

The Dream of *Ch'ou-ch'ih*: Su Shih's Awakening

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Abstract

Su Shih, one of China's most significant scholars, lived his life under the shadow of two mutually opposing unfulfilled ambitions: to serve actively in the highest levels of central government, and to lead a life of quiet spiritual and physical cultivation with his brother, Su Ch'ê. This tension is a major component in most of Su Shih's greatest literary writings, and is central to our understanding of the person and his works, and by extension, of the mid-Northern Sung political world. This paper follows the development of Su Shih's awareness, interpretation, and public expression of the details and implications of a dream he had in the last few months of 1091, and the great impact it had on him in his later years. By observing the poet as he eventually works through this particular dream, it is possible to follow the development of an idea, along with its outward expression, of which at first even the poet himself may not have been aware. Such analysis can provide glimpses into hitherto unrevealed intimate levels of his mind. We are then able to observe firsthand the process of one of China's foremost thinkers as he resolves the pivotal, paradoxical problem of his life, which manifested itself in some of the greatest pieces of Chinese traditional literature. We

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see Su Shih gradually accept his inability to fulfill his political ambition, and finally embrace his goal of leading a secluded life of idyllic simplicity, and spiritual and physical cultivation.

Key Words: Su Shih, Sung, Literature, Poetry, Dreams

1. Introduction

In the year 1092, while stationed as Prefect of Yang-chou 揚州, Su Shih 蘇軾(1037-1101) was given two stones, which he put in a dish of water. Just over one year later, Su Shih was stationed as Prefect of Ting-chou 定州 (modern-day Ting-hsien 定縣¹) when he found two other stones, which he again placed in a dish filled with water in his study, and then named his study after one of these two stones. One year later again, while on his way to his southern exile in Hui-Chou 惠州, Su Shih heard of a person who had an oddly shaped stone. He wanted to buy this stone for one hundred ounces of silver to accompany his other stones, but was not permitted the detour by the escorting official.

Why was Su Shih so interested in these stones, and why did he put them in dishes of water? Why would some curious stones be so important to him that he would attempt to go out of his way to buy them, and for such an extravagant price? These fascinations could of course be accounted for as simply an eccentricity of a tortured genius; but if examined more closely, much more is revealed. They disclose an intellectual realization of a problem which had been plaguing this literary master and political tragic hero since his youth.

This study shall examine the development of Su Shih's awareness, interpretation, and public expression of a dream he had in the last few months of 1091, and the great impact it had on him in his later years. By

1 T'án Ch'í-hsiang 譚其驥, ed. *Chung-kuo li-shih ti-t'ü chi* 中國歷史地圖集 (The Historical Atlas of China) (Shanghai: Ti-t'ü ch'ü-pan-she, 1982) (hereafter referred to as *LSTTC*), 6.17: 6.

chronologically tracing the poet's dealing with this particular dream, it is possible to follow the development of an idea, along with its outward expression, of which at first even the poet himself may not have been aware, thus providing a peek into yet unrevealed intimate levels of his mind. We are then able to observe firsthand the process of one of China's foremost thinkers resolving the pivotal paradoxical problem of his life, the problem which manifested itself in some of the greatest pieces of literary writing of the Chinese tradition: the struggle between devoting himself to a life of political service in a time of hostile competition, and his desire to seclude himself to a life of idyllic simplicity and spiritual cultivation.

2. Su Shih's Dreams

Su Shih's inner struggle and his contemporary social environment provided for multiple levels of reading in his poetry. Many times, Su Shih used poetry as a veiled form of criticism, or self-expression, purposefully hiding his intended meaning in a maze of possible interpretations. Although Su Shih had many enemies in positions of power who were constantly on the lookout for self-incriminating writings from him, the abstract nature of poetry made it possible for Su Shih to gain some amount of political immunity from these many enemies in the court. Oftentimes, these enemies, and later even opponents of what Su Shih came to represent after his death, spent great energy reading damaging implications into his poems.² In certain

² See, for example, Lu Yu's 陸游 (1125-1209) discussion of this problem in the foreword to *Shih Ssu-chien chu Tung-p'ò shih* 施司諫註東坡詩 (Remonstrator Shih's Annotations of Tung-p'ò's Poems):

As for Mister Tung-p'ò's 東坡 poetry, the basis is broad, the implications deep and expansive; it is so profound that I dare not speak of it. Recently, when I met with Sir Fan Chih-neng 范至能 (Ch'èng-ta 成大) in Shu, and thus discussed with him Tung-p'ò's poetry, he said with a sigh: "You ought to write a book explicating Tung-p'ò's meaning to leave behind for [future] scholars."

I declined, claiming inability. On another day, he brought it up again, so I raised two or three

especially sensitive situations, Su Shih went even further, using dreams as the subject of his poetry, thus providing an additional buffer against incrimination.

Dreams are a common subject in Su Shih's writings. Many of these dreams were fictitious, used only as a vehicle for other messages. At other times, however, these dreams were Su Shih's true dreams, which he would

points so as to prove this, saying: " ' Five acres gradually become a plan for the rest of life / Nine levels [heaven] have newly swept away the scars of the old nest ' ; ' In the distance we know that uncles and grandsons / have already become disciples of Lu ! How should these be interpreted? "

Chih-neng said: " When Tung-p'ò was exiled in Huang-chou, he figured he would not be recalled. This is why he said ' newly swept away the scars of the old nest. ' In the beginning of the Ch'ien-chung 建中 administration, all the people of the Yüanyu 元祐 administration were recalled, so he said ' have already become disciples of Lu. ' I'm afraid it's as simple as this. "

I said: " This is why I dare not accept your suggestion. In past times, the ancestors used the Three Institutes (*San Kuan* 三館) to support scholars and keep a reserve of generals and ministers. Once the [new] official system was implemented, the Three Institutes were done away with. Tung-p'ò was once in the Historiography Institute (*Chih-shih Kuan* 直史館) but after being exiled as a detached official, his position in the Historiography Institute had been revoked for long. By the time of this [poem], even the Historiography Institute had been done away with. This is why he said ' newly swept away the scars of the old nest. ' His references are this strict: Phoenix nest borders West of nine levels gate ' is from Li Yi-shan's 李義山 (Li Shang-yin 李商隱) poem.

" In the beginning of the Chien-chung period, the two ministers Han and Ts'eng controlled the government, and recalled all of the Yüan-yu people [to court]. Those not recalled were also given great strategic prefectures. Only Tung-p'ò and his brother were left in retirement. This line thus implies, shall we say, two people who cannot be fulfilled. The meaning is deep and the language is subtle. It is especially difficult to interpret.

" It is like ' In the cart, there is cloth, ' which means that, the closer one is, the easier the implications of the times are to be seen. ' The gray head buried as a lower official, the green robe [of the lowest ranked officials] has fair word's uses a lament of his concubine Chao-yün 朝雲 over Huang Shih-shih's 黃師 is lack of promotion. Thus, the meaning of this couplet is to criticize the usurpers above him. If I did not hear this from his close friends, it could never be known. I would have to know this about all [poems] before I could be satisfied. "

Chih-neng also sighed: " This is truly difficult! "

See *Su Shih shih-chi* 蘇軾詩集 (Collected Poems of Su Shih) (Taipei: Hsüeh-hai, 1991) (hereafter referred to as *SSSC*) p. 2833.

record upon awakening.³ Of these true dreams, it is often possible to observe a correlation of the subject of the dream to a matter of importance to himself at the time, thus simply reaffirming the folk-philosophy idea that dreams are expressions of the subconscious.⁴ Su Shih, in his preface to his brother's "Inscription on Dream Studio" 夢齋銘, expressed this idea, saying:

<p>世人心，依塵而有 ，未嘗獨立也。塵之 生滅，無一念住。夢 覺之間，塵塵相授。</p>	<p>The minds of common people exist through the dust [of worldly existence], never having been independent. They come into and go out of existence, not with one cogitation. Between dream and consciousness, the dusts [of worldly existence] interact.⁵</p>
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By following the evolution of the poet's own interpretation and discussion of one particular dream, we are able to gain a more intimate perspective on Su Shih's thoughts at the time than even most of his friends had, and thus keep one step ahead of what he offered his contemporaries in the form of public expression.⁶ This expression is observed in three steps, beginning with an

3 Some examples of this are "Poem of the Broken Lute" 破琴詩, *SSSC*, 33.1376; "A Letter from an Old Friend of Hang-chou Arrives; All Is Well" 杭州故人信至齊安, *SSSC*, 21.1090; "Hearing that Erudite of the National University Ch'iao Was Changed to the Left Vault and Appointed Prefect of Ch'in Chou, I Invite Him With a Poem to Drink" 聞喬太博換左藏知欽州以詩招飲, *SSSC*, 14.682; "Given to the Painter of the Emperor's Portrait, Master Miao-shan" 贈寫御容妙善師, *SSSC*, 15.770; "Stone Fungus" 石芝, *SSSC*, 20.1047; to mention but a few.

