

# Dream, Memory, and Reflection: Transfigurations of Su Shi's Qiuchi Rock in Song Poetry

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## Abstract

The present study traces the changing meanings of Su Shi's Qiuchi rock in Song poetry. As an aesthetic artifact, the rock may be gifted and exchanged through literati social interactions. At a more personal level, the rock reminds Su of a mysterious dream and symbolizes a place of retreat, described as his homeland in Shu, a Daoist grotto heaven, and a utopia that is superior to Peach Blossom Spring. The rock also serves as Su's most faithful companion in the dark days of his exile to the far south. In the poems of Southern Song poets, who experienced the trauma of the fall of northern China to the Jurchens, the rock turns into a nostalgic object but also prompts acute reflections on petrophilia as a morally and philosophically problematic passion.

## Keywords

dream interpretation – literati interaction – petrophilia – Su Shi

## 1 The Rock and Su Shi's Dream of Qiuchi

In 1092, while Su Shi 蘇軾 [1037–1101] was serving as prefect of Yangzhou 揚州, his cousin Cheng Zhiyuan 程之元 [fl. 1095] brought him a gift of two rocks from Yingzhou 英州.<sup>1</sup> The gift is featured in Su's "Twin Rocks, with a Preface [*Shuangshi bing xu* 雙石並敘]":

1 Yingzhou was under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Circuit of Guangnan 廣南東路, of which Cheng Zhiyuan had been the judicial commissioner [*tixing* 提刑].

After I arrived in Yangzhou, I acquired a pair of rocks. One of them, green in color, had a long range of mountain peaks, with a cave extending from front to back. The other is so immaculately white that it reflects like a mirror. I soaked them with water in a basin and set them up on a stand. All of a sudden, I recalled that when I was in Yingzhou,<sup>2</sup> I once dreamed that someone asked me to reside at a government office, whose plaque read “Qiuchi.” Upon waking up, I recited from Du Fu’s poem: “Ageless is the cave of Qiuchi, / That connects underground to the Lesser Heaven.” So, I playfully wrote this little poem to give my colleagues and friends a laugh.

至揚州，獲二石，其一綠色，岡巒迤邐，有穴達於背；其一正白可鑑。漬以盆水，置几案間。忽憶在潁州日，夢人請住一官府，榜曰仇池。覺而誦杜子美詩曰：萬古仇池穴，潛通小有天。乃戲作小詩，為僚友一笑。

夢時良是覺時非	It felt so real in the dream, so false when awake;
汲水埋盆故自癡	Drawing water to set them in a basin, I indulged in my foolishness.
但見玉峰橫太白	Now I see the jade peaks stretching across Mount Taibai;
便從鳥道絕峨眉	Then, following the bird route, I pass over Mount Emei.
秋風與作烟雲意	Autumn wind brings forth mist and cloud;
曉日令涵草木姿	Morning sun conjures up grasses and plants.
一點空明是何處	That dot of void with light coming through – where does it lead?
老人真欲住仇池	Now this old man really wants to live in Qiuchi. <sup>3</sup>

Du Fu’s 杜甫 [712–770] couplet cited in Su Shi’s preface is from the fourteenth poem in the *Miscellaneous Poems from Qinzhou* [*Qinzhou zashi* 秦州雜詩]:

萬古仇池穴	Ageless is the cave of Qiuchi,
潛通小有天	That connects underground to the Lesser Heaven.
神魚人不見	No one sees the divine fish,

2 To avoid confusion with 英州, I romanize 潁州 as Yingzhou. Su Shi’s half-year stint as prefect of Yingzhou started in the intercalary eighth month of 1091.

3 Su Shi 蘇軾, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu* 蘇軾全集校注 [*Collations and Annotations on the Complete Works of Su Shi*], annot. Zhang Zhilie 張志烈, Ma Defu 馬德富, and Zhou Yukai 周裕鐸 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2010), 6:35.3971–72.

福地語真傳  
近接西南境  
長懷十九泉  
何時一茅屋  
送老白雲邊

But it is veritably recorded as a Blessed Site.  
It sits close to the southwest border,  
Making me constantly think of its nineteen springs.  
When will I, in a thatched cottage,  
Spend my old days on the edge of the white clouds?<sup>4</sup>

Located southwest of Xihe 西和 County in present-day Gansu, Mount Qiuchi 仇池 derived its name from a lake [*chi* 池] on its summit. During his short stay in Qinzhou 秦州 in 759, Du Fu never visited Qiuchi, which was located about two hundred *li* southwest. According to Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲 [1638–1717], the first six lines of Du's poem are paraphrases of various accounts [*ji* 記] of Qiuchi.<sup>5</sup> However, no record is found before Du about the cave of Qiuchi connecting to the Lesser Heaven, also known as the Lesser Heaven of Pure Vacuity [*Xiaoyou qingxu zhitian* 小有清虛之天] in Daoist mythology.<sup>6</sup> Later sources only reference Du as the authority on this connection,<sup>7</sup> in addition to the designation of Qiuchi as a Blessed Site.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, Du's poem established two major themes that predominate in Su Shi's writings. The first is that Qiuchi is a Daoist transcendent realm, and the second is that it is a place to which to retreat in old age.

Su Shi's poem starts with a play between opposites, namely, dreaming [*meng* 夢] versus awakening [*jue* 覺], and reality [*shi* 是] versus falsehood [*fei* 非]. In making devotional objects out of the rocks, he simultaneously mocks and flaunts his "foolishness" [*chi* 癡]. The second couplet is adapted from one of Li Bai's 李白 [701–762] in "The Road to Shu Is Hard [*Shudao nan* 蜀道難]": "To the west, over Mount Taibai, there is a bird route, / Whereby one can cut across to the summit of Mount Emei."<sup>9</sup> Su's adaptation adds depth and complexity.

4 Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 et al., coll., *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 [Complete Poetry of the Tang Dynasty] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 225.2419.

5 Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲, *Du shi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳註 [Detailed Annotations on Poems of Du Fu] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 7.584.

6 This is the cave of Mount Wangwu 王屋 (in present-day Henan), one of the Ten Great Grotto-Heavens [*shida dongtian* 十大洞天]. See Zhang Junfang 張君房, *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 [Cloudy Satchel with Seven Bamboo Markers], ed. Li Yongsheng 李永晟 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 27.609.

7 See, e.g., Ge Lifang 葛立方, "Yunyu yangqiu 韻語陽秋 [Comments on Poetry]," in *Lidai shihua* 歷代詩話 [Remarks on Poetry from Various Dynasties], comp. He Wenhuan 何文煥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 13.583; Rolf A. Stein, *World in Miniature: Container Gardens and Dwellings in Far Eastern Religious Thought*, trans. Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

8 Qiuchi does not belong in the Seventy-two Blessed Sites in Zhang, *Yunji qiqian*, 27.618–31. For a narrative collection of traditional sources on Qiuchi, see Li Zuhuan 李祖桓, *Qiuchiguo zhi* 仇池國志 [Records of the Kingdom of Qiuchi] (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1986).

9 可以橫絕峨眉巔，西當太白有鳥道。Peng Dingqiu, *Quan Tang shi*, 162.1681.

First, in terms of colors, Emei (Moth Brows – a cliché metaphor for women's eyebrows painted in dark green) matches the green rock presented to him by Cheng Zhiyuan, while Taibai [Supreme White] finds its counterpart in the white rock. Second, Emei and Taibai are both prominent Daoist mountains. Their juxtaposition in Su's poem reinforces the motif already introduced in Du Fu's couplet. Finally, the two mountains hold special personal significance for Su. Taibai is located in Fengxiang 鳳翔 (in present-day Shaanxi), where Su started his official career in the twelfth month of 1061. Emei, however, represents his native land of Shu, to which he constantly expressed his desire to return. Although Su was from Meishan 眉山 and never visited the nearby Emei, he frequently referred to Emei as his home.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Taibai and Emei may have respectively represented service to the government and retreat to private life. Of the two rocks, Su clearly preferred the green one. The last couplet of the poem focuses on the cave, which appears to represent a Daoist grotto heaven such as Qiuchi. It was in this rock that Su found the embodiment or emblem of what Qiuchi meant in his dream. Indeed, it was this rock that Su named Qiuchi.<sup>11</sup>

In the preface to "Twin Rocks," Su Shi presented the dream interpretation as a purely private experience. Upon waking, he immediately comprehended the dream's significance. A different account is found in Su's note in "Matching Tao's 'Reading *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*' [*He Tao Du Shanhai jing* 和陶讀《山海經》],"<sup>12</sup> written in 1095, during his exile to Huizhou 惠州. According to that account, he was at first puzzled by the dream: Qiuchi was the ancient site of Wudu 武都 of the Di 氐 people, under the protection of Yang Nandang 楊難當.<sup>13</sup> "How could I live there?" Su wondered. The next day, when he asked his guests about the dream, Zhao Lingzhi 趙令時 [1061–1134], notary of the administrative assistant [*qianpan* 簽判] of Yingzhou 潁州 at the time, told him about Qiuchi being a blessed site and quoted from Du Fu's poem. In other words, it was Zhao who connected Su's dream to Du Fu's description of Qiuchi. As we shall see, at least one more person contributed to the interpretation of Su's dream. Su continued to obsess over his dream and repeatedly refers to it in his writings.<sup>14</sup>

10 On Emei in Su Shi's writings, see James M. Hargett, *Stairway to Heaven: A Journey to the Summit of Mount Emei* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 42–43.

11 See Shan Guoqiang 單國強, *Gu shuhua shi lunji* 古書畫史論集 [*Essays on Ancient Calligraphy and Paintings*] (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2001), 413; Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 8:45.5322n9.

12 Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 7:39.4644.

13 Yang Nandang ruled the Later Qiuchi Kingdom of Di ethnicity from 429 to 442.

14 For discussions, see Curtis Dean Smith, "The Dream of Ch'ou-ch'ih: Su Shih's Awakening," *Hanxue yanjiu* 18, no. 1 (2000); Ronald C. Egan, *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thoughts and Pursuits in Song Dynasty China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 221–24.

