

# THE OPEN COURT

*Publication of  
The New Orient Society  
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JULY

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*Vol. 48*

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OPEN  
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Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science,  
and the Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea.

FOUNDED BY EDWARD C. HEGELER

Volume 48

JULY, 1934

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Publication of the New Orient Society of America

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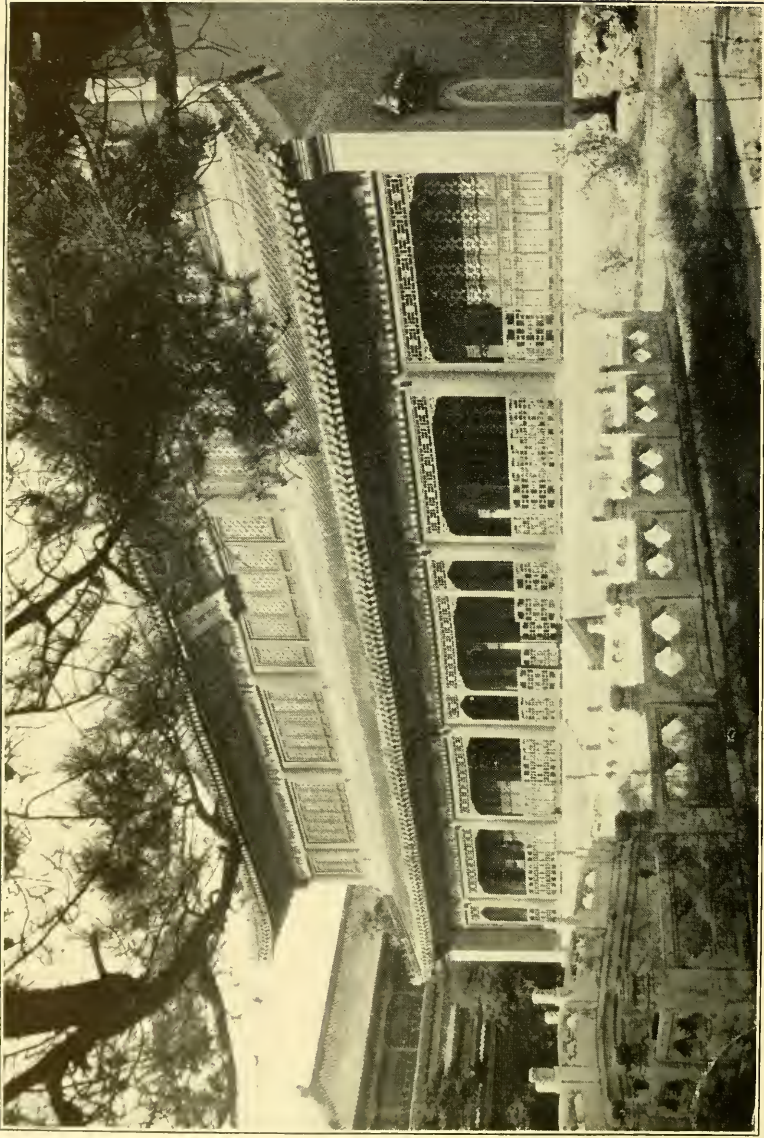
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*Frontispiece to The Open Court*



# THE OPEN COURT

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## THE POSTHUMOUS ADVENTURES OF A CHINESE POET

BY L. CARRINGTON GOODRICH

### EXPLANATORY NOTE

IN the last four or five years a commission of Chinese scholars found and published a quantity of edicts and memorials, unknown previously to Chinese historians, which were discovered in the archives of the palace in Peking. The material given below has been translated from one series of these documents, and concerns a single figure in the domain of Chinese letters, Ch'ü Ta-chün.

An extended biography of Ch'ü is not called for here, as enough is given in the record. Briefly, he was born about 1629 in the district of P'an-yü, Kuangtung Province, and was a young student when the forces of the Ming collapsed and the Manchu braves and their Chinese and Mongol allies overran the country, occupying Peking in 1644 and Canton in 1650. Like many another sensitive Chinese, Ch'ü could not tolerate living without protest under these conditions, and retired to the seclusion of a monastery, where he was free to write and dream. He became renowned for his poetry, he and two contemporaries of neighboring districts, Ch'en Kung-yin and Liang P'ei-lan, being known as "the three masters of Ling-nan." In middle life he left the priesthood. He died about 1690. Nearly a century later all of his writings were listed on the *Index Expurgatorius*, for destruction by fire. Fortunately copies of at least seven of his fifteen books have been preserved; likewise a few fugitive essays and poems.