4 For a detailed discussion of dreams in the poetry of Su Shih, including criteria for differentiating between poems of true dreams and fictitious dreams, as well as lists thereof, see the author's *Su Shih shih-tz'u chung meng te yen-hsi* 蘇軾詩詞中夢的研析 (Dreams in the Poetry and Lyrics of Su Shih) Ph.D. diss., National Taiwan Normal University, 1996. For an example of such use of dreams in poetry and hidden authorial intention as a shield against political attack, see the author's "A New Reading of Su Shih's 'Poem of the Broken Lute,'" *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 28 (1998). See also Holger Kühnle, "Die Entdeckung des Erlebnisses im Traum: Über das schriftliche Mitteilen von Träumen bei Su Shi," master's thesis, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, 1994.

5 *Su Shih wen-chi* 蘇軾文集 (Collected Writings of Su Shih) (Beijing: Chung-hua, 1992) (hereafter referred to as *SSWC*), 19.575. For another translation of this piece, see Shuen-fu Lin, "Chia Pao-yü's First Visit to the Land of Illusion: An Analysis of a Literary Dream in Interdisciplinary Perspective," *CLEAR* 14 (1992), pp. 77-106.

6 Beside the sources listed in note 4, the only other source that employs such an approach is Wang Wen-kao 王文誥, *Su Wen-chung Kung shih pien chu chi-ch'eng* 蘇文忠公詩編註集成 (Collected

intimate conversation with close friends, then developing into non-verbal expression through the creation and appreciation of miniature landscapes, and finally into a public forum of literary expression.

3. The Dream

In the last few months of 1091, while stationed in Ying-chou 潁州 (modern-day Fu-yang-shih 阜陽市)⁷ Su Shih had a dream. Later references will show that this was a dream of particular interest to Su Shih, one which he would remember very clearly for years to come. It was very unusual that, on this occasion, he made no record of this dream at the time. He did however discuss it with at least one close friend, Ch'ao Pu-chih 晁補之(1053-1101). The first reference to this dream does not appear until the poem "Matching the Rhyme of 'Scholar Ch'ao Wu-chiu Welcomes Me'" 次韻晁无咎學士相迎, written as Su Shih arrived in Yang-chou. After serving five months as Prefect of Ying-chou, Su Shih was transferred to Yang-chou, the home of his late mentor, Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修(1007-1072). The poem is not outstanding in itself. It is a common occasional poem for Su Shih in his later years. After praising Ch'ao Pu-chih(Wu-chiu) he speaks of his own old age and how life is but an illusion. In the middle of the poem, we come upon two couplets :

夢中仇池千仞巖
便欲攬我青霞幘

In the dream, Ch'ao Pu-chih had thousand-yard cliffs;
Thus I wished to grab my azure robe of red clouds.

Editions and Commentaries of the Poems of Sir Su Wen-chung (Taipei: T'ai-wan hsieh-sheng shu-chü, 1987). Wang Wen-kaio, however, only hints at, but does not develop, the implications of Su Shih's dreams and their expressions. Although recent studies (cf. Note 16, Beata Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited: Buddhism in the Life and Writings of Su Shih* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994) do translate and discuss some of Su Shih's works on dreams, and Ronald C. Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shih* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 339-343, even suggests dreams to be a minor motif of Su Shih's lyrics, these studies do not address the underlying implications of Su Shih's references to his dreams.

7 *LSTTC*, 6.22: 3.

且須還家與婦計 Yet I must go home and discuss with my wife;
我本歸路連西南 My original road to retirement led to the South-West.⁸

To the average reader of the time, the meaning of the first line here would be quite unclear. All that is mentioned is that, in a dream, some dream, there were very high cliffs in a place named *Ch'ou-ch'ih*. As it happens, *Ch'ou-ch'ih* is indeed an actual place, located in the far west of *Ch'eng-chou* 成州(modern-day *Ch'eng-hsien* 成縣).⁹ Moreover, it is even listed in Taoist texts as being one of the thirty-six lesser heavenly caves (*tung-t'ien* 洞天), homes to immortals.¹⁰ During his exile in *Ch'in-chou* 秦州(modern-day *T'ien-shui-shih* 天水市)¹¹ the famous *T'ang* poet *Tu Fu* 杜甫(712-770) mentioned *Ch'ou-ch'ih* in the fourteenth poem of his series "Twenty Miscellaneous Poems on *Ch'in-chou*" 秦州雜詩二十首:

萬古仇池穴 Since time immemorial, the cave of *Ch'ou-ch'ih*,
潛通小有天 Leads secretly to a lesser heaven.
神魚今不見 Although the divine fish today cannot be found;
福地語真傳 The tales of the blessed place are true.
近接西南境 Near to the South-West border,
長懷十九泉 I often think of the nineteen springs.

⁸ *SSSC*, 35.1870.

⁹ *LSTTC*, 6.21: 6.

¹⁰ According to *T'ien-ti kung-fu t'u* 天地宮府圖 (Diagram of Palaces of the Universe) in *Yun-chi ch'i-chien* 雲笈七籤 (Taipei: *T'ai-wan tzu-yu ch'u-pan-she* 臺灣自由出版社, 1996) 27.401-411, there are ten greater heavenly caves and thirty-six lesser heavenly caves in which immortals live. These caves are all located in famous mountains. The first of these greater heavenly caves is, for example, in *Wang-wu* 王屋 mountain, north of modern-day *Lo-yang* 洛陽, and is named Heaven of Lesser Pure Void (Hsiao yu ch'ing hsu chih t'ien 小有清虛之天). Neither *Ch'ou-ch'ih* mountain, nor its cave, is listed as one of the heavenly caves, but the twenty-first lesser heavenly cave is *Hsiu-lo Ch'ang-chen T'ien* 秀樂長真天, located on *Pai-shih* 白石 mountain. The exact location of this mountain is not certain. *T'ien-ti kung-fu t'u* places it either in *Yu-lin-chou* 鬱林州, in the Southern part of the South China Sea, or in *Han-shan* 含山 county in *Ho-chou* 和州(modern-day *An-hui*). There is no record of a *Pai-shih* mountain in *Ho-chou* during the Northern Sung dynasty, and no record of *Yu-lin-chou* in the South China Sea. In the Northern Sung, however, there was a village named *Pai-shih* (modern-day *His-ho* 西和) approximately thirty kilometers north-east of *Ch'ou-ch'ih* mountain. *Ch'ou-ch'ih* may thus be a lesser heavenly cave.

¹¹ *LSTTC*, 6.21: 6.

何時一茅屋	When will there be one grass hut,
送老白雲邊	In which to entrust my old age, beside the white clouds. ¹²

Tu Fu says Ch'òu-ch'ih is a blessed place. Although one can no longer come upon such marvels as divine fish, it is still a very attractive location in which to retire. Over five hundred years before Su Shih arrived in Yang-chou and wrote his poem to Ch'ao Pu-chih, Tu Fu was already hoping to retire to Ch'òu-ch'ih and follow a life of quietude in a blessed place, a lesser heaven. This explains the second line of Su Shih's poem; a blue robe decorated with a red cloud design is a common robe of Taoist practitioners. Su Shih wishes not only to retire, as Tu Fu wished, but to don the robes of a Taoist practitioner and begin a life of spiritual cultivation.

4. The Struggle

Retirement had been on Su Shih's mind for a long time. In fact, several sources show us that he had been considering it since childhood, before he had even left his home. In a letter Su Shih wrote while in exile in Hai-nan to Wang Hsiang 王庠, he said that when he was "young, I wanted to flee into the mountain forests, yet my elders did not permit this, and forced me to wed and serve in the government."¹³ Considering that this letter was written when Su Shih was sixty years old, while in extreme exile on the then remote island of Hai-nan, some of the resoluteness of this passage may be attributed to nostalgia. Examination of earlier evidence, however, does support the idea that political success was not always Su Shih's highest goal. For example, one cold winter night in 1061, while Su Shih and his brother were preparing for the Special Examination, Su Shih happened upon a poem by Wei Ying-wu 韋應物 (ca.740-ca.830) titled "Shown to Ch'üan-chen and Yüan-ch'ang" 示全真元常, containing the two lines: "Who knows [which] windy and rainy

12 *Tu-shih hsiang-chu* 杜詩詳注 (Detailed Annotated Poems of Tu) (Taipei: Li-jen Bookstore 里仁書局, 1980) 7.584.

13 軾少時本欲逃竄山林，父兄不許，迫以婚宦。See "To Wang Hsiang, First of Five Letters" 與王庠五首之一, *SSWC*, 60.1820.

night, / [We] can again sleep in opposite beds this way."¹⁴ As Su Shih read this couplet, it occurred to him that after they finished the examination and began their lives as government officials, they would not have many more opportunities for such intimate times. At this realization, the two brothers made an oath that they would retire early and live out the rest of their lives together in seclusion. This is why, upon parting with his brother, Su Ch'è 蘇轍 (1039-1112), Su Shih wrote the lines:

寒燈相對記疇昔	Under a cold lamp, facing each other, remembering matters past,
夜雨何時聽蕭瑟	In night rains, when shall we hear flute and zither?
君知此意不可忘	Sir, you know this sentiment must not be forgotten,
慎勿苦愛高官位	Cautiously avoid the bitter love of high official rank! ¹⁵

The first two lines refer to the oath between Su Shih and his brother. The last two lines warn his brother not to become too infatuated with the allure of high rank and worldly success. Although the letter to Wang Hsiang was written by an aged, disillusioned Su Shih reflecting back on his youth, Su Shih wrote this poem when he was but twenty-four years old, still young, vigorous, and full of ideals.