## 2 The Journey of the Rock from the Capital to the Far South

It is generally assumed that Su Shi wrote “Twin Rocks” in Yangzhou. There are, however, two reasons for believing that it might have been composed after he returned to the capital in the ninth month of 1092. First, the poem makes no mention of Cheng Zhiyuan. This oversight would have been perceived as rude if Cheng had been around when Su composed the poem. Second, and more important, it appears that the “colleagues and friends” whom Su meant to amuse were those in the capital, rather than those in Yangzhou, as evidenced in his “Upon Being Presented with the Poems Matching ‘Qiuchi’ [*Jian he Qiuchi* 見和仇池],” one of the “Four Poems Matching the Rhyme Words of the Poems by Qian Mufu, Jiang Yingshu, and Wang Zhongzhi [*Ciyun fenghe Qian Mufu, Jiang Yingshu, Wang Zhongzhi shi sishou* 次韻奉和錢穆父、蔣穎叔、王仲至詩四首].”<sup>15</sup> As the poem uses the same rhyme words as “Twin Rocks,” it may be inferred that the poems by Qian Xie 錢協 (*zi* Mufu, 1043–1097), Jiang Zhiqi 蔣之奇 (*zi* Yingshu, 1031–1104), and Wang Qinchen 王欽臣 (*zi* Zhongzhi, 1034–1101) used the same format in response to “Twin Rocks.”<sup>16</sup>

During Su Shi’s one-year stay in the capital, he frequently socialized with Qian Xie, Jiang Zhiqi, and Wang Qinchen. They were known as the Four Friends of Yuanyou [*yuanyou siyou* 元祐四友]. Su showed them some, if not all, of the poems he had composed in Yangzhou. He also told them about his dream. In response, Wang Qinchen mentioned his personal experience with Qiuchi during an official mission: “There one can escape the world, just like in Peach Blossom Spring.”<sup>17</sup> As we shall see, the idea of Qiuchi as a utopia figures prominently in Su’s poems to Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 [ca. 365–427] after he was exiled to Huizhou.

The exchanges among the foursome must have created a stir in the high society of the capital. Wang Shen 王詵 (*zi* Jinqing 晉卿, ca. 1048–ca. 1103), an imperial in-law and legendary connoisseur of the finer things in life, heard

15 Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 6:36.4108–9.

16 At least one of the four poems matched by the three friends, “Jiuyue shiwuri guanyue tingqin Xihu shi zuoke 九月十五日，觀月聽琴西湖示坐客 [Composed on the Fifteenth Day of the Ninth Month, Shown to Guests Who Were Seated While We Watched the Moon and Listened to the Zither at West Lake],” *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 6:34.3740, was written in 1091, when Su Shi was in Yingzhou. This indicates that the three friends also composed poems to match the rhyme words of poems composed by Su Shi before he arrived at the capital. In other words, “Twin Rocks” could have been written in Yangzhou.

17 可以避世，如桃源也。Su Shi, preface to “He Tao ‘Taohua yuan’ 和陶桃花源 [Matching Tao’s ‘Peach Blossom Spring’],” in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 7:40.4751. For a translation and discussion of the preface, see Zhiyi Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity: The Aesthetics and Ethics of Su Shi (1037–1101) in Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 148–51.

about it and sent a poem asking to borrow the rock for viewing.<sup>18</sup> The request resulted in three long response poems by Su Shi.<sup>19</sup> The first is titled “The Qiuchi Rock That I Have Kept Is the Rarest Treasure of All Times. In a Short Poem, Wang Jinqing Tried to Borrow It for Viewing. His Intention Is to Seize It from Me. I Would Not Dare to Refuse to Lend Him the Rock, but I Send Him This Poem First [*Pu suocang Qiuchi shi xidai zhi bao ye Wang Jinqing yi xiaoshi jie-guan yi zaiyu duo pu bugan bujie ran yi cishi xianzhi* 僕所藏仇池石希代之寶也王晉卿以小詩借觀，意在於奪。僕不敢不借，然以此詩先之]”:

海石來珠宮	The ocean rock comes from the dragon's palace;
秀色如蛾綠	Its charming color recalls the green brow-pigment.
坡陀尺寸間	Between the inches of its undulation,
宛轉陵巒足	There is enough space for hills and peaks to curve.
連娟二華頂	Twisting and slender: the peaks of the Two Huas; <sup>20</sup>
空洞三茅腹	Vacuous and hollow: the belly of the Three Maos. <sup>21</sup>
初疑仇池化	At first I thought it was a transformation of Qiuchi;
又恐瀛洲蹙	Then I felt it was a condensation of Yingzhou. <sup>22</sup>
殷勤嶠南使	It was kind of the Commissioner of Qiaonan,
餽餉淮東牧	To present it to the Prefect of Huaidong. <sup>23</sup>

18 Wang Shen married the second daughter of Emperor Yingzong 英宗 [r. 1064–1067], sister of the reigning Emperor Shenzong 神宗 [r. 1067–1085].

19 The three poems are translated and discussed in my *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects on Tang-Song Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard Asia Center, 2003), 179–95. They are retranslated here with substantial revisions. The discussion draws largely on my original discussion in the book. The three poems are also discussed in Egan, *Problem of Beauty*, 218–36; Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity*, 112–16. Egan approaches the exchange from the perspective of art collecting and its discontents in the Northern Song. Yang explores how Su legitimizes his passion for objects while granting them a degree of agency.

20 The Two Huas are Mount Taihua 太華 and Mount Shaohua 少華 (in present-day Shaanxi).

21 The Three Maos here refers to Mount Gouqu 句曲 (in present-day Jiangsu). The name derives from Lord Mao 茅君, a Daoist transcendent who resided in the mountain. He was joined by his two brothers who abandoned their official career and families. See Ge Hong 葛洪, *Shenxian zhuan jiaoshi* 神仙傳校釋 [*Annotations on the Lives of Immortals*], ed. Hu Shouwei 胡守為 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), 5.182–84.

22 Yingzhou is one of the five fabulous mountain islands in the eastern ocean. See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Liezi jishi* 列子集釋 [*Collected Explanations on the Liezi*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 5.151–52. In Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 [*Records of the Grand Historian*], comm. Pei Yin 裴駟, Sima Zhen 司馬貞, and Zhang Shoujie 張守節 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 6.247, it is listed as one of the three immortal islands in the ocean.

23 Qiaonan refers to Lingnan 嶺南. The commissioner is Cheng Zhiyuan. Huaidong refers to the Eastern Circuit of Huainan 淮南東路. Its seat was Yangzhou, of which Su Shi was the prefect.

得之喜無寐  
與汝交不瀆  
盛以高麗盆  
藉以文登玉  
幽光先五夜

冷氣壓三伏  
老人生如寄  
茅舍久未卜

一夫幸可致  
千里常相逐  
風流貴公子  
竄謫武當谷  
見山應已厭  
何事奪所欲  
欲留嗟趙弱  
寧許負秦曲

Getting it made me so happy that I couldn't fall asleep;  
In dealing with it, I wouldn't be arrogant.<sup>24</sup>  
In a basin from Koguryŏ I placed it,  
Strewing around its base jade pebbles from Wendeng.<sup>25</sup>  
Its glimmering light resembles that preceding the  
night's fifth watch;<sup>26</sup>  
Its chilly ether suppresses the midsummer's heat.  
My life as an old man is like a temporary lodging;  
For a long time I have been unable to decide on a  
cottage.  
Fortunately, just one man was able to bring it to me;  
A thousand miles it has always followed me.  
You, a gallant noble lord,  
Once scurried in banishment to the valley of Wudang.  
You must tire of the sight of mountains now –  
Why would you want to seize what I desire?  
I want to keep it but sigh over being weak like Zhao;  
It would be better to agree and let Qin shoulder the  
burden of being wrong.<sup>27</sup>

24 See Wang Bi 王弼, annot., Kong Yingda 孔穎達, coll., "Zhouyi zhengyi 周易正義 [The Correct Meaning of the Book of Changes with Subcommentary]," in *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 [Annotations and Commentaries on the Thirteen Classics], ed. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 8.362–63: "A gentleman does not cringe in dealing with his superiors or show contempt in dealing with his inferiors." [君子上交不諂，下交不瀆。]

25 Su Shi collected hundreds of those pebbles in 1085, during his short stay in Wendeng (in present-day Shandong) for less than a month. See Su Shi, "Wendeng Penglaige xia shibi qianzhang wei hailang suo zhan shi you suilie taosa sui jiu jie yuanshu ke'ai turen wei ci danziwo ye qu shubaimei yi yang shichangpu qie zuoshi yi Chuicatang laoren 文登蓬萊閣下，石壁千丈，為海浪所戰，時有碎裂，淘灑歲久，皆圓熟可愛，土人謂此彈子渦也。取數百枚，以養石菖蒲，且作詩遺垂慈堂老人 [Below the Penglai Pavilion of Wendeng, There Were Stone Cliffs of a Thousand Fathoms. Assaulted by the Ocean Waves, Chips Broke Off. After Being Washed for Ages, They Became Charmingly Round and Smooth. Locals Called Them Pellet Nests. I Collected Hundreds of Them to Spread around My Calamus. I Also Wrote a Poem to Present to the Old Man of Extending Charity Hall]," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 5:31.345.

26 The fifth is the last of the five watches of the night.

27 After King Huiwen 惠文 [r. 299–266 BCE] of Zhao obtained the famous He's jade disk [*Heshi bi* 和氏璧], King Zhao 昭 [r. 306–251 BCE] of Qin proposed exchanging the jade disk of He for fifteen of Qin's cities. Lin Xiangru 藺相如 [fl. 279 BCE], a minister in Zhao, advised King Huiwen to agree to the proposal because "Qin is strong while Zhao is weak." When King Huiwen asked what if Qin took the jade disk without giving the cities, Lin responded that Zhao would be wrong to refuse Qin's proposal and that Qin would be wrong not to give Zhao the cities in return. Between the two options, "it would be better to



傳觀慎勿許      Please don't grant any request to pass it on for viewing;  
間道歸應速      And be quick to return it via a shortcut.<sup>28</sup>

Su Shi acutely observes that Wang Shen's "intention" in "borrowing" the rock was to "seize" it. His suspicion was not unfounded, for Wang was known to be an unscrupulous borrower.<sup>29</sup> Su's acquisition of the rock as the result of voluntary gift giving contrasts with Wang's violent intention to "seize" it from him. The hyperbole about the rock as "the rarest treasure of all times" foreshadows Su's reluctance to part with it and sets the stage for the dramatic conflict between two rock fanciers. Su describes himself as the weaker party and reinforces the idea of his weakness by speaking of himself as an "old man" vis-à-vis Wang as a "noble lord." This apparent imbalance of power seems to foreshadow Su's eventual acceding to Wang's request. At the same time, however, the allusion to intrigue between Qin and Zhao hints at a different outcome, with the weaker triumphing over the stronger.

