

Mingshi 2/24/335 “Basic Annals”

Used by permission of the translator, Ying Zhang (February 16, 2015). See her “Politics and Morality during the Ming-Qing Dynastic Transition (1570-1670),” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2010, p. 1.

[On Chongzhen 17/3/19 (April 25, 1644)], learning that the rebel army led by Li Zicheng had entered Beijing and was quickly approaching the imperial palace, the Chongzhen emperor, accompanied by only one eunuch, rushed out of the northern gate, climbed onto Coal Hill, and hanged himself on a tree. Preparing for his final moment, the last Ming emperor wrote these lines on his white robe:.) “My inadequate virtues and weak flesh have invited punishment from Heaven. Now the treacherous rebels are invading the capital. My officials have caused all this! I must die, but I am ashamed to face my ancestors. Therefore I take off my crown and cover my face with my hair. Rebels ! You can dismember my body, but do not hurt my people.”