The first memorial was written during the period Yung-cheng (1723-35). All the other memorials and edicts were indited in the ensuing reign, that of Ch'ien-lung (1736-95).

THE TRANSLATOR

DRAMATIS PERSONAE  
OF THE MORE IMPORTANT FIGURES

Ch'ü Ta-chün	17th century poet, native of P'an-yü, Kuangtung
Fu-t'ai	Manchu, governor of Kuangtung in 1729-30
Ch'en Kung-yin	Poet, native of Shun-teh, Kuangtung, 1631-1700
Liang P'ei-lan	Poet, native of Nan-hai, Kuangtung, 1632-1708
Ch'ü Ming-hung	Son of Ch'ü Ta-chün
Li Shih-yao	Governor-general of Kuangtung and Kuangsi in 1774
Teh-pao	Manchu, governor of Kuangtung in 1774-75
Ch'ü Nien-chen	Great-grandson of Ch'ü Ta-chün's younger brother, born 1747
Ch'ü Chao-se	Distant cousin of Ch'ü Nien-chen, born 1705
Kao-chin	Manchu, governor-general of Kiangsu, Kiangsi, and Anhui in 1774-75
Sa-tsai	Manchu, governor of Kiangsu in 1774
San-pao	Manchu, governor of Chekiang in 1774

## I

The memorial to the emperor of Fu-t'ai, governor of Kuangtung, dated 1730:

...When I was reading your most recent edicts in the *Ta i chüeh mi lu*, I came across a reference to the rebellious character of the collected writings of Ch'ü Wen-shan. This name seemed suspiciously alike in sound, though not in script, to the style of Ch'ü Ta-chün, namely Ch'ü Weng-shan; so I went out and purchased the *Wen wai*, the *Shih wai*, and *Wen ch'ao* of Ch'ü Ta-chün, and the *Shih chi* and other books of Ch'en Kung-yin and Liang P'ei-lan. I found nothing seditious in the writings of Liang, but a great deal in those of Ch'ü and Ch'en. They conceal a sullen and tumultuous spirit. Also when referring to the last dynasty they set the characters respectfully up one space. The works of Ch'ü are worse than those of Ch'en in this respect. When I noted these things my hair stood on end. From the time our dynasty seized the tripods Heaven has smiled on us, the country has been unified, there has been peace within our borders and with foreign countries, and the virtues have flourished. All people the world over—hoary-headed men and yellow-mouthed babes—rejoice to have been born at this time, and messengers from foreign lands come by ships bearing gifts. There is none who does not honor and magnify the dynasty.



How could anyone believe that certain individuals eating of our plenty should, like Ch'ü Ta-chün and Ch'en Kung-yin, hide within them the hearts of dogs and wolves and notions of a viper. . . . Their violent words slander the sacred dynasty. . . . I ascertained that Ch'ü and Ch'en died some thirty years ago; so there was no way of gathering them into the net of the law. There remained the director of studies at Hui-lai hsien, Ch'ü Ming-hung, son of Ch'ü Ta-chün. I was secretly conferring with the lieutenant-governor Wang Shih-chün concerning the way to arrest him, when on the 16th day of the 10th moon [Dec. 6, 1729] Ch'ü Ming-hung arrived at the provincial seat, delivered his seal to the office of the lieutenant-governor, and handed himself over for punishment. He declared that his father was Ch'ü Ta-chün, who had been guilty of high treason and had written seditious books. When his father died Ming-hung was a child, too young to understand. The printed writings and wood-blocks had been deposited at his home but he had not examined them. Now, while in office as director of studies, he had received a copy of the *Ta i chüeh mi lu* sent by the emperor, which is to be read throughout the empire, and noted the likeness between the name of Ch'ü Wen-shan and his father's style. He then promptly passed in review his father's poetry and essays, and came to realize the disorder-provoking and rebellious nature of his father's writings. For this reason he gave himself up to be appropriately punished. The lieutenant-governor, Wang Shih-chün, secretly reported this to me. I considered in my own mind that the son of Ch'ü Ta-chün, having been in office as director of studies ought to know the law; that when he saw secreted in his home illegal and heterodox writings he ought at an early date to have burned them. Instead, he saved these posthumous works, permitting them to remain for posterity and to be sold. Now this rebel says that not until he read the *Ta i chüeh mi lu* did he understand, and give himself up, thus dodging his earlier responsibility. On the one hand, therefore, I order the lieutenant-governor and provincial judge most rigorously to pursue their investigations, and on the other made inquiry about the sons and grandsons of Ch'en Kung-yin.