Su Shi presents his quarrel with Wang Shen as a clash of desires. Paradoxically, the legitimacy of his desire is based on his possession of a miniature mountain against Wang's erstwhile grand, although only visual, possession of Mount Wudang. The reference to Wang's exile to Junzhou 均州 (where Mount Wudang sits) is somewhat uncanny, for it was his financial, social, artistic, and literary ties with Su that led to Wang's exile following the Crow Terrace Poetry Trial [*Wutai shi'an* 烏臺詩案].<sup>30</sup> At the end of the poem, Su mentions two phrases related to lending: no further circulation and an expeditious return. This miserly gesture is a far cry from his usual magniloquence about transcending attachment to physical objects. It also significantly differs from the positions and postures he takes in the next two poems.

Su Shi's poem to Wang Shen was also sent to Qian Xie, Wang Qinchun, and Jiang Zhiqi. Although none of their response poems are extant, the gist of their arguments is recorded in the extremely lengthy title of Su Shi's second poem, "Wang Jinqing Showed Me His Poem, Intending to Seize My Ocean Rock. Qian Mufu, Wang Zhongzhi, and Jiang Yingshu All Wrote Poems in the Same Rhyme

agree and let Qin shoulder the burden of being wrong." See Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 81.2440. For a detailed discussion of the story in connection with Lu Chen's 盧諶 [ca. 285–ca. 351] "Langu 覽古 [Poem on Surveying the Ancient History]"; see Yue Zhang, *Lore and Verse: Poems on History in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York, 2022), 126–31.

28 Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 6:36.4123–24.

29 See Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, 183–84.

30 For Wang Shen's involvement in the case, see Charles Hartman, "Poetry and Politics in 1079: The Crow Terrace Poetry Case of Su Shih," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 12 (1990): 20. For Su Shi's own reference to his implicating Wang Shen, see Su Shi, "Ti Wang Jinqing shi hou 題王晉卿詩後 [Postscript to Wang Jinqing's Poems]," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 19:68.7645.



Scheme, Lords Mu and Zhi Thought That I Should Not Agree. Only Yingshu Thought Otherwise. Today Yingshu Paid Me a Visit, and upon Seeing for Himself the Marvel of the Rock, Regretted What He Had Said. But I Thought Jinqing Was Not the Kind of Person Whose Request Could Be Denied for Long. I Would Give the Rock to Him If He Would Exchange for It a Painting of Two Loose Horses by Han Gan. Therefore, I Wrote Another Poem with the Same Rhyme Words as the Previous One [*Wang Jinqing shi shi yu duo haishi Qian Mufu Wang Zhongzhi Jiang Yingshu jie ciyun Mu Zhi ergong yiwei bu kexu du Yingshu buran jinri Yingshu jianfang qindu cishi zhimiao suihui qianyu pu yiwei Jinqing qike zhongbi buyuzhe ru neng yi Han Gan er sanma yizhi zhe gai kexu ye fuci qianyun* 王晉卿示詩，欲奪海石，錢穆父、王仲至、蔣穎叔皆次韻。穆、至二公以爲不可許，獨穎叔不然。今日穎叔見訪，親睹此石之妙，遂悔前語。僕以爲晉卿豈可終閉不予者，若能以韓幹二散馬易之者，蓋可許也。復次前韻]”:

相如有家山	Xiangru had a mountain at home,
縹緲在眉綠	Distant and hazy, on the green brows.
誰云千里遠	Who said it is a thousand miles away?
寄此一顰足	One knitting of the brows moved it here.
平生錦繡腸	For his whole life he had a heart for intricate things,
早歲藜莧腹	But in his early years there were but wild vegetables in his belly.
從教四壁空	He allowed his walls to go empty on all sides,
未遣兩峰蹙	But would not let go of the knitted peak-like brows.
吾今況衰病	Now, as I get weaker and more sickly,
義不忘樵牧	I won't forget the principles of rustic life.
逝將仇池石	Determined I am to take the Qiuchi rock,
歸泝岷山瀆	To return upstream to the river by Min Mountain.
守子不貪寶	Not greedy of other treasures, I only guard you,
完我無瑕玉	To keep intact my impeccable jade. <sup>31</sup>
故人詩相戒	Two old friends admonished me in their poems;
妙語予所伏	I admired their marvelous words.
一篇獨異論	Another one argued differently,
三占從兩卜	But I followed the guidance of two divinations out of three.
君家畫可數	In your home there are numerous paintings,
天驥紛相逐	On which herds of heavenly steeds chase one other.
風駿掠原野	Their windy bristles sweep across the plains and fields;

31 Lin Xiangru undertook the mission to Qin with the jade disk and was able to bring it back intact after Qin renegaded on the deal of exchange, see Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 81.2440–41.

電尾捎澗谷	Their lightning tails whisk over valleys and vales.
君如許相易	If you should be willing to exchange,
是亦我所欲	That would also be what I desire.
今朝安西守	Today the Commander of Anxi
來聽陽關曲	Came to listen to the parting song "The Yang Pass." <sup>32</sup>
勸我留此峰	He advised me to keep these peaks,
他日來不速	"The day of their return wouldn't be too soon." <sup>33</sup>

The poem starts with an allusion to the story of Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 [179–118 BCE] and his wife Zhuo Wenjun 卓文君 [175–121 BCE]: "Wenjun had a delicate appearance. The color of her brows was like that of mountains viewed from afar."<sup>34</sup> After the couple eloped, they were in such dire straits that "they had nothing in their house but bare walls on all four sides."<sup>35</sup> As the images of rock, mountain, and belle become mutually referential, a homology emerges: the rock is to Su Shi what Zhuo Wenjun was to Sima Xiangru. However, the husband-wife metaphor soon turns out to be faulty. Despite his forceful declaration to "keep intact my impeccable jade," Su proves himself only too ready to deal, as he makes a more practical counteroffer of exchanging the rock for a painting.

It is possible that Su Shi was making a genuine exchange proposition as the exchange of aesthetic artifacts was common in the collecting culture of the Northern Song [960–1127]. Trading such artifacts was a more acceptable and elegant form of transaction than buying them with, or selling them for, money. Wang Shen had once exchanged a horse painting by Han Gan 韓幹 [706–783] for a piece of calligraphy in Mi Fu's 米芾 [1051–1107] collection.<sup>36</sup> Su's counterproposal could also have been a tactic to frustrate Wang, an avid collector of paintings. In his seemingly reasonable proposition of a painting-rock

32 In the tenth month of 1092, Jiang Zhiqi was appointed prefect of Xizhou 熙州 (the old headquarters of Anxi Protectorate 安西都護府 in the Tang). See Li Tao 李燾, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 [Extensive Compilation of Materials for Continuation of Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979–1995), 487.11389.

33 Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 6:36.4132–33.

34 文君姣好，眉色如望遠山。Liu Xin 劉歆, *Xijing zaji jiaozhu* 西京雜記校注 [Collations and Annotations on Miscellanies of the Western Capital], comp. Ge Hong 葛洪, coll. Xiang Xinyang 向新陽 and Liu Keren 劉克任 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), 2.82.

35 家居徒四壁立。Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 117.3000.

36 Mi Fu 米芾, "Huashi 畫史 [History of Paintings]," in *Quan Song biji* 全宋筆記 [Complete Brush Notes of the Song Dynasty], ed. Zhu Yian 朱易安, Fu Xuancong 傅玄琮 et al. (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2006), 2:4.281.

exchange, Su was furtively giving Wang a dose of his own medicine. His message is subtle but clear: Do not take from me what you would not give away yourself. Interestingly enough, in a commemorative essay about Wang's collection of paintings and calligraphies, written some sixteen years earlier, in 1077, Su made one of his best-known statements about the dangers associated with the possessiveness of the collector and the need to cultivate the ability to enjoy aesthetic objects without being engrossed in or obsessed with them.<sup>37</sup> In the present situation, however, both Su and Wang seem to be mired in the sin of possessiveness against which Su had so eloquently warned.

Su Shi's proposal of trading his rock for a horse painting by Han Gan may have unwittingly brought up the traumatic memory of Wang Shen's exile to Wudang, already indirectly mentioned in Su's first poem. In 1069, during a brief visit to the capital, Su was invited by Wang to a meeting (their first one) outside the city. (The fact that the meeting took place outside the capital reflects the politically charged atmosphere at the time.) The next day, Wang sent Su a painting of twelve horses by Han Gan (in six scrolls) and asked him to write a colophon. During the Crow Terrace Poetry Trial, Su's verse colophon was cited as evidence of his flaunting his talent and attacking those in power for ignoring it.<sup>38</sup>

If Su Shi's counteroffer was meant as a ploy, then the ruse certainly worked. The proposition was flatly rejected by Wang Shen, as clearly indicated in the title of Su's third poem, "I Wanted to Exchange My Rock for a Painting. Jinqing Blamed Me for That. Mufu Wanted to Take Both the Rock and the Painting. Yingshu Wanted to Burn the Painting and Break the Rock. Therefore, I Wrote a Poem with the Same Rhyme Words to Explain the Meaning of My Previous Two Poems [*Shi yu yi shi yi hua Jinqing nanzhi Mufu yu jianqu erwu Yingshu yu fenhua suishi nai fuci qianyun bing jie ershi zhi yi* 軾欲以石易畫晉卿難之穆父欲兼取二物穎叔欲焚畫碎石乃復次前韻並解二詩之意]":

春冰無真堅	Ice in spring does not have true firmness;
霜葉失故綠	Leaves in frost lose their original green.

