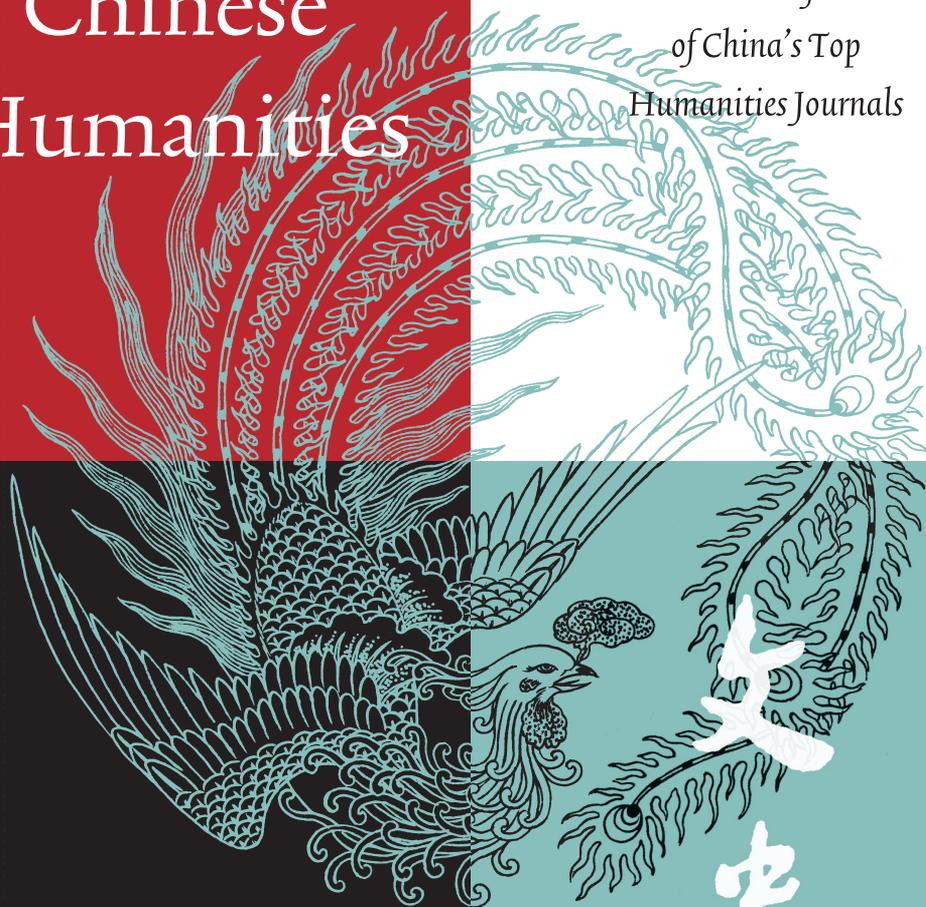


# Journal of Chinese Humanities

An English-language  
Extension of One  
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# Journal of Chinese Humanities

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*Journal of Chinese Humanities* is an English-language extension of *Literature, History and Philosophy* (Wen Shi Zhe 《文史哲》), a famous Chinese journal published by Shandong University. The content is not restricted to one aspect of Chinese culture but rather spans important topics within the fields of Chinese history, philosophy, and literature. It covers both traditional and modern areas of research. Importantly, as opposed to most English language journals that treat on Chinese studies, this journal aims to represent the current research coming out of mainland China. Thus each issue will be composed primarily of articles from Chinese scholars working at Chinese institutions, while at the same time including a small number of articles from foreign authors so as to provide opposing perspectives. This way, top scholars in China can be read in the Western world, and our Western readers will benefit from a native perspective and first hand material and research coming out of China. Every issue will be theme-based, focusing on an issue of common interest to the academic community both within and outside China. The majority of articles will relate directly to the central theme, but each issue will also accept a limited number of articles not directly related to the current theme. This journal primarily targets academics in the English-speaking world who are interested in multiple aspects of Chinese civilization and humanities. It will be of interest to both scholars and advanced students, both specialists and informed readers. It is one of the best windows for western readers to deepen their understanding of Chinese literature, history and philosophy.

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## Introduction: New Contributions in Tang Poetry

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The Tang dynasty [618–907] was the height of ancient Chinese civilization in many areas. The late-Qing, early Republican era scholar Wang Guowei 王國維 [1877–1927] once stated, “Every dynasty has its own representative literary accomplishments.” And speaking more specifically: “Tang dynasty poetry ... has remained unmatched.”<sup>1</sup> Wang considered poetry to be the crowning jewel of Tang culture, and his opinion has been widely accepted. Since the beginning of the twenty first century, Chinese scholars have made great progress in the field of Tang poetry by building on the accomplishments of previous research and, more importantly, by expanding the field of research itself with new paradigms and new material.

The four research articles in this issue span the entire Tang period, and they approach Tang poetry from different perspectives: scholarly communication, academic history, the creation of “classics”, and cross-national research.

The first article looks at Tang poetry as part of a larger, interactive literary tradition among Tang era poets aiming to establish their own identity. Wu Huaidong's 吳懷東 “The Derivation of *Shi-shi* in Mid-to-Late Tang as a Scholarly Inheritance” uses Tang dynasty scholar Meng Qi's 孟啟 [fl. 875] work *Benshi Shi* 本事詩 [*Poetry of Capabilities*] as its starting point. *Benshi Shi* is a collection of anecdotes about contemporaneous Tang poets. In it, Meng Qi mentions Du Fu 杜甫 [712–770] several times, and the term *shi-shi* 詩史, meaning “poet-historian” or “poetic history”, is often attached to Du Fu and his poems. Wu Huaidong traces the origins and changing use of this term as it relates to Du Fu. Wu further researches this important literary description in the context of Tang dynasty politics and academics, demonstrating the complicated circumstances under which Du Fu's poetry became canonized.

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1 Wang Guowei 王國維, Preface to *Song Yuan xiqu kao* 宋元戲曲考 [*Studies on Song and Yuan Opera*] (Beijing: Zhaohua chubanshe, 2018), 5.

Ding Fang's 丁放 article continues the theme of canonization with his "The Making of Classics: Li Bai and Du Fu's Poems in Anthologies of Tang Poetry between the Tang and the Ming Dynasties." Ding focuses on Li and Du, the two most famous Tang poets, looking at how the transmission of their poems was connected to their canonization. From the time that the two were still alive and creating poetry, through the next several centuries, their poems separately experienced changing levels of popularity until the end of the Ming dynasty [1368–1644] when their status as the two greatest poets of the Tang dynasty was established.

Zhang Bawei 張伯偉 turns his focus outside of China, examining the path Du Fu's poetry took before it became a part of the literary canon in all of East Asia. Zhang's article "The Canonization of Du Fu in the Context of East Asian Literature" goes on to use this specific example to discuss the larger issue of the reception history of Chinese literature in Japan and Korea. Zhang finally looks at certain national characteristics of these East Asian countries, how they play a role in the development of literature in general, and how understanding these characteristics can help with research on more modern topics in the new century.

Finally Liu Yi 劉一 compares similar style short poetry between China and Japan in her article "On the Shared Structure of the Early to High Tang *Gexing* and the Seven-character Short Poem with a Discussion of 'Kayō jūei' as a Japanese Seven-character Short Poem Sequence." She takes the seven-character short poem as the unit of comparison, searching out the poems that adhere to a certain set of characteristics from a large corpus of poetry and illuminating their characteristics and evolution in China and Japan respectively. Her use of comparative methods and new material successfully moves forward the field of both Tang poetry and cross-cultural literary comparison.



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# The Derivation of *Shi-shi* in Mid-to-Late Tang as a Scholarly Inheritance

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## Abstract

The term *shi-shi* 詩史 [poet historian/poem history] was first employed by Meng Qi 孟啟 in his book *Poetry of Capabilities*, a collection of stories about poets from the late Tang dynasty, to describe Du Fu and his poems. They were reflections of the political and scholarly climate in the Mid-to-Late Tang dynasty. During that time, Yuan Zhen 元稹 and Bai Juyi 白居易 studied Du's poems and acknowledged the historiographical attributes contained in Du's poems through depictions of social and political upheavals during the An Lushan Rebellion. Although Yuan and Bai had different opinions than Meng because of divergent political stances, they all agreed on the realistic quality of Du's poems. Building on the works of Yuan and Bai, the "Biography of Du Fu" in *New Book of the Tang* from the Song dynasty defined *shi-shi* from a perspective of contemporary affairs, which further broadened the word's connotation. Since then, *shi-shi* not only can refer to the narrative and realistic characteristics of Du's poems but also to the ethical and political ideologies involved: from narrating one's own fate to the fate of an era. Du's poem series such as "Three Officials" and "Three Farewells" have also been included as examples of *shi-shi*. Such is what constitutes our general understanding of the word *shi-shi* today, which constitutes a scholarly inheritance that combines the political, pedagogical and poetic traditions of Du Fu and Confucianism.

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## Keywords

Du Fu – *shi-shi* – *The Spring and Autumn Annals* – interaction between literary language and history – contemporary affairs

*Shi-shi* 詩史 [poet historian/poem history] and *ji dacheng* 集大成 [epitome of great talents] are almost exclusively used to address Du Fu 杜甫 [712–770] as his honorific titles, which shows why his poems are regarded as classics. Between the two titles, *shi-shi* appeared earlier and is more influential. The modern day understanding of *shi-shi* is linked to the narrative and realistic features of Du's poems since they provide detailed depictions of the social and political situations of the Tang dynasty [618–907]. This was especially true for the poems he wrote regarding the social impact of the An Lushan Rebellion 安史之亂 [755–763], such as the groups of poems “Three Officials [*San li* 三吏]” and “Three Farewells [*San bie* 三別].” This demonstration of the ethos of realism is still highly praised nowadays. Although many scholars have carried out research to investigate *shi-shi* and its derivation in recent years, there is still a lack of study of the word's original meaning and context when Meng Qi 孟啟 (courtesy name Chu Zhong 初中, *jinshi* 875) used the term in *Benshi-shi*<sup>1</sup> 本事詩 [*Poetry of Capabilities*] in the late Tang. The aim of this essay is to restore the derivation of the word in order to clarify its ideological and poetic principles by probing into the complex facets in the early days when Du's poems gradually gained prestige among scholars.

### 1

Attested by the existing literature, the term *shi-shi* was originally invented by Shen Yue 沈約 [441–513] in his work “Biography of Xie Lingyun [*Xie Lingyun zhuan* 謝靈運傳]” of *History of Song of the Southern Dynasties* [*Songshu* 宋書], but it was Meng Qi who first employed the word to critique poems in the chapter “Grand Escapism [*Gaoyi* 高逸]” of his book *Benshi-shi* in the late Tang dynasty, bestowing new meaning into the word. Among the three stories in that chapter, there are two short introductions of Du Mu 杜牧 [803–852] and one about Li Bai 李白 [701–762], the latter of which mentioned the word *shi-shi*. Through telling the stories behind some of Li's creations, Meng depicted him as a brilliant poet with unparalleled eloquence and courage in pursuit

1 Meng Qi 孟啟, *Benshi shi* 本事詩 [*Poetry of Capabilities*], comm. Dong Xiping 董希平, Cheng Yanmei 程豔梅, and Wang Sijing 王思靜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014).

of ancient wisdom, and with an unfettered state of mind. The truthfulness of the stories however remains an open question. For example, the story behind Li Bai's "Playfully Dedicated to Du Fu [*Xi zeng Du Fu* 戲贈杜甫]"<sup>2</sup> is deemed unreliable by scholars. While praising Li for his skills and capabilities (*benshi*, hence the name of the work *Benshi-shi*), Meng mentioned Du Fu and his poems four times. Reference to Du first appeared when Meng quoted He Zhizhang's 賀知章 [659–744] comment on Li Bai. The remarks were later included in Du's poem "To Li Shi'er Bai: Twenty Rhymes [*Ji Li shi'er Bai ershi yun* 寄李十二白二十韻]."<sup>3</sup> Du Fu's name then is brought up again in Li Bai's poem "Playfully Dedicated to Du Fu," which teased Du for being *jushu* 拘束 [restrained] and Meng used him as a contrast in order to give prominence to Li's unconstrained poetic ideology. Meng mentioned Du one more time when quoting his poem "To Li Shi'er Bai: Twenty Rhymes," which provided a comprehensive and accurate summary of Li's life of ebbs and flow. Finally, Meng argued that Du's poem not only epitomized the life and essence of Li, but was also a faithful representation of Du's own life events. Meng further elaborated on this by quoting others' impression of Du's strong sense of current affairs as *shi-shi* to support the credibility of Du's poems.

In Meng's stories, prominence was given to Li Bai, and Du Fu was mentioned only as a foil. In addition, Meng criticized Du for being too restrained by quoting "Playfully Dedicated to Du Fu," the poem which Li Bai wrote to mock Du Fu, which reflects Meng may have disapproved of Du. Regardless of his exact attitude, by having Du's stories and poems interspersed in his narrative, Meng clearly aimed to disclose certain characteristics of Du's poems: they were a vehicle of *shi* 事 [things, stories, doings], capable of relaying the events of both Li and Du's lives. This kind of capability is suggested in the name of the book which intends to study and praise the skills of great poets, *Chushi xingyong* 觸事興詠 [*Composing lyrical poems inspired by events*], as in the examples of "To Li Shi'er Bai: Twenty Rhymes" and Meng's own commentary "Trekking the paths in Long and Shu, the displacement was fully captured in poems."<sup>4</sup> Meng was explaining the meaning of *shi-shi*: on one hand, *shi-shi* encapsulated Du's narrative and realistic style in poem writing as he documented his daily life in his poems; on the other, the word was not referring to all of Du's creations but the ones that were composed during his time in Long-Shu.

2 Hua Wenxuan 華文軒, ed., *Gudian wenxue yanjiu ziliao huibian: Du Fu juan* 古典文學研究資料彙編·杜甫卷 [*Complete Classic Literature for Research: Du Fu*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1964), 2.

3 Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of Du Fu* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 1:113.

4 Meng Qi, *Benshi shi*, 2.

*Benshi-shi* is a collection of novellas, stories of poets collected and edited by Meng Qi, thus they are not Meng's original. Wang Mengou 王夢鷗 [1907–2002] suggested Li's story was first included by some novellas that were published before Meng's book.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the late unfortunate young scholar Zhang Hui 張暉 [1977–2013] discovered Meng deliberately included the description of Du and his poems to amplify Li's story.<sup>6</sup> No further findings were made in Meng's other work and his life that can help us understand why he brought up the concept of *shi-shi*. However, considering Du's accelerating importance in the Mid-to-Late Tang dynasty, if Meng used *shi-shi* on purpose, then it is necessary for us to probe into the meaning and the context of the word.

## 2

Meng explicitly set the time of *shi-shi* as “contemporary”, which indicated that the concept of *shi-shi* must have been invented when Du was alive or not too long after he passed away. From this fact we can infer that Meng was not the first person to address Du Fu and his poem as *shi-shi*. Although this piece of evidence is thin by itself, the use of history [*shi* 史] for poetry analysis is definitely not a single event but a reflection of a literary tradition since Mid-Tang, i.e. *Wen Shi hudong* 文史互動 [literature and history integration].

The intricate relationship between literature and history in Chinese culture is an old topic that has been debated for centuries. Confucius said: “Where the solid qualities are in excess of accomplishments, we have rusticity; where the accomplishments are in excess of the solid qualities, we have the manners of a clerk.”<sup>7</sup> Confucius made an academic comparison between the two ideas before each of them developed into individual genres of writing and formed their own discipline. While historiography generally focuses on the society and aims to keep its writing objective and unbiased, literature in essence revolves around personal experience and subjectivity. At first glance, the forms and properties of the two seem to be distinct. The origin of this separation started in the Han dynasty [206 BCE–220] when an abundance of cultural activities and writings surged into people's lives. Various writing styles gave birth to more classification. As a result, literary theories started to form to help differentiate writing styles and critique writings. Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 [661–721], a

5 Wang Meng'ou 王夢鷗, *Tangren xiaoshuo yanjiu* 唐人小說研究 [Research of Tang Novels] (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1974), 31–28.

6 Zhang Hui 張暉, *Zhongguo “shi-shi” chuantong* 中國“詩史”傳統 [The Tradition of Shi-shi in Chinese Literature] (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2012), 5–10.

7 Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 [The Exegesis of the Confucius Analects], 2nd ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 61.

historian in the early Tang, revised rules and standards for historical writing as in *yan wen* 嚴文 [strict writing] and *shi zhi fang* 史之防 [boundary of history].<sup>8</sup> He claimed that “Literary writing can make history” [*wen zhi jiang shi* 文之將史], but disapproved of the overuse of rhetorical devices in writing history since the Southern dynasty [420–589]. It is safe to conclude that his distinction between literature and history is based on a deep understanding of the two genres, which in turn propelled the development of each. Literary critics have historically paid more attention to the poetic writings of the Tang including poems, *fu* 賦 [prosed poems], and *pianwen* 駢文 [parallel prose], while overlooking the important fact that history writings in the Tang also enjoyed a prosperous growth. For example, Xie Baocheng’s 謝保成 *History of the Sui and Tang Dynasties* [*Sui-Tang Wudai shixue* 隋唐五代史學]<sup>9</sup> reported a vast number of *za shi* 雜史 [miscellaneous history], *za zhuan* 雜傳 [miscellaneous notes], and *biji xiaoshuo* 筆記小說 [novellas]. They were sub-categories of history according to the classification at the time, the majority of which were novellas with narrative styles.

