang had a flash of hope that an antifascist democratic union could be formed. The signing of the Munich Agreement, however, disappointed

him.³⁶ Given the dualistic nature of Western democratic powers being imperialists, he saw little chance that they would risk their relation with another imperialist power (Japan) for China’s sake. This opinion was cemented by Zhou Fohai and other Japan specialists who had recently joined Wang’s coterie. They argued that, save a dramatic change in the international situation, China would fall.³⁷ Their prediction was not proven wrong until Pearl Harbor.

Ultimately, Wang was yearning for action. He had been marginalized since the relocation of the government to Wuhan. During the GMD Provisional National Congress held in Hankou from March 29 to April 1, it was decided that the GMD would return to the authoritarian general director (*zongcai* 總裁) system, centralizing power in the hands of Chiang Kai-shek. Though the Provisional Congress also established a People’s Political Council (*Guomin canzhenghui* 國民參政會) as a token of its commitment to democratic principles, it was only a consultative body. Wang was elected as deputy director and chairman of the People’s Political Council, but he was visibly displeased.³⁸ Jiang Tingfu described Wang’s mood in Hankou as “somewhat resentful,” knowing this position to be a sinecure.³⁹ More benign observers considered Wang’s dismay to be caused by the return of dictatorship.⁴⁰ He must have felt useless too. Since the Mukden Incident, Wang had acknowledged the priority of party unity and was content with playing second fiddle to Chiang. But doing nothing was not how he envisioned his role in history. It was Zhou Fohai who suggested to Wang that a brave man should sacrifice his reputation to affect the situation.⁴¹ It was a calculated line of persuasion, since Wang was susceptible to idealism. A yearning for the meaning of life in action might have finally precipitated his decision. As Chen Bijun bluntly told Long Yun 龍雲 (1884–1962), an ethnic Yi (or Nuosuo) warlord in Yunnan and their potential military supporter, her husband “was only an empty suit in Chongqing and could contribute nothing to the country; thus he wants to change his environment.”⁴²

Wang Jingwei’s desire for historical agency palpitated in the poem that he wrote on April 29, 1938, upon visiting the tomb of the Tongmenghui leader Huang Xing in Changsha. The third couplet reads:

國殤為鬼無新舊 The band of national martyrs sees no seniority among
ghosts;
世運因人有轉旋 Human endeavors turn the wheel of fortune for the
world.⁴³

In this poem, Wang Jingwei relates the challenge that China faced in 1938 to that in 1911. Both, he contends, demand the revolutionary spirit of self-sacrifice. Hope lies in persistent “human endeavors”—persistence, in other words, when the only alternative is despair.

As Gerald Bunker observes, the original deal was to persuade Chiang to temporarily resign and let Wang lead the peace negotiation; Wang was to leave Chongqing so as to speak freely in his private capacity and then Konoe would announce peace conditions.⁴⁴ It was not meant that Wang should replace Chiang as head of a Chinese government, let alone a government in the occupied zone. Nor is there any evidence that Wang was “overjoyed” when he received the deal from Mei Siping, as some biographers assert.⁴⁵ In fact, Zhou Fohai’s diary accused Wang of indecision: on that day, Wang suddenly got cold feet and wanted to reconsider everything.⁴⁶ Zhou took it to be the weakness of Wang’s character. To be fair, unlike the cast of obscure actors around him, Wang had very much to lose. But when Chen Gongbo flew to Chongqing on November 29, trying to dissuade Wang from executing the plan, Wang had made up his mind. He told Chen that China could not fight any longer; but a peace proposal from Chongqing would be suspected as the government’s official policy, which would undermine its popular support. It would be preferable, therefore, if he would negotiate as a private person and bring a deal to the table.⁴⁷ In the afternoon, a plan was hatched. Wang would fly to Chengdu on December 8 and then to Kunming, where Long Yun was to support Wang’s plan with arms.⁴⁸ Zhou left for Kunming on December 5 as planned. However, on December 8, Chiang suddenly reappeared in Chongqing, causing a panic that their plan had been leaked. But Chiang came home only to recover from an ailment. Because of Wang’s delay, however, Konoe canceled his planned speech at Osaka, suspecting Wang had changed his mind. On December 18, just when Zhou began to feel restive, he found the streets of Kunming heavily sentineled. Wang Jingwei had arrived.⁴⁹ The next day, the clique flew to Hanoi.

To this day, there are various speculations on what Chiang knew.⁵⁰ Since Wang’s dissatisfaction was open and like-minded actors were frequenting his house, many questioned how Chiang’s formidable spy agencies could have noticed nothing. There was even an account that, two weeks before his departure, Wang sent his domestic servants away, telling them that he would go abroad soon. The gossip, spread through the grapevine of maids, quickly reached the Chongqing housewives and their husbands.⁵¹ Furthermore, most of the main conspirators were in Chiang’s faction, while key members of the Reorganization Clique like

Chen Gongbo and Gu Mengyu were against the plan. But there is no evidence of a grand Wang-Chiang collusion. Judging from Chiang's diary, he was genuinely surprised when he heard, as late as December 21, of Wang's secretive flight. He continued to curse Wang for his depravity and shamelessness in the diary of the next day.⁵²

On December 22, Konoe finally released a statement on the "adjustment of Sino-Japan relationship," proposing three principles of "neighborly friendliness," "joint anticommunism," and "economic cooperation." It omitted, however, to mention the crucial condition of the Japanese army's withdrawal from China.⁵³ This was because, unbeknownst to Wang, on November 30 the Imperial Conference passed the "guidelines to adjusting new Japan-China relations," greatly expanding "special defense and economic zones" (North China and Mongolia), "enforced economic cooperative zones" (lower Yangtze region), "special status areas" (islands along the southern Chinese coast), and Japanese military bases (north and southeast China). It decided that "collaboration under divided governance" (*bunchi gassaku shugi* 分治合作主義) should be the new guideline for Japan's China policy. Upon reading Konoe's statement, Wang had the chilly presentiment of betrayal. Still, he decided to take a proactive course of action. In his response he called the Chongqing government to restart the negotiation for peace, adding that the conditions should include the total and swift withdrawal of the Japanese army from the whole of China. Despite the objections of Chen Gongbo and Gu Mengyu, Lin Baisheng duly sent it to Hong Kong newspapers to be published on December 30. It came to be known as the notorious "yan telegram" (*yan* 艷 was the code used). As Gu Mengyu predicted, its release meant the ruin of Wang's political life.⁵⁴

Wang sought the understanding of his Chongqing comrades. In a letter to Chiang Kai-shek dated December 28, he recalled their conversation on December 9, when he had stated to Chiang that China's challenge was to sustain the war, and Japan's was to end it. "Both parties have difficulties; both know that they have difficulties; and both know that the other knows it too. So mediation is not impossible." Since the Western powers could not be relied upon, the only channel was to awaken Japan from its jingoist arrogance. Konoe's statement, in his opinion, showed such awareness and offered an opportunity to end the war. He urged Chiang to make a decision.⁵⁵

Chiang's public reaction to Wang's escape was at first measured. He ordered government newspapers not to attack Wang in person. At the Provisional Meeting of the Central Executive and Control Committees

on January 1, 1939, he asked for leniency on Wang's behalf. But party elders were indignant. They voted to have Wang permanently expelled from the GMD and dismissed from all posts. Domestic and international opinions were against Wang too. Prominent officials and generals one by one telegraphed to clarify their stance, and Chinese communities overseas demanded severe punishment.⁵⁶ Hu Shi, the new Chinese ambassador to the United States, telegraphed Wang from New York and tried to convince him that, after eighteen months of great national sacrifice, the time of appeasement was gone.⁵⁷ Around the same time, Guo Taiqi reported from London that US-British aid was finally materializing, which made Chongqing optimistic.⁵⁸ Another shock to Wang was Konoe's sudden resignation. Konoe had long been exhausted. Unable to rein in the military and to solve Japan's predicament, he was attacked from the left and the right. Now, having secured a face-saving triumph of acquiring the precious asset of Wang Jingwei, Konoe handed the scepter to Hiranuma Kiichirō 平沼騏一郎 (1897–1952). He was reassigned chairman of the prestigious Privy Council. The more hawkish Hiranuma had little interest in the Wang project and took no steps to follow up on the exchange of telegrams.⁵⁹ Wang, attacked and abandoned, spent a lonely January in a quiet mountain hotel in Hanoi, where he read, recollected, and weighed his options.⁶⁰

Experiencing the ambivalence of fate in Hanoi, Wang wrote a *ci* poem, "The Fallen Leaf," with the dedication to the tune "Thinking of My Old Friends." Comparing himself to a leaf falling in the woods, its desire to protect the tree unheeded, Wang in this song aims both at revelation and at persuasion.⁶¹

嘆護林心事	Sigh! Its heartfelt care for the woods is
付與東流	Consigned to an eastward stream
一往淒清	That departs in desponding coldness.
無限留連意	Its infinite thought to linger, to stay,
奈驚飈不管	Is ignored by the gusts of a storm
催化青萍	That rises from green duckweeds. ⁶²
已分去潮俱渺	Expecting to be carried off by the receding tide,
回汐又重經	It is washed back with the returning bore.
有出水根寒	There are roots piercing the icy water,
掣空枝老	And sapless branches gripping the sky,
同訴飄零	That share grief for the fading and the falling.

天心正搖落	Heaven's heart shivers at the downfall:
算菊芳蘭秀	Fragrant chrysanthemums or fair orchids
不是春榮	An exuberant spring do not make!
撼撼蕭蕭裏	What endless rustling and whispering—
要滄桑換了	Until the sea is turned into mulberry fields,
秋始無聲	An autumn cannot be silenced.
伴得落紅歸去	To accompany the scattered red, it takes departure
流水有餘馨	In the flowing water with the remnant scent.
只極目煙蕪	I train my eyes to the distant misty moor,
寒蟬夜月愁秣陵	Where autumn cicadas cast sorrow on the moonlit Moling.

The fallen leaf is a traditional image of loyalty. Its decay nourishes a new cycle of life. Comparing himself to a fallen leaf, Wang intimates that his departure is similarly driven by the loyalty to the body of the nation (the proverbial woods). He maintains that, despite some “blossoms” (small-scale victories), the “spring” has not yet arrived, and the outlook of the war remains bleak. The last lines limn an elegiac image of Moling (ancient name for Nanjing), possibly in reference to the massacre, a symbol of the war's human toll. Notably, when the poem was republished in *Accord Monthly* in December 1940, the last couplet was revised to “Despite the twilight of the year, in the coldness under the sky / ice and frost chase it for thousands of miles” 儘歲暮天寒 / 冰霜追逐千萬程.⁶³ The revision was likely made to create a more uplifting ending and perhaps to avoid an association with the massacre (see chapter 6).

Wang sent copies of this poem to his friends in Chongqing and also published it in *South China Daily News* around the beginning of April.⁶⁴ Despite broad condemnation that followed,⁶⁵ there were also readers moved by the sentiments of the poem. Long Yusheng later confessed that it was exactly this poem that convinced him of the altruistic purpose of Wang's peace movement, turning him from a sympathizer to a follower.⁶⁶

In the uncertainty of Hanoi, staying abroad was an option that Wang seriously entertained. Gao Zongwu had previously told the Japanese negotiators that, if Konoe's statement did not satisfy Wang, he would go to France.⁶⁷ Chongqing shared the idea. On December 29, Ambassador Guo Taiqi followed Chiang's instruction to telegraph Wang, suggesting that he go to Europe “to take a break.”⁶⁸ It would have been a graceful exit. But suddenly, the assassination of Zeng Zhongming, Wang's secretary and protégé, dramatically changed the meaning of the cause for

Wang. Curiously enough, despite multiple eyewitness accounts, what actually happened in Hanoi in the wee hours of March 21, 1939, remains a puzzle, Rashōmon style.

Hanoi Rashōmon

Kagesa had recommended Hanoi as Wang Jingwei's midway station on the grounds that, as a French colony, it was a safe place. Only the French were allowed to carry arms there. Furthermore, multiple members in the extended Wang family grew up in France and were able to communicate with the colonial government.⁶⁹

After Wang's departure to Hanoi, Long Yun hesitated for weeks. On December 20 he telegraphed Chiang, informing him that Wang had stopped by Kunming on the way to Hanoi to seek treatment for his ill health. Knowing it to be a lie, Chiang replied on December 27 with a stern warning about Japan's untrustworthiness, a point that seems to have convinced Long. One day later, Long plead leniency on Wang's behalf.⁷⁰ After Wang published the "yan telegram," public outrage likely helped Long to finally make up his mind. On January 6, he informed Chiang of a letter from Wang, brought to him by Chen Changzu. Long also said that the Wang couple was considering the French option, but he recommended allowing Wang to come back to Chongqing, both to show leniency and to facilitate surveillance. Chiang replied two days later that Wang had better go to Europe.⁷¹

The extended Wang family (now including Zhu Zhixin's orphaned daughters) lived in 25 and 27 Rue Riz Marché (Vietnamese: *Phố Chợ Gạo*; Chinese: *Gao Lang Jie* 高朗街), two leafy, Western-style mansions behind high walls.⁷² On February 15, Chongqing's envoy Gu Zhengding 谷正鼎 (1903–1974) brought their passports to Hanoi. Different accounts of his mission exist. One account has Wang declaring that, if Chongqing would accept his proposal to start the peace negotiation, he would go abroad; but if it remained indecisive, he would return to China to voice his dissent.⁷³ Another account claims that Gu's priority was to bring Wang back to Chongqing, which Wang declined, preferring France.⁷⁴

Though the French option was gaining favor, the Wang group did not stop exploring other possibilities. Through the early months of 1939, their secret contacts with the Japanese government continued, though perhaps not in a very coordinated fashion. Intelligence reported to Chiang that the Wang group was building up organizations in Shanghai and especially in Hong Kong.⁷⁵ Gao Zongwu was particularly active. On February

1, Gao came from Hong Kong and stayed for five days. He found Wang in depression. Wang asked Gao to forward a few letters to Japanese leaders, which pleaded the necessity of building a unified Chinese government to win the "understanding and trust" of the Chinese people. Wang was convinced that his action represented the highest interests for China and for Japan alike.⁷⁶ On March 18, the Japanese consulate general in Hong Kong informed Gao that funding for the Wang group's activities would be provided through China's custom revenues that Japan distrained.

Meanwhile, Chiang Kai-shek sensed a positive change in the direction of the war. On February 10, Japan attacked and occupied Hainan, China's southernmost major island. The next day, Chiang hosted a press conference and pointed out that it was "the Mukden Incident on the Pacific." Japan's appetite would begin to threaten the British and the French colonial interests and the United States' maritime dominance.⁷⁷ Gao Zongwu studied the speech and concluded that Chiang was becoming more optimistic.⁷⁸

For three whole months, the Wang group met frequently to weigh options. The prominent writer and scholar Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885–1967), who had already accepted an appointment as curator of Peking University Library by the collaborationist regime in Beiping, warned Tao Xisheng, "Don't do it" (*gan bu de* 幹不得), implying his objection to the plan of collaborating with Japan based on his own observation of Japanese politics. As Zhou noted, the young Japanese militarists did not even respect General Ugaki, let alone a foreign leader.⁷⁹

But the assassination of Zeng Zhongming greatly shook the Wang group. It came as a surprise. On March 20, Gu Zhengding ended his second visit in Hanoi.⁸⁰ One account has it that Gu brought the passports and money for their European trip.⁸¹ As it was a sunny spring day, the whole Wang family, lighthearted and craving seafood soup, went for an excursion to the Three Peaches Beach, a trip that was cut short by a French policeman who warned that they had been followed. During the afternoon siesta, a man appeared at the door, announcing himself as a painter, sent by the landlord, who had to measure the rooms to calculate his payment. Since he wanted to enter every room, he was eventually sent away. Of more than twenty people in the Wang household, none was armed.

Since January, Bureau of Investigation and Statistics (BIS) agents had been convening in Hanoi. The ringleader was the experienced assassin Chen Gongshu 陳恭澍 (1907–?), under the direct command of spymaster Dai Li. But Chen's account of the story contains so many incongru-

ences with the recollection of other eyewitnesses that one wonders if they recalled the same event at all. According to Chen Gongshu, their job had been intelligence and surveillance until March 19, when an unsigned telegram was sent by Dai Li to the agents, with a single sentence: “Severest punishment to the traitor Wang Jingwei, immediately!” The nature of their work suddenly changed. They did follow the Wang family the next day but eventually lost them in traffic. The frustrated agents thus decided to raid the house. Previous nocturnal intelligence reported that Wang lived on the second floor of no. 27. Shortly after midnight, the assassins jumped into the courtyard, hacked open the door of no. 27, and headed straight to Wang’s room. Chen, waiting in a getaway car outside, heard five or six gunshots. In the report that he received, the first few warning shots were aimed at a figure downstairs; the next three shots were fired through a hole on the bedroom door, hacked open by an axe, at a figure half-hidden under the bed, thought to be Wang Jingwei. The team pulled out of the house after only four to five minutes. But not everyone made it back to Chen Gongshu’s car. When the Vietnamese police arrived at the scene, three killers were caught who curiously lingered in the courtyard for a good hour and even eavesdropped on a phone call to the hospital. Chen Gongshu realized that they had killed the wrong person only the next afternoon. In another BIS report, possibly filed by other members of the group, Wang and Zeng had switched bedrooms that night, a story that Chen did not believe.⁸² Chen did not mention sending a painter earlier.

He Mengheng and Chen Changzu, however, remembered the event differently. Not only did the raid take place at two o’clock, instead of midnight, and last much longer than a few minutes, but there were many more gunshots and victims.⁸³ He Mengheng recalled that more than a dozen bullets pierced Zeng Zhongming’s stomach, Fang Junbi received four wounds, and three other people were shot downstairs. Chen Changzu further recollected that Zeng was lying on the bed, not hiding under it. The facts that the raid team leader knew Zeng and that the room was at least partially lit added to the unlikelihood of confused identities. Since no one in the house was armed, the assassins could have entered the room to check the body. Besides, Wang’s bedroom was on the second floor of no. 25. Though he occasionally used the room in no. 27 during the day to receive guests, if the agents did their intelligence at night, they should not have confused the rooms.

The injured were treated at the French Military Hospital. Wang Jingwei, who was awoken by the gunshots but was stopped by He

Mengheng from entering no. 27, managed to visit the hospital only in the afternoon. When it became apparent that Zeng was dying, he did not forget to sign blank checks, as he was in charge of the Wang group's finances and his signature was needed to get money from the bank. He died at four o'clock in the afternoon.

Certainly, one possibility was that there were other BIS agents in Hanoi. Perhaps Chen Gongshu, who admitted that Dai Li kept him in the dark on many matters, was not even in actual command of the group. But little could explain the vast discrepancies in the witness accounts. The mystery gave rise to conspiracy theories. Jin Xiongbai recounts three theories: one, the assassins deliberately killed "a wrong person" as a warning to Wang Jingwei; two, they killed Zeng Zhongming in order to outrage Wang Jingwei and push him further down the path to collaboration; three, it was always part of the plan of a "Chiang-Wang duet."⁸⁴ Whatever the case may have been, Dai Li showed uncharacteristic leniency toward Chen Gongshu: he was never punished and was later sent to lead the Shanghai station. After he was captured on October 29, 1941, the RNG spy chief Li Shiqun 李士群 (1905–1943) not only spared his life, but recruited him.⁸⁵ He worked as a double agent until the end of the war and retired in Taiwan. Chiang Kai-shek never mentioned the case, in his diary or elsewhere. His silence is perhaps the best proof that he ordered the killing.

The assassination of Zeng Zhongming dealt a heavy blow to Wang Jingwei. Despite a hatchet attack on Lin Baisheng in Hong Kong in January, he apparently did not expect himself to become a target. To Wang, it meant that Chiang would no longer tolerate his existence as a potential contender to power. In the throes of grief, on April 1, Wang Jingwei published a defiant article, "An Example" (*Ju yige li* 舉一個例), in the *South China Daily News*. Citing Zeng's final words, it argued that a peaceful solution was not Wang's proposal alone, but rather a consensus reached at the highest level of the national government. He cited the minutes of the December meeting in Hankou, where Trautmann's mediation had been discussed. He declared that it was only one of many instances of covert negotiations, though, for the sake of the interests of the national government, he would divulge no more details. He argued that Konoe's conditions could similarly serve as the foundation for peace, especially now with a greater part of China fallen. A Sino-Japanese total war, he contended, was mutually destructive and must stop for the survival of both nations. He wished for Zeng's blood to turn into a shining torch for the "peace movement."⁸⁶

This article proved to be deeply embarrassing for Chiang Kai-shek. Wu Zhihui immediately wrote a refutation, charging Wang both for leaking government secrets and for falsifying the minutes.⁸⁷ The original minutes, however, were not released to support Wu's claim.⁸⁸ From now on, any pretense of civility or understanding between the two camps was lost. This antagonism meant that, for Chongqing, the path to peace through negotiation was closed.⁸⁹ If he ever hoped to broker peace between Chongqing and Tokyo, the publication of this article burned the bridge, making his course of action increasingly irreversible.

On the Japanese side, the Hiramuma Cabinet, previously uncertain of what to do with Wang, now felt obligated to protect their new asset. Two days after the incident, the Five Ministers Conference decided to dispatch Kagesa Sadaaki and Inukai Takeru 犬養健 (1896–1960) to Hanoi immediately. The latter, a congressman, was the son of the assassinated prime minister Inukai Tsuyoshi. For him, the traumatic memory of a frenzied public cheering the killers of his father served as a sobering antidote against militant nationalism.

Zeng's death also marked the beginning of a bloody cycle of killings and retaliations. Shen Song 沈崧 (1894–1939), Wang Jingwei's nephew, was assassinated in August in Hong Kong. Wang and his followers sensed the urgency of self-protection. Given their lack of military support, they resorted to the secret police, thus empowering a notorious spy agency: the "No. 76," named after its headquarters in 76 Jessfield Road, Shanghai. It recruited the worst elements of the occupied metropolitan area and was led by the defected BIS agent Ding Mocun 丁默邨 (1901–1947) and Central Bureau of Investigation and Statistics agent Li Shiqun. Both men had previously defected to the Japanese and were handed over to the Wang group, which consequently exerted little control over them. Spy violence in Shanghai lasted throughout the war, infamous for its brutality and ambivalent allegiances.⁹⁰

Zeng's death exacted a steep toll on Wang Jingwei. Many of his later poems referred to Zeng's death, revealing a survivor's guilt. It also hardened Wang's resolution to continue seeking a peace deal with Japan. As he swore in a poem written on the occasion of planting trees to commemorate the deaths of Zeng Zhongming and Shen Song, "I shall pick up pieces of the old country, / and not let the dead down" 收拾舊山河勿負故人心.⁹¹ Another lyric song, probably written around the summer of 1940, to the tune of "Yu the Beauty" begins with Wang's self-image as a lone swallow:

空梁曾是營巢處	The empty roof beam was where we endeavored a nest;
零落年時侶	Now scattered and fallen: my companions in olden times.
天南地北幾經過	From the south of the sky to the north of the earth, I shuttle across;
到眼殘山賸水已無多	Of the mountains and waters: all broken, desiccated, not much left!
夜深案牘明燈火	Deep into the night, on a broad desk, a lamp brightly lit;
閣筆淒然我	Putting down the brush, a suddenly saddened me.
故人熱血不空流	My old friends' blood shall not flow in vain:
挽作天河一洗為神州	Pour it into the River of Heaven, cleanse this Divine Land! ⁹²

The swallow is a migratory bird. In her guise the poet assumes an aerial view over China's mountains and rivers, metaphors for sovereignty. The decimation of swallows is comparable to the encroachment upon China's territories. Wang's self-image as a lone bird reminds the reader of his self-image as a *jingwei*, an image of resolution and dedication. In the second stanza, Wang presents himself as a tireless civil servant, working into the wee hours of the night. The sixth line is the key to the poem. Through a reversed sentence structure, the reader is first introduced to the movement (“putting down the brush”), then the inner mood (“saddened”), and at last the lyric persona (“me”). Resting the rhyme on *wo* (“me”) points to the lyric subjectivity as the focal point of the poem. The dynamic poetic phrase thus leads to a change in sentiments: from desolation to resolution. The “River of Heaven” is a Chinese term for the Milky Way. This time it is the martyr's blood that shall be turned into the celestial river, “cleansing” the Divine Land of China—of what filth he does not explicitly say.

Wang Jingwei tried to create a martyr's cult around Zeng Zhongming in the RNG. From 1942, every year on the anniversary of Zeng's death, the propaganda ministry at Nanjing held memorial services.⁹³ As this day fell right between Sun Yat-sen's date of death (March 12) and the foundation date of the RNG (March 30), it became part of the RNG foundational myth that the Wang regime promoted. The Zeng cult, however, appeared to be particularly meaningful for Wang Jingwei alone.

After Wang's death in November 1944, the propaganda ministry quietly dropped the service on Zeng's death anniversary, though Sun's death continued to be mourned and the RNG's foundation continued to be celebrated in March 1945, five months before the regime's downfall.⁹⁴

Homebound

The homebound road from Hanoi to Nanjing was long and winding. Wang Jingwei would eventually emerge at the other end as an emblem and an enigma. To his followers and sympathizers, he was a cult figure who single-handedly saved half of China from the fate of total subjugation. He was likened to a bodhisattva who went into Hell to save tortured souls. To others, his name would become the synonym for treason. Through its hatred for traitors, the resistance finally gained unity. As for the Japanese government, Wang's role and value kept evolving along with the shifting circumstances of the war, at times appearing to be an asset, puppet, enemy, and partner all in one.

After months of a courtship dance, Kagesa and Inukai became the first Japanese agents to meet Wang in person. On April 16, they arrived in French Indochina with forged passports on a rented civilian ship, *Hikkōmaru* 北光丸. They found Wang embroiled in a new scandal. Eleven days earlier, the Chongqing *Dagongbao* had published an alleged secret agreement that Gao Zongwu purportedly brokered on Wang's behalf in late February. In this plan, Wang proposed to set up a GMD collaborationist organization with branches in major Japanese-occupied cities. When the Japanese army approached Xi'an, Yichang, and Nanning, Wang would make a statement to "take responsibility for peace," while Long Yun and other local warlords were to respond to the call. A new national government under Wang was to be established in Nanjing on October 10, 1939, creating a unified government over the whole of China (without Manchukuo), which would become Japan's ally in East Asia. All these activities were to be funded by the Japanese government.⁹⁵ The publication of the agreement caused an uproar condemning Wang Jingwei for "selling the nation." Gao Zongwu was suspected of having leaked the plan.⁹⁶ Wang denied that the agreement ever existed.⁹⁷ Gao Zongwu accused the Japanese of leaking a forged plan to sow further division between Chongqing and Wang.⁹⁸ The supporters around Wang were in deep disagreement. Gao later claimed that he came to prefer the French option, on account of Japan's insincerity. Chen Gongbo suggested Wang stay in Hong Kong first to cure his grief over Zeng Zhongming's death,

before going overseas. Zhou Fohai and Mei Siping preferred the international concessions in Shanghai.⁹⁹ Kagesa and Inukai’s mission was to deliver Wang into Japan’s hands.

On April 18, through Wang’s Japanese-language secretary Zhou Longxiang 周隆庠 (1905–1969), the Japanese agents met him for the first time. Wang Jingwei, dressed in a Chinese-style long white robe, deeply impressed them with his trademark elegance and sincerity, as he unfailingly did many visitors.¹⁰⁰ It was not the first time that Wang’s charm pulled him out of danger. If in 1910 he was spared death as an unintended consequence of Prince Su’s appreciation, in the following decades he had weaponized his intimate charisma. These agents, moved by Wang’s apparent altruism and sincerity, would eventually play a curious role mediating between the Japanese government and the Chinese collaborators. The Umē Kikan 梅機關 (“Plum Agency”)¹⁰¹ founded on August 22, 1939, in Shanghai under Kagesa’s leadership, was perceived as a puppet master controlling the RNG’s fate. But it often fought on the collaborators’ behalf with the Japanese cabinet for better conditions. Kagesa Sadaaki, a former “hawk” proposing an aggressive strategy, especially in Manchuria, was removed from his position as the supreme military consultant at Nanjing in May 1942 by the new prime minister, Tōjō Hideki 東條英機 (1884–1948), who considered him “overly generous toward China.” He was reassigned first to Manchuria and eventually to Rabaul Island (Papua New Guinea). In the shadow of sickness and death, he completed a memoir under a hail of shelling in December 1943 to apologize for having failed Wang’s trust.¹⁰² In reality, perhaps exactly because of Kagesa’s sympathy, Wang was led to feel unjustifiably optimistic about Japan’s intentions, unable to walk away from the negotiation even when conditions continued to sour.

Shanghai was chosen at Wang’s destination. Wang insisted on not boarding a Japanese ship and not taking up residence in the Japanese Hongkou concession, preferring instead other autonomous international concessions, to avoid the suspicion of patronage. Unfortunately, the 750-ton ship rented from the Indochina government nearly sank in a storm. At Hainan, Wang and his entourage were rescued by the 5,000-ton *Hikkōmaru*. On May 6, they arrived in Shanghai on a Japanese ship after all. Due to security considerations, he had to stay in the Hongkou District for three weeks, before moving into 1136 Lane Yúyuan Road, a section of the unauthorized expansion of the French concession. It was another publicity disaster.¹⁰³

After arriving at Shanghai, on May 28, the Wang group proposed

a “Concrete Plan to Solve the Current Situation” to the Japanese government. It included the following points: convening a GMD national congress to maintain the party’s “orthodoxy”; convening a multiparty central political conference that would legitimize the reorganization of the national government and approve its personnel choices; founding a national government in Nanjing and dissolving existing collaborationist regimes to signify national unity.¹⁰⁴ Three days later, Wang boarded a navy plane to Japan to meet Hiranuma in person, accompanied by eleven followers, including Zhou Fohai, Mei Siping, and Gao Zongwu.¹⁰⁵ It was his first visit to Japan in three decades, occasional stopovers aside. When he had left Japan in 1910, many intellectuals and politicians there had cherished goodwill toward China’s modernization and supported its Nationalist revolution morally and financially. Now, with such goodwill hard to find, he hoped to resort to Japan’s rational self-interest.

In Tokyo, the cabinet meeting on June 6 decided that the new Chinese government should consist of Wang, the retired strongman Wu Peifu 吳佩孚 (1874–1939), established collaborationist regimes, and a reformed Chongqing regime; the date of its foundation was to be decided by Japan; it should practice the principle of collaboration under divided governance; the GMD could exist only if it were to pledge friendship to Japan, recognize Manchukuo, and commit to anticommunism.¹⁰⁶ The document’s arrogant tone boded ill for Wang’s visit. The distance between the two parties’ demands looked insurmountable. In the next ten days, Wang held marathon meetings with Hiranuma, cabinet members, and Prince Konoe. Every day, Wang gave accounts to his followers of the conversations; every day he looked more dispirited. Wang suggested that Japan’s best option was to reach a peace deal with Chiang Kai-shek; the second best option was realizing peace through a new national government under Wang, for which he demanded the following terms: building an army of half a million strength; immediate withdrawal of the Japanese military forces after the foundation of his government; no interference in China’s domestic affairs; immediate recognition of his government by Japan, Germany, and Italy; three hundred million yen in financial loans; and administrative authority over North China. The Japanese politicians listened courteously and then added many *ifs* as conditions for their acceptance. The process frustrated Wang so much that he decided to walk away. Alarmed, the Japanese cabinet made some concessions on June 16. The “Concrete Plan” was approved. The resolution, however, insisted on the principle of divided governance and failed to

mention the crucial condition of military withdrawal. On June 18, Wang left Japan for Tianjin.¹⁰⁷

This round of negotiations was only the prelude. Aside from the thorny questions of jurisdiction, military occupation, and economic renationalization, Wang Jingwei insisted on maintaining the optical unity and consistency of a "national government," including its official doctrine (the Three Principles) and the Nationalist flag. He demanded annexation of existing collaborationist regimes in Beiping and in Nanjing. It was a daunting task, not the least because each had a different patron. After the fall of Nanjing, the North China Area Army directed Wang Kemin to establish the provisional government in Beiping. Liang Hongzhi was recruited by the Central China Area Army to lead the Reformed Government in Nanjing, founded on March 28, 1938. Both, furthermore, were Beiyang loyalists, and their regimes adopted the Five Color flag of the Beiyang government, an anti-GMD visual symbol. Asking them to subjugate themselves to a "latecomer" and old rival was difficult.¹⁰⁸ Wang's goal thus meant the reassertion of GMD political authority over occupied territories. But the idea of establishing a client government, thereby creating rivalry with Chongqing, divided Wang's followers and even his Japanese sympathizers. Gao Zongwu, Nishi Yoshiaki, and Matsumoto Shigeharu were against the plan. Given Gao Zongwu's increasing pessimism, Japan's chosen partner of negotiation eventually became the more optimistic Zhou Fohai.

Japan's support notwithstanding, Wang felt the need to create legitimacy in order for his future government to maintain the illusion of autonomy. As the historian David Serfass notes, in accordance with Sun Yat-sen's blueprint for the "political tutelage" phase, the state-formation process must be initiated by the party. The reorganization of an "orthodox" GMD in occupied China thus became a prerequisite for the restoration of state's legal apparatus in Nanjing, in order for the new government to claim legally constituted authority against Chongqing.¹⁰⁹ On August 28, 1939, the Sixth National Congress of the GMD was convened in Shanghai. Since most Reorganization Clique members refused to join, CC Clique members in the Wang group recruited locally. As thirty-six CC Clique members in Shanghai decided to support Wang, their faction dominated the congress.¹¹⁰ It foreshadowed the future factional division in the RNG between the Mansion Clique (*gongguan pai* 公館派) around the Wang couple and the CC Clique around Zhou Fohai. The communiqué did not denounce resistance per se, but denounced Chiang's

Fig. 14. Wang's first public appearance after his escape from Chongqing, studio portrait in black suit and tie, July 12, 1939, Shanghai. Nippu Jiji Photograph Archive, "Gaijin" Collection. Copyright holder: Hawaii Times Photo Archives Foundation; digitization: Densho; bilingual metadata: Hoover Institution Library and Archives and National Museum of Japanese History. <https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/A-G388-036.1.1>



method. It argued that the deal Wang brokered already realized the purpose of national resistance—namely, peace. Among other resolutions, the congress revised the GMD charter, abolished the authoritarian *zongcai* system, elected Wang chairman of the Central Executive Committee, announced the highest guidelines to be the Three Principles (after redefinition), anticommunism, and friendship with Japan and with Manchukuo. In terms of civil rights, it protected freedom of speech and association, though communists were denied these rights. It promised to convene a national assembly and to promulgate the constitution once peace would be realized. As a crucial step toward pluralism, other parties were permitted to join the Central Political Committee.¹¹¹ In a certain sense, Wang attempted to establish not only a rival “peace” government to Chongqing, but also a rival democratic government. For the next year and a half, constitutionalism became a priority in the Wang faction’s political agenda.

The communiqué offered a solution to separatist client regimes. An agreement reached on September 20 in Nanjing announced the nominal end of GMD one-party rule and created a multiparty coalition government. A Central Political Conference (a semiparliament) was to be set up, consisting of one-third GMD members, one-third former (Beiyang) collaborators, and one-third small parties or independents.¹¹² The tripartite division of power, however, was never fully implemented in the future RNG.

The negotiations with Japan became a verbal marathon that drew on for months. As Gerald Bunker remarks, the Wang peace movement "had depended on bringing China and Japan together by selling each other on the nonexistent conciliatory spirit of the other."¹¹³ It was a doomed enterprise. Through those months in Shanghai, Wang strove to find an agreement with Japan that would give substance to his "Peace Government." The problem was Japan's greed. To address the shambles Japan's China policy had created, a Kōain 興亜院 (Asia Development Board) was founded by Konoe as an institute, answering to the prime minister alone, to coordinate all government activities and economic initiatives in China. As its staff members came from all ministries, including Foreign, Treasury, Army and Navy, it could not help but become an arena for power struggles. At the same time, after the personnel changes in the General Staff Office, Kagesa, an Army officer, suddenly found himself responsible for the whole "peace movement," an envied spot.¹¹⁴ When he and Inukai were shown the secret document that Kōain had drafted as the foundation for their future negotiations with the Wang group, they were shocked by its stringent demands. The draft was announced to the Wang group on November 1 in Shanghai. The reaction was similarly astonishment and confusion, as it imposed much harsher terms than the deal that Gao Zongwu brokered a year ago, or indeed than even Konoe's newest statement.¹¹⁵ Kagesa thus assumed a Janus face. Every night, Inukai was to secretly meet with Zhou Fohai to arrive at more lenient terms, and the next morning Kagesa would propose these terms for the next round of debate.

Tao Xisheng was alarmed by the direction of the negotiations. He warned Wang of Japan's plan to slice China like an onion, each ring tied tighter to Japan's core interests. According to Tao, Wang burst into tears, declaring with indignation: "If Japan could really conquer China, let it try! It cannot, so it wants me to put my name on its plan. This document cannot be called an indenture to sell China. China is not what *I* can sell! My signature at most makes it an indenture to sell myself." The Wang

couple thought of halting all talks and going to France. Kagesa, upon hearing the news, hastened over to see Wang. Tears dabbled the paper on which he was taking note of Wang's prepared statement. His tears moved Wang. Retelling the exchange to his followers, he whispered, as if to himself, that Kagesa was sincere after all. The next day, Kagesa went back to Tokyo to report on Wang's discontent, and the plan for France was again shelved.¹¹⁶

Just as Wang weaponized his sincerity, Kagesa's sincere wish to end the war through Wang Jingwei was weaponized by the Kōain. The latter appeared to be torn between reason and greed. Besides, who said that the war in China was unwinnable? Like Wang, the Japanese were also students of the neo-Confucian belief in the invincibility of a thoroughly cultivated self, a moral conviction reflected in their suicidal wartime ventures. Similarly, Wang saw the negotiations as a contest of moral convictions. In Tao Xisheng's words, "It was like drinking poisoned wine. I took a sip, found it was poison, was already half-dead, and stopped drinking it. Wang found it was poison and decided he might just as well finish it."¹¹⁷ Kagesa's plea to improve the terms was rejected by Tokyo. He came back a changed man, stiff and overbearing, trying to jam the demands down his counterpart's throat. But just when the talks arrived at another breaking point, Kagesa suddenly changed again. He overstepped his power, made a few swift concessions on key issues, and concluded the discussion.¹¹⁸

In comparison to the original plan, the agreement signed on December 30, 1939, known as "Principles of Adjusting the New Sino-Japan Relationship," contained changes on eleven issues, ranging from substantial to more symbolic matters. The Great Wall line separating the Mongolian Autonomous Zone from North China was reassigned to the jurisdiction of the Wang regime; Chinese administrative rights over Japanese military areas were reassured; a two-year deadline for total troop withdrawal from occupied Chinese territories, *once* peace was achieved, was declared; and Manchukuo was not listed as a separate entity. The future Wang regime was given more freedom in economic policy and personnel appointment, as long as it guaranteed Japan's wartime supply.¹¹⁹

The issue of a navy base in Hainan became a point of heated exchange. The navy's representative, General Sugahiko Jirō 須賀彦次郎 (1889–1941), sparred with Chen Gongbo in a blinking game. This time, it was Wang Jingwei who ordered Chen to concede. Even Inukai lamented that Wang made too facile compromises, as the navy base in

Hainan symbolized the failure of Japan’s restraint not to venture into the Southern Pacific. The concession doomed not only Wang’s cause but also Japan’s fate.¹²⁰ According to Inukai, if, say, the conditions needed to score 60 points to avoid making Wang a traitor, Kōain’s original draft scored at best 30; his and Kagesa’s coordinated efforts improved it to 57 or 58 points, still falling short of the threshold of credibility—a crucial gap, as Gao Zongwu argued, between saving and selling the nation.¹²¹

Gao Zongwu and Tao Xisheng excused themselves from the signing ceremony. Gao Zongwu felt alienated from the movement that he had initiated. His relationship with the Japanese had become strained. Believing that he was in mortal danger, he convinced Tao to escape Shanghai together. In mid-November, Gao had covertly made a copy of Kōain’s terms under negotiation.¹²² The photocopies were published in the Hong Kong *Dagongbao* on January 22, 1940, which created an impression that it was the final signed agreement, discrediting the Wang group’s publicity campaign that they were to realize genuine peace and national independence. An editorial chastised it as “the ultimate fulfillment of the Japanese militarists’ pipedreams! The greatest evil in selling the nation in the history of China and of the world!”¹²³ A national uproar followed.

The Wang camp, on the way to Qingdao to build consensus with established collaborators, was caught by surprise. Zhou Fohai swore to “kill these two animals.”¹²⁴ For the nascent Wang regime, appearances were as important as substance. But now, with the leak of this damning document, the illusion of sovereignty was decisively shattered. Nonetheless, Wang resisted his followers’ urge to release the final secret conditions that contained the Japanese concessions, a gesture that impressed Imai.¹²⁵

But there were blessings too. Chen Gongbo, who had returned to Hong Kong after the negotiation with Sugahiko, came back to stand by Wang’s side. Years later, when Chen was in captivity awaiting death, he wrote a poem to explain his puzzling decision:

恃此肝膽烈	Relying on the fierce strength of my courage,
願為朋友死	I am willing to die on behalf of a friend.
祇求心所安	I only seek peace in heart;
不計身之毀	Caring not that my body be destroyed. ¹²⁶

Chen, the son of a Qing Dynasty general, was the closest thing Wang had to a friend and not just a follower. In the RNG he was first elected presi-



Fig. 15. January 1940, at the Qingdao Conference, in the greenhouse of the reception hall. From right to left in the front row: Wang Jingwei, Wang Kemin 王克敏 (wearing tinted glasses), and Liang Hongzhi 梁鴻志. Nippu Jiji Photograph Archive, “Gaijin” Collection. Copyright holder: Hawaii Times Photo Archives Foundation; digitization: Densho; bilingual metadata: Hoover Institution Library & Archives and National Museum of Japanese History. <https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/A-G388-008.1.1>

dent of the Legislative Yuan, then the mayor of Shanghai, and eventually Wang’s designated successor.

There was another silver lining to the media backlash. The Japanese cabinet was compelled to approve the limited concessions that Kagesa made, especially concerning the stationing of troops and railroad rights.¹²⁷ They remained adamant, however, in demanding that a yellow triangle pennant bearing the words “peace, anticommunism, nation-building” (*heping fangong jianguo* 和平反共建國) be attached to the flagpole below the national flag. The yellow pennant became a deeply emotional issue for the Wang group. To them, this ugly “pigtail” symbolized the future character of their regime. As late as on March 4, less than twenty days before the RNG was to be founded, Zhou Fohai threatened indefinite postponement as long as the yellow pennant was not removed. But they finally yielded on that point too. On March 30, the Blue Sky

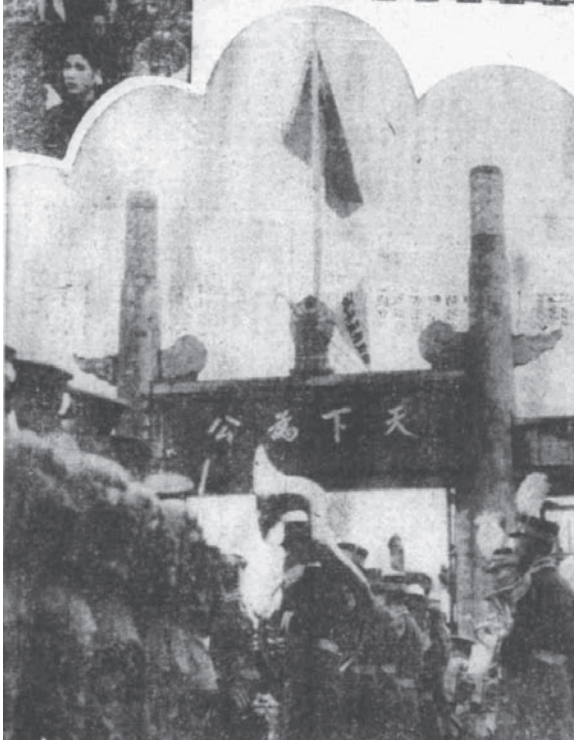


Fig. 16. The foundation of the RNG: the Nationalist government flag raised together with a yellow triangle banner, bearing the words "peace, anticommunism, nation-building." Reproduced from *Nanjing xinbao* 南京新報, March 31, 1940. Public domain.

White Sun flag flew again over the raped city of Nanjing, with a yellow triangle pennant tagged to the pole. Whenever they could, however, the RNG would try to hang the national flag without the pennant, resulting in its rarity in extant visual materials.

As Inukai observed, perhaps Wang had received such harsh conditions because many in the cabinet and in *Kōain* were reluctant to negotiate with him. They considered the RNG a temporary solution, reserving the optimal peace conditions only for Chiang Kai-shek. Konoe's statement about never negotiating with Chiang was an unfortunate faux pas that his successors struggled to amend. Wang took it too seriously, wasting his political capital and ultimately his life.¹²⁸ Inukai also noted that, in 1941, when Konoe negotiated with the United States to prevent a war in the Pacific, the conditions he offered concerning China were almost identical to what he promised to Gao Zongwu in 1938. But this time, it was Japan's turn to be rejected.¹²⁹ Konoe resigned again, Tōjō Hideki became his successor, and the Pacific War broke out. Had Konoe kept his promises, all the blood of the war might not have been shed.

Ambivalent Sovereignty

Wang Jingwei returned to a changed Nanjing. A provincial city never fully modernized, it had been devastated by war and depressed by occupation. On March 19, 1940, Wang led his future cabinet members to pay respects at the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum. It happened to be a desolate spring day. Through punishing wind and rain, this spotty group of solemn-looking men slowly climbed up the 392 steps, their figures diminished by the background of monumental portions. Wang led the entourage into the main hall. He raised his head toward the 4.6-meter high marble statue. Tears were streaming down his cheeks. When he began to read Sun's testament, the whole hall was filled with whimpering echoes.¹³⁰ It was a sorry sight. The prelude to the Wang regime was elegiac.

The more optimistic Zhou Fohai noted that the moment they stepped out of the mausoleum hall, the sun came out. He took it as a sign of a bright future. But on the same day, he was informed that the foundation of the RNG had to be delayed: the Japanese cabinet was keen to give the peace plan with Chiang another push, and Imai had been to Hong Kong to meet a representative from Chongqing. Zhou was annoyed, but Wang agreed with alacrity.¹³¹ Imai's contact, a man who declared himself to be the brother of Song Ziwen, turned out to be a BIS agent, whose sole mission was to frustrate the Wang group.¹³² The negotiations went nowhere, and the RNG was finally inaugurated on March 30, 1940. An exhilarated Zhou Fohai proclaimed that day to be "the happiest day in my life, as nothing feels more fulfilling in life than realizing one's ideals."¹³³ Given Wang Jingwei's increasing passivity, Zhou indeed became the most powerful man in the RNG, a premier who controlled the administration, finance, military, and police. This led to the resentment of the Wang faction, which formed "the Mansion Clique" around Chen Bijun, Mei Siping, and Lin Baisheng.¹³⁴ Chen Gongbo was broadly viewed as part of Mansion Clique, but his and Zhou's friendship stretched back to their days as founding members of the CCP. Their friendship proved crucial for stabilizing the RNG after Wang's premature death.

The RNG was founded on pretense. The GMD elder Lin Sen was elected its president. Since he was still in Chongqing and was unlikely to join the RNG any time soon, Wang assumed the acting presidency, aside from being the chairman of the Executive Yuan and of the Military Council. The regime declared nominal sovereignty over the border regions and imagined sovereignty over the hinterland provinces. Nanjing's influence over North China was also minimal, which



Fig. 17. Wang Jingwei and his followers reading an oath to Sun Yat-sen's statue in the Sun mausoleum, March 19, 1940, or two weeks before the foundation of the RNG. Reproduced from *Shashin shūhō* 寫真週報, no. 110 (April 3, 1940): 4. Public domain.