37 Su Shi, "Baohuitang ji 寶繪堂記 [An Account of Hall of Treasured Paintings]," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 11:11.1122–23.

38 Peng Jiuwan 朋九萬, "Dongpo Wutai shian 東坡烏臺詩案 [Crow Terrace Poetry Case of Dongpo]," in *Su Shi ziliao huibian* 蘇軾資料彙編 [*Compendium of Materials on Su Shi*], comp. Sichuan daxue Zhongwenxi Tang-Song wenxue yanjiushi 四川大學中文系唐宋文學研究室 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), 587. For Su Shi's colophon, see Su Shi, "Shu Han Gan muma tu 書韓幹《牧馬圖》 [Superscription on Han Gan's *Painting of Pasturing Horses*]," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 3:15.1466–67.

鵲疑鵬萬里      The quail doubts that Peng flies ten thousand miles;<sup>39</sup>  
 蛇笑夔一足      The centipede laughs at Kui for having only one foot.<sup>40</sup>  
 二豪爭攘袂      As two valiants roll up their sleeves in argument,  
 先生一捧腹      One elderly bursts his sides with laughter.  
 明鏡既無台      If the bright mirror has no pedestal,<sup>41</sup>  
 淨瓶何用蹙      Why kick over the pitcher for handwashing?<sup>42</sup>  
 盆山不可隱      A mountain in a basin cannot be a hermitage;  
 畫馬無由牧      Horses in a painting cannot be herded.  
 聊將置庭宇      I may just as well place it in my courtyard –  
 何必棄溝瀆      Why abandon it to ditches and gutters?  
 焚寶真愛寶      Burning the treasure shows your true love for the  
                                  treasure;  
 碎玉未忘玉      Breaking the jade shows you cannot forget about the  
                                  jade.  
 久知公子賢      I have long known you to be wise;  
 出語耆年伏      In my old age, I admire what you uttered.  
 欲觀轉物妙      Desirous to observe the miracle of turning objects  
                                  round,  
 故以求馬卜      I tried to find it by asking for the horses.  
 維摩既復捨      Vimalakīrti let them go after receiving them,  
 天女還相逐      Though the heavenly maidens wanted to stay.  
 授之無盡燈      He taught them about the Inexhaustible Lamp,

39 The Peng bird can soar 90,000 miles high. The quail, content with flying up and down within a small space, laughs at Peng. See Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, "Xiaoyao you 逍遙遊 [Roaming at Ease]," in *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 [Collected Annotations on the Zhuangzi], comp. Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 1A.14.

40 For the dialogue between Kui 夔 (a one-footed animal) and Xian 蜥 (a worm with a myriad of feet), see Guo Qingfan, "Qiushui 秋水 [Autumn Floods]," in *Zhuangzi jishi*, 6B.592–93.

41 This is a rewriting of a line in a famous gatha by Huineng 慧能 [638–713]. The idea is that enlightenment is a matter of seeing or realizing one's true nature, which is pure and clear in itself. See Huineng 慧能, *Tanjing jiaoshi* 壇經校釋 [Collations and Annotations on the Platform Sūtra], coll. and trans. Guo Peng 郭朋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 8.18.

42 When Huaihai 懷海 [720–814] was about to send Lingyou 靈祐 [771–853] to be the abbot at Mount Wei 嵩, Hualin 華林 was upset because he considered himself better qualified. Huaihai said that whichever of them could make an apt response to his question would be given the job. Pointing at a pitcher for hand washing, Huaihai asked what they would call it if they were not allowed to call it a "pitcher for hand washing." Hualin would call it a "stump"; Lingyou kicked the pitcher over without saying a word. See Daoyuan 道原, *Jingde chuandeng lu yizhu* 景德傳燈錄譯注 [Translations and Annotations on the Records of the Transmission of the Lamp during the Jingde Era], trans. and annot. Gu Hongyi 顧宏義 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2010), 9.556.

照此久幽谷	Shedding light on this eternal dark valley.
定心無一物	A serene mind does not fixate on a single object;
法樂勝五欲	The delight in the Dharma overcomes the Five Desires. <sup>43</sup>
三峨吾鄉里	Three Es are my homeland; <sup>44</sup>
萬馬君部曲	Ten thousand horses are under your command.
臥雲行歸休	In my retiring place I will sleep among the clouds,
破賊見神速	As you break the enemy with divine swiftness. <sup>45</sup>

In this third and final poem, Su Shi retreats as a participant in the ongoing wrangling and metamorphoses into an outside commentator, as his attitude toward or, rather, rhetoric about the rock waxes eminently philosophical. In the first poem, he shows the typical mindset of a collector as he defines the rock as the object of his intense desire. Unwilling to part with his treasure and anxious about its safe and timely return, he carefully negotiates the lending terms with Wang Shen. In the second poem, the possessive collector grows more sensible with the proposal of an exchange. In the third poem, the savvy dealer of aesthetic artifacts puts on the mask of a transcendental poet-philosopher, who, in glossing over his previous positions, dazzles his readers with illuminating banalities about detaching one's mind from physical things.

Entrenched in a series of allusions to Buddhist scriptures and hagiographies, Su Shi's new position is articulated through the rhetoric of negation, of which the most prominent component is the repeated use of the word "nothing" or "nothingness" [*wu* 無] (in lines 7, 10, and 23). In the opposition between the real and the simulacrum, the rock and the painting lose their value as a

43 Bodhisattva Ruler of the World [*chishi* 持世] was once approached by the devil Papiyas 魔波旬 in the guise of the god, accompanied by twelve thousand heavenly maidens. The devil offered the maidens to the bodhisattva, who refused. Vimalakīrti told the devil he would accept the maidens. After the maidens were enlightened, Vimalakīrti told them that they should take delight in the Dharma and reject the pleasures of the Five Desires (i.e., those aroused by the five senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch). When the devil asked for the maidens to be returned to him, Vimalakīrti agreed. The maidens asked how they could stay in the devil's palace. In response, Vimalakīrti told them to learn about the Dharma-gate [*famen* 法門] called the Inexhaustible Lamp. See Xu Wenming 徐文明, trans. and annot., *Weimojie jing yizhu* 維摩詰經譯注 [*Translations and Annotations on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 4.67.

44 Mount Emei is called Three Es because of its three peaks: Da E 大峨 [Big E], Zhong E 中峨 [Middle E], and Xiao E 小峨 [Little E].

45 Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 6:36.4137. In a note to the last line, Su writes that Wang Shen is the descendent of a general. Wang's ancestor Wang Quanbin 王全斌 [908–976] was a famous general in the early Song. His grandfather Wang Kai 王凱 [996–1061] was also an accomplished general.

miniature mountain and a pictorial representation of real horses, respectively. Su envisions a return to the “real” with him going back to Emei in his homeland and Wang Shen commanding “ten thousand horses” to break the enemy.

In the true Buddhist sense, however, even real mountains and real horses belong to the illusory realm. Indeed, Su Shi’s philosophical negation is more about the folly of human desires [*yu* 慾] than the artificiality of physical objects. The metamorphosis of Su’s poetic persona correlates closely with the different contexts in which *yu* appears in line 30 of each poem. In the first poem, his reluctance to accede to Wang Shen’s request is rooted in his own intense desire to maintain possession of the rock; in the second, his desire is counteracted by the hard-nosed savvy of an art dealer and is reoriented to the more pragmatic realm of material exchange; in the third, the spell of desire is broken, as Su becomes a veritable Buddhist adept. To maintain the philosophical high ground where he has repositioned himself, Su redefines his proposal of a rock-painting exchange as an exercise in observing “the miracle of turning objects around.” The allusion here is to a sermon by Buddha: all living beings “lose themselves in the pursuit of objects” [*miji weiwu* 迷己為物] as they “are turned around by objects” [*weiwu suozhuan* 為物所轉]; however, they can be like the Tathāgata if they can “turn the objects around” [*zhuanwu* 轉物].<sup>46</sup> At the same time, as he engages in the high-flown rhetoric of transcending “objects,” Su leaves little doubt that he will keep his rock after all.

Qian Xie, Wang Qinchen, and Jiang Zhiqi were not the only contemporaries involved in the wrangle between Su Shi and Wang Shen. Qin Guan 秦觀 [1049–1100] also joined the fray with “Matching Zizhan’s ‘Twin Rocks’ [*He Zizhan ‘Shuangshi’* 和子瞻雙石],” which uses the same rhyme words as Su Shi’s three poems:

天鑱海濱石	Heaven carved the oceanside rock,
鬱若龜毛綠	Luxuriant, like a green-shelled turtle.
信為小仇池	Truly a miniature Qiuchi,
氣象宛然足	With all of the mists and shapes.
連巖下空洞	Vacuous holes under the overlapping cliffs,
鼎張彭亨腹	The belly of a tripod vessel.
雙峰照清漣	Twin peaks reflected in clear ripples,
春眉鏡中蹙	Voluptuous brows knitted in the mirror.

46 Lai Yonghai 賴永海 and Yang Weizhong 楊維中, annot. and trans., *Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經 [*Sūraṅgama Sūtra*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), 2:54.