Was Du Fu in favour of this distinction between poems and history? Like other poets, he also composed poems to pay tribute to past eras, but his poems stood out among others because at the heart of them there is a strong sense of history – an eternal contrast between a mortal and an infinite universe. Just as he wrote in “A Poem to Express Myself on a Night of Travelling [*Lüye shuhuai* 旅夜書懷]”: “What am I like but a lonely seagull drifting along the shore, between heaven and earth.”<sup>10</sup> However, writing poems with a sense of history is not the same as writing strict history and Du was aware of the difference. Born after Liu Zhiji’s era, he had a clear understanding of the differences between poetry and history. For example, in “To Li Jiaoshu Twenty-six Rhymes [*Song Li Jiaoshu ershiliu yun* 送李校書二十六韻],” he wrote “At the age of fifteen I already had a command of history and literary language.”<sup>11</sup> He also praised court historians for writing faithfully and realistically. “Writing and recording events boldly and in a straightforward way.”<sup>12</sup> We can catch a glimpse of this way of “boldness and straightforwardness” [*zhishu* 直書] in his poems but otherwise there is no mention of his position on the debate or other historiographical arguments.

8 Liu Zhiji 劉知幾, *Shi tong* 史通 [Generalities on History], comp. Li Yongqi 李永圻 and Zhang Genghua 張耕華 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 90.

9 Xie Baocheng 謝保成, *Sui-Tang Wudai shixue* 隋唐五代史學 [History from Sui-Tang to the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2007).

10 飄飄何所似，天地一沙鷗。Xiao Difei 蕭滌非, ed., *Du Fu quanji jiaozhu* 杜甫全集校注 [Complete Work of Du Fu with Exegesis] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2014), 3429.

11 十五富文史。Ibid., 1086.

12 直筆在史臣。Ibid., 3972.

Du's poetry serves as a mirror of his time and the retrospective *shi-shi* quality of him and his poems was only appreciated posthumously. Judging from the extant literature, his poems were already lauded when he was alive, and his fame slowly caught up with Li Bai's after his death. However, no evidence can be identified in literature to support any suggestion that *shi-shi* or similar concepts were used to describe Du other than *Benshi-shi*.

## 3

Writing poems instead of history is the job of a poet, but this does not mean the poet lacks awareness or reflection on his social and political circumstances. As scholar William Hung (Hong Ye 洪業, 1893–1980) stated: “Those who were born in the same era as Du Fu did not need to read his poems in order to learn the customs or contemporary affairs.”<sup>13</sup> However, Du's poems gained historical significance as time went by because they epitomized the social situations of his time better than his peers. This explains why Meng Qi regarded Du's poems as *shi-shi*. However, there are surely other reasons why only Du's poems acquired this honor.

A broader picture needs to be viewed to fully understand why *shi-shi* became a focal point for Meng – i.e., Meng's inheritance of Confucian traditions. His entire book was dedicated to a direct demonstration of converging literary language and history, the classical argument mentioned previously. The preface of *Benshi-shi* indicated that the book was completed on the second day of the eleventh month of Guangqi 光啟 [885–888], which was right after the mid-Tang. Meng's way of reporting time was that of a historian's style. Similarly, on his wife's epitaph, Meng documented his failures in the Court Examinations<sup>14</sup> and how he finally succeeded and his life unfolded in mainstream society, participating in cultural activities. Some scholars even consider *Benshi-shi* as the origin of poetic tales [*shihua* 詩話], a combination of fictional and non-fictional writing styles. In addition, Meng used poems to express feelings along with preaching moral standards, quoting “the four schools of *Shijing*'s interpretation” [*sishi zhi shuo* 四始之說] and he “wrote a preface which also acts

13 William Hung, *Tu Fu, China's Greatest Poet* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), 7.

14 Chen Shangjun 陳尚君, “*Benshi-shi* zuozhe Meng Qi jishi shengping kao 《本事詩》作者孟啟家世生平考 [Textual Analysis of Meng Qi: the Author of *Benshi-shi*],” in *Xin Guoxue* 新國學 [*Modern Study of Chinese Classics*], ed. Xiang Chu 項楚 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2016), 6:99–111.

as introduction”,<sup>15</sup> which shows a heavy influence from the Confucian classics such as *The Preface of the Book of Songs* [*Shi xu* 詩序] and *Han Yin's Notes to the Book of Songs* [*Han Shi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳]. This way of connecting poems with real life, particularly with political events, is traditionally integrated in the Confucian doctrine. Books such as the “Literature” chapter of *A New Account of Tales* [*Shi shuo xin yu* 世說新語] revealed an enrichment of cultural activities including poetry creation from the Wei-Jin period through the Southern and Northern dynasties [220–589]. When it came to the High Tang, Wu Jing's 吳兢 [670–749] *A Concise Study on the Classic Titles of Ballads from Music Bureau Yuefu* [*Yuefu guti yaojie* 樂府古題要解] was another example of combining literary creation with historical description.

Meng Qi's *Benshi-shi* inherited this tradition. His passion for poetry inspired him to probe into the capabilities of great poets to gain new understandings of their poems and the poets' character. The book was also deeply influenced by *Spring and Autumn Annals* [*Chunqiu* 春秋] and historiography which were popular in Mid-Tang. The title of the book *Benshi* came directly from the classic chronicle book *Spring and Autumn Annals* and Meng's comment on Du Fu “being able to extrapolate the subtlety”<sup>16</sup> [*tui jian zhi yin* 推見至隱] referred to the *Spring and Autumn Annals'* commentary classic *The Commentary of Zuo* [*Zuozhuan* 左傳] which is known for revealing the subtlety of *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Therefore, it can be said that Meng Qi's emphasis on *benshi* and his use of the concept of *shi-shi* is exactly the inheritance of the Confucian classic *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

Why was Meng in favor of *Spring and Autumn Annals*? Confucian doctrine and classics are historically the guiding principles for governing the country ever since Emperor Wu 漢武帝 [r. 141–87 BCE] in the Han dynasty abandoned a hundred schools of thought and put Confucianism on a pedestal. Although Confucianism continued its predominance in the Tang, Li's empire was a multi-cultural pluralistic society and varied ideas as well as ethnic assimilation began to form. This induced a decline in the study of the Confucian classics. For example, Confucian theories suffered a shrinkage of concern in the orthodox government education in Tang. The imperial examinations heavily leaned towards the subject of a presented scholar [*jinshi ke* 進士科] which focused on the examinee's ability at poetry, and the subject testing a scholar's knowledge of the classics [*mingjing ke* 明經科] was overlooked. However, after the An Lushan Rebellion was quelled, a small group of scholars began to reflect on the cause of the upheaval in hindsight and often traced the root of the rebellion

15 Meng Qi, preface to *Benshi-shi*, 1.

16 Meng Qi, *Benshi-shi*, 2.

back to the diminished importance of Confucianism and its study. This rekindled scholars' interest in Confucianism. In the Mid-Tang, Yuan Zhen and Bai Juyi advocated a Confucian satirical poetic style [*mei ci shixue* 美刺詩學]; Han Yu 韓愈 [786–824] and Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 [773–819] supported revitalizing traditional Confucianist and Taoist ideas for political application. Compared with early the Tang, the shift of scholars' attitudes was obvious. "Since Dali 大曆 [766–779] the study of the Confucian classics has regained popularity and new ideas have begun to sprout."<sup>17</sup> This far-reaching ideological revival represented the transformation of thought and culture, and the study of *Spring and Autumn Annals* occupied a unique place in this movement. Founded by Dan Zhu 啖助 [724–770] and Zhao Kuang 趙匡, and through the development and dissemination of Lu Chun 陸淳 [d. 806], the study of *Spring and Autumn Annals* surpassed other classics and flourished in Mid-Tang. Chen Ruoshui's 陳弱水 research affirms that "*Spring and Autumn Annals* was the most favored classic to study" in the Mid-Tang.<sup>18</sup> As part of the Confucianism revival, this predominating popularity of *Spring and Autumn Annals* was connected with a more complex social and political reform in the Mid-Tang – a major ideological, academic and cultural campaign which involved some of the greatest politicians and writers to various extents. The study of the classics and historiography both serve a utilitarian function which is to summarize experiences and solve the problems in real life. Before he wrote *Records of the Grand Historian* [*Shiji* 史記], Sima Qian 司馬遷 [145–87 BCE] said in his "Letter to Ren An [*Bao Ren An shu* 報任安書]": "I want to study the natural phenomena and their relationship with the human society; to master the law of change through the past and the present; and finally to establish a school of thought of my own";<sup>19</sup> Li Han 李翰 [fl. 757] pointed out in his preamble to Du You's 杜佑 [735–812] *Comprehensive Statutes* [*Tongdian* 通典]: "In order to implement the best practice, we must review the good practices of ancient and modern times, and thoroughly study different systems from the beginning to end to master the gist before we can apply them to our time."<sup>20</sup> It can be concluded that the prosperity of the study of *Spring and Autumn Annals* and historiography was stimulated by the political

17 Ma Zonghuo 馬宗霍, *Zhongguo jingxueshi* 中國經學史 [*History of Classic Chinese Studies*] (1937; rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1984), 105.

18 Chen Ruoshui 陳弱水, *Liu Zongyuan yu Tangdai sixiang bianqian* 柳宗元與唐代思想變遷 [*Liu Zongyuan and the Ideological Shift in Tang*] (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2010), 145.

19 Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書 [*The Book of Han Dynasty*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1964), 2735.

20 Du You 杜佑, preface to *Tong dian* 通典 [*Comprehensive Statutes*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988).

situations of the Mid-Tang – a weak court and the independence of vassal states. The doctrine contained within those classics aimed to “respect the Zhou emperor and fight against foreign aggression” [*zunwang rangyi* 尊王攘夷], which satisfied the urgent need to revive the Mid-Tang and consolidate the government of the Li family. Finally, building on its profound historiographical tradition, the study of *Spring and Autumn Annals* triggered the advancement of historiography from the Middle to Late Tang, and they formed a joint force driving literary activities to thrive at that time.

In summary, the political turmoil caused by the An-Lushan Rebellion triggered a political reform, which in turn led to changes in the schools of thoughts, transformation of classic studies, and increased popularity of *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Meng’s citation of *Spring and Autumn Annals* in *Benshi-shi* and his personal sense of historiography is a reflection of this important academic transition.

## 4

In the process of the independent and vigorous development of literature and history, there must be mutual learning and referencing. The advancement of *Spring and Autumn Annals* studies and historiography in the mid-late Tang had an extremely complex impact on the writing activities at that time, which can be broadly categorized into two aspects.

Firstly, there was a phenomenon of “Writing will make history” – the emergence of a large number of novellas which combined the two styles of writing.

A new genre of stories called *chuanqi* 傳奇 [transmitting the strange] arose among a flourishing great number of other narrative literature genres including miscellaneous histories, miscellaneous biographies, and notebook fictions in the mid-Tang. Lu Xun 魯迅 [1881–1936] said: “The flourishing creation of *chuanqi* was a new phenomenon after Emperor Xuanzong’s reign of Kaiyuan 開元 [731–741] and Tianbao 天寶 [742–756]”,<sup>21</sup> “From Dali to Dazhong 大中 [847–860] a large number of authors of *chuanqi* appeared and the new genre attracted considerable attention in the literary world”.<sup>22</sup>

With a focus on poets’ lives and their creative process, novellas began to emerge in large numbers following this trend. Wang Yunxi 王運熙 [1926–2014]

21 Lu Xun 魯迅, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shi lue* 中國小說史略 [History of Chinese Novels] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), 46.

22 Lu Xun 魯迅, preface to *Tang Song chuanqi ji* 唐宋傳奇集 [Collection of Chuanqi in Tang and Song] (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1995), 2.

and Yang Ming 楊明 believed that “Meng Qi’s *Benshi-shi* reflected the Tang people’s ubiquitous passion for poetry and was influenced by the development of Tang novels” and “*Benshi-shi* combined poems and novels which was affected by the reader’s preference at the time as people in the Tang loved to gossip about the stories behind the poems while reciting.”<sup>23</sup> The preface of *Benshi-shi* clearly states: “if the story came from a suspicious source or I doubt its truthfulness, I would disregard it.”<sup>24</sup> Meng Qi’s deliberate emphasis on documenting reliable stories is the best depiction of the influence of a historian tradition.

Secondly, there was an enhanced emphasis on the narrative function of poetry regarding people’s daily lives.

In the mid-late Tang many poems and *chuanqi* complemented each other and spread together, which shows that the writers and readers were more interested in real social events beyond reading. A large number of narrative poems depicting people’s real life began to emerge and this was the most noteworthy literary phenomenon of the time. The enhancement of narrative and documentary features of poetry was specifically manifested in the aspects such as the lengthening of the poems’ titles, the emergence of a large number of prefaces for the poems, using poetry and fiction as mediums to chant praise, an increasing amount of secular life and individual life being portrayed in creations, and a fashion to write poems as accessible and worldly as possible.

This Confucian rejuvenation permeated through the whole mid-Tang era in literature, politics and culture among Meng’s generation and it was in light of this retrospective awakening that he recognized the *shi-shi* quality of Du and his poems – Du’s poems that were created while he was “Trekking the paths in Long and Shu” were distinctively historical, factual, narrative and personal. In the second year of Qianyuan 乾元 [758–760], Du, who was almost fifty at the time, returned to Huazhou 華州 from Luoyang 洛陽, the eastern capital; in July of the same year he resigned his civil service job as a *sigong canjun* 司功參軍, and then took his family towards the west passing Qinzhou 秦州. After trekking over hills and mountains, he finally arrived in Chengdu at the end of the year and settled down. This year was an important turning point for his life and his poetry creation. Feng Zhi 馮至 [1905–1993] described this year as “the most difficult time” in Du Fu’s life, but it was also the same period that “witnessed the climax of Du’s career as a poet, especially the ‘San li,’ ‘San bie’ poem series

23 Wang Yunxi 王運熙 and Gu Yisheng 顧易生, *Zhongguo wenxue piping tongshi* 中國文學批評通史 [*The General History of Literary Critiques in China*], vol. 3: *Sui Tang Wudai juan* 隋唐五代卷 [*Volume of Sui Tang and Five Dynasties*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1996), 736.

24 Meng Qi, preface to *Benshi-shi*, 1.

and some of his poems written while he was in Longyou.”<sup>25</sup> During this turbulent period, Du Fu wrote more than 120 poems in total, including 52 poems in 10 groups. These poems fully represented the difficulties that Du encountered in Qinzhou and Tonggu 同谷. At the same time, they portrayed the customs and people’s sentiments in Qinzhou as well as the dangerous and magnificent landscapes along the journey between Tonggu and Chengdu. The two groups of travel poems from Qinzhou to Tonggu and from Tonggu to Chengdu are the most eye-catching. Li Yindu 李因篤 [1632–1692], a scholar in the Qing dynasty [1616–1911] made the comment: “He travelled through thousands of miles, he trekked in mountains and rivers, and through the ups and downs of life there was a great amount of parting and reunion, with all the thick and thin tactfully weaved into his poems. Indeed, they are poems of history (*shi-shi*).”<sup>26</sup> These poems are not only different from traditional travel poems which emphasized lyricism but also from Du’s previous and subsequent creations which involved a heavy weight of lyricism and his expression of social and political concerns. The form of poetry groups and the historical, narrative and secular nature of these poems have gained the attention and appreciation of scholars of later generations, who not only enjoyed the magnificent mountains and rivers portrayed in the poems but also sympathized with the personal sufferings that Du Fu went through.

Meng Qi’s recognition of Du Fu’s poems during a specific phase as *shi-shi* not only demonstrated an emergence of a new fashion in academic studies and poetry creation but also affirmed the theoretical and poetic discovery based on such an emergence.

## 5

Later in the Song dynasty [960–1279], scholars widely adopted Meng’s idea of *shi-shi* but their understanding of the word was not the same. There are already an abundance of in-depth studies performed by modern day scholars looking into the academic development since the Song including how Du Fu textured his poems with this unique feature, how the rich Tang history was accurately and meticulously presented in Du’s poems, and how *shi-shi* impacted the study of poetry from the perspective of the word’s narrative and documentary

25 Feng Zhi 馮至, *Du Fu zhuan* 杜甫傳 [Biography of Du Fu] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1956), 35.

26 Yang Lun 楊倫, *Du shi jingquan* 杜詩鏡銓 [Exegesis of Du’s Poems] (1981, rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2014), 1:311.

attributions. Therefore, what we are emphasizing here is an enriched connotation of *shi-shi* and the change of its referent, i.e., how the meaning of the word was transformed into people's modern day understanding of it.

The concept of *shi-shi* was disregarded by the “Biography of Du Fu [Du Fu zhuan 杜甫傳]” in *Old Book of the Tang* [Jiu Tang shu 舊唐書] which basically copied Yuan Zhen’s “Epitaph Inscribed on the Tombstone of Du [Tang gu gongbu yuanwailang Du jun muximing 唐故工部員外郎杜君墓系銘].” Judging from the existing literature, Meng’s *shi-shi* was then first adopted in the “Biography of Du Fu, the Comment [Du Fu zhuan zan 杜甫傳贊]” chapter in *New Book of the Tang* [Xin Tang shu 新唐書] which was written in the fifth year of Jiayou 嘉佑 [1056–1063] in the Northern Song dynasty [960–1127]. Zhang Hui suggested:

The definition of *shi-shi* became complicated through the Song dynasty, but the *New Book of the Tang*'s definition was undoubtedly the most influential. This official history book was revised by the court scholars of the Song, hence it enjoyed a high reputation among literati and had a profound impact on them. If people of the Song used *shi-shi* to describe Du's poetry, it is most likely that they learnt the term from the *New Book of the Tang*.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, Hong Ye argued there were “many errors”<sup>28</sup> in the *New Book of the Tang* about Du Fu. In addition, when Song Qi 宋祁 [998–1061], one of the authors of the book, and his peers made comments on Du, their understanding was a sort of montage: keeping the quality of *shi-shi* with the ideologies of Yuan Zhen and Bai Juyi grafted. This way of combining or synthesizing reflects a new understanding of Du and his poetry in the early Song era.