Fig. 18. Wang Jingwei and a party of Chinese legislators visit Sun Yat-sen's mausoleum (undated; comparison with a blurred *Shashin shūhō* [no. 110] photo suggests that it was likely taken on March 19, 1940). Nippu Jiji Photograph Archive, "Gaijin" Collection. Copyright holder: Hawaii Times Photo Archives Foundation; digitization: Densho; bilingual metadata: Hoover Institution Library & Archives and National Museum of Japanese History. <https://hojishinbun.hoover.org/en/newspapers/A-G388-017.1.1>



Fig.19. The establishment of the RNG, March 30, 1940. Reproduced from *Shashin shūhō* no. 111 (April 10, 1940): 1. Public Domain.

was administered by the semiautonomous North China Political Council under Wang Yitang, another Beiyang bureaucrat. Though established to be China's national regime in rivalry with Chongqing, the RNG was not formally recognized by Japan. The latter did, however, agree to send an ambassador who would submit his credentials to Wang, but what that exactly meant remained unspecified. On this as well as other issues, the



Fig. 20. RNG luminaries. From right to left in the upper row: Wang Jingwei, Liang Hongzhi, Mei Siping 梅思平, Ding Mocun 丁默邨; in the middle row: Chen Gongbo, Wang Yitang 王揖唐, Chu Minyi, Zhao Zhengping 趙正平, Zhao Yusong 趙毓松, Lin Baisheng; in the lower row: Wen Zongyao 溫宗堯, Chen Qun 陳群, Zhou Fohai, Li Shengwu 李聖五, Zhu Qinglai 諸青來, Wang Kemin. Reproduced from *Shashin shūhō* no. 110 (April 3, 1940): 6–7. Public domain.

RNG's declaration of its sovereignty was neither denied nor supported by Japan.¹³⁵ The duplicity of Japan's attitude did not escape the collaborators. Instead of appointing a Japanologist as the foreign minister, Wang appointed Chu Minyi, whose foreign language expertise was in French, even though France declined to recognize the RNG. His appointment was an act that bordered on disobedience.

Through late 1940 and early 1941, the United States was increasingly involved in the war. Chongqing was holding its ground, and Japan was in a quagmire. Japan finally gave up the hope of peace with Chongqing. Despite his own great reluctance, Wang formally assumed the presidency of the RNG on November 29, 1940.¹³⁶ The next day, he and the Japanese ambassador Abe Nobuyuki 阿部信行 (1875–1953) exchanged a "Basic Treaty" that formally recognized the RNG as China's national government. Zhou saw it as a new chapter in their endeavor: in the past their agenda had been to persuade Chongqing to negotiate for peace;

now he hoped that Wang and Chiang would reach a tacit understanding of double-bidding for China—one regime would join the Axis, while the other joined the Allied powers; whichever side won, China would emerge as a victor of the war.¹³⁷ Chongqing did not seem to share Zhou's enthusiasm: the same day, it put a price on Wang's head.

The character and policies of the RNG have been studied by a number of scholars.¹³⁸ Given that this is a study of Wang Jingwei, my summary of its ambivalent political and ideological characters is focused on his role.

One political agenda that consistently defined Wang Jingwei's ideological profile was constitutional democracy, both as an idealist pursuit and as a pragmatic method to distinguish him from his rivals, primarily Chiang Kai-shek. In "Return to the Capital Manifesto" (March 30, 1940), Wang declared the regime's primary missions to be "realizing peace" and "implementing constitutionalism." The former task was defined along the line of Konoe's original speech, "Adjustment of the Sino-Japan Relationship," in December 1938 as "neighborly friendliness," "joint anticommunism," and "economic cooperation." The latter was outlined by the 1939 Sixth National Congress of the GMD in Shanghai. The RNG thus portrayed itself as the champion not only of peace, but also of constitutional democracy in a fight against dictatorship (Chiang Kai-shek) and against the doctrine of "class struggle" (CCP).¹³⁹ On June 27, 1940, a "Constitutionalism Implementation Committee" was founded; in September it adopted a resolution to convene a national assembly on January 1, 1941. But a representative liberal democracy would mean the weakening of Wang's (and the GMD's) leadership role.¹⁴⁰ Wang himself finally pronounced in August 1940 that neither direct nor representative democracy was suited for China under the current circumstances, and argued in favor of "democratic centralism" around the vanguard GMD in coalition with smaller parties.¹⁴¹ Later that year, the RNG faced more urgent tasks, like the ratification of the "Basic Treaty" with Japan, creation of the Chinese charter of the East Asian League Movement, and the creation of a Central Reserve Bank. The national assembly was delayed indefinitely, and the constitutionalism program was shelved.

Wang Jingwei's constitutional agenda, however, did trigger long-term consequences. As David Serfass argues, it forced Chongqing GMD to revive the prewar constitutional process and might have inspired Mao Zedong's speech "New Democracy" in January 1940, which started an intensive propaganda campaign denouncing Chiang's dictatorship.¹⁴² The CCP's democratic agenda continued to define its power struggle against the GMD after the war, and ultimately, "democratic

centralism" became the official albeit nominal doctrine in the People's Republic of China.

Another ideological source of legitimacy for the RNG was the Sun Yat-sen cult, which it continued to promote as a civil religion. Though Wang knew Sun to be a fallible man and had more than once dissented with Sun while the latter was alive, Sun's deification served him (and Chiang) well. The Three Principles of the People were retaught in schools; Sun's portrait was rehung in offices and printed on the currency; his bronze statue was erected in the Nanjing city center; his testament was read before every meeting; and liturgies were held on memorial dates of Sun's birth and death. Wang and Chiang's rivalry for legitimacy through a competition of piety was also demonstrated by Chongqing's formal conferment of the title "Father of the Nation" to Sun on March 21, 1940, in the days leading to the foundation of the RNG. Nanjing, however, possessed Sun's mausoleum. In the spring of 1942, the Japanese army discovered Sun's liver preserved in the basement of the Beiping Union Hospital. Chu Minyi personally escorted the relic to Nanjing. After an elaborate ceremony, it was interred in the mausoleum on March 30, on the second anniversary of "returning to the capital."¹⁴³ In the first phase of Japan's invasion of China, symbols of the Sun cult were destroyed and desecrated. Now, the occupiers acquiesced to the necessity of restoring such expressions of Chinese nationalism. The attempt to appropriate the Sun cult for the Asianist cause will be analyzed in the following section.

In terms of diplomatic relations, the RNG was recognized by Nazi Germany (reluctantly), fascist Italy (enthusiastically), and Franco's Spain. France, however, declined to follow suit, first of all, because of its delicate position balancing its interests in China and in Indochina and, second, because its diplomatic corps in China was divided between officials loyal to Vichy and the supporters of Free France.¹⁴⁴ But RNG's most meaningful foreign relations were with Japan. In June 1941 and in December 1942, Wang conducted two "state visits" to Japan. As Japan had formally acknowledged the RNG as China's national government, he had an audience with Emperor Hirohito on the second visit. Plans to "strengthen the national government" were signed into effect.¹⁴⁵ On March 13, 1942, Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki visited Nanjing to return the courtesy, thereby corroborating the impression of friendship instead of patronage.

Of the RNG's "foreign relations," the status of Manchukuo was the thorniest. Despite the RNG's reluctant acknowledgment of the latter's statehood, cautious rhetoric was adopted to avoid public outcries. On



Fig. 21. Wang Jingwei and his entourage prior to visiting the Imperial Palace for a meeting with Emperor Hirohito. Seated from left to right in the front row: Lin Baisheng, Yuan Yuquan 袁愈侓 (?), Mei Siping, Wang Jingwei, Chu Minyi, Zhou Fohai, and Xiao Shuxuan 蕭叔宣 (?). Wang Jingwei and Lin Baisheng photo collection 1940–44, East Asia Library Special Collections, Stanford University.



Fig. 22. March 13, 1943, Japanese prime minister Tōjō Hideki meeting with high-ranking members of the Wang Jingwei government in Nanjing. From left to right in the front row: Mamoru Shigemitsu, Tōjō Hideki, Wang Jingwei, Chen Gongbo, and Zhou Fohai. Wang Jingwei and Lin Baisheng photo collection 1940–44, East Asia Library Special Collections, Stanford University.

May 4, 1942, however, Wang left Nanjing for a "state visit" to Manchukuo, accompanied by Zhou Zuoren. On May 8, he finally met Puyi, who probably did not forget that the man standing before him once sought to murder his father. Regardless of their sentiments, the ritual had been decided in advance with Japanese approval, leaving little to chance.¹⁴⁶ Notably, in 1942, Manchukuo was a proud trophy that Japan brandished to show the results of its state-building. It also absorbed the lion's share of Japan's oversea investments and migration. It had a prosperous industry and cultural industry, and young people were mobilized and trained in semifascist "Youth Corps."¹⁴⁷ Wang seems to have been impressed by Manchukuo's success. After he returned to Nanjing, he decided the focus of the RNG's work for the rest of the year to be youth training and currency reform.¹⁴⁸

The Basic Treaty signed into effect at the end of 1940 limited Japanese military zones to Mongolia and certain areas of North China, conceding central and southern China largely to the RNG. It agreed to rescind Japanese extraterritoriality as well as Japanese settlements, effective immediately. The two-year grace period before the Japanese army's total evacuation now was to begin immediately once the war ended, instead of after the vaguely formulated "recovery of peace." The limit on the number of RNG troops was revoked, and the RNG was given more freedom to build its own police and army. Japanese advisers' roles were limited to technical and military aspects, and their functions were to be defined by the Chinese.¹⁴⁹ Even though this was still far from the genuine independence that Wang Jingwei wished for, concessions were made to strengthen the RNG and to make it useful to Japan as a war partner. The RNG forces, however, were not deployed in frontline combat against Chongqing or in Japan's war in the Pacific, but mainly in clearing the growing communist influence in the occupied areas.¹⁵⁰ On July 1, 1941, the Rural Pacification Campaign (*qingxiang* 清鄉) was launched. Wang devoted himself to this mission with fervor. For the first time in his life, he began to pose in uniform as chairman of the Military Commission. As historian Jeremy Taylor remarks, such propagandist portraits were "Chiangesque,"¹⁵¹ aiming to promote Wang as a strongman whose personality cult rivaled the wartime Chiang cult. For Japan, clearing the occupied countryside of insurgences allowed it to release more troops to continue the attack in China and in Southeast Asia. For the RNG, it now had a good reason to build up its forces, which was essential for any regime to stay in the game of power. This military campaign also gave credibility to its anticommunist mission statement, which could be useful



Fig. 23. 1941, Studio portrait of Wang Jingwei wearing a field captain's uniform, Bann's Studio, Nanjing. Photographed by Liang Boping. Wang Jingwei and Lin Baisheng photo collection 1940–44, East Asia Library Special Collections, Stanford University.

after the war. The collaborationist forces were a miscellaneous collection. Aside from a regular army, it also consisted of intelligence agencies, police forces, and paramilitary forces controlled by gangs, bandits, village watches, and underground sects, whose loyalties were ambivalent.¹⁵² Wang Jingwei's command was probably nominal. Nonetheless, a military force half a million strong would make the RNG an important player in postwar politics.

The RNG introduced its own currency, *zhongchuquan* 中儲券 (“central reserve banknote”), on January 6, 1941, which replaced not only the national *fabi* 法幣 and former collaborationist regimes' provisional currencies, but even Japanese military notes. The Japanese High Command in China also announced on March 18 that it would return to their original owners Chinese factories in occupied areas that had been under temporary military management.¹⁵³ In a certain sense, the RNG economic policy continued Wang Jingwei and Chen Gongbo's prewar program of

building a national economy. The RNG found itself in a nuanced position that on one hand abetted Japan’s exploitation of China for its wartime needs, and on the other resisted Japan’s exhortations, keeping the domestic situation sustainable and the national industry protected. At the same time, the RNG’s mediation also “made collaboration more palatable than a straightforward *entente* with the Japanese.”¹⁵⁴ Under the RNG, economic activities in the occupied areas assumed some appearance of normalcy, at least until “command economy” was introduced in early 1943 to monopolize commodities, when Japan’s Pacific venture became desperate. Nonetheless, life in occupied China was notably more comfortable than in “free China,” causing resentment when resistance fighters returned.

Throughout 1941 Zhou Fohai became increasingly convinced that Japan was losing the war. He had overestimated Japan’s strategic acumen and military capacity, had underestimated China’s reserve, and had misjudged America’s resolution.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Pearl Harbor came as a shock. Following the United States, the Chongqing government formally declared war on Japan on December 9, 1941. Anticipating a “great disaster in the future,” Zhou decided that the best tactic now was to fully join forces with Japan in order to strengthen the RNG politically and militarily.¹⁵⁶ The Tōjō Cabinet was compelled to let the RNG join the Axis powers and declare war on the Great Britain and on the United States.¹⁵⁷ Its hesitation was most likely caused by the awareness that the RNG would exploit the chance to further build up its military forces. On January 9, 1943, Wang signed the declaration to join the “Great East Asian War.”¹⁵⁸ Realizing a goal that Wang had long cherished and the GMD long strived for, the RNG took the opportunity to revoke foreign concessions in Shanghai. “The peace movement finally has some results to show,” Zhou noted in his diary, not without a sense of irony. He wondered if future generations would forgive them on account of these demonstrably patriotic deeds.¹⁵⁹

On February 5, 1943, the yellow pennant attached to the national flag was officially untied. The RNG achieved an important triumph to appear fully sovereign—though perhaps more in its signifier than in the signified. Nonetheless, as historians like David Serfass and others have observed, and in Jeremy Taylor’s words, it demonstrated how “the balance of power within the occupation was constantly shifting.”¹⁶⁰ By the end of the war, Wang’s administration would exert a far greater influence over fiscal policy and enjoy a far deeper reach into the counties and towns of occupied China beyond Nanjing. But the RNG’s major source

of legitimization had never been fiscal or political capitals or military strength. Instead, it lay in carefully constructed symbolisms, especially in Wang's purported inheritance of Sun Yat-sen's legacy, which he used variously both to buttress and to undermine Japan's wartime propaganda.

Nationalism and Pan-Asianism

Throughout Wang's life he was known as a nationalist. After his return to Nanjing, however, his public speeches frequently endorsed Japan's wartime propaganda of Pan-Asianism (Jp. *ajia shugi* アジア主義; Ch. *da Yazhou zhuyi* 大亞洲主義). Yet a closer look reveals an effort to redefine his patron's rhetoric in substance and in purpose.

Pan-Asianism is a theory born in late nineteenth-century Japan to promote the regional cooperation of Asiatic peoples against Western colonial powers. Compared to the traditional Sinocentric East Asian order, it appeared to be a more modern ideology of metanationalism that served as an integrating force, helping to fulfill the requirements for the "de-centering of China."¹⁶¹ On the other hand, the Sinocentric hierarchic view of the world also encouraged some Japanese Pan-Asianists to envision an East Asia with Japan acting as the new Middle Kingdom. As early as 1910, the rhetoric of Pan-Asianism was used by the Japanese government to legitimize Japan's annexation of Korea.¹⁶² In the Second World War, Japan used it as propaganda to justify its aggression in Asia as liberating the Asian nations from the shackles of Western imperialism. As Rana Mitter argues, the term "Pan-Asianism" played into the irrational, romantic streak in Japanese nationalism, which drew on Zen and Nichiren Buddhism as well as German ideas of "blood and soil" to give meaning to the national quest for power and glory.¹⁶³ Chinese nationalism, more secular in nature, could also be fiercely patriotic. But it never stressed the ideas of spiritual purity in the way that imperial Japan (and Nazi Germany) did.

But the rhetoric of equality and "co-prosperity" was also conveniently exploited by the RNG in its striving for legitimacy. Aside from adopting the formal trappings of the GMD national government, it enhanced the Sun Yat-sen cult onto which Wang's personality cult was grafted. His collaboration, too, was justified in Sun's vision of Pan-Asianism.

Sun promoted this vision in a speech given at Kobe during his last trip to Japan, a mere four months before his death. Its opportune timing helped Wang endorse it as part of Sun's legacy. In this speech, Sun Yat-sen declared his hopes for all colonial or semicolonial Asian coun-

tries to follow Japan’s example and strengthen themselves and to abolish unequal treaties. Japan’s naval victory over Russia, further, inspired all other Asian nations to strive for their own independence. Sun suggested that “European culture” adored the “despotic way” (Ch. *badao* 霸道; Jp. *hadō*), while “Asian culture” the “kingly way” (Ch. *wangdao* 王道; Jp. *ōdō*). In Confucian parlance, a despot rules through force, utilitarianism, and suppression, while a king rules through benevolence, justice, and morality. These values were consequently to become the basis of Pan-Asianism. Sun’s view thereby betrayed a Sinocentric perspective. He argued that if Asian countries learned from Europe to improve their science, industry, and weaponry, the goal would not be conquest but self-defense. Japan, as Europe’s model student, ought to unite with other Asian nations in a struggle against the European despotic way. Right now, as Sun warned at the end of his speech, Japan stood at the crossroads between the despotic and the kingly ways, and it should choose very carefully.¹⁶⁴

Sun’s Kobe address received wide coverage in Japan at the time, though some newspapers redacted his closing note of warning. Ironically, Sun’s invitation of Japan to choose the kingly way was appropriated by Japanese militarist chauvinism: in the 1930s and 1940s, Japan often proclaimed its rule in Manchukuo as the kingly way and further used it to legitimize an “Asian Monroe Doctrine” and a “holy war” against China.¹⁶⁵ According to Prime Minister Hiranuma, it was Japan’s Heaven-mandated duty, sparing neither lives nor money, to save degenerate China from itself.¹⁶⁶ Using Confucian moralistic discourse, conquest was translated into salvation.

As Hu Hanmin argued in 1936, genuine Pan-Asianism placed a moral command on resisting Japan’s invasion, because no co-prosperity was possible without equality.¹⁶⁷ The same rhetorical strategy was employed by Wang Jingwei. Half a year after the RNG’s foundation, in a speech commemorating Sun Yat-sen’s seventy-fourth birthday titled “Nationalism and Pan-Asianism,”¹⁶⁸ Wang wove the three major credos of his life—nationalism, humanism, and Pan-Asianism—into a single ideological strand. As he declared, nationalism helped awaken the Chinese nation, making it self-conscious and unified; Pan-Asianism played a similar role to East Asian peoples. The ultimate goal was to unite all peoples in the world as equals in a fight against colonialism and chauvinism, so that the yellow race would not suffer the same fate that befell the aboriginal races in America, Australia, and Africa. In a sense, Wang’s Pan-Asianism was nationalism writ large, or humanism writ small.¹⁶⁹ He further proclaimed that, in the current world, even strong countries must find allies to sur-

vive, let alone a weak country like China. Japan, being a strong country of the same culture and race as the Chinese, was the best candidate for a union of convenience and of affection.

What Wang failed to mention was China's cultural superiority or its uniqueness that in his earlier writings had served as the foundation of national pride. China was now one weak nation among many, even though it culturally and racially bore much affinity to its strong neighbor, Japan. Why it deserved to survive, however, now became a question. Wang's more sophisticated ruminations on the ethical dimension of "weakness" and his criticism of social Darwinism almost disappeared from these speeches, which were more propagandist than intellectual in nature. As Kameda Hisao argues, Wang's Pan-Asianism was both rhetorical, driven by pragmatic calculations to regain China's rights under the umbrella of collaboration, and genuine, hoping that Japan would not annihilate China but become a scourge to colonial powers instead.¹⁷⁰

If Wang once held belief in Pan-Asianism, it notably never found explicit expression in his poetry. Throughout Wang's political career, his poetry presented a private image that enriched his public image as an intellectual and a politician. Its philosophical lyricism often appeared to give emotional depth to his ideological persuasions otherwise expressed in prose. In this last period of his life, however, there was a visible cleft between the public and the private. Simply put, the uplifting message of a Great East Asia finds no place in his poetry. Though some imageries may allude to a Japan-dominated East Asia, they limn a picture of violent conquest, and not a luminous world of benevolent moral influence. Take the following *ci* poem, for instance:

秋來彫盡青山色	The autumn has bleached the verdure of mountains;
我亦添頭白	I, too, see my temples covered in frost.
獨行踽踽已堪悲	A solitary traveler trudges down a road of sorrow,
況是天地荊棘欲何歸	Finding no home in a world where thorns overgrow.
閉門不作登高計	I close my gate and make no plan to climb high,
也攔茱萸涕	But am still beset with dogwood tears.
誰云壯士不生還	Who says that the valiant warrior did not return?
看取笳聲椎影滿人間	His clarion call to arms is answered across the world of man. ¹⁷¹

This *ci*, written to the tune "Yu the Beauty," was composed before the Double-Ninth Festival in October 1940, a day on which people climb

high, with dogwoods in their hair, to pray for longevity. By alluding to a quatrain by the Tang poet Wang Wei 王維 (699–761), who lamented not being able to join his brothers in celebration,¹⁷² Wang expresses his grief for Zeng Zhongming. The "valiant warrior" refers to Jing Ke, the Warring States assassin to whom Wang compares himself in the 1910 quatrains in prison. Though Jing Ke died in his failed attempt to assassinate the king of Qin, he was immortalized in another sense: successive assassins were inspired by his example to attempt at the life of the First Emperor. Gao Jianli 高漸離, a musician, took the chance of a court concert to throw his iron-filled lute (*zhu* 筑) at the emperor, failed, and was executed.¹⁷³ Zhang Liang 張良 (251–186 BCE) hid in the sands of Bolang and ambushed the emperor's chariot with an iron hammer.¹⁷⁴ For Wang Jingwei, this New East Asia is one where "thorns" (sufferings) overgrew. Japan's war of conquest is likened to the Qin unification: violent and, even if it was to succeed, ultimately short-lived (see also chapter 5).

Wang's disappointment in Japan's failure to live up to its ideals was expressed also in a poem titled "Reading Tao's Poetry," written in 1943.¹⁷⁵ In the preface to this poem, Wang reiterates the traditional view that Tao's reclusion was motivated by his objection to Liu Yu's 劉裕 (363–422; r. 420–22) usurpation. Wang argues, however, that Tao's poem shows his lingering hope for Liu Yu to recover the north from the nomadic invaders, as well as his disillusion caused by Liu's lust for imperial power, which prohibited Liu from completing the Northern Expedition. Wang cites Mencius: "If, by doing a single deed of injustice or by killing a single innocent, one could acquire the power over All-under-Heaven, one shall not do it!" (*Mencius* 2A.2). It implies that Tao's disappointment in Liu was not because of Liu's usurpation per se, but because of his moral failure. In effect, Wang finds Liu Yu's military exploits laudable; but his failure to unite China caused the lasting turbulence of the Six Dynasties. The poem continues to elaborate on this theme. Apparently, Wang is comparing Liu Yu to Japan, and his sentiments are complicated. The "barbarians" may refer to Western imperial forces. Japan's endeavor to "expel" them from Asia is laudable, but unfortunately its imperialist ambitions become its own enemy.

Japan's Pan-Asianism, understood or deliberately construed as an anticolonial ideology, was, however, highly useful for the nationalistic purposes of its client regimes and not just the RNG. On November 5, 1943, the Greater East Asia Conference was convened in the Japanese Diet Building. A proud Tōjō greeted heads of states that included Wang Jingwei (RNG), Zhang Jinghui 張景惠 (Manchukuo), Ba Maw (Burma), Subhas Chandra Bose (Free India), José Laurel (Second Philippine

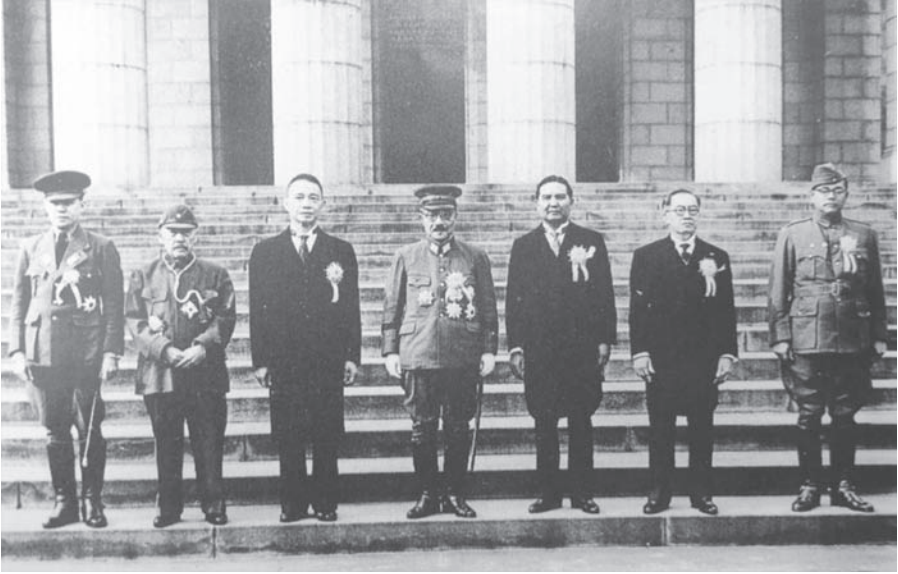


Fig. 24. Leaders from the Greater East Asia Conference. Photo taken in front of the National Diet Building in Tokyo (November 5, 1943). Left to right: Ba Maw, Zhang Jinghui, Wang Jingwei, Tōjō Hideki, Wan Waithayakon, José Laurel, Subhas Chandra Bose. Mainichi Shimbun, Public domain. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greater_East_Asia_Conference.JPG#filelinks

Republic), and Prince Wan Waithayakon (Kingdom of Thailand). Wang was accorded the seniority to speak first after Tōjō, but his speech was rather lackluster, a concoction of bromide.¹⁷⁶ In contrast, other representatives seemed genuinely elated. Prince Wan Waithayakon, Ba Maw, and Chandra Bose each gave an emotional speech on the “Asiatic dream.” The Southeast Asians did have reason to feel grateful for their newly pronounced national independence from Western imperialism, the patronage of a new Japanese Empire notwithstanding. Even Tōjō seemed to be caught up in the theatrical of Pan-Asian spirit, a sight that troubled his more sober military comrades.¹⁷⁷

Wang looked a little exhausted and pale at the conference, but no one realized that he was gravely ill. It would be his last major public appearance.

The Denouement

Trauma, stress, and psychosomatic distress gradually reduced Wang Jingwei to a shadow of his former self. In his last years, he frequently burst

into tears or rage at public occasions, a troubling sign to those who knew his public face to be unfailingly disciplined.¹⁷⁸ Nonetheless, Wang continued to perform his duties like a diligent civil servant. Since Liang Hongzhi had already occupied the former Presidential Palace, Wang chose the Examination Yuan compound as his office, a historical and scenic site, where the Ming Dynasty Confucius Temple was located. According to the resurfaced "Wang Jingwei Diary," he received guests daily, presided over meetings, gave banquets, and served diplomatic functions. This impression was corroborated by his son-in-law, who remembered that Wang worked six days a week, early morning to midnight. He occasionally watched a film at home or went swimming. But for security reasons, he was mostly confined indoors aside from performing official functions.¹⁷⁹ Since his suburban home was destroyed in December 1937, the Wang family moved into a three-story white villa in the Yihe Road government residential quarters, owned by Chu Minyi. It was also occasionally used for meetings and receptions.¹⁸⁰ On weekends the house was teeming with children, invited over by Chen Bijun to distract Wang from work.

Due to the absence of intimate biographical account of Wang's final years, his poetry may be used as the only albeit imperfect material from which to gain a glimpse of his lyric subjectivity. Notably, from 1938 through 1941, its dominant mood is distress, trauma, and suffering. Starting in the winter of 1941, however, it suddenly achieves a certain quality of lightness, hope, and even joy. According to Jin Xiongbai, sometime after Pearl Harbor, Wang realized his misjudgment and, in a gesture of self-reprimand, confided to his eldest son Wenying: "If China can still be saved, I only hope that my reputation will be ruined and our family broken. You must be prepared and be courageous to face this destiny."¹⁸¹ Jin did not report, however, when exactly Wang said this, nor did he reveal the source of the quotation. Perhaps Wenying related it to him in postwar Hong Kong. Given the advantage of retrospective insight, even witness memory should be treated with caution. Yet a change of mood is indeed detectable in Wang's poems written before and after the winter of 1942. If in late 1941, he still encourages his literary associate Long Yusheng to "endure the cold" together and expect "a season of solid ice,"¹⁸² in a quatrain around the Chinese New Year (February 14) of 1942 he writes:

梅花有素心	The plum flower has a pure heart:
雪月同一色	The same unsullied color of the snow and the moon.
照徹長夜中	It shines through the long night;
遂令天下白	And then brings the world light. ¹⁸³

The plum flower routinely serves as Wang's chosen self-image in the floral kingdom. Given the coincidence of the change with the outburst of the Pacific War, it appears that Wang finally begins to see the light at the end of the "long night." The deterioration of the RNG's prospects is thus curiously coupled with the increasing tranquility and lightness in Wang's poetry, which fluctuates through the spring of 1942 and becomes especially pronounced after the summer, coinciding with the US Navy's decisive victory in the Battle of Midway.¹⁸⁴

It seems that Wang, seeing that China's hope of victory might be realized, feels finally released from the duty to make history. The role that he carves out for himself is that of a father and a reader:

雨後春泥已下鋤	After the rain, a hoe bites deep into the spring soil;
一庭芳穢有乘除	In the garden, the fragrant and the foul take turn.
爐灰爆得花生米	Roasted peanuts crack beneath the ashes of the hearth
便與兒童說子虛	When I tell the children some tall tales of the old. ¹⁸⁵

風咽瓶笙茗初熟	The wind chokes; the kettle pipes; the tea is freshly brewed.
硯池花落惜香餘	Into the ink-pool flowers fall, their scent lingering.
青燈不礙明蟾影	The bright lamp does not dilute shadows of the moon;
雙照樓中夜讀書	Inside the Double-Shining Tower, a reader reads into the night. ¹⁸⁶

Both quatrains were written in the spring of 1943. The first couplet is metaphorical. Seeding stands for working toward a future harvest. Wang seems to say that he has done his share of labor, and the harvest is no longer his concern. The second line argues that fragrant flowers come out of the foul soil, and their respective power alternates in a natural cycle. In the second couplet, family life assumes the center stage. The poetic persona transforms from a philosophical farmer to a loving father. The space moves continuously inward, from the field to the courtyard and finally to a burning hearth. In the end, the intimate space is again expanded by history and imagination.

The second poem dispenses even with symbolism. It begins and ends with details that define Wang's domestic bliss. The visual focus is meticulously detailed. External nature is invited into the intimate space, in the form of air whistling inside a tea kettle or petals fallen into the ink. The "freshly" and the "lingering" signify fleeting moments only caught by the most attentive observer. The sensitive observer then reveals him-

self as a reader. The sources of light for the Double-Shining Tower—the name of Wang's studio and of his poetry collection—are now found to be the reading lamp and the bright moon. The gentle moonlight that expels the darkness in the external realm blends harmoniously into the flickering flame that illuminates the domestic domain. They shine upon a reader, who in books finds his eternal delight.

In August 1943, Wang began to feel acute chest and back pain, caused by the bullet remaining in his body close to the fifth thoracic vertebra. He was often assaulted by exhaustion. A Japanese military doctor, Lieutenant General Momoyama 桃山, proposed to retrieve the bullet. After the Greater East Asia Conference, an operation was successfully conducted on December 19 at the Japanese Army Hospital in Nanjing. The lead bullet had turned pitch-black and brittle. It broke in two upon retrieval. To recuperate, the next day Wang moved into the elegant Song Ziwen mansion by the Polar Star Pavilion. On his way home on the New Year's Day, however, Wang suffered a sudden paralysis. On January 4, Dr. Noll visited him. A look at Wang's gait sent the German doctor into tears, proclaiming that Wang was gravely ill. The family did not take his words seriously, assuming that he was covering up his mistake eight years ago in not removing the bullet. But in late January, Wang's legs turned numb. By the end of the month, he was bedridden, besieged by high fever and incontinence. As the Japanese doctor Kurokawa Toshio 黒川利雄 (1897–1988) came to Nanjing to treat Chen Bijun's stomach illness, he was asked to take a look at Wang. Kurokawa then recommended Saitō Makoto 齋藤真 (1889–1950), a prominent neurosurgeon, who diagnosed spinal nerve disorder. On March 3, Wang was flown from Nanjing to Nagoya, leaving the government in the custody of Chen Gongbo and Zhou Fohai. He would not touch the soil of China alive again.¹⁸⁷

Wang was checked into the suburban campus of Nagoya University Hospital. A team of seven medical experts were in charge of his care. The surgery on March 4 to remove part of the chest bones to release the pressure on the nerves went smoothly. Afterward Wang's limbs began to warm and he could move his knees again. His family felt hopeful. But Wang's condition remained unstable. Having been bedridden for months, he developed pressure ulcers. Due to persistent low hemoglobin, he received a blood transfusion every two or three weeks, but the effects were short-lived, and he suffered from hemolytic reaction. The doctors finally concluded that Wang suffered from a rare disease, multiple myeloma, a cancer of the bone marrow. An assistant physician remembered Wang as a model patient. Despite the extreme pain, he

never betrayed a trace of it in front of others. Only when left alone did he allow himself to frown.¹⁸⁸ Wang was performing his final act of bravery, charging against all the indignities that his dying body subjugated him to.

Nobody spoke of it in front of the patient, but most everyone knew that the end was near. On August 8, the Japanese ambassador at Nanjing visited Zhou Fohai, suggesting he should get ready. Zhou told him that he and Chen Gongbo had reached an agreement. Chen would be the acting chairman of the Executive Yuan, assuming responsibility as acting president, while Zhou's office would remain unchanged. One day later, Zhou flew to Nagoya and visited Wang in the hospital. He noted that Chen Bijun still expected Wang's full recovery.

Lin Baisheng's visit must have happened in the fall, on which he finally broke the delicate taboo and asked: "Do you have anything you entrust us to do, sir?" Wang was silent for a long while before he answered: "All the thoughts and speeches of my life, following the changing times and tides, have been published, which are for everyone to read. The only writings worth preserving for later generations are the *Double-Shining Tower* collections of poems."¹⁸⁹ This wish is corroborated by the eldest son Wenying's recollection: in their last meeting in early November, Wang explained to him that his treatises and speeches were only responding to the concrete needs of the times and should be consigned to oblivion; his poetry, however, not only bore witness to his love of China, but could perhaps make a small contribution to Chinese literature.¹⁹⁰ Wang Jingwei's last will was thus a gesture of double entendre: of remembrance and of oblivion. As a man who had subscribed to Wang Yangming's philosophy of action, his will instead bespoke a wish to be remembered by his being and not his doing, given that all actions were conditioned by circumstances that, in his case, were extremely regretful.

That summer, the long-ranged Boeing B-29 Superfortress became ready for the American air force to use in combat. The air raids on the Japanese main island began. A fortified basement was prepared for Wang, which was put into use after the Battle of Saipan. The transportation from his fourth floor suite into the basement was an ordeal for the greatly debilitated patient. In late autumn, he caught a cold during a maneuver. Pneumonia, the doctors' greatest fear, was what finally claimed him. In the early morning of November 10, his body temperature climbed to 40.6 degrees Celsius. His pulse stopped at 16:20, in the wintry hours of sunset over Nagoya and over the Empire of the Sun.

At the news of Wang's death, Prince Konoe promptly left Kyoto for

Nagoya to make his condolences. At a suburban airfield, he bid farewell as Wang’s remains were flown back to China.¹⁹¹ It was perhaps a gesture of remorse for having wasted Wang’s political capital, together with his own, by being a weak hand at the helm that steered Japan into an ever escalating storm of war. Konoe would commit suicide on December 16, 1945, to avoid the humiliation of reporting to the American authorities as a suspected war criminal.

Wang’s remains arrived in Nanjing in the early evening of November 12, a day when the pious ceremony to celebrate Sun Yat-sen’s seventy-ninth birthday was held as usual. Bureaucrats wore black armbands of mourning, and flags were lowered to half-mast. The next day, the farewell began. Government and civilian groups were organized to visit Wang’s coffin. Mourning rituals were also held in the northern provinces. Although Wang had previously expressed the wish to be buried in Guangzhou, the circumstances dictated that Nanjing was the best, if not the only viable, site. A funeral committee, led by Chen Bijun and Long Yusheng, decided not to hold a state funeral but keep the burial relatively austere. This did not entail, however, paucity of symbolism. The funerary procession was somber and reverent, in deliberate reminiscence of Sun’s first funeral in 1925, over which Wang himself presided.¹⁹² A hill between Sun Yat-sen’s mausoleum and the imperial Ming Xiao Mausoleum was chosen. At 10:00 a.m., November 23, 1944, he was buried under a fortified cement dome, on top of the Plum Flower Hill (Meihuashan 梅花山), named after Wang’s favorite floral symbol (see chapter 6).

After Japan’s surrender, Nanjing was recovered. In preparation for its grand return, the Chongqing national government ordered that Wang’s tomb be removed from the Purple Mountain area, as its presence was considered a sacrilege to the “Father of the Nation.” In the evening of January 21, 1946, a crew of engineers and soldiers used 150 kilograms of TNT to demolish the dome. The coffin was opened. Witnesses saw Wang’s body covered by a GMD party flag and ceremoniously dressed: in a dark blue long robe under a black mandarin jacket, with a top hat and a sash at the waist. His face was merely browned and specked, possibly because the body had been treated before the interment. The only funerary item was a piece of white paper, three inches long, bearing four characters: “Cometh back, Thy Soul!” (*hun xi guilai* 魂兮歸來), signed by Chen Bijun. The coffin was removed and burned. Wang’s ashes were dispersed without a trace. To some observers, this act ominously evoked a couplet that Wang had written in Beijing thirty-six years earlier:¹⁹³

留得心魂在 I will preserve only my heart, my soul,
 殘軀付劫灰 And let the maimed body incinerate in the flames of kalpa.

Similar images of incineration and catastrophe are frequently evoked in his poetry. The desecration of the body symbolized the beginning of a long-lasting campaign of *damnatio memoriae*, still being waged to date to erase the traces of Wang Jingwei from memorials, museums, and textbooks (see epilogue). Ironically, the victors of history unwittingly helped to realize a lyric truth by making Wang Zhaoming the person and Wang Jingwei the poetic persona inseparable, turning his poetry into prophecy.

Aftermath

When the war ended in atomic clouds, ranking members of the RNG hurried to find exits from the shambles. It turned out that Zhou Fohai had been in secret radio communication with Dai Li since the end of 1942, making him the highest-ranking BIS asset in the RNG.¹⁹⁴ The navy minister, Ren Yuandao 任援道 (1890–1980), had his own channels set up in the spring of 1942 (see chapter 5). Since the communist insurgence forces were already active in the formerly occupied territories, to prevent a communist takeover before the triumphant return of the Nationalist forces, Chongqing recruited collaborators to maintain local order. Zhou and Ren thus became vanguards for the national government. Chen Gongbo, however, did not put up a fight. To avoid the suspicion that he would use the RNG military forces to resist Chongqing, he flew to Japan and spent two weeks in the Kinkaku Temple in Kyoto. When he was listed by the Chinese national government as wanted, he flew back to China and turned himself in.

The collaborators were detained in the Tilanqiao 提籃橋 Prison (formerly the Ward Road Gaol) of Shanghai. At first their future remained unclear. As pastime they taught each other Chinese philosophy, classical poetry, English, and tai chi.¹⁹⁵ The French trial of collaborators, however, inspired and emboldened the Chinese press to call for justice to be meted out to traitors of their own. The sudden death of Dai Li in a plane crash on March 17, 1946, further cast a shadow on the fate of the Zhou clique, since Dai Li's method of record-keeping was his photographic memory. Following the treason trials in the communist areas, the national government began its public trials of collaborators in Suzhou. Justice was swift. Chen Gongbo was accused of “plotting with the enemy” and “opposing the central government.” He was found guilty, sentenced to death, and

executed. His fellow wayfarers included Liang Hongzhi, Wang Yitang, Mei Siping, Lin Baisheng, and Chu Minyi. Only Zhou Fohai received a presidential pardon from Chiang Kai-shek. His death sentence reduced to life, he died in prison of heart disease in February 1948.

Altogether, by October 1947, Chinese civil courts under the jurisdiction of the national government had held 45,679 treason trials, of which 25,155 cases were concluded. The death penalty was pronounced on 369 people, a life sentence on 979, and lesser terms of imprisonment on 13,570. More were tried in the CCP-controlled areas or court-marshaled. Extrajudicial "street justice" was rampant.¹⁹⁶ To put those numbers into perspective, the Nazi trials at the Nuremberg Military Tribunals resulted in 142 convictions, of which 24 defendants were sentenced to death. Of the 2,500 identified German "major war criminals," only 177 ever stood trial. The tribunals also recognized various defenses, with particular emphasis on their treatment of superior orders, duress or necessity, mistake, and military necessity.¹⁹⁷ In Italy, at most fifty people were judicially executed for fascist crimes.¹⁹⁸ In Japan, just six military and political leaders received the death sentence at the International Military Tribunal in Tokyo for plotting and waging the war, and only four officers for the Nanjing Massacre at the Nanjing War Crimes Tribunal. Altogether, between 1945 and 1951, more than fifty courts assembled throughout the Far East tried circa 5,000 Japanese defendants for the mass atrocities during the hostilities and condemned 920 of them to death.¹⁹⁹ Though Japanese war crimes arguably received more severe punishments than their Nazi counterparts, reflecting possibly the Allies' racist bias, the Chinese treason trials were much broader and harsher. They were paralleled in scale and severity only by the trials of collaborators in occupied France, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark.²⁰⁰ The legitimacy and effectiveness of retributive justice aside, one may gather the impression that collaborators were condemned with greater passion by their compatriots than war criminals, perhaps precisely because the lines were harder to draw and purgation was a necessary part of the national catharsis; that men of letters, having left a written wartime record, were treated more harshly than military leaders, who in the case of China were again summoned for patriotic duty in the brewing civil war; and that the postwar trials and purges were less about justice than about redrawing the political landscape. Thousands of Chinese collaborators, a category in which some undercover communists were wrongly sorted, who survived the trials or prison sentences would continue to be hunted down and persecuted in the political movements after 1949.²⁰¹

Chen Bijun was asked to condemn Wang Jingwei in court in exchange for her freedom. She refused and put up a defiant defense for herself and her husband. She accused Chiang of losing half of China to the Japanese then and selling out China to American and British interests now. As Charles Musgrove notes, to the exasperation of the judges and the prosecutor, the audience enthusiastically applauded her accusations, as the rampant corruption of the postwar national government produced much nostalgia for the RNG. When the judge stopped the hearing, Chen Bijun left the courthouse triumphantly, giving autographs to scores of spectators.²⁰² Sentenced to life, she spent her days hand-copying Wang Jingwei's poetry. In 1952, the widows of Sun Yat-sen and Liao Zhongkai mediated another passport to freedom on her behalf, provided that she denounce Wang. She refused again. A hospital wardmate recollected that, one night, Chen Bijun proudly declared that her husband was a beautiful man; that he loved her not for her looks, but for her talent.²⁰³ The next day, June 17, 1959, Chen died of heart failure and pneumonia. Her ashes were secretly sent to her children in Hong Kong and were scattered into the ocean.²⁰⁴

Long Yusheng was sentenced to twelve years, but, thanks to his network and reputation, was released in February 1948 on bail. He maintained contact with Chen Bijun and endeavored to preserve Wang's manuscripts.²⁰⁵ In 1964, after Jin Xiongbai, a former associate of Zhou Fohai, serialized his apologetic five-volume memoir on the Wang regime in Hong Kong, he received a copy of Wang's purported testament, titled "My Final Sentiments" (Zuihou zhi xinqing 最後之心情). It bore Wang's signature on the cover page and was dated October 1944. Given the common knowledge that Wang left no will, Jin claimed that he was suspicious at first, before deciding that the handwriting of the text resembled Long Yusheng's. He surmised that the will must have been first held by Chen Bijun and then by Long Yusheng, before being hand-copied and sent to him.²⁰⁶ This document, now also known as "Wang Jingwei's Testament on State Affairs" (Wang Jingwei guoshi yishu 汪精衛國事遺書), has been cited by scholars with varying degrees of belief in its authenticity. Using first-person pronouns, the authorial voice argues that his collaboration was motivated by a desire to shield the people in occupied China and to hand it back in one piece to the national government after the war. Regardless of its veracity,²⁰⁷ which is another unsolved mystery concerning Wang's life, to Wang's followers and sympathizers this was the version of truth that they chose to believe.

The Wang family assets were confiscated. Aside from an infant son

who was born and died in 1923, Wang and Chen were survived by five long-lived children.²⁰⁸ After 1945, they were all briefly detained, though only the eldest son, Wenying, and the son-in-law He Mengheng served prison terms. All eventually migrated to Hong Kong. Wenying, born in France in 1913, held a degree in politics and economics from Cologne University. He returned to China in 1939 and led the RNG Supply Office. After moving to Hong Kong in 1948, he was initially supported by his wife, a scholar in fashion design. They later migrated to California in 1989, following their daughter's rising academic career in medicine. He passed away in 2011. The eldest daughter, Wenxing, born in France in 1914, was a primary school teacher, and her husband He Mengheng was a botanist. He was appointed laboratory superintendent at the Department of Botany, University of Hong Kong, in 1959. They moved to New Jersey in 1984, where Wenxing died in 2015. He followed her the next January. The second daughter, Wenbin 文彬 (1920–2015), studied medicine in Japan and became a doctor in Indonesia in 1955, before joining a Catholic order. The third daughter, Wenxun 文恂 (1922–2002), studied pedagogy at Nanjing Central University. In Hong Kong, she taught first at St. Mary's Canossian College and then as a lecturer at the University of Hong Kong from 1958 until after 1978. She served as a member of the Professional Teacher Training Board and published a book on the pedagogy of classical Chinese poetry. The youngest son, Wenti 文悌 (b. 1928), wore the epaulet of lieutenant captain when the war ended. In Hong Kong he studied architecture by correspondence. He then worked in a Japanese architectural firm before founding his own and participated in a number of prestigious projects, including bridges and airports. He was still alive as of March 2023.

Wang's children remained deeply devoted to their father, though most were reluctant to visit the ghosts. He Mengheng avidly assisted scholars like Cai Dejin and Kamisaka Fuyuko in their research on Wang Jingwei. He sent photocopies of manuscripts (under the name Ho Mang Hang) to various North American university libraries. Before his death, he set up a Wang Jingwei Irrevocable Trust to encourage scholarly research. It is run by his third daughter, Cindy Ho (He Chongjia 何重嘉, b. 1957), now living in New York. Other descendants have chosen anonymity and silence. In February 2021, however, Wenying's family made a generous donation of "Wang Jingwei papers" to the Hoover Institution, which include priceless manuscripts and artwork, proving that silence is not oblivion.

PART II | The Poetics of Memory

Since early China, poetry had been an integral part of a genteel education. In the *Analects*, Confucius famously asked his disciples to study the Odes, so that they would learn proper emotional responses to circumstances, contemplate and socialize, serve their fathers and lords, and broadly acquaint themselves with the natural world (*Analects* 17.9). This request indicates that, in the Confucian tradition, a poetry education (or in the original context, an education in ritual odes) is as conducive to emotional intelligence as it is to objective, political, and moral knowledge. The canonicity of poetry, however, was not necessarily coupled to examination policy. As Benjamin Elman notes, even when poetry was entirely removed from the civil examination from 1370 to 1756, this policy “never hindered the popularity of poetry and literary flair among literati groups.”¹ Rather, the capacity to write poetry was an essential skill for polite society. And, following the expressionist exegetical tradition that sees poetry as the faithful reflection of its author’s moral being (see chapter 4), the poetry of a statesman was invested with special political implications.

Despite the abolishment of civil examinations in 1905 and despite the eventual institutional dominance of vernacular poetry after the Literary Revolution, classical-style poetry retained its canonicity among the reading public throughout Republican China. Few modern Chinese leaders, however, could confidently claim a high level of competence in poetry writing, as most pursued a military career or received a Western-style education. Despite or precisely because of this lacuna, being a poet was an essential component of Wang Jingwei’s appeal. Through poetry Wang the orator acquires a private voice in which he whispers to sympathetic readers his innermost thoughts, a voice that evokes the cultural memory

of the scholar-officials and the tradition of moral politics. This private lyric voice is key to its public function.