疑經女媧鍊  
 或入金華牧  
 鑪熏充雲氣  
 研滴當川瀆  
 尤物足移人  
 不必珠與玉  
 道旁初無異  
 漢將疑虎伏  
 支機亦何據  
 但出君平卜  
 奇礪入華林  
 傾都自追逐  
 我願作陳那  
 令吼震山谷

It appears to be forged by Nüwa;<sup>47</sup>  
 Or come from the herd of Jinhua.<sup>48</sup>  
 A burning incense burner emits clouds and mists;  
 Drops on inkstone form valleys and ditches.  
 An extraordinary thing can stir a person;<sup>49</sup>  
 It does not have to be pearl or jade.  
 There was nothing odd about what lay by the roadside,  
 But the Han general thought it was a crouching tiger.<sup>50</sup>  
 What was the story about the support of the loom?  
 It was only told by Junping.<sup>51</sup>  
 When the fantastic rock was moved to Hualin Park,  
 The entire capital followed along with it.<sup>52</sup>  
 I wish to become Dignāga,  
 With a roar that shakes hills and vales.<sup>53</sup>

- 47 In primordial times, the sky once broke so that there was a deluge caused by incessant rain. Nüwa forged five-colored rocks to mend the sky. See Liu Wendian 劉文典, *Huainan honglie jijie* 淮南鴻烈集解 [Collected Annotations on the Great Elucidation by Prince of Huainan], coll. Feng Yi 馮逸 and Qiao Hua 喬華 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 6.206–7.
- 48 Huang Chuping 皇初平 [b. 328], a native of Jinhua, was a shepherd turned Daoist master who could turn white rocks into sheep. See Ge Hong, *Shenxian zhuan jiaoshi*, 2.41.
- 49 The term *youwu* 尤物 originally refers to a beautiful woman who can stir men's dangerous passions. See “Zhaogong 昭公 [The Duke of Zhao],” in Hong Liangji 洪亮吉, *Chunqiu zuozhuan gu* 春秋左傳詁 [A Glossing of the Zuo Commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals], annot. Li Jiemin 李解民 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 18.786. From the mid-Tang onward, the term was often used in reference to fantastic rocks. See Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, 115n57.
- 50 While hunting, the Han general Li Guang 李廣 [d. 119 BCE] saw a rock among tall grasses. Thinking it was a tiger, he shot it with such power that the arrowhead penetrated deep into the rock. See Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 [History of the Former Han Dynasty], annot. Yan Shigu 顏師古 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 54.2444.
- 51 A man once walked along a river and saw a woman washing silk. The woman told him it was the River of Heaven 天河 [Milky Way] and gave him a rock. Later, Yan Junping 嚴君平 [86–10 BCE] told him that the rock was used to support the loom of the Weaving Maid in heaven. See “Jilin 集林 [Forests of Collections],” in *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 [Compendium for Imperial Perusal Compiled during the Taiping [Xinguo] Era], ed. Li Fang 李昉 et al., annot. Xia Jianqin 夏劍欽 and Wang Xunzhai 王巽齋 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000), 118.75.
- 52 Dao Gai 到溉 [477–548] had a giant rock in his garden. On the day it was moved to the Hualin Park inside the palace compound, the entire population of the capital came out to watch. See Li Yanshou 李延壽, *Nanshi* 南史 [History of the Southern Dynasties] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978), 25.679.
- 53 Kapila 迦毗羅仙 was afraid of dying and asked Maheśvara 自在天 for advice. The latter told him that eating the amala 余甘子 of Mount Pinda [Pāṇḍava] 頻陀山 would prolong



一拳既在夢	That fist-sized rock was an apparition in your dream;
二駒空所欲	Those two foals were what you desired in vain. <sup>54</sup>
大士捨寶陀	The Great Being gave up Mount Baotuo; <sup>55</sup>
仙人遺句曲	The immortals left Mount Gouqu. <sup>56</sup>
惟詩落人間	Only your poems stay in the human realm,
如傳置郵速	Spreading faster than orders from posting stations. <sup>57</sup>

The title of Qin Guan's poem suggests that he was responding to Su Shi's "Twin Rocks," quoted earlier. However, the thematic orientation and the rhyme scheme of Qin's poem both make it clear that he was matching Su's three long poems discussed above. The opening four lines of Qin's poem offer further evidence that Qiuchi was the name given to Su's green rock. The following description consists of several allusions that could be used in any poem with a rock as its subject. In the last eight lines, Qin Guan, however feebly, tries to admonish Su against possessiveness and urges him to follow the examples of religious sages and worthies. Qin does not seem to be alluding to a specific source in describing Guanyin 觀音 [Avalokiteśvara] giving up his residence at Potala or the three Mao brothers [*san Maojun* 三茅君] leaving Gouqu 句曲. Qin's general point is that the truly enlightened do not attach themselves to physical things (not even their homes). Just as Guanyin left Mount Baotuo and the Mao brothers left Mount Gouqu, Su should give up his miniature mountain. According to Qin, Su has a more valuable and enduring asset: his poems.

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his life. After eating the amala, Kapila turned into a huge rock. When unenlightened people had questions, they would inscribe them on the rock. Bodhisattva Dignāga denounced this practice. After he wrote a gatha on the rock, the rock cracked. In another account, the rock sweated. Then, with a roar, it cracked into pieces that flew into the sky. For discussion of "roaring rock" [*houshi* 吼石], see Xiang Chu 項楚, "Du bian sui zha 讀變隨割 [Casual Notes Taken while Reading Transformation Texts]," in *Xin shiji Dunhuang xue lunji* 新世紀敦煌學論集 [*Collected Essays on Dunhuang Studies in a New Era*], ed. Xiang Chu 項楚 and Zheng Acai 鄭阿財 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2003), 546–48.

- 54 The "two foals" refers to Han Gan's painting of two loose horses in Wang Shen's possession for which Su Shi wanted to exchange his Qiuchi rock.
- 55 The Great Being [Mahāsattva] here refers to Guanyin 觀音 [Avalokiteśvara], said to reside at Mount Potala 寶陀巖.
- 56 The allusion is to the Mao brothers. See note 21.
- 57 Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo 北京大學古文獻研究所, ed., *Quan Song shi* 全宋詩 [*Complete Poetry of the Song Dynasty*] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1991–98), 1057.12087. The last line alludes to a saying attributed to Confucius in *Mencius* 3.1: "The spread of virtue is faster than setting up posting stations for orders to be delivered." [德之流行，速於置郵而傳命。]

Qin Guan's admonition apparently fell on deaf ears. Su Shi did not give up his rock but, rather, kept it with him for the rest of his life. About a year after the Wang Shen episode, Grand Empress Dowager Gao 高太后 [1032–1093] died. With Emperor Zhezong 哲宗 [r. 1085–1100] assuming control of the government, a political reversal was soon underway. In the fourth month of 1094, Su was banished to Yingzhou (which happened to be the origin of his Qiuchi rock). Two months later, he was further demoted by being sent to Huizhou. His journey of exile led him to Hukou 湖口 (in present-day Jiangxi). There, he came across a rock that immediately struck his fancy. He named it Mount Jiuhua in a Gourd Bottle [*huzhong Jiuhua* 壺中九華] and thought about buying it to provide a “mate” [*ou* 偶] for his Qiuchi rock; however, circumstances en route prevented him from clinching the deal.<sup>58</sup>

Su Shi arrived at Huizhou in the tenth month of 1094. While in Huizhou, he devised a plan to match all the poems by Tao Yuanming.<sup>59</sup> These matching poems have many references to Qiuchi. It should be clarified, however, that in these cases, Qiuchi stands for a place to which Su Shi hopes to return or claims to have returned, rather than the green rock given to him by Cheng Zhiyuan. Two significant aspects of Qiuchi should be mentioned here.<sup>60</sup> First, it represents a synthesis of the Daoist pursuit of longevity and a return to a simpler way of life, as seen in “Matching Tao’s ‘Reading *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*.’” In this poem, Su describes himself as totally acclimated to Huizhou. He then presents his exile as a blessing in disguise: “There is a road back to Qiuchi; / How could I have come to Luofu in vain?”<sup>61</sup> Mount Luofu 羅浮 (located in Huizhou) was where Ge Hong 葛洪 [283–363] attained immortality through Daoist cultivation and alchemy. Su’s exile to Huizhou is thus transformed into a return to the Daoist realm of the immortals. At the end of the poem, Su declares that he will hold the hands of Ge Hong and Tao Yuanming so that they may return together.

Second, Qiuchi is described as a superior utopia. In a note to “Matching Tao’s ‘Peach Blossom Spring’ [*He Tao ‘Taohua yuan’* 和陶桃花源],” Su Shi mentions Wang Qinchén’s comparison of Qiuchi to Peach Blossom Spring. He positively

58 Su Shi, “Huzhong Jiuhua 壺中九華 [Mount Jiuhua in a Gourd Bottle],” in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 7:38.4355.

59 Incidentally, Su started composing matching poems to Tao when he was in Yangzhou, around the time when he received the Qiuchi rock.

60 For the name Qiuchi as a “composite symbol” with a wide range of meanings, see Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity*, 118.

61 仇池有歸路，羅浮豈徒來。Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 7:39.4644. For translation and discussion of the poem, see Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity*, 118.

depicts how the inhabitants of Peach Blossom Spring live in harmony with nature, as they rely on the fertile land for tilling and consume fruits and plants associated with longevity, yet the famed utopia still pales in comparison to the ideal of Qiuchi: "They can't compare with my Qiuchi; / How many more years will pass before I retire?"<sup>62</sup> Further, those who fled the Qin for Peach Blossom Spring are not his "true kindred spirits" [*zhenqi* 真契] because they were still fearful [*youwei* 有畏].<sup>63</sup>

Su Shi's southern exile did not end in Huizhou. In 1097, he was further banished to Hainan Island. Three years later, he was pardoned and allowed to return to the mainland. He arrived at Hukou in the fourth month of 1101. There, he learned that Mount Jiuhua in a Gourd Bottle had been acquired by someone else.<sup>64</sup> In a commemorative poem, Su Shi lamented the loss of the rock but took comfort in the thought that he still had his beloved Qiuchi rock: "Fortunately, I have a copper basin as a rock altar, / Where Qiuchi's green jade keeps sparkling."<sup>65</sup> In its loneliness, the Qiuchi rock shines both literally and figuratively. It remains Su Shi's most faithful and reliable companion as he readies himself to retire from government service.

### 3 The Afterlife of Su Shi's Rock

Su Shi, however, would not enjoy the companionship of his Qiuchi rock for long. He died about three months after he left Hukou. A quarter of a century after his death, the Northern Song capital fell to the Jurchens. Su Shi's beloved rock, which presumably found its way into the imperial collection, was abandoned, as were other palace treasures. It was later salvaged by Zhao Shiyan 趙師嚴 (*zi* Youyi 有翼), an imperial clansman. Zhao carried it across the Yangzi

62 不如我仇池，高舉復幾歲。Su Shi, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 7:40.4751.