In 813 during Tang Xianzong's 唐憲宗 [r. 805–820] reign, Yuan Zhen made a comment on Du to state his importance in poetic history, and this was inscribed in the preface of Du's epitaph: “Du completely grasped the styles and characteristics of ancient and contemporary poetry. All the merits of his predecessors were integrated into him” and “Since *Shijing*, there has never been such a poet as great as him.”<sup>29</sup> He also compared Li Bai and Du Fu and judged that Du's poems “absorbed all the essence of great poems in the past”<sup>30</sup> with a return to the “elegant and correct” [yazheng 雅正] tradition of Qu Yuan 屈原

27 Zhang Hui, *Zhongguo “shishi” chuantong*, 25.

28 William Hung, *Tu Fu, China's Greatest Poet*, 353.

29 Zhou Xianglu 周相錄, *Yuan Zhen ji jiaozhu* 元稹集校注 [The Complete Work of Yuan Zhen with Exegesis] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011), 1361.

30 *Ibid.*, 1361.

[ca. 340–278 BCE] as exemplified in his long poems, especially *pailü* 排律 [regulated verse], with “detailed descriptions elaborated, parallelism and tonal alteration applied.”<sup>31</sup> In contrast, Bai Juyi focused on the ideological nature of Du’s poems. In the tenth year of Yuanhe, Bai Juyi wrote “Letters to Yuan Zhen [*Yu Yuan Jiu shu* 與元九書].” In it he went through the history of poetry since *Shijing* 詩經 [*The Book of Song*] and *Chuci* 楚辭 [*The Song of Chu*], described the gradual decline of Confucian satirical poetry [*mei ci shi* 美刺詩] in later generations, and believed that Du Fu was the best poet since the High Tang as the Confusion tradition of *feng ya bi xing* 風雅比興 (stylistic techniques originated from *Shijing*) was revived in his poems such as “The Officer of Xin’an [*Xin’an li* 新安吏],” “The Officer at Stone Moat [*Shihao li* 石壕吏],” “The Officer at Tong Pass [*Tongguan li* 潼關吏],” “Luzi Pass [*Sai Lüzi* 塞蘆子],” “Keeping Those of Huamen [*Liu Huamen* 留花門]” and through verses such as “Crimson gates reek with meat and ale, while on the streets are bones of the frozen dead.”<sup>32</sup> Yuan and Bai may have different views but they both noticed the narrative and realistic properties in Du’s poems – a reflection of major social issues known as *shishi* 時事 [contemporary affairs]. Yuan and Bai’s realistic interpretation and their emphasis on the political function of Du’s poems are obviously influenced by the cultural and political movements in mid-Tang as mentioned earlier including the political reform, the resurgence of the study of *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and the realistic trend of poetic writing, which were the same background that gave birth to Meng Qi’s *shi-shi*. However, they have different intentions hence their emphases are not quite the same in the way they narrate the story of Du Fu. Yuan and Bai had their focus on the political turmoil reflected in Du’s poems with *shi-shi* capturing and revealing major political events, while Meng’s *shi-shi* sees more of the personal side of Du with depictions of his daily life and the mountains and rivers that he crossed.

With Yuan and Bai’s views in mind, the extension and change of *shi-shi*’s meaning in *New Book of the Tang* is now clear. First, the book affirms Yuan Zhen’s view “Du has such a masterly command of rhymes and rhythms that the momentum in his writing shows not even a slightest sign of fading no matter how long the poems are”<sup>33</sup> and adds “He is also good at presenting his contemporary affairs in his poems”<sup>34</sup> into *shi-shi*. As a conclusive remark, *shi-shi* represents that Du writes about his contemporary affairs in his poems with a mastery command of strict parallelism rules in long verses. According

31 Ibid., 1361.

32 Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of Du Fu*, 215.

33 Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 and Song Qi 宋祁, *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 [*The New Book of the Tang*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 201.5738.

34 Ibid., 5738.

to Meng's definition, the word only refers to Du's creations during "Trekking the paths in Long and Shu." Now according to Yuan's new standard, only a few of Du's poems can be addressed as *shi-shi*, such as "Going from the Capital to Fengxian County, Singing My Feelings [*Zi Jing fu Fengxian xian yonghuai wubaizi* 自京赴奉先縣咏懷五百字]," "Journey North [*Bei zheng* 北征]," and "Writing My Feelings in Kui on an Autumn Day [*Qiuri Kui fu yonghuai fengji Zheng jian Li binke yibaiyun* 秋日夔府咏懷奉寄鄭監李賓客一百韻]," which are verses of considerable length that were extremely rare among Tang poems. Inheriting the ideas of Yuan and Bai, the connotation and referent of *shi-shi* continued to deviate. Unlike Meng's emphasis on Du's personal misfortune, Yuan and Bai returned to the Confucian doctrine of interpretation of political concern.

Second, *shi-shi's* meaning in *New Book of the Tang* was after Yuan and Bai hence was influenced by their own poetic philosophy. Yuan and Bai both praised and acknowledged that Du's poems followed the tradition of *feng ya* 風雅 [bearing elegance]. They also reached a consensus of the ethical and ideological values manifested in Du's poems along with the subsequent prestige bestowed. Bai Juyi is more explicit and specifies the Confucian doctrine and poetic origin he believes was contained in Du's poems as the Confucian satirical poetry – namely *feng ya bi xing*. This shows that instead of *Spring and Autumn Annals*, people started to compare Du's poems to another classic – *Shijing*. In the Tang, the prestigious ancient poetry book *Shijing* is often mentioned to make compliments to other works. For example, Li Bai in his "Fifteen Ancient Odes I [*Gu feng shiwushou* 古風十五首]" writes "Poems like those written in 'Great Elegy [*Da ya* 大雅]' (a section in *Shijing*) on the rise and fall of the governments have long gone";<sup>35</sup> Du Fu in his "Six Quatrains Done Playfully [*Xi wei liu jueju* 戲為六絕句]" writes "Imitating ancient classics and practicing in the tradition of *feng* and *ya*."<sup>36</sup> Du Fu also praised other people's poems carrying the spirit of *feng ya*. In his preface of "Accompanying Yuan Jie in Chongling [*Tong Yuan shijun Chongling xing* 同元使君春陵行]" he applauded the *bi xing ti zhi* 比興體制 [use of comparison and evocation]<sup>37</sup> in Yuan's poem. Same kind of fashion was returned to praise Du's style which was more relatable to *Shijing*. For example, shortly after Du's death, Fan Huang 樊晃 [ca. 700–773] compared Du's poems to "Masterpieces of great elegy"<sup>38</sup> in *A Preface to a Minor Anthology of Du Fu's Poems* [*Du gongbu xiaoji xu* 杜工部小集序]; Du Mu 杜牧

35 大雅久不做。Wang Qi 王琦, annot., *Li Taibai quanji* 李太白全集 [*The Complete Work of Li Bai*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 77.

36 別裁偽體親風雅。Xiao Difei, *Du Fu quanji jiaozhu*, 2511.

37 *Ibid.*, 4813.

38 Hua Wenxuan, *Gudian wenxue yanjiu ziliao huibian*, 7.

[803–852] described Du's poems as *fengsao* 風騷 [unrivaled] in "Visiting Zhao Gu on a Clear Winter Day in His Residence on the Western Street in Three Rhymes [*Xueqing fang Zhao Gu jiexi suoju sanyun* 雪晴訪趙嘏街西所居三韻]."39 Bai's comparison between Du's poems and *Shijing* is more comprehensive and precise. In his letter to Yuan, Bai elucidated the use of *feng ya bi xing* to write about contemporary affairs and appraised Du's poems such as "The Officer at Stone Moat" as an example. In addition, the word *shishi* is used in *New Book of the Tang* to define Du's *shi-shi*, which came from two keywords in Bai's letter to Yuan: "Essays should be made for the current era and poetry should be composed to represent real events."<sup>40</sup>

Because of this newly established connection between Du's poetry and the *feng-ya* tradition and based on the *shishi* standard to be able to reflect current events, the referent of *shi-shi* takes a further shift – it is to neither the poems Meng Qi refers to during Du's drifting in Long-Shu, nor those long regulated verses recognised by Yuan and included by the *New Book of the Tang*, but the ones that are admired by Bai such as "The Officer of Xin'an," "The Officer at Stone Moat," "The Officer at Tong Pass," "Luzi Pass," "Keeping Those of Huamen," which contains verses depicting social issues such as "Crimson gates reek with meat and ale, while on the streets are bones of the frozen dead." As a result, the referent of *shi-shi* changed and its connotation has expanded to include the allegorical poems advocated by Yuan and Bai as well as the new *yuefu* 新樂府 movement they have produced. Yuan and Bai create new ballads and titles for *yuefu* [*xin ti yuefu* 新題樂府] which in their view is an inheritance of the traditional ethos in *Shijing* and *yuefu* of Han dynasty 漢樂府 for reporting and revealing issues in real life. The creation of new ballads indeed leads to the poetic fashion to reflect on contemporary social issues in mid-Tang. Although the An Lushan Rebellion has been quelled after Tang Suzong 唐肅宗 [r. 756–762], the social and political problems gradually aggravate, which brought public attention and cause people to contemplate. This has formed a trend among a generation of poets born after High Tang. Zhang Ji 張籍 [766–830] and Wang Jian 王建 [765–835] for example, have created such works. On the other hand, Yuan and Bai are more aware of the theories when they write, that is, they consciously follow the Confucian doctrine and are guided by its utilitarian principles.

The ethos of having social problems reflected in poems began to emerge before Yuan and Bai. After Li Shen 李紳 [772–846] named it new *yuefu*, Yuan and Bai promptly generated its writing paradigm and advanced the movement.

39 Ibid., 22.

40 Ding Rupeng 丁如朋 and Nie Shimei 聶世美, coll., *Bai Juyi quanji* 白居易全集 [*The Complete Work of Bai Juyi*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), 648.

According to Yuan's interpretation, although the new style of new *yuefu* poems did not appear until Mid-Tang, Du Fu in High Tang was the founder of the movement and set Du and his poems as the role model. The reason why Yuan and Bai traced their origins to Du Fu was indeed influenced by Du's works and theory: Du clearly states in the preface of the poem "Accompany Yuan Jie in Chongling" that he wants to revive the *bixing* paradigm and requires poems to reflect people's hardships and problems in real life. Yuan and Bai regard Du's poems like this carry the same creed as their new *yuefu* poems and can be adopted to support their movement. Following this train of thought, *shi-shi* gradually altered its referent to the new *yuefu* poems that depict contemporary affairs and social issues.

After further elaboration in *New Book of the Tang*, *shi-shi's* meaning has altered again. While its documentary and narrative are preserved, Meng's original focus on reporting individuals' daily lives has been transformed into restoring major events that happened in contemporary societies – *shishi*. Hence *shi-shi* has gained new political and ethical values for critiques, i.e., whether a poem is concerned about the public interest and destiny of the country; poetry should be a vehicle for reporting important *shi-shi* instead of a narrow focus on mundane aspects of daily life. Therefore, Meng's implicit empathy towards Du's personal misfortune is eliminated in *shi-shi's* meaning and replaced by a communal understanding of Du's patriotic concerns. Some later interpretation of *shi-shi* associates it with the concept of *shibi* 史筆 [historian pen] which is in fact a misunderstanding because *shibi* is a specific writing style of historiography emphasizing objectivity. Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 [1045–1105] and Yu Ji 虞集 [1272–1348] support the ethical connotation of *shi-shi*, while Lu You 陸遊 [1125–1201] suggests that *shi-shi* reflects Du's inheritance of *Shijing* through adopting the ancient Confucian tradition of writing history *chungqiu bifa* 春秋筆法 [the artistry of *Spring and Autumn*] in which poetry can act in place of history or they can be incorporated in order to serve important Confucian values and political purposes. *Chungqiu bifa* is not a mere stylistic technique. Instead, it focuses on *yin* 隱 [concealment] with author's intention hidden and attitude veiled. Mencius [372–289 BCE] states "*Shijing* faded after the rulers stopped collecting poems and songs from their people, and Confucius created *Spring and Autumn Annals* instead."<sup>41</sup> He believes that history is preserved in poems, so the writings of history can continue to be based on poems. In addition, poetry can familiarise readers with the time period that the poets lived in and learn about the social and political situations related to the poems. The history

41 Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Mengzi yizhu* 孟子譯注 [A commentary of Mencius] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 209.

mentioned here is not a history of one's own but a history of nations – *shishi*. This kind of national history not only contains particular values – political and ideological ideas – but also tells events, reflecting the narrating, documentary and realistic attributes of *shi-shi*.

From an uncherished poet drifting in desolation to a poetic hero treasured by thousands of people after he died, Du Fu has gradually gained importance and influence, and Meng's *shi-shi* stands as the first and most conclusive evaluation of him. The word then acquired new connotations in *New Book of the Tang*. In addition to the stylistic features of documentation and narration, political and ideological values were attached – so-called realism nowadays was also added to describe its content. The denoting targets of the words and their focus also changed. The focus shifted from depicting writer's own life to narrating *shi-shi* – historical events of the time, and the referents expanded from Du's poems written during “Trekking the paths in Long and Shu” to his other poems written before and after the time in order to fit in with the new title *Yuefu* genre and support the associated poetry movement. Such poems include Du's “San li” and “San bie” series, which are regarded as classical examples of *shi-shi*. All of the above has constituted our understanding of the concept today.

*Translated by Wu Min 吳旻*

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# The Making of Classics: Li Bai and Du Fu's Poems in Anthologies of Tang Poetry between the Tang and the Ming Dynasties

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## Abstract

The canonization of Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry occurred over a period that spanned centuries and dynasties. The treatment of Li Bai and Du Fu's works differed through the ages. Among anthologies from the Tang and the Five Dynasties that remain to our disposition today, only three contain poems by Li Bai, and only one includes some by Du Fu. Tang compilers had a poor opinion of the two poets. Their criticism contrasts substantially with the praise that was offered by Han Yu and other poets. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, scholars held Li Bai and Du Fu in high regard, yet their poems were often omitted by compilers. The main reason for this exclusion was that both poets' complete works had long been considered unworthy and set aside. Compilers respected the skills of the two poets, but they did not truly appreciate their work. During the Ming dynasty, anthologies would comment on the two poets as important figures of literary history. Compilers praised their art as being of the highest quality. By then, both poets were highly respected, and their poems had officially already been made into classics. In the process of becoming classics, works of art can be seen as enduring, and as cumulating value through different periods of time. Times keep on changing, yet the significance of Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry became all the more obvious as centuries passed.

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## Keywords

Tang poetry – Li Bai – Du Fu – anthologies – the canonization of texts

In the firmament of Chinese poetry, Li Bai 李白 [701–762] and Du Fu 杜甫 [712–770], shine like the twins of the Gemini constellation. This was not always the case. It took decades for scholars to warm up to Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry, and they only came to be considered classics after centuries of anthologizing Tang poems. It is during the Ming dynasty [1368–1644] that the interest toward Li Bai and Du Fu among compilers was at its highest. This was in perfect accordance with the cultural zeitgeist then, when “prose was to be modeled on the writing of the Qin [221–207 BCE] and the Han [206 BCE–220 CE], and poetry on the works of High Tang [*Shengtang* 盛唐] poets.”<sup>1</sup> Contemporary research on Tang anthologies has provided many valuable insights on the topic. Examples worthy of mention are, among others, Lu Yanxin's 盧燕新 *A Study of the Compilation of Poetry Anthologies during the Tang Dynasty* [*Tangren bianxuan shiwen zongji yanjiu* 唐人編選詩文總集研究], Zhang Zhihua's 張智華 *A Study of the Compilation of Poetry Collections during the Southern Song Dynasty* [*Nan Song de shiwen xuanben yanjiu* 南宋的詩文選本研究], Chen Fei's 陳斐 *The Compilation of Tang Poetry and Poetics during the Southern Song Dynasty* [*Nan Song Tangshi xuanben yu shixue kaolun* 南宋唐詩選本與詩學考論] and Jin Shengkui's 金生奎 *A Study of the Compilation of Tang Poetry during the Ming Dynasty* [*Mingdai Tangshi xuanben yanjiu* 明代唐詩選本研究]. These contributions are all enlightening for the present research. Yet, these authors often mention the canonization of Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry, but do not explore in detail the actual process by which these poems became classics. This has left room for further research, which we present here.

### 1 From the Tang's Ignorance to the Yuan's Superficial Esteem

Based on historical records, more than 170 collections of Tang poems must have been compiled during the Tang dynasty [618–907]. Those extant almost all appear in their block-printed format in *Tang Compilers Editing Tang Poetry* [*Tangren xuan Tangshi xinbian* 唐人選唐詩新編], which Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮

1 Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., eds., *Ming shi* 明史 [*Ming History*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 286.7348.