From this point on, Su Shih met with countless disappointments in his political career. Charges against him of slander and treason became commonplace, once, as mentioned above, even resulting in his arrest and a threatened death sentence.¹⁶ Much of Su Shih's most beautiful and interesting poetry concerns his trips into natural surroundings. During his first assignment in Hang-chou 杭州 (1071-1074) he often made use of his spare

14 寧知風雨夜，復此對床眠。 See *Wei Su-chou chi* 韋蘇州集 (Collected Works of Wei Ying-wu), 3.11a.

15 See "On the Nineteenth Day of the Eleventh Month of the Year of Hsin-ch'ou, After Parting with Tzu-yu Outside the Western Gate of Cheng-chou, I Composed this Poem on Horseback to Send to Him." 辛丑十一月十九日既子由別於鄭州西門之外馬上賦詩一篇寄之, *SSSC*, 3.95."

16 In his article "Poetry and Politics in 1079: The Crow Terrace Poetry Case of Su Shih," *CLEAR* 12 (1990), pp. 35-44, Charles Hartman gives an in-depth discussion of the trial, its implications, and its consequences, as well as providing a discussion of Su Shih's personality and ideological beliefs. For an examination of Su Shih's life up to his arrest and resulting exile in Huang-chou (1080-1084), see Michael A. Fuller, *The Road to East Slope: The Development of Su Shi's Poetic*

time to go into the surrounding mountains, where he would often meet with literate monks and enjoy the peace of monasteries, or he would go drinking on West Lake with friends. Many times, he referred to himself as not fitting the times,¹⁷ and compared his nature to that of the “deer and elk.”¹⁸ Such poetry did not abate after he left Hang-chou. In fact, it became a regular mode of poetry for Su Shih throughout the rest of his life.

Despite this will to escape the sordid world of Northern Sung politics, Su Shih did feel a strong obligation and responsibility to serve the state and its people, instilled in the darkest depths of his heart by his strong Confucian education, and most certainly plenty of paternal indoctrination from his father, Su Hsün 蘇洵(1009-1066). Much has been said about this side of Su Shih's personality.¹⁹ Although he claims in his letter to Wang Hsiang to have

Voice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990). For a discussion of Su Shih's poetry during his two periods of exile, first in Huang-chou and then in the far South, see Kathleen M. Tomlonovic, *Poetry of Exile and Return: A Study of Su Shih (1037-1101)*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1989. For a general discussion of Su Shih, see Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*.

- 17 For just a few examples, see “First of Two Quatrains Sent to Tzu-yu Upon Arriving at Hang-chou” 初到杭州寄子由二絕·其一, *SSSC*, 7.314; “Sent to Editor Ts'ên” 送岑著作, *SSSC*, 7.329; “Visiting Ching Mountain” 游徑山, *SSSC*, 7.350; “Presented to the Examination Officials While Overseeing the Examination” 監試呈諸試官, *SSSC*, 8.366. The density of such poems in Su Shih's collected poems is evident by the close proximity of these examples within *SSSC*.
- 18 See, for example, “Matching the Rhyme of K'ung Wen-chung's ‘Given on Meeting’” 次韻孔文仲推官見贈, *SSSC*, 8.384; “On the Road to Ching Mountain, Matching ‘Answering Superior Chou,’ Also Given to Court Aide Su” 徑山道中次韻答周長官兼贈蘇寺丞, *SSSC*, 10.498. For further discussion of Su Shih's ‘wild nature’ 野性, see Wang Hong 王洪, *Su Shih shih-ko yen-chiu 蘇軾詩歌研究* (A Study of Su Shih's Poems) (Peking: Chao-hua ch'ü-pan she 朝華出版社, 1993), pp.1-49.
- 19 Beside all references listed in note 16, see also Peter K. Bol, “*This Culture of Ours*”: *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); also T'ang Ling-ling 唐玲玲 and Chou Wei-min 周偉民, *Su Shih ssu-hsiang yen-chiu 蘇軾思想研究* (A Study of Su Shih's Thought) (Taipei: Wen-shih-che ch'ü-pan she 文史哲出版社, 1996); Wang Shui-chao 王水照, “Su Shih te jen-sheng ssu-k'ao han wen-hua hsing-ko” 蘇軾的人生思考和文化性格 (Su Shih's Philosophy on Life and [his] Cultural Characteristics) and “Su Shih te cheng-chih t'ài-tu han cheng-chih shih” 蘇軾的政治態度和政治詩 (Su Shih's Political Attitudes and Political Poetry) in Wang Shui-chao, *Su Shih lun-kao 蘇軾論稿* (Articles on Su Shih) (Taipei: Wan-ch'uan-lou t'ü-shu 萬卷樓圖書, 1994).

been forced into marrying and leading a political life, his successes in the National, Ministry of Rites, and Palace Examinations (1056-1057) and then in the Special Examination (1061) were not those of a reluctant student. He came in second in the three former examinations, and with top scores in the latter.²⁰ The fifty essays written for this examination are a very impressive and complex plan for an overall political reform.²¹ Such an accomplishment of political theorizing would not likely be a product of someone interested only in escaping to the mountains.

This paradox in Su Shih's personality was not resolved during the first half of his life. Su Shih did however come to a compromise early in his career. His initial assignment, as Administrative Assistant of Feng-hsiang 鳳翔 Prefecture, was his first taste of real world administrative work. He was disappointed. This was a position of clerk, and not a great court minister. To add to the trouble, this was also Su Shih's first time away from family. He spent much time writing poems to his brother and reminiscing about his home in Shu 蜀 (modern-day Ssu-ch'uan Province) during the holidays. Things did not improve when the new Prefect Ch'en Hsi-liang 陳希亮 came into office in 1063. Su Shih did not get along well with Ch'en Hsi-liang, partly because Ch'en thought this young and promising official to be overly proud and inexperienced, and thus purposefully harassed him. Su Shih became even more despondent, refusing even to attend parties hosted by the Prefect.

During his assignment in Feng-hsiang, one more event pushed Su Shih to question seriously the value of a political life. His long-revered uncle, Su Huan 蘇渙 (1000-1062) died. In an epitaph for his uncle, Su Shih wrote:

20 Passing scores for the Special Examination were divided into five levels, the highest possible being the third level, followed by the fourth and fifth. Although there was a first and second level, they could never be achieved. For a detailed discussion, see Wang Te-i 王德毅 "Sung-tai hsien-liang fang-cheng k'ò-k'ao" 宋代賢良方正科考 (The Sung dynasty Special Examination) in *Sungshih yen-chiu lun-chi* 宋史研究論集 (Collected Articles on Sung History Studies) Taipei: Commercial Press, 1968) pp. 111-180.

21 For a detailed examination of these essays, see Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, pp. 259-269.

嗚呼！昔我先祖之後，諸父、諸姑，森如鷹行。三十年間，死生契闊，惟編禮與伯父，千里相望。宦遊東西，奔走四海，走家如忘。至有生子成童而不識者，茲言可傷。方約退居卜築，相與終老，逍遙翱翔。嗚呼伯父，一日捨去，有志弗償。

Alas! In former times, after my grandfather, my uncles and aunts were plenty. Within thirty years, living and dead have been separated. Only my father and uncle [and I] can long for each other from a thousand miles away. On official tours of duty east and west, rushing throughout the land, he left his home, as if having forgotten it, even so far as having had a son born and grown up, yet not recognizing him. Saying this pains me so. He only just planned to retire and build a home, so as to grow old together, to fly high and free. Alas, Uncle! In a day, you are gone. You had aspirations, yet no compensation.²²

It is clear that Su Shih not only bemoans the death, but also the fate, of his uncle. His uncle sacrificed his family and his lifetime to his career, yet in the end, he received no reward. Just when he decided to retire and live out his last years together with his family in quiet seclusion, he died. Su Shih had an agreement with his brother that they would retire early and live out their years in quiet seclusion. Could it be possible that he would face the same fate as his uncle?

Su Shih was still seriously considering an alternate avenue, one of seclusion and Taoist cultivation. In a later poem, “Wang I Left [to be] Chien-chou Directorate of Coinage, and Asked for a Poem and Cursive Calligraphy” 王頤赴建州錢監求詩及草書, written in 1069, Su Shih tells of how he and Wang I stayed up late into the night discussing Taoist cultivation techniques:

丁寧勸學不死訣	You reminded and encouraged me to learn the formula of immortality,
自言親受方瞳翁	You said you received it yourself from a square-eyed old man. ²³

²² See *SSWC*, 63.1958.

²³ It is said that one who has attained Taoist enlightenment has square pupils and green irises. See *SSSC*, 6.237.