Though Wang's most influential poems are political in content, statistically speaking, more than half of his poems are about landscape, mostly written during vacations or periods of political setback. The lyrical transformation of political frustration into philosophical freedom has a long tradition in Chinese literati poetry. The medieval "farmer-recluse" Tao Qian, whose poems Wang studied as a child, established the tradition of "garden and fields" poetry, presenting his home among nature as a private space carved out in a world that had lost its way. For Wang, nature similarly represents cosmic harmony that transcends the reality of war and intrigue. If Tao had willingly chosen to retreat, then by emulating Tao's poetry and lifestyle, later poets could translate their plight into freedom, projecting agency over their fate and claiming the transcendence of their inner selves to external glory or disgrace.² The "self-content exile," fashioned after Tao Qian, embodies the moral self-sufficiency of a *junzi* 君子 (Confucian gentleman). As Mencius declares: if he prospers, he benefits All-under-Heaven; if not, he benefits himself (*Mencius* 7A.9). This view portrays the public service of a *junzi* to be altruistic, his inner tranquility not influenced by external circumstances; in effect, for a *junzi*, failures are blessings in disguise, relieving him from the obligation to serve. Wang Jingwei's landscape poems helped fit him into this paradigm of altruistic noble service.

The duality of Wang's poetry is also manifested in its history of publication. Though writing is purportedly a private act, publication opens the text to the public, its exegesis beyond the author's control. Furthermore, if a poem is written with its potential readers in mind, then even the "private" act of writing seems less private in nature, problematizing the poem's claim to "authenticity." Wang Jingwei the publicist seemed to have been troubled by the ambivalent implications of publishing his poetry. Soon after his release from prison, he published a collection titled *Poems Exchanged in Prison* (*Qiufan changhe ji* 邱樊倡和集), in which many of the poems were written in exchange with a fellow prisoner, Xiao Tianren 蕭天任 (Xiaoyin 小隱).³ The instant popularity of these poems established Wang's image as a romantic hero. In subsequent publications of the poems, however, their titles were modified to erase the context of social exchange, thereby making them appear more private and perhaps, consequently, authentic.

Through most of Wang's political career, he curated the private air of his poetry. His first individual poetry collection was titled *An Hour of*

Leisure (*Xiaoxiu ji* 小休集), edited by Zeng Zhongming and published in 1930, when Wang was recuperating from the 1927 debacle and preparing for an armed battle against Chiang Kai-shek (see chapter 2). This title suggests that, for Wang, writing poetry was a respite from politics. In the preface, Wang explains that the title alludes to an ode from the *Book of Odes* (“Minlao” 民勞, Mao 253), in which the authorial voice sympathizes with the toils of commoners and argues that they deserve a few “hours of leisure.” This allusion suggests that Wang has not forgotten his obligations, though at times he permits himself to enjoy the civil pleasure of writing. As Zeng’s epilogue emphasizes, despite many unauthorized and error-ridden collections of Wang’s poetry circulating in the market, Wang never bothered to correct those errors, since his poetry “had nothing to do with propagating the revolution.” However, because poetry shows “the cultivation of his mind” and is “the overflow of his innate character,” Zeng claims to have taken it upon himself to publish this edition on Wang’s behalf.⁴ This claim must be taken with a grain of salt, as the chronological arrangement of the poems betrays Wang’s supervisory role. Rather, what he wanted to avoid was the impression of taking poetry too seriously. A literatus-statesman may be a poet, but his proper obligation is always serving the public. Notably, this collection was partially translated into English by Xu Siyuan 許思園 (1907–1974; or Seyuan Shu) and published in London in 1938, in a consistent effort to promote Wang as leader of the Chinese Nationalist revolution to Western readers.⁵

A second collection of Wang’s poems was published in March 1941, one year after the foundation of the RNG. The editor was Kurone Shōsaku 黑根祥作, an *Asahi Shimbun* journalist in Beiping. According to Wang’s preface, the title *Sweeping Leaves* (*Saoye ji* 掃葉集) alludes to the Tower of Sweeping Leaves in Nanjing that commemorates Gong Xian 龔賢 (1618–1689), a Ming loyalist who refused to serve after the Manchu Conquest. On October 27, 1933, Wang Jingwei participated in a gathering there and met Chen Sanli 陳三立 (1853–1937) and Chen Yan 陳衍 (1856–1937), two celebrated poets and Qing loyalists.⁶ Wang’s poem on this occasion describes the wintry season as a test of integrity, a compliment to all loyalists.⁷ Possibly, the image of the “leaves” also alludes to Wang’s “Fallen Leaf” poem written in Hanoi (see chapter 3). This title thus implied Wang’s loyalty to China, his collaboration with Japan notwithstanding. Notably, Kurone did not collect any poems written after he left Wuhan for Chongqing, not even including “Fallen Leaf.” It is unclear who made the decision. There is some evidence that suggests, however, that it was decided by the Japanese side.

Among the Wang Jingwei papers acquired by Hoover Institution, there is a manuscript of *Sweeping Leaves*. It is a clean hand-copy, likely transcribed by a copyist, with Wang Jingwei's handwritten corrections and interlinear notes. These corrections are reflected in Kurone's edition, proving that this manuscript was made prior to, if not for, Kurone's publication. But the manuscript also contains poems written since his trip to Chongqing in late 1938 till the foundation of the RNG, in the same copyist hand with Wang's corrections, which are not in Kurone's edition.⁸ In addition, this manuscript contains more than a dozen poems entirely in Wang's handwriting, written since the foundation of the RNG till the summer of 1941. Five months later, Lin Baisheng, minister of propaganda, published *Sweeping Leaves* in Shanghai, with all the poems in the Hoover manuscript. Apparently, Wang and his followers considered these poems written before and since Chongqing to contain an important message, in which Wang often expresses his resolution to carry on and persevere. It was precisely this message that was redacted from the Beijing edition. These poems and their publication history corroborate the impression that, deprived of other channels of discursive self-revelation, Wang increasingly confided political messages to his poetry.

The final posthumous anthology edited by Long Yusheng and published in 1945 contains three collections: *An Hour of Leisure*, *Sweeping Leaves*, and *After 1941* (*Sanshinian yihouzuo* 三十年以後作). The *Sweeping Leaves* collection was further expanded to include poems written prior to May 12, 1942, Wang's sixtieth *sui* birthday. A quatrain with a strong Buddhist overtone written on that day opens the last collection, under the functional title *After 1941*. As I argue in chapter 3, after the outbreak of the Pacific War, Wang's poems often betray a certain tranquility, even hope and quiet joy. Long Yusheng's editorial decision was thus likely meant to call attention to this subtle change in Wang's mood as further evidence of his patriotic devotion.

The paradox between the act of revelation and the insistence on the private nature of Wang's poems is also manifested in the general title of his poetry collection, *Poetry on the Double-Shining Tower*. The "double-shining" stems from a poem that Du Fu wrote to his wife, at a time when they were separated by the war. It wistfully imagines their heads joining by the window, letting the moonlight dry their tears of joy.⁹ This title intimates Wang's dedication to his wife Chen Bijun, a disclosure of his domestic bliss. For a high-ranking statesman, needless to say, his marital fidelity was also a private virtue that enhanced his moral stature.

Wang Jingwei, as an active literary figure, maintained broad contacts with, and was broadly admired by, writers and scholars across all walks of life and ideological persuasions. Many would become sympathizers, if not followers, of his “peace movement.” Under Japanese occupation, traditional genres of Chinese literature saw a new boom. Poshek Fu has analyzed in depth a group of essayists who regularly contributed to the journal *Reminiscences* (*Gujin* 古今). Published in Shanghai and sponsored by Zhou Fohai, it featured anecdotal and lyrical essays in the style of Zhou Zuoren. Their writings were “filled with set allusions to the shame and anguish of compromise,” and these essayists portrayed themselves as *yimin* 遺民, anachronists who remained loyal to the previous dynasty.¹⁰ For them to be *yimin*, however, China would already have to have lost the war. But that was not the case. Fu notes that their backward, self-justifying themes came under increasing attack from the Nanjing regime. By way of Wang’s personality cult, Lin Baisheng’s propaganda ministry strived to create a “collectivist, forward-looking outlook defined by an amalgam of the Confucian virtues of ‘loyalty’ and ‘propriety’ and Western scientism.”¹¹ Fu has neglected to note, however, that Nanjing was itself filled with cultural anachronists. Wang Jingwei aside, many of the high-ranking collaborators in town were acclaimed classical-style poets: Liang Hongzhi, Xia Jingguan 夏敬觀 (1875–1953), Li Xuanti 李宣倜 (1888–1961), Chen Fangke 陳方恪 (1891–1966), Zhao Zunyue 趙尊岳 (1898–1965), Chen Liaoshi 陳寥士 (1898–1970), Long Yusheng, Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯 (1908–2003), and Mao Xiaolu 冒效魯 (1909–1988), to name but a few.¹² Traditionalist literary practices prospered. In January 1940, Chen Liaoshi founded *National Art* (*Guoyi* 國藝), a journal dedicated to research on and writing of classical-style poetry and prose, which was later sponsored by the RNG propaganda ministry. *Accord Monthly*, edited by Long Yusheng, had a similar mission statement and was also financed by the propaganda ministry. Wang Jingwei was among their regular contributors. Yet the contributors to these journals also encompassed a broad spectrum of cultural figures living under the occupation, who were not necessarily collaborators. These journals’ subscribers also consisted of the generically defined “cultural elites.” They published poems that encoded individual emotional responses to the national crisis or simply placid joy in the quotidian, as well as scholarly essays that investigated classical literature or traditional arts. Their popularity expressed their readers’ desire for the normalcy of cultural life despite or precisely because of the unending war, undermining the nar-

rative of “united resistance.” These seemingly apolitical journals therefore provided crucial links for the RNG’s outreach to a network of prestigious supporters and sympathizers.

Wang Jingwei’s poetry, by tapping into China’s cultural memory, speaks to his followers, sympathizers, and later readers through imageries and allusions, though the message is often ambivalent and open to interpretation. In Part II, I examine three case studies to show the textuality, temporality, and spatiality of poetic memory. By reconstructing the contexts and recovering the rich ambiguity of these poems, I argue that the exegetical principle of “authenticity” is as intellectually impoverished as misguided in hermeneutical practices. Instead, I attempt to maintain the openness of the reading. Wang Jingwei is shown as the “poet-in-chief” of a highly literary regime. His lyric performance of authenticity carried far-reaching political resonances. Whenever appropriate, the Japanese readership of his poetry will be considered, for it adds another layer of complexity to its meanings and functions.

4 | Poetry as Mnemonic Atlas

“Night Onboard” (1939)

臥聽鐘聲報夜深	Lying awake I hear a bell announcing the depth of the night;
海天殘夢渺難尋	My remnant dreams slide tracelessly beyond the sea and the sky.
舵樓欹仄風仍惡	The tall stern sags and leans, fighting a malicious wind;
鐙塔微茫月半陰	A distant lighthouse dimly gleams under a cloudy moon.
良友漸隨千劫盡	Slowly, through a thousand kalpas, my dear friends vanish;
神州重見百年沉	While this Divine Land of ours sees another century of decline.
淒然不作零丁嘆	Desolate, forlorn, I shall heave no sigh for Bereft Bay;
檢點生平未盡心	I inspect and recite the unfulfilled vows of my life.

This poem¹ in the heptasyllabic regulated style was found among the few compositions by Wang Jingwei in the long fifteen months between his spectacular flight from Chongqing and his ignominious return to Nanjing. It was also a poem that Wang was fond of writing in calligraphy as a gift for his followers and visitors, Chinese and Japanese alike. While its voice of immediacy seems to illustrate the motivations of his collaboration, its dating is problematic. In different contexts, Wang hinted at two different dates of its composition, problematizing therefore the poem's claim of authenticity. Interpretations by historians, pertinent to their jurisdiction of Wang as a patriot or a traitor, also drastically differ. On

a grander scale, the reading of the poem bears not only on the exegetical principle of lyrical authenticity, but on the hermeneutical validity of admitting poetry into historiography.

In this chapter, I examine the poem and its exegesis as a paradigmatic case in exploring the relationship of poetry, memory, and history. A close reading reveals that this poem is a composite text containing multiple forms of memories, each with its own function and purpose in writing history. In the end, I argue that the text resists a singular reading, but is a rich and ambivalent space open to a creative cacophony. As such, it comprises another dimension of history: the creative and the imaginative, the habitat of a transtemporal community of literary precursors, poets, and their future readers.

Anatomy of a Poem

The poem opens with sublime imageries of nature, a world that is agitated, dangerous, and liminal. It then slides into the poetic persona's inner emotional state—in this case a noble mind stirred by a profound pathos, articulated, however, through semantic parallelism in the two middle couplets. The orderly structure projects calmness and control of the lyric subjectivity. It ends with resolution, relating the present moment to the past and to the future, thereby broadening its temporal dimension as well as its subjective depth.

The very first word of the poem, *wo* 臥 (“reclining”), indicates that the lyric persona is a sleepless listener, his body inert, his mind active. The second couplet may describe the actual scenery outside of his cabin, or his mental imageries. The poem then delves into the poet's innermost thoughts. The fifth and sixth lines depict an image of destruction, with China retreating unstopably into the dark. It reflects Wang's judgment of the current state of the war. Since the beginning of the hostilities, China has lost vast swathes of territory, which contains all of its former political, cultural, and economic centers. Though the Japanese offensive has been stymied, the Chinese resistance cannot break the deadlock either. If the lighthouse stands for the light at the end of the tunnel, it remains dim and remote; Wang fears that another century of decline awaits China, the “Divine Land.”

There is, however, a sliver of hope. *Jie* 劫 (*kalpa*) is a Buddhist term for the cosmic destruction at the end of a cycle of time. The word *chong* 重 (“again”) relates the current pending destruction to *déjà vu* destructions of the past. In cyclical temporality resides the hope for rebirth, as

after a kalpa, time starts anew. A lost century may seem long; contextualized in China's long history, it will soon become a short episode. When the poet assumes the perspective of a future historian, the present war between China and Japan suddenly loses its uniqueness and immediacy. Historical memory empowers him with educated optimism.

The temporal and spatial dimensions of the poem are multiplied by literary references. The sixth line refers to an exclamation by General Huan Wen 桓溫 (312–373) of the Eastern Jin, who undertook an expedition to recover the northern territories lost to the invading nomads. Standing on a tower, with the northern plains spreading under his feet, Huan Wen condemned Western Jin ministers like Wang Yan 王衍 (256–311) for “the decline of the Divine Land.” Wang Yan, a chancellor fond of ritualized philosophical debates (*qingtan* 清談, or “pure talk”), was accused of negligence and self-protectionism.² By alluding to this story, Wang Jingwei rejects defeatist fatalism and further compares his act of collaboration to Huan Wen's endeavor to recover the lost territories. “Pure talk” is not enough. Desperate times demand resolute actions.

The “sigh for Bereft Bay” evokes the memory of Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236–1283), the patriotic chancellor of the Southern Song Dynasty who was captured by the Mongol army. When the Mongols brought him along for their final onslaught on the Song army's last encampment, he wrote a poem while meditating suicide, when the ship was passing Bereft Bay in Guangzhou.³ Wen's poem declares his hope to leave an untarnished posthumous reputation in history. Wang's poem, however, expresses instead his resolution to carry on, infamy notwithstanding. The last phrase of the poem invites the readers to ask: What are the “unfulfilled vows” of his life? Wang thereby contextualizes the present moment in his life's story and captures its immediacy in the poem, suggesting that his endeavors have been consistent since the beginning of his revolutionary career, when he embraced martyrdom, until this fateful night, when he chooses to carry on. Few doubt the young Wang Jingwei's patriotism. Wang hence hints at similar patriotism underlying his apparent treason.

Read against the second half of the poem, the first four lines suddenly become pregnant with symbolism. The bells reporting the hours of the night seem to announce the depth of the national crisis. The “dream” may stand for the author's youthful yearning for personal freedom. Wang was fond of writing poems when he traveled, especially on the ocean at night. His earlier travel poems often limn the sea, the sky, and the moon as symbols of eternity, transcendence, and freedom—sometimes even freedom from his historical obligations or national iden-

tity. His dream that literally takes flight between the sea and the sky thus may be understood as his dream for a private life and for a cosmopolitan identity. Here, however, he sees this dream dissipating against cosmic hostility. The malicious wind may stand for the Japanese jingoism that threatens to capsize the ship of China. The lighthouse of hope is dim—but again, it gleams in the distance and pierces the clouds. The poem thus speaks of moral courage, of carrying on despite adversities, and of understanding history in its long time-span. This poem is in the paradigmatic literatus tradition. Its style and technique conform to the formal conventions of a regulated octave on patriotic pathos, as established by Du Fu in his later poems at Kuizhou, when the Tang capital Chang'an fell in the An Lushan Rebellion.⁴ Fittingly, An Lushan was ethnically foreign. The formal choice, therefore, also contributes to the intertextual reference, enriching the poetic voice in a chamber filled with voices of other patriotic poets facing similar national crises. Wang's personal fate is associated with the fate of the nation and with China's history of cyclical foreign conquests.

There are two potential dates for this poem. The original draft of the poem, preserved in the Hoover Institution, is undated. According to a Japanese-language essay titled "An Account of My Thoughts" published under Wang's name in July 1941,⁵ it was written on his way from Hanoi to Shanghai. Since the small French steamer was wrecked during the storm, Wang was rescued by the five-thousand-ton *Hikkōmaru*, with which the agents Kagesa and Inukai had come to Hanoi to fetch him (see chapter 3). Wang had insisted on the French ship precisely to avoid the suspicion of Japanese patronage. But now, literally and symbolically, he changed ships. The essay declares that the poem was written in May, the very night of the changing of ships. This has to be a mistake, since the night in question was April 28. It could of course be a glitch of memory—unless it was a Freudian slip, namely the poem was actually written in early May, but in Wang's mind it was written on that fateful night, a date that gives the poem more emotional urgency and immediacy.

The second date is "June 1939," which has been added to the copyist manuscript of *Sweeping Leaves*, possibly in early 1941 in preparation for its publication. Both the Shanghai edition of *Poetry on the Double-Shining Tower*, published in August 1941, and a separate publication of the poem in *Accord Monthly* in October 1941 contain this date. This date also appears in the posthumous edition.⁶ Since Wang flew to Japan on the first of June, the only sea voyage he made in June 1939 was on his way back to Tianjin, after his meetings with the Japanese cabinet. He was

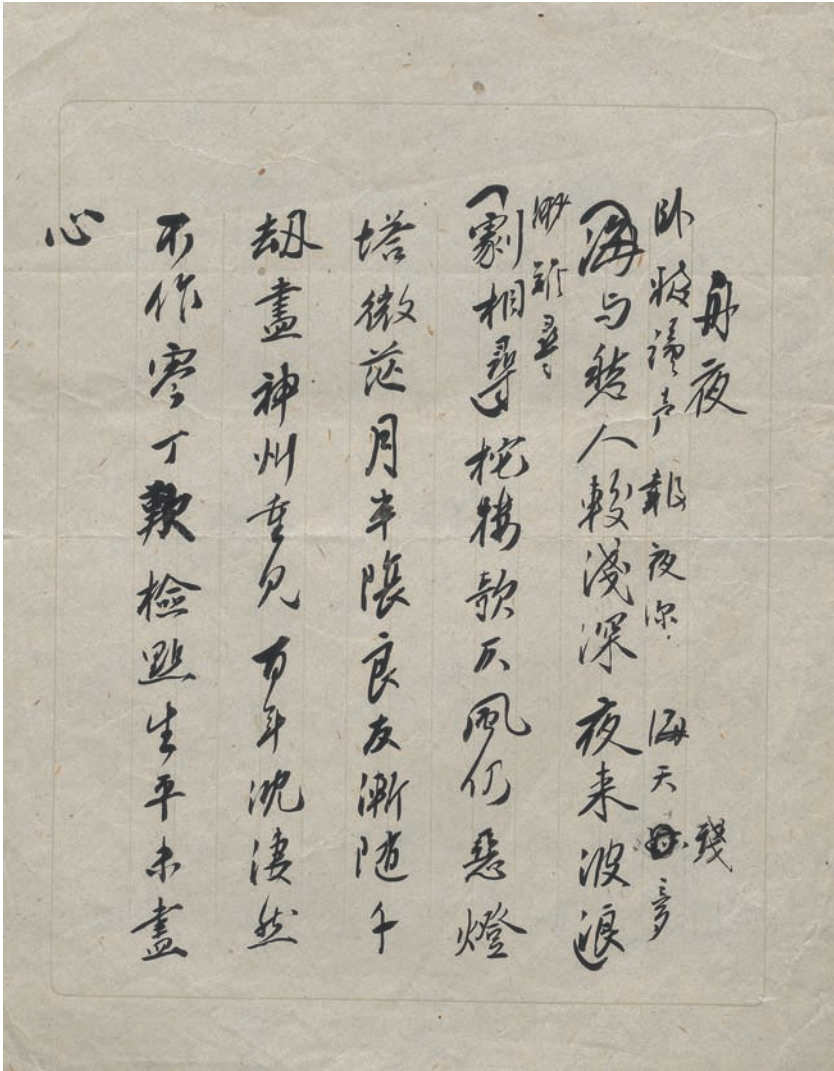


Fig. 25. Wang Jingwei's manuscript of "Night Onboard" (1939). Wang Jingwei Papers, Hoover Institution. Courtesy of Wang Wenying's family.

aware that his future regime would unlikely achieve the true independence that he had wished for, but would be created as a client regime under the principle of “divided governance and collaboration.” Given the very different circumstances of the two sea journeys, it was unlikely that Wang could have confused them. If the reason for the discrepancy is not mnemonic, it must be intentional.

Notably, “An Account of My Thoughts” was published by Wang only in Japanese. It was translated into Chinese by different translators,⁷ but none of the translations seems to have been authorized by Wang, who never released this essay in its original Chinese language. In contrast, the date “June 1939” was added for the poem’s publication in Chinese, well after the Japanese essay “An Account of My Thoughts” had appeared. It suggests that in the year 1941, Wang assigned different dates to this poem in publications meant to be read by Japanese or Chinese audiences, each bearing special implications.

The small window of fifty days between April and June 1939 is crucial to characterize two stages of the “peace movement.” When Wang left Hanoi, despite the Hiranuma Cabinet’s procrastination in declaring its position, he was escorted by sympathetic agents and had some reason to remain optimistic. In “An Account of My Thoughts,” he recounts in some length the pacifist Inukai’s words of hope for a genuine Sino-Japanese peace. After the meetings in Tokyo, however, hopes for swift military withdrawal and genuine peace were all but dashed. The symbolism of the “wind” that threatens to capsize the ship of China, therefore, would subtly differ, too: had the poem been written on the trip to Shanghai, it could refer to Japan’s previous aggressions before his “peace movement” was launched, and moreover could be inspired by the actual storm that sank the French steamer; in June after the Tokyo meetings, however, it would describe the current terms as still “malicious.” In the Japanese-language essay, Wang explains that he uses the story of Huan Wen to ask, “Who should be responsible for this war, if we are not?” It thus underlines China’s co-responsibility for losing the war, though the “we” may tactically include the Japanese readers. The dating in the Chinese-language publications, however, implies a stronger indictment of Japan for its aggression.

The fact that two dates exist for two separate audiences speaks of the performative nature of Wang’s lyrical authenticity. Unsurprisingly, it is also the poem on which historians’ interpretations diverge the most radically.

In his highly influential biography, Cai Dejin cites this poem and

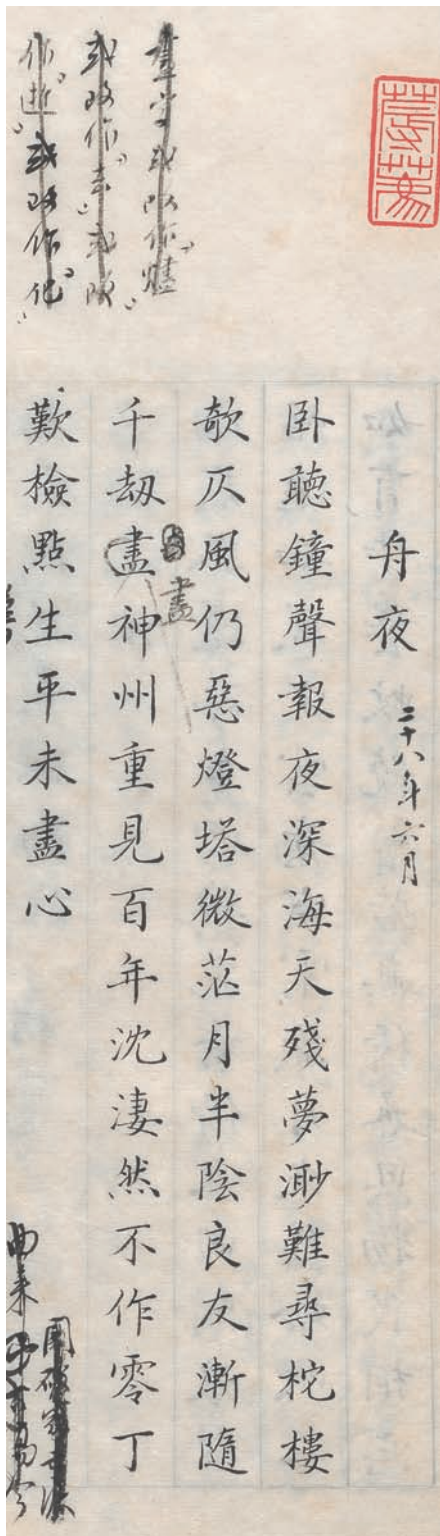


Fig. 26. A transcribed copy (most likely made in early 1941) of “Night Onboard” with handwritten date “the sixth month of the twenty-eighth year of the Republic” (June 1939). In the upper right corner there is a seal, “Ru jian” 蓆薦 (straw mattress), meaning a humble object on which others may rest. In the lower right corner there are two more crossed-out lines, which contain the phrase “guo po jia wang lei” 國破家亡淚 (tears for the broken nation, the fallen family). Wang Jingwei Papers, Hoover Institution. Courtesy of Wang Wenying’s family.

asserts that it “reveals Wang’s inner state of mind as being fully committed to selling his country for a profit.”⁸ He does not explain how he has reached the reading, seeming to assume that this conclusion is evident to every reader. However, three other Chinese biographers cite the same poem as proof of Wang’s cynical effort to “mix black and white” (*hunxiao heibai* 混淆黑白) and to “reverse right and wrong” (*diandao shifei* 顛倒是非).⁹ Their consensus (curiously, all biographies use these eight words verbatim) suggests that a credulous reader may indeed read the poem as patriotic; once she is informed of Wang’s treacherous nature, however, she will understand it to be manipulative and mendacious. The readers whom they may deem “credulous” ironically include prominent historians like Yu Ying-shih and Wong Young-tsu 汪榮祖. In his preface to Wang’s poetry collection, Yu Ying-shih cites precisely “Night Onboard” as proof of Wang’s altruistic motivations for collaboration.¹⁰ Wong Young-tsu similarly cites this poem as a revelation of its author’s genuine sentiments, calling Wang Jingwei a “patriotic traitor,” whose actions represented a rational plan to save the nation.¹¹

None of the historians, however, have paid much attention to the disparate dating. Both Chen Dawei and Wong Young-tsu adopt the April dating, which suggests that they have read “An Account of My Thoughts.” Yet neither attempts to explain the dating of June in Wang’s collection. In this case, more than in any other, their reading strategy reveals itself as circular, influenced primarily by their judgment of Wang and of his peace movement. Furthermore, these historians, implicitly or explicitly, operate under the principle of “poetry articulates one’s mind” (*shi yan zhi* 詩言志), interpreting a poem as an unmediated revelation of its author as an agent of history, whose private and emotional being is intimately tied to his public and historical doing. If Yu Ying-shih and Wong Young-tsu consider Wang’s poem to be patriotic and to be proof of his patriotism, then Cai Dejin understands it to be the unfiltered expression of his treason. As for other PRC biographers who read this poem as being mendacious, they seem to assume that such mendacity is encoded in the text and is transparent to an informed reader. After all, as Mencius instructs, in reading poetry one shall not let the stylistic embellishments hinder understanding of the text, and not let the text hinder understanding of the author’s mind, but shall retrace the authorial mind with one’s own intent (*yiyi nizhi* 以意逆志) (*Mencius* 5A.4); the method to understand the historical author is to know his person and to study his time (*zhiren lunshi* 知人論世) (*Mencius* 5B.17). The biographers’ accusation faithfully follows this exegetical tradition.

It happens that Wang Jingwei himself champions the same exegetical principle. In *Talks on Poetry of the Southern Society*, Wang proposes that the ideal poetry is the spontaneous revelation of an innocent mind, which in his own time was manifested by the “revolutionary literature” that Southern Society poets exemplified. Revolutionary literature, however, is not necessarily about the violent revolution. Rather, it is the authentic overflow of a “revolutionary spirit,” which first of all embraces the multifaceted life, and second combines the positive manifestation in action (what one chooses to do) with the negative manifestation in integrity (what one chooses not to do). In this sense, the recluse Tao Qian’s poetry is the paragon of revolutionary literature.¹² In contrast, poetry by a “turncoat” like Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582–1664), who served the conquering Qing Dynasty, may appear “good,” but a perspicacious reader will recognize the “filth hiding in the marrow.”¹³ Excellence in poetry has its roots in, and serves as the evidence of, the purity of the poetic mind; all other distinctions are secondary.

If Wang’s own poems are to be judged by the same principle (and in the *Talks on Poetry*, Wang’s poems are cited as exemplary revolutionary literature), Wang is essentially inviting the historians to judge his poems by his person. And yet, if his act of collaboration was arguably comparable to Qian Qianyi’s (if not more despicable, as Japan had not even conquered China), what else would be his redemption, aside from the “authenticity” of his patriotic poetry? On his deathbed, Wang precisely asked to be remembered through his poetry. But poetry becomes apology only when it can be admitted into the court of history as authentic testimony. At this juncture, an examination of the question of “authenticity” in lyric poetry is in order.

The Question of Authenticity

The term “authenticity” in literary criticism is intrinsically related to “sincerity” as a personal quality. As it happens, “sincerity” was the transparent mask that Wang Jingwei wore to move about in the world. As a politician, he trademarked and weaponized its intimate charm. In a poet, such performative “sincerity” is manifested as the quality of being “authentic.”

I argue that, for poets, authenticity is part of their theatricality. Poetry writing is a self-conscious, performative act. It punctuates the continuous flow of time with moments of contemplation. It assigns semantic order, metrical rhythm, and philosophical depth to the otherwise cacophonous

experience of living. “Authenticity,” therefore, cannot but be an impression that a successful poem creates. In traditional Chinese criticism, however, it is understood without irony as an essential quality of lyric poetry. Its proponents argue that poetry captures the truth (especially moral truth) of an author at the moments of composition. As a critic, Wang Jingwei fully embraced this canonical exegetical tradition. His encomium of “innocent” poets, the English poet Byron (1788–1824) and his contemporary Su Manshu 蘇曼殊 (1884–1918) par excellence, is further inspired by Romanticism. Such innocence, however, is not only the result of the unconscious and spontaneous act of “natural genius,” but also that of Confucian self-cultivation and Buddhist benevolence. When poetry is experienced by the reader as the spontaneous outpouring of one’s nature, the poet and his creation are united.¹⁴

The term *shi yan zhi* derives from the canonical *Book of Documents*, formed at the dawn of the Chinese elite writing tradition. The mythological Sage-King Shun 舜 charged the music master Kui 夔 with teaching royal and noble heirs, so that “the straightforward may yet be mild, the gentle may yet be dignified, the strong not tyrannical, and the impetuous not arrogant.” The teaching materials were odes (as early poetry was always sung) and ritual music, as “poetry is the expression of earnest thought; singing is the prolonged utterance of that expression.”¹⁵ The king’s speech implies the possibility of seamless transmission of the authorial intent into the mind of a percipient reader. Poetry in this sense becomes the transubstantiation of the historical author, further serving a didactic function. The poem of a patriot shall inspire the reader’s patriotic devotion. The poem of a traitor is preserved to admonish, since a percipient reader is able to decode the poem as showing the mendacious nature of the person. In short, poetry reveals the truth about its author.

Classical authors, from Mencius on, have elaborated on this principle. But it was through the critical discourse on the Tang poet Du Fu that authenticity (or “sincerity” in Eva Chou’s term) “from being an essential quality of worthwhile poetry . . . evolved into a standard by which worthwhile poetry may be recognized.”¹⁶ The quality of perceived sincerity justifies the critics’ claims of the uniqueness of Du Fu’s poetry, making it no longer subject to conventional criticisms regarding technique or style. The circular logic that Wang endorses, in this critical tradition, is the rule rather than the exception. As Eva Chou points out, to understand Du Fu criticism, “It is important to recognize that many critics have found it unnecessary to make any distinction between the proposition that poems reveal the person and the proposition that the person explains the poem.”¹⁷

It is perhaps a “natural reading strategy” for readers of lyrical poetry to identify the author’s person with his persona. As Roland Barthes remarks, “The *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it.”¹⁸ The authorial function creates a sense of consistency for the various creations through the author’s life, which may well be an illusion. However, even to the most self-conscious critics, biographism is hard to avoid. In effect, we may reverse Roland Barthes’s assertion on its head and say that no “author” is ever dead, since, in his own words, “The author is never more than the instance writing.”¹⁹ Arguably, asserting that the poem bears no relation to its historical author is absurdist, an attempt to prioritize the fetishism of the text over empirical research or reading.²⁰ Rather, and as this book maintains, the relation between the historical poet and the lyric subjectivity is indeterminate. In the case of “Night Onboard,” the author’s identity, or even the dating of the composition, does influence the reading of the sentiment of the lyric “I.” It is the purported lyric truth of the “author” in the instance of writing.

Rejecting naive biographism does not mean exiling lyric subjectivity. As Käte Hamburger suggests, a poem’s statement is always experienced as a reality statement. For instance, we read a letter by Rilke “as being the experience of the I which is here stating.”²¹ It may sound tautological, but the distinction is crucial. The lyric subject-object correlation differs from the object-oriented communicative statement “in the very fact that the object is not its goal, but its impetus.” Otherwise expressed, “The lyric statement does not aim at having any function in an object- or reality-nexus.” This circumstance is the reason for the infinite variability of the lyric subject-object relation, making the understanding of the poem difficult.²² The correlation between the lyric I (the authorial voice) and the empirical I (the historical author) thus cannot be determined. Even though we may be more interested in the how (a poem is constructed) than in the what (it says) when it comes to the lyric genre, the what nonetheless remains there to be experienced. “And precisely what distinguishes the experience of lyric poetry from that of a novel or a drama is that we do *not* experience a poem’s statements as semblance, as fiction or illusions. Our grasping the poem through acts of understanding and interpretation is to a large extent a process of ‘re-experiencing.’ We must consult ourselves, if we will understand the poem. For we always stand in direct confrontation with it, just as we do *vis-à-vis* the utterance of a real ‘Other,’ of a Thou who speaks to my I. There is no mediation of any kind.”²³ The power of lyric poetry lies in its immediacy. To truly experience a poem, the reader must allow herself to sink into its textual flow and submerge in a moment of identity, however brief, with the lyric subjectivity.

By establishing the sincerity of Du Fu's poetry, Chinese critical discourse also proposes to read his poetry as history. The binome *shishi* 詩史, however, has a rather ambivalent syntactical structure, which may be understood alternatively as "poetic history," "poet-historian," "history in poetry," or "poetry as history." Without going into the full depth of the critical history of this term, already explored by a number of scholars, including two recent doctoral dissertations,²⁴ here it suffices to point out that one interpretation is that poetry conveys a higher level of historical truth by articulating emotions lost in historical narratives. As philosopher Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–1695) argues, historical narrative is not dependent on poetry, but poetry may supplement the negligence of history in articulating the historical agent's emotional reaction to historical events.²⁵ David Der-wei Wang similarly contends that only poetry can revive the strong individual emotions from the disappeared memories and discarded papers of history, revealing the subtle and complicated truths, and thereby confirming that, in his own words, "only after the death of history, poetry is born."²⁶ Wang Jingwei did not explicitly expound on *shishi*, but his understanding appears to follow the same vein. As he argues, the study of traditional Chinese poetry is essential in preserving "the people's heart and the literati's morale" for the recovery of national self-consciousness.²⁷ In other words, it is precisely through its capacity to recover the subjectivity of a historical narrative—the lost memories of men and women when they encountered historical events in real time—that poetry becomes an elevated kind of history. By introducing the dimension of memory into the equation, the dualistic system is transformed into a triangular system. Through the transformation of history into memory, a poem acquires the capacity to convey the emotions of a lyric subject to future readers. The cultured medium of literary language allows individual readers to translate their experience (memory) using the established dicta of cultural and collective memory. Through this medium, the readers then localize the individual and collective memory encoded in the poem in their own subjective experience, thereby realizing the communication of subjectivities across temporal boundaries. A poem creates a transtemporal community.

A Mnemonic Atlas

An "authentic" poem posits the faithful translation of the author's moral truth, at the moment of composition, into rhymed words. This view regards a poem as the instantaneous and holistic transference of the

authorial memory. In actual fact, a poem is a palimpsest, painstakingly written and rewritten, and a composite text of various forms of memory. As modern studies reveal, memories are not mechanical imprints of impressions. Conscious instances of unprovoked, preverbal, and intuitive recollections are rare, as such memories stay mostly in the domain of the unconsciousness. In a predominant number of cases, it is in social interactions that memories are actively retrieved. The meaning of our memory is also understood and altered through contextualization and recontextualization. Furthermore, memory is plastic, subject to fragmentation, suppression, distortion, falsification, and correction, all processes that are essentially tied to social contexts. In short, a social framework is needed for people to acquire, recall, organize, understand, and communicate their memories. Last, our access to memory is primarily mediated by language, itself a social and cultural product. Through the medium of language, we can also acquire memories that contain temporal and spatial dimensions much beyond individual experience, in the form of education and cultural products. In this sense, individual memory and social memory are inseparable, and their correlation indeterminable.

Inspired by Aleida Assmann's analysis of *Hamlet*,²⁸ I have tentatively identified seven forms of memory encoded in the single poem "Night Onboard." These are episodic memory, traumatic memory, historical memory, cultural memory, counter-memory, witness memory, and *memento mori*. This list exhausts neither the typology of memory nor, possibly, those forms and functions encoded within Wang's poetic corpus. These forms, furthermore, are not mutually exclusive, but often overlapping. Episodic and traumatic memories originate from individual experience, though their recollection and expression have been shaped by social and collective frameworks of memory. The collective aspect of memory is more pronounced in historical and cultural memories. Counter-memory and witness memory show ways in which Wang's writing strives to give voice to his subjective experience in the narrative of his life. *Memento mori* is a peculiar type of memory: that of a future that is certain to come.

Episodic memory is the spontaneous recollection of past events, often triggered by a concrete incident. This form of autobiographic memory is dynamic, unstable, and involuntary.²⁹ In "Night Onboard," Wang's reminiscence of his "remnant dreams" between the sea and the sky, a semantic image created through past trips across the ocean, is triggered by the sound of bells and waves. The recollection, however, is of the negative kind; namely, he remembers a previous wish for the future that has not

materialized. In this case, Wang is reminded of his dream of personal freedom, only to realize that it is never to be fulfilled.

Traumatic memory is the suppressed memory of a devastating event. Since the event is so incomprehensible, humiliating, painful, or life-threatening, its recollection could destroy the framework within which the person constructs his or her identity.³⁰ Such a memory is therefore deliberately excluded from the conscious mind. From an early age on, Wang was easily assailed by grief. Many of his comrades, furthermore, had died, some for his cause, some even in his stead. His poems often betray a certain survivor guilt, as well as the tormenting thought that he might have been instrumental in causing their deaths. Notably, in this poem, Wang refers to the deaths of his “dear friends” as vanishing “through a thousand kalpas.” A kalpa, as mentioned previously, is a Buddhist term referring to the inevitable destruction at the end of every cosmic cycle. These deaths are therefore likened to natural events. Wang’s choice of words signals unconscious distancing, for the incapacity to ponder each and every catastrophe, lest the abyss of grief engulf him. He may find solace in contextualizing the deaths in a framework of destiny. Such a double bind of commemoration and denial signals psychological trauma.

Both episodic and traumatic memories are passive recollections of personal experiences. However, if the function of episodic memory is primarily to record and relate, writing about trauma has a therapeutic function. While a traumatic experience is “preverbal,” leaving a physical trace on the sufferer’s body,³¹ the suffering can be alleviated by finding a narrative that links emotional memories to create a structured, contextualized, and meaningful story. As Richard Kearney argues, in witnessing past pain, “Narratives imitate the life of suffering-and-action in such a way as to refigure events absent, unbearable and otherwise forgotten. Narrative catharsis . . . is a way of making absent things present in a unique balancing of compassion and dispassion, of identification and contemplation, of particular emotion and universal understanding.”³² By externalizing his grief in words and further by naturalizing his comrades’ demises in a cycle of life and of the cosmos, Wang Jingwei finds the strength to carry on—to fulfill the unfulfilled vows of his life.

In contrast to the aforementioned forms of memory, which are personal, the next two forms originate in the domain of collective memory and are localized in the individual’s subjective perceptions of the world. As a general feature, Wang Jingwei’s lyrical selfhood is fundamentally shaped by, and in response to, the collective memory of China’s history and cultural traditions.

Historical memory is the official representation of the past. Chinese intellectuals in the early twentieth century created a nationalistic myth, asserting that China always perseveres and revives after cyclical foreign conquests—be it the Mongols or the Manchus.³³ Cultural elites living under Japanese occupation frequently evoked the historical memory of conquest, comparing their own choices to those of late Ming literati who eventually served or at least accommodated the Qing Dynasty.³⁴ In this poem, Wang similarly resorts to this cherished narrative. He sees China's current subjugation to Japan as the beginning of another period of decline, while implying the possibility of a future renaissance.

Cultural memory refers to the long-term, collective memory of a group about its past, which informs its identity. Wang's poem contains many mnemonic codes that would trigger an educated reader's "recollection" of a collectively shared cultural repertoire. The allusions to Huan Wen's exclamation on a tower and to Wen Tianxiang's sigh in the Bereft Bay, as well as the formal reference to Du Fu's later poems, activate the mnemonic codes of patriotism. These references are almost tongue-in-cheek. Wang must have been aware that his action stood in contrast to all three historical figures. Huan Wen waged a military campaign to recover the north; Wen Tianxiang was captured on the battlefield and was eventually executed by the Mongols; and Du Fu followed the Tang court in an exodus to the hinterland, refusing to accommodate the new regime. Wang's apology rests precisely upon the expectation that a reader familiar with the allusions will recognize the paradox. He thereby asks the reader to understand his motivations behind the act of apparent treason, which is in effect inspired by and comparable to these historical precursors. This kind of mnemonic practice locates Wang in an elite cultural community whose dialogues are encoded through references to the past. As Jan Assmann argues, memory of a shared past creates group membership.³⁵ The sense of identity is normative: regardless of the reader's sympathy toward Wang, or the lack thereof, the fact alone that she understands this poem suggests that they share a cultural identity. Elite, classical-style Chinese verse is intensely intertextual, and cultural memory is frequently evoked through forms, styles, conventions, allusions, and even rhetorical techniques. These mnemonic codes trigger recognition and create a sense of camaraderie between the author and the reader, who share membership in a transtemporal cultural community. Intertextuality creates intersubjectivity.

The next two forms of memory are essential in making Wang's poetry his apology. Wang's gesture to "heave no sigh for Bereft Bay" constitutes a counter-memory, "through which binding values of the past must

be upheld against the demands of the present.”³⁶ It contains a belief in his moral worth upon which he constructs his sense of identity. It also encodes a protest against the contemporary and future denunciation of him as a traitor. It is, further, a melancholic memory. His “desolate and forlorn” sighs suggest that he expects such a countermemory to hover at the margins of wartime discourse and of historical imagination, fighting the chance of complete oblivion.

Wang’s poem serves as witness memory, an entreaty to future generations to remember his version of the truth. Guided by the exegetical principle to understand the lyric statement as a reality statement, it is neither necessary nor possible to determine the authenticity of his evocation. It is, however, worth pointing out that even witness memory in more prosaic genres is not without hazards. Memory is fallible, subject to oblivion, distortion, and falsification.³⁷ Testimonies, in particular, involve high ethical and epistemological stakes that may highlight the dangers of prioritizing questions of sincerity over truth. Every utterance of “Believe me, I am being *sincere*” implicitly encodes and is often understood to be “Believe me, this is the *truth*.” A testimony further makes a claim to its universality and transparency.³⁸ Oral history researchers, therefore, face the dilemma of respecting the urgency and sincerity of testimonies while remaining aware of their insufficiencies at the same time. But instead of trying desperately to “impose a discipline on an untamed world,” they are encouraged to “seek to create a plurality of knowledges: knowledges that complement, contradict and seek to undermine one another, or come together in unexpected ways to create new events and modes of understanding.”³⁹ In this sense, Wang’s witness memory, encoded in lyrical forms, may be taken as sincere and urgent, though not necessarily true, adding to the plurality of knowledges about him and about his time.

The seventh form of memory embodied in this poem is *memento mori*, a peculiar kind of memory: that of death. Strictly speaking, it will never become an individual’s own memory, but is part of the collective empirical observation about life on earth. To “remember” the inevitability of death gives meaning to life. Wang Jingwei is a poet keenly aware of his mortality. His poetry projects a perpetual search for the meaning of life as his drive of action. At the end of “Night Onboard,” he swears to fulfill the “unfulfilled vows” of his life, which may be understood as his aspiration for national salvation through individual martyrdom, a frequent theme in his poetry. Contextualized in his life’s enterprise, Wang’s collaboration is portrayed by his followers as sacrificing not only his life but also his reputation—his ultimate act of martyrdom (see chapter 5).

A poem read this way ceases to be “a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God),” but becomes “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.”⁴⁰ It is a mnemonic atlas, carrying memories in a rich variety of species and taxonomies, each with its own voice, contour, and function. The text thus unfolds itself into an open space of creative cacophony.

A Creative Cacophony

The coexistence of multiple forms of memories in one poem means the coexistence of voices including, but not limited to, the authorial intent. In the case of “Night Onboard,” the voices of the ancient patriots are not necessarily in tune with each other, or even with the authorial voice. The lyric subjectivity insists on their harmony and invites future readers to consent. The reader’s voice joins the cacophonous chorus with her own take on the tune, since no historical memory is inheritable without one actively locating it in one’s own memory. This cacophony is creative in the sense that the audience may freely choose to follow a diverging motif and join the chorus too. Last, there is nature, on whose silence and disarray the regulated verse form imposes a voice and an order. If the natural wind has no moral nature, in the poem it is “malicious.” While in Wang’s earlier poems the moon often stands for transcendental freedom,⁴¹ here it bespeaks human hopes and dreams. Nature is thus momentarily wrestled out of its ahistoricity to bear witness to the historical agent’s lyrical subjectivity, while at the same time problematizing this subjectivity’s self-perception.

If we torture the metaphor of a musical performance a little further, we may compare the historical author to the producer. He did not determine the reading of the poem, but invited an authorial voice to enter the poem, who, like a director of a postmodern orchestra, gives a framework, consistency, and meaning to the cacophony. Thus, even though the historical author is dead both literally and figuratively, the piece that he has created lives on, and his authorial voice stays alive. It continues to serve as the nonauthoritarian director of this multivocal, cacophonous, and ever-ramifying orchestra.

This dynamic reading of a poem helps to settle the disputes on its circumstances and on its interpretations. Simply put, the poem talks differently to different readers, and it is precisely its multivocality that gives it depth and longevity. Even historians who accuse it of being “menda-

cious” nonetheless decide to include it in their biographies of Wang Jingwei, thereby allowing it to talk directly to the readers, giving the readers liberty to reach an understanding of their own.