I secretly followed the latter inquiry, but without success. So I bethought myself that Ch'en and Ch'ü Ta-chün must have had friends of like sympathies when they were alive, and that their descendants might still live in one place. This fact Ch'ü Ming-hung would surely know. Accordingly I ordered him sternly to divulge the infor-

mation, with the expectation of arresting them all at once, imprisoning them, and then informing your majesty. . . .

Received by the emperor the 19th day, 10th moon, of the 8th year of Yung-cheng [Nov. 28, 1730], who made this notation in vermilion: "Foolish and fuddled. He does not know how to transact business."

## II

Forty-four years later (1774)

The memorial of Li Shih-yao and Teh-pao, respectively governor-general of Kuangtung and Kuangsi and governor of Kuangtung:

We respectfully acknowledge receipt of the imperial edict of the 5th day, 8th moon, 39th year of Ch'ien-lung [Sept. 10, 1774].<sup>1</sup> Just after laying out our course of action on the search for seditious literature, there appeared at our yamen the two district magistrates of Nan-hai and P'an-yü. They reported the discovery that a member of a later generation of the clan of the rebel Ch'ü Ta-chün, named Ch'ü Nien-chen, and others kept concealed in their homes the said rebel's book *Wen wai*. The P'an-yü magistrate also declared that the student Shen Shih-ch'eng had delivered to him the single work *Shih wai* by Ch'ü Ta-chün, and that the bookshop proprietor P'an Ming and others had turned over the blocks and printed matter—ten copies in all—of both the *Kuang tung hsün yü* ["New Tidings from Kuangtung"] and the *Ling-nan san chia ho-k'o shih chi* ["Anthology of poetry by the three masters of Ling-nan"]. We find that P'an Ming and the rest are book salesmen and are ignorant of wrong-doing. As for the student Shen Shih-ch'eng, he may be shown mercy as he delivered the books of his own volition. But Ch'ü Nien-chen and his group, because of their kinship with the rebel Ch'ü Ta-chün and their boldness in secretly concealing for so long books that should have been burned, deserve the full penalty of the law. We have determined their punishment and are writing a separate memorandum on that head.

Now as to the "Anthology" of the three poets, we have noted much that is seditious in the poems and prose of Liang P'ei-lan and

<sup>1</sup>This edict is the first of a long line of decrees by the same emperor demanding books which were or seem to be derogatory to the throne, or to the Manchus and other border peoples. This inquisition resulted eventually in the destruction of over 2,300 works (together with their duplicates and many woodblocks) and the mutilation of some 350 more. (The Translator)



A PORTRAIT OF CH'Ü TA-CHÜN

Taken from *Ch'ing tai hsüeh che hsiang chuan* by Yeh Kung-cho of P'an-yu, Kuangtung

Ch'en Kung-yin. The book should surely not be permitted to circulate. We feared that besides this "Anthology" there might be books by Ch'ü alone. Consequently we directed a deputy quietly to investigate the private libraries of Ch'ü's sons and grandsons. He made a careful examination, but discovered nothing. Still we have ascertained that the bookstores of the provincial seat [Canton] have the "Anthology" of the three poets to print and to sell, and the gentry and scholars cannot but be buyers of it. We have instructed our subordinates to discover the whereabouts of copies and to take them into custody, and we have respectfully labelled, wrapped up, and despatched to Peking the *Shih wai* in twenty-three booklets; the *Kuang-tung hsin yü*, one copy; and the "Anthology," one copy. Besides these we have a few woodblocks; when more are collected we shall set fire to the lot.

We intend once more to publish your edict, informing the people of the treason and immorality of Ch'ü Ta-chün, of the iniquity of his books, of the fact that long ago a command was sent out to burn them, that Ch'ü's works are not like other traitorous books. We shall also inform them of Ch'ü Nien-chen and members of the Ch'ü clan, their gall in secretly concealing the books of Ch'ü Ta-chün, and how we have memorialized your majesty concerning the punishment to be meted out to them. In respect to the P'an-yü student, Shen Shih-ch'eng and his ilk, we shall mention our plea for mercy, because they gave up books of their own accord, and were not themselves involved in crime.

All this we shall have announced from door to door, that everyone may be warned, and no misunderstanding result. The search will be thorough and complete. What our deputies and officials discover in their investigation will be the subject of a later despatch. . . .

Received and checked by the vermilion pencil of the emperor on the 9th day, 11th moon, of the 39th year of Ch'ien-lung [Dec. 11, 1774].