Half a year after the arrival of Ch'ên Hsi-liang, Su Shih made a trip to a nearby Taoist temple, where he read through the *Taoist Canon*. The next day, he wrote a poem, "Reading the Taoist Canon" 讀道藏, in which he mentions several Taoist meditation methods, and then sighs:

何暇及天下	What leisure have I [to care] for the land,
幽憂吾未除	My deep trouble I have not yet eliminated. ²⁴

Although he says he has no time to care for worldly matters, he shall not express a serious will to pursue active practice of Taoist cultivation techniques until his second exile, to the far South. Up to his visit to the Taoist temple to read the Taoist Canon, Su Shih had been struggling with the desire for such practice. However, he finally came to the conclusion that he had first to accomplish his worldly goals (of political success) before he could retire to a life of seclusion.

Almost thirty years later, Su Shih dreamt his dream of *Ch'ou-ch'ih*. Although he had been hesitant to pursue his desire for a reclusive life up to this point, in his poem to Ch'ao Pu-chih, he exposes in concrete terms his wish to practice Taoist self-cultivation techniques. After stating this desire in the first two lines, Su Shih quickly follows up with the third and fourth lines, saying that he must first clear this plan with his wife, as up to this point, his plan had been to retire to his family home in Shu.

Although Su Shih did mention a dream of *Ch'ou-ch'ih* in this poem, he did not include any note explaining the source of this reference, as is common in other poems with references to something of a personal nature.²⁵ Poetry, and especially the poetry of one of the most famous literati in the land, is by its very nature a form of public expression, and so by including a

²⁴ See SSSC, 4.181.

²⁵ See, for example, "Answering Tzu-yu's 'Eleven poems recording grasses and trees in the garden'; No. 10" 和子由記園中草木十一首其十, SSSC, 5.207; "Second of Two Poems Answering Shen Li-chih's 'Sending Off'" 和沈立之留別二首其二, SSSC, 8.379; and many of the poems cited later in this paper.

reference to this dream in a poem, Su Shih had already placed the dream in the realm of public discussion. The lack of an explanation suggests that the recipient of the poem, Ch'ao Pu-chih, understood its meaning, yet at the same time also implies that Su Shih was not yet prepared to discuss the details of this dream in a forum beyond his immediate friends. Not long afterwards, however, he wrote the poem "Twin Stones," in the preface of which he did discuss the source of this dream:

雙石 并敘

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：夢古仇池穴，潛通小有天。乃戲作小詩，為僚友一笑。

Twin Stones—with preface

When I arrived in Yang-chou, I acquired two rocks. One was green, peaked and cragged, with a hole reaching the back. One was white and reflective like a mirror. I submerged them in a dish of water and placed it on a table. Suddenly I remembered when I was in Ying-chou, I dreamt someone invited me to stay in an official's residence. The plaque [above the door] said "Ch'ou-ch'ih." When I awoke, I recited Tu Fu's poem, saying: "Since time immemorial, the cave of Ch'ou-ch'ih / Leads secretly to a lesser heaven." Thus, I wrote this little poem in jest, so as to provoke a laugh from colleagues and friends.

夢時良是覺時非
汲水埋盆故自癡
但見玉峰橫太白
便從鳥道絕峨眉
秋風與作煙雲意
曉日令涵草木姿
一點空明是何處
老人真欲住仇池

When in dream all is beautifully good, when awake false;
I draw some water and fill the dish, and so daydream by myself.
I now see a jade peak and horizontal Mount T'ai-pai;
Then following the bird's path, I pass Ê-mei.
The fall wind joins in to suggest fog and cloud;
The dawn sun invokes the beauty of timber and vegetation.
A little bit of clear light; what is this place?
This old man truly wishes to live in Ch'ou-ch'ih.²⁶

The preface tells of how Su Shih collected two interestingly shaped stones, one which looked like T'ai-pai Mountain in Feng-hsiang, his first station of appointment, and one which looked like Ê-mei Mountain in Su Shih's homeland, Shu. Placing the two stones in a dish of water to ponder, Su Shih says that the view of these stones reminds him of a dream he previously had

26 SSSC, 35.1880.

while in Ying-chou, and consequently, he gives specific details concerning this dream of *Ch'ou-ch'ih*. He describes the contents of the dream, how he dreamt he visited *Ch'ou-ch'ih*, as well as his reaction upon awakening, quoting the poem by Tu Fu mentioned above; but the details of the dream are still very vague.

By giving the details of his dream in the preface to this poem, Su Shih is now bringing the dream itself into the public forum. In addition, he is directly discussing the influence the dream has had on himself. By placing these two stones in the dish of water so as to bring out their colors and markings, Su Shih created a miniature landscape. In the last two lines of the poem, he asks himself what place this miniature landscape is, and then responds to this question by expressing his wish to live in *Ch'ou-ch'ih*. Su Shih, by making this miniature landscape, is in fact building a physical representation of this ideal “bit of clear light,” the *Ch'ou-ch'ih* of his dream. The last line of the preface, however, claims that this poem was written only “so as to provoke a laugh from colleagues and friends.” Although he has brought the topic out for public discussion and expression, he is still not ready to make it a serious subject. The process of conceding to fate and giving up his hope of ever making a great impact on history is a slow and difficult one.

Another reason why he said that this poem was written only to provoke a laugh from his peers was that Su Shih was still in active service in the government. Although he was coming to the realization that he would never be able to fit in to the political world of the court, he was at the time still holding a very high rank of office, and was able, on a local level, to continue with public works. This may be the reason why, upon being once again recalled to the court by the empress dowager to be tutor to the young emperor Che-tsung 哲宗 (r. 1086-1100) Su Shih did not mention any more of his dream. Su Shih remained in the court for the next sixteen months. Although he continued to request assignments in the northwestern border

areas, these were not granted to him by the empress dowager, who still remembered the wish of her late husband, Emperor Jen-tsung 仁宗 (r. 1023-1063), to make the Su brothers prime ministers one day. It was not until just before her death in 1093 that Su Shih was given a transfer to Ting-chou by the young emperor. Before his departure, Su Shih wished to meet with the newly empowered emperor to say good-bye and to leave him with some advice, for he knew better than anyone, having been his tutor for six years,²⁷ that the emperor was still inexperienced in the ways of the world, and susceptible to bad influences. Unfortunately, it was too late. During the first eight years of his reign, the grandmother of the emperor, the empress dowager, had held power as regent, and all officials spoke to her, and not to the emperor. When the emperor reached his teen years, he began to resent this disrespect. Now that he had finally attained power, he was both bitter and rebellious, and thus did not grant the customary meeting. Su Shih knew at this point that he had lost all hope of useful service to the state. The best he could do was to leave a letter to the emperor, begging him to wait three years for reflection before implementing any major changes. The emperor, as Su Shih himself expected, did not heed any such advice, and the court quickly fell into disarray.

Upon arrival in Ting-chou, Su Shih found the important military outpost in a very chaotic and corrupted state, and so he began, as usual, to throw himself into the task of clearing up the local government and helping the people. This time, however, the court would not even respond to his urgent pleas for materials or new government regulations. Whereas before, Su Shih figured he could at least serve the people on a local level, now he lost all

27 Su Shih was assigned to be tutor to the emperor in the seventh month of *Yüan-yü* 2 (1087). See Chên Hsiung-hsün 陳雄勳, *San-su chi ch'i san-wen chih yen-chiu* 三蘇及其散文之研究 (A Study of the Three Sus and their Prose) (Taipei: Wen-shih-che ch'ü-pan she 文史哲出版社, 1991), p. 80; also Ts'ao Shu-ming 曹樹銘, *Su Tung-pò tz'u* 蘇東坡詞 (Lyrics of Su Tung-pò) (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1983), 2.602.

hope for any active contribution to society in his lifetime.²⁸

Facing this situation, as he was still in active service in the government, in name, if not in fact, he still did not mention his dream of *Ch'ou-ch'ih*, but Su Shih did resume his interest in miniature rock landscapes. Not only did he still have his "twin stones" with him, but he also found two new stones. It was shortly after arriving in Ting-chou in 1093 that Su Shih wrote the first of three poems to an Official T'eng:

次韻滕大夫三首	<i>Matching Official T'eng's Three Poems—Number One—Snowy</i>
· 其一 · 雪浪石	<i>Waves Stones</i>
太行西來萬馬屯	Come west over T'ai-hang Range, to this camp of ten-thousand horses,
勢與岱岳爭雄尊	Its presence rivaling the majesty of Tai ²⁹ and Yüeh ³⁰ Mountains.
飛狐上黨天下脊	Fei-hu and Shang-tang are the spine of the land,
半掩落日先黃昏	Blocking half of the setting sun, hastening the dusk.
削成山東二百郡	Dividing the east of the [T'ai-hang] range into two-hundred counties,
氣壓代北三家村	Its presence covers the three villages north of Tai [-chou].
千峰右卷蠹牙帳	A thousand peaks swirl left, towering as a general's tent,
崩崖鑿斷開土門	Cragged cliffs drilled through, opening T'u-men.
謁來城下作飛石	Coming and going below the gate, making flying rocks,
一礮驚落天驕魂	One catapult struck horror into the souls of the northern nomads.
承平百年烽燧冷	Successive peace for a hundred years, the beacon fires cold;
此物僵臥枯榆根	This thing lay still at the root of a dry elm.
畫師爭摹雪浪勢	Painters compete to capture the magnificence of Snowy Waves;
天工不見雷斧痕	Marks of the lightning axe cannot be seen on this piece of heaven's work.
離堆四面繞江水	Around the four sides of Li-tui Mountain circles river water;
坐無蜀士誰與論	No Shu gentleman at seat, with whom can I discuss these.
老翁兒戲作飛雨	The old fellow plays a child's game, making flying rain;

28 For more on the events in the court after Su Shih's departure, see Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*, pp. 104-105.