[1933–2016], Chen Shangjun 陳尚君 and Xu Jun 徐俊 edited.<sup>2</sup> The book contains sixteen collections of Tang poems, some of which do not include poems by Li Bai or Du Fu, for reasons that have to do with the period during which they were put together or the places in which they were, or simply because these poems were not available to the compilers. For instance, the *Collection of the Hanlin Academicians* [*Hanlin xueshi ji* 翰林學士集], the *Pearls and Blossoms Anthology* [*Zhu ying ji* 珠英集] and the *Little Collection of Searching for Jade* [*Sou yu xiaoji* 搜玉小集] contain only works by Early Tang [*Chutang* 初唐] poets. Similarly, because neither Li Bai nor Du Fu belonged to the area covered by Yin Fan's 殷璠 [fl. 713–756] *Collection from Danyang* [*Danyang ji* 丹陽集], there is no mention of their works to be found in it. As for Rui Tingzhang's 芮挺章 [fl. 742–756] *Collection of the Nation's Ripened Talents* [*Guo xiu ji* 國秀集], it was published in the third year [744] of the Tianbao 天寶 era [742–756], and hence it could not possibly have kept a record of any of Li Bai or Du Fu's poems. As for Yuan Jie's 元結 [715–772] *Collection from the Book-Bin* [*Qie zhong ji* 篋中集], it was published during the Qianyuan 乾元 era [758–760]. The book contains twenty-four poems from seven authors, including Chen Qianyun 沈千運 [fl. 715–772] but none again by Li Bai and Du Fu. Li Kangcheng's 李康成 [fl. 742–756] *Another Jade Terrace Collection* [*Yu tai hou ji* 玉臺後集] continues the work of Xu Ling 徐陵 [507–583] in *New Songs of the Jade Terrace* [*Yu tai xin yong* 玉臺新詠], citing only poems narrating women's lives. The originals are no longer extant, but in the text compiled by Chen Shangjun, there are no works by Li Bai and Du Fu. Gao Zhongwu's 高仲武 [fl. 712–805] *Collection of the Ministerial Spirit of an Age of Revival* [*Zhong xing jian qi ji* 中興間氣集] was put together not long after the publication of the *Collection of the Finest Souls of our Rivers and Alps* [*Heyue yingling ji* 河岳英靈集]. The two anthologies are very close in style and their authors selected almost all the same celebrated Tang poems. The absence of Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry in this specific collection reflects Gao Zhongwu's narrow artistic views as well as his ignorance. It also illustrates how Li Bai and Du Fu's works had yet to become classics of poetry. There were clear and precise standards according to which poems could be selected as entries in other collections published during the Middle Tang [*Zhongtang* 中唐]. Many, hence, did not include any poems by Li Bai and Du Fu. Examples of such collections are Linghu Chu's 令狐楚 [766–837] *Poems for the Emperor's Inspection* [*Yulan shi* 御覽詩], Chu Cangyan's 褚藏言 [fl. 860–874] *The Dou Family's String of Pearls Collection* [*Dou shi lian zhu ji* 竇氏聯珠集], Cai Xingfeng's 蔡省風 [fl. 875–907]

2 Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, Chen Shangjun 陳尚君 and Xu Jun 徐俊, eds., *Tangren xuan Tangshi xinbian (zengdingben)* 唐人選唐詩新編 (增訂本) [*Tang Compilers Editing Tang Poetry* (revised and enlarged edition)] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014).

*New Songs from the Jade Lake* [*Yaochi xin yong ji* 瑤池新詠集] and Yao He's 姚合 [776–842] *Collection of the Superlatively Mysterious* [*Ji xuan ji* 極玄集].

Yin Fan's *Collection of the Finest Souls of our Rivers and Alps* is one of the extant anthologies of poetry that has had the most influence on subsequent generations of scholars. It was published in the twelfth year of the Tianbao era of Tang Xuanzong's 唐玄宗 reign [713–756] and it consists of more than 230 poems by twenty-four High Tang poets. Wang Changling 王昌齡 [d. 756] comes in first place with sixteen poems, while Chang Jian 常建 [708–765] and Wang Wei 王維 [700–761] both have fifteen poems to their names included. There are fourteen poems by Li Qi 李頎 [ca. 690–ca. 754], and Li Bai and Gao Shi 高適 [ca. 700–765] both come in fifth place, with thirteen poems each. Yin Fan's comment on Li Bai's poetry reads:

Li Bai loved his liquor and his character made him unable to bear any kind of constraint. He once holed up more than ten years in some forest in the mountains. Hence, there is both an unrestrained quality and flowing elegance to his poems. As for poems such as “The Road to Shu is Steep [*Shu dao nan* 蜀道難],” they can be described as being of the most surprising and remarkable kind. Since Qu Yuan's *Songs of Chu* [*Chu ci* 楚辭], such style has been quite rare.<sup>3</sup>

Yin Fan first recognizes that Li Bai writes as if he is free of any constraint. He then describes poems such as “The Road to Shu is Steep” as surprising and remarkable. Such a comment seems to indicate Yin Fan appreciated Li Bai's poetry. However, he also considered it as peculiar enough to belong to a kind of its own. In fact, Yin Fan did not regard Li Bai's poetry as part of the canon of Tang poetry. As for Du Fu, he lived and gained fame relatively later. While Yin Fan was selecting works for his collection in Runzhou 潤州, Du Fu was trapped in Chang'an. The two places being far away from each other, and Du Fu's reputation as a poet having yet to grow, his poems could not possibly make the cut. There are 299 poems still extant from Wei Zhuang's 韋莊 [ca. 836–910] *Collection of the Even More Mysterious* [*You xuan ji* 又玄集], but only seven by Du Fu and four by Li Bai. In this anthology, the selection and omission of poems seem to follow quite a random pattern, as if choices were made based on the compiler's inclinations only. Wei Hu 韋穀 [ca. 884–ca. 960] compiled his *Collection of the Gifted and Talented* [*Caidiao ji* 才調集] at the time of the

3 Fu Xuancong et al., *Tangren xuan Tangshi xinbian (zengdingben)*, 171. Refer to the same volume for the *Collection of the Finest Souls of our Rivers and Alps* [*Heyue yingling ji* 河岳英靈集] cited later in this article.

Later Shu kingdom 后蜀 [934–966], during the period of the Five Dynasties [907–960]. The anthology contains a thousand poems, and in its preface, the compiler appears to hold in high regard both Li Bai and Du Fu. However, no poems by the latter made their entry into the collection, while twenty-eight poems by Li Bai did. This amounts to a fairly low number nonetheless. Moreover, most of these are *Yuefu* 樂府 verse, i.e., poems written in a folk style. One would describe these poems as charming and elegant, two features that are not representative of Li Bai's most famous work.

Among the anthologies of Tang poetry compiled during the Tang dynasty that are still extant, only three of them contain poems by Li Bai – and those are never many. As for Du Fu, he is even more ignored by his contemporaries: a mere seven poems appear in the *Collection of the Even More Mysterious*, while all other compilers ignored the poet's achievements. When reviewing the work of Tang compilers, it becomes evident that the canonization of Li Bai and Du Fu had not even started at the time. If we are to look at the reasons behind this, one would be that neither Li Bai nor Du Fu ever succeeded in passing the imperial examinations, another would be that they did not belong to wealthy and influential clans and were not descendants of high-ranked officials. In their lifetime, neither Du Fu nor Li Bai enjoyed great reputations as poets. Both men also lived through the difficult times of the An Lushan Rebellion [*Anshi zhi luan* 安史之亂]. They met plenty of hardships during their existence and were forced to wander from one place to the next. One could hardly keep texts safe in such conditions, and the poems could not possibly have circulated among readers in a rapid fashion. Moreover, the art of printing had yet to develop further. It was not widespread at the time. As a result, it seems par for the course that compilers would not even have been able to set eyes on the works of Li Bai and Du Fu. Nonetheless, the Tang compilers' indifference contrasts tremendously with the great admiration expressed by poets of the Middle and Late Tang periods in regard to Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry.<sup>4</sup> This is revealing of how

4 Famous poets of the Middle and High Tang periods all praised Li Bai and Du Fu relatively equally. See for instance, Han Yu's 韓愈 poems, "A Recommendation for a Fellow Scholar [*Jian shi* 薦士]", "Mocking Zhang Ji [*Tiao Zhang Ji* 調張籍]", "A Song for Drum-Shaped Stones [*Shigu ge* 石鼓歌]" and "For Requiting a Customs officer Lu Yunfu in Early Autumn [*Chou simen Lu Sixiong yunfu yuanzhang wangqiu zuo* 酬司門盧四兄雲夫院長望秋作]". See also Bai Juyi's 白居易 "Reading the Collected Works of Li Bai and Du Fu: A Colophon [*Du Li Du shi ji yin ti juan hou* 讀李杜詩集因題卷後]", Du Mu's 杜牧 [803–852] "A Poem Sent to my Nephew A Yi on the Winter Solstice [*Dongzhi ri ji xiaozhi A Yi shi* 冬至日寄小侄阿宜詩]" and "Visit Zhao Jia on a Clear Winter Day in his Residence on the Western Street in Three Rhymes [*Xue qing fang Zhao Jia jie xi suoju san yun* 雪晴訪趙嘏街西所居三韻]", Li Shangyin's 李商隱 [ca. 813–ca. 858] "Five Casual Pieces [*Man cheng wu zhang* 漫成五章]", Si Kongtu's 司空圖 [837–907] "Comment on Poems with Wang Jia, a Letter [*Yu wangjia ping* 與王賈平]

little acknowledgment the general population granted to the two poets' verse. Their works remained inaccessible and thus it was impossible for people to recognize their value.

During the Song dynasty [960–1279], the complete works of both poets were block-printed many times and widely circulated among the population. However, in collections of Tang poetry compiled during the Song dynasty, compilers adopt a respectful, yet detached attitude toward the two masters. For instance, Wang Anshi 王安石 [1021–1086] in his *Anthology of a Hundred Tang Poets* [*Tang baijia shi xuan* 唐百家詩選],<sup>5</sup> for which he selected over 1200 poems by 104 poets, claims that “if one desires to be literate in Tang poetry, this collection only will suffice.”<sup>6</sup> Yet, neither Li Bai nor Du Fu appear in it. Hong Mai 洪邁 [1123–1202] selected eighty-three pentasyllabic *jueju* 絕句, or quatrains, and eighty-five heptasyllabic ones by Li Bai for his *Ten Thousand Quatrains from the Tang Dynasty* [*Wan shou Tangren jueju* 萬首唐人絕句], as well as thirty-two pentasyllabic quatrains and 108 heptasyllabic ones by Du Fu. Poems that appear in the collection are only in one form (i.e., quatrains) however, and those that made the cut do not pay tribute to the achievements of the two great poets. Four poems by Li Bai and six by Du Fu are found in Ke Mengde's 柯夢得 [fl. 1194–1225] collection entitled *Quatrains from the Tang Worthies* [*Tangxian jueju* 唐賢絕句]. None though appear in Zhao Shixiu's 趙師秀 [1170–1217] *Anthology of Many Fine Poets* [*Zhong miao ji* 眾妙集] or in Liu Kezhuang's 劉克莊 [1187–1269] *Pentasyllabic and Heptasyllabic Quatrains from the Tang Dynasty* [*Tang wu qi yan jueju* 唐五七言絕句]. Other major anthologies make no mention of either Li Bai nor Du Fu. Such is the case of Zhou Bi's 周弼 [1194–1255] *Tang Poetry in Three Forms* [*Santi Tangshi* 三體唐詩], published at the end of the Song dynasty, and Yuan Haowen's 元好問 [1190–1257] *The Celebration of Tang Poetry, or Fife and Drum Songs of Tang Poetry* [*Tangshi guchui* 唐詩鼓吹], compiled during the Jin dynasty [1115–1234].<sup>7</sup>

Well-known anthologies of Tang poems compiled during the Yuan dynasty [1279–1368] include Fang Hui's 方回 [1227–1307] *Luminaries of Essential*

*shi shu* 與王駕評詩書]” and Huang Tao's 黃滔 [840–911] “A Letter to Chen Boyin on Poetry [*Da Chen Boyin lun shi shu* 答陳礪隱論詩書].”

5 This book mentions both Wang Anshi and Song Cidao 宋次道 [fl. 1002–1060] as compilers.

6 Wang Anshi 王安石, “Tang baijia shi xuan xu 唐百家詩選序 [A Preface to an Anthology of a Hundred Tang Poets],” in *Song wen jian* 宋文鑒 [*Examples of Song Poetry*], ed. Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 87.1247.

7 According to a preface by Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 [1254–1322], who lived during the Yuan dynasty, Yuan Haowen 元好問 compiled the works for this collection and his student Hao Tianting 郝天挺 [1247–1313] annotated them. During the Qing dynasty [1616–1911], some scholars objected to this authorship, but such a theory was never confirmed.

*Regulated Verses* [*Yingkui lüsui* 瀛奎律髓], block-printed in the twentieth year of the Zhiyuan 至元 era [1282] and Yang Shihong's 楊士弘 [fl. 1264–1368] *Sounds of Tang* [*Tang yin* 唐音], block-printed in the fourth year of the Zhizheng 至正 era [1344]. More than sixty years had passed between the publication of the two collections, and the difference in treatment of Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry in both reflects the major changes in perspectives that occurred during that span of time.

There are approximately 3000 poems in regulated verse, or *lǜshi* 律诗, written by 385 different poets, from both the Tang and Song dynasties in the *Luminaries of Essential Regulated Verses*. Fang Hui held in high regard both Du Fu and the Jiangxi school [*Jiangxi shipai* 江西詩派]. He devoted twenty-nine of its forty-nine fascicles [*juan* 卷] to Du Fu's poetry, for a total of 209 poems. Fang Hui first coined the expression “one ancestor and three masters,” when he wrote, “Among poets from the past up to present days, Du Fu must be regarded as the ancestor, and Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 [1045–1105], Chen Shidao 陳師道 [1053–1102] and Chen Yuyi 陳與義 [1090–1139] as the great masters that followed. Not many others rival them in talent.”<sup>8</sup> Fang Hui's collection mostly contains poems by Du Fu and other authors of the Middle and Late Tang periods, as well as poems by authors from the Northern Song, such as Huang Tingjian. As Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 [1910–1998] pointed out, all were poems that had a “Song ring” to them. Yet, Fang Hui only selected pentasyllabic or heptasyllabic poems in regulated verse, and those alone cannot convey Du Fu's transcendent talent and versatility in style. The treatment of Li Bai's poetry is even more unfair, since Yan Hui selected a mere ten poems among all his works. As for Yang Shihong's *Sounds of Tang*, it contains 1421 poems from the Tang dynasty.<sup>9</sup> Yang selected no work by Li Bai or Du Fu, even though he seems, in his preface, to have a lot of esteem for both men: “Poetry never flourished more than it did during the Tang. Li Bai and Du Fu's works tower above all

8 These statements by Fang Hui are cited in the twenty-sixth fascicle [*juan* 卷] of the *Luminaries of Essential Regulated Verses* in a remark on Chen Yuyi's 陳與義 poem “Qingming 清明” and in a remark on Chen's poem “Ascending to a Pavilion in Fengzhou with Daguang [*Yu Daguang tong deng Fengzhou xiaoge* 與大光同登封州小閣]” in the first fascicle of the *Luminaries*. See Fang Hui 方回, *Yingkui lüsui hui ping* 瀛奎律髓匯評 [*Collected Commentaries on the Luminaries of Essential Regulated Verses*], ed. Li Qingjia 李慶甲 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2005), 1149, 42.

9 This number is mentioned in the introduction of *An Annotated Edition of Sounds of Tang*. Yang Shihong 楊士弘, Tao Wenpeng 陶文鵬, Wei Zuqin 魏祖欽, eds., *Tang yin ping zhu* 唐音評注 [*An Annotated Edition of Sounds of Tang*] (Baoding: Hebei daxue chubanshe, 2006), 17.

those who came before and whoever wants to discuss poetry after them will have to study them.”<sup>10</sup>

In sum, scholars who compiled anthologies of Tang poetry during the Song and the Yuan dynasties admired Li Bai and Du Fu, but they did not truly appreciate their worth. Their main excuse might have been that anthologies did not circulate a lot yet, but, on the whole, this inability to give Li Bai and Du Fu the attention they deserved seriously impaired the popularity of both poets among the general population, weakening the influence they could have had at the time.

## 2 The Ming Dynasty: Li Bai and Du Fu Both Inspire Reverence

During the Ming dynasty, scholars emphasized the importance of Tang poetry in literary history. They also considered Li Bai and Du Fu’s poetry as nothing less than the zenith of this history.