### III

The memorandum referred to in the previous memorial by Li Shih-yao and Teh-pao:

. . . . On the 20th day, 9th moon, of the 39th year of Ch'ien-lung [Oct. 24, 1774] we received a report from Ch'ang Teh and Chang T'ien-chih, district magistrates of Nan-hai and P'an-yü respectively, as follows:

After receiving the edict to look for and hand over books of former generations, we made a careful investigation and discovered in the bookstalls a copy of the *Kuang-tung hsün yü*, written by Ch'ü Ta-chün. This we glanced over, but could find nothing in it to object to. Yet in our investigation of the author we remarked that because he had rashly composed the *Shih wai* and the *Wen wai*, the words of which are treasonable, there had resulted the case at law in the 7th year of Yung-cheng. Now the *Kuang-tung hsün yü* was on sale at the bookstores, and we suspected there might be other books as well that had been saved from the general proscription of his works. Accordingly we secretly instructed a clerk in the bureau of ceremonies named Chien Shang to obtain information about the members of the Ch'ü family and report back. Chien has a young relative of another surname, a boy, named Lin Ya-pi studying under the tutelage of Ch'ü Nien-chen, of the same clan as Ch'ü Ta-chün. Chien reported:

"I went on my quest, and informed him that my office was making an investigation of the writings of Ch'ü Ta-chün. He replied that in his home he had the *Wen wai* in three booklets. I asked him to produce it, and he offered it to me at the price of three round milled pieces of silver."

We bought the booklets, and checking them over discovered that whole pages and sections were missing. On the suspicion that he had intentionally torn or destroyed them, we immediately arrested Ch'ü Nien-chen and told him to confess where a complete copy might be. He replied that he had formerly noticed that his elder brother [actually a distant cousin] Ch'ü Chao-se also had one. We promptly sought the latter out at his home and imprisoned him. He produced a copy in four booklets. We have checked and found them complete. We also searched the two houses with every care, but found nothing illegal beyond these volumes; nor were the wood-blocks hidden there. For the present we are holding said criminals awaiting your orders; as to the seven booklets, we have the honor to forward them herewith.

[The governor-general and governor then review the case, reminding themselves that in the 8th year of Yung-cheng (1730), the son, Ch'ü Ming-hung, had given himself up, the governor Fu-t'ai had recommended punishment, but mercy instead had been shown by the emperor; the books, however, they recalled, were to be burned.]

How then does it happen, [they continue] that the descendants



of this family, which had received imperial clemency, should still possess books ordered burned over forty years ago? Evidently because the investigation was not thorough. Our hair stood on end at the revelation. Consequently we summoned Ch'ü Nien-chen and his cousin and examined them with the aid of the lieutenant-governor Wu Chiu-ling and the provincial judge Ch'in Huang. Ch'ü Nien-chen replied in answer to our questioning:

"I inherited from my father the three booklets of the *Wen wai*. I only had a rough idea of its contents and did not comprehend its meaning. Had I hidden it on purpose, how would I have dared to sell it for money, and thus let its existence become known?"

Ch'ü Chao-se in his turn replied, "As a boy I worked on the farm and did not learn to read. The book has been in our home for a long time. Just why it was not handed over years ago I have no idea."

Now this Ch'ü Ta-chün's guile was that of a mad dog. . . . We recommend therefore that, due to their negligence in not handing over these rebellious works, Ch'ü Nien-chen and his brother receive no mercy, but be dealt with according to the penalty for the sons and grandsons of, and residents in the same home as traitors. They should all be decapitated. The four volume copy of the *Wen wai* we shall have labelled and sent to you. The imperfect copy will be kept here and burned.

Expressing penitence for having had this happen in our jurisdiction, and confessing that we are worthy of punishment, we nevertheless implore the emperor's pardon. . . .

Received on the 9th day, 11th moon, 39th year of Ch'ien-lung [Dec. 11, 1774]. The comment in vermilion reads, "I have already sent my edict."

#### IV

Here are given in full the statements by Ch'ü Nien-chen and Ch'ü Chao-se, summarized very briefly in the memorandum above. [The evidence is written in colloquial style, befitting the station of the prisoners. The Translator.]