29 Modern-day T'ai Mountain 泰山 in Shan-tung Province. See *LSTTC*, 6.14: 4.

30 Modern-day Heng Mountain 衡山 in Hu-nan Province. See *LSTTC*, 6.64: 6.

把酒坐看珠跳盆	Holding wine, he sits watching pearls bouncing in the dish.
此身自幻孰非夢	This body is its own illusion, what is not but a dream;
故國山水聊心存	Landscapes of the old country remain only in my heart. ³¹

The first half of this poem describes the magnificent landscape and historical relevance of the T'ài-hang Range, on which Ting-chou is located. Fei-hu³² and Shang-tang³³ in line 3 are both peaks on the T'ài-hang Range, the former approximately 100 km NNW of Ting-chou, and the latter approximately 300 km SSW of Ting-chou. Lines 7-10 refer to the heroic victories of T'ang general Li Kuang-pi 李光弼 (708-764) who managed to fight off the rebel forces during the An Lu-shan Rebellion (755-6). Li Kuang-pi won his initial victory as he stormed through T'u-men Pass on the West of the T'ài-hang Range.³⁴ He came to be known as a hero of the loyalist forces, and partly responsible for saving the T'ang dynasty.³⁵ Halfway through, in line twelve, a dead "thing" is mentioned, yet we have no way of knowing what it is, even with the clues in the following two lines. Li-tui Mountain in line 15 is the name of a mountain in Shu. It is only in the end that we understand that this poem may not be about the actual mountain itself, but about something else found at the base of an elm tree. With the help of the preface to an inscription Su Shih wrote for his study in Ting-chou, we begin to understand what the subject of this poem really is:

予於中山後圃得黑 石，白脈，如蜀孫 位、孫知微所畫石 間奔流，盡水之變	I found a black stone with white veins in the back garden in Chung-shan. It looks just like the waterfalls in the rocks painted by Sun Wei and Sun Chih of Shu, exhausting the changes of water. I also found a white stone with curved
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³¹ See SSSC, 37.1997.

³² Modern-day Lai-yüan 涇源, in He-pei Province. See *LSTTC*, 6.17: 6.

³³ Modern-day Ch'ang-chih-shih 長治市, in Shan-hsi Province. See *LSTTC*, 6.16: 5.

³⁴ See *LSTTC*, 6.18: 4.

³⁵ See *Chiu T'ang shu* 舊唐書 (Old Book of T'ang), 110.3304; *Hsin T'ang shu* 新唐書 (New Book of T'ang), 136.4584. For a detailed account of Li Kuang-pi's campaign, see Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, ed. *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 3.457-459.

。又得白石曲陽， side. I prepared a large dish to hold them, submerging them
 為大盆以盛之，激 in water, and named their room " Snowy Waves Study. "³⁶
 水其上，名其室曰
 雪浪齋。

Now the last four lines of the poem become clear. Su Shih is sitting in his Snowy Waves Study looking at his two stones submerged in a dish of water, dreaming that they are in fact the real mountains T'ai-hang and Li-tui. Again, the stones are submerged in water so as to bring out the colors and patterns on their surfaces. As he looks at these stones, he envisions the great magnificence of the real mountains. The " pearls jumping in the dish "refers to two famous poems Su Shih wrote during his two stays in Hang-chou. During his first stay, in 1072, Su Shih wrote the famous fifth poem of the set " Five poems written while drunk at Lake View Pavilion on the twenty-sixth day of the sixth month "六月二十七日望湖樓醉書五絕：

黑雲翻墨未遮山	Black clouds, spilt ink, have not yet covered the hills;
白雨跳珠亂入船	White rain, bouncing pearls, spill into the boat.
卷地風來忽吹散	Gales, sweeping up the land, suddenly disperse them;
望湖樓下水如天	Beneath Lake View Pavilion, the water is as the heavens. ³⁷

Fifteen years later, when he returned again to Hang-chou, he wrote " Drinking on the lake with fellow examinee Mo "與莫同年雨中飲湖上：

到處相逢是偶然	Meeting each other upon arrival is mere chance;
夢中相對各華顛	Facing each other in this dream, both are gray.
還來一醉西湖雨	On return, drunk again, with rain on West Lake;
不見跳珠十五年	I haven't seen these bouncing pearls for fifteen years. ³⁸

The bouncing pearls was a metaphor with which Su Shih was particularly pleased. In the past, when he saw these bouncing pearls, he was on his favorite lake, West Lake, in Hang-chou, leading a life of carefree and leisurely abandonment, in poetry if not in actuality. When Su Shih speaks of

³⁶ See *SSWC*, 19.574.

³⁷ *SSSC*, 7.340.

³⁸ *SSSC*, 31.1647.

pearls bouncing in the dish, he is again picturing such a carefree state. As he sits and plays with his miniature mountain-scape, not only is he imagining the mountains to be actual mountains, but he is envisioning himself to be in the scene, leading a carefree life, surrounded by Li-tui mountain of his homeland, to where he wishes to retire and lead a leisurely life of self-cultivation.

In fact, all is only the figment of an old man's imagination as he plays with his miniature landscape. Su Shih is himself aware of the underlying significance of his game, and this awareness causes a moment of reflection. He realizes that he too, and even all of Creation, is but an illusion. The landscape of his homeland, Shu, is now also no more than a memory, never again to be attained in any form more real than that of this miniature landscape. Su Shih has finally realized, and accepted, that he will not be allowed to retire the way he and his brother had planned thirty years before. Certainly, Su Shih had some premonition of his imminent exile to the far south.

5. Acceptance

After more than twenty years of internal struggle, of suppressing his desire to lead a life of peaceful self-cultivation in favor of pursuing a life of public service in the central government, Su Shih was finally prepared not only to give up his hopes of ever accomplishing his goal in government, but also to begin actively searching for a chance to find his ultimate place of reclusion. In his mind (and dreams), Ch'ou-ch'ih was just such a place. By building miniature landscapes out of rocks that looked like mountains he knew, he was actually building his ideal place of retreat. When he sat by his miniature landscapes and splashed water so as to watch the drops splashing like rain on his mountains, he was instilling life into his utopia. To Su Shih, collecting these curious rocks was not simply a form of sophisticated

interest; it was his method of dissolving a life-time of pain, defeat, and disillusionment. It is no wonder that he was willing to renovate the study in Ting-chou and name it "Snowy Waves" after his miniature landscape. It is also little wonder that, while passing through Chiu-chiang on his way to his place of exile in the far south-east province of Kuang-tung, he was willing to try to buy other interesting stones for the amount of one hundred ounces of silver:

<p>壺中九華詩 并引 湖口人李正臣蓄異石 九峰，玲瓏宛轉，若 窗櫺然。予欲以百金 買之，與仇池石為偶 ，方南遷未暇也。名 之曰壺中九華，且以 詩記之。</p>	<p><i>Chiu-hua in a Bottle— with preface</i> Li Cheng-ch'en of Hu-k'ou had an odd stone. It was delicate yet crooked and curved, like the carved sill of a window. I wanted to buy it for one hundred ounces of silver to keep my Ch'ou-ch'ih stones company, but I was on my way south, and did not have time. I named it Chiu-hua in a Bottle, and recorded it with a poem.</p>
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<p>清溪電轉失雲峰 夢裏猶驚翠掃空 五嶺莫愁千峰外 九華今在一壺中 天池水落層層見 玉女窗虛處處通 念我仇池太孤絕 百金歸買碧玲瓏</p>	<p>The clear creek, like lightning, disappears in the clouded peak; In dream even I am shocked by the emerald sweeping the sky. Worry not that the five ranges are beyond the thousand peaks; Chiu-hua is now in a bottle. The waters of the hanging lake can be seen in layers; The jaden maiden's window is empty, all ways are clear. Worried that my Ch'ou-ch'ih are too lonely, One hundred ounces of silver is to buy a home of emerald delicateness.³⁹</p>
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Chiu-hua is the name of a mountain in modern day An-hui province.⁴⁰ The five ranges in line three were the border between the cultured central region considered during Su Shih's time to be China proper and the underdeveloped southern area. Passing over the five ranges was usually a very traumatic experience for many exiled officials, as it meant being exiled from

³⁹ See *SSSC*, 38.2047.

⁴⁰ See *LSTTC*, 6.24: 3.

their own culture.⁴¹ Su Shih, however, did not worry, because he hoped that he could take Chiu-hua Mountain, which is located in China proper, with him. To Su Shih, these stones were not only curiosities to be played with, but very real external representations of a desire all too long suppressed.