Gao Bing’s 高棅 [1350–1423] *Appraisal and Collection of Tang Poetry*, or *Graded Compendium of Tang Poetry* [*Tangshi pin hui* 唐詩品匯], published in 1293, remains the most famous anthology of Tang poems published during the Ming dynasty. There are ninety fascicles to the original, on which 5769 poems by 620 authors are recorded. The collection is organized based on the style or form of the poems. Gao Bing carried on, and added to, Yan Yu’s 嚴羽 [1192/1197–ca. 1245] periodization of Tang poetry. In the collection, Tang years are divided into four periods: the Early Tang, the High Tang, the Middle Tang and the Late Tang [*Wantang* 晚唐]. Gao Bing also identifies nine different standards on which he can grade the works he is citing: proper beginnings [*zhengshi* 正始], proper pedigree [*zhengzong* 正宗], great master [*dajia* 大家], notable master [*mingjia* 名家], supplementary [*yuyi* 羽翼], follower [*jiewu* 接武], resonant with the times [*zhengbian* 正變], lingering echoes [*yuxiang* 餘響] and side stream [*pangliu* 旁流]. The Early Tang poems are naturally regarded as proper beginnings, whereas proper pedigree, great master, notable master and supplementary refer to High Tang poets, because of their following of classical teachings, or as the names of the categories make clear, because of their excellence, notoriety or rather accessory status in history. The Middle Tang poets are presented as followers who emulated the achievements of those who came before them. Finally, the Late Tang poets are described as being resonant with

10 For Yang Shihong’s preface to *Sounds of Tang* mentioned in this article, see the section “Tang yin xingshi bing xu ‘唐音’姓氏並序 [Surnames and Preface of *Sounds of Tang*]” at the beginning of Yang Shihong et al., *Tang yin ping zhu*, 7.

the times, or again as lingering echoes; the former because they strived both to follow the ancient standard and make them evolve, the latter because of their powerful melodies. Finally, some poets fall under the label “side streams,” because they were outsiders, such as Buddhist monks and Daoist priests, or imperial concubines. Li Bai’s poems were mostly considered as belonging to the proper pedigree category, whereas Du Fu’s appeared for the most part under the great master one. In terms of numbers, both men’s poems come in first position among all those recorded by Gao Bing. At this stage, their paramount importance in the history of Tang poetry seems to have been firmly established. In Gao Bing’s system for studying poetry, poems categorized as part of the proper pedigree are the ones that receive the highest praises. Li Bai’s poems are considered proper pedigree in six of the forms in which they are written, while one form is listed as a proper beginning. As for Du Fu, Gao Bing accords him the title of great master. Although Du Fu was then considered one of the foremost poets in literary history, he did not, in the eyes of Gao, qualify as a “proper pedigree” type. This perhaps might be explained by the changes embodied by Du Fu’s poetry, as it straddled the divide between the High and the Middle Tang. Five forms of poems by Du Fu are listed under the “great master” category and two forms are listed under the “supplementary.” Gao Bing selected 408 poems by Li Bai and 297 by Du Fu, which amounts to a total of 705 for both masters. Besides, their most consummate works all appear in the anthology. Gao Bing’s preface to the *Appraisal and Collection of Tang Poetry* amply confirms Li Bai and Du Fu’s status as major poets:

During the Kaiyuan 開元 and the Tianbao eras of the Tang emperor Xuanzong’s reign, there was the flowing grace of Li Bai’s poems, the pathos of Du Fu’s, the refined style of Meng Haoran’s 孟浩然, the exquisite writing of Wang Wei’s, the superior melodies of Wang Changling’s, the solemn and stirring quality of Gao Shi’s and Cen Shen’s 岑參, and the extraordinary character of Li Qi’s and Chang Jian’s. Those works are the quintessence of the golden age that was the High Tang period.<sup>11</sup>

Gao Bing carefully selected works already appearing in his *Appraisal and Collection of Tang Poetry* for the twenty-two fascicles that make up his *Proper Music of Tang Poetry* [*Tangshi zhengsheng* 唐詩正聲]. Based on our

11 Gao Bing 高棅, ed., *Tangshi pin hui* 唐詩品匯 [*Appraisal and Collection of Tang Poetry*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), 8–9.

calculations,<sup>12</sup> the *Proper Music of Tang Poetry* contains a total of 934 poems from the Tang dynasty, including eighty-one by Li Bai and ninety-three by Du Fu. It is obvious then that Gao Bing always had a lot of admiration for both poets. One could in fact say they appear in the collection as towering above others. Some longer pentasyllabic and heptasyllabic old-style poems [*gushi* 古詩] and songs in old form [*gexing* 歌行] of theirs were left out, however, possibly because there was not enough room to include them.

One of the Later Seven Masters [*houqizi* 后七子], Li Panlong 李攀龍 [1514–1570], compiled the *Selections of Tang Poetry* [*Tangshixuan* 唐詩選], a collection in seven fascicles, arranged by forms. It records, in order, pentasyllabic old-style poems, heptasyllabic old-style ones, pentasyllabic regulated verse (or *lüshi*), pentasyllabic long regulated verse [*pailü* 排律], heptasyllabic regulated verse, pentasyllabic quatrains (or *jueju*) and heptasyllabic quatrains, for a total of 460 Tang poems,<sup>13</sup> including thirty-four by Li Bai and forty-eight by Du Fu. Both poets come again in first place based on the number of poems cited. In his preface to his *Selections of Tang poetry*, Li Panlong vouches for Du Fu's heptasyllabic old-style verse, as well as for Li Bai's pentasyllabic and heptasyllabic quatrains, but when it comes to heptasyllabic verse, he vouches for Wang Wei and Li Qi. For Li Bai, Li Panlong selected mainly pentasyllabic regulated verses (a total of five poems), pentasyllabic quatrains (five again) and heptasyllabic quatrains (eighteen), and only selected two old-style poems, which is a rather small number. His selection of poems by Du Fu is fairly reasonable, with eight heptasyllabic old-style poems, twelve pentasyllabic regulated verses, seven pentasyllabic long regulated verses, and twelve heptasyllabic regulated verses. The anthology is to some extent a reflection of the poetry of the Early and the Later Seven Masters [*qian hou qi zi* 前后七子].

Tang Ruxun's 唐汝詢 [fl. 1573–1644] *Tang Poems Interpreted* [*Tangshi jie* 唐詩解], published during the Ming dynasty, is also an anthology worthy of review. Tang Ruxun compiled the anthology by editing the works of Gao Bing and Li Panlong discussed above. Based on Wang Zhenhan's 王振漢 calculations, *Tang poems Interpreted* contains more than 1500 Tang poems, among which 175 are written by Li Bai and 174 by Du Fu,<sup>14</sup> a number as impressive as

12 The numbers here are based on the *Notes and Commentaries on Proper Music of Tang Poetry* [*Tangshi zhengsheng jianzhu* 唐詩正聲箋注], published in 1841 during the Tenpō 天保 era in Japan. This version is now part of the Toki special collection at Waseda University.

13 *A Selection of Poems from the Old and the Modern* [*Gu jin shi shan* 古今詩刪] includes twelve fascicles of Tang poetry, for a total of 725 poems.

14 See Wang Zhenhan 王振漢 and Fan Haiyu 范海玉, "Tang Ruxun ji qi *Tangshijie* 唐汝詢及其《唐詩解》 [*Tang Ruxun and Tang Poems Interpreted*]," *Hebei daxue xuebao* 河北大學學報, no. 4 (1999), 14.

the number of poems compiled in *Proper Music of Tang Poetry*. The work is in fact an extended edition of Gao Bing's collection, with about 500 more poems, in addition to explanatory notes and remarks (or interpretations, as conveyed by the character *jie* 解 in the title).

From Gao Bing's first collection to his second, and from Li Panlong's anthology to Tang Ruxun's, the reverence for Tang poetry and the importance attached to Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry remain clear constants. These collections from the Ming dynasty clearly helped disseminate the two poets' works and contributed to their fame.

During the late Ming dynasty, Zhong Xing 鍾惺 [1574–1624] and Tan Yuanchun 譚元春 [1586–1637], both members of the Jingling school [*Jingling pai* 竟陵派], compiled a collection they entitled *Return to Tang Poetry* [*Tangshi gui* 唐詩歸]. At first glance, the selection seems to bear absolutely no resemblance to the ones made by members of the Restoring Antiquity school [*Fugu pai* 復古派] discussed above. Zhong and Tan not only opposed the emulation of the High Tang poets by the Early and the Later Seven Masters, declaring the style of these poets to be “rotund, overripe, and narrow,” they also stood against the “jarring, vulgar and obscure” methods of the Gong'an school [*Gong'an pai* 公安派]. Conversely, they advocated an attention to “the quiet and beautiful, to the small details of one's emotions” (see Zhong's preface) and to “one's own personal moods and convictions” (see Tan's preface). They did not, as the Gong'an school had, vouch for the Middle and Late Tang poets, and they still held the High Tang in high regard. Simply, they differed considerably from the Restoring Antiquity school in the works they elected to present. Zhong and Tan adopted the periodization that Gao Bing had conceived, and *Return to Tang Poetry* offers thirty-six fascicles of poetry, for a grand total of 2237 poems by 294 authors. Among all anthologies compiled during the Ming dynasty, *Return to Tang Poetry* comes second in the number of poems it contains, right after the *Appraisal and Collection of Tang Poetry* by Gao Bing. Yet, the compilers excluded a lot of classical poems that are usually celebrated. Wu Guoping 鄔國平, Sun Chunqing 孫春青 and Sun Xuetang 孫學堂 devoted a lot of attention to this particular issue and analyzed it in minute detail.<sup>15</sup>

15 Wu Guoping 鄔國平, ed., *Jingling pai yu Mingdai wenxue piping* 竟陵派與明代文學批評 [*The Jingling School and Literary Criticism during the Ming Dynasty*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004); Sun Chunqing 孫春青, ed., *Mingdai Tangshi xue* 明代唐詩學 [*Tang Poetics during the Ming Dynasty*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006); Sun Xuetang 孫學堂, ed., *Mingdai shixue yu Tangshi* 明代詩學與唐詩 [*Poetics of the Ming Dynasty and Tang Poetry*] (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2012).

In anthologies compiled by members of the Restoring Antiquity school, Li Bai and Du Fu occupy the center stage. Their poems are the most cited, in roughly equal numbers for both of them. However, in *Return to Tang Poetry*, Du Fu comes first with 313 poems, Wang Wei second with 113, and Li Bai third with ninety-eight. It is in the specific titles selected by the compilers that the difference is the most striking. Zhong Xing, for instance, only included one of Li Bai's "Fifty-Nine Old-Style Poems [*Gufeng wushijiu shou* 古風五十九首]": "The Phoenix Ascending Nine Thousand Ren [*Feng fei jiuqian ren* 鳳飛九千仞]". Many famous heptasyllabic old-style poems by Li Bai did not make the cut either, such as "The Road to Shu is Steep [*Shu dao nan* 蜀道難], the "Chant of Liangfu [*Liangfu yin* 梁甫吟], "Bring in the Wine [*Jiang jin liu* 將進酒], "A Song of Parting for Dan Qiuzi on Mount Hua's Cloudy Peak [*Xiyue yuntai ge song Dan Qiu zi* 西嶽雲台歌送丹丘子], "A Song of Lu Mountain to Censor Lu Xuzhou [*Lushan yao ji lu shiyu xu zhou* 廬山謠寄盧侍御虛舟], "A Song of Adieu to the Queen of the Skies, After a Dream Voyage to Her [*Mengyou tianmu yin liu bie* 夢遊天姥吟留別] and "Responding to 'Meditation on a Cold Night While Drinking Alone' by Wang the Twelfth [*Da Wang Shi'er hanye duzhuo youhuai* 答王十二寒夜獨酌有懷]. In "Eight Poems on Autumn Moods [*Qiuxing ba shou* 秋興八首]" and "Five Poems on Generals [*Zhu jiang wu shou* 諸將五首]", Du Fu's writing is powerful and simply soul-stirring. These poems in heptasyllabic regulated verse stand out as masterpieces in the history of Chinese literature, and there has been widespread consensus among scholars as to the organic whole that Du Fu's lines create. Zhong and Tan, though, held different opinions. They not only did not appreciate the quality of these poems, but they also cut them down, keeping only one or two of them. Zhong and Tan preferred poems that were quieter and more delicate in style, but this editing has since antagonized most readers. The reality is, their thinking was narrow in scope, and their artistic taste mediocre. They were only able to appreciate sentimentalist descriptions of a poet's interior life. The complexity and profoundness of Du Fu's writing eluded them completely. Zhong and Tan also were also unmoved by Li Bai's heptasyllabic old-style poems, even though Du Fu once wrote of Li Bai's writing that it could "startle wind and rain," and make "ghosts and spirits weep."<sup>16</sup>

Block-printed in the eleventh year of the Chongzhen Emperor's 崇禎 reign [1628–1644] and compiled by Zhou Jing 周敬 [fl. 1465–1487] and Zhou Ting 周琿 [1565–1647], the *Revised and Annotated Anthology of Tang Poetry* [*Shanbu Tangshi xuan mai jian shi huitong ping lin* 刪補唐詩選脈箋釋會通評林] is one of the most major achievements of the end of the Ming dynasty. Zhou

16 Owen Stephen, *The Poetry of Du Fu* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 1:113.

Jing and Zhou Ting offer more than 2400 poems from a wide range of poets, which they all comment on impartially, avoiding the biases displayed by their predecessors, whether they were from the Restoring Antiquity, the Gong'an or the Jingling schools. They put together a remarkable reader of Tang poetry for subsequent generations to refer to. The collection contains a total of 172 poems by Du Fu and 154 by Li Bai, and most of the two poets' masterpieces. As for the comments provided, they are fairly insightful, as already discussed in depth in another paper of ours.<sup>17</sup>

### 3 Generation after Generation, Li Bai and Du Fu's Fame Keeps Growing

Fortunately, even though compilers did not pay enough attention to Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry during the Tang dynasty, relatively complete collections of their works were preserved. Li Yangbing 李陽冰 [fl. 756–805] compiled poems of Li Bai into *The Thatched Cottage Collection* [*Caotang ji* 草堂集], Wei Hao 魏顥 [fl. 756–762] compiled the *Li Hanlin Collection* [*Li Hanlin ji* 李翰林集] and Fan Chuanzheng 范傳正 [fl. 806–820] also completed an anthology of Li Bai's poetry. At the beginning of the Song dynasty, Yue Shi 樂史 [930–1007] completed two anthologies, which he entitled the *Li Hanlin Collection* [*Li Hanlin ji* 李翰林集] and *Another Li Hanlin Collection* [*Li Hanlin bie ji* 李翰林別集]. Not long after, Song Minqiu 宋敏求 [1019–1079] compiled the records of a multitude of scholars into thirty fascicles entitled *An Anthology of the Works of Li Taibai* [*Li Taibai wen ji* 李太白文集]. Zeng Gong 曾鞏 [1019–1083] presented an amended version of the work in the third year of the Yuanfeng 元豐 era [1078–1085]. Shortly before, Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽 [1008–1048], followed by Wang Zhu 王洙 [997–1057], had busied themselves arranging Du Fu's works, but they did not manage to print the texts they had compiled. In the Jiayou 嘉佑 [1056–1063] era, Wang Qi 王琪 [fl. 1056–1063] continued Wang Zhu's work and had the collection printed. In the Zhiping 治平 era [1064–1067], Pei Yu 裴煜 [fl. 1041–1067] added nine pieces to it, including Yuan Zhen's 元稹 [779–831] "Epitaph for Du Fu [*Du Fu Muzhiming* 杜甫墓誌銘]", and reprinted and redistributed the edited collection. The work which Wang Zhu initiated, and which his son Wang Qi amended and Pei Yu supplemented, became ultimately known as *An*

17 Ding Fang 丁放, "Shanbu Tangshi xuan mai jian shi huitong ping lin yu Ming dai Tangshi xue 《刪補唐詩選脈箋釋會通評林》與明代唐詩學 [The Revised and Annotated Anthology of Tang Poetry and Tang Poetics during the Ming Dynasty]," *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論, no. 1 (2017): 141–50.

*Anthology of Vice-Director of the Ministry of Works Du* [*Du gong bu ji* 杜工部集]. Many anthologies in the future would be modeled on this one.<sup>18</sup> Yang Qixian 楊齊賢 [fl. 1194–1225], who lived during the Song dynasty, compiled and commented a collection of poems by Li Bai. His work was supplemented by Xiao Shiyun 蕭士贇 [fl. 1249–1333] during the Yuan dynasty, and published under the title *A Categorized and Supplemented Collection of Li Taibai's Poetry* [*Fenlei buzhu Li Taibai shi* 分類補注李太白詩]. This is one example of the commented anthologies of Li Bai's poetry that circulated at the time. Many collections of comments on Du Fu's works were published as well. Guo Zhida's 郭知達 [fl. 1174–1189] *Nine Collected and Annotated Commentaries on Du Fu's Poetry* [*Jiu jia ji zhu Du shi* 九家集注杜詩] is one of them. Other examples also include Zhao Cigong's 趙次公 [fl. 1105–1180] annotations and Huang Xi's 黃希 [fl. 1166] and Huang He's 黃鶴 [fl. 1208–1224] father-and-son anthology, *A Thousand Collected and Annotated Commentaries on Du Fu's Poetry* [*Qian jia ji zhu Du shi* 千家集注杜詩]. Approximately 1050 poems by Li Bai are still available to readers today, and 1450 are by Du Fu. The only poet who supersedes them in number is Bai Juyi 白居易 [772–846]. Yet, Li Bai and Du Fu wandered the kingdom their whole life. Li Bai only spent a couple of years in Chang'an, where he earned the empty title of "Hanlin Academician [*Hanlin gongfeng* 翰林供奉]". After the third year of the Tianbao era, Li Bai roamed the whole country. He was imprisoned at the time of the An Lushan Rebellion, and was then sent into exile. As for Du Fu, the ten years he spent trapped in Chang'an, barely got him anywhere in terms of starting a career as an official of the emperor. When war erupted, he too was forced to drift from one place to the next. Both Li Bai and Du Fu spent the rest of their lives in poverty, which explains why it was impossible for the court to be aware of the value of their works. In comparison, Wang Wei, who lived at the same period in history, already enjoyed a great reputation as a poet in his lifetime, and so after his death, the emperor ordered Wang Jin 王綰 [700–781] to submit the works of his older brother to the court.

In the early stage of the Middle Tang, the dominant style in literary circles could be described as careful and neat, flowing and elegant. Thus, Dugu Ji 獨孤及 [725–777], in his preface for an anthology of poems by Huangfu Ran 皇甫冉 [ca. 717–ca. 770] composed during the Dali 大曆 era [766–779], writes, "After Shen Quanqi 沈佺期 and Song Zhiwen 宋之問 passed away, Cui Hao

18 We are indebted to Tao Min 陶敏 and Li Yifei 李一飛 for their detailed account of the multiple stages of revision of the drafts of Li Bai's and Du Fu's collected work that led to the block-printed editions. See Tao Min 陶敏 and Li Yifei 李一飛, *Sui Tang Wudai wenxue shiliao xue* 隋唐五代文學史料學 [*The Historical Sources of Literary History in the Sui, the Tang and the Five Dynasties*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990).