The testimony of Ch'ü Nien-chen:

"I am a native of P'an-yü hsien, and am now twenty-eight *sui* [27 years]. My father, Ch'ü T'ing-jui, died many years ago. As a boy I studied for several years, and then set up a small shop, in which I could not earn very much. Accordingly this year I opened



a little school at Chih [the Straight] street outside the small south gate. Ch'ü Ta-chün was my great grandfather's elder brother. In the eighth year of Yung-cheng [1730] I had not yet been born; so knew nothing of the case involving the investigation and submission of his treasonable books. This one, the *Wen wai*, was inherited from my father. I have no idea why it was kept and not handed over to be destroyed long ago. I had only a rough notion of what it was about, but certainly did not comprehend its meaning. This year, on the 16th day of the 9th moon [Oct. 20, 1774], Chien Sheng, the maternal uncle of one of my students, Lin Ya-pi, came to my school to spend a leisure hour. During our chat he said to me,

“At the present time I have been told by our magistrate to look for the books of Ch'ü Ta-chün. Are there any in your home?”

“I replied, ‘We have the *Wen wai* in three volumes.’

“Whereupon he wanted to take it. I knew that he was on the staff of the yamen, and thought that since he had come to ask for this book there must be some use for it. But I feared that he would be off with it leaving nothing in return; so I asked him for three round milled edged silver pieces in exchange. Chien Sheng went for the money and in the end I gave him the three volumes. How was I to suspect that the two magistrates would take me into custody to be questioned? They stated that part of the book was missing, and made me responsible for producing the complete work. I had previously visited the home of my elder clan brother, Ch'ü Chao-se, and had seen a copy there; so I told them this. They forthwith led me in bonds to the home of Chao-se to take delivery.

“As to that three-volume book and why it was incomplete—I had never turned its pages, and truly did not on purpose tear or lose any of them. Had I understood the purport of the book and realized it contained traitorous language, I would certainly not have let it remain till now, nor dared to inform outsiders that I had it and was willing to sell it. Would I thus make known my own wrong doing?”

The testimony of Ch'ü Chao-se:

“I am a native of P'an-yü hsien, at present aged seventy *sui* [69 years], and live at Ssu-hsien ts'un, a village situated over fifty *li* from the district city. Since childhood I have been a farmer and cannot read. I belong to a collateral branch of the clan of which Ch'ü Ta-chün was a member. That four-volume work has been in our home a long while. My younger clan brother Ch'ü Nien-chen



THE EMPEROR CH'EN LUNG

often comes to our house. On the 17th day of the 9th moon [Oct. 21] he arrived with the magistrate to investigate, and said that the *Wen wai*, or whatever you call it, by Ch'ü Ta-chün, is a rebellious and prohibited book. The district magistrate ordered your humble servant to hand it over. I got our family's copy and gave it to him to see. He took it and went off with it. Formerly, in the eighth year of Yung-cheng, at the time of the case in which the family of Ch'ü Ta-chün was accused of treason, my father was alive. Why this book was not given up then I truly do not know, but I declare that I have not wittingly kept it hidden."

## V

An imperial edict, addressed through the Grand Council to Kao-chin, governor-general of Kiangsu, Kiangsi, and Anhui, and others:

Li Shih-yao and his associate have memorialized me on their inquiry into seditious books by Ch'ü Ta-chün. They have labelled and sent up some to be destroyed and made a recommendation on how to dispose of Ch'ü Nien-chen and others who have kept these books in concealment. I intend to forgive Ch'ü Nien-chen and Ch'ü Chao-se, but shall suppress the books.

Again publish it abroad that I order the high provincial officials to bend their energies in this direction. In my former edict I ordered the various governors-general and governors to make known my decree: if private owners will hand over their treasonable books at an early date, I shall pardon them.

Now, in the main, these slanderous writings are found in the two provinces, Kiangsu and Chekiang, but Kiangsi, Fukien, Kuangtung, Kuangsi, Hunan, and Hupeh also perchance are not to be forgotten. Therefore, I have sent an edict to the respective governors-general and governors by name to have a care and conduct this inquisition. But Kao-chin, Sa-tsai, and San-pao have reported back saying that they have not discovered any books that are treasonable.

Now Li Shih-yao and his associate have discovered in Kuangtung the works of Ch'ü Ta-chün. It is improper, therefore, for Kiangsu and Chekiang and the other provinces to return word that no censorable works dating from the end of the Ming and the beginning of the Ch'ing exist. Cannot Kao-chin and the rest administer their affairs with as much real zeal as Li Shih-yao and his associate? Or is it that the book-owning families of Kiangsu and Chekiang were not well able to understand my purpose?

Let a decree, therefore, be transmitted to all governors-general and governors, that they should once more make this known in all clarity: if at present the books are delivered in haste, it will not yet be too late: only the books that ought not to be preserved will be destroyed: heterodox language, too, will be checked, in order to correct the hearts of men and make straight their ways. How can these officers merely look on while even a few volumes are saved to be handed down to the next in descent? But if again the people fail to give up their treasonable books, and later this fact comes to light, then they are guilty of concealment, and we shall grant no

pardon. Moreover, the said high provincial officials will be held responsible.