It was after he arrived at his place of exile, Hui-chou, that Su Shih began seriously and diligently to pursue Taoist spiritual cultivation practices in an attempt to attain the spiritual freedom not only to find, but to build within himself, a utopia such as his Ch'ou-ch'ih. Four years after writing his poem of "Twin Stones," Su Shih wrote a poem matching "Reading the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*" 讀山海經, by T'ao Yüan-ming 陶淵明 (365-427) in which he again mentions his dream of Ch'ou-ch'ih, but this time includes a note, just in case the reader has not read or remembered his "Twin Stones."

和陶讀山海經 . 并引	<i>Answering T'ao's "Reading the Classic of Mountains and</i>
. 其十三	<i>Seas" with preface Number Thirteen</i>
東坡信畸人	Tung-p'ò is truly an enlightened eccentric;
涉世真散材	Entangled in the world, what a waste of talent.
仇池有歸路	Ch'ou-ch'ih offers a way home;
羅浮豈徒來	Certainly coming to Lo-fu was not in vain.
踐蛇及茹蠱	I step on snakes and eat poisons;
心空了無猜	My mind is void, still and without doubts.

41 Upon his crossing of this range, Sung Chih-wen 宋之問 (d. 712) wrote the poem "Written on the Northern Lodge of Ta-yü Range" 題大庾嶺北驛:

陽月南飛雁	The autumn moon, wild geese fly South;
傳聞至此迴	Mail and news are turned back at this point.
我行殊未已	Only my journey comes not yet to an end;
何日復歸來	What day will I return back again?
江靜潮初落	The river is peaceful, the tide just fallen;
林昏瘴不開	The forest is dark, the vapors not yet arisen.
明朝望鄉處	Tomorrow morning, when I look toward home,
應見隴頭梅	I ought to see a hill of plums. (See Sun Chu 孫洙, <i>T'ang-shih san-pai-shou</i> 唐詩三百首 (Three Hundred Poems of the T'ang Dynasty) (HongKong: Chung-hua, 1981) p. 78.)

The last line refers to the top of Ta-yü Range, which was covered with plum trees. Su Shih also makes reference to the plum trees in other poems.

攜手葛與陶
歸哉復歸哉

Holding hands with Ko and T'ao,
Let me retire, and retire again!⁴²

In line 1, Su Shih refers to himself as an enlightened eccentric (*chi-jen* 畸人). This term is from the sixth chapter of the *Chuang Tzu* 莊子 (The Chuang Tzu), "Ta tsung-shih" 大宗師, where it is defined as one who is "ostracized from society, yet equal with heaven."⁴³ Lo-fu, in the fourth line, refers to Lo-fu mountain, where the famous Taoist practitioner and author of the *Pao-p'u Tzu* 抱朴子, Ko Hung 葛洪 (ca. 280-ca. 343), spent the latter half of his life trying to find the elixir of immortality and practicing Taoist exercises. Legend says that it was also on Lo-fu mountain that Ko Hung finally ascended to heaven. Ko and T'ao in the last couplet refer to Ko Hung and T'ao Yüan-ming. Su Shih attached a note to the third line, saying:

在穎州，夢至一官
居，顧視堂上，榜
曰仇池。覺而念之
，仇池，武都氏故
地，楊難當所保，
余何為而居之。明
日以問客，客有趙
令時者曰：「此乃
福地，小有洞天之
附庸也。杜子美蓋
云：萬古仇池穴，
潛通小有天。」

In Ying-chou, I dreamt I was at an official's residence. I
When looked up over the main hall, I saw the plaque
saying "Ch'ou-ch'ih." When I awoke, I thought of this.
Ch'ou-ch'ih is the original territory of [the Ti tribe of] Wu-
tu, which Yang Nan-tang protected.⁴⁴ Why would I live
there? The next day, I asked my guests, and a guest named
Chao Ling-chih said: "This is a blessed place, a vassal
state of a lesser heaven." Tu Tzu-mei [Fu] said: "Since
time immemorial, the cave of Ch'ou-ch'ih / Leads secretly
to a lesser heaven."

In this poem, Su Shih again refers to Ch'ou-ch'ih as the goal of his search, a place to which he can retreat. In this note, he provides even more details of his dream, naming one of the people he spoke with the next morning,⁴⁵ as well as a personal reflection on the dream. By supplying the

⁴² See *SSSC*, 39.2136.

⁴³ 畸人者，畸於人而侔於天。

⁴⁴ See *Wei shu* 魏書 (Book of Wei), 101.2229.

⁴⁵ Su Shih does not, however, mention Ch'ao Wu-chiu, to whom the first poem referring to the Ch'ou-ch'ih dream was written.

brief historical back-ground of Ch'ou-ch'ih, Su Shih is making it a very real place, with a location, inhabitants, and a place in the official histories, and no longer simply a place in his dreams. In fact, shortly after writing this poem, he wrote another poem, in which he said:

仇池九十九	Ch'ou-ch'ih, ninety-nine;
嵩少三十六	Sung has less, thirty-six.
天人同一夢	Heaven and mortals are all the same dream;
仙凡無兩錄	Immortals and lay, there are not two records. ⁴⁶

To this poem, Su Shih again attached a note, explaining that Ch'ou-ch'ih has ninety-nine springs.⁴⁷ These four lines are saying there is no difference between the mortal and immortal worlds. When he says there are not two records, he means there are not two separate and unchangeable record books, one containing the names of mortals, the other immortals. In other words, it is perfectly possible for a mortal to become a member of the immortals. His Ch'ou-ch'ih, land of immortals, is now more real and more accessible than before, and there is nothing stopping him from striving to arrive there. Not only has the court taken a change for the worse, but, for the first time in Su Shih's career, even the emperor does not support or appreciate him. Now, Su Shih is exiled to the far south, beyond the realm of cultural China, with all authority to participate in government revoked. Su Shih is now ready to start on the path of self cultivation and Taoist practice. He even made this clear as he passed the Ta-yü mountain range 大庾嶺 on his way south, marking his departure from the Chinese cultural sphere and entering the yet "uncivilized" south, when he wrote the poem:

過大庾嶺	<i>Crossing Ta-yü Range</i>
一念失垢污	With one thought, dust and dirt is lost;
身心洞清淨	Body and soul are clean and clear.
浩然天地間	Vast, amid heaven and earth,

⁴⁶ See "Matching Magistrate Liu T'ì of Kao-yao County's ' Sent upon meeting at Mount Shan Temple ' " 次韻高要令劉湜峽山寺見寄, *SSSC*, 40.2188.

⁴⁷ 仇池有九十九泉.

惟我獨也正	Only I alone am upright.
今日嶺上行	This day, this journey upon this range,
身世永相忘	Self and position forget each other eternally.
仙人拊我頂	Immortals stroke my head;
結髮受長生	I tie my hair and receive immortality. ⁴⁸

Upon his crossing the border from “civilized” to “uncivilized,” Su Shih also crosses the boundary from political hope to final release. As he crossed the Ta-yü range, a crossing which had caused other literati, such as Sung Chih-wen, such pain,⁴⁹ Su Shih, on the other hand, felt relief, and even the exhilaration of freedom.

Poem number thirteen of “Answering T'ao's ‘Reading the Classic of Mountains and Seas’” is about retiring into seclusion, and is written in terms much more explicit than ever before. It is clear that Su Shih no longer feels any responsibility to the court, going so far as to claim his political life to be a “waste of talent.” He has finally withdrawn himself from the political realm, reclaiming his life to be his own. Unlike most exiles, who view their exiles to be painful due to the waste of life they are usually perceived to be, as well as the unfavorable locations of the exiles, Su Shih sees his exile to be the opposite. It has released him from the burdens of responsibility. The location of his exile is also by Lo-fu mountain, a location of special meaning to Su Shih. Now, the possibility of finding his idyllic *Ch'ou-ch'ih* is real, and Hui-chou is an ideal place to practice his self-cultivation techniques. The last couplet implies that he wishes to emulate two great recluses of history, to be disinterested in politics and worldly matters as T'ao Yüan-ming, and as knowledgeable in the ways of Taoist alchemy and spiritual cultivation as Ko Hung.

The last line is an echo of T'ao Yüan-ming's famous poem, “Going Back Home” 歸去來辭, in which T'ao Yüan-ming announces his resignation from government office and public life, to return home to his rural

⁴⁸ SSSC, 38.2056.

⁴⁹ See note 41.

residence and lead a life of peaceful seclusion. The first section of this poem states that, even though the past cannot be changed, one can still live for the future:

歸去來兮	Oh, go back home!
田園將蕪胡不歸	The fields and garden will grow over, why not return?
既自以心為形役	As I myself have made my mind slave to my body,
奚惆悵而獨悲	Why be melancholy and alone in grief?
悟已往之不諫	I realize the past cannot be mended,
知來者之可追	I know that the future can be sought after.
實迷途其未遠	I have actually not strayed far from the path,
覺今是而昨非	And understand that today I am right, and yesterday was wrong. ⁵⁰

Even though Su Shih cannot change the past years of struggle, he can now begin anew, with a fresh goal in sight, as did his new peer, T'ao Yüan-ming. Su Shih is interested in T'ao Yüan-ming's retirement, yet unlike him, Su Shih does not have a clear idea of where he should retire.

