

<sup>28</sup> (YTH) *Pu-cheng-sbib* 布政使, colloquially called *fan-t'ai* 藩臺.

<sup>29</sup> (YTH) Now vulgarly called the Yangtze River.

<sup>30</sup> (YTH) This granting of official posts to the legitimate descendants of a meritorious high official has been a continuous institution handed down from antiquity to the end of the Ch'ing dynasty.

<sup>31</sup> T'ing-lu 廷鏞 (1772–1820).

<sup>32</sup> Her father was Sire Sun-chai 巽齋, whose name was Te-feng 德風, a *chin-sbib* of the year *jen-sben* of the Ch'ien-lung reign (1752). His last official post was that of Vice-President of one of the Six Boards.

<sup>33</sup> T'ing-chün 廷鈞, who later served as Assistant Administrator to a Prefect in Chihli Province.

<sup>34</sup> A native of Hsiang-ho in Shun-t'ien Prefecture. (Ed) She was a cousin of Ying-ho, who also wrote a biography of Lin-ch'ing's mother. See *Pa-ch'i wen-ching, chüan* 53. These prominent Bannermen families were very closely interconnected.

<sup>35</sup> A native of Yang-hu in Kiangsu Province. (H) Yun Chu 惲珠 [1771–1833] was herself a poetess and a descendant of the painter Yun Shou-p'ing 惲壽平 [1633–90]. To her Lin-ch'ing owed much of his literary talents and artistic inclinations ... She is best known for her anthology of Ch'ing dynasty woman-poets, *Kuo-ch'ao kui-hsiu cheng-sbib chi* 國朝閩秀正始集.) My maternal grandfather, Sire Chih-t'ang 芝堂, named Yu-hsiu 毓秀, served as a minor county official in his lifetime, and then in the 24th year of Chia-ch'ing (1824), when I was serving in the office of the Heir Apparent, he was granted the title Grand Master for Governance: this was part of the general largesse dispensed on the occasion of the Jubilee celebrations of that year. At the same time my maternal grandmother, Madame Chuang 莊, was granted the title Lady of Suitability.

<sup>36</sup> Of the Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner. Her father was the Viceroy Nasuto 那蘇圖, who enjoyed the additional honorary title of Senior Tutor to the Heir Apparent, and was posthumously canonised as "Earnestly Diligent" and granted admission to the Temple of the Conscientious and Virtuous.

## *Presenting Verses to my Parents in the Gallery Ringed by Verdure*

In the year *hsin-yu* [1801] of the Reign of Chia-ch'ing, my grandfather, who was serving in the post of Financial Administrator<sup>28</sup> of Honan Province, was given a special concurrent appointment to command the troops guarding the Great River.<sup>29</sup> He died on duty on board ship and was rewarded with an Imperial commendation: his official career was deemed "meritorious," and he was therefore granted, as a mark of great favour, a formal sacrificial offering and burial rites, while his legitimate descendants were to be granted hereditary rank according to law.<sup>30</sup>

In the previous year, *keng-sben* [1800], in the twelfth month, my father Sire Shu-ch'ih 曙埤,<sup>31</sup> then serving as Assistant Administrator to the Prefect of Soochow, had suffered the bereavement of my grandmother, the Lady Socolo 索緯羅, of the Plain White Manchu Banner.<sup>32</sup> My father had vacated his official post and returned to the Capital to observe his period of mourning. Now, accompanied by my uncle Sire Shih-p'ing 石屏,<sup>33</sup> he reverently went to the Military Headquarters to transport my grandfather's coffin back to the Capital. When the cortège reached the county of Pai-hsiang in Chihli Province, he also suffered the bereavement of his own mother, the Lady Lu 陸.<sup>34</sup> Then my own mother, Lady Yun 惲,<sup>35</sup> reverently went to conduct my great-grandmother Lady Tai-chia 戴佳<sup>36</sup> home to the Capital, to our old mansion east of the Drum Tower, where she could live surrounded by her devoted family.

In the eastern part of the mansion, there was a building named the Gallery Ringed by Verdure. In front of it stood a "Horse Tassel Tree," so big it took two people to reach their arms around its trunk, while two old wisteria vines rambled up a trellis nearby, their lovely shade covering more than a rood. Nearby a banana-palm had been planted beside a rockery. It was a delightful spot. During the summer months my great-grandmother would go there to escape the heat. When I was eleven years of age, I used to keep the old lady company and amuse her, together with my two brothers, Chung-wen 仲文<sup>37</sup> and Chi-su 季素,<sup>38</sup> and the older of my younger sisters.<sup>39</sup> One evening, when there was a refreshing breeze and the moon was bright, my parents composed poems to amuse the old grand-dame. As I was then just beginning to learn how to versify, I presented a 'regulated' poem of my own composition, which ran as follows:

<sup>37</sup> Named Lin-ch'ang 麟昌, then aged ten, later served as Chief Custodian of the Arsenal.

<sup>38</sup> Named Lin-shu 麟書, then aged eight, later served as Administrator of a *chou* in Kwangsi Province.

<sup>39</sup> Then aged seven, later married to Tung Yen-yung 童衍榮, who served as Department Magistrate.

Beyond the flowers the clepsydra tells the night,  
 Above the quiet gallery, the moon shines bright,  
 Both parents are hale and well,  
 Poetry and the Rites have left their mark:  
 Sitting in my corner, I offer my evening duty,  
 Sharing in a family joy that warms my heart.  
 Fain would I follow in the footsteps of my forebears,  
 And wet my brush to imitate their elegant refrain.

詩呈翠環