崔顥 and Wang Wei in the years of the Kaiyuan and Tianbao eras rose to fame. Today, there are only a few poets who have managed to learn from these poets' crafts. Huangfu Ran is one of them."<sup>19</sup> Dugu Ji's preface reflects the prevalent style among poets during that period. In the years of the Yuanhe 元和 era [806–820], two important schools of poetry emerged, one led by Han Yu 韓愈 [768–824] and Meng Jiao 孟郊 [751–814], the other by Yuan Zhen and Bai Juyi. Both schools thought highly of the poetry of Li Bai and Du Fu. In the eighth year of the Yuanhe era, Yuan Zhen composed the "Epitaph for Du Fu." While he praises the talent of both poets, Du Fu is the one who wins his utmost admiration. Yuan Zhen commends Du Fu by criticizing Li Bai for his inability "to narrate and elaborate as he writes and to arrange long verses and rhymes."<sup>20</sup> In the tenth year of the same era, Bai Juyi wrote the "Epistle to Yuan the Ninth [*Yu Yuan jiu shu* 與元九書]". In the letter, Bai expounds his views by both complimenting and mocking Li Bai and Du Fu, and by using comparisons and allusive images. Bai Juyi does reaffirm the importance of their works, but also delivers a heavy dose of veiled criticism.<sup>21</sup> Toward the end of the Five Dynasties, Liu Xu 劉昫 [888–947] significantly bolstered the reputation of Li Bai and Du Fu among literary circles, by providing a record of their lives in "Bibliographical Notes on Various Scholars [*Wenyuan zhuan* 文苑傳]", one of the fascicles of *Old Book of the Tang Dynasty* [*Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書], and by making the following statement: "Among poets of the Tianbao era, Du Fu and Li Bai have equally earned their fame."<sup>22</sup>

At the dawn of the Song dynasty, the three most prevalent styles were the Bai style [*baiti* 白體], the Xikun style [*xikunti* 西昆體] and the style of late Tang poets [*wan Tang ti* 晚唐體]. In other words, poets then were quite indifferent to the talent of Li Bai and Du Fu. However, one circle, led by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 [1007–1072] and with Su Shunqin and Mei Yaochen 梅堯臣 [1002–1060] as followers, still expressed the strong admiration they had for the two poets. Thanks to them, there was a revival of interest toward their works, which were subsequently rearranged and printed many times during the Song dynasty.

19 Du Guji 獨孤及, "Tang gu zuo buque Anding Huangfu Gong ji xu 唐故左補闕安定皇甫公集序 [A Preface to the Anthology of the Anding Censor Mr. Huangfu]," in *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 [*The Complete Works of Tang poets*], eds. Dong Gao 董誥 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 4:388.5366.

20 Yuan Zhen 元稹, "Tang gu gongbu yuan wai lang Du jun mu xi ming bing xu 唐故工部員外郎杜君墓系銘並序 [Epitaph of Mr. Du, Former Acting Vice-Director in the Ministry of Works of the Tang, with a Preface]," in *Quan Tang wen*, 7:654.6649.

21 Bai Juyi 白居易, "Yu Yuanjiu shu 與元九書 [Epistle to Yuanjiu]," in *Quan Tang wen*, 7:675.6889.

22 Liu Xu 劉昫 et al., eds., *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 [*Old Book of the Tang Dynasty*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 190.5055.

Ouyang Xiu and his fellow poets' contribution in promoting Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry was greatly significant. In the four hundred years that the Song and Yuan dynasties spanned, only anthologies of Li Bai, Du Fu, Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 [773–819] were commented in their entirety, and while Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan were praised for their prose, Li Bai and Du Fu's gained renown for their poetry.<sup>23</sup>

All the main poets of the Northern Song, from Ouyang Xiu to Su Shi 蘇軾 [1036–1101] recognized Li Bai and Du Fu as the two most important poets of the Tang dynasty, and most had in fact a slight preference for Li Bai. Ouyang wrote in *Remarks on Poetry from the Six-Unit Scholar* [*Liuyi shihua* 六一詩話] that “by the time of the Late Tang, there were no more poets whose style was as powerful and free as Li Bai's and Du Fu's had been.”<sup>24</sup> On the topic of poetry, Su Shi would often cite Li Bai and Du Fu as examples. In “Rhyme Schemes from Zhang Andao's Reading of Du's Poetry [*Ciyun Zhang Andao du Du shi* 次韻張安道讀杜詩],” Su Shi wrote: “Everyone knows how brilliant Du Fu's poetry is. His renown as a poet is equal to Li Bai's. Li Bai and Du Fu rival each other in talent, like two boats in a regatta.”<sup>25</sup> Yet, Su Shi's style was closer to Li Bai's.

Su Shi's student, Huang Tingjian, distinguished himself as an important representative of the Song school of poetry. Huang would often mention his admiration for Du Fu's poems. In “A Letter to Hong Jufu [*Da Hong Jufu shu* 答洪駒父書],” Huang emphasizes that “there is not one character that does not come from another source” in Du Fu's verse, but also talking about these pieces of writing, that Du Fu would “touch rough stones and turn them into gold,” and that he had the marvelous ability to “use the words of the ancients and transform them.”<sup>26</sup> In fact, Huang Tingjian conceptually held both Li Bai and Du Fu

23 On the block-printed editions of Li Bai, Du Fu, Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan's anthologies, see Wan Man 萬曼, ed., *Tang ji xulu* 唐集敘錄 [*Tang Anthologies in Order*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980).

24 Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Ouyang Xiu ji biannian jianzhu* 歐陽修集編年箋註 [*An Annotated Chronicle of Ouyang Xiu's Works*], ed. Li Zhiliang 李之亮 (Chengdu: Bashu shu she, 2007), 7:141.

25 Su Shi 蘇軾, *Su Shi shi ji* 蘇軾詩集 [*The Collected Poems of Su Shi*], eds. Wang Wengao 王文誥 and Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 6.266.

26 The expression *duo tai huan gu* [奪胎換骨], rendered here as “to use to words of the ancients and transform them,” can literally be translated “to seize a fetus and change the bones.” It refers to writers who would take some classical poems and rewrite them in a different form. The themes and ideas would be similar, but they would be presented in a new fashion, which made the connection with the former text not so obvious. The expression was used during the Song dynasty by Huihong 惠洪 in *Night Talks in a Cold Studio* [*Leng zhai ye hua* 冷齋夜話] when citing Huang Tingjian. Whether the statement was correct or wrong is debated. Yet, we tend to agree with Mo Lifeng, who presents an alternative perspective to Zhou Yukai's. See both authors' articles: Mo Lifeng 莫礪鋒, “Zai

in high regard. In his “Postscript on drafts of Li Bai’s poetry [*Ti Li Bai shi cao hou* 題李白詩草後], he writes: “I critique Li Bai’s poems, as the Yellow Emperor in ancient times presenting a recital in the wilderness of the Dongting Lake 洞庭湖. The tunes are in a confusing order, and they ignore convention, in a way that the average scribe today would never be able to imitate.”<sup>27</sup>

At the end of the Northern Song dynasty, poets of the Jiangxi school turned to Du Fu’s poetry, his experience of the An Lushan rebellion resonating with their own lives after the Jingkang incident [*Jinkang zhiluan* 靖康之亂]. Chen Yuyi and others then began to emulate Du Fu’s style. However, after Fang Hui identified Du Fu as the ancestor of Huang Tingjian’s, Chen Shidao’s and Chen Yuyi’s style in the expression “one ancestor, three followers” coined in *Luminaries of Essential Regulated Verses*, Li Bai’s verse became less cited by scholars of poetry. During the middle stage of the Southern Song dynasty, Yan Yu wrote in his *Canglang’s Remarks on Poetry* [*Canglang shihua* 滄浪詩話] that he disapproved of “the strange take on poetry writing” of poets such as Huang Tingjian and Chen Shidao, who “wrote poetry as if it was prose, flaunted their erudition and filled their poems with discursive elements.” Instead of referring to this sort of poetry, Yan Yu encourages readers to “keep Li Bai’s and Du Fu’s works next to their pillow instead, to study them in time as people today train themselves in the Confucian classics.”<sup>28</sup> Yan Yu also believed that “Li Bai and Du Fu cannot be compared with one another.” He wrote: “There are subtleties in Li Bai’s verses that Du Fu could not have reproduced, and there are some in Du Fu’s that are not found in Li Bai’s writing. Du Fu is incapable of the flowing elegance of Li Bai, but Li Bai is incapable of the pathos that Du Fu’s poems beautifully convey.” In other words, both Li Bai and Du Fu were poets of remarkable style in their own right. Yan Yu also points out that both created masterpieces:

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lun ‘duo tai huan gu’ shuo de shouchang zhe – yu Zhou Yukai xiong shangque 再論‘奪胎換骨’說的首倡者—與周裕鍇兄商榷 [Again on the first to ‘inconspicuously emulate the ancients’ – a discussion with Zhou Yukai], *Wenxue yichan* 文學遺產, no. 5 (2003); and Zhou Yukai 周裕鍇, “Huihong yu ‘duo tai huan gu’ fa – yi zhuang wenxue piping shi gong’an de zhongpan 惠洪與‘奪胎換骨’法——樁文學批評史公案的重判 [Huihong and the inconspicuous emulation of the ancients – a controversial case in the history of literary criticism]” in the same issue of *Wenxue yichan*.

27 This statement also appears in Chen Shidao’s 陳師道 *Houshan’s Remarks on Poetry* [*Houshan shi hua* 後山詩話]. See He Wenhuan 何文煥, *Lidai shihua* 歷代詩話 [*Remarks on Poetry from the Past Dynasties*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 312.

28 Yan Yu 嚴羽, *Canglang shihua jiaoshi* 滄浪詩話校釋 [*The Collated and Annotated Texts of Canglang’s Remarks on Poetry*], ed. Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1961), 1.

Poems by Li Bai such as “A Song of Adieu to the Queen of the Skies, After a Dream Voyage to Her” and “The Distant Parting [*Yuanbie li* 遠別離]” are tours de force that Du Fu would have been unable to accomplish; poems by Du Fu such as “The Journey North [*Bei zheng* 北征]”, “The Ballad of the Army Wagons [*Bing che xing* 兵車行]” and “Parting as Old Age Nears [*Chuilao bie* 垂老別]” are conversely beautiful in a way that Li Bai’s poetry could never have been. If we were to have Li Bai and Du Fu represent the norm by which other poems are discussed, that would be the same as trying to have the emperor issue orders to the attention of the feudal lords.<sup>29</sup>

At the end of the Song dynasty, literati would reject the Jiangxi school. They instead embraced the “Four Excellent Poets of the Yongjia Period” [*Yongjia si ling* 永嘉四靈] and the Jianghu School of poetry [*Jianghu pai* 江湖派] as their model for poetry. The trend then was rather to learn from the Late Tang poets, and writers did not attempt to study the styles of Li Bai or Du Fu any more. During the Yuan dynasty, scholars revered the High Tang poets more, and Li Bai and Du Fu came to represent the quintessence of Chinese poetry. They were put on a pedestal by many a poet, including Xin Wenfang 辛文房 [fl. 1266–1323] in his *Biographies of the Talented Masters of the Tang Dynasty* [*Tang cai zi zhuan* 唐才子傳], Hao Jing 郝經 [1223–1275] in “A Letter to Han Yanju on Poetry [*Yu Han Yanju lun shi shu* 與撒彥舉論詩書]”, He Menggui 何夢桂 [1229–1303] in the preface to *Poems by Brother Zhang from Lin Xi* [*Lin Xi zhangxiong shi xu* 琳溪張兄詩序], Jie Xisi 揭傒斯 [1274–1344] in the preface to the *Anthology of the True* [*Wei shi ji xu* 惟實集序] and Zhang Yining 張以寧 [1301–1370] in the preface to the *Anthology of Poems from the Fishing Window* [*Diaoyu xuan shi ji xu* 釣魚軒詩集序].

Following the rise in popularity of Tang poetry during the Ming dynasty, many a scholar reacknowledged the value of Li Bai’s and Du Fu’s works, until the accumulated recognition ultimately cemented their status in the literary firmament. Bei Qiong 貝瓊 [1314–1378], who witnessed the last days of the Yuan dynasty and the first days of the Ming dynasty, wrote in his preface to *The Breath of the Cosmos* [*Qiankun qingqi xu* 乾坤清氣序], “Poetry was in full bloom during the Tang dynasty, and Li Bai and Du Fu were the two poets that towered above the others.”<sup>30</sup> Both the Early and the Later Seven Masters advocated for a return to classical poetry. As Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 [1672–1755] later wrote, the proposition was that “prose was to be modeled on the writing of

29 Yan Yu, *Canglang shihua jiaoshi*, 166–68.

30 See the first fascicle of Bei Qiong 貝瓊, “Qing Jiang Bei xiansheng ji 清江貝先生集 [The Collected Works of Qing Jiang Bei],” in *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊 [Collectanea of the Four Categories], 53.

the Qin and the Han, and poetry on the works of High Tang poets.”<sup>31</sup> In a similar vein, He Jingming 何景明 [1483–1521] wrote in “A Letter to Li Kongtong on Poetry [Yu Li Kongtong lun shi shu 與李空同論詩書]”: “From Cao Zhi 曹植, Liu Zhen 劉楨, Ruan Yu 阮瑀 and Lu Ji 陸機, to Li Bai and Du Fu, the tunes are different, but the skills are as honed.”<sup>32</sup> Xie Zhen 謝榛 [1499–1575] expressed a bit more admiration toward Du Fu, while Yang Shen 楊慎 [1488–1559], for his part, preferred Li Bai’s poetry and had reservations toward Du Fu. Yet, the Early and the Later Seven Masters as well as other scholars of the time all had a high opinion of both Li Bai and Du Fu. That general sentiment is confirmed in relatively clear terms in the following citation from Wang Shizhen 王世貞 [1526–1590], one of the Later Seven Masters:

Li Bai and Du Fu’s verses have shined brightly in the literary firmament for a thousand years. This is a fact known by all.... Whether we discuss pentasyllabic old-style poems, the styles found in *The Selections of Refined Literature of the Crown Prince Zhaoming* [Zhaoming wenxuan 昭明文選] or heptasyllabic songs in old form, the spirit of Li Bai’s poems is always bold and free, and the poet always advocates a natural style, elegant and unrestrained, resounding and flowing. As for Du Fu, his thoughts are profound, and the poet attaches a lot of importance to originality. His style is as peculiar as it is serene and magnificent.<sup>33</sup>

The critique is similar in the end to Yan Yu’s remarks on both poets’ talents. As Yan Yu, Wang Shizhen praises fairly objectively Li Bai and Du Fu’s poetry, offering simultaneously an analysis of their work and discussing the strong and less strong features of their poems depending on the form in which they were written.

Toward the end of the Ming dynasty, however, the literati from the Gong’an school of poetry, became less satisfied with the poetry of Li Bai and Du Fu, as well as with the High Tang poets in general.<sup>34</sup> They did not necessarily

31 Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 286.7348.

32 He Jingming 何景明, “Yu Li Kongtong lun shi shu 與李空同論詩書 [A Letter to Li Kongtong on Poetry],” in *Ming Wenhai* 明文海 [A Collection of Texts from the Ming Dynasty], ed. Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 151.1514.

33 Wang Shizhen 王世貞, “Yiyuan zhi yan 藝苑卮言 [Remarks on the arts],” in *Lidai shihua xubian* 歷代詩話續編 [A Sequel to Remarks on Poetry from the Past Dynasties], ed. Ding Fubao 丁福保 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 1005–1006.

34 See Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道, *Yuan Zhonglang quan ji* 袁中郎全集 [The Complete Works of Yuan Zhonglang], Chongzhen Emperor’s 崇禎 block-printed edition (Ming dynasty), 21.16b–18a.

have anything against Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry specifically, as much as they had a dislike of those who blindly tried to emulate them, such as members of the Restoring Antiquity school. Perhaps inspired by Gao Bing's *Appraisal and Collection of Tang Poetry*, many scholars also decided to publish their own anthologies of Li Bai and Du Fu's works. Zhang Han 張含 [1479–1565] compiled the pieces of *A Compilation of Li and Du's Poems* [*Li Du shi xuan* 李杜詩選] into eleven fascicles, with comments by Yang Shen, among others. Mei Dingzuo 梅鼎祚 [1549–1615] is another example, with his *Commented Collection of Transcribed Poems by the Two Masters Li and Du* [*Li Du er jia shichao ping lin* 李杜二家詩鈔評林]. Such specialized anthologies were a rare sight before the Ming dynasty. They are also a sign of their popularity during that period in history.

#### 4 Last Remarks on the Canonization of Li Bai and Du Fu's Poetry

The process by which Li Bai and Du Fu's works were made into classics, through successive anthologies from the Tang dynasty up until the Ming dynasty, was incremental. In the centuries that this period spanned, the two poets were overlooked during the Tang and the Five Dynasties, they were admired but not necessarily loved during the Song and the Yuan and they were revered during the Ming.

Hu Zhenheng 胡震亨 [1569–1645], commenting on the anthologization of Tang poetry during the Tang dynasty, wrote:

As Tang scholars selected the works of their contemporaries, the standards they used to evaluate them varied considerably. Yin Fan was against the restrictions of classical conventions and valued the powerful style of the poets he elected. Gao Zhongwu found fault with the *The Finest Blossoms* [*Yinghua* 英華], *The Jade Terrace* [*Yutai* 玉臺] and *The Pearls and Blossoms* [*Zhu ying* 珠英] anthologies of Tang poetry, and also criticized Yin Fan's *Collection from Danyang* for being too narrow in scope. It seemed that Gao Zhongwu had made his picks based merely on how the verses sounded to his own ears.<sup>35</sup>

35 Hu Zhenheng 胡震亨, *Tang yin gui qian* 唐音癸籤 [*The Tenth and Final Section of the Comprehensive Classification of Tang Poetry*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 31.322.