6. Summation

In 1084, upon being recalled to official service after his exile in Huang-chou 黃州 (modern-day Huang-kang 黃岡),⁵¹ Su Shih wrote a poem while on the road to his new assignment in Teng-chou 登州 (modern-day P'eng-lai 蓬萊):⁵²

再過常山和昔年留別詩	<i>On Passing Ch'ang Mountain Again, I match the Parting Poem of Years Before</i>
僵僂山前叟	The hunch-backed old man at the foot of the mountain
迎我如迎新	Welcomes me as he would welcome a stranger.
那知夢幻軀	Who would think this illusionary body
念念非昔人	Is with every thought and idea not the person of before.
江湖久放浪	I have long drifted on the waves of the rivers and lakes;

⁵⁰ T'ao Yüan-ming, *T'ao Ching-chieh chi chu 陶靖節集注* (Annotated Collected Works of T'ao Ching-chieh), 5.78.

⁵¹ *LSTTC*, 6.22: 2.

⁵² *LSTTC*, 6.15: 7.

朝市誰相親	Who recognizes me in the morning market?
卻尋泉源去	Let me search the source of the spring;
桃花應避秦	The plum blossoms ought to protect from the Ch'in. ⁵³

In this poem, Su Shih, still in a quiet state of mind resulting from his first exile, faces his oncoming career in court politics, which he compares to the bloody despotism of the Ch'in dynasty, with a sense of fear, and implies a wish for an idyllic utopia such as T'ao Yüan-ming's "source of the peach blossoms." This last line brings up an earlier interest in T'ao Yüan-ming's famous "Source of the Peach Blossoms" 桃花源記. This story, originally written by T'ao Yüan-ming, tells of a land of idyllic rural life to which people had originally retreated to avoid the warfare of the Ch'in 秦 dynasty (221-207 B.C.E.). These people had remained undiscovered there ever since. In T'ao Yüan-ming's story, a lost fisherman discovered the descendants of these people, and describes their peaceful life.

The climax of Su Shih's contemplation on his dream of *Ch'ou-ch'ih* was written after his "Answering T'ao's 'Reading the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*,'" in his poem answering T'ao Yüan-ming's famous "Source of the Peach Blossoms":

和陶桃花源 . 並引	<i>Answering T'ao's "Source of the Peach Blossoms" with preface</i>
世傳桃源事，多過其實。考淵明所記，止言先世避秦亂來此，則漁人所見，似是其子孫，非秦人不死者也。又云殺雞作食，豈有仙而殺者乎？舊說南陽有菊水，水甘而芳，民居三十餘家，飲其水，皆壽，或至百二三十歲。蜀青	The story of the <i>Source of the Peach Blossoms</i> passed down through the generations is mostly exaggerated. Examining what Yüan-ming recorded, he only said that their ancestors came there to avoid the agitation of the Ch'in. Thus, those that the fisherman saw seem to be their descendants, and not immortals from the Ch'in dynasty. He also said they killed chickens to prepare food. How can there be immortals who kill? There is a story of Chü-shui (Chrysanthemum River) in Nan-yang. The water is sweet and fragrant. Thirty-some families live there, drinking the water. They all live long lives, some even to one hundred

53 SSSC, 26.1381.

城山老人村，有見五世孫者，道極險遠，生不識鹽醢，而溪中多枸杞，根如龍蛇，飲其水，故壽。近歲道稍通，漸能致五味，而壽益衰，桃源蓋此比也歟。使武陵太守得而至焉，則已化為爭奪之場久矣。嘗意天壤間，若此者甚眾，不獨桃源。予在穎州，夢至一官府，人物與俗間無異，而山川清遠，有足樂者。顧視堂上，榜曰仇池。覺而念之，仇池，武都氏故地，楊難當所保，余何為居之。明日，以問客。客有趙令時德麟者，曰：「公何問此，此乃福地，小有洞天之附庸也。杜子美蓋云：萬古仇池穴，潛通小有天。」他日工部侍郎王欽臣仲至，謂余曰：「吾嘗奉使過仇池，有九十九泉，萬山環之，可以避世，如桃源也。」

twenty or one hundred thirty years. In Elder's Village in Ch'ing-ch'eng Mountain, Shu, there are those who have seen their fifth-generation grandchildren. The road is extremely long and dangerous, and they have never known salt or vinegar. There are many medlar plants in the rivers, their roots like dragons and snakes. They drink this water, and so live long lives. In recent years, the road has improved some, and they are slowly acquiring more sundry foods. Their longevity is also deteriorating. The Source of Peach Blossoms is similar to these. Had the prefect of Wu-ling arrived there, it would have long become a place of conflict. I often think that there must be many places like this in the world, and not only the Source of Peach Blossoms. When I was in Ying-chou, I dreamt I was at an official's residence. The people and things were just as in the normal world, yet the mountains and rivers were pure and removed, and there was plenty to please a person. When I looked up over the main hall, the plaque said "Ch'ou-ch'ih." When I awoke, I thought of this. Ch'ou-ch'ih is the original territory of the Ti tribe of Wu-tu, which Yang Nantang defended. Why would I live there? The next day, I asked my guests, and a guest named Chao Ling-chih, style Te-lin, said: "Why do you ask this? This is a blessed place, a vassal state of a lesser heaven." Tu Tzu-mei [Fu] said: "Since time immemorial, the cave of Ch'ou-ch'ih / Leads secretly to a lesser heaven." On another day, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Works, Wang Ch'in-ch'ên, style Chung-chih, told me: "I once served in Ch'ou-ch'ih. It has ninety-nine springs, and is surrounded by thousands of mountains. One could withdraw from the world there, just as in "Source of Peach Blossoms."

凡聖無異居	Lay and sage have no separate dwelling places;
清濁共此世	The pure and the vile all share this world.
心閒偶自見	When my mind is idle, I occasionally see it myself,
念起忽已逝	But when thoughts arise, it suddenly is gone.

欲知真一處	If one wishes to know the place of true unity,
要使六用廢	One must do away with the functions of the six senses.
桃源信不遠	The Source of Peaches I believe is not far;
杖藜可小憩	On a pigweed staff, I can take a small rest.
躬耕任地力	Hunched at plowing, rely on the strength of the earth;
絕學抱天藝	Abandon learning, and embrace nature's instincts.
臂雞有時鳴	My arm-chicken calls on time;
尻駕無可稅	My buttocks-cart cannot be taxed.
苓龜亦晨吸	The fungus-turtle also breathes in the morning,
杞狗或夜吠	The medlar-dog may bark at night.
耘樵得甘芳	Weeding and cutting kindling, receiving sweet fragrance;
齧齧謝炮製	Chomping and chewing, refusing that prepared by roasting.
子驥雖形隔	Although Tzu-chi was removed from form,
淵明已心詣	Already Yüan-ming had arrived in mind.
高山不難越	High mountains are not difficult to cross;
淺水何足厲	Shallow waters are not worthy of worry.
不如我仇池	They do not compare to my Ch'ou-ch'ih;
高舉復幾歲	How many years more to travel?
從來一生死	I've always viewed life and death as one;
近又等癡慧	Recently I have equaled idiocy and wisdom.
蒲澗安期境	Calamus Valley is An Ch'ih's area;
羅浮稚川界	Lo-fu is Chih-ch'uan's territory.
夢往從之遊	In a dream I went, accompanying them;
神交發吾蔽	In spiritual intercourse, I dispelled my darkness.
桃花滿庭下	Peach blossoms all over the patio;
流水在戶外	Flowing water outside the door.
卻笑逃秦人	I laugh at those fleeing the Ch'in;
有畏非真契	If one has fear, it is not true harmony. ⁵⁴

This is Su Shih's final summation of his dream of Ch'ou-ch'ih. In it, he has finally worked through the problem which has been plaguing him ever since his youth, when, one rainy night, he and his brother made a vow to retire early and live out their lives in peaceful seclusion. Before again giving a detailed account of his dream, the discussion thereof with friends, and the history of Ch'ou-ch'ih, as in the preface of "Answering T'ao's 'Reading the

54 SSSC, 40.2196.

Classic of Mountains and Seas, ' " Su Shih first gives an extended argument concerning the story of " Source of Peach Blossoms," in which he denies the folk beliefs that the people in T'ao's story were actually the same people of the Ch'in dynasty become immortals, pointing out evidence from the original text. By giving two actual examples of similar idyllic places where the residents lived to ripe old ages, mostly for explainable reasons, Su Shih demystifies one of China's favorite stories, suggesting that the " Source of Peach Blossoms " was also nothing more than an isolated community. He then concretizes his own dream of Ch'ou-ch'ih, not only saying that " the people and things were just as in the normal world," but even giving the historical background of the location. Su Shih then quotes two friends, who both reaffirm his suspicions that this is an actual place, even something of a utopia.