Poems like “Night Onboard” have historiographical power. The pensive melancholy of Wang’s poetry is a feature often noted by readers. As the scholar Qian Zhongshu 錢鐘書 (1910–1998) sarcastically remarked upon reading Wang’s poetry collection in 1941:

莫將窮苦求詩好 Do not speak the words of suffering to make a poem good:

高位從來讖易成 For people of power, it easily turns into a prophecy.⁴²

By seeing Wang’s poetry as prophecy, Qian’s poem also becomes a prophecy. Notably, Qian himself was living in occupied Shanghai at the time, a choice that can be construed as accommodation. His remark, therefore, was precisely one way to distinguish himself from the collaborators, even though he stayed friends with some of them.⁴³ Qian’s case demonstrates the moral ambivalence of living under hostile foreign occupation. On the other hand, for Wang Jingwei, melancholy was the only admissible public revelation. In the eyes of the public and of history, any trace of jubilation would make him appear a shameless traitor. It is precisely the tormented lyric subjectivity that turns his poetry into his redemption.

One addressee of this poem was Jin Xiongbai, a Shanghai journalist and barrister. Jin was persuaded by Zhou Fohai in 1939 to join the peace movement as a prestigious recruit. After his first meeting with Wang, Jin received a gift: a poetry scroll bearing “Night Onboard” in Wang’s calligraphy. No doubt it was meant to intimate Wang’s true intent of collaborating with Japan. Jin, however, remarked in his postwar memoir: “The dominant mood of the poem is that of decline and gloom. The Wang regime is yet to be established, but Wang has witnessed the misery of the fallen territories and has discovered the ravenous greed of the Japanese. Ruminating over his life, he is making a sigh of a hero in his final act.”⁴⁴ Jin’s reading of the poem was undoubtedly empowered by hindsight, and he was instrumental in turning Wang’s lyric apology into historiography. After the fall of the Wang regime, Jin Xiongbai was found to have carried out Zhou Fohai’s order and to have rescued captured BIS agents. He served a prison term of two and a half years, migrated to Hong Kong, and became the most vocal defendant of the Wang regime. The secret resistance of Zhou Fohai, an unimaginative bureaucrat, was not enough to redeem the moral nature of the RNG, since it could

well be construed as opportunistic. Not even Jin's own double agency was enough to redeem him, legally or morally. Instead, Wang Jingwei's poetry, romantic iconography, and inspiring demeanor are frequently cited in Jin's memoir as proof of the authenticity of his—and by extension, their—patriotism. The patriotic voice of the lyrical Wang Jingwei, in this way, is appropriated by the collaborators as their collective voice, in writing their collective self-defense.

As memory, prophecy, and apology, Wang Jingwei's poetry creates a transtemporal community that brings literary precursors and future readers together through the "poet," himself a creation in the imagination of the readers. Here our historical existence is enriched by the dimension of the creative and the imaginative. In the poem, the boundaries separating the individual from the collective, or action from contemplation, have similarly collapsed. As Lessing argues, action is the essence of poetry.⁴⁵ Hannah Arendt takes it to mean that poetry bears an effect on "that worldly space which has come into being between the artist or writer and his fellow men as a world common to them."⁴⁶ This common worldly space is the space of shared poetic memory. The next chapters will continue to investigate this mnemonic community, through lyric conversations among Wang Jingwei and other elite collaborators.

5 | The Iconography of an Assassin

In late February 1942, *Accord Monthly* published a collection of curious poems. The string of events began when Ren Yuandao, minister of the navy, procured a painting, *Bidding Farewell at the Yi River* (*Yishui songbie tu* 易水送別圖), by the late Cantonese artist Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 (1889–1933). Ren asked for colophons in verse forms from luminaries of the regime, including from Wang Jingwei himself. These ten poems were inspired by each other and sometimes matched each other in rhyme.¹ One month later, the same journal published an opera, *Bidding Farewell at the Yi River*. Written by the journal's editor Long Yusheng himself, it integrated poems produced in this exchange into its libretto.² In April, *National Art*, another literary journal sponsored by the RNG, chimed in, republishing most of these poems.³

This much-promoted exchange contained a message not difficult to decode. In this message, Wang Jingwei, China's chief collaborator, was compared to the ancient assassin Jing Ke. The painting depicted a moment when Jing Ke departed on a journey of no return to prevent Ying Zheng 嬴政 (259–210 BCE), the king of Qin, from uniting China. Contemporaneous readers were easily reminded of the young Wang Jingwei's failed attempt on the life of prince regent. Jing Ke's heroic act at the dawn of the Chinese bureaucratic empire and Wang Jingwei's at its final light thus echoed across time. The analogy between them was made more explicit by another cycle of poetic exchange, published in October 1942, on a painting depicting the Silver Tael Bridge in Beijing, below which Wang and his coconspirators were popularly believed to have buried the bomb.⁴ The resurgence of Wang Jingwei's iconography as an assassin and would-be martyr in 1942 was significant. Taken as a whole, these collaborator-poets seem to hint at yet another comparison:

Japan was likened to Qin, for both were powers that threatened to conquer all of China by force.

The poetic exchanges delineate a vivid picture of the RNG elite's daily life at Nanjing, a cultural scene dominated by classical-style poets, who spoke to each other in a coded language referring to a repertoire of shared cultural memories. This “mask” of poetic convention and refinement permitted them to speak more freely of what was unspeakable in prose. To scholars studying the Chinese collaboration during the Second World War, these poems constitute precious materials that offer a glimpse, via their ciphered dialogue, into the collaborators' predicament, sense of self, moral vision, fear of eternal condemnation, and, possibly, political strategies. They depict a moment when options were still on the table, and agents who were still to make history were caught ruminating about what to do, who they were, and what they were to become. As lyric poetry speaks in a voice of immediacy and intimacy to the reader, it writes a chapter of history with human warmth, unearthing complicated motivations that mix ambition, opportunism, and vanity with valor, sacrifice, and dedication.

Poems are active biographers of their authors' public lives, partaking in a constant and dynamic dialogue with a diachronic republic of letters. For the collaborator-poets, this privileged community included their Japanese patrons too. The attention of their conquerors should have made the open publication of these poems dangerous—except that it was perhaps not. As the previous chapter contends, a poetic text may consist of “a creative cacophony” of voices, resisting a singular interpretation. Allusions are inherently ambivalent, open to multiple dimensions of exegesis. A reference to Jing Ke may emphasize rather different sides of his story. The rich repertoire of exegetical traditions can thus be selectively appropriated to serve various political purposes. In this case, Wang's followers were appropriating Jing Ke's heroism to boost the moral profile of Wang Jingwei. Their poems reminded readers of Wang's revolutionary past and hinted at patriotic motivations for his collaboration—and, by extension, for theirs. Accordingly, they sought to preemptively refute the institutionalized memory of future generations that might view the RNG as a traitors' venture. Wang's personality cult, in this and other ways, was exploited as a means to compensate for his regime's deficiency in institutional legitimacy.

The poetic exchange on the painting *Bidding Farewell at the Yi River* was a small but highly complex instance of lyricized dialogues. It involved a plethora of actors: the painting (as well as its painter and the

colophons it bore), its owner and promoter, the collaborator-poets, the poems' publication, the venue of publication, and the potential readers (Chinese and Japanese alike). Last but not least in adding to the complexity are the cultural memories evoked in this exchange. Particularly multivalent is the memory of Jing Ke and its association with Wang Jingwei's own mythologized biography. This case further illustrates the awkward symbiosis between the collaborators and their patron, in an age when national sovereignty was increasingly perceived as the normative foundation of a state's authority and legitimacy. As for poetic justice, nothing befitted the oxymoronic nature of the RNG's "collaborationist nationalism" more than a regicidal assassin serving as its head of state. In the end, Wang Jingwei's iconography as an assassin is revealed to be a rich and ambivalent floating symbol, assuming various meanings in different contexts. It simultaneously justified collaboration, in the sense that Japan's Pan-Asianism would usher in a new unified Qin empire, and resistance, in the form of Wang Jingwei's perceived readiness to make a personal sacrifice to save the nation. It offered a tantalizing opportunity for readers to imagine an unfulfilled but ultimately unknowable possibility: Had Wang lived till the end of the war, what he might do when the proverbial map unfolded to its end? It was a story of multiple layers of remembrance, and through remembering the evoked past continued to transform.

Jing Ke: From Ambivalent Hero to National Martyr

The story of Jing Ke, immortalized in the *Grand Scribe's Records*, is one of tension, suspense, and ambiguity. The basic plot is as follows: the Qin threatens to conquer the northern state of Yan, whose heir apparent, Dan 丹, looks for an assassin to kill the king of Qin. Tian Guang 田光 recommends Jing Ke, a roaming warrior, and then commits suicide to safeguard the secret. The defecting Qin general Fan Wuqi 樊於期 donates his head as a token for Jing Ke to gain an audience with the king of Qin. Jing Ke delays his departure to wait for a companion, who does not come, and finally accepts a young killer, Qin Wuyang 秦舞陽 as assistant. The assassins pretend to be envoys expressing Yan's willingness to become a vassal state to Qin; they will unfold a map of Yan's fertile regions in front of Ying Zheng; a poisoned dagger is hidden at the end of the scroll. Against all odds, however, the assassination fails. The cowardly Qin Wuyang is unable to act, and Jing Ke fails to strike the king in close combat. Both assassins die. The Qin hastens its conquest of Yan, which falls in five years. A year later (221 BCE), China is united.⁵

ocratic hero revolting against tyranny. Even Liang Qichao remarked that the Chinese intellectuals' spirit, long worn in pedantic philology, could borrow from Jing Ke a fresh dose of militarism to rejuvenate itself.¹⁰ More radical admirers saw in Jing Ke a role model for Republican martyrs. His fealty to Prince Dan was now refashioned as love of the people, and his attempt an uprising against autocracy. His spirit, it was argued, inspired later rebels to overthrow the Qin rule, so his sacrifice was not in vain, but rather a prelude to a greater revolution.¹¹

The young Wang Jingwei was inspired by the veneration of anarchist assassins (see chapter 1) to venture into the alien metropolis of Beijing in November 1909 and to make an attempt on the prince regent's life. The fresh interpretation of Jing Ke as a hero of republicanism is reflected in his poems in prison. In one that he sent to Chen Bijun titled "Autumn Night," he listens to the wind and contemplates: "On the Yi River, the wind sighs and sighs, just like yesterday" 風蕭易水今如昨.¹² In a lengthier verse, "Expressing My Thoughts,"¹³ he describes his assassination attempt as a medical intervention on the ailing body of the nation:

哀哉眾生病	I lament a sick people in suffering;
欲救無良藥	And aspire to save them, but find no cure.
歌哭亦徒爾	I sing, I wail—all in vain!
搔爬苦不著	I scratch the skin but cannot touch the root cause.
針砭不見血	Even acupuncture brings no drop of blood to the needle:
痿痺何由作	A paralyzed man cannot rise up.
驅車易水傍	I drive a chariot to the Yi River:
嗚咽聲如昨	The sobbing waters sound just like yesterday.
漸離不可見	But Jianli is nowhere to be found!
燕市成荒蕪	The marketplace of Yan has turned barren.

In the voice of a paradigmatic nationalist hero, Wang sees the Chinese nation as a sick man in need of saving. Through repeated references to Jing Ke's song of the Yi River, Wang has appropriated Jing Ke as his precursor in deeds, spirit, and literature, while having at the same time transformed Jing Ke into a nationalist hero, whose act may finally inspire the nation to cure itself. He sees his circumstances as even harsher: the marketplace of Yan, where Jing Ke enjoyed the company of like-minded men, is now deserted. This image alludes to the numerous deaths of Wang's comrades in uprisings and clampdowns. Notably, he does not mention Prince Dan. As a modern Jing Ke, Wang is not driven by fealty, but solely by concern for the suffering masses.

Japan's hastening steps toward invasion fueled the transformation of Jing Ke into a Chinese "national hero" (*minzu yingxiong* 民族英雄).¹⁴ After the Mukden Incident, an outburst of references to Jing Ke appeared in journals and newspapers. He was called the "soul of the nation" (*minzu hun* 民族魂);¹⁵ his valiant self-sacrifice was seen as China's last hope against industrialized Japan's military clout. In addition to poetry and prose versions, the story was performed on stage and in film. New librettos for traditional opera music as well as newly composed stage scripts elaborated the story.¹⁶ Take, for instance, Gu Yuxiu's 顧毓琇 (1902–2002) four-act stage play *Jing Ke*, completed in December 1924 in Cambridge, England, and rewritten in 1939 in the wartime capital Chongqing. The 1924 version already establishes the analogy between the state of Yan and contemporaneous China.¹⁷ In the 1939 version, militant patriotism assumed even greater urgency. Gao Jianli is transformed into a military strategist. He argues that Yan could only win through a "protracted war" and that its future lies in united resistance and international alliance. His opinion reflects the GMD's official strategy of resistance.¹⁸ The play enjoyed some success in the hinterland. In addition to the stage version, an opera version (in collaboration with Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋 [1903–1987] and Ying Shangneng 應尚能 [1902–1973]) was published in January 1940 and premiered in March 1941.¹⁹

Through repeated rewritings, Jing Ke finally morphed into a national martyr and a herald of united resistance. Though "Qin" is often used as synonym of tyranny of all kinds, in the historical context of the Second Sino-Japanese War and in association with the Jing Ke story, it almost always refers to Japan, while Jing Ke serves as a symbol of resistance.

Wang Jingwei as the New Jing Ke

Throughout Wang Jingwei's political career, his public image of moral audacity and altruistic dedication, embodied by his iconography as an assassin, helped legitimize his claim to power. The painting *Bidding Farewell at the Yi River* now appears lost. The Cantonese artist Gao Qifeng (real name Gao Weng 高嶽) was a close friend of Wang Jingwei's. According to Ren Yuandao's postwar recollection, around 1919–20, Hu Hanmin wrote a quatrain for Wang as colophon to a painting "on men in white robes and hats at the Yi River."²⁰ Judging from Ren's description, I think it must have been the same painting. Ren's recollection helps to date the painting and suggests that it was originally composed precisely to commemorate Wang's heroism as a founding act of the Republic, at

a time when Wang ended his study in Europe to rejoin his comrades in arms.

Such an origin story would explain why, years later in 1942, when Wang was presented with the painting, he was moved to tears. He must have recognized his younger self and the world's expectations of him. Ren Yuandao's motivation to present the painting deserves some speculation. After the outbreak of the Pacific War, Ren began to contact Chongqing and work secretly under its directives, probably as a bet-hedging strategy.²¹ In the same winter of 1941–42, he asked Long Yusheng and Li Xuanti to compose two *ci* songs. Then he showed Wang Jingwei the painting together with the songs. Given the painting's emotional value to Wang, this must have been a carefully deliberated act—perhaps one to induce persuasion.

Long's and Li's poems reveal their own understandings of Wang's collaboration and his iconography. Long Yusheng's *ci*, written to the tune "A Dragon Sings in Water," reads:²²

所期不與偕來	My expected companion has not come;
雪衣相送胡爲者	What for, bidding farewell in robes white like snow?
高歌擊筑	I sing a song of pathos to a lute tune,
寒波酸淚	Into the cold billowing waves, some grieving tears
一時俱下	Stream down all at once.
血冷樊頭	The blood on Fan's head is getting cold;
忍還留戀	How can I further delay, over the charm of
名姬駿馬	Beautiful women and fine steeds?
問誰深知我	I ask, Who knows me deeply?
時相迫促	Time presses.
恩和怨	Of all the kindness and resentment,
餘悲咤	Only tragic cries of battle remain.

孤注早拚一擲	I dare to take the single chance of throwing the dice,
賭興亡	To bet on the rise or fall,
批鱗寧怕	Risking the dragon's wrath. ²³
秦貪易與	Qin with its greed has a weakness;
燕讎可復	The injustice on Yan may be avenged—
徑騰吾駕	I take my swift departure.
日瘦風悽	The skinny sun, the desolate wind,
草枯沙白	Upon withered grassland and white sands;
飄然曠野	My shadow flaps through vast plains.
漸酒醒人遠	Slowly, the effect of alcohol fades, the crowd is gone;

暗祈芳劍 I say a wordless prayer to my fragrant sword,
把神威借 To borrow its divine power.

Long's poem is highly visual and theatrical. It describes a solitary hero: one man, one chance, one sword. Yet with bravery and determination he takes matters like the "rise or fall" of states into his own hands. The poem ends in suspense: a private moment when the hero prays to his sword, "fragrant" from ancient blood, to "borrow" its divine power. In the Chinese literature and folklore, fine swords are magical objects with their own lives and destinies: they require human blood as a finishing touch; when hung in idleness on the wall they sing, asking for attention or begging to kill; and they transform into dragons.²⁴ Jing Ke's prayer externalizes the stronger part of his self into the image of a sharp sword that is bloodthirsty by nature. By virtue of its "divine power," his success is probable. The fact that readers know how the story will unfold increases the sense of tragedy when they watch helplessly as the hero gallops toward his fate. In Long's opera libretto *Bidding Farewell at the Yi River*, this *ci* poem is used verbatim as Jing Ke's aria before his departure for Qin.²⁵

Li Xuanti's song is written to the tune "The River Runs Red":²⁶

煮酒談天	Those who chat about history over a hot cup of wine,
且休笑	Please do not laugh at
荊卿謀拙	Master Jing's unsophisticated plan!
燕趙勢虎蹊委肉	Like pieces of meat abandoned on a tiger's path, ²⁷
幾何能輟	Yan and Zhao lived in constant peril.
功就定誇曹沫勇	Ending in success, he would gain glory like the valiant Cao Mo;
身亡未讓專諸烈	In death, he would be no lesser than the fierce Zhuan Zhu.
算當時	Let me guess—back then,
百計費沉吟	He pondered over hundreds of strategies
方投玦	Before throwing in the jade [of his life].
一諾感	His single promise was moved by
田光節	Tian Guang's integrity;
片語濺	Upon one word there splashed
於期血	Fan Wuqi's blood.
豈縱橫游俠	Is it not a case of those roaming warriors
恩酬冤雪	Who must see debt paid and injustice avenged?

短劍單車汾水遠 With a short dagger and a chariot, he left the Fen River
far behind;
高歌哀筑秦宮歇 A song of pathos from a harrowing lute stilled the palace
of Qin.
甚丹青 What marvelous art!
千載卷圖看 After thousands of years, when this painting is rolled
out,
酸風咽 Sorrowful wind still chokes in grief.

The first stanza of the poem protests the harsh judgments that ancient poets and scholars had meted out at Jing Ke. Li Xuanti argues that states like Yan did not have good options. Cao Mo and Zhuan Zhu were two other assassins glorified by Sima Qian. Cao was a general of Lu who held Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (d. 643 BCE) hostage to force him to return the occupied territories. Zhuan Zhu sacrificed himself to kill King Liao of Wu 吳王僚 (d. 515 BCE) on behalf of a rival prince.²⁸ Though for Jing Ke neither scenario was realized, Li argues, poor planning did not cause the failures.

The comparisons, however, are not entirely Li's own. The aforementioned colophon by Hu Hanmin, written on the painting, reads:

功就不誇曹沫勇 Ending in success, you will gain glory like the valiant Cao
Mo;
身亡未讓專諸烈 In death, you will be no lesser than the fierce Zhuan
Zhu.
知君百計費沉吟 I know that you pondered over hundreds of strategies;
滿座衣冠真似雪 The robes and hats of all present are indeed like snow.

Three lines from Hu's quatrain are reworked by Li Xuanti into his *ci* poem. However, unlike Li Xuanti who uses the third-person pronoun throughout, Hu Hanmin's poem addresses the protagonist directly with a sense of intimacy. Hu's last line is borrowed from a *ci* poem by Xin Qiji:

易水蕭蕭西風冷 Upon the sighing Yi River, the west wind chills;
滿座衣冠似雪 All present, their robes and hats like snow.²⁹

Though the precise circumstances of Xin's composition were unclear, his use of the Jing Ke allusion reflects his own patriotic resolution to recover the northern territories under the Jurchen occupation. Hu Hanmin's poem also echoes Wang Jingwei's letter written to him before

Wang's departure for Beijing, in which Wang compares himself to "fire-wood" and suggests that Hu should be the "pot" that perseveres to feed the people (see chapter 1). We may deduce that Hu envisions himself among the white-robed.

Wang Jingwei's response to the painting, however, was much more ambivalent. The lengthy title of his set of two poems states: "While viewing and caressing [the painting], myriad emotions swept over me. So I extemporized two long poems."³⁰ The two poems read:

酒市酣歌共慨慷	Singing a tipsy song in the wine market creates passionate camaraderie;
况茲揮手上河梁	Bidding farewell on a bridge over the river leads us to diverging roads.
懷才蓋聶身偏隱	Ge Nie, despite his martial talent, hides in reclusion;
授命於期目尚張	The eyes of Wuqi, who gave his life, remain wide open.
落落死生原一瞬	Swiftly, he crossed the space between life and death;
悠悠成敗亦何常	Failure or success were never set in stone!
漸離筑繼荊卿劍	Jianli's lute soon followed Master Jing's sword;
博浪椎興人未亡	And the iron hammer thrown at Bolang proved that he never died.
少壯今成兩鬢霜	Once young and strong, now both temples covered by frost;
畫圖重對益徬徨	A reencounter with this painting bewilders me.
生慚鄭國延韓命	Alive, I feel ashamed for Zheng Guo, prolonging Han's bare survival;
死羨汪錡作魯殤	In death, I shall envy Wang Qi, recognized as Lu's martyr.
有限山河供墮甑	Not enough mountains or rivers can devolve into pots/herds;
無多涕淚泣亡羊	No more tears shall flow over a lost goat.
相期更聚神州鐵	May we gather all the irons in our Divine Land,
鑄出金城萬里長	To cast a Great Wall of metal, ten thousand miles long!

Wang seldom wrote exchange poems matching others' compositions in rhyme, but these poems did respond to Li's and Long's, forming a dialogue. In the first poem, his and Jing Ke's voices are entirely merged. It begins with a reference to Jing Ke's joyous society in the marketplace of Yan, alluding to Wang's comrades of the Nationalist revolution. The second line suggests, however, that these old friends have parted ways

with him. Instead of the proverbial Yi River, the site of their farewell is the “bridge over the river.” This phrase alludes to a “Han Old Poem,” which begins with the line: “Holding hands, we walked to the bridge over the river” 攜手上河梁; it is one of three poems anthologized in *Selections of Fine Literature* as purportedly sent from Li Ling 李陵 (d. 74 BCE) to Su Wu 蘇武 (140–60 BCE).³¹ Both were Han generals detained by the Xiongnu. Su Wu persevered and ultimately went back to Han as a hero. In contrast, after his entire family was executed by the emperor and he was denounced as a traitor, Li Ling defected to the Xiongnu. Symbolically, the “bridge” is a liminal space between home and alien territories, life and death, as well as glory and condemnation.

In the second couplet Wang justifies his choice to cross the bridge. He argues that better warriors such as Ge Nie, a great swordsman in the original story, stayed in lofty detachment. The furious eyes on Fan Wuqi’s severed head stand for expectations from comrades who had already died for Wang’s causes. Sacrifices like that of Zeng Zhongming encouraged Wang to remain on the chosen path.

The third couplet philosophizes on the principle of impermanence. Wang routinely staked his moral reputation on the claim that he was not afraid of death. In the fifth line, Wang restates his equanimity toward this ultimate fear in life; in the sixth line, he further wonders about whether an action should be judged by its outcome. The implication is that the true morality of an action lies in its intention, not its result. Historians, furthermore, have a famous hindsight bias. Both Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53–18 BCE) and Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) called Jing Ke a “mere robber” (*dao* 盜).³² But, as the Qing scholar Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716–1797) points out, what distinguishes a “hero” from a “robber” is success.³³ Wang then declares that Jing Ke’s spirit never truly died, since it inspired successive rebellions against the Qin (see chapter 3).

But if the first poem speaks of Wang’s moral confidence, the second poem betrays a moment of hesitation and shame, where his own voice emerges in distinction to Jing Ke’s. He opens the painting in 1942 and is reminded of the tragic gap between his current and younger selves. Had he died in 1910, he would have already gone down in history as another Jing Ke. Instead, he is alive, graying, and the object of patriotic anger. For him, life and death are equally unenviable. With this sense of “shame,” Wang invokes Zheng Guo—a hydraulic engineer from the Han who proposed building a canal for Qin, only to be exposed as a Han agent intending to divert Qin’s resources and delay its attack on Han. Zheng Guo defended himself by saying that the Qin would benefit from

the canal all the same. King Ying Zheng agreed. The canal enriched the Qin and fueled its war of conquest. Thus, although building the canal prolonged the survival of the Han for a few years, it ultimately aided the Qin.³⁴

Wang Jingwei contrasts his kinship with Zheng Guo to his “envy” of Wang Qi, a teenager who died in a battle for Lu. The Lu people wanted to offer sacrifices to him as a martyr, but because of his young age, they consulted Confucius on the ritual permissibility of the matter. Confucius opined that anyone who died for his country should be given proper sacrifices as though he were an adult.³⁵ By comparing himself to Zheng Guo, Wang appears to admit that his regime had assisted Japan’s war, despite his best intentions. He thus reminds us that a patriot can simultaneously be a collaborator. He fears that, if China should prevail, he, unlike Wang Qi, would not go down favorably in history, his personal sacrifice notwithstanding.

The second half of the poem is full of ambivalent allusions. “Potsherds” refers to the story of Meng Min 孟敏, whose vase falls to the ground and is broken to pieces. Meng walks on without even casting a glance at it, to spare futile regrets.³⁶ The “lost goat” comes from a story about the philosopher Yang Zhu 楊朱, whose neighbors fail to find a lost goat, since the road keeps forking into branches, so that they cannot possibly exhaust all the possibilities.³⁷ The tears refer to a different story about Yang Zhu, where he is found crying at a crossroad, because any step onto a wrong path will take him farther away from his goal.³⁸

This penultimate couplet thus appears to say that China cannot afford to see more territories (the proverbial “mountains and rivers”) devolve into potsherds and that there is no use in spilling tears for unrecoverable losses. Does it suggest that the territorial loss is irrevocable? For the couplet can also be interpreted in a deeply personal fashion. Yang Zhu was moved to tears from the fear of making the wrong choice. Another interpretation, therefore, is that tears are needless, since the proverbial “goat” has already gone down a path, whether right or wrong. Thus, the couplet can be read as a resolution to stay with his choice and make the best of it. The exegesis, however, remains open.

The last couplet raises further questions. On the surface, it shows resolution for continuous resistance. This is also Liu Wei-Chih’s interpretation: he relates the “metal” to Wang’s “pot” metaphor in his 1909 letter to Hu Hanmin and suggests that, although thirty years earlier Wang saw himself as firewood, by 1942 Wang saw himself as the pot that must endure the heat to bring food to the populace.³⁹ However, this read-

ing is tenuous. If we relate the last couplet to the apparent motif of the poem—Jing Ke—we may reach a rather different interpretation. After all, this couplet states exactly what the Qin did. After the unification of China, the First Emperor built the Great Wall on the northern borders to fend off the Xiongnu; he also had all weapons (made of metal) collected from the whole empire and recast into ritual music instruments and gigantic statues.⁴⁰ This reading would also explain Wang's presentation of himself as another shameful Zheng Guo.

Putting the ending of the two poems together, we see that the “continuous resistance” of individual heroes from Jing Ke to Zhang Liang did not stop the Qin from unifying China, even though its empire was short-lived. Wang's poems thus may bespeak his patriotic devotion as much as his pessimism about the short-term effectiveness of resistance. Bear in mind that when the exchange happened, Japan was still on the offensive. On February 15, 1942, the very day when these poems were published in *Accord*, British troops in Singapore surrendered to the Japanese army. Though his poems from the winter of 1941–42 show that he began to feel hopeful (see chapter 3), it is possible that Wang, while writing the poems, was unsure that Japan would lose, at least not until the Battle of Midway in June 1942, which decisively turned the war in favor of the Allies.

Interpreted this way, the poems entered a dialogue with Ren Yuandao's deliberate act of showing Wang the painting. Ren's contact with Chongqing suggests that, at that time, he began to question Japan's capacity and wanted to diversify the bid. And if we assume that showing Gao Qifeng's painting to Wang was a subtle policy proposal related to Ren's own judgment of the situation, we may suspect that Ren was trying to inspire Wang to be Jing Ke again—roll out the map and pretend to surrender but plan to strike at the last moment.

Wang's poems also respond to Long's and Li's *ci* songs that were attached to Gao's painting. Wang replies with less resolution to the sense of optimistic suspension at the end of Long's poem. If in Long's vision Jing Ke is heading toward the Qin court to bravely throw the dice, his shadow flapping through vast plains like a bird of death, Wang in his poems is walking down one path among many, not knowing if he is right or wrong, but with a presentiment of his failure and eternal disgrace. In response to Li Xuanti's comparison of Jing Ke to Cao Mo and Zhuan Zhu, Wang compares himself instead to Zheng Guo, a de facto collaborator, and to Wang Qi, whose martyrdom was not uncontested. While Wang Qi's martyrdom was ultimately confirmed, Wang Jingwei foresees that his own probably will not be.

Li Xuanti and Long Yusheng both responded to Wang’s poems. Li composed two further poems, matching Wang’s in rhyme and emphasizing again Jing Ke’s courage and his example as a lasting inspiration.⁴¹ One of Li’s couplets argues:

客異舞陽容有濟 Were the assistant different from Wuyang, it might have worked;
事同曹劌故非常 His deeds were extraordinary, just like Cao Gui’s.⁴²

Using the allusion to Cao Mo (Gui), Li Xuanti emphasizes that Jing Ke’s ideal outcome would have been to force the king of Qin to sign a peace treaty and that it might have worked if only his companion had been braver than Qin Wuyang. As discussed above, in Li Xuanti’s poem, Jing Ke is not a lone hero. Li boldly proposes that they—faithful followers of Wang Jingwei and the peace movement—are better aids than Qin Wuyang, ergo making Wang’s plan feasible.

Long Yusheng’s response is the opera libretto *Bidding Farewell at the Yi River*. He certainly was aware of other contemporaneous plays and operas that elaborated on this historical theme. Long’s libretto therefore was intended to rival theirs in interpreting the cultural memory of Jing Ke for the masses. In the foreword, Long states that although his opera mostly follows traditional Chinese opera libretto styles, he hopes to commission “musicians in the new fashion” (*xinxing yuejia* 新興樂家) to write a modern score.⁴³ This hope suggests that he had in mind a fusion form of popular opera that would combine traditional and modern features, possibly inspired by, if not in competition with, Gu Yuxiu’s play performed in Chongqing in 1941 as an opera with Ying Shangneng’s modern score.

The opera’s first three lines are a chorus:

落落死生原一瞬 Swiftly, he is crossing the space between life and death!
奮迅為仁 Be brave, be resolute! Commit to your benevolence;
成敗何須問 Success or failure is of no concern!

The first line literally cites Wang’s previous poem. Then Long uses the line “courage for the revolution is born from the heart of benevolence” in Wang’s farewell letter to Hu Hanmin, which demonstrates the influence of Wang Yangming’s idealistic moral philosophy. The third line again adapts Wang’s verse, referring to the sixth line of Wang’s first response poem. In this way, Long establishes this opera to be about the new Jing Ke—Wang Jingwei, in 1909 as well as 1942.

These poems invited a sarcastic response from Liang Hongzhi, president of the Control Yuan and Wang's rival. His four quatrains target what he perceives as Wang's and his followers' moral self-delusion:⁴⁴

- 腐遷史筆久傳神 The brush of castrated historian Qian vividly conveys the spirit;
不如丹青為寫真 But it still cannot compare to the painter's faithful portrait.
今日圖窮無匕首 Today the map has been unrolled, yet a dagger there hides not;
眼中何限虎狼秦 How many bestial Qins do you, my sir, actually see?
- 真堪立懦與廉頑 Truly a story to hearten and inspire—
變徵聲中去不還 In a mournful key of pathos, he departed on a mission of no return.
刺客國殤休等視 But do not take assassins or national martyrs lightly;
怕人孤注擲江山 I fear to stake the country in a desperate throw of dice!
- 自是荊軻劍術疎 Surely Jing Ke's swordsmanship was wanting;
虛捐樊首督亢圖 He was given Fan's head and the map of Dugang in vain!
輪它劉季提三尺 Greater was Liu Bang, a single sword in hand,
臣服燕秦罵豎儒 Subjugating the Qin empire, putting the pedants to shame!
- 神勇方能致太平 Only extraordinary courage can bring peace—
期君此事學荊卿 I hope you, sir, learn this lesson from Master Jing!
田光老矣無人問 Now that Tian Guang is old, his home is off the beaten path;
夜誦陰符坐到明 All night he chants a scripture of hidden accordance, sitting till dawn.

These four poems demonstrate the discord between Liang Hongzhi, on the one hand, and Wang Jingwei and his coterie, on the other. While praising the painting, Liang's first quatrain emphasizes that there is no "dagger" hiding in the proverbial scroll. In other words, if Wang Jingwei were Jing Ke, the analogy goes no further than Jing Ke's sending a message of Yan's subjugation to the Qin court—had there been no dagger, Jing Ke would have been a collaborator too. Liang's second quatrain further dresses down Long Yusheng's first poem by saying that a state's fate is too great to stake on a bet; after all, Jing Ke's failure hastened the Qin invasion of Yan.

In the third poem, Liang satirizes Wang Jingwei's lament that greater swordsmen than he have hidden in reclusion. Were that the case, it would have been better for Jing Ke to abort mission, at least sparing the head of Fan Wuqi and the valuable map. By comparison, Liu Bang 劉邦 (ca. 256–195 BCE), who did not rely on opportunistic means, rose from the ranks of commoners and founded the Han Dynasty.⁴⁵

In the last poem, Liang Hongzhi compares himself to Tian Guang. In the original story, when Prince Dan first asked Tian Guang for his service, Tian declined on account of his age. But the phrase *Tian Guang lao yi* 田光老矣 (“Now Tian Guang is old”) alludes rather to the story of Lian Po 廉頗 (327–243 BCE), a general no longer trusted due to his advanced age, even though he remained strong and eager to serve.⁴⁶ Xin Qiji, with his military ambitions, once compared himself to Lian Po and lamented:

憑誰問 Who would ask,
廉頗老矣 Now that Lian Po is old,
尚能飯否 If he still has an appetite?⁴⁷

Liang Hongzhi's declaration that he is old and has no ambition, therefore, is clear irony. The *yinfu* 陰符 in the last line refers to the *Scripture of the Yellow Emperor's Hidden Accordance* (*Huangdi yinfu jing* 黃帝陰符經). One version of this scripture is about the Daoist art of immortality, while the other is about esoteric military strategy. Read this way, the last line is a barely veiled request to be taken seriously, implying that Liang is willing to replace Wang Jingwei, if Japan is listening. Unsurprisingly, his were the only poems in this poetic exchange excluded from republication in *National Art* two months later.

Similar messages celebrating Wang Jingwei as Jing Ke occurred later that year via the cycle of poems on *Remembering the Past at Silver Tael Bridge* (*Yinding qiao huawang tu* 銀錠橋話往圖), a painting commissioned by Zhang Jiangcai 張江裁 (1909–1968), chronicler of Wang's assassination attempt. Wang's followers showed a high degree of unity in interpreting Jing Ke's story. They chose to ignore some inconvenient details (some of which Liang raised) and focused instead on the significance of Jing Ke's rebellious spirit. They also quietly sidelined the role of Prince Dan, construing Jing Ke's actions as fully voluntary. And despite their differences, all poets explicitly or implicitly compared Japan to Qin, a comparison made more striking by Liang Hongzhi's vehement denial of a hidden dagger.

At this point, an inevitable question arises. Is it possible that, in an open publication, these collaborators serving under Japanese surveil-

lance could call for stabbing Japan in the back? The ambivalent nature of poetic allusions suggests other potential explanations.

Burying the Dagger

Despite the cruelty of the Qin conquest, it unified China. The proverbial “dagger” is thus double-edged, signifying both resistance and resignation. This duality in meaning manifests also in the stated purpose of the journal *Accord*, where the poems were published. Because it was edited by Wang’s confidant Long Yusheng, the journal closely reflected Wang’s personal literary taste and propagandist guidelines.

While launching the journal, Long Yusheng promotes the idea of East Asian peace as genuine equality of Asian nations, thereby rejecting Japanese dominance. He explains that the term *tongsheng* comes from the received commentary on the *Book of Changes* for the *jiuwu* 九五 (nine in the fifth [place]) line of the *qian* 乾 (Heaven) hexagram. The line states: “Flying dragon in the heavens; it furthers one to see the great man” 飛龍在天利見大人; the commentary explains, “Things that accord in tone vibrate together; things that accord in their inmost natures seek one another” 同聲相應, 同氣相求.⁴⁸ Long argues that all human beings are moved by *sheng* 聲 (tone) and *qi* 氣 (inmost nature); in our context, this pair of terms may be understood as referring to art (poetry is art par excellence) and moral character. Moved by emotions, all beings strive for truth, goodness, and beauty. Long then cites Tang poet Bai Juyi’s 白居易 (772–846) poetic theory: “The Sage brings peace to All-under-Heaven by moving people’s hearts” 聖人感人心而天下和平.⁴⁹ Long perceives the world as a cruel place where countries “vie for hegemony” and the flame of humanism (*rendao* 人道) is almost extinguished; he sees the introduction of “materialist culture” of the West, in particular, as driving China and Japan to mutual harm. He thus hopes to remind both countries of their fraternal past—for example, during the Tang dynasty, when Chinese and Japanese poets exchanged poems and shared fond feelings for each other. Long suggests that poetry can be a pedagogic device for transforming human hearts toward cultural refinement and moral kindness. Classical-style poetry, in particular, is more musical and therefore more effective than vernacular poetry in moving hearts. He hopes that the publication of *Accord* will make a small contribution to broaden Confucian teaching through poetry (*shijiao* 詩教), bring peace and order to China, and realize the ideal of universal “Great Unity” (*datong* 大同).

Regular contributors to *Accord* included some Japanese poets, and Long Yusheng distributed the journal across Japanese universities too.⁵⁰ He originally thought of calling the journal *Drum and Trumpet for the Renaissance* (*Zhongxing guchui* 中興鼓吹), but Wang Jingwei found the name too celebratory, especially when peace had not materialized. It was Wang's idea to call it *Accord* (*tongsheng*).⁵¹ This term, literally meaning “shared sounds,” echoed the contemporaneous Japanese propaganda that China and Japan shared the same script and belonged to the same race (J. *tōbun tōsho* 同文同種). But instead of stressing their imagined sameness, *tongsheng* presents an image of mutually independent voices that sing in harmony and equality. Furthermore, contemporaneous readers would have been aware of the full commentary in the *Book of Changes* on this line, including “The Sage arises, and all beings follow him with their eyes” 聖人作而萬物覩. The allusion to this hexagram in the journal title, read in light of Long's preface, seems to hint that all hearts will be moved and universal peace regained with the rise of a sage. This allusion gives centrality to Wang Jingwei, not his Japanese patron, as the true moral center of a new East Asia. A reader may also notice that, by placing blame on China and Japan equally, Long Yusheng avoided castigating Japanese jingoism for the war of invasion. But in choosing classical-style and not vernacular poetry, Long reasserted China's cultural centrality in the East Asian culture and must have intended the Japanese conquerors to read the poems too—thereby potentially having their hearts moved by Wang Jingwei, the auspicious new Sage.⁵²

By this reading, Wang's spirit of self-sacrifice as well as his powers of persuasion is precisely the “dagger” of resistance. If Wang were to succeed, the “bestial Qin” would disappear, replaced by a benign Confucian power that conquers not by brutal force but by moral example. This reading is the same vision of Pan-Asianism that Sun Yat-sen promoted in his speech given at Kobe in 1924. As examined in chapter 3, based on the spirit of Sun's Kobe speech, Wang argued that nationalism and Pan-Asianism were not in conflict, but in effect shared the same goal, which was to unite all peoples in the world in a fight against colonialism and chauvinism. This vision of Pan-Asian equality and fraternity was the official line taken up by the Wang regime. By adopting the puppet master's propaganda, Wang effectively turned it into a rhetorical weapon against the conqueror.

For such rhetorical resistance to work, Wang's partner Japan would have to possess at least some sense of justice. Arguably, many among Wang's Japanese supporters shared this moral vision of Japan. Kagesa

Sadaaki, Inukai Takeru, and Imai Takeo—major actors who promoted and implemented the “Wang Zhaoming mission” (J. *Ō Chōmei kōsaku* 汪兆銘工作)—survived the war to tell their stories. Their memoirs all confess to a sense of guilt when it comes to Wang.⁵³ As Kagesa recalls, Wang emphasized to him that he hoped the Japanese public would understand that both his peace proposal and Chiang’s resistance theory were patriotic; that their only difference was the relation envisioned between Japan and China in the East Asian community. Kagesa admitted to having been greatly moved by Wang’s candid attitude and his sincere love for China as well as for East Asia. He claimed that Wang’s “lofty spirit and noble personality shall move even ghosts and gods to tears.”⁵⁴ Ashamed by the terms that he was made to deliver to the Wang group, he felt to have personally failed Wang’s trust.

The three Japanese agents’ postwar narratives share one common trait: a personal relation with Wang built upon the latter’s seemingly candid demeanor and trust. They never expected Wang to be anything less than a Chinese patriot; nor did they ever suspect his collaboration to be a plot against Japan. They considered him simultaneously a nationalist and a genuine Pan-Asianist. For these Japanese supporters of Wang, his revolutionary credentials and his moral profile as a patriot were essential in lending minimal credibility to the peace movement. A mere puppet regime, like Liang Hongzhi’s Reformed Government that preceded the RNG, would not work. Ironically, therefore, Wang Jingwei’s iconography as poet and assassin became a central part of the Japanese propaganda around him.

From the very beginning of his “cooperation,” Wang’s altruistic patriotism was his selling point. Prince Konoe, whose peace terms lured Wang to escape from Chongqing, stressed in an open article (on November 10, 1939) that Wang was the political heir of Sun Yat-sen, the most senior among GMD leaders, and an erstwhile assassin. He suspected that Wang was nothing less than the reincarnation of Zhang Liang, who failed to assassinate the First Emperor but supported the founding of the Han Dynasty. To Konoe, Wang’s courage and charisma made him the only candidate for the “great director of a new China” (*shin chūgoku no daishidōsha* 新中国の大指導者).⁵⁵ A news release by the China Expeditionary Army on February 8, 1940, reported that General Itagaki Seishirō 板垣征四郎 (1885–1948) praised all collaborators, especially Wang and his followers, as heroes, risking their lives to save China. Itagaki acknowledged that it was Wang’s candidness that had convinced him of Wang’s sincerity and made him support the foundation of the RNG.⁵⁶

Wang's credentials as a genuine patriot gave his regime the prestige and legitimacy that the Japanese desperately desired for their local collaborators; it also lent their Pan-Asianist propaganda an air of credibility. Given China's and Japan's shared tradition of founding political legitimacy on moral integrity, Wang's past as an assassin was featured in virtually all the major introductions of him to the Japanese public. The writer Itō Ken 井東憲 (1895–1945), for instance, wrote a pamphlet profiling Wang, *Talking about Wang Zhaoming (Ō Chōmei o kataru 汪兆銘を語る)*. It described Wang's 1910 assassination attempt and imprisonment as his first ordeal and mentions Prince Su's recognition of him as a rare hero. With such a romanticized background, Itō's pamphlet narrates Wang's whole life in the best possible light, presenting his collaboration as conducted with a do-or-die spirit (*J. kesshi teki kakugo 決死的覺悟*).⁵⁷

An extensive Japanese biography of Wang (326 pages) was written by Lieutenant Yamanaka Minetarō 山中峯太郎 (1885–1966) and published in January 1942. Its title, *The Great Director of the New China: Wang Jingwei (Shin Chūgoku no daishidōsha: Ō Seiei 新中国の大指導者: 汪精衛)*, explicitly refers to Konoe's expectation of Wang's role. A tenth of the book is dedicated to Wang's short career as an assassin.⁵⁸ It cites Wang's poems as revelations of his nobility and praises Wang's defense of China's rights.⁵⁹ Toward the end, the propagandist acknowledged the numerous difficulties still challenging East Asian peace, but he asserts that Wang's personality and determination will aid Japan in overcoming these difficulties.

This projection of Wang as simultaneously a nationalist and a Pan-Asianist represented the official Japanese discourse about him. Prime Minister Koiso Kuniaki's 小磯國昭 (1880–1950) press release giving notice of Wang's death juxtaposed two periods in Wang's life: his early days as a young revolutionary and his later "courageous" collaboration. Koiso says that as head of the RNG, Wang accomplished two great deeds: domestically, he annulled unequal treaties, restoring Chinese rights in the once semicolonial treaty ports; and internationally, he made China Japan's partner in an East Asian renaissance.⁶⁰ The consensus among Japanese military and civil officials on Wang Jingwei (at least in their public announcements) suggested their conviction of Wang's goodwill toward Japan, despite his history as a Chinese patriot. Indeed, his record as a revolutionary assassin was celebrated as proof of his worth. At least openly, Japanese officials did not raise the suspicion that Wang might be again playing a diplomat-assassin, as hinted in the poetry exchange on *Bidding Farewell at the Yi River*.

Wang certainly counted his Japanese patrons among the readers of his poetry, a fact that he exploited to gain a cultural edge. He routinely sent his poetry anthology to Japanese statesmen as a gift and wrote poems for them on occasions of their social exchanges. His poems were collected and published by Japanese admirers. It is thus reasonable to assume that Wang expected that his published poems would find Japanese readers.

One possible explanation to account for this apparent discrepancy between the explicit message of Wang as an assassin and the Japanese trust in his motivation lies in the ambivalent nature of allusions, which are open to multiple dimensions of exegesis. The painting by Gao Qifeng was completed decades before the 1942 poetry exchanges and moreover referred to Wang Jingwei as a young assassin in 1910. If the comparison between Jing Ke and Wang Jingwei stops in 1910 and is not extended to the Second World War context, then reevoking Wang's iconography as an assassin in 1942 could be seen as legitimizing the RNG as the true successor of the Chinese Nationalist revolution. If Wang's Japanese patrons took this interpretation, they probably understood the poems of the 1942 exchanges as serving their propagandist cause—or, at least for some of them, this potential explanation lent a legitimate excuse to turn a blind eye.

Jing Ke's hidden dagger, invoked by the poems, offers a poignant contrast to the perceived candidness of Wang Jingwei's collaboration in his Japanese supporters' eyes. We may ask: Who was seeing (or telling) the truth? If Wang was the new Jing Ke, where was his dagger? Was there a dagger at all, hidden at the end of the proverbial Dugang map, an illusory ownership over foreign land yet to be conquered? Or perhaps, was the impression that there was no dagger precisely the point, since such manifested sincerity might disarm the invader and turn it into a merciful moral power? Perhaps the ultimate "assassination" was to win the heart and mind of the conqueror? In that case, the absence of a dagger is itself precisely the "dagger."

We may never know the truth. After all, unlike Jing Ke, Wang died before a "dagger" was drawn to reveal his intentions. Some clue, however, may be gathered from Ren Yuandao, the original instigator of the exchange. By showing the painting, he did seem to have a program in mind, though exactly what it was he never revealed. A poet himself, he did not even write a poem to join the exchange, a reticence that appears most unusual. What he later did, however, may help to explain his intentions.

Ren Yuandao's Strategy

By collecting colophons and presenting Wang with a painting that was special, Ren Yuandao did seem to have an agenda in mind, one that he never revealed. His postwar recollections, however, help to cast light on his motivations in instigating the exchange in early 1942. Furthermore, by reusing the same set of discursive codes referring to China's cultural memory of noble assassination, Ren's recollections offer yet a new interpretation of Wang Jingwei's iconography, legitimating therefore not only Ren's joining the RNG but also his betrayal of it.