In short, as Hu Zhengheng points out, the Tang compilers' criteria for electing or discarding poems had mostly to do with their personal appreciation of a poet's style or the mellifluousness of a verse. Put succinctly, standards varied from one scholar to the next. When Song dynasty scholars noticed the interesting phenomenon that many Tang compilations of Tang poets did not include Li Bai and Du Fu, they interpreted this as a sign of respect for the two top poets of their age. Hu Zhengheng refutes the idea that most Tang compilers intentionally excluded Li Bai and Du Fu out of respect. Hu offers rather a historical reading of Li Bai and Du Fu's burgeoning fame during the Tang. His research demonstrates that, in the making of classics, there is a cumulative factor. The accumulation of favorable mentions is intrinsically connected to how texts are arranged and presented within anthologies and to the comments that accompany them.<sup>36</sup> At the time of the Tang dynasty, compilers had not yet realized how remarkable Li Bai and Du Fu's writings were. Both subjective and objective factors explain why their work was not enough circulated and appreciated, but ultimately, the two poets had to wait before they got to be considered for playing leading roles in the history of Chinese literature. Compilers first had to catch up with the innovative writing of Li Bai and Du Fu. For anthologies of the Early and the High Tang poets, this had mainly to do with the period in which they were published; compilers then had not been able to collect many, if any, works by Li Bai and Du Fu. By the Middle and Late Tang periods, the discarding of their poems had more to do with the aesthetic judgment rendered by compilers. In other words, they seemed to pay attention first to the mellifluousness of a verse, and in most cases, they thought Li Bai's and Du Fu's were not worth including in their collection.

From the beginning of the Song dynasty up to the end of the last Yuan emperor's reign, Li Bai and Du Fu accumulated enough prestige to be eventually regarded as the most talented poets not only of the Tang dynasty, but also of the whole history of poetry. Their status as two of the greatest literary figures of all times was by then firmly established. In the Song dynasty, there were small inconsequential differences in preference among scholars; Ouyang Xiu, for instance, was fonder of Li Bai's verse, and Wang Anshi admired mostly Du Fu. Yet, there was by then a unanimous verdict among compilers: they all considered Li Bai and Du Fu the most brilliant poets of the Tang dynasty. This consensus is made evident in Su Shi's postscript for *Huang Zisi's Anthology of Poems*: "No one has been able to rival Li Bai and Du Fu's talents. They outshine

36 See the chapter "Jingdian de ji lei xing 經典的積累性 [The Classics and the Accretion of Value through Time]," in Zhan Furui 詹福瑞, *Lun jingdian 論經典 [On the Classics]* (Beijing: Renmin wuxue chubanshe, 2015).

all the other poets that came before and after them. The works from ancient to modern times are not worth looking at, in comparison to theirs.”<sup>37</sup> At the time Yan Yu composed his *Canglang’s remarks on poetry*, most people were ready to admit Li Bai’s and Du Fu’s importance as poets. However, while compilers in the Song dynasty erred in offering strained interpretation of Tang poetry,<sup>38</sup> in the Yuan, compilers erred in providing readers with a vast disorganized jumble of poems from which to choose from.<sup>39</sup> These compilers would elect the works of poets whose names others had already extolled and would not consider Li Bai and Du Fu’s poems. There is a striking contrast between the treatment they received during the Yuan and the brilliant reputation the poets already enjoyed in literary circles at the time.

In anthologies of Tang poetry published during the Ming dynasty, compilers always seem to hold Li Bai and Du Fu in high regard. This has a lot to do with the classical status Tang poetry had acquired by then. The lasting legacy of Tang literature, as well as its enduring character, all contributed to Li Bai and Du Fu’s prestige. After nearly a thousand years in circulation, these works had clearly already stood the test of time. By then, Li Bai and Du Fu’s poetry had undeniably become classics of Tang poetry. In terms of the quantity of extant poems written, Li Bai occupies the third position among Tang poets, and Du Fu the second, but in the originality of their thinking and their craft, they by far surpass Bai Juyi (who comes first for the number of poems he wrote). Li Bai and Du Fu both emerged as poets at the same key period in time, when the Tang empire was at the zenith of its prosperity, and just before it started to decline in power. They were eventually hailed as the voices of their generation for their genius. In China, they became known as the two Gemini in the firmament of literature, and after a thousand years, they still shine brightly because of the magnificence of their texts. Their enduring legacy explains why they now rank first among all Tang poets. Ming scholars also considered Li Bai and Du Fu as the two most outstanding poets of the Tang dynasty. Today, when studying the classics, researchers describe this kind of literature as offering an enduring reading experience, as a bottomless source of enlightenment for readers, or again as texts whose meaning can always be interpreted anew. These poems will always evoke a sense of novelty, or foreignness, to readers,

37 Su Shi 蘇軾, *Su Shi wen ji* 蘇軾文集 [*The Collected Works of Su Shi*], ed. Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 67.2124.

38 See *Shaoling shige* 少陵詩格 [*Poetic Style of Shaoling*], in vol. 40 of *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要 [*Synopsis of the General catalogue for the Complete Collection in Four Treasuries*], Minguo shangwu yinshuguan Wanyou wenku paiyinben 民國商務印書館萬有文庫排印本, 197.17.

39 See *Tangshi pinhui* 唐詩品彙 [*Appraisal and Collection of Tang Poetry*], in vol. 38 of *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, 38:189.44.

and Ming writers would study Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry and would constantly find something new and interesting to comment upon. They would also draw inspiration from these poems when working on their own creations.<sup>40</sup>

Tang scholars did not recognize the value of Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry. Song and Yuan compilers progressively warmed up to them, but Li Bai and Du Fu did not rise to the status of literary stars before the Ming dynasty. The canonization of Li Bai and Du Fu hence represents a great example of the accretion of value for the classics through time, a principle often referred to in the theories used to research the making into classics of literature. Arrangement and annotation are also two of the major processes and methods by which the accretion of value occurs. Zhan Furui 詹福瑞 already discussed this process of accretion through the organization and annotation of the *Classic of Poetry* [*Shijing* 詩經] and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, including the arrangements supposedly made by Confucius. Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry also accumulated value through time thanks to the works of compilers who commented on their writing. *A Categorized and Supplemented Collection of Li Taibai's Poetry*, which Yang Qixian collected and Xiao Shiyun edited, was in circulation and read by many during the Ming dynasty. As for the commented editions of Du Fu's works published by Ming scholars, there were more than thirty at the time, based on public and private catalogues and records from that period such as the *General Catalogue for the Complete Collection in Four Treasuries* [*Siku quanshu zongmu* 四庫全書總目], the *Catalogue of the Hall of a Thousand Acres* [*Qian qing tang shumu* 千頃堂書目], the *Catalogue of the Falling Blossoms House* [*Hongyu lou shumu* 紅雨樓書目] and the *Catalogue of the Hall of Treasuring Literature* [*Bao wen tang shumu* 寶文堂書目] (see also the section "An Anthology of Vice-Director of the Ministry of Works Du" in Wan Man's 萬曼 *Tang Anthologies in Order*). There were also many block-printed editions of the works of Li Bai and Du Fu by Ming scholars. Two books by Hu Zhenheng, published at the end of the Ming dynasty, had a tremendous influence on subsequent generations: *Familiarity with Li's Poetry* [*Li shi tong* 李詩通] and *Familiarity with Du's Poetry* [*Du shi tong* 杜詩通]. These, with Hu's other work, *A Comprehensive Classification of Tang Poetry* [*Tang yin tong qian* 唐音統簽], have been considered masterpieces in the field of study of Tang poetry. As for the annotations and criticism Hu offers in these books, they are also important examples of how the accretion of value occurs, and how it makes some works into classics.

Ming scholars did not subscribe to the idea that between Li Bai and Du Fu, one had to surpass the other. Rather, their views followed those already

40 See Zhan Furui's chapter "Jingdian de nai du xing 經典的耐讀性 [The Enduring Character of the Classics]," in *Lun jingdian*. We are indebted to Zhan's brilliant insights on Li Bai's creativity and the sense of foreignness evoked by his poems.

expressed by thinkers such as Su Shi and Yan Yu; in other words, they believed that both were worthy of admiration. They also focused on the difference in style between the two poets, and on the forms in which they wrote. For instance, some, like Zhang Yining in his preface to the *Anthology of Poems from the Fishing Pavilion*, believed that Li Bai's poems more closely resembled the ballads of the *Classic of Poetry* [*feng* 風], while Du Fu's were closer to its festal songs [*ya* 雅]. There are also discussions of the poetics as well as the quality or weaknesses of both poets' works in Hu Yinglin's 胡應麟 [1551–1602] *A Gathering of Poems* [*Shisou* 詩藪], Xu Xueyi's 許學夷 [1563–1633] *The Source of Poetry and Difference in Style* [*Shi yuan bianti* 詩源辯體], Wang Shizhen's *Remarks on the Arts* [*Yiyuan zhi yan* 藝苑卮言], Xie Zhen's *Siming's Remarks on Poetry* [*Siming shihua* 四溟詩話] and Yang Shen's *Sheng'an Remarks on Poetry* [*Sheng'an shihua* 升庵詩話]. Yet, all of these thinkers revered the High Tang poets, and considered Li Bai and Du Fu as leaders of the literary movements of the High Tang period. As for Wang Wei, Meng Haoran, Gao Shi, Cen Shen, Li Qi, Wang Changling and Cui Hao, Ming compilers almost unanimously labeled them as "supplementary readings." Looking at the anthologies published at the time, it seems that, by the Ming dynasty, the canonization of Li Bai and Du Fu's works was more or less complete. Their essential contribution to literary history had been established as fact by then.

In the Qing dynasty, the genius of Li Bai and Du Fu was common knowledge. The famous Qing anthology entitled *Discriminating Collection of Tang Poetry* [*Tang shi biecai ji* 唐詩別裁集] contains 1928 poems, more than twenty percent of which are written by Li Bai (140 poems) or Du Fu (252 poems). One of Zhao Yi's 趙翼 [1727–1814] *Five Poems on Poetry* [*Lun shi wu shou* 論詩五首] can be roughly rendered as such: "The poems of Li Bai and Du Fu have been on the lips of millions, and there is nothing new about them today. For each period in time, a person of exceptional literary talent will stand out somewhere in the country, and they will pave the way for excellence for years to come."<sup>41</sup> Zhao Yi mostly insists on the innovative character of both poets, but the remark is also revealing of the unprecedented popularity of Li Bai and Du Fu in the literary circles of the Qing dynasty. This apotheosis was the result of the poets' works accumulating fame over centuries, from the Tang to the Song to the Yuan, and finally to the Ming, when their canonization finally was complete.

41 Zhao Yi 趙翼, *Oubei ji* 甌北集 [*Oubei's Collection*], eds. Li Xueying 李學穎 and Cao Guangfu 曹光甫 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), 28.630.

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# The Canonization of Du Fu in the Context of East Asian Literature

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## Abstract

In such regions of the East Asian cultural sphere as China, Korea and Japan, the canonization of Du Fu was a relatively lengthy process. It was achieved mainly because of strong support from three different cohorts: the first cohort is the Chinese literary giants who expressed strong commendations of Du Fu, the second cohort is the Japanese scholars who conducted rigorous evaluation of Du Fu's poetry within academic frameworks, and the third cohort is the Korean royals who directly contributed to the rise of Du Fu's poetry. The first two cohorts are unofficial, while the latter one is official but not without amicable interactions with the masses. Korean literature was in tune with the character of Du Fu's poetry because it displayed a strong tendency towards politics; Japanese literature, on the other hand, was somewhat not, for it hardly included coverage on issues of social politics. Du Fu was given the highest literary recognition in both Korea and Japan for his poetic prowess, and his poetry was used by the state in both regions to serve different purposes; this goes to demonstrate that the two countries made their own culturally-driven decisions when accepting the influence of Chinese culture. It is a norm in East Asian literature for literary canons, whether old or new, to coexist, regardless of type or level, and such a norm is particular to the admission of literary works into literary canons within the East Asian cultural sphere.

## Keywords

Du Fu's poetry – East Asian literature – literary canon

## 1 Introduction

In 1962, in commemoration of the 1250th anniversary of the birth of Du Fu 杜甫 [712–770], Kōjirō Yoshikawa 吉川幸次郎 [1904–1980] dedicated a speech on the relationship between Du Fu's poetry and Japanese literature.<sup>1</sup> In the same year, in the 17th issue of *Journal of Chinese Literature* 中國文學報, Kiichirō Kanda 神田喜一郎 [1897–1984] published an overview of the studies on Du Fu's poetry from the Heian Period to the Meiji Period in Japan.<sup>2</sup> In 1976, Lee Byong-ju 李丙疇 [1921–] published a monograph discussing Du Fu's poetry in the context of Korean literature.<sup>3</sup> These events marked the beginning of modern academic studies of both the position of Du Fu's poetry and its significance within the realm of East Asian literature. Against the backdrop of the 21st century, when academic research characteristically places academic discourses about cultures within broader contexts regardless of nationality, race, and language, although the scope of discussion of the present paper includes the three main geographical entities of East Asian literature, namely China, the Korean Peninsula, and Japan, Chinese literature has been determined to be its focal point; and such a decision was made on the basis of the extraordinary richness of Chinese literary materials, but it was more so, in light of the perception – which was generally held in East Asia before the 20th century – that Chinese literature was the source of all other literatures. From this general belief, it should follow that Chinese literary works canonized in East Asia represent the classics of East Asian literature.

## 2 The Canonization of Du Fu in Chinese Literary History

Despite the modern-day universal acknowledgement of Du Fu's position as the canonical poet within Chinese literature, comments given on his poetry during his lifetime present a vastly different picture. Compilers of the most important form of literary criticism in ancient China, which was the anthology,

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- 1 Kōjirō Yoshikawa 吉川幸次郎, "Tōyō bungaku niokeru toho no igi 東洋文學における杜甫の意義 [The Significance of Du Fu in Oriental Literature]," in *Yoshikawa kōjirō zenshū* 吉川幸次郎全集 [Complete Collection of Kōjirō Yoshikawa's Works] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1968), 12:586–592.
  - 2 Kiichirō Kanda 神田喜一郎, "Nihon niokeru Toho 日本に於ける杜甫 [Tu Fu's Works in Japan]," *Chūgoku bungakuhou* 中國文學報 17 (1962): 186–195.
  - 3 Lee Byong-ju 李丙疇, *Dusiui bigyo munhakjeok yeongu* 杜詩의 比較文學的研究 [Tu Fu's Poetry in Korean Literature] (Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 1976).

hardly took a liking to Du Fu's poetry during the Tang dynasty [618–907], and in other forms of literary criticism, his poetry suffered similar treatments too. Du Fu's poetry, it follows, can hardly be described as having a wide-spread impact,<sup>4</sup> even though it did achieve patchy circulation and attract perceptive comments from a handful of men of insight.

The literary realm showered adulations upon Du Fu for the first time in the Yuanhe Period [806–820], and they were offered by Han Yu 韓愈 [768–824], Bai Juyi 白居易 [772–846], and Yuan Zhen 元稹 [779–831]. Yuan Zhen once made a comment on Du Fu's poetry with such a lasting impact that it is even familiar to modern-day academia; and his comment, which reads “since the first ever poet, there has been no poet as good as Du Fu”, represents the highest possible commendation among all positive comments about Du Fu.<sup>5</sup> Yuan's friend, Bai Juyi, viewed Du Fu's poetry as “the bridge connecting the past and the present” [*guan chuan jin gu* 貫穿今古].<sup>6</sup> However, according to Han Yu's 韓愈 [768–824] “Teasing Zhang Ji [*Tiao Zhang Ji* 調張籍],” we can find that these sentiments were not universally shared in the literary circle.<sup>7</sup> The first anthology that commended Du Fu's poetry is *Tang Poetry Selected by Category* [*Tangshi leixuan* 唐詩類選], compiled by Gu Tao 顧陶 [fl. 830–860?] in 856. The book was lost but its preface survived, and according to it, the author not only held that his peers “could not match (Du Fu)” [*mo de er jian* 莫得而間]<sup>8</sup> but also made the unequivocal move by putting Du Fu before Li Bai 李白 [701–762], a move intentionally made at a time when the accepted pairing of the two poets was Li Bai and then Du Fu. Similarly, Wei Zhuang 韋莊 [836–910] opened his *Collection of Mysteries upon Mysteries* [*Youxuan ji* 又玄集] with Du Fu's poetry and followed it with Li Bai's. Even though he did not include Du Fu's poems in his anthology entitled *Collection of the Gifted and Talented* [*Caidiao ji* 才調集], Wei Hu 韋穀 [fl. 947] made a special point by stating in the preface of the anthology that his

4 For the circulation and impact of Du Fu's poetry in its early stage, see Chen Shangjun 陳尚君, “Du shi zaoqi liuchuan kao 杜詩早期流傳考 [The Early Circulation of Du Fu's Poetry],” in *Tangdai wenxue congkao* 唐代文學叢考 [Collective Exploration of Tang Literature] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1997), 306–337.

5 Yuan Zhen 元稹, *Yuan Zhen ji* 元稹集 [Collected Works of Yuan Zhen] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 56.600–601.

6 Bai Juyi 白居易, *Bai Juyi ji* 白居易集 [Collected Works of Bai Juyi] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 45.961.

7 Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯, *Han Changli shi xinian jishi* 韓昌黎詩繫年集釋 [Collective Annotations of Han Yu's Poetry in Chronological Order] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984), 9.989.