In earlier works, Su Shih has already made it clear that the Ch'ih-ch'ou in his dream is in fact a place of his dreams! The first couplet once again reaffirms his claims from " Matching Magistrate Liu T'í of Kao-yao County's ' Sent upon meeting at Mount Shan Temple, ' " repeating the idea that the difference between immortals and mortals is not that between heaven and earth. They all live in the here and now. The only difference is simply a matter of self-cultivation and enlightenment. The second couplet, in fact, says that Su Shih himself is sometimes able to see the truth of matters, yet his mind is still too polluted with the troubles of life to make the enlightenment last. He then gives a method for attaining eternal enlightenment and spiritual freedom: " one must do away with the functions of the six senses," a basic concept of both Taoism and Buddhism, with early origins in the *Chuang Tzu*. At the end of the seventh chapter of the *Chuang Tzu*, " Ying ti-wang " 應帝王, Chuang Tzu tells the story of how the perfection of the primordial " Chaos " was destroyed through physical senses, and thus died:

南海之帝為儻，北海	The lord of the Southern Sea was Shu, the lord of the
之帝為忽，中央之地	Northern Sea was Hu, and in the center was Chaos. Shu
為渾沌。儻與忽時相	and Hu once met in Chaos's territory, and Chaos was very

與遇於渾沌之地，渾
 沌待之甚善。儵與忽
 謀報渾沌之讎，曰：
 「人皆有七竅以視聽
 食息，此獨無有，嘗
 試鑿之。」日鑿一竅
 ，七日而渾沌死。

cordial. Shu and Hu, thinking of a way to thank Chaos's hospitality, said: "Everyone has seven orifices for seeing, listening, eating, and breathing. Only he does not. Let's try drilling them." Every day, they drilled one orifice, and on the seventh day, Chaos died.

The seven orifices are what make possible the sensations with which one experiences the outer world. In this text, they represent the organs which provide the six senses of sight, smell, taste, hearing, touch, and mind. The purpose of meditation (lines 3-4) is to stop all sensory stimulation and allow the mind to settle to a state of purity, from which the true unity of oneself with the universe becomes clear (line 5). As the "Source of Peach Blossoms" is not distant any longer, Su Shih decides to abandon the burden of scholarship, the main purpose of which was usually political learning, and adopt a simple, rural lifestyle, conducive of philosophical and spiritual self-cultivation (lines 7-16). Lines 11-12 again allude to the *Chuang Tzu*, this time the sixth chapter, "Ta tsung shih," in which Tzu-yü 子輿 becomes deformed. When his friend asks if he is upset, Tzu-yü says:

亡，予何惡！浸假而化
 予之左臂以為雞，予因
 以求時夜；浸假而化予
 之右臂以為彈，予因以
 求鴉炙；浸假而化予之
 尻以為輪，以神為馬，
 予因以乘之，豈更駕哉
 ！且夫得者，時也；失
 者，順也。安時而處順
 ，哀樂不能入也。此古
 之所謂縣解也。而不能
 自解者，物有結之。且
 夫物不勝天久矣，吾又
 何惡焉！

No! Why should I be upset? If my left arm becomes a chicken, I'll use it to time the night. If my right arm becomes a dart, I'll use it for owl to roast. If my buttocks become wheels, my spirit shall become my horse, and I'll ride them. What else will I have to steer. We receive when it is time, and lose when we should. If one accepts the timing and dwells in the flow, disparity and pleasure cannot enter [one's mind/heart]. This is what the ancients called hovering in unentanglement. Those not able to untangle themselves are entangled by matter. Matter, however, does not prevail over heaven for long. Why would I be upset?

Unlike before, Su Shih shall now accept the loss of political potential and receive the opportunity to retreat. He shall no longer entangle himself in the matters of the mundane world. Line 16 again refers to the simplicity and blandness of a Taoist practitioner's lifestyle, where a bland diet is important. As taste is one of the six senses, an appetite for strong flavors is harmful to the purity of the body and mind.

After reaffirming the spiritual attainment of T'ao Yüan-ming, Su Shih points out that his Ch'ou-ch'ih is more than a geographical location. If it were, he would need only to cross high mountains and shallow waters, both of which he had done many times already. No, Ch'ou-ch'ih is a much more difficult goal. Even though he has always viewed life and death as one, that is not enough. He still felt pride. After all, he was famous for not only his literary genius, but also his political skill. Now, he has overcome this great obstacle. Now he lives in a location previously inhabited by spiritual greats. He has arrived at a physical location worthy of dispelling his darkness and attaining enlightenment.

7. Conclusion

In the years following this poem, Su Shih built a large residence on top of a hill, called his family down south with the intention of living out his life together with them, was subsequently exiled further south, to the most remote island of Hai-nan, was recalled to official service, and was finally granted retirement, free to settle wherever he wished. On his way back to his residence in Ch'ang-chou 常州, he fell ill, and finally died several days after arriving. Of the four greatest wishes of his life, he never achieved political success; he was never able to make his trip back to Shu; nor did he get the chance to retire with his brother. What about his dream of Ch'ou-ch'ih? Was he finally able to achieve the state of mind/consciousness he outlined in this poem? Ultimately, it is impossible to prove whether or not he did, yet we can

refer to two pieces he wrote during his last year to help in drawing our own conclusions. The first poem follows up "Chiu-hua in a Bottle":

予昔作 壺中九華 *I Earlier Wrote a Poem Entitled "Chiu-hua in a Bottle." Eight*
 詩，其後八年，復 *Years Later, I Again Passed Through Hu-k'ou, Yet the Stone*
 過湖口，則石已為 *Had Already Been Taken by a Collector, So I Answered the*
 好事者取去，乃和 *Former Rhyme so as to Comfort Myself:*
 前韻以自解云
 江邊陣馬走千峰 Along the river, a rank of horses galloped its thousand peaks
 away;
 問訊方知冀北空 Asking what happened, I learn that Chi-pei is empty.
 尤物已隨清夢斷 The lovely object is already gone with the end of the pure
 dream;
 真形猶在畫圖中 The true form still remains in picture.
 歸來晚歲同元亮 Returning home in my later years, I am the same as T'ao Yüan-
 ming;
 卻掃何人伴敬通 In turning away all people, I join Feng Yen.
 賴有銅盆修石供 I have but the bronze basin to offer to the stones;
 仇池玉色自瓊瓏 Ch'ou-chih's jade color glistens on its own.⁵⁵

Although the material object he desired has disappeared, it does still exist in picture form, referring to a picture in the *Taoist Canon* entitled *Tung-hsüen Ling-pao Wu-yüeh ku-pen chen-hsing t'u* 洞玄靈寶五嶽古本真形圖 (The Ancient Edition of the Tung-hsüen and Ling-pao 'True Form of the Five Ranges')⁵⁶ Even if he cannot have this mountain in a miniature, he is able to obtain its essential form through the *Taoist Canon*.

This is so, not only for the stones, but also for Su Shih's dream of *Ch'ou-ch'ih*. With the poem "Answering T'ao's 'Source of the Peach Blossoms,'" Su Shih laid out a very clear plan for attaining his ultimate spiritual freedom. He claimed that the actual physical location was not necessary for such freedom. Shortly before his death, in his last letter to his brother, Su Ch'ê, Su Shih wrote:

55 SSSC, 45.2454.

56 *Tao-tsang* 道藏 (Taoist Canon) vol. 197.

吾兄弟俱老矣，當
以時自娛，此外萬
端皆不足介懷。所
謂自娛者，亦非世
俗之樂，但胸中廓
然無一物。即天壤
之內，山川草木蟲
魚之類，皆吾作樂
事也。

We brothers are already old, and should amuse ourselves with time alone. Beside this, all the thousands of extremes are not enough to enter into our hearts. When I say to amuse ourselves, I do not mean this in the mundane sense, but to devoid our souls of all. All which is encompassed between heaven and earth, the mountains and rivers, grasses and trees, insects and fish, all are our amusements.⁵⁷

For his amusement, Su Shih no longer needs the pleasures of the mundane world. In the sixth line of the poem above, he says that he needs not even the social interaction he valued so much throughout his life.⁵⁸ He has managed to find freedom and happiness in any and all surroundings and situations.

57 “Ten Letters to my Brother, Tzu-yu, Number Ten” 與弟子由十首 其十, *SSWC*, 60. 1838.

58 Feng Yen was a general during the period after Wang Mang's 王莽 usurpation of the Han throne. After first refusing to serve Wang's government, and then serving the Han dynasty, when he was unfairly passed over for promotion, and then punished due to relations, Feng Yen retreated to his home and refused contact with any of his former acquaintances. See *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Latter Book of the Han) 28a.955-28b.1004.

以蘇軾的仇池之夢探論 其晚年之解脫

史 國 興

摘 要

蘇軾是中國文學、政治及藝術史上的一個重要人物，常以豪放、開闊、曠達知名，而他一生大半都是在充滿著矛盾的心情中渡過的。他一心想在朝廷政壇上有所貢獻，而另一方面又欲與其弟蘇轍共退隱，一起過著農樸的日子。這兩個志向的互相矛盾，成為其許多偉大文學作品的啟發點。因而，在了解蘇軾此位重要學者之前，必先了解他如何解決其心靈的矛盾。

元祐六年（1091），蘇軾知潁州時，夢見他置身於一個寧靜美好之處，名叫仇池。他當時沒有提到他所做的這場夢，但數年後，這場夢對他的內心思想演變的影響，變得愈來愈重要。此篇論文將由他的詩中，觀察蘇軾如何藉此場夢解決他的內心矛盾，捨其政治之途而追求精神自由的過程。

關鍵詞：蘇軾、宋代、文學、詩、夢