Ren Yuandao was a survival artist who escaped the Armageddon of the RNG's downfall unscathed. Wang died in 1944, and Liang Hongzhi was executed in 1946. The others, haunted and disgraced, lived out their lives quietly. Ren Yuandao, however, never faced indictment. As he commanded the RNG troops around Nanjing, after Japan's surrender, he was appointed by Chongqing as commander of the vanguard for the Nanjing-Jiangsu-Shanghai region. He was to use RNG troops and its police force to prevent a communist takeover before Chongqing central government's troops could be moved into these formerly occupied areas. Part of Ren's job was to turn over his former RNG colleagues, a task that Ren executed with exceptional efficiency and ruthlessness.⁶¹ He remained a GMD general through the civil war (1945–49), escaped to Hong Kong ahead of the People's Liberation Army, and died in Canada in 1980.

In postwar Hong Kong, Ren recollected and versified. He serialized more than sixty *ci* poems to the tune "A Partridge Sky" (Zhegutian 鷓鴣天) in the journal *Observatory* (*Tianwentai* 天文台), reminiscent of people or events in the "lost" China.⁶² About his fellow collaborators, however, he wrote only five poems, all concerning Wang Jingwei, in particular Wang's relationship to Hu Hanmin. In these poems, Ren styles himself an unapologetic admirer of Wang. His exposition following the first poem in this series recounts Wang's 1910 assassination attempt and describes Wang as follows:

Wang was tall and stood straight, fair as fine jade. Just as Sima Qian described [Zhang Liang]: his appearance resembled that of a beautiful young woman. In his dealing with people, Wang was gentle and courteous to a fault, but in effect he was quite stubborn inside. His speeches were extremely inflammatory. Even for a speech over ten

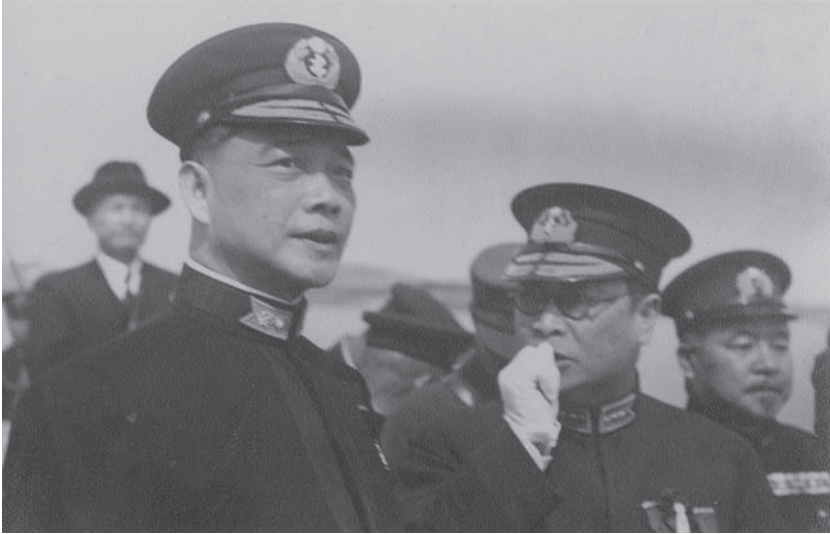


Fig. 27. Wang, dressed in an admiral's uniform, talking with Ren Yuandao 任援道, minister of the navy. Wang Jingwei and Lin Baisheng photo collection 1940–44, East Asia Library Special Collections, Stanford University.

thousand words in length, he never needed a draft. This author thinks that Wang was a quintessential martyr because, for over three decades, he engaged in politics in the merciful, selfless, and daring fashion of a martyr. Despite his best intentions, the world ended up feeling sorry for him.

汪長身玉立，美如冠玉，真史遷所謂狀貌如婦人好女。待人接物，外表雖極和悅，然內心亦頗固執，言論富煽動性，數萬字之講演詞，從不起稿。論者謂汪具有烈士典型，三十餘年始終以悲天憫人、奮不顧身、勇往直前之烈士風格，從事政治，雖其用心良苦，終不免為世惋惜。⁶³

Ren's reference to Wang as a martyr "for over three decades" is provocative. It hints of Wang's potential that despite the best intentions never materialized. His comparison of Wang Jingwei to Zhang Liang—and not Jing Ke—is also notable, a comparison that he repeats a few times.⁶⁴ Ren elaborates that, just as Zhang Liang's assassination attempt marked the first crack in the Qin's rule, Wang Jingwei's 1910 attempt marked the crack in the Qing's rule.⁶⁵ But by the time that Ren wrote his recollections, he had shifted to using the Qin as a reference to the People's

Republic.⁶⁶ Thus for Ren, Wang seemed to become in retrospect an assassin not against Japan but against the eventual communist unification of China. Did Ren think that Wang could have prevented a CCP victory if he had lived to see Japan surrender? Ren's reluctance to make a comparison between Wang and Jing Ke may indicate wishful thinking about the PRC's duration. Other factors notwithstanding, it could have been for the same reason that he did not join the exchange in 1942—simply put, Jing Ke was inauspicious. Jing Ke and all his associates died, and the state of Yan was conquered. Ironically, Wang and the RNG suffered the same fate.

Martyrdom as a Floating Symbol

The case of Jing Ke illustrates the mobility and adaptability of cultural memory. Through its constant reincarnations and actualizations, Jing Ke's iconography furnishes Chinese cultural memory a rich spectrum of signifiers, offering numerous exegetical possibilities. When the imprisoned young Wang Jingwei identified himself with Jing Ke, he interpreted his personal life in this cultural hero's trajectory of destiny. And he subsequently sought to live out this destiny as his own. As Jing Ke's nobility was elevated to an impossible height of heroism through retelling and rewriting, particularly during the turbulent years at the end of the Qing, his mythologized heroism would always be too great a suit for a mortal to fill.

During the decades when Wang lived in the public eye as a Republican statesman, that obsession seemed to have faded. Yet in 1942 his previous identification with Jing Ke acquired new meaning. Jing Ke's "martyrdom" became a rich, ambivalent, floating symbol that could be, and was, appropriated to justify various, sometimes conflicting, interests: for Wang himself, for his followers, and for his Japanese patrons. For Wang, the meaning of martyrdom was supreme sacrifice—not just of his life, but also of his reputation in life or death. His followers stressed instead the valiant act of past and implied future assassination, a desperate method that, if successful, could bring them the silver hope of salvation. Wang's Japanese patrons, however, approved only the altruistic aspect of Wang's iconography, seeing his credentials as political capital that validated his collaboration as patriotic and their occupation as benign. For the survivor Ren Yuandao, by glorifying Wang Jingwei's moral image, he sought his own personal redemption—a redemption that he denied his fellow collaborators, first by hunting them down in Nanjing in 1946, then by

rewriting history in his own memory in postwar Hong Kong, when others were silenced by death or prosecution.

Despite or perhaps precisely because of its power to serve all these conflicting needs, the iconography of Wang Jingwei as poet and martyr has gained greater currency in recent decades. Today, scholars seeking to overturn the mainstream historiography of Wang as a traitor continue to describe Wang's motivation to collaborate as driven by a "martyr complex": Hu Shi's remark famously revived by Yeh Chia-ying.

The poetry exchange published in February 1942 was one of many that characterized the cultural life of occupied Nanjing. It was a special cultural habitat distinct from other contemporaneous cultural establishments under occupation for its elitist pedigree and moralistic self-claim. Perhaps exactly because of the RNG's impotence to rally popular support through cohesive modern ideologies, such as nationalism and communism, its adherence to a model of traditional authority was particularly significant. Furthermore, using cultural memory as a legitimating discourse also played into Japan's Pan-Asianist strategy. As the title of the journal *Accord* suggested, China and Japan shared the same classical written language. If the RNG poets used this language to evoke the warm feeling of friendship between the countries, their very success also lent credibility to Japan's same-script, same-race propaganda. It did not matter that Japan strengthened itself through embracing Western-style modernity. Nor was it a concern that whatever commonality existed in Japan's and China's respective histories centered on Chinese values. The universalist aspect of the Confucian tradition dictates that whoever personifies moral authority and cultural achievements becomes the true king. Accordingly, it is a doctrine that is alien to the modern divisions of nation or race. In this way, Japan could comfortably claim the mantle of "Middle Kingdom," the new center of the traditionally Sinocentric Confucian East Asia.

It is exactly in such profound ambivalence that the comparison of Wang Jingwei to Jing Ke appears particularly poignant—even to the collaborators themselves. Qin, the despotic hegemon, laid the institutional foundation for the structure of the subsequent Chinese bureaucratic empire. Jing Ke, despite his valiance, also symbolized the military weakness and strategic recklessness of the conquered states, whose downfall in a social Darwinist sense was entirely deserved. Analogously, Wang Jingwei's collaboration, altruistic though it might have been, was ill-conceived, poorly executed, and disastrous for himself as well as for his associates. His romantic image was jarringly disconnected from his

regime that asked its people to accept the distasteful reality of conquest.⁶⁷ Wang's actions failed, regardless of whether his proverbial dagger was meant to stab Japan militarily in its back, as Ren Yuandao's involvement might suggest, or meant to remove Japan's aggressive sting, as Long Yusheng implied in his introduction to *Accord*.

Yet through poetry, Wang and his associates have been redeemed, at least partially in the eyes of sympathetic readers and scholars. The erudite historical references of Wang and his associates lend their collaboration a meaning constructed diachronically through time. Their connection of Wang to Jing Ke raises possibilities of debate and reconsideration. Over time, Jing Ke's failure was transformed into a posthumous victory in the war of memory. By appropriating Jing Ke's iconography, Wang Jingwei might have aspired for the same.

6 | The Impossibility of Remembering the Past at Nanjing

It was another sunset in Nanjing. On this October afternoon in 1942, Wang Jingwei stood on the ruins of the Stone City fortification. To the northwest the emerald Qinhuai River soundlessly dissolved into the Yangtze's turbid torrents. To the east loomed the Purple Mountain, where Sun Yat-sen's mausoleum presided majestically over the evergreens. Between him and the mountain was a bustling urban sprawl that the imperial Japanese army had laid waste to almost five years ago, after he and his government had abandoned it to the tanks and bayonets. He composed four lines, titled "An Evening View from the Stone City":¹

廢堞荒壕落葉深	Discarded bulwarks, wasted moats, where fallen leaves pile deep;
寒潮咽石響俱沈	Cold tidal waves choke the Rock, mournful sounds ebbing.
一聲牧笛斜陽裏	With a single note of a shepherd's flute in the setting sun,
萬壑千巖盡紫金	Over ten thousand gullies and cliffs scatters purplish gold.

At such an emotionally intense moment, the poem is, however, subdued, its meaning ambivalent. Verbs in the first couplet suggest a downward movement, inviting the reader to delve into the poet's intimate thoughts. But the second couplet takes an abrupt turn. It begins with an uplifting sound and ends on a radiant, literally gilded, surface.

While the previous chapter explores the temporal dimension of cultural memory, this chapter investigates the war of memory waged over

the exegesis of a place: Nanjing, often referred to in poetry by its ancient name, Jinling 金陵. It is through reference to ancient poems on Nanjing that Wang's quatrain gains meaning. The first couplet constructs a symbolic space. The bulwarks, moats, and fallen leaves allude to the lost wars and lives of the past. Nanjing is a city of *déjà vu* tragedies. The first recorded massacre there happened in 549 during the rebellion of General Hou Jing 侯景 (503–552). In 1130, the city was burned to ashes by the Jurchen army. By surrendering to the Manchus in 1645, the city narrowly escaped the fate of Yangzhou and Jiading, two nearby towns destroyed in its stead. But no soul was spared in 1853, when the Taiping rebels conquered the city, and again in 1864, when the Qing troops took it back. In 1913, the Beiyang general Zhang Xun seized the city from the anti-Yuan Nationalists and slaughtered thousands of civilians. The Rape of Nanjing, now commemorated as a singular event, was in effect the fourth massacre of the city in just a century, though perhaps the most efficiently executed. Yet after every tragedy, the city recovered. For millennia it has been celebrated by poets for its talented courtesans, material riches, cultural life, and natural splendor. It is the brick-and-mortar personification of a tired drama of the "rise and fall." In this context, the "discarded bulwarks" and "wasted moats" may allude as much to the general history of Nanjing as to the particular tragedy of 1937.

The image of "fallen leaves" is traditionally associated with aging and decay in Chinese poetry. Wang Jingwei, who celebrated his sixtieth *sui* birthday earlier that summer, with a bullet in his spine served as a daily reminder of his mortality, probably sensed that his days were numbered, like the remaining leaves on a tree. Needless to say, the "fallen leaf" for Wang Jingwei had another layer of symbolism, as in the eponymous *ci* song (see chapter 3) written in 1939 he compared himself to a fallen leaf. Its cares for the "woods" (the nation) unheeded, the leaf falls into the swirling flow of history. Now, in the Stone City, the leaf covers the ruins of time.

Similarly, the "cold tidal waves" in the second line may be understood as the ruthless passage of history. The Rock, a cliff by which the ancient fortification is known, is forever associated with surrender, thanks to the Tang poet Liu Yuxi's 劉禹錫 (772–842) immortal couplet: "A thousand-meter iron chain sank to the bottom of the Yangtze; / a single sail of surrender came out of the Rock" 千尋鐵索沉江底，一片降帆出石頭。² The thousand-meter iron chain across the Yangtze was a barrier against enemy fleets. The Western Jin navy, however, melted it with fire; the Wu Kingdom was subsequently conquered in the year 280, an event that

ended the Three Kingdoms era of division. Wang Jingwei, representing a China yielding to armed invaders, hears the Rock making mournful sounds against the thrashing tides of time.

Suddenly, these sorrowful thoughts are interrupted by a shepherd's flute. The setting sun gilds a vast landscape with the majestic luster of purplish gold. This couplet might imply that the poet is turning his attention away from his inner thoughts. All the symbolisms suggest a seemingly iron rule of history for regimes established in Nanjing: if the poet continues his train of thought, he can only conclude that another "fall of the state" is inevitable—either of China as a whole or of his collaborationist regime. Memory turns into prophecy. As there is nothing deeper to delve into than despair, he ends with a surface—a vague hint at hope.

Another possible reading of the second couplet is that the "purplish gold" (*zijin* 紫金) stands for the Purple Mountain (*Zijinshan* 紫金山, literally Purplish Gold Mountain), where Sun Yat-sen was buried. For a regime whose authority was built on the shaky foundations of foreign support, Wang's credentials as Sun's political heir helped bolster its claim to legitimacy. Covering the landscape in the shadow of the Purple Mountain thus dilutes the ominous allusions in the first couplet with a new allusion to national unity and ideological authority. Through the pious evocation of Sun's posthumous cult, Wang also celebrates his revolutionary credentials and justifies his motivation to collaborate. His individual memory merges into a landscape of cultural memory, the sentient into the nonsentient, thereby alleviating the weight of history.

But symbolism is multivalent in nature. If we understand the "sun" as an allusion to Japan, the "Empire of the Sun," the last couplet can either mean that Japan helps to spread Sun Yat-sen's spirit (Pan-Asianism) over the landscape of China, or that the sun of Japan is setting while Sun's spirit (nationalism) is winning. The former makes Wang a true believer in Japan's proclaimed mission and a Chinese traitor; the latter makes Wang a patriot in a collaborator's guise. The reader's view of the poet thus assigns to the first couplet different possible meanings too. If we see Wang as a traitor, then he is avoiding direct reference to Japan's Rape of Nanjing and focusing on the history of the city's earlier tragedies. If we see Wang as a patriot, however, he might be drawing attention to Japan's atrocious crime to undermine Asianism as pure propaganda and to point to the dimming of the imperial sun.

The poem shows how the poetic memory of Nanjing has become a metatext through which individual observations, recollections, and imag-

ination may and must speak. I ask: between booms and busts, between nostalgia and a sense of doom, is relating individual experiences about Nanjing in poetry still possible? Can we even commemorate those lost, unique lives, in the highly aestheticized art form of classical-style Chinese poetry? The focus of my investigation in this chapter is how Wang and his followers used traditional poetry, a medium deeply imbued with China's cultural memory, to transform the image of their regime, to interpret their present circumstances, and to imagine their fate. The urban history of Nanjing has played a crucial role in this transformation. It also lays bare their amnesia and aphasia in remembering the past and in imagining the future. Ultimately, however, a gap between the immediacy of experience and the mediated nature of poetry as a linguistic art appears insurmountable. For collaborative elites in Wang Jingwei's regime, meditating on the past became a futile gesture of looking away from an abyss beneath their feet.

This tour of urban poetry will begin with Nanjing in history as a city of literary memory and will end with Nanjing today as a city of oblivion, where the memory of the wartime collaborators has been systematically censored and erased.

Nanjing as a *Lieu de Mémoire*

The term *lieu de mémoire* ("site/realm of memory") was popularized by the French historian Pierre Nora. A *lieu* differs from a historical object by its invested significance. It has a dual nature, as "a hermetic excrescence upon the world, defined by its identity and summed up by its name but at the same time open to an infinite variety of possible other meanings."³ Nanjing is precisely such a site, where memory replaced history. But instead of an eternal remembrance, actual history interacts with literary memory in nuanced ways.

The idea that poetry about Nanjing mimics its cyclical history by endlessly recycling old clichés and stereotypes is masterfully articulated by Stephen Owen in examining the topos "remembering the past at Jinling" (*Jinling huaigu* 金陵懷古).⁴ His interest is "in the formation of a mood and a poetic image of that city, an overlay of sites, images, and phrases that shaped the way the city was seen"⁵—in other words, in Nanjing as a literary *lieu de mémoire*, though Nora's neologism is not used. Owen begins by citing a lyric song by Shao Ruipeng 邵瑞彭 (1888–1938), which matches the rhyme of a song by the Southern Song poet Zhou Bangyan 周邦彥 (1056–1121), which again adapts two quatrains by the Tang poet

Liu Yuxi. When Liu Yuxi wrote his quatrains, he had not even visited Nanjing; rather, he combined ideas in his imagination with inspiration drawn from canonical works such as “The Lament for the South” (Ai Jiangnan 哀江南) by Yu Xin 庾信 (513–581). Yu, a southern poet forced to serve two subsequent northern dynasties, expressed his deep sorrow over the fate of the south, when northern troops wreaked havoc in Nanjing. Through repeated rewriting of Yu Xin’s original lament, poetry replaced reality. As Owen argues, when later poets came to Nanjing, they only saw a constructed lyrical geography defined by sites invested with memory and meaning. Clichés and stereotypes had become the only “correct” way to experience the city. To Owen, the only thing fresh about Shao Ruipeng’s lyric song is the poet’s weariness for lack of anything fresh to say at all.

But perhaps this macrohistorical view of Nanjing as a parable of the “rise and fall” fails to take into account various attempts to interpret the city’s history. In actual fact, though Shao Ruipeng’s aforementioned poem may appear stereotypical, its context of composition tells a more complicated story: written shortly after the Mukden Incident,⁶ it stands in contrast to the widespread feeling of hope expressed through precisely the same poetic topos in the few years following 1927. In these years, Nanjing was established as the Republic of China’s capital, and modernizing urban planning was underway.⁷ A closer look at the Republican-era poems “remembering the past at Nanjing,” which made up the immediate context of the wartime collaborators’ poetry, reveals complicated interactions among historical memory, contemporary politics, and individual poets’ interpretations.

For the Republic of China to establish its capital in Nanjing, it first had to deal with the specter of the city’s history. In 1902, when Sun Yat-sen discussed China’s future national capital with Zhang Taiyan, he cited the cautionary tale of the Taiping Rebellion and warned: “Jinling, so rich in gold, silk, jade, and rice, is where soldiers will linger despite drums urging them north.”⁸ Sun viewed Nanjing’s material abundance to be a hamartia that softened and doomed all dynasties settled in the south. After the success of the 1911 Revolution, however, Sun tried to make Nanjing the new national capital in order to force Yuan Shikai to abandon his seat of power in the north, a maneuver that failed (see chapter 1). In 1927, Chiang Kai-shek finally made Nanjing the national capital during the Northern Expedition. The propagandists justified the move by arguing that Nanjing was “the birthplace of the renaissance of the modern Chinese nation,” as it was the base of the rebellion against

the Mongols and eventually the capital of the Ming dynasty, in addition to being Sun Yat-sen's choice.⁹ Historical memory of military humiliation at Nanjing was superseded by that of a glorious history of national resistance. The episodes of defeats and conquests were selectively forgotten.

The memory war is also shown in poems "remembering the past" at Nanjing. A simple survey of the term "Jinling" in the "1833-1949 Chinese Periodical Full-Text Database" illustrates the fluctuating number of poems explicitly referring to this topos and published in periodicals between 1910 and 1945. Despite the imprecise nature of the survey,¹⁰ it shows that in any average year two to five titles containing this nostalgic term were published in periodicals. A peak can be seen 1912 to 1915. The first element was the anti-Manchu fervor inspired by the 1911 Revolution; second, the debate over the national capital; and third, Zhang Xun's massacre of Nanjing in 1913. The last factor in particular led to the publication of twelve such poems in 1915, the pinnacle year. A second peak happened in 1927 to 1931, due to the establishment of the national capital in Nanjing. The third peak occurred from 1934 to 1937, due to China's military failure to defend the Great Wall in 1933 and Japan's subsequent hastening of its invasion.

But an unexpected result of the survey makes it particularly interesting. If, up to December 1937, every important historical event related to Nanjing led to an increase in poems on Jinling (and was reflected in their content), from 1938 on and during the eight years of the Second Sino-Japanese War, there were only seven such titles published in total. Clearly, this unusual phenomenon cannot be explained by statistics, especially in light of the revival of traditional poetry during the Second Sino-Japanese War. A partial explanation may be attempted by reading between the lines.

Thematically, the poems from 1910 and 1911 continued the Qing tradition: "remembering the past at Jinling" meant lamenting the "rise and fall" and often harbored subversive nostalgia for the Ming Dynasty. But that pensive mood greatly changed after the foundation of the Republic. More poems were written on this topos, and some showed striking optimism. However, political reality quickly darkened, and poems around 1913 vacillated between hope and disillusion.¹¹ After Zhang Xun's massacre, poems on Jinling published from 1914 to 1915 were permeated by sorrow and rage. Poets lament that the Republic is still an infant but history has already repeated itself: "Since the time of old the war of dragons never ceased" 終古龍爭憾未休!¹² Following to the old paradigm of "remembering the past," poems interpret the current historical event as

another link in a cycle of perpetual disappointments. The optimism of 1912 quickly faded, to be replaced by fear, fatalism, and uncertainty.

The mood of pessimism persisted in the decade from 1916 to 1927. After the national capital was reestablished at Nanjing, however, poems in the next few years became uplifting. Nanjing was seen covered by “the dim but lofty aura of a king” 隱隱隆隆王氣鐘.¹³ “The feat of Northern Expedition is accomplished, songs singing of heroes; / the Southern Capital has been founded, a chapter opening anew” 北伐功成歌壯烈，南都論定啓新猷。¹⁴ Thus, Shao Ruipeng’s pessimistic lyric song cited by Owen was in fact far from typical in 1932. Shao might have been hinting at the Mukden Incident, but at that time few believed that the fate of Manchuria should befall the whole of China.

With Japan quickening its pace to invade northern China, however, Shao’s presentiment became prevalent in poems after 1934. After the city fell in December 1937, only a few poems were published under this title. They generally contextualize the massacre in the cyclical history of dynastic conquests, putting the blame on the Nationalist government, which failed to defend the city—perhaps because the authors, Wu Chengyu 伍澄宇 (1888–1963) and Zhang Lushan 張魯山 (u.d.), were both collaborators who had joined the Reformed Government to return to Nanjing.¹⁵ One possible reason for the dearth of poems by others was the general disbelief and confusion following the massacre.¹⁶ The fact that few elite men of letters stayed behind to be eyewitnesses was probably another reason. The absence of testimonial memory is similarly revealed in the following poem, “A Gaze in Lament,”¹⁷ by Qian Zhongshu, then living in Paris.

白骨堆山滿白城	White bones heap into a mountain, filling the White City; ¹⁸
敗亡鬼哭亦吞聲	Defeated ghosts, in shame, weep silently.
孰知重死勝輕死	Who knows to cherish life rather than disdain death?
縱卜他生惜此生	Even if lives reincarnate, this one shall not perish in vain!
身即化灰尚齎恨	The body reduced to flying ashes still harbors resentment. ¹⁹
天為積氣本無情	Heaven, an accumulated mass of air, has no sentience.
艾芝玉石歸同盡	Foul or fragrant herbs, jade or pebble, all end alike.
哀望江南賦不成	I gaze in lament at Jiangnan, failing to rhapsodize.

The language of this poem is direct and relatively artless, suggesting swift composition driven by emotional urgency upon hearing the news

of the massacre. But “white bones” are not the immediate scene after a massacre—human carcasses take a long time to rot and to turn into white bones. The description is abstract, sanitized, and aestheticized, implying the author’s absence from the scene as well as his safe distance from danger. The last line points to the impossibility of writing poetry—at least a poem as good as Yu Xin’s “The Lament for the South.” Nonetheless, in alluding to Yu Xin’s rhapsody, Qian could not help himself but see the repetition of history. Such an educated gaze, while strengthening the historical pathos, also reduces the poem’s immediacy.

These, perhaps, are some factors resulting in the paucity of poems “remembering the past at Jinling” after the massacre. All comparisons pale. Unlike the previous massacres, the poets might have sensed that something truly extraordinary and horrendous had happened. A Chinese literatus learned to always observe the present through the prism of history. Classical-style poetry, furthermore, requires using historical allusions as a genre convention, let alone in the highly normalized sub-genre of “remembering the past.” Classical references increase the sense of depth of history, and fate is a powerful device in tragedy. However, if the city is perpetually doomed to fall, then the perpetrators of evil may even assume the instrumentality of fate, exonerated from individual responsibility: just as the autumn is not guilty for the killing of plant lives. Indeed, if the cycle of the “rise and fall” is perceived as a historical rule, it acquires a normalcy like the alteration of seasons. Perversely, perpetrators then seem to be instruments of the Way of Heaven—or, as in Wu Chengyu’s poems, since the fall of the city is blamed on the weakness of the defense, the invaders have only realized their function in a social Darwinian law.

The “rise and fall” associated with the memory of Nanjing is particularly pronounced in classical-style poetry, as to be seen later in Wang Jingwei’s poems. The Nanjing Massacre, however, poses a unique challenge to this cyclical view. Through its scale and cruelty, it represented a unique moment of industrialized barbarism in human history, which refuses to be reduced to *déjà vu*. Though few members of cultural elites experienced the massacre in person, collaborators were the first of their class to set up shop in the ravaged city and to wash the blood off the streets, thereby having an immediate experience of the scale of the devastation.²⁰ Yet their memories were clouded by a profound silence, with rare exceptions like Wu Chengyu’s awkward lament. To them, and to paraphrase Adorno,²¹ “remembering the past at Jinling” after the Rape of Nanjing became impossible, as the immediate, immense, and nameless horror refuses to be reduced into yet another episode in a repeti-

tive drama of history. The discipline and order required of the Japanese army, so that it could “maintain the efficiency necessary to carry out so much killing and destruction,”²² make this massacre comparable to other modern atrocities committed by totalitarian regimes. As Hannah Arendt insists with the trial of Eichmann, and as John W. Treat points out concerning the Rape of Nanjing, such automated efficiency makes these atrocities “a complete break with the past.”²³ This radical break is articulated through the silence in the poetry of the elite collaborators.

Prophecy or Apology?

Since the elite collaborators continued to assert their love for China in their poetry, the unique history of Nanjing posed a special challenge to them. It was a past that they could not fail to remember, and yet remember the past they could not. The immediate past of Nanjing was defined by their patron’s crime; its distant past, by the “rise and fall,” a cycle that would serve as an ominous prophecy for their own future. Perhaps this is why I fail to identify any classical-style poem written by Wang regime officials explicitly titled “remembering the past at Jinling” during 1940–45.

The lack of public commemoration, however, did not mean the absence of remembering. Rather, the silence offsets the overburdening of historical memories. This chapter analyzes a few poems on Nanjing by Wang Jingwei and by prominent members of his regime to explore their rhetorical methods in dealing with local history—especially the memories of the recent massacre—and to look at how they anticipate a future based on historical memories of the place.

Wang took residence in Nanjing after the Chiang-Wang coalition government was built after the Mukden Incident. The connection that he felt to the city’s literary past is best manifested by the *ci* poem written to “Hundred Words Song” (1934; see chapter 2), which envisions his “remnant ashes” and “abandoned bones” after a catastrophe be covered below the lush green, symbol of nature’s insentience. After his return to Nanjing, this sense of pathos intensifies in his poetry, as shown in this lyric song written in the fall of 1940, to the tune “The River Runs Red”:

驀地西風	A sudden gust of west wind
吹起我	Breathes into my
亂愁千疊	Thousand folds of disorderly sorrow.
空凝望	In vain I stare into the void—
故人已矣	My disappeared friends of old,

青燐碧血	Blue ghost-lights rise from their emerald blood.
魂夢不堪關塞闊	A dreaming soul finds the broadness between frontiers unbearable;
瘡痍漸覺乾坤窄	The wounds and scars turn the universe a jacket too narrow.
便劫灰冷盡萬千年	Even after thousands of years, when kalpa ashes have turned cold,
情猶熱	My passion burns on.
煙斂處	Where the mists dissipate,
鍾山赤	The Bell Mountain stands in scarlet shades.
雨過後	After a shower of rain,
秦淮碧	The Qinhuai River flows emerald green.
似哀江南賦	Like the rhapsody of “Lament for the South”:
淚痕重濕	Stains of my tears are again moistened.
邦殄更無身可贖	When the nation falls, no person is left to be ransomed;
時危未許心能白	The moment of crisis forbids the revelation of my heart.
但一成一旅起從頭	With just one village, one brigade, I start from the beginning,
無遺力	With no reserve. ²⁴

The tune pattern “The River Runs Red” has been immortalized by a song credited to Yue Fei, a Southern Song general whose name was synonymous with patriotism and the effort to recover lost territories. Since Wang was broadly compared to Qin Hui 秦檜 (1090–1155), the Southern Song chancellor who allegedly plotted Yue Fei’s execution to sabotage the military campaign to recover the north (see epilogue), the choice of the tune therefore suggests self-defense, implicitly comparing himself rather to Yue Fei, the patriot.

The west wind that wrinkles a pool of sorrow recalls a famous line by Feng Yanyi 馮延巳 (903–960), chancellor of the Southern Tang: “A sudden gust of wind / breathes wrinkles into a pool of spring water” 風乍起、吹皺一池春水,²⁵ a line that Emperor Li Jing 李璟 (916–961; r. 943–961) joked about as being excessively sentimental.²⁶ Yet Li Jing himself was guilty of writing, “A gust of west wind stirs sorrow among green waves” 西風愁起綠波間,²⁷ another line that may have inspired Wang’s. The Southern Tang was a short-lived regime with Jinling its capital. It was the original epitome of Nanjing’s emasculating sensual culture, as embodied

by the emperor and his chancellor's literary sentimentalities. Ominously, the historical memory of the Southern Tang creeps into Wang's poem soon after the foundation of his regime in Nanjing.

The sense of melancholy intensifies in the second strophe. Staring into the void, he is talking to ghosts. Most of his early comrades in the Nationalist revolution, as well as many of his followers in the peace movement, are dead. Wang, who started his political career as a would-be martyr, had a keen sense of the precariousness of existence. To him, death seemed easier, even at times more enviable, than staying alive, as the living must carry out the unfulfilled wishes of the dead. "Blue ghost-light" harks back to the fourth quatrain of "Oral Compositions after Being Captured" (see chapter 1): "Its blue ghost-light will never die— / Night after night, it shines upon the Terrace of Yan." The "ghost-light," or *ignis fatuus*, is the natural phosphorescence rising from decomposing organic matter. The term originally shows Wang's expectation for his own posthumous status as a revolutionary martyr, whose spirit shimmers over Beijing, shedding a ghastly light into this fortress of conservative forces. In this 1940 poem, however, it is his comrades who have turned into "ghost-light," and he is the one bearing the burden of survival. This term thus commemorates both his deceased comrades and his own youthful self. By referring to his past, Wang creates a continuity of his identity and moral subjectivity as a revolutionary. And yet this moral subjectivity can hardly find its expression in the current political situation. His "dreaming soul," tormented by traumatic memories, seems unable to find a foothold within the boundaries. The "wounds and scars" are both on the body of the state and on himself, the head of the state, which in this stanza eventually merge into one. "Kalpa" is an image that repeatedly appears in Wang's poems. Again, Wang anticipates the advent of an Armageddon. The burning passion at the end of the stanza expresses a wish. While the youthful Wang expected glorious martyrdom, now he only hopes that some remnant heat of his existence will be felt beneath the ashes of time.

The second stanza establishes a direct link between the immediate landscape and the historical memory of the "rise and fall," coded in the reference to Yu Xin's rhapsody. The phrase "when the nation falls," however, is curious in the context that Wang has just established the RNG. Likely, it is a covert reference to the fall of Nanjing in 1937 as the national capital. This couplet is also the poem's key line. The fall of the nation corresponds to the kalpa in the previous stanza. But the memory of

cyclical history is also prophecy: after a kalpa, the next eon will see the re-beginning of time and the regeneration of the universe; similarly, a fallen nation may rise again. The cycle of destruction and rebirth, however, is a natural law in the Buddhist universe, unaffected by individual will or actions. Wang, the agent of history, acknowledges his powerlessness. The declaration “When the nation falls, no person is left to be ransomed” again establishes the equation between the body of the state and his person—a statement that hints at his resolution to sacrifice himself to halt the inevitable. “The moment of crisis forbids the revelation of my heart” suggests a sense of prohibition to defend himself under a greater crisis. Yet, by hinting at the cause of his silence, this line encourages the reader’s sympathetic response. The last sentence uses an allusion from *Zuozhuan* 左傳. Shaokang 少康, the sixth emperor of the Xia Dynasty, who had only “one village of land, one brigade of troops” 有田一成有眾一旅. On such a meager base, however, he defeated the usurper and revived the dynasty.²⁸ With this allusion, Wang implies hope. Readers today are equipped with the retrospective insight to know that neither vision of the future in the poem happened: China did not fall, and a “renaissance” following the foundation of the RNG did not materialize. The ultimate function of the poem is precisely Wang’s “self-revelation,” his apology.

A History That Forgets

In the late fall of 1943, it was an open secret among RNG elites that the sun of the Japanese Empire was setting. Poets in Nanjing were spending more time than ever living by the motto *carpe diem* by drinking and versifying. The center of their social circle was Li Xuanti, descendant of a well-connected family who served in Qing, Beiyang, and Nationalist governments. Since late 1940, he had been hosting “elegant gatherings” in his studio called West-Bridge Thatched Cottage, a name referring to a line by the patriotic poet Du Fu. His guests included not only high-, middle-, and low-level RNG bureaucrats capable of writing poetry, but also cultural elites loosely associated with the regime, as well as visiting Japanese sinologists. From late 1942 on, these gatherings became “weekly salons” (*xingfanhui* 星飯會) held every Sunday at noon, sponsored by Wang Jingwei and Mei Siping, minister of industry and commerce.²⁹

On November 14, 1943, a stellar cast of RNG poets met here to celebrate the 819th anniversary of the Southern Song poet Lu You, another

paragon of patriotism. One of the guests was Qian Zhonglian, a promising young classical scholar and counselor in the Executive Yuan. Qian wrote a lyric song to the tune “The River Runs Red”:³⁰

如此乾坤	Such a Heaven, such an Earth!
當痛酌精靈以酒	Let's pour the Spirit a big toast of wine!
共依約流人身世	Men in dislocation share the same fate
紅羊劫後	After the Red-Goat Kalpa.
九域已符金狄讖	The Nine Districts ³¹ have relived the Golden Barbarian's Curse;
兩宮誰折黃花壽	Who gathers chrysanthemums to wish stateless sovereigns longevity? ³²
剩夢中夜夜奪松亭	All he can do is seize the Pine Pavilion, in dreams night after night, ³³
男兒手	By the hands of a man.
家國事	Matters concerning the family and the state
沉吟久	Have long been weighed in my thoughts.
天水碧	The Heaven Dew Cyan—
依然否	Is it the same tender shade of green?
看河山信美	Behold! The rivers and mountains are truly beautiful,
春非吾有	But our own springtime it is not!
當日朝廷休恨小	Think not that the court back then was small—
畫江吳蜀猶堪守	It still protected Wu and Shu, its river picturesque.
想魂兮歸策劍門驢	Imagine: his soul returns on a donkey, entering the Sword Gate,
難回首	Hardly looking back.

This poem was the boldest among all compositions written and surviving that day.³⁴ Qian was decades younger than the other poets known to have attended the party: Li Xuanti, Long Yusheng, Xia Jingguan, Li Peiqiu 李霈湫 (b. 1884), Huang Maoqian 黃懋謙 (d. 1950), Yang Wuyang 楊無恙 (1894–1952), and Chen Zhaoting 陳趙亭 (1899–1962).³⁵ Though all poets mentioned Lu You's patriotism, none ventured to explicitly compare the situation of the RNG to that of the Southern Song. Qian, the enfant terrible, was the one who broke the taboo.

The Red-Goat Kalpa 紅羊劫 is a belief that stemmed from numerical prognostication. Kalpa is borrowed here to mean periodical disasters. According to the Southern Song scholar Chai Wang 柴望 (1212–1280), havoc most likely would occur in a sexagenary cycle in the years

of *bingwu* 丙午 and *dingwei* 丁未. *Bing*, *wu*, and *ding* all share the quality of “fire” in Five-Phase theory, corresponding to the color red; the zodiac animal for the year of *wei* is the goat. By his time, twenty-one major historical disasters had happened in these years—the Northern Song fell, for instance, in 1126, a *bingwu* year. The Taiping Rebellion is also termed a Red-Goat Kalpa, even though it did not happen in either sexagenary year. This is because the names of its leaders, Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 (1814–1864) and Yang Xiuqing 楊秀清 (1823–1856), are often coined into a binome Hong-Yang 洪楊, which is homophonic to *hongyang* 紅羊, or Red-Goat. If the Southern Song suffered from a Red-Goat (*hongyang*) Kalpa, Nanjing in the mid-twentieth century was still recovering from the Hong-Yang Kalpa. By referring to the recent massacres of Nanjing, it may be a subtle nod to the Rape of Nanjing.

The Golden Barbarian refers to Buddhist bronze statues and is a synecdoche for Buddhism. A Daoist living toward the end of the Northern Song called Buddhism a “Golden Barbarian that reduced China to disorder” (*Jin Di luan Hua* 金狄亂華); when China was indeed invaded by the Jurchen Jin (Jin means “golden”), people thought of his words as a prophecy, the actual meaning of which was only revealed at its fulfillment.³⁶ The Late Qing poet Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲 (1848–1905) also used this “curse” to describe recent events of his time; according to Qian Zhonglian’s commentary, Huang’s allusion refers to the foreign military intervention by the Eight-Nation Alliance to end the Boxer Uprising.³⁷ It is unclear, however, whether Qian uses this term here to allude to the generic foreign colonial forces or specifically to the Japanese invasion. Given that he cites Lu You’s dreams to regain lost territories, the latter reading is plausible.

The “Heaven Dew Cyan” refers to a story set in the Southern Tang court: ladies in Emperor Li Yu’s 李煜 (937–978; r. 961–75) palace stored rainwater until it turned a pale shade of teal and used it to dye cloth. Since it was a color from water fallen from the sky (*tianshui* 天水), it gained a poetic name. After the kingdom was conquered by the Song Dynasty, people realized that this was a prophecy, since the Zhao royal house of Song hailed from Tianshui (in modern Gansu Province).³⁸ Li Yu, a talented poet, was poisoned and died in captivity. When the Northern Song fell, its two last emperors—both talented artists and poets—were taken north as prisoners and eventually died there. The “chrysanthemum” line in Qian’s poem alludes to their fate. Rumor had it that one of the unfortunate emperors, Zhao Ji 趙佶 (1082–1135; r. 1100–1126), was Li Yu’s reincarnation—purportedly they even looked alike.³⁹ A single disaster is

tragic, but a history that always repeats itself turns into a divine comedy. And even though the Southern Song court might be seen as small, Qian suggests, it was still in control of the whole Yangtze area to wage effective self-defense of its autonomy. The last couplet again cites Lu You, who, while entering the Sword Gate on a donkey in the misty rain, asked whether, in such a time of national crisis, it was permissible for him to be a poet.⁴⁰ Qian Zhonglian seemed to be asking himself the same question.

Qian's poem speaks through erudite references. If the history of the highly cultured Southern Song in many aspects repeated that of the Southern Tang, Qian suggests that it could well be the fate of the RNG to become another "southern dynasty." One wonders if Qian saw Wang Jingwei as another Li Yu or Zhao Ji, rulers too poetic to serve themselves or their states well. All other poets at the party avoided making an explicit comparison. But by celebrating Lu You's birthday, they were implicitly confirming the "elephant in the room"—the burden of Nanjing's historical memory.

Qian himself would produce his own history of amnesia and aphasia. After 1945, this great classical scholar barely talked about his prominent civil service career under the RNG, or his professed admiration for Wang's altruistic sacrifice.⁴¹ The great majority of the poems he wrote in this period were left uncollected, this poem included.

After the war, elite collaborators finally dared to "remember the past." This time, the history of the Wang regime had joined the ranks of failed dynasties at Nanjing. Zhou Fohai, who began writing classical-style poems in captivity, composed five "Moved by the Past at Jinling" poems in late July 1947.⁴² By lamenting that "South of the Yangtze, the ranks of genteel luminaries are newly replenished" 江左縉紳新舊異, he probably sees himself as among the sacrifices for the national unity; and by including Republican monuments like the Purple Mountain and the Linggu Temple (where anonymous soldiers of the Nationalist Revolutionary Army were buried) among the sites of historical remembrance, he may imply that the same fate may befall Republican China.

A City That Remembers

As Iris Chang argues in her seminal work: "The Rape of Nanjing is told from three different perspectives. The first is the Japanese perspective. It is the story of a planned invasion—what the Japanese military was told to do, how to do it, and why. The second perspective is that of the Chinese,

the victims; this is the story of the fate of the city when the government is no longer capable of protecting its citizens against outside invaders. This section includes individual stories from the Chinese themselves, stories of defeat, despair, betrayal, and survival. The third is the American and European perspective,” a story of momentary heroism and, later, indifference.⁴³

In this chapter, I have tried to construct a fourth perspective: that of the collaborators who lost the city to invaders and then came back to rule as Japanese puppets, their moral claim undermined by profound shame. These men were further troubled by a sense of *déjà vu*, a particular kind of historical weariness sharpened by their identity as cultural elites. Many of them thus deliberately adopted a strategy of amnesia and aphasia: most of their poems in Nanjing focus narrowly on landscape and enjoyment, avoiding historical depth. To them, the taboo of historical memory was unlocked only after the fall of the Wang regime.

The presence of these collaborators in Nanjing, in turn, was perceived as an episode of shame in the history of the city. The Republican government that returned in 1946 and the People’s Republic that took over in 1949 systematically erased their traces. Today, tourists in Nanjing will not miss sites of literary memory—the inevitable “Qinhuai River,” the “Rook Robe Lane” (*Wuyi xiang* 烏衣巷), or the “Stone City,” underwhelming places where the literary past has imposed overdetermined meanings. They will most certainly visit sites significant for the rehabilitated memory of Republican China—the Presidential Palace and Sun Yat-sen’s mausoleum par excellence, co-opted by the PRC as part of its own origin myth. Most likely, however, they will find not a trace of the RNG. There is no museum or monument to commemorate those who compromised China’s national honor. Their tenure is carefully redacted from the city. Wang’s office compound now houses the Nanjing Municipal Government, which has demolished the original building and rebuilt one in a pseudoclassical style. Wang’s Yihe Road residence has been repurposed into a military (or intelligence) institution, keeping out any curious visitor. Only a persistent and inquisitive lover of history may find the site of Wang’s desecrated tomb close to the Ming Xiao Mausoleum, on top of which a “Plum Viewing Pavilion” (*Guanmei xuan* 觀梅軒) is still standing among plum trees.

Nevertheless, an oblique gesture of commemoration hides in plain sight. The pavilion was built by Sun Ke in 1947, and to this day bears a long couplet stating:



Fig. 28. Couplets by Sun Ke 孫科, “Plum Viewing Pavilion,” site of Wang Jingwei’s destroyed tomb, Nanjing. Photograph by the author, October 1, 2018.

欣敵寇潛蹤，景物依然，河山如故，此日花香鳥語，鍾阜麗明，若同和靖重遊，應媿六橋三竺。

問吳王何處，墳塢已渺，史蹟尚留，當年虎踞龍蟠，石城安穩，端賴武鄉定策，永垂九鼎一言。

Delighted—the enemy has scurried away, the scenery is unchanged, and the rivers and mountains remain the same; today the flowers are fragrant, the birds chirping, and the Bell Mountain sunlit; if only I could come with Hejing [Lin Bu], it would be like the Six Bridges and Three Temples [of Hangzhou] again.

I ask where the king of Wu is gone, whose tomb has disappeared, but whose traces in history stay; where once the tiger squatted and the dragon coiled, the Stone City is secured, all thanking the strategy of Wuxiang [Zhuge Liang]; forever remembered be his words, weightier than Nine Tripods!



Fig. 29. The “Wang Plums” in Daiko Medical Center, Nagoya. Photograph by the author, September 2016.

In the first half of the couplet, Sun Ke compares Wang Jingwei to Lin Bu 林逋 (967–1028), a recluse who lived in Hangzhou and declared plum flowers to be his wife and cranes his sons. Wang’s poetry repeatedly reveals a longing to live a private life among the landscape. He also famously loved plum flowers, a floral symbol of purity, elegance, and strength. The extent of his love for plums is reflected by the use of “Plum” as his code name while he was a patient at Nagoya University Hospital. After his death, his family donated three plum trees to the hospital as a token of gratitude; two remain alive today in the deserted backyard of Daiko Medical Center. Hangzhou, moreover, was where in January 1932 Wang, Chiang, and Sun decided to build a coalition government, in the aftermath of Mukden Incident, under the policy guideline of trading space for time. Sun Ke thus appears to express a certain sense of regret over Wang’s posthumous damnation for staying faithful to the same policy that Sun and Chiang coauthored. The second half of the couplet further compares Wang to Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234), the celebrated counselor during the Three Kingdoms period. Using his strategy, Liu Bei 劉備 (161–223) collaborated with the state of Wu and defeated the

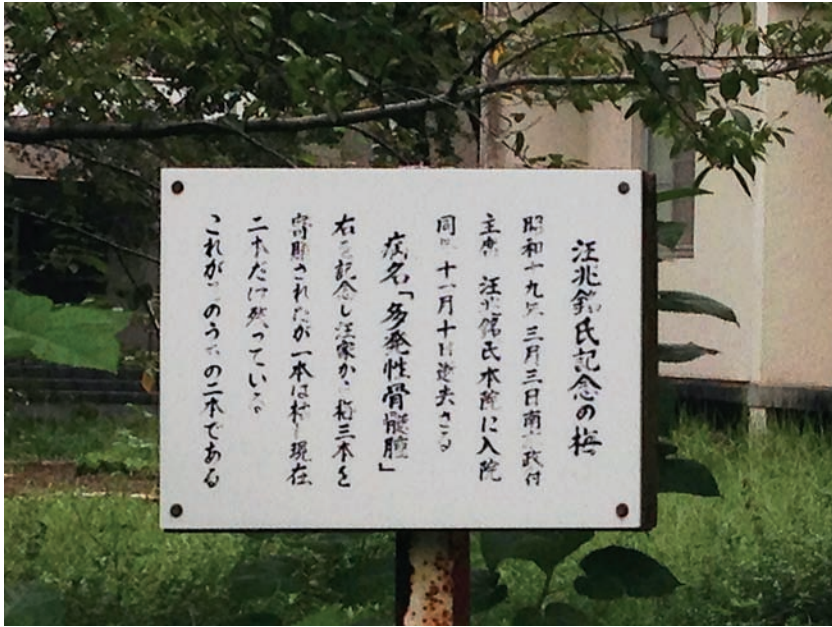


Fig. 30. An information placard explaining the name and origin of the “Wang memorial plums.” Daiko Medical Center, Nagoya. Photograph by the author, September 2016.

domineering military force of Wei through the Battle of the Red Cliffs. Sun implies that, thanks to Wang, China’s fallen territories remained intact and were handed back as a whole to the national government after Japan’s surrender. The Nine Tripods are used as a metaphor for China. The phrase “weightier than Nine Tripods” refers to the story of Mao Sui 毛遂, a Warring States retainer who on a diplomatic trip to Chu managed to convince its king to save Zhao. Lord Pingyuan 平原君 (d. 251 BCE) thus praised his tongue as being a more effective weapon than a million troops.⁴⁴ Through these allusions, Sun Ke appears to sympathize with Wang’s course of action for protecting the city, and the fallen territories of China at large, from being turned into ruins.