I avail myself of the opportunity given by the case reported to the throne [by Kuangtung] to hand down this edict. As before let the officers handle this matter with care, and report back according to the facts. Respect this!

The 9th day, 11th moon, of the 39th year of Ch'ien-lung [Dec. 11, 1774].

## VI

Memorial of the Grand Council:

We have obeyed the order to investigate the several books of poems and prose by Ch'ü Ta-chün. Such antagonistic words and sentences as occur have already been gone over and each page properly and clearly marked by the viceroy. Now we ourselves have examined them, and have attached labels to each passage that is truly seditious. They are herewith presented for your inspection.

Presented to the emperor the 11th moon of the 39th year of Ch'ien-lung.

## VII

A second imperial edict (of the same date as V):

Already there have been transferred to the capital ten thousand books, inherited from former generations, and purchased from bookshops of the provinces. But these contain no trace of anything objectionable. Perhaps the families which collect books feared that penalties would be meted out, and consequently did not submit any volumes. For this reason I charge the governors-general and governor to explain this edict most clearly to the public:—if certain people have volumes which should not be kept they should hand them over; in which instance no guilt will be attached to them.

At the present time Li Shih-yao and others have drawn attention to a number of books by the rebel Ch'ü Ta-chün, have sent them up duly labelled, and have recommended after due deliberation the decapitation of the two members of a later generation of the clan of Ch'ü Ta-chün: Chü Nien-chen and Ch'ü Chao-se, who have secretly been concealing his writings, etc. The poems and essays of Ch'ü Ta-chün are seditious; long ago and many times since have I ordered them proscribed, and forbade people privily to keep them. But, as I have often proclaimed, all these rebellious words were the



bigoted views of former writers and have no relation to our times. In case the books contain language that is antidynastic, then the woodblocks and printed sheets must both be put to the flames. Heterodox opinions must be quashed that later generations may not be influenced. My method, however, is only to burn the books; not to be harsh to men. I transact affairs in the most correct and enlightened way; therefore, when I inquire after the writings bequeathed from the past, I cannot find fault with those who have treasured and stored them away. The seditious poetry and prose of Ch'ü Ta-chün found in Kuangtung must be destroyed, but there is no need to find fault with the two descendents who have been discovered in possession of them.

Let the various governors-general and governors know, moreover, that they must make sure that the people understand my decree: that if at the present time in any province there is anyone harboring rebellious books dating from the end of the Ming or the beginning of the Ch'ing it is his duty at the earliest moment to hand them over; no questions will be asked and no charge brought against him for having clandestinely hidden them away before. Now Ch'ü Nien-chen and Ch'ü Chao-se were apprehended by officials, yet shall I not consider them guilty. How much more then, if people of their own accord submit books, will I hold them blameless. In case, however, after knowing my decree, any of them do not deliver said volumes, then it will be because they purposely desire to hold false and perverse writings. Hereafter, therefore, should this fact come to light from other sources, we cannot regard their fault lightly.

My sincerity and justice is profoundly known to all within the seas. Let all look up and comprehend my purpose, and soon come to their senses. Repent not too late. Let the whole country be informed of this edict. Respect this!

#### VIII

A special edict addressed to Kao-chin:

...I have noticed in the works of Ch'ü Ta-chün a reference to his burial of clothes and cap at Yü Hua T'ai. How can we let this filthy rebellious memento remain undisturbed? I send this especial command to Kao-chin: locate the spot; unearth and burn the things immediately; do not permit a trace of the rebel to remain any longer. This order goes secretly by the four hundred *li* a day post. The moment you have carried out instructions, write me in detail how you have performed them.

Written the day *i wei*, 11th moon, of the 39th year of Ch'ien-lung [Dec. 12, 1774].

## IX

Kao-chin's memorial in reply:

I write to inform your imperial majesty of the receipt of your edict while at Yen-yü [Kiangsu?], whither I had gone to supervise certain construction works. I had crossed the Huang [the Yellow River] and gone to P'an-chia-t'un to oversee the clearing of the [Grand?] canal. It was there that the despatch containing the imperial edict. . . . reached me, recounting the discovery by Li Shih-yao and his associate of the rebellious writings of Ch'ü Ta-chün. . . . And now comes the very private missive, which I have hastened to open and put away in a secret file.