63 For discussion of the poem, see Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity*, 151–54.

64 The rock was purchased by Guo Xiangzheng 郭祥正 [1035–1113] in 1099. See Chao Buzhi 晁補之, "Shu Li Zhengchen guaishi shi hou 書李正臣怪石詩後 [Postscript to Poem on Li Zhengchen's Fantastic Rock]," in *Quan Song wen* 全宋文 [Complete Prose of the Song Dynasty], ed. Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳 et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2006), 126:2723.139.

65 賴有銅盆修石供，仇池玉色自璵璠。Su Shi, "Yu xizuo Huzhong Jiuhua shi qihou banian fuguo Hukou ze shi yiwei haoshizhe ququ naihe qianyun yi zijie yun 予昔作《壺中九華詩》，其後八年，復過湖口，則石已為好事者取去，乃和前韻以自解云 [In the Past I Wrote a Poem on Jiuhua in a Gourd-Bottle. Eight Years Later, When I Passed Hukou Again, the Rock Had Already Been Taken Away by a Curiosity-Lover. Therefore, I Matched My Earlier Poem for Self-Consolation]," in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu*, 8:45.5320.

River to the south. In 1162, he brought it to Huzhou 湖州, after being appointed its vice prefect [*tongpan* 通判].<sup>66</sup> In Huzhou, he joined the Club for Sincerity and Spontaneity [*Zhenshuai hui* 真率會] organized by Zeng Xie 曾協 [1119–1173].<sup>67</sup> Shen Qingchen 沈清臣 (*zi* Zhengqing 正卿, *jinshi* 1157) was also a club member.<sup>68</sup> Poetic exchanges among the three were routine.<sup>69</sup> Zhao's rock was the topic of one such exchange. Shen started with a poem that no longer exists, which used the rhyme words of Su Shi's three long poems. Zeng joined in with "Composed about Zhao Youyi's Qiuchi Rock, Matching Shen Zhengqing's Poem Using Academician Su's Rhyme Words [*Fu Zhao Youyi Qiuchi shi ci Shen Zhengqing yong Su Hanlin yun* 賦趙有翼仇池石次沈正卿用蘇翰林韻]":

貪夫居奇貨 什襲藏結綠 寧知十五城 不救卞和足 豈如嗜石人 丘壑在胸腹 不知連城價 但賞數峰蹙	The greedy man stocks up rare objects; Jielü hides in a wrapping of ten layers. <sup>70</sup> Who would have expected that fifteen cities Could not save Bian He's feet? <sup>71</sup> How can he compare with that rock addict, Who cherished hills and ravines in his chest? Not caring for the value of many cities, He only relished the few peaks pressed together.
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66 For Zhao Shiyan's appointment, see Li Xinchuan 李心傳, *Jiannan yilai xianian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄 [*An Annalistic Record of Important Events since the Jiannan Era*], coll. Hu Kun 胡坤 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), 176.3372.

67 On this club (which was active between 1162 and 1165), see Pang Mingqi 龐明啟, "Nan Song zhongqi zhenshuaihui kao 南宋中期真率會考 [An Essay on the Club of Sincerity and Spontaneity in the Mid-Southern Song]," *Zhongguo kuangye daxue xuebao*, no. 4 (2016): 84–85. I follow Wang Kexi 王可喜 in dating Zeng's birth year as 1119, in "Zeng Dun Zeng Xie kao 曾惇、曾協考 [An Essay on Zeng Dun and Zeng Xie]," in *Liang Song ciren congkao* 兩宋詞人叢考 [*Essays on Authors of Song Lyrics in the Northern and Southern Song Periods*], ed. Wang Zhaopeng 王兆鵬, Wang Kexi 王可喜, and Fang Xingyi 方星移 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007), 142–43.

68 For biographical notes on Shen Qingchen, see Lu Xinyuan 陸心源, *Yigutang ji* 儀顧堂集 [*Collection of Hall of Following Gu*], coll. Zheng Xiaoxia 鄭曉霞 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2015), 13.261–62.

69 Quite a number of poems addressed to Zhao and Shen can be found in Zeng's extant works.

70 *Jielü* [hardened green] was one of the legendary jade treasures; see Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 79.2405.

71 Bian He presented an unworked piece of valuable jade to two successive kings of Chu, each of whom judged it to be worthless and punished him with a foot amputation for his deception. See Wang Xianshen 王先慎, *Han Feizi jijie* 韓非子集解 [*Collected Annotations on the Han Feizi*], coll. Zhong Zhe 鐘哲 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), 4.101. As noted above, Qin proposed exchanging fifteen cities with Zhao for Bian He's jade.

長公仙去後      Soon after Su the Elder Lord left to join the  
 朔馬遂南牧      immortals,<sup>72</sup>  
 尤物落何許      Northern horses invaded southward.<sup>73</sup>  
 心知委溝瀆      Where did the extraordinary thing fall?  
 何期超世賢      The love of his heart was abandoned in a ditch.  
 愛石不愛玉      Who would have expected such an outstanding worthy  
 夜半負之走      To love rocks but not jade?  
 包裹隨竄伏      He carried it away in the middle of the night;  
 一朝返窗几      Wrapped up, it followed him in his fleeing and hiding.  
 時清端可卜      Once it was returned to a table by the window,  
 李虎初平羊      A time of peace is thereby known to have arrived.  
 案上紛相逐      Li's tiger and Chuping's sheep,<sup>74</sup>  
 崢嶸幸無恙      One chasing the other on the stand.  
 不問牛馬谷      Delighted that the lofty peaks are safe and sound,  
 趙侯天機異      He does not care about valleys of cattle and horses.<sup>75</sup>  
 閱世輕嗜欲      Lord Zhao's heavenly impulse is different;  
 好奇與嗜利      Throughout his life, he has no addictive desires.  
 達觀均一曲      Love of curiosities and addiction to profit –  
 正恐便棄置      Both are partialities in the eyes of the wise.  
 就賞君宜速      I am afraid it will be abandoned again;  
                          If you want to view it for pleasure, do it fast.<sup>76</sup>

Zeng Xie's description of the physical attributes of Zhao Shiyan's rock is not detailed enough for us to be certain that this is Su Shi's original rock, but that hardly matters. What is of interest to us here is Zeng's perspective on petrophilia as a form of addiction [*shi* 嗜]. At the beginning of the poem, the contrast between general greed and single-minded addiction to rocks reflects a standard form of apologia in the petrophile's discourse that has been used since the ninth century.<sup>77</sup> In the wake of the fall of the Northern Song, such apologia lost much of its effectiveness. The dynastic catastrophe was attributed to, among other things, Emperor Huizong's 徽宗 [r. 1100–1126] legendary

72 Su the Elder was Su Shi, the eldest son of the family. He was appointed Hanlin academician [*hanlin xueshi* 翰林學士] in 1086, hence the reference to him as Academician Su in the title of the poem.

73 I adopt the textual variant *shuo* 朔 over *bing* 兵 here, as recorded in Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo, *Quan Song shi*.

74 Li is Li Guang, and Chuping, Huang Chuping. See notes 48 and 50.

75 Wushi Luo 烏氏僕 [third century BCE] was so rich that his (or her – some believe Wushi Luo was a woman) horses and cattle were measured by the valleys they occupied. See Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 12.3260.

76 Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo, *Quan Song shi*, 2047.23003–4.

77 See Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, 106–43.

indulgence in sensual pleasures, as exemplified in the construction of Genyue 艮嶽 Park.<sup>78</sup> To decorate the park, fantastic rocks were gathered from all over and transported to the capital at great cost with the infamous Fleet of Flowers and Rocks [*huashi gang* 花石綱]. When the capital was ransacked, these rocks were all abandoned.<sup>79</sup> This national trauma cast a long shadow over the discourse on petrophilia in the Southern Song [1127–1279].

Zeng Xie's poem alternates between praise and admonition. Su Shi's petrophilia is at first presented as a lofty passion, reflecting his love of "hills and ravines" and separating him from greedy people in general. Such a lofty passion is problematized, however, in the conspicuous (and seemingly gratuitous) reference to what happened shortly after Su's death (i.e., the southern invasion of "northern horses" and the abandonment of his rock).

The same shift can be observed in Zeng Xie's description of Zhao Shiyān's recovery of the rock. Zhao was a seventh-generation descendant of Zhao Dezhaō 趙德昭 [951–979], the second son of Emperor Taizu 太祖 [r. 960–976]. As an imperial clansman, he apparently could not and did not do anything to save the collapsing dynasty. All he managed to do was rescue a piece of rock that was, at the time, associated with the hedonistic lifestyle of an emperor who was held responsible for the dynasty's downfall. It is true that returning the rock to where it properly belongs – a scholar's table – is celebrated in Zeng's poem as a sign of returning to "a time of peace." At the same time, however, it is clear that, although the rock is "safe and sound," the Song empire is by no means intact, having lost its northern territories to the Jurchens. Furthermore, the peace enjoyed by the Southern Song was extremely fragile. For example, in the ninth month of 1161 (about a year before Zeng Xie formed the Club of Sincerity and Spontaneity), Wanyan Liang 完顏亮 [1122–1161] led an army of 600,000 to invade and conquer the Southern Song. For a moment, the threat of another Jingkāng 靖康 disaster loomed large. Although the Jurchen invasion soon ended in failure, the memory of this ominous event not long before must have been fresh in Zeng's mind when he wrote about Zhao's rock.

There is also a flip side to Zeng Xie's praise of Zhao Shiyān for his lack of "addictive desire" for otherworldly possessions and his "heavenly impulse" that sets him apart from the common run of humanity. The allusion here is to the *Zhuangzi* 莊子: "When a man's addictive desires are deep, his heavenly impulse is shallow."<sup>80</sup> However, as Zeng emphatically asserts, a "love of curiosities" is

78 For a discussion in English of why the Genyue was built, what it looked like, and what purposes it served, see James M. Hargett, "Huizong's Magic Marchmount: The Genyue Pleasure Park of Kaifeng," *Monumenta Serica* 38 (1988–89).

79 See Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, 144–48.

80 其耆欲深者，其天機淺。"Da zongshi 大宗師 [Grand Master]," in Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi*, 3A.228.



ultimately not different from an “addiction to profit,” which are both manifestations of partiality. The distinction between “the greedy man” and “the rock addict” at the beginning of the poem dissolves at the end. In the last couplet, Zeng Xie seems to offer a moral compromise: Zhao could view the rock for aesthetic pleasure but should not try to keep it permanently.

