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| **Wang Zhenyi**  **Born 1768 - Died 1797**  Wang Zhenyi was one of the greatest **scholars** in China. She was born in 1768, during the Qing Dynasty. At the time, China had a strict **feudal system**; education was available only for the wealthy, and women were expected to cook, sew, and not be bothered by studies.  Wang Zhenyi was fortunate to be born into a family of scholars who valued her education. Her grandfather and father taught her **astronomy** and math. She also traveled extensively and saw how extreme taxation affected the less fortunate. Learning about the harshness of poverty inspired her to write poetry decrying injustice.  In Wang Zhenyi’s day, **eclipses** were considered mysterious and beautiful, but were not well understood. But she had theories about how they worked, and she created her own eclipse model using a mirror, a lamp, and a globe that she tied up with ropes around a table. She used it to prove her theories about how the moon blocks our view of the sun-or the earth blocks the sun’s light from reaching the moon-during an eclipse.  And there were more planetary problems to solve! Wang Zhenyi scientifically studied the Chinese calendar system and used her telescope to measure the stars and further explain the rotation of the solar system.  She was also a dedicated mathematician. Her struggles with math would often make her stop and sigh, but she pushed through those tough moments. She understood complicated arithmetic theories and at the age of 24 published a 5-volume guide for beginners called, *Simple Principles of Calculation*. This work, compiled 6 years after Wang Zhenyi’s death, was prefaced by the famous scholar Qian Yiji and was read by many people.  Wang Zhenyi lived only to age 29, but she is remembered as one of the greatest minds of the Qing Dynasty. She published many volumes of writing on math, astronomy, and poetry, and her work influenced legions of scientists, mathematicians, and writers who came after her. |

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| **Vocabulary Word Bank**  **Scholar**: A highly educated person.  **Feudal System**: A social system that divides society up into different classes.  **Astronomy**: the study of stars, planets, and space.  **Eclipse:** The blocking of the sun’s light by either the moon or the Earth. |