I have ascertained that the Yü Hua T'ai is at Nanking, not a great distance outside the Chü Pao Gate. The place where the clothes and cap of Ch'ü Ta-chün lie buried should be easy to locate by inquiry. These stinking effects left by the traitor must be unearthed in all haste and destroyed, and his stone monument smashed to bits, so that no trace of him may longer remain.

I am now sending private word to the lieutenant-governor at Nanking, Min Ao-yün, to go himself to Yü Hua T'ai, find the spot, identify the monument, place a seal on it, and set a guard. The fact remains, however, that these garments and cap were buried a long time ago. It will be necessary for me to go myself and make sure of the evidence that the spot truly is the place of burial. I shall make the examination as soon as there is an end to the task here at P'an-chia-t'un, and after I have returned to the provincial capital. When sure there is no mistake we shall dig for the effects and destroy every shred of them by fire. This done, I shall indite a memorial, giving your majesty an exact account.

In reference to the literature by the miscreant found at the dwellings of Ch'ü Nien-chen and others,—I am struck by your clemency towards those guilty of concealment. . . . etc.

Checked by the vermilion pencil, "Noted." The 29th day, 11th moon, of the 39th year of Ch'ien-lung [Dec. 31, 1774].

## X

The second memorial of Kao-chin:

. . . Last winter, while at the construction works at P'an-chia-t'un, I received your edict to investigate the matter of the burial of



the clothes and cap at Yü Hua T'ai, mentioned in the writings of Ch'ü Ta-chün. . . . During the twelfth moon I returned to Nanking and heard there the report of Min Ao-yün. He first delegated a trustworthy educational official to make an inquiry in the neighborhood as though he were in the market for monuments. Min told him to gather the gentry well informed as to ancient lore about him, ask about Buddhist and Taoist shrines in the region round about the Yü Hua T'ai, and added that he must be discreet. Min also went himself to the place and examined it from top to bottom, front and back, and all about. He had the inscribed monuments by every mound, including those which were prone, scrubbed clean, in order to see and distinguish between them. But not a single stone marked the resting place of the apparel and hat of Ch'ü Ta-chün.

Fearing that Min's examination might not have been complete I got together all the officials in the city: circuit, prefectural, and district, and personally went out with them to the spot. We ascertained that the Yü Hua T'ai is to the southwest of one ridge, and the Mu Mo T'ing is to the southeast of another, and that the two ridges are half a *li* apart. In the middle of the hollow is a road, by which are many dwellings. On the flanks of the hills are several Buddhist and Taoist temples, concealed about which there may be a number of ancient grave mounds. I questioned both priests and monks in great detail. They replied,

"We have never heard of a monument over a grave of clothes and cap. Both the Yü Hua T'ai and Mu Mo T'ing are well known. On the hillsides are not only temples, but also wine shops and tea houses for visitors out on a ramble. Had this burial actually occurred, there is no possibility that it would have escaped notice and failed to come eventually to our attention. Why should we wish to keep the knowledge of it from you, and incriminate ourselves?"

I scrambled over the terraces of both ridges and at their foot, scrupulously searching everywhere: but no such stone was to be found. Each monument had already been marked with whitewash by Min. We looked at every character, but not one referred to the burial place of Ch'ü's clothes and cap.

It is my opinion that this rebel Ch'ü Ta-chün, most criminal of all men, while alive, was artfully mercurial: first a scholar, next in a twinkling a priest, or a monk, and then a layman again. He was inscrutable. Long after his death his corpse was unearthed by the Kuangtung authorities and dismembered. Moreover, at the places

through which the rebel passed, he had the hardihood to make at each a cunning burrow in order to provide a place for his wandering ghost of the future. Truly he was bereft of heaven's morals, hated by man and spirit.

Since the time this burial mound was made, over a century has elapsed, and no trace remains. Possibly it has been destroyed by lightning, and its roots obliterated; possibly the dogs and pigs have run over it, destroying even the ashes. Possibly even, this wily wretch penned a fib. At all events there now remains no certain evidence. That Ch'ü Ta-chün used to come to Nanking is true, but as priest to which temple is unknown. The years since are many, and all records gone.

Two further actions I have taken. First, I have written to ask Teh-pao to make Chü Nien-chen and other kinsmen give what information they can; second, I have appointed another trusted officer to go over the same ground once more in the attempt to get fresh evidence. If the clothes are unearthed, they will be destroyed, and I shall report on it. . . .

Received the 30th day of the 1st moon, 40th year of Ch'ien-lung [March 1, 1775]. Checked by the vermilion pencil: "Since the garments do not exist, let it go. It is enough."