Zeng Xie wrote from the perspective of an observer of petrophilia. There is no evidence that he was a rock lover himself. The poems of Zeng Ji 曾幾 [1085–1166] are close to a petrophile’s confession. By his own account, Zeng’s petrophilia was nothing short of an obsession. His extensive rock collection came from all corners of the country. Among them was a piece of Ying rock (i.e., the same type as Su Shi’s Qiuchi rock), which prompted Shen Zuozhe 沈作喆 (*zi* Mingyuan 明遠, *jinshi* 1135) to compose a poem that used the same rhyme words as Su Shi’s three long poems.<sup>81</sup> In that poem, Shen apparently questioned Zeng’s moral and philosophical wisdom as a rock collector. In response, Zeng wrote two poems. The first is titled “Instructor Shen Mingyuan Used the Rhyme Words of Dongpo’s Poems about His Qiuchi Rock to Write about the Ying Rock That I Have Kept. I Used the Same Rhyme Words in My Poem [Shen Mingyuan jiaoshou yong Dongpo Qiuchi shi yun fu yu suo xu Yingshi ci qi yun 沈明遠教授用東坡仇池石韻賦予所蓄英石次其韻]”:<sup>82</sup>

維南有絲溪	In the south, there is the Silk Stream; <sup>83</sup>
溪石如水綠	Its rocks are green as its water.
瞻相百里間	A hundred miles were surveyed;
抱負一夫足	One man was enough to carry them away. <sup>84</sup>
聲名作災怪	Fame brought disaster:
攻取及背腹	Quarrying reached its front and back.
在者略無奇	The remainders have nothing fancy about them;
溪神爲顰蹙	Thereupon the stream goddess knits her brows.
蠻煙瘴雨地	Of that land of barbarian mist and miasmic rain,
故舊賓州牧	My old friend is the Prefect.
坐令數峰青	It was he who made the several blue peaks,

81 For biographical notes on Shen Zuozhe, see Lu Xinyuan, *Yigutang ji*, 13.258.

82 Dongpo 東坡 was the style name of Su Shi.

83 Artificial lakes were built in the Genyue Park to represent Dongting 洞庭, Hukou 湖口, Sixi, and Qiuchi. See Zhao Ji 趙佶 [1082–1153], “Genyue ji 艮嶽記 [Account of Genyue],” in *Quan Song wen*, 166:3630.383–84. Modern scholars have generally followed Chen Zhi 陳植 and Zhang Gongchi 張公馳 in taking Sixi as referring to Sishui 絲水 in Rizhao 日照, Shandong (in *Zhongguo lidai mingyuan ji xuanzhu* 中國歷代名園記選注 [Selected Accounts of Famous Gardens from Various Dynasties] [Hefei: Anhui kexue jishu chubanshe, 1983], 63). However, Zeng Ji’s poem clearly indicates that it is in Yingzhou.

84 The precise meaning of the couplet is not clear.



飛過大江濱	Fly over great rivers and valleys.
何嘗說向人	Never have I talked to others about it,
恐類和氏玉	For fear that it would be like He's jade.
公然遭奪攘	Seized in broad daylight,
不使得藏伏	With me unable to hide it.
廣文到吾廬	The Master of Erudition came to my cottage,
索隱妙著卜	Skillful at finding the hidden through divination.
東坡韻險艱	Dongpo's rhyme words are rare and hard,
句句巧追逐	With ingenuity he matches them line by line.
幽人所好山	"The mountain beloved by you, a recluse,
已占一林谷	Already occupies a wooded valley.
又兼小崢嶸	You have also annexed Little Cliff; <sup>85</sup>
無乃太多欲	Isn't your desire too excessive?"
端如耐久朋	"They are like long-lasting friends,
相與會心曲	Companions who understand my heart.
大勝輕薄兒	Far superior to those flippant fellows –
浮雲變何速	How fast they change like floating clouds!" <sup>86</sup>

The exact date of Zeng Ji's poem is hard to determine. Sometime around 1059, Shen Zuozhe was appointed instructor of the prefectural School of Confucianism [*Ruxue jiaoshou* 儒學教授], also known as master of erudition [*guangwen xiansheng* 廣文先生] (or simply *guangwen* 廣文, as used in Zeng's poem). Based on this information, Bai Xiaoping 白曉萍 dates the poem to approximately the same time.<sup>87</sup> Internal evidence in Zeng's response poems suggests that they were probably written between the sixth month of 1060, when he moved from Suzhou 蘇州 to Shaoxing 紹興 (where his eldest son was the vice prefect), and the tenth month of the following year, when he fled to Taizhou 台州 to seek refuge from the advancing Jurchen army. In other words, it was written during his sixteen-month stay in Shaoxing (around the same time as Zeng Xie wrote about Zhao Shiyan's Qiuchi rock).

85 Judging from the context, Little Cliff was the name conferred upon Zeng's Ying rock. The same name was given to a piece of Taihu 太湖 rock presented to Zeng by He You 何侗 (*zi* Deqi 德器), as recorded in Zeng's "He Deqi zeng Taihushi 何德器贈太湖石 [On the Taihu Rock Presented by He Deqi]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510. The term Little Cliff had been used by Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 [1045–1105] to describe a strange rock painted by Su Shi. See Huang Tingjian, "Ti zhushi muniu 題竹石牧牛 [Inscribed on Bamboo, Rock, and Herd Boy]," in *Quan Song shi*, 987.11381.

86 Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo, *Quan Song shi*, 1652.18501.

87 Bai Xiaoping 白曉萍, "Song nandu chuqi shiren qunti yanjiu 宋南渡初期詩人群體研究 [A Study of the Poet Groups in the Early Years When the Song Crossed the River to the South]" (Ph.D. diss., Zhejiang University, 2006), 117.

The first eight lines of the poem describe how the ruthless quarrying to satisfy the craze for Ying rocks devastated the natural environment in the area. In Zeng Xie's poetic fancy, even the stream goddess knits her eyebrows in displeasure. This dark side of petrophilia had been exposed by earlier Song poets. For example, Wei Xiang 韋驥 [1033–1105] described, in vivid detail, how commercial quarriers continuously cleaved rocks from a mountain until it became totally bare.<sup>88</sup> Still, Zeng's description is remarkable in that it appears in a poem about his own love of rocks and thereby implicates himself. However, his primary regret is not so much the destruction of nature as it is the general poor quality of rocks that remained in the area.

The last eight lines of Zeng Xie's poem should be understood as a dialogue. In this dialogue, Shen Zuozhe voices his objection to Zeng's possessive desire as a rock collector, rather than his petrophilia. Zeng already had access to a grand mountain (i.e., Guiji 會稽 Mountain near Shaoxing) that occupied a "wooded valley," but he still "annexed" a miniature mountain in the form of a rock. This, in Shen's view, reveals a possessive desire that borders on excessive. Zeng's collection was indeed quite extensive. In addition to rocks from Yingzhou,<sup>89</sup> it included those from Taihu 太湖,<sup>90</sup> Lingbi 靈壁,<sup>91</sup> Daozhou 道州,<sup>92</sup> Nanxiong 南雄,<sup>93</sup> and Kunshan 崑山.<sup>94</sup> Shen must have viewed at least some of Zeng's impressive collection of rocks when he wrote about the Ying rock. Some, if not all, of those rocks came into Zeng's possession before this particular piece of Ying rock. The Kun 崑 rock, for example, was presented to

88 Wei Xiang 韋驥, "Guan pishi 觀劈石 [Observing the Cleaving of Rocks]," in *Quan Song shi*, 727.8414. For a detailed discussion, see Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, 121–23.

89 In addition to the piece that occasioned Shen Zuozhe's poem, Zeng's collection included at least another piece of Ying rock, presented to him by Cheng Youzhi 程祐之. See Zeng Ji 曾幾, "Cheng Jilao fufan yi Ying shi jianyi cengdie ke'ai bao zhi yi ci 程吉老撫幹以英石見遺層疊可愛報之以此 [Prefectural Assistant Cheng Jilao Presented Me with a Ying rock, Which Looks Lovely with Its Layers. I Thank Him with This Poem]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1657.18569.

90 Zeng Ji, "On the Taihu Rock," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510.

91 Zeng Ji, "Wu Sheng yi Lingbi shi yi shi huan zhi 吳甥遺靈壁石以詩還之 [With a Poem, I Thank My Eldest Nephew, Who Presented Me with a Piece of Lingbi Rock]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510.

92 Zeng Ji, "He Deqi ji Daozhou guaishi 何德器寄道州怪石 [He Deqi Sent Me a Fantastic Rock of Daozhou]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1655.18538.

93 Zeng Ji, "Nanxiong junshou zhi guaishi sizhu 南雄郡守致怪石四株 [The Prefect of Nanxiong Sent Me Four Pieces of Fantastic Rocks]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1655.18538.

94 Zeng Ji, "Ji Kunshan Li zai mi shi 寄崑山李宰覓石 [Sent to Magistrate Li of Kunshan to Ask for a Rock]," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510.

him by Li Geng 李庚 [*jīnshī* 1135] in 1155.<sup>95</sup> Zeng does not explain why he would maintain such a large collection. Instead, he shifts the argument by asserting that his rocks provide constant companionship, which is lacking in capricious human relations.