Not all visitors who perchance passed by this pavilion would notice Sun Ke’s couplet; even fewer could decode its message. Yet when the plum trees are in bloom and attract visitors from near and far, they testify to this place as a site of memory in another way: it used to be called Sun Mausoleum Hill (Sunling gang 孫陵岡) or King of Wu’s Mausoleum (Wuwang fen 吳王墳) to commemorate Sun Quan 孫權 (182–252), the king of Wu during the Three Kingdoms period. In 1930, the Sun Yat-sen

Mausoleum Committee decided to have thousands of plum trees planted on this hill.⁴⁵ It was finally renamed Plum Blossom Hill (Meihua shan 梅花山), however, only after Wang was buried there on November 23, 1944.⁴⁶ Locals suspected that it was a deliberate act inspired by Shi Kefa 史可法 (1602–1645),⁴⁷ a Ming loyalist minister and martyr whose remains were buried on the Plum Ridge (Meiling 梅嶺) outside of Yangzhou, after the invading Manchu army laid waste to the city and massacred hundreds of thousands of its residents. This site, therefore, relates the memory of Wang Jingwei to that of patriotic resistance as well as to that of Sun Yat-sen, whose status as the “Father of the Nation” had been consolidated to no small extent through the agency of Wang Jingwei.

Through these multiple layers of reference, the Plum Viewing Pavilion has truly become a *lieu de mémoire*, creating an interaction between memory and history. It imposes, in Nora’s terms, “a hermetic excrescence upon the world,” turning a mundane patch of ground into a contested mnemonic space, summed up by its name and open to an infinite variety of interpretations. The tomb has disappeared among the wilds—ominously, just as Wang envisioned in 1934: “Remnant ashes after the flames of kalpa, / abandoned bones churned out by wars, / find sleep beneath a spread of lush green.” Nonetheless, the name of the mountain, the blooming plums, and the Plum Viewing Pavilion bearing Sun Ke’s couplets continue to hint at Wang Jingwei’s tortuous, haunting historical memory, which, beating all odds, has survived to date.

Nanjing, a city that cannot yet forgive, will never truly forget.

Epilogue

Poetry against Oblivion

Shame

Off the beaten paths in the Ciqikou Old Town, away from the teeming tourists, tongue-numbing chicken, sizzling grills, hotpots, and mass-produced trinkets, squeezing through narrow alleys between moss-covered brick walls, trekking over the debris of demolished houses, and standing still under a gigantic white fig tree that spreads its wings in the foggy air blown over from the Jialing River, the time-wanderer found what brought her to Chongqing, China's wartime capital, on this December afternoon: two cast-iron statues. In dark cold shimmer, they show a man and a woman facing each other in a kneeling position, their wrists bound by ropes behind their backs, their heads bent and tilting inward, in a gesture of coerced repentance to a white marble relief of an anonymous soldier in his eternal sleep. A newly erected bilingual placard explains that this is the Monument for Fallen Soldiers in the Anti-Japanese War, and the statues represent Wang Jingwei and his wife Chen Bijun.

In the months following the Wang couple's escape from Chongqing in December 1938, shoddy kneeling effigies bearing their names popped up in streets across Chinese cities. They were thus compared to the Southern Song chancellor Qin Hui and his wife Madame Wang, whose cast-iron statues are kneeling in a temple in Hangzhou enshrining the anti-Jurchen hero Yue Fei. The Qin couple was believed to have schemed Yue Fei's execution, resulting in the Southern Song's failure to recover the lost north. The comparison was not perfect: Wang Jingwei was hardly the chief culprit in China's military defeats. And if one saw Qin Hui as a



Fig. 31. Kneeling statues of the Wang couple in Ciqikou, Chongqing. Courtesy of the artist Xue Lei. Photographed in February 2019.

scapegoat for the imperially sanctioned peace policy, condemning Wang as a new Qin Hui would implicate Chiang Kai-shek too. It was perhaps the reason why this grassroots initiative was not officially endorsed by the national government.¹ But Wang gave China's weakness a human face. Through 1940 and 1941, such kneeling effigies cropped up across China, especially in the south. Patriots spat and stomped on these effigies to vent their anger and frustration. Requests were sent to Chongqing for a master design.² Given the popular demand, General Feng Yuxiang, a former ally and admirer of Wang (see chapter 2), led a campaign to create the kneeling statues from more durable material.³ Citizens, soldiers, students, and civil servants pitched in with pennies, and pressure to donate was exerted on banks and companies. This patriotic project was commissioned to Wang Linyi 王臨乙 (1908–1997), an artist who would later contribute the marble relief *The May Thirtieth Movement* to the Monument to the People's Heroes, the landmark of Tiananmen Square.⁴ The original plan to cast the statues in iron, however, could not materialize, due to wartime restrictions on metal. Wang Linyi thus used



Fig. 32. Facial detail of the kneeling statue of Wang Jingwei.

fortified concrete. Patriotic fever soon cooled into logistics, budgets, and slow handwork. The whole project was completed only in September 1944. Because of inflation, there was no money left to install the statues in the city center as planned. They were instead put at the crossroads in front of the artist's studio below the Phoenix Mountain in Ciqikou.⁵ After all, there was no more urgency to condemn: the resisters were winning the war, the Wang regime no longer a rival, and Wang Jingwei himself was dying in the hospital of Nagoya. This artwork was unceremoniously destroyed at the end of the 1940s during road construction. In 2002, the Ciqikou District decided to recreate the statues after the original design in cast iron, to “propagate the Chinese people’s will to maintain national unity,” as a placard, no longer extant, explained.⁶ With other such effigies slowly disappearing from the Chinese landscape, they are



Fig. 33. Detail of the hands of the kneeling statue of Wang Jingwei.

now the only *Schandmale*, “monuments of shame,” of the Wang couple still exposed to the elements.⁷

This site, however, failed to become an official “Patriotic Educational Site,” as the Ciqikou District had hoped. The recreation of the statues is poorly documented. It is unclear who made the decision and under what circumstances. And if the project was meant to admonish and shame, the statues have received curiously little public promotion. Not a single Chongqing local whom I interviewed knew about their existence. Though located in one of the most popular tourist haunts in Chongqing, they are tucked into a hidden nook. Perhaps it is because any portrayal of Wang, even a *Schandmal*, eternalizes his problematic memory, therefore defying the institutionalized amnesia. Notably, in comparison to the ungainly and expressionless Qin couple statues, the Wang couple stat-

ues are slender and sleek, their upper bodies bent in graceful curves, betraying the artist's (misguided) attention to structural symmetry and aesthetic harmony. The agony on their faces, furthermore, may call for unwanted attention to their inner states of mind. These statues make them recognizable individuals, and not simply an abstract symbol, in contrast to the anonymous marble soldier who is expressionless and featureless. For the trial of treason as a political act, artistry is a distraction.

Perhaps the negligence is also due to the fact that the anonymous soldier portrayed in the relief, to whom the Wang couple repent, is unmistakably Nationalist. As Benedict Anderson argues, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a powerful symbol around which nationalism is constructed as a secular religion. Fatality is transformed into continuity, and the link is established between the dead and the unborn.⁸ Had the district government heeded his argument, it could have saved itself the money and the embarrassment of having to build, and then neglect, this anachronistic monument. In Chongqing, the only martyrs celebrated today are the communists.⁹ The nearby Gele Mountain sites of commemoration feature the interrogation and torture inflicted on communists in and after the War of Resistance. A visitor arriving by subway to the Martyr's Grave Station first encounters a museum in monumental proportions, Red Crag Soul (*Hongyanhun* 紅岩魂), named after the novel *Red Crag* (1961), which romanticizes the communist prisoners' heroic resistance. The certified martyrs, 310 in total, were mostly victims of the Civil War waged after the War of Resistance. But the Chinese-language exhibition insinuates that the two wars were in effect one. It maintains that the Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO), established in 1943 as part of the Allied joint venture in intelligence exchange, trained Chinese agents only "in the name of fighting the Japanese" and that it invested the heaviest in the Chongqing Special Police program, which "was not for the War of Resistance." (The English-language exhibition notably downplays the charge, stating that "the purpose of the SACO training course was not mere fighting against Japan.") And even though the SACO was disbanded in 1946, the novel *Red Crag* and its dozens of derivative books, plays, and films create the impression that it continued to orchestrate the GMD prosecution of communists.¹⁰ They thereby portray the GMD as a party of compradors serving foreign interests. Making her way up the mountain, the visitor finds the Bai Villa and the Zhazi Cave, two scenic compounds now featured in popular literature as SACO "concentration camps." In effect, the Bai Villa detained political prisoners, Zhou Fohai among them, only before and after the

period when It served as a SACO hospice. Gele Mountain as a prominent patriotic education site is frequented by organized excursions for school students. Busloads of tourists swarm its streets, causing constant traffic jams. Its popularity is partly due to the Red Crag mythology and partly to the free entrance, attractive to commercial tours. The price of selective memory, however, is forgetting. Even the communist martyrs are only celebrated in their abstract commonality. In paintings and sculptures they invariably lift their chiseled chins and look into the future. One martyr's portraiture is interchangeable with another's, conforming to the communist ideal of strength derived from collective anonymity.¹¹ In this fashion, commemoration ironically consigns the individuality of these men and women, whose bravery derived from their belief in a collective ideal, to the fate of oblivion.

Power creates memory, and memory is power. As Hung Chang-tai argues, a Chinese revolutionary museum primarily serves two purposes: to legitimize the CCP's rule and to highlight the pivotal role played by Mao Zedong in guiding the party to its final victory, in a fight against the oppressive GMD at home and the callous imperialists abroad (particularly the Japanese and the Americans).¹² The heroism and sacrifice of the Chongqing people during the War of Resistance can only be celebrated today in dissociation with the regime that led them.

But if the "orthodox CCP memory" is the mainstream narrative that dominates the city's mnemonic landscape, the "orthodox GMD memory" has recently been rehabilitated too, to a certain extent and apparently for a specific purpose. The Chongqing Anti-Japanese War Site Museum (also known as "the Yellow Mountain") is also off the beaten path. Located in the remote South Mountain area, it consists of villas that once housed Chiang Kai-shek and the American Advisory Corps, among others. Here a visitor sees a list of the twenty-two major battles fought throughout the War of Resistance. Most of them, aside from the two battles in which the communist forces played a significant role, are seldom celebrated in mainland Second World War museums, history textbooks, films, documentaries, or TV dramas. Here lists of 255 GMD generals (including posthumously conferred ranks) who lost their lives in the resistance are hung on the wall, a quiet rebuttal of the summary denunciation of the GMD government's "nonresistance." This site has been open as a museum since October 19, 2005. Between 1952 and 2003, it primarily served as a sanatorium for senior CCP cadres. Two villas became "exhibition rooms" in 1991. In contrast, the Gele Mountain sites were museumized in 1963. An unspoken reason for the rehabili-

tated memory of Yellow Mountain was perhaps the need to recruit the GMD as the CCP's junior partner in a new pursuit of reunification. Coincidentally or not, also in 1991, the Taiwan National Assembly was democratically elected for the first time, with the freshly founded nativist Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) winning more than 23 percent of the seats, enhancing the threat of Taiwanese separatism. This museum officially serves as a "Cross-Strait Exchange" site too. Its prominent visitors included multiple Chiang family members and GMD luminaries, as well as American veterans who served in China. Enemies are not forever, and their memories may be unburied, if only for pragmatic purposes and provided that they no longer have the power to overturn the entrenched narrative. Unlike Gele Mountain, easily accessible via subway and free of charge, Yellow Mountain enjoys poor public transportation service and is not free. Despite its scenic outlook, it remains a quiet place.

The third institutionalized form of memory in Chongqing may be called "the market form." Another museum of war in the city is in the private Jianchuan Museum Cluster, open since 2018 and named after its owner, billionaire Fan Jianchuan 樊建川. This museum is built on the site of an abandoned weapons factory, which was relocated to the hinterland at the outbreak of the war and was a crucial contributor to China's continuous resistance. It exudes a bombastic "cool" vibe that attracts the curious. Facts are not as rigorously checked as the entrance ticket. It performs a balancing act among commercial interests, commemoration, and political correctness. Its metanarrative of the war strictly adheres to the official guidelines, crediting the CCP as "the mainstay" of the resistance and naming the USSR alone in the "wartime diplomacy" information plaque. The objects in display, however, may tell a different story. US Air Force uniforms of those who fought in China are exhibited. An entrance hallway features thousands of handprints of surviving veterans, the majority of whom fought in the GMD government army. While celebrating their heroic defense of the nation, the museum is silent about the prosecution (or at best lenient negligence) of GMD veterans who stayed in mainland China after 1949. In effect, the GMD veterans of the resistance were invited to the Victory over Japan Day Parade in Tiananmen Square for the first time in 2015, seventy years after their war ended. Also among the invitees were more than three hundred Taiwanese representatives, including Lien Chan, vice chairman of the GMD. The following year, the DPP candidate Tsai Ing-wen won the Taiwanese presidential election by a landslide, making the partnership with GMD all the more urgent for the future of "One China." The Jianchuan Museum's inclu-

sion of GMD veterans in 2018 was thus not a civilian rebellion against, but a faithful implementation of, the official guidelines. The former weapons factory now produces weaponized memory, its effectiveness boosted by market appeal.

All sites of wartime memory have one aspect in common: the summary denunciation of Wang Jingwei and his regime for “selling the nation.” There is no gray zone, only black and white. The stories are narrated from the anachronistic hindsight of the victors, along the neat lines of resisters against collaborators, heroism against treason, and glory against shame. Absent from this binary narrative are unvarnished testimonies of lives under the occupation.

Oblivion

Damnatio memoriae, literally the damnation or condemnation of memory, is a modern Latin term. It originally describes the Roman Senate’s practice of erasing the names and portraits of those citizens condemned as “enemies of the Republic” from public memory, which sometimes included wholesale rewriting of histories. The practice included excising the condemned individual’s name and titles from all official lists; wax masks representing the deceased were banned from display at aristocratic funerals; books written by the condemned were confiscated and burned; property rights were forfeited; wills were annulled; the birthday of the condemned was proclaimed a day evil to the Roman people, while the anniversary of the death was celebrated as a time of public rejoicing; houses belonging to the deceased were razed; and prohibitions could be enacted against the continued use of the condemned’s praenomen.¹³ For a people preoccupied with memory and fame, this was the most horrible fate that could befall an individual.

This list of punitive practices coincides to a large degree with the memory censorship exercised on Wang Jingwei. Beginning in 1939, schools in the hinterland were repeatedly ordered to excise from their textbooks all writings by Wang Jingwei, Zhou Zuoren, Zhou Fohai, and other collaborators, regardless of content.¹⁴ Ironically, since Wang Jingwei wrote Sun Yat-sen’s last will, a central piece of the Sun personality cult, and Zhou Fohai’s interpretation of the Three Principles of the People remained the most authoritative, thorough censorship proved impossible. After Wang Jingwei’s death, his tomb was destroyed, his body incinerated, and his properties confiscated. Needless to say, his writings have never been republished in mainland China. His name has become synonymous with

“traitor.” Whenever anything related to the RNG is mentioned, the prefix “illegitimate” (*wei* 偽) is automatically added. None of his former residences call the fact to memory. They have become ruins, or stand in disrepair, or were appropriated for other uses. Wang’s records of public service were erased, often from academic research too. Below, I will examine school textbooks and motion pictures, two of the most effective means of creating and disseminating public memory on a mass scale. And if textbooks are “hard” means that indoctrinate through pedagogy, rote memorization, and examination, then motion pictures are “soft” means, as cultural products that people willingly pay for.

After 1949, Wang’s historical roles as a founder of the Tongmenghui, as Sun Yat-sen’s lieutenant and political heir, as the first chairman of the Guangzhou Nationalist government, and as leader of the GMD Left are entirely obliterated from mainland Chinese middle school history textbooks for the nine years of compulsory education. What is consistently mentioned is his split with the communists in 1927 in Wuhan. A 1951 textbook, for instance, first mentions Wang as a “fake revolutionary hidden in the Wuhan GMD Central Committee and Nationalist government,” who purportedly exclaimed: “We’d rather kill a thousand [communists] by mistake than let one loose!”¹⁵ This slogan of macabre cruelty, popularly credited to Wang Jingwei in mainland history books, was of ambivalent provenance. There is no evidence that he ever uttered these words.¹⁶ The textbooks themselves are inconsistent too. The 1982 eighth-grade history textbook credits the slogan to “the Wang Jingwei group,”¹⁷ while the 1994 edition credits it again to Wang Jingwei.¹⁸ The slogan finally disappeared in the early 2000s pilot editions during the educational reform,¹⁹ but reappeared again in the 2017 Ministry of Education textbook, except that this time it is attributed to the ambivalent plural pronoun “them.”²⁰ Obviously, it is a fabricated fact too salacious, and too long associated with the name of Wang Jingwei, to be disavowed for good. In post-2001 textbooks based on the new standard promulgated by the Ministry of Education, both Wang and Chiang are designated as part of the “GMD right wing” who “betrayed the revolution.” It appears that even the term “fake revolutionary” may call unwanted attention to Wang’s being a leader of the GMD Left, while in mainland Chinese historiography the “Left” possesses uncontested legitimacy. But the most curious change in the new millennial textbooks is that they no longer mention Wang’s wartime collaboration. Previously, this had been Wang’s primary transgression. In the 1995 textbook, for instance, Wang’s treason has merited a full paragraph of description and condemnation.²¹

By removing the Wang regime, the newest textbooks create the impression that China's fallen territories were under the direct jurisdiction and exploitation of the Japanese military occupation. The memory of the Chinese wartime collaboration is entirely repressed and erased. Through oblivion the damnation is complete.

In comparison, Taiwanese history textbooks underwent three stages of development in the portrayal of Wang. Until the 1970s, Wang Jingwei was primarily remembered as the enemy of Chiang Kai-shek. His collaboration with Japan was not always mentioned. In textbooks from 1983 to the early 2000s, however, Wang is only introduced as a “puppet traitor who sold the nation.”²² Clearly, in the democratizing Taiwan, the significance of the old rivalry between Wang and Chiang was waning. After the promulgation of the 2005 standard, textbooks are no longer unified, and different publishers gain greater freedom in interpreting history. The popular Sanmin textbook published in 2007, for instance, acknowledges for the first time that Wang Jingwei was the first chairman of the Guangzhou Nationalist government, and that the GMD Left government in Wuhan saw itself as the “orthodox” nationalist regime.²³ Recent textbooks have ventured even farther. The Nanyi textbook, for instance, states that Wang Jingwei escaped Chongqing “to promote a peace movement.” The RNG is described as “pro-Japan” instead of a “puppet.”²⁴ In the portrayal of Wang, among other historical issues, the mainland and Taiwanese textbooks are increasingly headed in opposite directions. Textbooks are among the most powerful instruments to create public memory. While for current mainland pupils, Wang is remembered solely as the enemy of the Party, Taiwanese educators have forgiven his rivalry with Chiang and see his partnership with Japan as one of the desperate wartime alliances.

Portraits are powerful. A photo encourages the reader to gain an intuitive impression of a person and reach his or her own judgment. Since democratization and liberalization, Taiwanese textbooks routinely include portraits of Wang. Mainland textbooks, however, sustain the portrait ban. As Jeremy Taylor argues, successive Chinese governments “have long sought to obfuscate, dismiss, or render invisible the visual cultures that were sustained by Chinese living under occupation and by the organs of the RNG state,” leading to a phenomenon that he terms “enforced invisibility.”²⁵ Yet in the case of Wang Jingwei, his personal charm is an elephant in the room that makes denunciation complicated. In the age of visual culture, Chinese blog posts listing “the most handsome men in history” routinely include Wang Jingwei. Baidu

Baiken, the largest mainland Chinese online encyclopedia, even includes an entry titled “the four greatest male beauties of the Republican era” (*Minguo sida meinan* 民國四大美男), and Wang Jingwei tops every one of the three lists. Superficial charm charms just as well. This may be the reason why, despite the plethora of films and TV dramas romanticizing the Republican era produced in mainland China in the recent years, Wang has barely appeared in any of them. There have been precisely three breaches of this motion picture *damnatio*.

The first case, and the only picture in which Wang appears as a main character, is *Assassinate Wang Jingwei* (*Cisha Wang Jingwei* 刺殺汪精衛, 1988), directed by Ying Qi. It romanticizes the 1935 attempt on Wang’s life. The film’s pious portrayal of patriots, however, pales against its true passion: Wang Jingwei, played by Sun Yanjun, an actor who masters the art of nuance. Wang’s first appearance is as a pensive and solitary shadow, dressed mournfully in a white suit and black tie, facing the massive stone stele of martyred soldiers in the Shanghai Incident. When a general challenges his decision to negotiate with Japan, he gives no answer at first, before telling him that Chiang Kai-shek has ordered the Nineteenth Route Army to evacuate Shanghai immediately and march to Fujian to join the anticommunist campaign (5’0”–6’10”). This scene implies that the patriot’s rage is misguided, since the true culprit of appeasement is Chiang and not Wang. Wang’s next appearance is at a meeting, accused by the party seniors of “begging for peace.” Standing in front of Sun Yat-sen’s portrait, Wang delivers an impassioned speech on resisting the temptation of “high keys”; only peace with Japan would give China some breathing space for nation-building and for eliminating the CCP threat (10’18”–12’50”). This film also lets Wang explain China’s international isolation in its fight against Japan and his decision to assume the responsibility of signing the peace treaty. In one crucial scene before the assassination (5’22”–53’10”), Wang defends his position by declaring his willingness to sacrifice everything to save the nation. There is also a hint, however, at his hurt pride in subordinating himself to Chiang Kai-shek. The portrayal is thus a marvelous double entendre: Is Wang being sincere or hypocritical? If the audience takes Wang’s rhetoric of altruism at face value, the accusation of treason by other patriots becomes a true tragedy. The character actor Sun Yanjun’s subtle performance captures this ambivalence in great finesse. To a certain extent, it resembles his highly acclaimed role as Liu Bei in the TV drama *Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義, 1994). In both roles, Sun’s moral facade is so perfect that one wonders if it is a mask.

The film shows great accuracy in the portrayal of Wang's habits and mannerisms—the Wang family dinner features French food and red wine, a culinary preference of Wang that few are aware of. The assassination scene is also faithfully reconstructed. But the whole film is built upon a historically faulty premise: it is a well-known fact that Sun Fengming's real target was Chiang Kai-shek (see chapter 2). Given the film's attentiveness to details, this “mistake” must have been deliberate. It betrays the director's true interest in Wang Jingwei and in particular in the reasons for his collaboration. This film had the potential of becoming a far better one, had the director had the artistic freedom to explore the full complexity of the protagonist and the subject matter. In its current form, the film is slowed and dulled by the lackluster main plot. When it was released in 1988, it failed to scandalize and failed to succeed. In the internet age, however, it acquired a second life of modest popularity: by April 2021, it has been streamed 310,000 times on 1905.com alone, one of the major film streaming services in China, and received a 7.0 score on Douban, a review site. The comments make it clear that the nuanced portrayal of Wang Jingwei is the sole merit of the film that interests the audience.

Despite its shortcomings, the fact that this film was made and released at all reflects the liberalizing atmosphere of 1988. Wang Jingwei would not appear on Chinese screens again for two more decades. In the film *1911* (*Xinhai geming* 辛亥革命, 2011), produced to mark the centenary of the 1911 Revolution, Wang Jingwei appears in the second half of the film. He is played by Yu Shaoqun, a young actor whose breakthrough role was portraying the namesake in *Mei Lanfang* 梅蘭芳 (2008), the male “Queen of Peking Opera.” His elegant femininity is thus exploited in *1911* to define Wang Jingwei's character. The relative success of his portrayal landed Yu this character again in an official “keynote” film, *The Founding of an Army* (*Jianjun daye* 建軍大業, 2017), which romanticizes the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 1927. In both films, “Wang Jingwei” is a minor actor in the epic history. He comes across as slightly naive, credulous, and extraneous, but never vicious or dangerous. In the second film, he is the only character citing Chinese classics and practicing calligraphy. From time to time the camera caresses the fine features of his fresh and radiant face.

None of the films has portrayed Wang in the last and most notorious incarnation of his life: as a “traitor.” In all three films, Wang Jingwei is played by actors who otherwise are known for roles sympathetic to the audience. Most likely, it is because for an actor who possesses such gen-

tle features to play a convincing Wang Jingwei does not conform to the dramaturgical stereotypes of villainy. Any portrayal of him with a modicum of visual credibility cannot but give the audience a license to sympathize, as becomes obvious from the online comments on these roles. Despite the recent surge of spy movies that dramatize espionage warfare in Shanghai among multiple forces that included the Wang regime, a trend pioneered by *The Message* (Fengsheng 風聲, 2009), Wang appears in none of them.

A film that merits special examination, however, is Ang Lee's masterpiece *Lust, Caution* (*Se Jie* 色戒, 2007), adapted from Eileen Chang's eponymous short story. A sensual epic drama unfolding in a stifling atmosphere of intrigue, desire, and death, it portrays a young student, Wang Jiazhi (under the cover of being "Mrs. Mai"), attempting to seduce and to murder a Mr. Yi, the intelligence chief of the Wang regime, only to be executed at the end under Mr. Yi's personal order. The Hong Kong actor Tony Leung, a master of understated emotions, personifies Mr. Yi, an inconspicuous, quiet, and dangerous spy of complicated loyalty. Yet he charms through his eyes of perennial melancholy. At the end of the film, when his wife calls him to dinner, he is found sitting alone in the darkness on Wang Jiazhi's emptied bed that still bears her shape. He looks up and tells his wife quietly that Mrs. Mai has returned to Hong Kong. In the light leaking through the opened door, tears twinkle in his eyes. At that moment, by casting his order to kill in a new psychological light, his melancholy assumes a redeeming power. The man to whom Mr. Yi pledged loyalty, Wang Jingwei, never appears in the film except as a name and as a photo decorating the wall of Mr. Yi's office. Mr. Yi's air of melancholy, however, may call to mind Wang Jingwei's, a man whose eyes and poetry were often noted for their extraordinary pathos. The psychological depth of their actions thus becomes their artistic redemption, at least in the eyes of the audience whose judicial judgment is governed by the law of art.

This film won multiple prestigious international awards and became a controversial sensation in the Sinosphere. Aside from its scandalously bold sex scenes, it was the first time the Wang regime was portrayed in mainstream Chinese cinemas without being reduced to a caricature. Though serving the Japanese, Mr. Yi is a reluctant puppet aching to recover China's lost territories (hinted at by a popular Manchurian song that Jiazhi sings in a Japanese bar). An uninformed viewer might be confused to find that the visual trappings of the Wang regime are entirely nationalist: in Mr. Yi's office, the National flag and the GMD party flag

flank Sun Yat-sen's portrait. It is the most direct reminder to the audience that a nominally Chinese regime served to mediate (and perhaps mitigate) the Japanese rule. The film's release has unleashed a spate of online enthusiasm for excavating RNG history.

Yet the film's most ironic detail easily escapes the non-Chinese audience. When Kuang Yumin, Jiazhi's heartthrob and ringleader of their patriotic student drama group, decides that they should turn into an assassination cell to kill traitors, he cites a couplet as inspiration: "The blade drawn turns into a sharp thrill / That truly deserves this fine young head!" 引刀成一快, 不負少年頭 (29'13"). He and his classmates appear to be unaware that it was written by Wang Jingwei, the very man whose "peace movement" they are condemning. The film is making a pregnant point: over time and at least in the public eyes, a patriot may turn into a traitor. This scene also underlines the naivete of their patriotism, soon to be exploited in a game of power and paid for with their lives. But above all, their obliviousness to the couplet's authorship demonstrates a poem's possible independent life as a mnemonic fragment.

Fragments

On March 28, 2019, irreverent laughter erupted across Chinese social media. That morning, at 9:27 a.m., the PLA Ground Force published the report on a chemical defense brigade paying respects to the revolutionary martyrs at the Yuhuatai Park in Nanjing on their home page, as well as on their official Weibo and WeChat accounts. The authors cite two quatrains:

慷慨歌燕市	With heroic abandon I sing in the market of Yan;
從容作楚囚	At utmost ease I become a prisoner from Chu.
引刀成一快	The blade drawn turns into a sharp thrill,
不負少年頭	That truly deserves this fine young head!

留得心魂在	I will preserve only my heart, my soul,
殘軀付劫灰	And let the maimed body incinerate in the flames of kalpa.
青燐光不滅	Its blue ghost-light will never die—
夜夜照燕臺	Night after night, it shines upon the Terrace of Yan.

These lines are followed by the remark "Commemorating the Revolutionary Martyrs, and marching forward, for a brighter future!"

Readers were quick to point out that these two poems, in fact, were

written by Wang Jingwei (see chapter 1). They questioned whether it was sacrilegious to cite the poems of a traitor to commemorate the revolutionary martyrs. The PLA Ground Force promptly deleted the report and the social media post. It then published a letter of apology, explaining that the report was an external submission, that the mistake was caused by the “lack of cultural literacy” of their website editors, and that “traitors and running dogs” should be nailed to the column of shame for the eternity. But the damage was done. All major Chinese-language online news services, even the right-wing *Global Times*, reacted in glee.²⁶ As a social media event, readers poured in with their own reactions. Take the Tencent Online News for instance. Within a single day, 649 comments were posted under the report. Readers debated whether a traitor’s poem could still be accepted as a good poem; whether it was appropriate for the PLA to cite the poems, considering that Wang was still a patriot when he wrote them; and whether Wang was truly a traitor.²⁷ The reaction became even less manageable when overseas services, including the Singapore-based *Lianhe Zaobao* and US-based New Tang Dynasty Television (with Falungong background), chimed in. The latter, for instance, exploited this chance to revisit the PLA’s record in the War of Resistance,²⁸ making the humiliation cultural and political.

Lest a viewer of *Lust, Caution* wonder if it violates cinematic realism to let a patriot cite a traitor’s poem, this incident proves that life truly imitates art. The four quatrains “Orally Composed upon Being Captured” gained such broad circulation and popularity during and after Wang’s lifetime that they begin to assume a life of their own. The historian Yu Ying-shih recalls that he first read these four quatrains in the wartime countryside and was deeply moved by them, without knowing that their author had become a “traitor.”²⁹ The writer and memoirist Zhang Yihe 章詒和 (b. 1942) also recounts that she learned in primary school that Wang Jingwei was the arch-traitor of the nation. Her father, Zhang Bojun 章伯鈞 (1895–1969), a prominent democrat, laughed at such a caricature and showed her a few poems by Wang Jingwei. She was deeply moved and realized that both her textbook and her teachers had been misleading. She similarly cites a couplet from these quatrains to title her article: “Carrying pebbles in its beak—what extreme folly, / Over ten thousand miles of dark waves spreads its sorrow.”³⁰ These and other anecdotes bear witness to the long-lasting appeal of Wang Jingwei as a poet.

One good poem is enough to make a poet immortal. True, Wang Jingwei the poet is not defined by these four poems alone, and even less so is Wang Jingwei the historical person. But their indisputable power

and memorability help to push them into a stratosphere of cultured expressions, achieving the unofficial status of miniclassics, instinctively recalled and recited by educated Chinese in varying contexts. This phenomenon does not, however, make their author “dead,” in the sense that their authorship is dissociated from their reception. The opposite appears true. Even when they are drifting in the mnemonic ocean of internalized verses as fragments unattached to their author’s body and name, they continue to point in the direction of an absence. The censors thus have been unwittingly complicit in executing Wang’s last will: by forgetting Wang as a person in flesh and blood with his complicated subjectivity, they have truly turned his poetry into his afterlife. These poems keep unburying Wang Jingwei from history’s grave.

I myself must have read these four quatrains sometime in my early teens. I later lived under the impression they were included in my literature textbook, until my research demonstrated the opposite. Though such poems are natural candidates for a school curriculum, their authorship dooms their candidacy. Nevertheless, as a teenager I must have immediately committed them to memory, making them an indelible part of my textual experience with the world, without knowing or caring about history’s jurisdiction. Judging from the PLA social media faux pas, millions of Chinese people have done the same, including the unfortunate authors of the blog post.

Toward a Happier Memory

Memories are central to the formation of an identity, regardless of a person or of a group. As Paul Ricoeur points out, the “what” of one’s memory at the same time determines the “who” of the one remembering. The object of memory is its very subject: “To remember something is at the same time to remember oneself.”³¹ We are what we remember. It is thus quite inevitable, even understandably human, for the victor of history to create a memory that justifies and legitimizes the outcome of history. Memory is the victor’s birthright.

But, as Ricoeur argues, that does not mean that memory pledges no duty to the idea of justice. It must be recalled, first, that the virtue of justice, “par excellence and by its very constitution, is turned toward others.” A just person is one who treats others with justice. The duty of memory is “the duty to do justice, through memories, to an other than the self.” Second, we are indebted “to those who have gone before us for part of what we are.” The idea of debt, inseparable from the

notion of heritage, is not limited to the concept of guilt. Even victors are indebted to the vanquished for making them who they are. The duty of memory thus demands maintaining “the feeling of being obligated with respect to these others.” And third, “among those others to whom we are indebted, the moral priority belongs to the victims.” In contrast, in our contemporary memory culture we tend to claim victim status for ourselves, since victimhood is often associated with moral purity if not immunity. But the victim at issue here “is the other victim, other than oneself.”³² The Chinese government has every right to celebrate the “red martyrs.” But if the victors of history aspire for moral victory, they may be better served by remembering their enemies and their victims too—truthfully, if possible.

After all, China as a postwar nation consists not only of the victors, but also of the nationalists, the collaborators, the accommodators, the silent survivors, and the variously vanquished in the “continuous revolution” after 1949. Every family has memories contesting with the institutionalized narrative. This even holds true for the last three Chinese presidents. Jiang Zemin was enrolled in the collaborationist Nanjing Central University from 1943 to 1945, a stigma later redacted from his official resume.³³ Hu Jintao’s father was a small factory owner and was persecuted in the Cultural Revolution. Xi Jinping’s father was purged in intraparty rivalry in 1963, and Xi himself spent his formative years being “reeducated” in the countryside. These “first families” are symptomatic of the Chinese society at large. The glorious narrative of the Revolution simply does not correspond with the lived reality. Today, China has realized, if not already surpassed, the Republican era’s wildest dream of becoming an economic, political, and military powerhouse, a nation respected and feared. The “losers” of history, Wang Jingwei included, may be relieved to know that their struggle was not in vain. But a gracious victor China is not. The idea of “just memory” remains alien to contemporary Chinese culture.

The continuous exercise of memory censorship in mainland China, which discourages thorough and balanced research into the figure of Wang Jingwei, makes his poetry a haunted space, in which the author does not return truly as himself, but as a ghost of China’s national trauma. Nothing shows this better than the case of Yeh Chia-ying, one of the most influential scholars among Chinese readers. As she recalled in a series of speech given in 2007,³⁴ when Beiping fell in the summer of 1937, her father followed the exodus to relocate to the hinterland, leaving his wife and children behind. In hindsight, Beiping’s nonresistance saved this ancient capi-

tal from destruction and probably saved her life too. When the RNG was founded in Nanjing, her whole family huddled around the radio, listening to Wang Jingwei's speech. Elders sighed that it was good that someone stood forth to represent China to the occupiers. Yeh remembers that, in 1945, as a middle school teacher in Beiping she and her students joined the elated crowd to welcome the returning government. But very soon, the returned government overstayed its welcome, as it treated the repatriated as the vanquished, putting all under the suspicion of moral compromise. Wartime school education in the occupied areas was declared to be "slave education" and the degrees were nullified.³⁵ The punitive exchange rate of the RNG currency to the national currency (200:1) deprived hundreds of millions of their livelihood and led to an economic meltdown.³⁶ In contrast, the government demanded no repatriation from Japan, a gesture of generosity that caused resentment. A newspaper sarcastically remarked that now "every heart misses the *Han*" (*renxin si Han* 人心思漢). While *Han* originally means an ethnically Chinese state missed by those living under foreign occupation, here it was a pun referring rather to the Hanjian, or collaborators. "Takeover" (*jieshou* 接收) was punned on as "robbery" (*jieshou* 劫收).³⁷ The "liberated" population felt that their suffering under Japanese occupation was unacknowledged. Yeh admits that she is an apolitical person, teaching Chinese classical poetry in North America, mainland China, and Taiwan with equal dedication. In the summer of 2007, however, she accidentally encountered Wang's poetry in the UBC library. Deeply moved by the author's talent and sentiments, she began to study his life. She praises Wang's poetry as exemplifying the highest ideals of Chinese literary aesthetics and his collaboration as driven by a "martyr complex" to sacrifice his reputation to save China.³⁸ It appears that, through Wang Jingwei's poetry, Yeh has rediscovered the words for her experience under and after the Japanese occupation. Her sufferings were rendered unspoken and unspeakable by the institutionalized narrative of united national resistance. Now, by commemorating Wang Jingwei's "martyrdom," she has finally managed to contextualize and verbalize her own traumatic memory of survival.

Reconciliation with the past is only possible after wounds are closed and traumas are healed. Such an act of reconciliation, accomplishable only as the end result of a series of long and difficult mnemonic practices, is not for the dead, but for the living. It is about who we are, as a people, expressed by how we treat our past. Pretending that the checkered past never existed is not only unjust, but unwise, as similar maneuvers inevitably fail.

For sure, memories of a troubled history, even in a more open society than the People's Republic of China today, are never without controversies. On November 7, 2018, before the centennial of the end of the First World War, French president Emmanuel Macron waded into controversy by praising Marshal Pétain as “a great soldier” for leading the French army to victory in Verdun in 1916, while acknowledging that he made “fatal choices during the Second World War.”³⁹ France's leading Jewish organization issued searing criticism of Macron's stance, citing Pétain's record of allowing the deportation of French Jews to concentration camps. It is true that the favorable memory of Philippe Pétain has often been exploited to disguise right-wing political agendas. Nevertheless, a 1993 poll found that 58 percent of those queried believed his role in the war to have been mitigated by attenuating circumstances.⁴⁰ But perhaps the fairest argument came from President Macron, a student of Paul Ricoeur. As he declared: “I pardon nothing, but I erase nothing of our history.”⁴¹

“Erasing nothing” does not mean “remembering everything.” As Henry Rouso points out in his seminal work *Le Syndrome de Vichy* (1987), the French remembrance of their wartime experience can be divided into phases. The first phase was that of “failed mourning.” Following the moment of liberation, confusion prevailed. Opinions differed radically about which heroes should be legitimately celebrated and which of the dead could be legitimately mourned. The second was that of “invented honor.” By the early 1950s, a kind of national unity had been achieved around the Gaullist myth of united resistance. Vichy had been limited to a marginal handful of traitors, its memories repressed. The third phase, starting in the early 1970s, was that of a “broken mirror.” The crimes of the fathers were exposed; people dug obsessively into the buried past, unable to look away from the worst.⁴² The metaphor of a “syndrome” suggests a pathology. As Rouso and Éric Conan suggest, the “duty to remember” has in effect led to a total denial of the legitimacy of the “right to forget,” a refusal “to admit that, beyond morality, forgetting is an integral part of any construction of memory.”⁴³

Not everything from the terrain of the past can or shall be saved. The dominant majority of things, events, and people will be resigned to oblivion, if only to relieve the living from the burden of memory. The simultaneous obligations to preserve historical truth and to forget form a dialectical relationship. As Harold Weinrich points out, in ancient Greek, the word for truth is *aletheia*. The morpheme negated by the prefix *a-* is *-leth-*, which denotes the concealed, the closed, the “latent.” So the truth liter-

ally appears to mean unconcealment, disclosure, nonlatency. “But *-leth-*, the morpheme negated by *a-*, also appears in the name for *Lethe*, the mystic stream of oblivion; so, from the formation of the word *aletheia*, we can also regard ‘truth’ as ‘non-oblivion’ or ‘not-to-forget.’”⁴⁴ An overdose in the light of Apollonian truth, in Nietzsche’s metaphor, is unbearable for the naked eyes of humanity. Oblivion thus acquires the Dionysian power of liberation. In the soft flow of *Lethe*, the river of Hades, “The hard contour of reality-remembrance is lost and becomes ‘liquidized’”; drinking the water of *Lethe* will free a person from an earlier existence, leading to rebirth in a new body.⁴⁵ Oblivion thus has the power of healing sorrow and pain. In this sense, the painstaking (and ultimately futile) pursuit of historical truth is counterbalanced by happy oblivion.

And this is what, at the end of this project, I wish for: a happier memory, one that strikes a balance among the justice of memory, the truth of history, and the salubrious task of forgetting. It erases nothing and yet does not actively remember everything. It is that of a confident memory that forgives and forgets. As Ricoeur asks at the end of his last opus: Is a sensible politics possible without something like a censure of memory? “Political prose begins where vengeance ceases, if history is not to remain locked up within the deadly oscillation between eternal hatred and forgetful memory. A society cannot be continually angry with itself. Then, only poetry preserves the force of unforgetting concealed in the affliction that Aeschylus declares ‘lust of power insatiate’ (*Eumenides*, v. 976).”⁴⁶ Ricoeur uses the term “poetry” to stand for the creative, the loving, and the hopeful. As John Wall argues, “As part of his larger philosophy of a ‘poetics of the will,’ Ricoeur suggests that moral life has its ground in humanity’s ineffable capacity for creating meaning within its fallen world.”⁴⁷ The forgetting achieved through the lenient act of forgiving fundamentally differs from punitive amnesia: the former is poetry; the latter is dull political prose.

With the publication of this book, I wish to help open the dialogue with the anguished ghosts haunting modern Chinese history. In a way, this book responds to Wang Jingwei’s last wish to be remembered solely through his poetry, a wish that it partially realizes, partially defies. Poems encode memories, however curated, cacophonous, and fragmented. In Hannah Arendt’s words, poetry, “whose material is language,” is perhaps the most human and least worldly of the arts. It is also the most durable human product. “Here, remembrance, *Mnēmosynē*, the mother of the muses, is directly transformed into memory, and the poet’s means to achieve the transformation is rhythm, through which the poem becomes

fixed in the recollection almost by itself. It is this closeness to living recollection that enables the poem to remain, to retain its durability, outside the printed or the written page.” Its memorability determines its durability, “that is, its chance to be permanently fixed in the recollection of humanity.”⁴⁸ A similar connection between poetry and memory may be found in the etymology of the very word for poetry, *shi* 詩, in Chinese. According to the ancient dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, it derives from *zhi* 志, or “heart’s intent,” which is also a variant for *zhi* 識, namely to “mark” so as to remember. Poetry is innately related to remembrance. The radical of *shi* is *yan* 言, or “speaking.” We hereby may take the word *shi* to mean “words that are conducive to remembrance.” The words of poetry defy the institutionalized amnesia and aphasia. If the reader truly listens to a poem, she will hear a cacophony of voices and of silence. If she truly looks, she will see a hidden atlas of constantly forking and disappearing paths in a labyrinthine garden under the darkness of the past. Thus the act of reading becomes an exercise in the remembering, reimagining, and remaking of the past.

Notes

Introduction

1. Liu Jie, “Wang Jingwei and the ‘Nanjing Nationalist Government.’” For English scholarship, see also Boyle, *China and Japan at War*; Hwang, D., “Wang Jingwei, the Nanjing Government, and the Problem of Collaboration”; Barrett and Shyu, *Chinese Collaboration with Japan*; Brook, “Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied Wartime China.”

2. For more on this term, see Xia, “Traitors to the Chinese Race.”

3. Lary, “The Tomb of the King of Nanyue,” 18.

4. For more on his death and sources, see chapter 3.

5. Wang Jingwei, *Shuangzhaolou shici gao* (1945).

6. Yuan Ke, *Shanhaijing jiaozhu*, 92. The classic was compiled in the first century BC, though the myths are believed to be much older.

7. SZL; He Chongjia, *Wang Jingwei yu xiandai Zhongguo*, which contains manuscripts in Wang family’s private collection.

8. Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies*, 4.

9. Moss, “The Unrecognized Influence of Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” 92.

10. Chen, “American Studies of Wang Jingwei.”

11. Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*.

12. See, respectively, Kaplan, *The Collaborator*; Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 199–216; Suleiman, *Crises of Memory and the Second World War*, 36–61.

13. See Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*; Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*; Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism”; Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*; Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*; and Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*.

14. Rings, *Life with the Enemy*, 73, 86, 106, 128.

15. Lloyd, *Collaboration and Resistance in Occupied France*, 5, 11.

16. See, e.g., Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*; Fussell, *Wartime*.

17. Cited respectively from SZL, 31, 380, 21. For more on *shi yan zhi*, see chapter 4.

18. Yu Ying-shih 余英時, “Preface,” SZL, 7.

19. Yeh Chia-ying, “Wang Jingwei *Shuangzhaolou shici gao* duhou.” For more, see epilogue.

20. Hu Shi's diary entry on November 13, 1944, in *Hu Shi riji quanbian*, vol. 7: 563.
21. Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature*, 233–34.
22. Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, 107.
23. Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, 350.
24. Celan, “Edgar Jené and the Dream about the Dream,” 3, 6.
25. Wang Jingwei, “Chaozhongcuo” 朝中措, SZL, 314. Since it is the last poem in Wang's posthumously compiled collection, Wang Mengchuan dates it to 1943. But since it already appeared in *Tongsheng* (2, no. 10), published on November 15, 1942, it was most likely written on the Double-Ninth Day (October 7) of 1942. See Liu Wei-Chih, “Liang Wang heping yundong xia de fushi yanzhi,” 330 n. 120.
26. See Yuan Haowen, “Chaozhongcuo: Shiqing tianyi” 朝中措·時情天意, in *Yishan yuefu biannian xiaojian*, j. 3: 120.
27. Levenson, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*, 110–22.
28. See Xin Qiji, “Shuilongyin: Deng Jiankang Shangxinting” 水龍吟·登建康賞心亭, in *Jiaxuan ci biannian jianzhu*, j. 1: 34.
29. See Hu Shi, “Wenxue gailiang chuyi”; Hu Shi, *Baihua wenxueshi*.
30. See, e.g., Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*; Kowallis, *The Lyrical Lu Xun*; Kowallis, *The Subtle Revolution*; Schmidt, *The Poet Zheng Zhen*; Wu, S., *Modern Archaics*; Yang, H., *A Modernity Set to a Pre-modern Tune*.
31. Wang Jingwei, “Nanshe congxuan xu.”
32. Wang Jingwei, “Haogetang shichao xu.”
33. *Nanshe shihua* 南社詩話, serialized in *South China Daily* 南華日報 (Hong Kong) and published under the name Manzhao 曼昭. Wang's manuscript has been recently published in photocopy as *Wang Jingwei Nanshe shihua*. On the authorship controversy, see Yuk Fung Yeung's preface to *Wang Jingwei Nanshe shihua*, vi–xxiv. The original manuscript is among the Wang Jingwei papers acquired by the Hoover Institution.
34. Wang Jingwei, *Wang Jingwei Nanshe shihua*, 6–7, 107; also found in *Nanshe shihua liangzhong*, 73–74.
35. See Wu Haifa, *Ershi shiji Zhongguo shici shigao*, 76–656.
36. Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration*, 82–93; Fussell, *Wartime*, 164–80.
37. On Shanghai (and partially Beijing), see Gunn, *Unwelcome Muse*; Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration*; and Huang, N., *Women, War, Domesticity*. On Manchukuo, see Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*; and Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*.
38. See Ko Chia-Cian, “Fengya, shijiao, zhengzhi shuqing”; Liu Wei-Chih, “Liang Wang heping yundong xia de fushi yanzhi”; Chiu Yi-Hsuan, “Shishi yu shixin.”
39. See Chen Weishun (Nicholas L. Chan), *Gudian shi de xiandai miankong*, 201–55.
40. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 38.
41. Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 27.
42. Assmann, J., *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 16, 38, and passim.
43. Assmann, J., *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 3.
44. See, e.g., Kern, “The *Odes* in Excavated Manuscripts.”