## XI

### Memorial of Teh-pao:

. . . . On the 7th day of the 2nd moon of this year [March 8, 1775]. I received a letter from the governor-general Kao-chin, telling me of your majesty's command, following your discovery in Ch'ü Ta-chün's writings of a statement respecting the burial of his clothes and cap at Yü Hua T'ai, and his unsuccessful search for the same. Kao-chin related that Ch'ü had formerly come to a certain temple in Nanking as priest, but the years since were many, and the facts could not be determined. He wonders if possibly members of later generations might not carry the recollection, and asks me to clear it up in Kuangtung.

As a consequence I have deputed the prefect of Canton, together with the two magistrates of Nan-hai and P'an-yü, to hail in Ch'ü Nien-chen and the rest, to find out whether among the own sons and grandsons of Ch'ü Ta-chün or the members of the clan there were any who from bygone years had any knowledge of this question, or were able to read and write, and to bring them all to court. I and my officials have examined these people one by one.

The grandsons of Chü Ta-chün, Ch'ü Tse-k'uei and Ch'ü Tsung-ch'ang, both asseverated that at the time of his death neither was grown up. Later they were banished to Fukien. In the second year of Ch'ien-lung [1737] they were permitted to return. They assured us that they were ignorant of the temple in Nanking which their grandfather had entered as priest. They did know, however, his burial place. It is in P'an-yü-hsien, in the environs of Se-hsien-ts'un. Years ago it was planned to mutilate the corpse. Thanks to the clemency of the emperor Yung-cheng, this was avoided, and since then it has not been dug up and destroyed.

In the cross-examination of Ch'ü Nien-chen, Ch'ü Chao-se, the elderly member of the clan Ch'ü Hsi-p'eng, the village headman Ch'ü Hsien-hsiu, and the student of the Imperial Academy Ch'ü Yung-t'ai, all were found to agree with these statements. So the question at which Buddhist temple in Nanking during his lifetime Ch'ü Ta-chün entered the priesthood, and whether or not the burial of clothes and cap actually took place, it is now impossible to determine because of the long stretch of one hundred years that separates us from these events. I have informed the governor-general, Kao-chin, of this evidence, and must leave it to him to make still another investigation in the region of the Yü Hua T'ai.

For my part, I have looked back in the records to the original case wherein Ch'ü Ming-hung surrendered himself to justice in the ninth year of Yung-cheng [1731], and acknowledged that his father Ch'ü Ta-chün had been guilty of publishing seditious books. The Board adjudged that according to the law for high treason the corpse of said traitor, already long dead, should be dismembered and exposed to the public gaze. The emperor in his mercy, however, recurred to those passages in the law about abating punishment for cases of self-surrender. Since the son of Ch'ü Ta-chün had himself made accusation against his father's rebellious books—an action very different from that of wickedly obdurate and irreclaimable men—the emperor raised the question of according a more liberal and generous judgment, and asked the opinion of the Nine Ministries. Whereupon the Board of Punishments in conjunction with the Nine Ministries looked into the law on cases of self-surrender of criminals, and retracted that part of the judgment requiring the dismemberment and exposure of the corpse of Ch'ü Ta-chün. They likewise lessened the punishment for sons and grandsons which requires decapitation, and the punishment for near of kin which re-

quires enslavement, according to the law for abatement of penalties. The emperor concurred in this judgment and said, "Let it be so." Such is the record.

My next move was to delegate the judicial commissioner, Ch'en Yung-fu, and the magistrate of P'an-yü-hsien, Chang T'ien-chih, to proceed to Se-hsien-ts'un and there make inquiry. After their return they made the following statement:

"We commanded Ch'ü Tzu-k'uei and his fellows to point out said traitor's tomb. He lies buried just below the burial place of his father, Ch'ü I-yü. We then and there marked the spot with lime, put our seal upon it, told the local headman to watch over it, and returned to render our report."

In my humble opinion, Ch'ü Ta-chün wrote traitorous books, acted insanely, and committed a crime most heinous, inexcusable before heaven and earth. Since he lived over a hundred years ago, his shadow has disappeared and his bones have rotted away. But surely it would not be appropriate to leave still remaining beneath the light of heaven one horrid memento of him standing upright: his tumulus, which his descendants protect, bow to, and sweep at appropriate seasons every year. I recommend that you decree that this be dug up and destroyed, and his remains cut to pieces, in order to satisfy the hearts of men that their country's laws have been fulfilled. . . .

Received the 29th day, 3rd moon, 40th year of Ch'ien-lung [April 28, 1775]. Checked by the vermilion pencil, "It is not necessary."