In addition to the devastation of the natural environment from the process of harvesting the rocks, transporting them required a tremendous amount of human labor. This particular problematic aspect of petrophilia is largely ignored in Zeng Ji's first poem, but it conspicuously appears in his second, "Matching the Poem with the Rhyme 'Lü' [*Ci 'lǚ' zì yùn* 次綠字韻]":

舍前南山青	In front of my house, the south mountain is green;
舍後北山綠	Behind it, the north mountain is verdant.
捫蘿涉其巔	I grab the vines to climb to their peaks;
策杖遶其足	With a staff, I circle their feet.
中間奇絕處	At the most wondrous spots in between,
表裏見心腹	Views and sights are had from all around. <sup>96</sup>
登臨豈不佳	Isn't it great to ascend for fine views?
老境日以蹙	But old age is pressing on me day by day.
誰知怪石供	Who would expect that an altar to a strange rock,
能坐我郊牧	May be set up in my wilderness house?
政應索幽遐	I just want to seek some quiet leisure;
何憚越川瀆	Why worry about crossing rivers and streams?
嶽嶽庾嶺南	South of the lofty Yu Ridge,
美者色蒼玉	Beautiful rocks look like green jade.
賞音無東坡	With no Dongpo to appreciate them,
尤物多跼伏	Most of these extraordinary things have lain hidden. <sup>97</sup>
今年致書求	This year I sent letters to request one,
屢以可否卜	Asking time and again whether it could be had.
故人爲遣送	An old friend presented one to me,
健步遠相逐	A sturdy runner carried it from afar.
雖非古仇池	It may not be the ancient Qiuchi rock,
要是好崖谷	But it does have fine cliffs and valleys.
似爲天所矜	Heaven seems to take pity on me,
此段獨從欲	Indulging my desire with this piece.
深慚舛致重	I feel deep shame about its heavy transportation;
路轉知幾曲	How many twists and turns were there on the roads?

95 See Bai Xiaoping, "A Study of the Poet Groups," 111.

96 The exact meaning of this couplet is unclear.

97 The original note to the line states that the Qiuchi rock came from the south of Song Mountain. The character 嵩 *song* is most likely a typographical error for *ling* 嶺.

安得滄海神      How can I get the god of the blue ocean,  
鞭笞使之速      To whip it to speed up its journey?<sup>98</sup>

The poem relates Zeng's petrophilia to the circumstances of his life. As old age pressed upon him, mountain climbing was no longer viable. However, if he could not go to the mountain, then the mountain had to come to him; setting up and viewing fantastic rocks indoors provided an experience equivalent to roaming around the mountains. Indeed, his love of rocks was an extension of his love of the mountains: "With my love of mountains already an obsession, / My love of rocks has turned into another obsession."<sup>99</sup> However, satisfying his obsession required considerable labor, not only in harvesting but also in transporting the rock. Whereas his first poem exposes the negative side of quarrying, this one problematizes rock transportation.

There is a profound irony in the fact that Zeng Ji's achievement of "quiet leisure" relied on the work of a "sturdy runner" in transporting the rock over a great distance from Lingnan 嶺南 to his "wilderness house." Instead of glibly describing, as he did in the first poem, his rock as "fly[ing] over the great rivers and valleys," here he lets his moral anxiety bubble to the surface in confessing his "deep shame" about the "heavy transportation" of the rock. In the end, he could find no moral solution other than fantasizing, somewhat flippantly, about divine assistance. The last couplet in the poem alludes to the following legend. The First Emperor of Qin 秦始皇 [r. 221–210 BCE] wanted to cross the ocean to see where the sun rose, so he built a rock bridge, whose columns were erected by the ocean god. The emperor was also helped by a magician, who could drive rocks into the sea. If the rocks did not move fast enough, the magician would whip them.<sup>100</sup>

In Zeng Ji's first poem, the rock is described as a gift from an "old friend," who happened to be the prefect of Yingzhou. In the present poem, it becomes clear that it was Zeng who repeatedly wrote letters of request. Indeed, in his retirement, Zeng Ji frequently sent such letters: "In my idle life, I have written hundreds of letters, / All for nothing but a piece of rock."<sup>101</sup> These letters were often addressed to ranking officials of regions where the rocks were mined – a

98 Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo, *Quan Song shi*, 1652.18501.

99 愛山已成癖，愛石又成癖。Zeng Ji, "On the Taihu Rock Presented by He Deqi," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510.

100 See Fu Chen 伏琛, "Sanqi lueji 三齊略記 [*Brief Accounts of Tales of Sanqi*]," in *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 [*Literary Collectanea Arranged in Categories*], comp. Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢, coll. Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1965), 79.1347.

101 閒居百封書，總爲一片石。Zeng Ji, "With a Poem, I Thank My Eldest Nephew," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510. See also "Sent to Magistrate Li," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510; "On the Taihu Rock," in *Quan Song shi*, 1653.18510.

fact that he frequently mentioned in either the titles or the texts of his poems. In addition to the Ying rock that prompted Shen Zuozhe's poem, there is mention of four "fantastic rocks" [*guaishi* 怪石] that were sent by a prefect [*junshou* 郡守] of Nanxiong and a Kun rock that was obtained from the magistrate [*zai* 宰] of Kunshan. Zeng was famed for his impeccable moral integrity in his long government service: "His career brought him to Lingnan thrice, and yet there was not a single southern curiosity in his house."<sup>102</sup> In his later years, however, his scruples seem to have given way to his petrophilia.

#### 4 Concluding Remarks

I conclude by summarizing the shifting meanings of Su Shi's Qiuchi rock in Song poetry. Initially, in Yangzhou, for unknown reasons, the rock reminded Su Shi of a strange dream about Qiuchi. The interpretation of that dream was a collaborative process. Zhao Lingzhi connected the dream to Du Fu's poetic imaging of Mount Qiuchi as a Daoist realm of retreat. By naming the rock Qiuchi, Su turned it into an emblem of his dream world and what that world represented.

In the capital city Bianjing 汴京, Su Shi's rock became entwined in the urbane exchanges in high society, where tensions occasionally flared. The rock turned into a transferable and tradable item, even as Su portrayed it as his inseparable companion and as a miniature replica of his native land to which Su longed to return. In the back and forth between Su and his friends, the rock's connection to the dream about Qiuchi was obscured: Qiuchi was merely one of several sacred Daoist mountains about which the rock reminded Su.

During Su Shi's exile to the far south, the idea of Qiuchi seeped into his poetic engagement with Tao Yuanming. Whereas Wang Qichen had compared Qiuchi to Peach Blossom Spring in interpreting Su's dream, Su transformed Qiuchi into a superior alternative to Tao Yuanming's utopia. Su's desire to acquire a rock from Hukou as a companion for his Qiuchi rock was indicative of both his uncontrollable petrophilia and his loneliness in exile.

In matching Su Shi's three long poems, Song poets were preoccupied with the issue of the desire for material things. Qin Guan simultaneously critiqued Su's possessiveness and praised his poetry. In the wake of the collapse

<sup>102</sup> 三仕嶺外，家無南物。Lu You 陸游 [1125–1209], "Zeng Wenqinggong muzhiming 曾文清公墓誌銘 [Tombstone Epitaph Inscription for the Refined and Pure Duke Zeng]," in *Quan Song wen*, 223:4947.191. Lu You was Zeng Ji's student; his words probably should be taken with some caution.

of the Northern Song (which was attributed in part to the construction of Genyue Park, for which fantastic rocks were harvested and transported from all over the country), there was a heightened wariness about petrophilia, even among the most ardent rock lovers.<sup>103</sup> Zeng Xie's ostensible celebration of Zhao Shiyuan's repossession of Su Shi's Qiuchi rock refuted a fundamental premise of the rock fancier's discourse, namely that petrophilia is a nobler passion than common greed. Zeng Xie equated petrophilia with attachment to more vulgar worldly things. In a semiconfessional mode, Zeng Ji exposed the serious consequences of indulging in petrophilia. In addition to displaying a lack of wisdom at the philosophical level, such indulgence caused grave harm to the natural environment and compromised the moral integrity of the rock lover.

103 The passage of time would dull this wariness, as can be glimpsed in poems about Ying rocks in later times that used the same rhyme words as Su Shi's three long poems. In one such poem, Peng Lu 彭輅 [*jinshi* 1764] celebrated how in his idle post as instructor [*jiaoyu* 教諭] of Confucian School of Yingde he obtained a piece of Ying rock. He scoffed at famous petrophiles such as Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 [780–848] and Li Deyu 李德裕 [787–850] of the Tang who had to search high and low to build up their rock collections. He then turned his thought to the Song: "A greater pity is that those in charge the Fleet of Flowers and Rocks, / Never saw this jagged valley." [更憐花石綱，未覩此岩谷。] However, the remembrance of the Fleet of Flowers and Rocks did not cause any moral discomfort as he went on to congratulate himself for being able to roam around mountains while recumbent [*woyou* 臥遊] by simply pulling out the rock from his sleeve. See Peng Lu 彭輅, "Yingshifeng ci Pogong Qiuchi yun 英石峰次公仇池韻 [On My Craggy Ying Rock, with the Rhyme Words of Lord Dongpo's Poem on His Qiuchi Rock]," in *Qingdai shiwenji huibian* 清代詩文集彙編 [Collected Compilations of Poetry and Prose of the Qing Dynasty], ed. Bianzuan weiyuanhui 編纂委員會 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), 429:314. For other poems that used the rhyme words of Su Shi's three long poems, see Qian Zai 錢載, *Tuoshizhai shiji*, *Tuoshizhai wenji* 蘅石齋詩集 蘅石齋文集 [Poetry and Prose Collection of the Studio of Tuoshi], comp. Ding Xiaoming 丁小明 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 33:553–54; Qian Daxin 錢大昕, "Qianyantang shi xuji 潛研堂詩續集 [Poetry Collection of Hall of Assiduous Study: A Sequel]," in *Jiading Qian Daxin quanji, zengdingben* 嘉定錢大昕全集 (增訂本) [Complete Works of Qian Daxin of Jiading, Expanded Edition], ed. Chen Wenhe 陳文和 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2016), 10:246, 247; Huang Yue 黃鉞, *Yizhai ji* 壹齋集 [Collection of Studio of One], ed. Chen Yude 陳育德 and Feng Wenxue 鳳文學 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1999), 29:563–64. (All three wrote in response to poems by friends that used the same rhyme words.) After Wu Qian 吳騫 [1733–1813] presented an inkstone to Lu Susheng 陸素生 [1756–1815] as a birthday gift, Zha Kui 查揆 [1770–1834] got hold of it with a poem of request to Lu. Zha then sent Wu a poem with the same rhyme words as Su Shi's three poems and asked Wu to compose a matching poem. Wu complied with the request. See Wu Qian 吳騫, *Wu Tuchuang riji* 吳兔床日記 [Diaries of Wu Tuchuang], ed. Zhang Haosu 張昊蘇 and Yang Hongsheng 楊洪升 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2015), 126.



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