45. My proposal is inspired by Aleida Assmann's expansion of "cultural memory" to be a more dynamic concept that allows the constant transformation between functional and stored (or working and archival) memory. See Assmann, A., *Erinnerungsräume*, 137.
46. Nora, "General Introduction," 14.
47. Erl and Nünning, *Cultural Memory Studies*, 21.
48. Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, viii–x.

Part 1

1. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 314.
2. Brook, "Hesitating before the Judgment of History."
3. Or more precisely: even when he did, it was ecliptic. A "Wang Jingwei Diary" resurfaced in 1987, which contains entries from January 1, 1940, to January 25, 1944. However, it consists only of brief notes, mostly the names of visitors. A part of the diary was published by the Shanghai Municipal Archives (see Wang Jingwei, "Wang Jingwei riji"), but subsequent publications were canceled. Currently no researcher has access to the manuscript. On evidence of its authenticity, see Jiangbian and Jianxing, "*Wang Jingwei riji* lounianji ji zhenwei bian."
4. Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*, 39.
5. White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in *Topics of Discourse*, 83.
6. Adorno, *History and Freedom*, 28.

Chapter 1

1. Or the twentieth day of the third month in the traditional calendar. Unless specified otherwise, dates in this book are converted to the common calendar. Wang normally dated his writings in the modern calendar but celebrated his birthdays according to the traditional calendar.
2. On the Wang clan lineage, see Wang Zhaoyong, "Shanyin Wangshi pu."
3. Yan Guangfen, *Jingshang yu banxue*, 73.
4. Wang himself calculated his age according to the traditional Chinese practice, namely the newborn baby is seen as one *sui* 歲. To avoid confusion, I generally convert his age to the modern system. Five *sui* thus becomes age four.
5. Two paintings by Wen Youju 溫友菊 and by Fang Junbi 方君璧, both titled *A Morning Class in the Autumn Courtyard* (*Qiuting chenke tu* 秋庭晨課圖) are found among the Wang Jingwei papers donated to the Hoover Institution. See SZL, 209.
6. Wang Jingwei, "Chongjiu you Xishiyan" 重九游西石巖, SZL, 5.
7. Lin Jiayou, *Zhu Zhixin*, 8.
8. Wang Ke, *Minzu zhuyi yu jindai Zhong Ri guanxi*, 5–9.
9. See Hu Hanmin, *Hu Hanmin zishu*, 11–12.
10. See Hosei University archives, in *Hosei daigaku shi shiryō shū*, vol. 11.
11. Wang Jingwei, "Zhengyue de huiyi."

12. Hu Hanmin, *Hu Hanmin zishu*, 25.
13. *Dagongbao* 大公報 (Tianjin), January 14, 1906.
14. Sun Yat-sen, “Minbao fakanci” 民報發刊詞, *Minbao* 民報 no. 1, October 20, 1905. According to Hu Hanmin, Sun dictated this article to Hu. See *Hu Hanmin zishu*, 19.
15. Hu Hanmin, *Hu Hanmin zishu*, 19.
16. Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution*, 63.
17. Liang Qichao, “Kaiming zhuanzhi lun” 開明專制論 (1905), LQC, vol. 5: 1470–86.
18. Liang Qichao, “Lun bianfa bi zi ping Man Han zhi jie shi” 論變法必自平滿漢之界始 (1896), LQC, vol. 1: 51–54; “*Chunqiu Zhongguo Yi Di bian xu*” 《春秋中國夷狄辨》序 (1897), LQC, vol. 1: 124–25.
19. Liang Qichao, “Zhongguo jiruoyuan lun” 中國積弱溯源論 (1900), LQC, vol. 2: 412–27.
20. Liang Qichao, “Zhengzhixue dajia Bolunzhili zhi xueshuo” 政治學大家伯倫知理之學說 (1903), LQC, vol. 4: 1070.
21. Wang Jingwei, “Minzu de guomin” 民族的國民, in *Wang Jingwei ji*, 1–52. For a more detailed summary of the debate, see Yang Zhiyi, “Nationalism, Human-Co-Existentialism, Pan-Asianism.”
22. Zhang Binglin, “Bo Kang Youwei lun geming shu” 駁康有為論革命書 (1903), in *Zhang Taiyan quanji*, vol. 4: 173–84.
23. See Wang Ke, *Minzu zhuyi yu jindai Zhong Ri guanxi*, 68–69.
24. Esherick, “How the Qing Became China.” On Sun Yat-sen’s hesitation between mono- and multiethnic nationalism, see Wang Ke, *Minzu zhuyi yu jindai Zhong Ri guanxi*, 45–46.
25. Taylor, Jay, *The Generalissimo*, 19.
26. Snow, *Red Star over China*, 144.
27. Yen Ching Hwang, *Overseas Chinese and the 1911 Revolution*, 101.
28. Habermas, “Wahrheitstheorien.”
29. Chen Pingyuan, “Xiandai Zhongguo de yanshuo ji yanshuoxue.”
30. Hu Hanmin, *Hu Hanmin zishu*, 47.
31. Cai Dejin, *Wang Jingwei pingzhuan*, 32–33. NHK newsreels of Wang’s speeches are available at the Getty Image online archive.
32. Yen Ching Hwang, *Overseas Chinese and the 1911 Revolution*, 122.
33. Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 24.
34. See Wang Jingwei’s letter (February 15, 1910) to Zeng Xing 曾醒 and Fang Junying 方君瑛, photocopied in He Chongjia, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 355–60.
35. For a history of assassination in Europe, see Ford, *Political Murder*; Laqueur, *A History of Terrorism*; Hoffman, “The Age of Assassination”; Haupt, *Den Staat herausfordern*.
36. Laqueur, *A History of Terrorism*, 28–29, 49–54.
37. Wu Yue, “Ansha shidai” 暗殺時代, in “Wu Yue yishu” 吳樾遺書, *Minbao*, supplementary issue (1907): 7–31.
38. On assassinations at the end of the Qing, see, e.g., Huang Tao, “Yuansha”; Luo Haoxing, “1900 niandai Zhongguo de zhengzhi ansha jiqi shehui xiaoying.”
39. Wu Yue, “Wu Yue yishu.”
40. Krebs, *Shifu*, 24–25.

41. Zarrow, *Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture*, 21–30.
42. Krebs, *Shifu*, 40.
43. Wang Jingwei, “Yu Hu Hanmin shu” 與胡漢民書 (May 8, 1909), in *Wang Jingwei quanji*, j.2, 169–73.
44. Wang Jingwei, “Yu Hu Hanmin shu” (December 27, 1909) in *Wang Jingwei quanji*, j.2, 174–75.
45. Wang Jingwei, “Yu Hu Hanmin shu” (December 27, 1909), in *Wang Jingwei quanji*, j.2, 174.
46. Wang Yangming, “Daxue wen” 大學問, in *Wang Yangming quanji*, j. 26: 967–73.
47. Wang Yangming, “Yangming chuanxi lu” 陽明傳習錄, in *Wang Yangming quanji*, j. 3: 107.
48. Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 25.
49. Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 26.
50. Most accounts wrongly identify Silver Tael Bridge (Yinding qiao 銀錠橋) as the site of the attempt. For a detailed investigation, see Yuan Yidan, *Cishi huaibao xiang shei kai*, 183–88. Wang Jingwei and Huang Fusheng revisited the Sweet Water Bridge in 1930 to commemorate their attempt; see *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), August 11, 1930.
51. There are different accounts on exactly how they were discovered; see Zhang Jiangcai, “Gengxu mengnan shilu” 庚戌蒙難實錄, in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng xingshilu*, 6.
52. He Mengheng, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 21. On the bounty, see Hu Hanmin, *Hu Hanmin zishu*, 31.
53. Zhang Jiangcai, “Gengxu mengnan shilu,” 198–99.
54. He Mengheng, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 21. Wang Jingwei also relates the story himself; see *Wang Jingwei Nanshe shihua*, 43–44.
55. Known as *Qiufan changhe ji* 邱樊倡和集, a collection that also included the poems of a certain Xiaoyin 小隱 (real name Xiao Tianren 蕭天任), a fellow prisoner with whom Wang exchanged poems. See Wang Jingwei and Xiao Tianren, *Qiufan changhe ji* 邱樊倡和集.
56. Wang Jingwei, “Beidai kouzhan” 被逮口占, SZL, 6–7.
57. A terrace built by a northern Yan prince shortly after he became the king in 311 BCE, later known as the “Gold Terrace” (Huangjintai 黃金臺).
58. Yang Xiong, *Shuwang benji*, 1.
59. Sima Qian, *Shiji*, j. 86: 2526–38. See also chapter 5.
60. See Ruan Yuan, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 [Cheng 9], j. 26: 203–4, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, 1906–7.
61. Wang Jingwei, “Zhengyue de huiyi,” 41.
62. Wang Jingwei, “Yougan” 有感, SZL, 11.
63. Li Xian, “Huangtai gua ci” 黃臺瓜辭, in Peng Dingqiu, *Quan Tang shi*, j. 6: 65.
64. Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian*, 134.
65. See Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 12–13.
66. Hu Hanmin, *Hu Hanmin zishu*, 54–59. He recalled that the desperate Bijun naively tried to win through gambling; she dressed up as a young man to try her luck in a casino in Macao, only to lose a hundred taels of silver.
67. Wang Jingwei, “Jinlüqu” 金縷曲, SZL, 158–59.

68. See Fang's letter to He Mengheng and Wang Wenxing (February 25, 1962), in *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 446. It corroborates the fact that Wang's poem celebrating their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary was placed in his chronologically arranged collection among poems written in 1935 (SZL, 240), though their formal wedding was held in 1912.

69. See Wang Jingwei, "Yuzhong wen Wen Shengcai ci Fuqi shi" 獄中聞溫生才刺孚琦事, SZL, 27; "Xinhai sanyue ershijiuri Guangzhou zhi yi [. . .]" 辛亥三月二十九日廣州之役 [. . .], SZL, 29; "Xinhai sanyue ershijiuri Guangzhou zhi yi, yu zai Beijing yuzhong wen Zhantang sishi [. . .]" 辛亥三月二十九日廣州之役余在北京獄中聞展堂死事 [. . .], SZL, 32–33.

70. On the background and circumstances, see Esherick, *Reform and Revolution in China*.

71. Feng Ziyou, *Zhonghua Minguo kaiguo qian gemingshi*, j. 2: 231.

72. One source even claims that Wang swore brotherhood with Yuan's eldest son, Keding 袁克定 (1878–1958). See Hu Egong, *Xinhai geming beifang shilu*, 103–4. It could not have happened: on the day when the unholy alliance was supposed to take place in Beijing (December 26, 1911), Wang was already in Shanghai, welcoming Sun Yat-sen's return to China.

73. Xia Siyun, "Xinhai geming shiqi geming dangren yong Yuan fan Qing celue xinlun."

74. Yang Du, Wang Jingwei, et al., "Guoshi gongjihui xuanyanshu" 國事共濟會宣言書, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), November 19, 1911.

75. *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), December 16, 1911.

76. Liu Huanfeng, Zhang Bo, and Liu Fengwen, "Xinhai geming shiqi de Wang Jingwei he Yuan Shikai de guanxi."

77. Wang Jingwei, "Zhengyue de huiyi," 41.

78. Young, "Yuan Shih-K'ai's Rise to the Presidency," 437–38.

79. See "Renxin zhi quxiang yu Minguo zhi tongyi" 民心之趨向與民國之統一, *Minli Bao* 民立報, February 26, 1912.

80. See Cai Dejin and Wang Sheng, *Wang Jingwei shengping jishi*, 17; Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 25–30; Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 120.

81. Li Shizeng had translated the first three chapters of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (1902) into Chinese. See Li Shizeng, trans., "Huzhu lun" 互助論, *Xin shiji* 新世紀 (*Les Temps Nouveaux*; later *Nouveau Siècle*), issues 31–51 (1908).

82. Tsuchiya, *Ō Sei-i to minshuka no kuwadate*, 32–33. The anarchist group had already split with the Sun Yat-sen faction in 1907; see Tsuchiya, 40–41.

83. See Bailey, "The Chinese Work-Study Movement in France."

84. See, respectively, *Shenbao* 申報, February 10, 1912; *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), June 8, 1912; *Shenbao*, February 28, 1912. See also Chen Jiongming 陳炯明, "Jiuren Yue sheng daili zongdu bugao" 就任粵省代理總督佈告 (December 24, 1911), in *Chen Jiongming ji*, 44.

85. "Wang Zhaoming qishi (gao Nanyang renshi)" 汪兆銘啟事(告南洋人士), KMT Archives (Zhi 稚 09679). Cited also in He Mengheng, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 32–33.

86. Li Zhiyu has also examined Wang's thoughts and activities in this period; see *Jingxian*, 33–54. She has not, however, utilized European materials. For a

more detailed account of Wang's French period, see Yang Zhiyi, "A Humanist in Wartime France."

87. See, e.g., Cai Dejin, *Wang Jingwei pingzhuan*, 61; Chen Dawei, *Wang Jingwei dazhuan*, 33–35.

88. Wang Jingwei, "Yinduyang zhouzhong" 印度洋舟中, SZL, 44.

89. Wang Jingwei, "Zhou bo Xilandao [. . .]" 舟泊錫蘭島 [. . .], SZL, 45.

90. Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 30–31. Cai and Wang, however, dated Wang's arrival in Paris in September; see *Wang Jingwei shengping jishi*, 24.

91. Li and his fellow researchers of oriental biology built the first French tofu factory in 1909. See Xian Yuhao, *Liu Fa qingong jianxue yundong shi*, 2.

92. See Chu Minyi, "Le rythme vaginal chez la lapine."

93. Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 28, 31–32.

94. Frader, *Peasants and Protest*, 84.

95. See, e.g., Li Shizeng (June 4 [1913?]), letter to Wu Zhihui, KMT Archives (Zhi 06679); Chen Bijun, (July 18 [year unknown]), letter to Wu Zhihui, KMT Archives (Zhi 07653).

96. Cited in Xian Yuhao, *Liu Fa qingong jianxue*, 319–21.

97. There are, however, other theories. For a summary, see Shang Xiaoming, *Song'an chongshen*. Shang opines that Yuan was involved in the case but did not order the killing.

98. *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), May 26, 1913.

99. Cai Yuanpei visited him on September 18 at the Chen family mansion; see *Cai Yuanpei quanji*, vol. 16: 19.

100. See Wang Jingwei's letter, in *Zhao Fengchang cangzha*, j. 1: 19.

101. See Wang Jingwei (March 21, 1916), letter to Wu Zhihui, KMT Archives (Zhi 09381).

102. *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), July 25, 1913.

103. Wu Zhihui, "Jiayin you Fa ji" 甲寅游法記, in *Wu Zhihui xueshu luncong, xubian* 145–53.

104. Wang Jingwei, "Xiaoyan" 曉煙, SZL, 46.

105. Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 33.

106. See Zeng's student dossier (registered under the name Tsen Tsouming), Dossiers des étudiants de la faculté des lettres de Lyon (1898–1960), Archives Departementales du Rhône (2400 W 802); Zeng, Zho., *Essai historique sur la poésie chinoise*.

107. Probably Hotel Pilatus-Kulm, opened in 1890. The guestbook from 1914 is, however, lost.

108. Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 35.

109. Marquiset, *Les Allemands à Laon*.

110. See Cai Yuanpei's letter to Wu Zhihui, in *Cai Yuanpei quanji*, vol. 10: 229.

111. See Wang Qisheng, "Zhonghua Gemingdang shiqi dangren qjian," 5–24.

112. See Wang Jingwei (September 17, 1914), letter to Wu Zhihui, KMT Archives (Zhi 09562). Also examined in Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 40–42.

113. See Cai Yuanpei (1915?), letter to Wu Zhihui, KMT Archives (Zhi 07810).

114. Taylor, Jay, *The Generalissimo*, 29.

115. Wang Jingwei (May 21, 1915), letter to Wu Zhihui et al., KMT Archives (Zhi 09395).

116. Wang Jingwei (June 20, 1915), letter to Wu Zhihui et al., KMT Archives (Zhi 09392).
117. *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), June 29, November 24, December 15, and December 31, 1915.
118. See Wang Jingwei's letter to Zhao Fengchang, probably written around 1920; in *Zhao Fengchang cangzha*, j. 10: 201–2.
119. Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 40.
120. Wang Jingwei (January 16, 1916), letter to Wu Zhihui, KMT Archives (Zhi 09385).
121. For a catalog of French archives on the SEFC, see “Associations de patronage des étudiants-ouvriers chinois en France,” Archives nationales (Dossier 47 AS).
122. See Xian Yuhao, *Liu Fa qingong jianxue*, 11.
123. Xu, G., *Strangers on the Western Front*, 14–17.
124. See Wang Jingwei, Cai Yuanpei, and Li Shizeng, “Zhi gesheng xingzheng jiguan han” 致各省行政機關函, in SEFC, *Lü Ou jiaoyu yundong*, 82.
125. Xu, G., *Strangers on the Western Front*, 1.
126. See SEFC, *Lü Ou jiaoyu yundong*, 45–47.
127. Reported in *Lü Ou zazhi* no. 12 (February 1, 1917), 7. Cai's letter in *Cai Yuanpei quanji* (vol. 10: 295) is erroneously dated as written on March 15, 1917.
128. He Mengheng, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 37–38.
129. Wang Jingwei, “Bali hehui yu Zhong Ri wenti” 巴黎和會與中日問題, in *Wang Jingwei ji*, j. 2: 34.
130. On the history of the early Republican Congress, see Yan Quan, *Minguo chunian de guohui zhengzhi*.
131. November 7 telegraph from Guangdong; see *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), November 19, 1918.
132. *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), March 10, 1919.
133. Gu Weijun, *Gu Weijun huiyilu*, vol. 1: 177–79, 193–94. On the two Chinese delegations, see also Wood and Arnander, *Betrayed Ally*, 127–31.
134. Oka, *Konoe Fumimaro*, 10–15; citation from page 11.
135. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, 83–84.
136. Wood and Arnander, *Betrayed Ally*, 131–32, 156.
137. Wang Jingwei, *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin yanshuo*, 16.
138. Wang Jingwei, *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin yanshuo*, 7.
139. See Wang Jingwei, “Wuren duiyu guojia zhi guannian” 吾人對於國家之觀念, *Lü Ou zazhi* no. 4 (1916) and no. 5 (1916); “Wuren duiyu Zhongguo zhi zeren” 吾人對於中國之責任, *Lü Ou zazhi* no. 8 (1916) and no. 9 (1916).
140. Wang Jingwei, “Yi Folaoliang yuyanshi” 譯佛老里昂寓言詩, SZL, 53. For a full translation and comparison, see Yang, Z., “A Humanist in Wartime France,” 184–87.
141. See Wang Jingwei, “Renlei zhi gongcun.” Anthologized in 1929 as “Renlei gongcun zhuyi,” in *Wang Jingwei ji*, Section II, 1–18.
142. Wang Jingwei, “Xisheng zhi yiyi.”
143. Wang Jingwei, “Bali hehui yu Zhong Ri wenti,” 22–25.
144. Wang Jingwei, “Renlei gongcun zhuyi,” 8–12.
145. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 6.

146. Wang Jingwei, “Xibanyaqiao shang guan pu” 西班牙橋上觀瀑, SZL, 75.
 147. Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, ix.

Chapter 2

1. M.-L. Gasc, “Souvenirs d’Entretiens avec Ouang Tching Ouei,” *Le Petit Parisien*, November 2, 1935.
2. On October 1, 1938, *Le Petit Parisien* enthusiastically endorsed the Munich Agreement. On the paper’s history and political stance, see Amaury, *Histoire du plus grand quotidien de la III^e République*.
3. For the case of Yan Fu, see Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, 67–68.
4. Zhang Hao, *Youan yishi yu minzhu chuantong*, 22–42.
5. Metzger, “Confucian Thought and the Modern Chinese Quest for Moral Autonomy,” 336.
6. Metzger, “Confucian Thought and the Modern Chinese Quest for Moral Autonomy,” 336.
7. Huang Kewu, *Jindai Zhongguo de sichao yu renwu*, 67–69.
8. Sun Yat-sen, “Sanmin zhuyi: Minquan zhuyi” 三民主義·民權主義, SZSQJ, vol. 9: 298–99.
9. Huang Kewu, *Jindai Zhongguo de sichao yu renwu*, 383–87.
10. Wang Jingwei, “Postscript,” in Satomi, *Yangming yu chan*.
11. Cited from Satomi, *Yangming yu chan*, 22, 24–25, 30–31, 41, 47, 74–77.
12. Wang Jingwei, “Jianren xi chelun wei xin weici zuoge” 見人析車輪為薪為此作歌, SZL, 22.
13. Wang Jingwei, “Bingru shoushu Yangming xiansheng da Nie Wenwei shu [. . .]” 冰如手書陽明先生答聶文蔚書 [. . .], SZL, 285. For Wang Yangming’s letter to Nie Wenwei 聶文蔚, see “Yangming chuanxi lu,” in *Wang Yangming quanji*, j. 2: 79.
14. Wang Jingwei, “Ganhuai” 感懷, SZL, 34.
15. Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution*, 195.
16. Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution*, 195–96.
17. “Wang Jingwei buyuan pojie” 汪精衛不願破戒, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), December 10, 1920.
18. More on the role of Sneevliet, see Saich, *The Origins of the First United Front in China*.
19. The Sun-Joffe announcement (January 26, 1923), in Guo Tingyi, *Zhonghua minguo shishi rizhi*, vol. 1: 700.
20. See, for instance, his speech at Fuzhou, *Shenbao*, November 10, 1922.
21. Saich, *The Origins of the First United Front in China*, 145–46.
22. So, *The Kuomintang Left*, 12.
23. Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution*, 199.
24. Guo Tingyi, *Zhonghua minguo shishi rizhi*, vol. 1, 777.
25. Sun Yat-sen, “Livelihood of the People,” SZSQJ, vol. 9: 389–90.
26. Sun Yat-sen, “Dui Shenhu shangyehuiyisuo deng tuanti de yanshuo” 對神戶商業會議所等團體的演說, SZSQJ, vol. 11: 401–9.
27. For a detailed investigation, see Barth and Chen, “What Did Sun Yat-sen Really Die Of?”
28. See, for instance, “Sun Zhongshan di Jin shengkuang zhixiang” 孫中山抵

津盛況誌詳, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), December 5, 1924; “Tianjin shimin daibiao yu Wang Jingwei boshi zhi tanhua” 天津市民代表與汪精衛博士之談話, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), December 7, 1924.

29. *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), January 6, 1925.

30. Sun Yat-sen, “Guoshi yizhu” 國事遺囑, *SZSQJ*, vol. 11: 639–40.

31. On the power shift after Sun’s death, see So, *The Kuomintang Left*, 14–17.

32. See *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), July 13, 1925. The aspersion that Wang voted for himself (and was embarrassed upon the revelation that he received all votes) was unfounded.

33. Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 78–94.

34. So, *The Kuomintang Left*, 8.

35. Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction*, 218.

36. Wang Jingwei, “Guomin geming zhi yiyi,” 35–36.

37. Wang Jingwei, “Jiaoyujie duiyu minguo zhi zeren yanshuoci” 教育界對於民國之責任演說詞 (1925), in *Zuijin xinbian Wang Jingwei yanshuoji*, 11–12.

38. Wang Jingwei, “Zhongguo shiye zhi jiuji fangfa yanshuoci” 中國實業之救濟方法演說詞, in *Zuijin xinbian Wang Jingwei yanshuoji*, 62–66, 71.

39. Wang Jingwei, “Minzhu zhengzhi de tujing yanjiangci” 民主政治的途徑演講詞 (1926), in *Wang Jingwei yanjianglu*, 4.

40. Wang Jingwei, “Zenyang de jinian Zongli yanjiangci” 怎樣的紀念總理演講詞 (March 12, 1926), in *Wang Jingwei yanjianglu*, 118–20.

41. Sun Yat-sen, “Guomin zhengfu jianguo dagang” 國民政府建國大綱, *SZSQJ*, vol. 9: 126–29.

42. Wang Jingwei, “Zenyang shuli minzhu shili” 怎樣樹立民主勢力 (November 3, 1929), in *Wang Jingwei zuijin dao Jiang yanlunji*, 3–9. Also collected in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin yanlunji*, 1–8.

43. Wang Jingwei, “Zenyang shixian minzhu zhengzhi” 怎樣實現民主政治 (November 20, 1929), in *Wang Jingwei zuijin dao Jiang yanlunji*, 9–15; also in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin yanlunji*, 9–17.

44. Wang Jingwei, “Dui Dongya xinjushi de baofu yu quexin” 對東亞新局勢的抱負與確信 (January 4, 1941), in *Wang Zhuxi heping jianguo yanlunji xuji*, 56.

45. Wang Jingwei, “Dang yu minzhong yundong,” in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin yanshuoji*, 12–13.

46. Wang Jingwei, “Xin shidai de shiming” 新時代的使命 (December 15, 1940), in *Wang Zhuxi heping jianguo yanlunji xuji*, 42.

47. Tsuchiya, *Ō Sei-i to minshuka no kuwadate*, 188.

48. See Wang Jingwei, “Zenyang yi dang zhi jun” 怎樣以黨治軍 (May 17, 1930), in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin yanlunji*, 181–89.

49. Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution*, 209.

50. Some suspected that the conflict between Wang and Hu was instigated by the communists; see Ren Yuandao, *Zhegu yijiu ci*, 26. Ren considered their relation that of sibling rivalry.

51. Hu Hanmin, “Du shi” 讀史, in *Bukuishi shichao*, j. 1: 12.

52. More on Gu Mengyu and the GMD Left, see Huang Kewu, *Gu Mengyu de qinggao*.

53. Taylor, Jay, *The Generalissimo*, 50–51.

54. Taylor, Jay, *The Generalissimo*, 55.

55. For a detailed analysis of the episode, see Yang Tianshi, “Zhongshanjian shijian’ zhi mi” 中山艦事件之謎, in *Zhaoxun zhenshi de Jiang Jieshi*, vol. 1: 131–54. He concludes that the incident was the result of mistrust and misunderstanding.

56. Chiang would remain convinced that Wang was part of the conspiracy. Upon hearing the news that Wang escaped Chongqing, he in his diary again recounted the rumor that Wang had wanted to detain him and send him to Russia in 1926. See Chiang Kai-shek’s diary entry on December 25, 1938, box/folder 40.2, Hoover Institution Archives.

57. Chen Gongbo has a detailed account of the incident seen from the perspective of Wang’s followers; see *Kuxiaolu*, 30–39.

58. See Chen Gongbo, *Kuxiaolu*, 43.

59. See Fang Junbi’s letter (February 25, 1962), in *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 456–62.

60. Wang Jingwei, “Zashi” 雜詩, SZL, 134. The SZL edition contains a typographical error in line 12 (*zhi* 至 instead of *zhi* 之). I have corrected it based on earlier editions of this poem.

61. So, *The Kuomintang Left*, 22.

62. Zhang Guotao, *Wo de huiyi*, vol. 2: 167–70.

63. Chen Changzu, then studying aeronautical engineering at the Technical University of Berlin, helped them contact the Soviet Embassy in Berlin; see *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 78.

64. See, for instance, Wang Jingwei, “Zhuyi yu zhengce” 主義與政策 (July 12, 1927), in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin yanshuoji*, 31.

65. Wang Jingwei, “Dang yu minzhong yundong” 黨與民眾運動 (July 5, 1927), in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin yanshuoji*, 12–13.

66. See, e.g., Wang Jingwei, “Shiyue erri zai lujun junguan xuexiao jiuzhi dangdaibiao yanshuoci” 十月二日在陸軍軍官學校就職黨代表演說辭 (October 2, 1925), in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng yanjiangji*, 78; “Guomin zhengfu qingzhu Shuangshijie yanshuoci” 國民政府慶祝雙十節演說辭 (October 10, 1925), in *Zuijin xinbian Wang Jingwei yanshuoji*, 131–32.

67. Cai Dejin and Wang Sheng, *Wang Jingwei shengping jishi*, 91.

68. This is Jay Taylor’s opinion; see Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 65.

69. Zhang Guotao has a detailed account of these few months; see *Wo de huiyi*, vol. 2: 214–51. See also Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution*, 240; Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 94–106. Huang Kewu argues that Wang’s change of attitude was influenced by Gu Mengyu, who had always objected to the “class struggle” theory; see Huang Kewu, *Gu Mengyu de qinggao*, 114–19.

70. Wang Jingwei, “Wuhan fen Gong zhi jingguo” 武漢分共之經過 (November 5, 1927), speech delivered at the Sun Yat-sen University, in *Wang Jingwei ji*, 215–37.

71. Tsuchiya, *Ō Sei-i to minshuka no kuwadate*, 14–15, 155–86.

72. “Shanghai jing yi tongji Wang Jingwei” 上海竟亦通緝汪精衛, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), June 17, 1927; “Dangquan yu dangxin” 黨權與黨信, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), July 28, 1927.

73. Dirlik, “Mass Movements and the Left Kuomintang,” 48.

74. So, *The Kuomintang Left*, 35–38.

75. WZQ, vol. 2: 171–72.

76. So, *The Kuomintang Left*, 45–46.
77. Wang Jingwei's letter to Chen Changzu, in He Chongjia, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 281–82.
78. Tang, “Wang Ching-wei: A Political Biography,” in Wang Jingwei, *China's Problems and Their Solution*. The Chinese version was published only in 2019; see Wang Jingwei, “Zizhuan caogao” 自傳草稿, in He Chongjia, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*.
79. Huang Kewu, *Gu Mengyu de qinggao*, 128.
80. Tsuchiya, *Ō Sei-i to minshuka no kuwadate*, 195.
81. Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 81.
82. Wang Jingwei, “Yi Xiao-e gonghe ernian zhi zhanshi shi yishou” 譯露俄共和二年之戰士詩一首 (1929), *SZL*, 149–50.
83. Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 82–83.
84. Chen Kewen, *Chen Kewen riji*, appendix, vol. 2: 1352–54.
85. Wang Jingwei's letter to Li Haoju 李浩駒 (October 1, 1929), in He Chongjia, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 384.
86. Wang Jingwei, “Huiguo gao ge dangbu geming tongzhi” 回國告各黨部革命同志 (November 7, 1929), in *Wang Jingwei zuijin dao Jiang yanlunji*, 1–2.
87. Wang Jingwei, “Yidang yujun lun”; “Lun yuefa”; “Zhi yu xing”; “Zenyang yidang zhijun.”
88. Wang Yusheng 汪玉笙, “Zhen neng bu tongyi sixiang ma” 真能不統一思想嗎, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), May 15, 1930.
89. See Chen Jinjin, “Lingyige zhongyang.”
90. Wang Jingwei (et al.), “Yuefa cao'an.”
91. Chen Jinjin, “Lingyige zhongyang,” 128.
92. “Wants Kuomintang to Return to People,” *New York Times*, September 21, 1930.
93. “Jiang qing kai guomin huiyi zhi jiang dian” 蔣請開國民會議之江電, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), October 8, 1930.
94. “Wang Jingwei tanhua” 汪精衛談話, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), October 12, 1930.
95. Yang Tianshi, “Yuefa zhi zheng yu Jiang Jieshi ruanjin Hu Hanmin shifan” 約法之爭與蔣介石軟禁胡漢民事件, in *Zhaoxun zhenshi de Jiang Jieshi*, vol. 1: 184–95.
96. See Hsu Yu-ming, *Wang Zhaoming yu guomin zhengfu*, 33.
97. *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), October 23, 1931.
98. On the collapse of the Sun Ke cabinet, see Duan Zhifeng, *Jiang Wang hezuo yanjiu*, 75–101.
99. On the Wang cabinet, see Huang Kewu, *Gu Mengyu de qinggao*, 136–47.
100. On the rise of imperial Japan, see Toland, *The Rising Sun*; Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*.
101. Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 182–85.
102. Toland, *The Rising Sun*, 10–11.
103. Hsu Yu-ming, *Wang Zhaoming yu guomin zhengfu*, 36–53, 68–91, 107–18, 398–99.
104. *Zhongyang ribao*, March 30, 1932.
105. Cai Dejin and Wang Sheng, *Wang Jingwei shengping jishi*, 175–76.

106. “Ge minzhong tuanti lianhehui dianqing yizhi he Wang” 各民眾團體聯合會電請一致効汪, *Shenbao*, May 25, 1932. More on Wang’s role in the incident and its solution, see Hsu Yu-ming, *Wang Zhaoming yu guomin zhengfu*, 119–45.
107. “Wang Jingwei zuochen lai Hu turan chengqing zhongyang cizhi” 汪精衛昨晨來滬突然呈請中央辭職, *Shenbao*, August 7, 1932. More on Zhang and Wang’s relations, see Hsu Yu-ming, *Wang Zhaoming yu guomin zhengfu*, 163–75.
108. Chen Gongbo, *Kuxiaolu*, 188–90.
109. Matsumoto, *Shanghai jidai*, 175.
110. Gu Weijun, *Gu Weijun huiyilu*, vol. 2: 89–90.
111. Gu Weijun, *Gu Weijun huiyilu*, vol. 2: 69–70.
112. Stadtarchiv Tübingen, E 104/85.
113. Information on Dr. Noll was provided by his daughter Ingrid Noll (b. 1935 in Shanghai), now one of the most popular novelists in Germany.
114. “Unterredung mit Premierminister Wang Ching Wei,” *Tübinger Chronik*, January 9, 1933.
115. See *Salzburger Chronik*, January 12, 1933; *Český Deník*, February 8, 1933. I thank Olga Lomová for finding the *Český Deník* article for me.
116. “Ex-Premier Wang Returns,” *New York Times*, March 19, 1933.
117. “Tiao huokeng” 跳火坑, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), April 15, 1933.
118. “Tiao huokeng” 跳火坑, *Shenbao*, May 25, 1933.
119. Gu Weijun, *Gu Weijun huiyilu*, vol. 2: 214–16.
120. Chen Gongbo, *Kuxiaolu*, 193.
121. Gu Weijun, *Gu Weijun huiyilu*, vol. 2: 234–45.
122. For more details, see Hsu Yu-ming, *Wang Zhaoming yu guomin zhengfu*, 193–223.
123. Chen Gongbo, “Banian lai de huiyi,” 3.
124. Wang Jingwei, “Baiziling: Chunmu jiaoxing” 百字令·春暮郊行, SZL, 305.
125. Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian*, 50.
126. See Hsu Yu-ming, *Wang Zhaoming yu guomin zhengfu*, 225–71.
127. Matsumoto, *Shanghai jidai*, 176–96.
128. Matsumoto, *Shanghai jidai*, 193.
129. Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 139–42.
130. “China,” *Time*, March 18, 1935, 21–22.
131. Gu Weijun, *Gu Weijun huiyilu*, vol. 2: 320–24.
132. Bōei Kenshūjo Senshishitsu, *Shina jihen Rikugun sakusen*, vol.1: 48. For a detailed account of the event, see Hsu Yu-ming, *Wang Zhaoming yu guomin zhengfu*, 325–50.
133. Matsumoto, *Shanghai jidai*, 249–50.
134. Wang Jingwei, “Fang Junbi mei yi huayang zhifu jianyi, tiju qishang” 方君璧妹以畫羊直幅見貽題句其上, SZL, 248.
135. See Svarverud, “The Usefulness of Uselessness.”
136. Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 182–86.
137. Hsu Yu-ming, *Wang Zhaoming yu guomin zhengfu*, 351–60.
138. He Mengheng, *Yunyan sanyi*, 114.
139. See “Wang zhuxi qing she xingci anfan” 汪主席請赦行刺案犯, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), February 1, 1937; “Ci Wang Song an zuo xuanpan” 刺汪案昨宣判, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), April 4, 1937.

140. Matsumoto, *Shanhai jidai*, 292–97.
141. Bōei Kenshūjo Senshishitsu, *Shina jihen Rikugun sakusen*, vol. 1: 52.
142. Report from the Badedirektion Bad Nauheim, Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt, G 37 Nr. 4788. I thank Ms. Barbara Tuczek for locating the document.
143. Hsu Yu-ming, *Wang Zhaoming yu guomin zhengfu*, 384–85.
144. Gu Weijun, *Gu Weijun huiyilu*, vol. 2: 3–4, 345.
145. General Ma Yuan 馬援 (14 BCE–49 CE) of the Han Dynasty declared that he would rather die a soldier on the battlefield, his body coming home wrapped in a horse skin. It was declared the death of a true martyr (*lieshi* 烈士). See Wang Xianqian, *Houhanshu jijie*, j. 14: 307.
146. Wang Jingwei, “Xinhai sanyue ershijiuri Guangzhou zhi yi, yu zai Beijing yuzhong wen Zhantang sishi [. . .]” 辛亥三月二十九日廣州之役余在北京獄中聞展堂死事 [. . .], SZL, 32–33.
147. In *Liezi* 列子, a man living on the coast befriended seagulls. After his father asked him to catch a few birds, he went to the coast again and no birds came down to him anymore, sensing the chicanery in his heart. See Yang Bojun, *Liezi jishi*, j. 2: 67–68.
148. Wang Jingwei, *Ganshi* 感事, SZL, 255.
149. Sima Qian, *Shiji*, j. 31: 1459.
150. See Hu Hanmin, “Zai Nanyang zeng Jingwei” 在南洋贈精衛, in *Hu Hanmin xiansheng wenji*, vol. 1: 592–93.
151. The certificate was given to him only on February 3, 1937, in Nanjing by the German ambassador. See “550-Jahr-Feier: Ehrenpromotionen,” Universitätsarchiv Heidelberg (B-1523/4, B-1523/6, B-1523/76, H II 585/1, H II 859). Wang referred to the degree only once in a statement thanking the German people for their friendship; see “Dui Deguo guomin shengming” 對德國國民聲明 (January 21, 1941), *Wang Zhuxi heping jianguo yanlunji xuji*, 351. Heidelberg University, however, would thereafter address him as Dr. Wang.
152. *Guanghua bao* 光華報, July 4, 1936; *Neues Wiener Journal*, July 7, 1936.
153. See Xiao Liju, “Guomin zhengfu dui De Ri ‘Fang Gong xieding’ de yinying.”
154. Jay Taylor reiterates the same rumor. See Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 130–31.
155. German Foreign Office Archives (pol. VIII 24/137442; pol. VIII 24/137443). Curiously, Jay Taylor has cited the same archives, but concludes the opposite of its statement.
156. Wang Jingwei, “Wang Zhuxi jiang minzhu zhengzhi.”
157. “Chiang Murder Stuns Chinese,” *Boston Globe*, December 16, 1936.
158. Gu Weijun, *Gu Weijun huiyilu*, vol. 2: 369–75. The editorial was published in *Pravda*, December 14, 1936.
159. Jiang Tingfu, *Jiang Tingfu huiyilu*, 215–17.
160. Gu Weijun, *Gu Weijun huiyilu*, vol. 2: 369–75.
161. “Wang Sails for China,” *New York Times*, December 23, 1936.
162. Zhou Fohai, *Sanmin zhuyi de jiben wenti*.
163. See Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on January 2, 1938, ZFH, 2–3. Selected translations from his 1938 diaries are made by Brian G. Martin in Henshaw et al., *Translating the Occupation*.
164. “Wang Jingwei zuowu di Hu” 汪精衛昨午抵滬, *Shenbao*, January 15, 1937.

165. See, e.g., Wang Jingwei, “Zenyang jiuwang tucun” 怎樣救亡圖存 (January 18, 1937), in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin zhi yanlun*, 7–13; “Duiwai yao baowei guotu duinei yao tuanjie minzhong” 對外要保衛國土對內要團結民眾 (January 22, 1937), in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin zhi yanlun*, 15–19; “Annei yu rangwai” 安內與攘外 (February 1, 1937), in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin zhi yanlun*, 27–33; and “Sanzhong quanhui xuanyan de yiyi” 三中全會宣言的意義 (March 22, 1937), in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zuijin zhi yanlun*, 39–42.

166. See, e.g., “Wang Jingwei xiansheng huiguo di Hu” 汪精衛先生回國抵滬, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), January 15, 1937; “Wang Jingwei zuo di Jing” 汪精衛昨抵京, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), January 19, 1937.

167. Chen Kewen’s diary entry on January 22, 1937, in *Chen Kewen riji*, vol. 1: 29.

168. “Quanhui zuo you zhongda jueyi” 全會昨有重大大決議, *Dagongbao* (Tianjin), February 20, 1937; “Sanzhong quanhui xuanyan yuanwen” 三中全會宣言原文, *Shenbao*, February 23, 1937.

169. Matsumoto, *Shanghai jidai*, 546.

170. Mao Zedong, “Zhongguo Gongchandang zai kangri shiqi de renwu” 中國共產黨在抗日時期的任務, in *Mao Zedong xuanji*, vol. 1: 252–70.

171. Wang Jingwei, “Diaotai” 釣臺, *SZL*, 271.

172. Sima Qian, *Shiji*, j. 41: 1740–53.

173. Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*, 207.

174. For more on him, see Oka, *Konoe Fumimaro*.

175. For a more detailed description of the Incident, see Toland, *The Rising Sun*, 43–46.

176. Since 2017, the Chinese government has officially dated the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War to 1931, namely since the Mukden Incident. The “North China Incident” is extensively chronicled in Bōei Kenshūjo Senshishitsu, *Shina jihen Rikugun sakusen*, vol. 1: 138–256.

177. Matsumoto, *Shanghai jidai*, 566.

178. On Chiang’s indecision over the effect of his announcement, see Yang Tianshi, *Zhaoxun zhenshi de Jiang Jieshi*, vol. 1: 224–25.

179. See *Zhongyang ribao*, July 20, 1937. The account of the meeting is based on *Zhongyang ribao* reports through July 1937.

180. Tao Xisheng, *Chaoliu yu diandi*, 142–47.

181. Wang Jingwei, “Zuihou guantou” 最後關頭, in *Wang Jingwei xiansheng kangzhan yanlunji*, 8–12.

182. Harmsen, *Shanghai 1937*, 66, 118.

183. On the casualty tally, see Harmsen, *Shanghai 1937*, 247, 251, 292 n. 18.

184. The massacre has been fully chronicled and explored in many academic works, though the exact scope of the atrocities remains an emotionally and politically charged topic of dispute. See, for instance, Chang, *The Rape of Nanking*; Brook, *Documents on the Rape of Nanking*; Fogel, *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*; Yoshida, *The Making of the “Rape of Nanking”*.

185. Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*, 120.

186. He Mengheng, *Yunyan sanyi*, 125; Chen Kewen’s diary entries on November 21–22, 1937, in *Chen Kewen riji*, vol. 1: 138–39.

Chapter 3

1. Brook, “Hesitating before the Judgment of History,” 104.
2. Luo Junqiang, “Dui Wang-wei de huiyi,” 3.
3. For a few slightly different accounts of this club, see the summary in Tao Hengsheng, “*Gao-Tao shijian*” *shimo*, 70–72.
4. For more on Zhou’s role in this movement, see Martin, “The Dilemmas of a Civilian Politician in Time of War”; Ward, “Zhou Fohai.” On Gao Zongwu’s early activities, see Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 27–34.
5. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 2.
6. See Zhou Fohai’s diary entries on July 30 and through August 1937, ZFH, 55–65.
7. See Zhou Fohai’s diary entries on September 11 and 15, 1937, ZFH, 70–71.
8. See Zhou Fohai’s diary entries on October 4 and 6, 1937, ZFH, 78–79.
9. See Zhou Fohai’s diary entries in mid-November, ZFH, 92–94.
10. Tao Hengsheng, “*Gao-Tao shijian*” *shimo*, 75–78.
11. On the importance of *South China Daily News* to the Wang group, see Chiu, L., “The ‘*South China Daily News*’ and Wang Jingwei’s Peace Movement, 1939–41.”
12. For a photocopy of the minutes of the meeting, see KMT History Committee, *Kuilei zuzhi*, vol. 3: 7–15.
13. Tao Hengsheng, “*Gao-Tao shijian*” *shimo*, 53–65; Imai, *Shina jihen no kaisō*, 63–64.
14. See Yang Tianshi, “Jiang Jieshi qinzi zhangkong de dui Ri mimi tanpan,” in *Zhaoxun zhenshi de Jiang Jieshi*, vol. 1: 253–87.
15. “Chen Gongbo fang Yidali jilu” 陳公博訪義大利記錄, Foreign Ministry Archives (306.2/0001), Academia Historica, Taipei.
16. Tao Xisheng, *Chaoliu yu diandi*, 156–58.
17. Luo Junqiang, “Dui Wang-wei de huiyi,” 4–5.
18. See Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 51–79; Tao Hengsheng, “*Gao-Tao shijian*” *shimo*, 80–84.
19. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 80.
20. Tao Xisheng, *Chaoliu yu diandi*, 158.
21. Luo Junqiang, “Dui Wang-wei de huiyi,” 5.
22. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 81–86.
23. Tao Hengsheng, “*Gao-Tao shijian*” *shimo*, 101–6.
24. See Zhou’s diary entries dated November 26–29, 1938, ZFH, 201–2.
25. This was a belief held by people of various persuasions and relations to Wang. See, for instance, Tao Xisheng, *Chaoliu yu diandi*, 159; Chen Gongbo, “Banian lai de huiyi,” 8, 10; Luo Junqiang, “Dui Wang-wei de huiyi,” 11; Jiang Tingfu, *Jiang Tingfu huiyilu*, 232.
26. Imai, *Shina jihen no kaisō*, 85.
27. Edgerton-Tarpley, “From ‘Nourish the People’ to ‘Sacrifice for the Nation,’” 448.
28. Lary, “Drowned Earth,” 201–2.
29. Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 186–87.
30. Taylor, Jay, *The Generalissimo*, 159–60.

31. Wang Jingwei, “Quanmian zhanzheng.”
32. Wang Jingwei, “Weishenme wujie jiaotu kangzhan.”
33. Taylor, Jay, *The Generalissimo*, 155.
34. Zanasi, *Saving the Nation*, 4–7.
35. Edgerton-Tarpley, “From ‘Nourish the People’ to ‘Sacrifice for the Nation,’” 457–58.
36. Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 180–85.
37. See, e.g., Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on November 6, 1938, ZFH, 192.
38. Chen Bulei, *Chen Bulei huiyilu*, 129.
39. Jiang Tingfu, *Jiang Tingfu huiyilu*, 227–28.
40. See Chen Kewen’s diary entry on April 2, 1938, in *Chen Kewen riji*, vol. 1: 209.
41. Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on November 8, 1938, ZFH, 193.
42. Luo Junqiang, “Dui Wang-wei de huiyi,” 11.
43. Wang Jingwei, “Ershiqinian siyue ershijiuri shi zhi Changsha [. . .]” 二十七年四月二十九日始至長沙 [. . .], SZL, 275.
44. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 103–8.
45. See, e.g., Lin Kuo, *Wang Jingwei quanzhuan*, 333.
46. Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on November 26, 1938, ZFH, 201.
47. Chen Gongbo, “Banian lai de huiyi,” 10.
48. Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on November 29, 1938, ZFH, 202; Luo Junqiang, “Dui Wang-wei de huiyi,” 11.
49. Zhou Fohai’s diary entries, ZFH, 205–12.
50. See also Lo Jiu-jong, “Zhong-Ri zhanzheng shiqi Jiang-Wang shuang-huang lunshu.”
51. Chen Kewen’s diary entry on December 21, 1938, recollected the gossip that he heard two weeks ago; see *Chen Kewen riji*, vol. 1: 336.
52. Chiang Kai-shek diary, box/folder 40.2, Hoover Institution Archives.
53. According to Inukai Takeru, this was because of the strong objection of the new chief of the General Staff Office; see *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 103.
54. For the contents of the telegram and the reactions, see Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 119–20; Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 207–28; Tao Hengsheng, “*Gao-Tao shijian*” *shimo*, 110–15.
55. Wang Jingwei’s letter, in KMT History Committee, *Kuilei zuzhi*, vol. 3: 51–52.
56. See telegraphs collected in KMT History Committee, *Kuilei zuzhi*, vol. 3: 55–76.
57. Hu Shi’s telegram (December 29, 1938), Academia Historica (118-010100-0056-044), Taipei.
58. Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 224.
59. Tao Hengsheng, “*Gao-Tao shijian*” *shimo*, 118–27; Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 107–8.
60. Wang Jingwei, “Zhengyue de huiyi,” 43–44.
61. Wang Jingwei, “Yijuyou: Luoye” 憶舊遊·落葉, SZL, 306. The last two lines are modified according to the original manuscript collected among the Wang Jingwei Papers (021c_011; 021a_061), Hoover Institution Archives. See also *Wang Jingwei shici xinbian*, 201–5.
62. Song Yu 宋玉, “Rhapsody of Wind” (*fengfu* 風賦): “The wind arises from

the ground / and is born from the tips of green duckweeds [floating on the water]” 夫風生於地，起於青萍之末。 See Xiao Tong, *Zhaoming wenxuan*, j. 13: 582. The duckweeds thus stand for tiny causes leading to significant historical events.

