

Private Emotion, Public Commemoration: Poems of Mourning by Widows in Late Imperial China

This paper examines how widows in the Ming and Qing periods engaged with the poetic subgenres of mourning, which had been developed by male poets in the literary tradition, both to inscribe personal feelings and commemorate their husbands' lives. Examples of the formal subgenre designated *dao wang* (mourning the deceased) are drawn from the literary collections of women writers made available in the McGill-Harvard-Yenching Library Joint Digitization Project on Ming Qing Women's Writings (<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/mingqing>). In these women's act of commemorating, biographical remembrance is inseparable from autobiographical recollection.

Speaker:

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Grace Fong is Associate Professor of Chinese Literature in the Department of East Asian Studies at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. Her research interests encompass classical Chinese poetry and poetics, and the intersection of gender, subjectivity, and writing in Late Imperial and Republican China. Her recent publications include "A Recluse of the Inner Quarters: The Poet Ji Xian (1614-1683)," in *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 2 (2007); "Female Hands: Embroidery as a Knowledge Field in Women's Everyday Life in Late Imperial and Republican China," in *Late Imperial China* 25.1 (June 2004); "Gender and the Failure of Canonization: Anthologizing Women's Poetry in the Late Ming," in *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 26 (December 2004). She is author of *Wu Wenying and the Art of Southern Song Ci Poetry* (Princeton University Press, 1987); co-editor of *Beyond Tradition and Modernity: Gender, Genre and Cosmopolitanism in Late Qing China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); and project editor of *Ming Qing Women's Writings* (<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/mingqing/>), a website that allows free access to a range of rare and important literary collections by women held at the Harvard-Yenching Library. Her forthcoming book, *Herself an Author: Gender, Writing, and Agency in Late Imperial China* (University of Hawai'i Press, May 2008), draws on some of this exceptional material. While at CUHK, she will conduct research for a book-length literary biography of the early twentieth-century woman poet, educator, and journalist Lü Bicheng (1883-1943), who lived in Hong Kong from 1939 until her death in 1943.



Chair:

Prof. Tung Yuan Fang

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*All interested are welcome!

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Time: 12:45 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

**Venue: UG05 Chen Kou Bun Building
Chung Chi College, CUHK**