63. See Wang Jingwei, “Yijiuyou: Luoye” 憶舊遊·落葉, *Tongsheng yuekan* 1, no. 1 (1940): 116. The handwritten revision of the last two lines is visible in the *Saoye ji* manuscript among Wang Jingwei papers at the Hoover Institution Archives.

64. Copies of the newspaper from April 2 to April 11, 1940, are no longer extant.

65. Wu Zhihui wrote a sarcastic song that matches it in rhyme; cited in SZL, 307. See also Ko Chia-Cian, “Chidao shang de fengtu,” 13.

66. Long Yusheng, preface to *Wang Jingwei xiansheng xingshilu*; see also Zhang Hui, *Long Yusheng xiansheng nianpu*, 97.

67. Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 98.

68. “Wang Zhaoming panguo an” 汪兆銘叛國案, National Government archives, Academia Historica (001-10310-0001-030a), Taipei.

69. Gerald Bunker believes that the death of Zeng made Wang’s French trip impossible, since “no other member of Wang’s entourage” spoke fluent French; see *The Peace Conspiracy*, 131. That is untrue.

70. “Wang Zhaoming panguo an,” Academia Historica (001-103100-0001), Taipei.

71. See Long Yun’s telegraph on January 6, 1939, and Chiang’s telegraph on January 8, 1939, in KMT History Committee, *Kuilei zuzhi*, vol. 3: 50, 54–55.

72. Most of my accounts on the Wang group in Hanoi come from Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 109–10; He Mengheng, *Yunyan sanyi*, 140–51; He Mengheng, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 135–38.

73. He Mengheng, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 133.

74. WZQ, vol. 1: 22.

75. Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 234–39.

76. Gao Zongwu, “Shenru huxue,” Part 2, *Zhuanji wenxue* 89, no. 6 (2006): 99.

77. “Jiang weiyuanzhang tanhua” 蔣委員長談話, *Shenbao* (Shanghai), February 13, 1939.

78. Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 116–18.

79. Tao Xisheng, *Chaoliu yu diandi*, 160–61. On Zhou Zuoren’s collaboration, see Kiyama, *Pekin Kujūan ki*. On his poetry in the period of collaboration, see Yang, Z., “An Alternative Lyric Modernity?”

80. He Mengheng, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 134. There are also doubts whether Gu visited Wang the second time at all. Cai Dejin mentions only the February visit; see *Wang Jingwei pingzhuan*, 303.

81. WZQ, vol. 1: 22.

82. Chen Gongshu, *Henei Wang-an shimo*, 193–231.

83. See He Mengheng, *Wang Jingwei shengping yu linian*, 135–37; He Mengheng, *Yunyan sanyi*, 140–45; Chen, C., *Memoirs of a Citizen*, 110–13. Jin Xiongbai’s account (WZQ, vol. 1: 21–24; vol. 5: 41–44) is based on He Mengheng’s.

84. WZQ, vol. 5, 48.

85. Chen Gongshu's own answer to this question was that he was more useful alive to the Japanese, and the Wang couple had to obey their puppet masters; see *Kangzhan houqi fanjian huodong*, 5–6.

86. Wang Jingwei, “Ju yige li,” *Nanhua ribao*, April 1, 1939. Cited also in KMT History Committee, *Kuilei zuzhi*, vol. 3: 78–84.

87. Wu Zhihui, “Dui Wang Jingwei ‘Ju yige li’ de jinyi jie.”

88. For the original minutes of the meeting, see KMT History Committee, *Kuilei zuzhi*, vol. 3: 7–15. In comparison to the original record, Wang's version contained some minor differences and in particular more dialogues. It was likely reconstructed from memory.

89. Lo Jiu-jong, “Zhong-Ri zhanzheng shiqi Jiang-Wang shuanghuang lunshu,” 174.

90. See Wakeman, *The Shanghai Badlands*, 85–87.

91. Wang Jingwei, “Sanshiernian sanyue [...]” 三十二年三月 [...], SZL, 331.

92. Wang Jingwei, “Yu meiren” 虞美人, SZL, 309.

93. See RNG Propaganda Department reports, Second Historical Archives of China (2010–4092, 2003–2034, page 327, 563).

94. See RNG Propaganda Department reports, Second Historical Archives of China (2003–2032).

95. Cai Dejin, *Wang Jingwei pingzhuan*, 320–27.

96. Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 132–41.

97. Wang Jingwei, “Zhongyao shengming” 重要聲明 (April 9, 1939), in *Wang Zhuxi heping jianguo yanlunji*, 37.

98. Gao Zongwu, “Shenru huxue,” part 3, *Zhuanji wenxue* 90, no. 1 (2007): 94.

99. Gao Zongwu, “Shenru huxue,” part 3, 93–94. Zhou Fohai's 1939 diary is unfortunately lost.

100. Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 143.

101. Ume, or “plum flower,” was Wang's code name, for his love of this botanic beauty.

102. Kagesa, *Sō soro waki*, 72–74.

103. Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 143–56; Gao Zongwu, “Shenru huxue,” part 3, 95–96.

104. “Zhongguo fangmian tichu guanyu shoushi shiju de juti banfa” 中國方面提出關於收拾時局的具體辦法, in Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, *Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu chengli*, 64–69.

105. Imai, *Shina jihen no kaisō*, 91.

106. “Shuli xin zhongyang zhengfu de fangzhen” 樹立新中央政府的方針, in Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, *Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu chengli*, 86–87.

107. For the contents of Wang's conversations, see Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, *Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu chengli*, 88–108. For the plan, see “Huafang tichu de youguan shoushi shiju de juti banfa he rifang de yijian” 華方提出的有關收拾時局的具體辦法和日方的意見, *Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu chengli*, 117–21. The negotiations are summarized in Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 157–62. See also Gao Zongwu, “Shenru huxue,” part 3, 97–98.

108. For records of their conversations, see Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, *Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu chengli*, 140–44.

109. Serfass, “Democracy through Collaboration?”
110. Luo Junqiang, “Dui Wang-wei de huiyi,” 25.
111. “Zhongguo guomindang diliuci quanguo daibiao dahui xuanyan” 中國國民黨第六次全國代表大會宣言 (August 30, 1939), in Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, *Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu chengli*, 324–32; “Xiuding zhongguo guomindang zhenggang” 修訂中國國民黨政綱 (August 30, 1939), in Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, *Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu chengli*, 333–34.
112. “Sanjutou huiyi jue ding shixiang” 三巨頭會議決定事項, in Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, *Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu chengli*, 391–92. On Wang’s negotiations with other collaborators, see Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 163–71. For an in-depth examination of the collaborators’ political persuasions and ideals, see Seki, *Tai-Nichi kyōryokusha no seiji kōsō*.
113. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 190. Bunker also gives a more detailed account of the negotiations; see 176–92.
114. Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 199–201.
115. Tao Hengsheng, “Gao-Tao shijian” shimo, 176.
116. Tao Xisheng, *Chaoliu yu diandi*, 163–65.
117. Tao Hengsheng, “Gao-Tao shijian” shimo, 153.
118. Tao Hengsheng, “Gao-Tao shijian” shimo, 182–85; Kagesa, *Sō soro waki*, 76–79.
119. For a list of the revisions, see Tao Hengsheng, “Gao-Tao shijian” shimo, 233–38.
120. Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 278–80.
121. Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 196, 268.
122. A detailed account can be found in Gao Zongwu, “Shenru huxue,” part 3, 99–105.
123. *Dagongbao* (Hong Kong), January 22, 1940.
124. Zhou Fohai’s diary entries, January 4–22, 1940, ZFH, 223–35.
125. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 208.
126. Excerpt from Chen Gongbo, “Sawunian yuzhong ougan” 卅五年獄中偶感, in Chen Gan, *Chen Gongbo shiji*, 67.
127. Kagesa, *Sō soro waki*, 80.
128. Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 217–18, 311–13.
129. Inukai, *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 318–19. For a detailed account of the negotiations, see Toland, *Rising Sun*, 67–145, esp. 72, 101–5, 144–45.
130. WZQ, vol. 1: 97.
131. Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on March 19, 1940, ZFH, 265.
132. For the whole story, see Imai, *Shina jihen no kaisō*, 115–48.
133. Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on March 30, 1940, ZFH, 272.
134. On Chen Bijun’s role in the Wang regime, see Yick, “Self-Serving Collaboration.”
135. On Japan’s double dealings, see Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 212–16.
136. On Wang’s hesitation, see Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on November 27, 1940, ZFH, 385.
137. Zhou Fohai’s diary entries on November 30, 1940, and July 28, 1941, ZFH, 386, 484.

138. See, e.g., Kobayashi, *Nicchū sensō to Ō Chōmei*; Shibata, *Kyōryoku teikō chinmoku*; Serfass, “Le gouvernement collaborateur de Wang Jingwei.”
139. Wang Jingwei, “Guomin zhengfu huandu xuanyan” 國民政府遷都宣言, in Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, *Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu chengli*, 821–22.
140. See Seki, *Tai-Nichi kyōryokusha no seiji kōsō*, 281–310.
141. Wang Jingwei, “Minquan zhuyi qiantu zhi zhanwang.”
142. Serfass, “Democracy through Collaboration?”
143. Xie Ren, “Lunxian zhi du,” 38–47.
144. On the Western powers’ attitude, see Serfass, “Le gouvernement collaborateur de Wang Jingwei,” 94–107.
145. See “State Visits of Wang Zhaoming, President of the National Government,” Foreign Ministry archives, National Archives of Japan (Bo2030707500).
146. Wang Bin, “Ribei diguo zhuyi de kuilei Wang Jingwei Puyi huijian ji.”
147. See Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*; Suleski, “Northeast China under Japanese Control”; Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*; Baskett, *The Attractive Empire*; Yang Haosheng, “Songs Transcending Boundaries.”
148. Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on May 11, 1942, ZFH, 602.
149. “Ri Wang qianding ‘Ri Hua jiben tiaoyue’ ji ‘Ri Man Hua gongtong xuanyan’ 日汪簽訂《日華基本條約》及《日滿華共同宣言》, in KMT History Committee, *Kuilei zuzhi*, vol. 3: 375–81.
150. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, 272–74.
151. Taylor, Je., “Republican Personality Cult in Wartime China,” 686. See also Taylor, Je., *Iconographies of Occupation*, chapter 3.
152. Liu Ximing, *Weijun*, 2–3, 102–21, 367–70.
153. Coble, *Chinese Capitalists in Japan’s New Order*, 75.
154. Henriot and Yeh, introduction to *In the Shadow of the Rising Sun*, 10.
155. See Zhou Fohai’s diary entries on February 27, August 26, October 4, October 8, and November 27, 1941, ZFH, 429, 509, 525, 527.
156. Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on December 8, 1941, ZFH, 548.
157. Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on July 17, 1942, ZFH, 627.
158. For a videotaped speech that he gave on this occasion, see NHK video bank; BBC Motion Gallery, video number 750201_005; Getty Images, clip number 506684467.
159. Zhou Fohai’s diary entry on July 24, 1943, ZFH, 774.
160. Taylor, Je., *Iconographies of Occupation*, 22.
161. Saaler and Szpilman, *Pan-Asianism*, vol. 1: 9.
162. Saaler and Szpilman, *Pan-Asianism*, vol. 1: 10.
163. Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*, 54.
164. Sun Yat-sen, “Dui Shenhu shangyehuiyisuo deng tuanti de yanshuo.”
165. Saaler and Szpilman, *Pan-Asianism*, vol. 2: 77–78.
166. Saaler and Szpilman, *Pan-Asianism*, vol. 2: 195.
167. Hu Hanmin, “Dayaxiya zhuyi yu kangri” 大亞細亞主義與抗日, in *Hu Hanmin xiansheng wenji*, vol. 2: 538–41.
168. Wang Jingwei, “Minzu zhuyi yu Da Yazhou zhuyi.” For an English translation, see *Pan-Asianism*, vol. 2: 213–15.
169. Hsu Yu-ming has also noted the relation of Wang’s Pan-Asianism to his earlier convictions; see *Wang Zhaoming yu guomin zhengfu*, 98–103.

170. Kameda, ‘*Ō Chōmei seiken’ no kenshō*, 19–20.
171. Wang Jingwei, “Yu meiren” 虞美人, SZL, 312.
172. Wang Wei, “Jiuyue jiuri yi Shandong xiongdi” 九月九日憶山東兄弟, in *Wang Wei ji jiaozhu*, j. 1: 3.
173. Sima Qian, *Shiji*, j. 86: 2526–38.
174. Sima Qian, *Shiji*, j. 55: 2034.
175. Wang Jingwei, “Du Tao shi” 讀陶詩, SZL, 336. It responds to Tao Qian’s poem “Zeng Yang-zhangshi” 贈羊長史, in *Tao Yuanming ji*, 64.
176. Toland, *The Rising Sun*, 457.
177. Toland, *The Rising Sun*, 455–58.
178. WZQ, vol. 2: 173–74.
179. He Mengheng, *Yunyan sanyi*, 251–52.
180. Current address: 34 Yihe Road. Some bloggers claimed that it was a luxurious mansion. In effect, this villa had a modest size of 1,542 square meters. In perspective, Zhou Fohai’s house (8 Xiliuwan) had 11,383 square meters. See Wang Xiaohua and Chen Ningjun, *Wang-wei guomin zhengfu jiu zhi shihua*, 71–72. One of Chiang’s residences in Nanjing, Meiling Palace, covers about 485,650 square meters. A photo of Wang’s living room, taken on March 19, 1940, can be found on Asahi Shinbun historical photographs online archives, ID 000009887.
181. WZQ, vol. 2: 104.
182. Wang Jingwei, “Ju” 菊, SZL, 294.
183. Wang Jingwei, “Meihua jueju” 梅花絕句, SZL, 298.
184. For a more detailed examination, see Yang Zhiyi, “Shuangzhaolou zhong ye dushu.”
185. Wang Jingwei, “Oucheng” 偶成, SZL, 333. Zixu 子虛 is the namesake figure in Sima Xiangru’s 司馬相如 “Rhapsody of Zixu” (Zixu fu 子虛賦), in which Mr. Zixu (“Fiction”) had a conversation with Mr. Wuyou 烏有 (“Nonexistent”). Zixu thus can stand for fictive stories. See Xiao Tong, *Zhaoming wenxuan*, j. 7: 348–60.
186. Wang Jingwei, “Jishi” 即事, SZL, 335.
187. This account of Wang’s final days has relied on the following sources: Zhou Fohai’s diary from December 1943 through November 1944; He Mengheng, *Yunyan sanyi*, 152–59; Jin Huanran, “Wang Jingwei zhi si”; and Ōta Mototsugu, “Yisheng de huiyi.”
188. Ōta Mototsugu, “Yisheng de huiyi.” Ōta later wrote a dissertation on this disease.
189. He Mengsheng, *Yunyan sanyi*, 157.
190. Kamisaka, *Ware wa kunan no michi ō iku*, vol. 2: 110.
191. Oka, *Konoe Fumimaro*, 205.
192. The funeral and its symbolism are extensively examined in Taylor, Je., “From Traitor to Martyr.” See also archives 2012–1135, 2005–514, and 2010–6147, Second Historical Archives of China.
193. WZQ, vol. 5: 129–32; “Wang ni fenmu gaizang shixiang” 汪逆墳墓改葬事項, Nanjing Municipal Archives (3-1-1015).
194. More on Zhou Fohai’s double agency, see Martin, “Collaboration within Collaboration.”
195. WZQ, vol. 3: 143–44, 183.

196. Wang Xiaohua, *Hanjian dashenpan*, 150.
197. Heller, *The Nuremberg Military Tribunals*, 7, 313, 370.
198. Judt, *Postwar*, 48.
199. Piccigallo, *The Japanese on Trial*, xi; Wilson et al., *Japanese War Criminals*, 1–2.
200. Judt, *Postwar*, 42–46.
201. See Masui Kōichi, *Kankan saiban shi*; Lo Jiu-jong, “Kangzhan shenglihou Zhong-Gong chengshen hanjian chutan”; Nanjing Municipal Archives, *Shenxun Wang-wei hanjian bilu*; Zanasi, “Globalizing Hanjian”; and Xia, *Down with Traitors*.
202. See Musgrove, “Cheering the Traitors.”
203. Liang Chunbai, “Chen Bijun zai renshijian zuihou de liangzhouye.”
204. Kamisaka, *Ware wa kunan no michi o iku*, vol. 2: 134–35, 165–78.
205. Zhang Hui, *Long Yusheng xiansheng nianpu*, 158, 174, 220.
206. WZQ, vol. 5: 154–64.
207. Wang’s son Wenying, who examined the document in Jin’s holding, expressed doubts. See Kamisaka, *Ware wa kunan no michi o iku*, vol. 2: 135.
208. My account of the Wang family has relied on Kamisaka, *Ware wa kunan no michi o iku*, vol. 1: 22–86 and vol. 2: 100–146, 238–51, 284–85; He Mengheng, *Yunyan sanyi*, 166–228; University of Hong Kong archives; information provided by Wang Jingwei Irrevocable Trust; and my interviews with descendants.

Part II

1. Elman, *Civil Examinations and Meritocracy in Late Imperial China*, 3.
2. A primary case is Su Shi, as discussed in Yang Zhiyi, “Return to an Inner Utopia.”
3. Wang Jingwei, “Qiufan changhe ji xu” 邱樊倡和集序, in *Wang Jingwei quanji*, vol. 2: 161–62.
4. Zeng Zhongming, “Xiaoxiu ji ba” 小休集跋, SZL, 369–70.
5. More on the circumstances, see Yang Zhiyi, “Road to Lyric Martyrdom.”
6. On this gathering, see Yin Qiling, *Minguo Nanjing jiuti shiren yaji yu jieshe yanjiu*, 188–204.
7. Wang Jingwei, “Chongjiu ji Saoyelou fenyun de you zi” 重九集掃葉樓分韻得有字, SZL, 223–24.
8. See the manuscript of *Saoye ji*, Wang Jingwei Papers (021a), Hoover Institution Archives.
9. Du Fu, “Yueye” 月夜, in *Du shi xiang zhu*, j. 4: 309. Noticeably, it also echoes the name of Liao Zhongkai’s studio Double-Purity Tower (*Shuangqing lou* 雙清樓), similarly celebrating nuptial bliss; see Wang Jingwei, *Wang Jingwei Nanshe shihua*, 56.
10. Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration*, 110.
11. Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration*, 148.
12. More on these characters, see Yang Zhiyi, “Thatched Cottage in a Fallen City.”

Chapter 4

1. Wang Jingwei, “Zhouye” 舟夜, SZL, 281.
2. Fang Xuanling, *Jin shu*, j. 98: 2572.
3. Translated in Fuller, *Drifting among Rivers and Lakes*, 459.
4. For a detailed discussion of Du’s style, see Chou, *Reconsidering Tu Fu*.
5. Wang Jingwei, “Jutsushi.” No translator’s name is given.
6. See Wang Jingwei, “Zhouye: Ershibanian liuyue” 舟夜: 二十八年六月, *Shuangzhaolou shicigao* (Shanghai, 1941), 36; *Tongsheng* 1, no. 11 (1941): 107; *Shuangzhaolou shicigao* (1945), 135. The manuscripts are found in Wang Jingwei Papers (021c_071 [no date], 021a_051 [dated]), Hoover Institution Archives.
7. See, e.g., Wang Jingwei, “Shusi,” *Zhengzhi yuekan* and “Shusi,” *Yicong*.
8. Cai Dejin, *Wang Jingwei pingzhuan*, 339.
9. See Lin Kuo, *Wang Jingwei quanzhuan*, 431–32; Wen Shaohua, *Wang Jingwei zhuan*, 133; Chen Dawei, *Wang Jingwei dazhuan*, 251.
10. Yu Ying-shih, “Preface,” SZL, 8–9.
11. Wong Young-tsu, “Liangyou jiansui qianjie jin.”
12. Wang Jingwei, *Wang Jingwei Nanshe shihua*, 48–49.
13. Wang Jingwei, *Wang Jingwei Nanshe shihua*, 32–33.
14. Wang Jingwei, *Wang Jingwei Nanshe shihua*, 32.
15. Legge, *The Shoo King*, in *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 3: 47–48.
16. Chou, *Reconsidering Tu Fu*, 197.
17. Chou, *Reconsidering Tu Fu*, 199.
18. Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” 143.
19. Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” 145.
20. White, “The Absurdist Moment in Contemporary Literary Theory,” in *Topics of Discourse*, 261–82.
21. Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature*, 51.
22. Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature*, 266.
23. Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature*, 271.
24. See, e.g., Chen, Jue, “Making China’s Greatest Poet,” 137–87; Chiu Yi-Hsuan, “Shishi yu shixin.”
25. Huang Zongxi, “Wan Lü’an xiansheng shixu” 萬履安先生詩序, in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol. 10: 49–50.
26. Wang, D., “Xiandai Zhongguo wenlun chuyi,” 306.
27. Wang Jingwei, *Wang Jingwei Nanshe shihua*, 6.
28. Assmann, A., *Introduction to Cultural Studies*, 177–90.
29. Assmann, A., *Introduction to Cultural Studies*, 170–72.
30. Assmann, A., *Introduction to Cultural Studies*, 175.
31. Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*, 43.
32. Kearney, “Narrating Pain,” 63.
33. Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism.”
34. Yuan Yidan, “Beiping lunxian shiqi dushuren de lunli jingyu yu xiuci celue,” 243–46.
35. Assmann, J., *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*.
36. Assmann, A., *Introduction to Cultural Studies*, 180.
37. Bjorklund, *False-Memory Creation in Children and Adults*.

38. Plant, “On Testimony, Sincerity and Truth,” 40, 45–46.
39. Gradner, “Unreliable Memories and Other Contingencies,” 199.
40. Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” 146.
41. See Yang Zhiyi, “Shuangzhaolou zhong ye dushu.”
42. Qian Zhongshu, “Ti moushi ji” 題某氏集, in *Huaiju shicun*, 64.
43. For instance Mao Xiaolu, who joined the RNG in 1942. Mao purportedly inspired the character Dong Xiechuan 董斜川 in Qian’s novel *Fortress Besieged* (Weicheng 圍城).
44. WZQ, vol. 2: 173. Jin Xiongbai mistakenly stated that the poem was written in May on Wang’s way from Shanghai to Japan.
45. Lessing made this argument in the sixteenth chapter of *Laokoon*; about the controversy over its meaning, see Rudowski, “Action as the Essence of Poetry.”
46. Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 7.

Chapter 5

1. *Tongsheng* 2, no. 2 (1942): 139–49.
2. Zhongshan Yinqilang 鐘山隱七郎 (sobriquet of Long Yusheng), “Yishui songbie (lishi geju)” 易水送別 (歷史歌劇), *Tongsheng* 2, no. 3 (1942): 91–106.
3. *Guoyi* 4, no. 1 (1942): 19–20.
4. *Tongsheng* 2, no. 9 (1942): 98, 99, 102. The actual location was Sweet Water Bridge; see chapter 1.
5. See Sima Qian, *Shiji*, j. 86: 2526–38. For an English translation, see Sima, *The Grand Scribe’s Records*, vol. 7: 596–613.
6. The song was likely interpolated into the *Shiji* text much later. See Zhang Haiming, “Sima Qian zuo ‘Yishui ge’ xianyi.”
7. Tao Yuanming, “Yong Jing Ke” 詠荊軻, in *Tao Yuanming ji*, 131–32.
8. Liu Zongyuan, “Yong Jing Ke” 詠荊軻, in *Liu Zongyuan ji*, j. 43: 1259.
9. See Lu You, “Bingwu shiyue shisan yemeng guo yi dazhong [. . .]” 丙午十月十三夜夢過一大冢 [. . .], in *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*, j. 18: 1410. Zhu Xi, *Chuci jizhu* 楚辭集註, *houzhu* 後注 j. 1, in *Zhuzi quanshu*, vol. 19: 234.
10. Liang Qichao, “Zhongguo zhi wushidao” 中國之武士道 (1904), LQC, vol. 5: 1415.
11. See, e.g., Gao Xu 高旭, “Yong Jing Ke bu Tao Jingjie zuoyun” 詠荊軻步陶靖節作韻, originally published in *Fubao* 復報 no. 7 (1906). Collected in *Gao Xu ji*, j. 3: 64.
12. Wang Jingwei, “Qiuye” 秋夜, SZL, 15.
13. Wang Jingwei, “Shuhuai” 述懷, SZL, 35–36.
14. A term literally used in Ding Hongxun, “Zhongyi renxia de dianxing renwu.”
15. Caonong, “Minzu hun.”
16. These include Ouyang Yuqian 歐陽予倩, *Jing Ke* (opera in five acts, 1929); Wang Bosheng 王泊生, *Jing Ke* (opera in four acts, 1932); Lin Wenzheng 林文錚, *Yishui bie* 易水別 (tragedy in three acts, 1933); Yishi 一士, *Yishui han* 易水寒 (stage play in three acts, 1935); Xiqiong 西龔, *Yishui han* (stage play in one act, 1935); Yidan 以旦, “Yishui hen” 易水恨 (1936?); Li Wenhua 李文華, *Yishui he*

bian 易水河邊 (stage play in three acts, 1937); and Yeyin 野吟, *Jing Ke* (stage play in four acts, 1939).

17. Gu Yuxiu (sobriquet Yiqiao 一樵), “Jing Ke,” 103, 109.

18. Gu Yuxiu, *Jing Ke*.

19. Gu Yuxiu, Liang Shiqiu, and Ying Shangneng, *Jing Ke chaqu*. For its premiere, see “Guoli yinyue xueyuan xiayue shouci yanzou Jing Ke chaqu” 國立音樂學院下月首次演奏荊軻插曲, *Yishibao* 益世報 (Chongqing), February 24, 1941.

20. See Ren Yuandao, *Zhegu yijiu ci*, 29–30.

21. Liu Wei-Chih, “Liang Wang heping yundong xia de fushi yanzhi,” 231.

22. Long Yusheng, “Shuilongyin, Ti Gao Qifeng hua ‘Yishui songbie tu’ 水龍吟·題高奇峰畫易水送別圖, *Tongsheng* 2, no. 2 (1942): 148–49. A slightly revised text is found in *Long Yusheng cixue lunwen ji*, 557–58.

23. In *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策, Prince Dan’s desire to avenge Qin’s humiliation was criticized by the senior statesman Ju Wu 鞠武 as “stroking [the dragon’s] reverse scales” 批其逆鱗; see Zhu Zugeng, *Zhanguo ce jizhu huikao*, j. 31: 1645. Allegedly, a dragon can be meek. But it has reversely aligned scales below its neck; anyone who strokes these scales is exposed to the dragon’s wrath.

24. For the earliest record of using human sacrifice as the finishing touch in making swords, see Zhao Ye, *Wu Yue chunqiu*, j. 2: 3–4. On an idled sword singing like a dragon, see, e.g., Li Bai, “Dulu pian” 獨漉篇, in *Li Taibai quanji*, j. 4: 221–22.

25. Long Yusheng, “Yishui songbie (lishi geju),” 99–100.

26. Li Xuanti, “Manjianghong, Ti ‘Yishui songbie tu’ 滿江紅·題易水送別圖, *Tongsheng* 2, no. 2 (1942): 147–48; republished in *Guoyi* 4, no. 1 (1942): 19.

27. Ju Wu advised Prince Dan against giving asylum to Fan Wuqi, as it would certainly attract Qin the tiger’s attention. See Sima Qian, *Shiji*, j. 86: 2529.

28. See Sima Qian, *Shiji*, j. 86: 2515–21.

29. Xin Qiji, “He xinlang: bie Maojie shierdi” 賀新郎·別茂嘉十二弟, in *Jiaxuan ci biannian jianzhu*, j. 4: 526–27.

30. Wang Jingwei, “Huoan chushi ‘Yishui songbie tu’ [. . .]” 豁齋出示易水送別圖 [. . .], *Tongsheng* 2, no. 2 (1942): 139–40; republished in *Guoyi* 4, no. 1 (1942): 19; also SZL, 295.

31. See “Li Shaoqing yu Su Wu shi sanshou” 李少卿與蘇武詩三首 no. 3, in Xiao Tong, *Zhaoming wenxuan*, j. 29: 1353. The attributed authorship is considered spurious.

32. See Yang Xiong, *Fayan yishu*, j. 16: 419; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, j 7: 232.

33. Yuan Mei, “Jing Ke shu dao lun” 荊軻書盜論, in *Xiaocangshanfang shiwen ji, wenji* 文集 j. 20: 1584–85.

34. Sima Qian, *Shiji*, j. 29: 1408.

35. Sun Xidan, *Liji jijie*, j. 11: 282–83.

36. Wang Xianqian, *Houhanshu jijie*, j. 68: 784.

37. Yang Bojun, *Liezi jishi*, j. 8: 265–66.

38. See Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jijie*, j. 7: 218–19.

39. Liu Wei-Chih, “Liang Wang heping yundong xia de fushi yanzhi,” 225–26.

40. Sima Qian, *Shiji*, j. 6: 239, 280–81.

41. Li Xuanti, “Ciyun Jingwei xiansheng ti ‘Yishui songbie tu’ ershou.”
42. Cao Gui 曹颺 is a figure who appeared in *Zuozhuan*, who is suspected to be the same person as Cao Mo. See Li Ling, “Weishenme shuo Cao Gui he Cao Mo shi tongyiren.”
43. Long Yusheng, “Yishui songbie (lishi geju),” 91.
44. Liang Hongzhi, “Wei Yuandao ti ‘Yishui songbie tu’” 為援道題易水送別圖, *Tongsheng* 2, no. 2 (1942): 140.
45. *Sanchi* 三尺 (“a single sword”) alludes to Liu Bang’s boasts of his spectacular rise from the rank of commoners; see *Shiji*, j. 8: 391.
46. *Shiji*, j. 81: 2448–49.
47. Xin Qiji, “Yongyule Jingkou Beiguting huaigu” 永遇樂·京口北固亭懷古, in *Jiuxuanci biannian jianzhu*, j. 5: 553.
48. The following paragraph is based on Long Yusheng, “Tongsheng yuekan yuanqi” 同聲月刊緣起, *Tongsheng* 1, no. 1 (1941): 1–4.
49. Bai Juyi, “Yu Yuan Jiu shu” 與元九書, in *Bai Juyi ji*, j. 45: 960.
50. Zhang Hui, *Long Yusheng xiansheng nianpu*, 109–10.
51. Wang Jingwei’s letter dated on August 6, 1940, “Shuangzhaolou yizha (weiwan),” 46.
52. See Long Yusheng, “Preface” to Zhang Jiangcai, *Wang Jingwei xiansheng xingshi lu*.
53. See, e.g., Inukai T., *Yōsukō wa imamo nagareteiru*, 157–64; Imai, *Shina jihen no kaisō*, 219–21; Kagesa, *Sō soro waki*, 13–14.
54. Kagesa, *Sō soro waki*, 47–49.
55. Konoe, “Wang xiansheng he wo” 汪先生和我, in *Heping fangong jianguo wenxian*, vol. 2: 4.
56. Itagaki, “Lun Zhong Ri jian zhi genben wenti” 論中日間之根本問題, in *Heping fangong jianguo wenxian*, vol. 1: 20, 23.
57. Itō, *Ō Chōmei o kataru*, 4, 9.
58. Yamanaka, *Shin Chūgoku no dai shidōsha*, 46–73.
59. Yamanaka, *Shin Chūgoku no dai shidōsha*, 289–95.
60. “Speech by Prime Minister Koiso Kuniaki upon the Death of Wang Jingwei” 小磯內閣總理大臣汪精衛逝去に際し談話, National Archives of Japan (A15060310500).
61. WZQ, v. 2: 27–28.
62. The serialization of the poems started in 1953; see Ren’s prefaces to *Zhegu yijiu ci*, 1.
63. Ren Yuandao, “Ti Wang Hu shoushu shici xiaojian” 題汪胡手書詩詞小簡 no. 1, in *Zhegu yijiu ci*, 23.
64. See, for example, Ren Yuandao, *Zhegu yijiu ci*, 25, 29.
65. Ren Yuandao, *Zhegu yijiu ci*, 29.
66. Ren Yuandao, “Kaipianci” 開篇詞, in *Zhegu yijiu ci*, 1.
67. Howard Boorman has recognized the duality of Wang as “a political romantic” and as having a “claim to realism.” See Boorman, “Wang Ching-wei,” 296.

Chapter 6

1. Wang Jingwei, “Shitoucheng wantiao” 石頭城晚眺, SZL, 314.
2. Liu Yuxi, “Xisaishan huaigu” 西塞山懷古, in *Liu Yuxi ji*, 300.
3. Nora, “General Introduction,” 20.
4. Stephen Owen has translated term *huaigu* as “meditating on the past.” I have, however, chosen to translate it as “remembering the past” to stress the role of memory.
5. Owen, “Place,” 417.
6. It was published as Shao Ruipeng 邵瑞彭, “Xihe: Shibanianqian ceng he Meicheng ‘Jinling huaigu’ jin zai weizhi” 西河·十八年前曾和美成《金陵懷古》今再為之, *Xinyin* 心音 no. 2 (1932): 10. We may deduce that Shao’s lyric song was composed in late 1931 or early 1932, a dating supported also by the exchange poems published together with it.
7. Musgrove, “Building a Dream.”
8. Sun Yat-sen, “Yu Zhang Taiyan de tanhua” 與章太炎的談話 (1902), SZSQJ, vol. 1: 214.
9. “Jiandu Nanjing erzhou jinian xuanchuan dagang” 建都南京二週紀念宣傳大綱, *Zhongyang zhoubao* 中央週報 no. 45 (1929): 21–23; “Guomin zhengfu jiandu Nanjing sanzhounian jinian xuanchuan dagang” 國民政府建都南京三週年紀念宣傳大綱, *Zhongyang zhoubao* no. 97 (1930): 38–40.
10. For the convenience of the survey, I have not taken into consideration the publication of such poems in newspapers, since very few Republican newspapers have been digitized.
11. Shao Ruipeng’s first “Jinling huaigu” poem was probably written in this period, though it was published later; see Shao Ruipeng, “Xihe: Jinling huaigu he Meicheng yun” 西河·金陵懷古和美成韻, *Guoxue congkan* 國學叢刊 1, no. 3 (1923): 145.
12. Wenhao 文鎬, “Jinling langu” 金陵覽古, *Guoxue* 國學 (Tokyo) no. 1 (1914): 60.
13. Xu Tianzhang 徐天璋, “Jinling huaigu” 金陵懷古, *Guoxue congkan* 3, no. 1 (1926): 103–5.
14. Zhu Danshan 朱丹山, “Jinling huaigu” 金陵懷古, *Junshi zazhi* 軍事雜誌 no. 34 (1931): 128.
15. See, e.g., Wu Chengyu, “Jinling huaigu: Wuyin zhongqiu 金陵懷古·戊寅仲秋,” *Xianzheng yanjiu* 縣政研究 1, no. 2 (1939): 91; Zhang Lushan, “He qianti” 和前題, *Xianzheng yanjiu* 縣政研究 1, no. 2 (1939): 92. Wu Chengyu, a legal scholar, would later lead the RNG Constitutionalism Implementation Committee (see chapter 3).
16. See Eykholt, “Aggression, Victimization, and Chinese Historiography,” 12–13.
17. Qian Zhongshu, “Aiwang” 哀望, in *Huaiju shicun*, 18.
18. The ancient central district in Nanjing is called Baixia 白下; thus Nanjing is alternatively called Baixiacheng 白下城, which Qian shortens as Baicheng 白城 (the White City).
19. The author’s note: “harboring resentment in the Netherworld” (*jihen ruming* 齋恨入冥), a term from Feng Yan’s 馮衍 (fl. 8–28) letter to Yin Jiu 陰

就. This letter is cited in Li Xian's 李賢 commentary to Feng Yan's biography in Wang Xianqian, *Houhanshu jiji*, 350.

20. See Jing Shenghong, *Nanjing lunxian banian shi*, 235–36, 265–66. The GMD leadership, then at Wuhan, was well aware of the massacre; see *Nanjing lunxian banian shi*, 1107–9.

21. Adorno, “Prismen: Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft” (1951), *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft*, vol. 1: 30. He later revised the statement and declared instead: “Hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems. But it is not wrong to raise the less cultural question whether after Auschwitz you can go on living.” See Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 362–63.

22. Eykholt, “Aggression, Victimization, and Chinese Historiography,” 14–16.

23. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*; Treat, “Arendt in Asia.”

24. Wang Jingwei, “Manjianghong” 滿江紅, SZL, 310.

25. Feng Yansi, “Ye Jinmen” 謁金門, in Zeng Zhaomin, *Quan Tang Wudai ci*, j. 4: 392.

26. See the biography of Feng Yansi in Lu You, *Nan Tang shu*, j. 11: 3.

27. Li Jing 李璟, “Huanxisha” 浣溪沙, in Zeng Zhaomin, *Quan Tang Wudai ci*, j. 3: 726.

28. See the entry on the first year of Duke Ai's reign; Hong Liangji, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan gu*, j. 20: 844.

29. Pan Yimin and Pan Rui, *Chen Fangke nianpu*, 158. for more on Li Xuanti's gatherings, see Yang Zhiyi, “Thatched Cottage in a Fallen City.”

30. Qian Zhonglian, “Manjianghong, Shiri Fenyun de Shouzi” 滿江紅·是日分韻得壽字, *Tongsheng* 3, no. 8 (1943): 55.

31. Namely central China.

32. An adaptation of the Southern Song poet Chen Yuyi's 陳與義 (1090–1138) line from the poem “Yougan zaifu” 有感再賦, in *Chen Yuyi ji*, j. 17: 268. Written on the Double-Ninth Day of 1127, it laments the fate of the two Northern Song emperors living in captivity.

33. This is a reference to Lu You's line: “In dream I seize the Pine Pavilion Fortress” 夢中奪得松亭關; see “Loushang zuishu” 樓上醉書, in *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*, j. 8: 629–30.

34. The poems from the party were published in *Tongsheng* 3, nos. 8–9 (1943).

35. After 1945, Qian Zhonglian was silent about his collaborationist career, but he nonetheless reserved high praise for the poetry of Xia Jingguan and Yang Wuyang; see Qian Zhonglian, “Jin Bainian Shitan Dianjianglu” 近百年詩壇點將錄, in *Dangdai xuezhe zixuan wenku: Qian Zhonglian juan*, 674, 677; Qian Zhonglian, “Jin Bainian Citan Dianjianglu” 近百年詞壇點將錄, in *Dangdai xuezhe zixuan wenku: Qian Zhonglian juan*, 696, 697.

36. Lu You, *Laoxuean biji*, j. 9: 121.

37. See Qian Zhonglian's commentary on Huang Zunxian's poem “Jiuhan yuji Qiu Zhongyan guofang yin Renjinglu Zhongyan youshi jiankai jinshi yiyun hezhi, sanyong qianyun” 久旱雨霽丘仲闕過訪飲入境廬仲闕有詩兼慨近事依韻和之·三用前韻, in *Renjinglu shicao jianzhu*, 957–58.

38. Tuo Tuo, *Songshi*, j. 65: 1429.

39. See You Dong, *Genzhai zashuo xushuo*, j. 9: 174.

40. Lu You, “Jianmen dao zhong yu weiyu” 劍門道中遇微雨, in *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*, vol. 3, 269.
41. As manifested in his three poems mourning Wang’s death; see Qian Zhonglian, “Jingwei xiansheng wanshi” 精衛先生輓詩, *Tongsheng* 4, no. 3 (1945): 105–6.
42. Zhou Fohai, “Jinling ganjiu” 金陵感舊, ZFH, 1157–61.
43. Chang, *The Rape of Nanking*, 14–15.
44. Sima Qian, *Shiji*, j. 76: 2368.
45. Sun Yat-Sen Mausoleum Committee, *Zongli lingyuan guanli weiyuanhui baogao*, 398. Wang joined the committee only in 1933. The Wang regime, however, continued to plant plum trees on the hill.
46. In the manuscript letter sent by Chairman Wang Funeralary Committee to the RNG Central Political Committee (November 16, 1944), Chen Bijun mentioned that Wang wished to be buried temporarily near *Wuwang fen* before he could be properly buried in Guangzhou; *Wuwang fen*, however, is then crossed out and changed to be *Meihua shan*. See Second Historical Archives of China, *Wang-wei zhongyang zhengzhi weiyuanhui ji zuigao guofang huiyi huiyilu*, vol. 18: 406. Official documents arranging the funeral also refer to the grave’s location alternatively as *Wuwang fen* or *Meihua shan*, showing that the change of name was decided by the funerary committee and the new name was popularized only afterward.
47. See, e.g., Zhou Jingquan, “Nanjing youji.”

Epilogue

1. For instance, when a local county petitioned the Ministry of the Interior in July 1940 to order all frontline areas to build kneeling statues of Wang in Sun Yat-sen memorial halls, the ministry simply replied that “there is no precedence for it” and shelved the petition. Second Historical Archives of China (12-6-18326).
2. See the letter dated May 16, 1940, from the Xichang People’s Education House to the Chongqing General Mobilization Committee; Chongqing Municipal Archives (0053-0014-00112-0000-003-000, 0053-0014-00112-0000-007-000).
3. “Zhu Wang-ni fufu guixiang” 鑄汪逆夫婦跪像, *Dagongbao* (Chongqing), March 15, 1940.
4. On these reliefs, see Wu, H., “Tiananmen Square”; Hung, “Revolutionary History in Stone,” 467–72, esp. 468.
5. See Chongqing Municipal Archives (0081-0004-0075-3000-0020-000, 0067-0004-0024-0000-0025, 0061-0002-0002-0000-0218-000, 0061-0015-0107-8000-0011-001, 0053-0020-00501-0000-081-000 [including an image of the design], 0053-0020-00501-0000-134-000, 0053-0020-00501-0000-112-000).
6. Archival photo of the placard taken in February 2019.
7. In January 2023, the two kneeling statues suddenly disappeared, purportedly temporarily for the purpose of preservation during the urban renewal project. The marble relief of the fallen soldier, however, remains. When and if the statues will be restored remains unclear. See <https://news.ifeng.com/c/8MyROxU245Z>

8. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9–11.
9. On the creation of memorials for Communist martyrs, primarily in Beijing, see Hung, “The Cult of the Red Martyr.”
10. See He Shu, “Wenyi zuopin zhong yu lishishang de Zhong-Mei Hezuosuo.” On the Red Crag myth, see Jing Wendong, *Shiqing zonghui qi bianhua*.
11. As Wu Hung observes in the case of the Monument to the People’s Heroes; see “Tiananmen Square,” 94. On the portraiture of Communist martyrs, see also Denton, “Visual Memory and the Construction of a Revolutionary Past.”
12. Hung, “The Red Line,” 915, 931.
13. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation*, 1.
14. See Chongqing Municipal Archives (0130-0001-0007-8000-0037-000, 0120-0001-0007-8000-0040-000, 0153-0001-0001-7000-0117-000).
15. Ding Xiaoxian, *Benguo jindaishi keben* (Seventh Grade), vol. 2: 50.
16. As explicitly pointed out in Li Zhiyu, *Jingxian*, 107.
17. Li Longgeng, *Zhongguo lishi* (Eighth Grade), vol. 4: 46, 47.
18. Wang Hongzhi and Li Longgeng, *Zhongguo lishi* (Eighth Grade) (1994), vol. 3: 165.
19. Zheng Shiqu, *Lishi* (Seventh Grade), vol. 2: 50; Wang Hongzhi, *Lishi* (Eighth Grade), vol. 1: 52.
20. Qi Shirong, *Zhongguo lishi* (Eighth Grade), vol. 1: 73.
21. Wang Hongzhi and Li Longgeng, *Zhongguo lishi* (Eighth Grade) (1995), vol. 4: 64–65.
22. Guoli bianyiguan, *Guominzhongxue: Lishi*, vol. 3: 88, 107.
23. Jin Shimin, *Putong gaoji zhongxue: Lishi*, vol. 2: 181–82.
24. Lin Nengshi, *Putong gaoji zhongxue: Lishi*, vol. 3: 28, 39.
25. Taylor, Je., *Iconographies of Occupation*, 13.
26. See “Zhongguo Lujun zhiqian” 中國陸軍致歉 (March 29, 2019), *Global Times*. The web page on the official platform is no longer available, but can still be accessed through Sina News. Link: <https://news.sina.cn/gn/2019-03-29/detail-ihsxncv697863.d.html> (accessed July 1, 2022). I thank Liu Haochen (Free University, Berlin) for reminding me of this incident.
27. See “Zai xinwen tuisongzhong yinyong Wang Jingwei de shi yinfa zhiyi” 在新聞推送中引用汪精衛的詩引發質疑 (March 29, 2019), *Tencent News*. The web page is no longer available.
28. See “Lujun guanwei yinyong hanjian shiju” 陸軍官徵引用漢奸詩句, *New Tang Dynasty Television* (March 29, 2019). Link: <https://www.ntdtv.com/gb/2019/03/29/a102544044.html> (accessed July 1, 2022).
29. Yu Ying-shih, “Preface,” SZL, 7.
30. Zhang Yihe, “Xianshi cheng chijue, cangbo wanli chou.”
31. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 3.
32. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 89.
33. Jiang transferred to Shanghai Jiao Tong University after the war, from which he received his degree. His case is examined in Henshaw, “Serving the Occupation State,” 203–34. According to Henshaw, the rumor of Jiang’s biological father having been a collaborator is not supported by available evidence.
34. Yeh Chia-ying, “Wang Jingwei *Shuangzhaolou shici gao* duhou.”
35. For more on “slave education” (*nuhua jiaoyu* 奴化教育), see Cao Bihong, Xia Jun, and Shen Lan, *Riben qin Hua jiaoyu quanshi*; Zhang Yucheng, *Wang-wei*

shiqi Ri-wei nuhua jiaoyu yanjiu; Lee, “Education in Wartime Beijing, 1937–1945”; Henshaw, “Serving the Occupation State,” 214–62.

36. Xia, *Down with Traitors*, 94.

37. Yeh’s account is corroborated by the memoir of a former Chongqing agent who worked in the RNG; see Yang Peng, *Jianzheng yisheng*, 63–82.

38. Yeh Chia-ying, “Wang Jingwei *Shuangzhaolou shicigao* duhou.”

39. “Macron Praises World War I General Who Later Collaborated with Nazis,” *New York Times*, November 7, 2018.

40. Gordon, *War Tourism*, 179–212.

41. “Macron Praises World War I General Who Later Collaborated with Nazis,” *New York Times*.

42. Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*. Also summarized in Conan and Rousso, *Vichy*, 5–11.

43. Conan and Rousso, *Vichy*, 4.

44. Weinrich, *Lethe*, 15.

45. Weinrich, *Lethe*, 18.

46. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 501.

47. Wall, “The Creative Imperative,” 48.

48. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 169–70.

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