8 Li Fang 李昉 et al., *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 [The Fine Blossoms of the Literary Garden] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966), 714.3686.

motivation to compile the book came from “reading the collected poems of Li Bai, Du Fu, Yuan Zhen, and Bai Juyi in spare time.”<sup>9</sup>

Because the poetry styles popular at the beginning of the Song dynasty [960–1279] were the Bai style [*bai ti* 白體], Late Tang style [*wantang ti* 晚唐體], and Xikun style [*xikun ti* 西昆體], Du Fu’s poetry was belittled and shunned rather than regarded as the height of poetry. Besides showing his dislike towards Du Fu’s poetry, Yang Yi 楊億 [974–1020], a representative practitioner of the Xikun style, went further by labelling Du Fu as “country scholar” [*cun fuzi* 村夫子].<sup>10</sup> Ou Yangxiu 歐陽修 [1007–1072] later reformed the Xikun style by imbuing it with Li Bai’s and Han Yu’s poetry style preferences. Notwithstanding his strong recommendations of Du Fu’s poetry in the *New Book of Tang* [*Xin tangshu* 新唐書], which he compiled together with Song Qi 宋祁 [998–1061], who was a supporter of the Xikun style, Ouyang Xiu did not base his commendations entirely on his personal aesthetic preferences.<sup>11</sup> In fact, he did not appreciate Du Fu’s poetry; according to Liu Ban 劉攽 [1022–1088], Ouyang Xiu did not show much appreciation towards Du Fu’s poetry, and the reason remained elusive why he thought highly of Han Yu but little of Du Fu.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, according to Chen Shidao 陳師道 [1053–1101], author of *Houshan’s Remarks on Poetry* [*Houshan shihua* 後山詩話], “... to think that Ouyang Xiu is not fond of Du Fu’s poetry ... every time when we come to talk about it, Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 [1045–1105] and I are simply in disbelief, thinking how strange it is.”<sup>13</sup> In addition, in his “On the Merits and Demerits of Both Li Bai’s Poetry and Du Fu’s [*Li Bai Du Fu shi youlie shuo* 李白杜甫詩優劣說],” Ou Yangxiu asserted that Li Bai’s poetry was superior to Du Fu’s.<sup>14</sup> Two things about Du Fu pointed out in the *New Book of Tang*, however, did contribute to his canonization. These two points are in relation to his character, and they are “allegiance to the emperor” [*zhongjun* 忠君] and “poet-historian” [*shishi* 詩史].<sup>15</sup>

9 Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, *Tangren xuan tangshi xinbian* 唐人選唐詩新編 [A New Edition of Tang Poems Selected by Tang People] (Xi’an: Shannxi renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), 691.

10 Liu Ban 劉攽, *Zhongshan shihua* 中山詩話 [*Zhongshan’s Remarks on Poetry*], in vol. 1 of *Lidai shihua* 歷代詩話 [*Poetry Remarks Through the Ages*], ed. He Wenhuan 何文煥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 288.

11 Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 [*New Book of Tang*] (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1975), 201.5738–5739.

12 Liu Ban, *Zhongshan shihua*, 288.

13 Chen Shidao 陳師道, *Houshan shihua* 後山詩話 [*Houshan’s Remarks on Poetry*], in vol. 1 of *Lidai shihua*, 303.

14 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 歐陽修全集 [*Complete Works of Ouyang Xiu*] (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1986), 1044.

15 Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Tangshu*, 5738.

It was during the Northern Song [960–1127] that Du Fu's poetry came to be recognized as the acme of poetry in Chinese literature. Wang Anshi 王安石 [1021–1085] was the first to highly compliment Du Fu's poetry, and not only did he compile the book entitled *Sequel to the Collected Works of Du Fu* [*Du Gongbu houji* 杜工部後集] as a tribute to Du Fu, but he also put the name of Du Fu before that of Ouyang Xiu, of Han Yu, and of Li Bai, in the anthology titled *Poems of Four Masters* [*Sijia shi* 四家詩] which he compiled. Ever since Han Yu made the poetic pairing of Li Bai and Du Fu, they had been known as the two poet giants and heated discussions about whose poetry was superior had been part of public discourses; during these debates, however, the prevailing tendency was to elevate Li Bai over Du Fu. It was therefore quite a counterintuitive move by Wang Anshi to give priority to Du Fu by putting his poetry in the first section of the *Poems of Four Masters* and Li Bai's in the very last. Following in the footsteps of Wang Anshi was Su Shi 蘇軾 [1037–1101], who continued from where the *New Book of Tang* left off and went further by validating Du Fu's poetry from an ideological perspective. His "Preface to Collected Poems of Wang Dingguo [*Wang Dingguo shiji xu* 王定國詩集序]" endorsed Du Fu by stating that he should be lauded as the best ever poet in history for the reason that he had never once forgotten his sworn mission to serve the emperor, not even during mealtimes, even though he had never been put into a position of importance by the monarch during his life that was full of miseries.<sup>16</sup> Since that statement, the expression of "never let one meal go by without thinking of the lord" [*yi fan bu wang jun* 一飯不忘君] became widely used during the Song dynasty, and thus it was familiar to everyone. Though such a statement helped tremendously with the recognition of Du Fu's poetry as the zenith of poetry in Chinese literature and beyond, it painted an incomplete picture of his poetry, failing to reveal its true features. As a result, poets who imitated Du Fu's poetry fell into the pitfall of only scratching its surface.<sup>17</sup> Offering further interpretations of Du Fu's poetry from an artistic perspective were Huang Tingjian and the Jiangxi School of Poetry [*jiangxi shipai* 江西詩派] led by him. His endorsement of Du Fu's poetry was due to a combination of factors, such as the accumulated generational learnings passed down in his family, influences from his mentors and friends, and most importantly his inheritance of Wang Anshi's practice of centering the studies of Du Fu's poetry around the

16 Su Shi 蘇軾, *Su Shi wenji* 蘇軾文集 [*Collected Works of Su Shi*], coll. Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 1:10, 318.

17 Xia Jingguan 夏敬觀 commented that people from the Ming dynasty [1368–1644] who aspired to imitate Du Fu suffered the same fate. See Xia Jingguan 夏敬觀, *Tangshi shuo* 唐詩說 [*Commentary on the Tang Poetry*] (Taipei: Heluo tushu chubanshe, 1975), 48.

concept of *jufa* 句法. As far as *jufa* as a literary term was understood in ancient times, its main areas of concern were content and form, and its application entailed an investigation into the hidden depths of a writer as well as that writer's character and refinement. When Huang Tingjian and his likes were studying Du Fu's poetry primarily by way of *jufa*, they were invariably taking into consideration such traits of Du Fu as loyalty and righteousness as well as his considerable accomplishment in the art of poetry.<sup>18</sup> As far as the mastery of the art of poetry was concerned, according to them, it all boiled down to one's amount of knowledge and level of education. In short, the canonization of Du Fu was made possible because of the continued reassertions made by representative members of the literati from the Northern Song about the unparalleled greatness of his poetry.

### 3 The Canonization of Du Fu in Japanese Literary History

In his "Written after Reading the Collection of Li Bai and Du Fu's Poetry [*Du Li Du shiji yinti juanhou* 讀李杜詩集因題卷後]," Bai Juyi wrote, "The singing (of Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry) will linger for thousands of years, / Their reputation stirs the four barbarians."<sup>19</sup> If that were not a baseless statement, then between the end of the 8th century and the beginning of the 9th century, it should have been the case that Du Fu's poetry were already widely known among the "four barbarians" [*síyì* 四夷], or if that was not the case, then to say the very least, Du Fu's poetry should have been introduced to the eastern barbarians [*dongyi* 東夷]. It is beyond doubt that by the mid-ninth century at the latest, Japanese had been able to access collections of Du Fu's poetry.<sup>20</sup> As pointed out by a number of scholars, however, Japan's favorite Tang poet during the Heian period [794–1192] was not Du Fu but Bai Juyi.<sup>21</sup> Bai Juyi was considered as a

18 Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅, *Yuzhang Huang xiansheng wenji* 豫章黃先生文集 [Collected Works of Master Huang of Yuzhang], in *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊.

19 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 15, 319–320.

20 Such a conclusion should have already been accepted by the academia in both Japan and China. See Chen Shangjun, "Du shi zaoqi liuchuan kao"; and Takeshi Shizunaga 靜永健, "kinsei nihon de yomareta tohoshishū nistuite 近世日本で讀まれた《杜甫詩集》について [The Reading of *Du Fu's Poetry Collections* in Early Modern Japan]," *Bungakukenyū* 文學研究 109 (2012): 1–19. Among the texts listed by Wang Zhu 王洙, two volumes of the ancient text are in parallel to the six volumes of *Little Collection* [*Xiaoji* 小集] prefaced by Fan Huang 樊晃, so it seems that the former is not a transcription based on the latter.

21 See Kōjirō Yoshikawa, "Toho zai nihon 杜詩在日本 [Du Fu's Poetry in Japan]," in *Yoshikawa kōjirō zenshū*, 12:717–719; Yōichi Kurokawa 黒川洋一, "Nihon niokeru toshi 日本における杜詩 [*Tu Fu's Works in Japan*]," in *Toho no kenkyū* 杜甫の研究 [Studies

model poet during the Heian period, and he had such a profound influence that it was reflected not only in Sinitic literature but also in such forms of *kana* literature as *monogatari* and *waka*.<sup>22</sup>

Du Fu's poetry began to attract attention in Japan in the 13th century during the Kamakura period [1185–1333] and the Muromachi period [1336–1573], to be precise. Literature of the Five Mountains produced by poet-monks represented the height of literature during the two periods. According to Hokkai Emura 江村北海 [1713–1788], these poet-monks were venerated by anyone who could be engaged in a conversation about poetry, hence their wide-spread renown.<sup>23</sup> As Japan was importing works of both literature and literary criticism from the Song dynasty, Bai Juyi's position atop of Japan's literary world was threatened by the rise in Du Fu's position. As more people read Du Fu's poems more often, it soon became a staple for Buddhist monasteries to host workshops on his poetry, and the most well-known monks who led such activities were Gidō Shūshin 義堂周信 [1325–1388], Zuikei Shūhō 瑞溪周鳳 [1392–1473], Taikyoku Zōsu 太極藏主 [b. 1421], Keijo Shūrin 景徐周麟 [1440–1518], and Ten'in Ryūtaku 天隱龍澤 [1422–1500].<sup>24</sup> Because of the staunch support from Gidō Shūshin, Du Fu's poetry continued to attract attention from poet-monks during the Muromachi period. As a result, it soon became a staple activity in the life of the people to read his poems, raising his popularity to an unprecedented level. Nonetheless, Du Fu cannot be said to have attained his position as the canonical poet by that point in Japan. According to previous studies, poet-monks of the Five Mountains endorsed Du Fu's poetry largely because they were following the examples of Su Shi and Huang Tingjian, and in addition, they based their understandings of his poetry on judgements given

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*on Du Fu*] (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1977); and Takeshi Shizunaga, "Kinsei nihon de yomareta tohoshishū nistuite."

- 22 Hikojiro Kaneko 金子彦次郎, *Heianjidaibungaku to hakushimonjū* 平安時代文學と白氏文集 [*The Collections of Bai Juyi's Works in the Heian Period*] (Tokyo: Geirinsha, 1977); Kiyoko Maruyama 丸山キヨ子, *Genjimonogatari to hakushimonjū* 源氏物語と白氏文集 [*The Tale of Genji and the Collection of Bai Juyi's Works*], vol. 3 of *Tokyōjoshidaigakugak kaikenkyūsousho* 東京女子大学学会研究叢書 [*Tokyo Women's University Association Research Series*] (Tokyo: tokyōjoshidaigakugakkai, 1964); Susumu Nakanishi 中西進, *Genjimonogatari to hakurakuten* 源氏物語と白樂天 [*The Tale of Genji and Bai Juyi*] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997).
- 23 Hokkai Emura 江村北海, *Nihonshishi* 日本詩史 [*A History of Japanese Poetry*], in vol. 2 of *Nihonshiwassousho* 日本詩話叢書 [*Collection of Japanese Poetry Remarks*], ed. Cho Cheong-gye 趙鍾業 (Seoul: Taehaksa, 1992), 569–570.
- 24 See the second chapter in the second section in Kōshirō Haga 芳賀幸四郎, *Chūseizenrin no gakumon oyobi bungaku nikansuru kenkyū* 中世禪林の學問および文學に關する研究 [*A Study of Medieval Zen Buddhism and Literature*] (Tokyo: Nihongakujutsushinkokai, 1956), 269–274.

during the Song dynasty on Du Fu's poems.<sup>25</sup> An unquestionably keen insight as that is, there is, however, one important but generally ignored factor, which is a specific view held by the poet-monks about what counts as the best literature. According to them, the only form of literature that merited advocacy was "poetry by revered monks" [*gaoseng shi* 高僧詩]. As Gidō Shūshin pointed out, poems created by contemporary monks had become so derivative and poetry by revered monks was the best source for people learning how to write poetry.<sup>26</sup> The reason that "poetry by revered monks" was held in such high regard back then goes beyond itself as a form of literature per se; it is more about the Way [*dao* 道] as manifested in it. Coming from a religious background, poet-monks would find themselves reluctant to endorse Du Fu's poetry as the best form of literature, even though they did promote his poems.

Multiple prior studies have pointed out that during the Edo period [1603–1867], there was a huge surge in the circulation of Du Fu's poetry, causing his readership to grow further; the immediate cause of such wide-spread popularization, however, was the *Collective Commentary on Du Fu's Regulated Verse* [*Dulü jijie* 杜律集解], a general knowledge book authored by Shao Fu 邵傅 [n.d.] in the Ming dynasty [1368–1644].<sup>27</sup> Compared to its highly limited circulation in China, the *Collective Commentary on Du Fu's Regulated Verse* was once the best seller during the Edo period in Japan; it was reproduced on wood-blocks a number of times, and sold far more than other collections of Du Fu's poetry.<sup>28</sup> An important reason for the book's wide-spread popularity consisted in its brevity; it was so straightforward that everyone was able to understand it, in the words of Hayashi Gahō 林春齋 [1618–1680].<sup>29</sup> Not only was the original version of the book reproduced, but also its annotated versions done by Japanese writers, such as the *Detailed Interpretation of Du Fu's Regulated Verse* [*Dulü xiangjie* 杜律詳解] by Tsusaka Takahiro 津阪孝綽 [1758–1825]. Disciples of Tsusaka Takahiro later wrote an epilogue to his version, and the follow-up

25 See Masaru Aoki 青木正兒, "Kokubungaku to shinabungaku 國文学と支那文学 [Domestic Literature and Chinese Literature]," in *Shinabungaku geijyutokou* 支那文學藝術考 [A Study of Chinese Literature] (Tokyo: Koubundou, 1942); and Takeshi Shizunaga, "Kinsei nihon de yomareta *tohoshishū* nistuite."

26 Gidō Shūshin 義堂周信, *Kūgenistiyōkuhūryakushū* くうげにちようくふうりやくしゅう [Short Collection of Kōhwa's Daily Thoughts] (Tokyo: Taiyosha, 1942), 42.

27 See Kōjirō Yoshikawa, "toho zai nihon"; Yōichi Kurokawa, "nihon niokeru toshi"; and Takeshi Shizunaga, "Kinsei nihon de yomareta *tohoshishū* nistuite."

28 Takeshi Shizunaga, "Kinsei nihon de yomareta *tohoshishū* nistuite."

29 Tōru Sagara 相良亨 et al., *Kinseijukabunshūshūsei* 近世儒家文集集成 [Collection of Modern Confucian Writings] (Tokyo: Perikansha Publishing, 1997), 12:390.

too sang high praises of Du Fu's poetry, although its content mainly mirrored judgements from the Song dynasty of Du Fu's poetry.

Does it follow from the above discussions that Du Fu had already attained his position as the canonical poet during the Edo period? My argument is that it does not. At the very best, I reason that, among the giants in the hall of fame of literature, Du Fu managed to earn himself a place for his poems, and for several decades of a period as long as three centuries, his poetry succeeded in maintaining its superiority. Firstly, even though Du Fu's poetry gained an almost unprecedented number of readers during the Edo period compared to the prior period, there was more than one contributing factor; besides, despite the wide circulation of Du Fu's poetry, it only lasted for a few decades. Secondly, it was due to the active endorsement by Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 [1666–1728] that the *Anthology of Tang Poems* [*Tangshi xuan* 唐詩選] achieved its wide-spread popularity. In addition, plaudits given towards Du Fu's poetry during the Edo period were mainly found in prefaces and postscripts of woodblock reprints of his poetry, and understandably, these expressions of admiration were somewhat exaggerated. Lastly, the world of poetry was a dynamic one during the Edo period, meaning people never just studied and imitated one poet; hence it is incorrect to assume that one individual occupied the position as the canonical poet during that period.

It was Kōjirō Yoshikawa from the 20th century who moved Du Fu to the foreground in the landscape of Chinese literature, sang him the highest praises possible, and ultimately had the general public share his views about the poet. Under the influence of Torao Suzuki 鈴木虎雄 [1878–1963], Kōjirō Yoshikawa dedicated himself entirely to translating, annotating, and studying Du Fu's poems, and his research articles were printed and broadcast in such languages as Japanese, Chinese, English, Korean, and Vietnamese. Some of his comments on Du Fu are as follows:

As far as I am concerned, the greatest Chinese literary works have to be Du Fu's poems.<sup>30</sup>

Du Fu is the greatest Chinese poet, and he is known in China as the “poet-sage,” in other words, the sage of poetry.<sup>31</sup>

30 Kōjirō Yoshikawa, *Yoshikawa kōjirō zenshū*, 12:3.

31 *Ibid.*, 12:560.

Du Fu's poetry paved the way for the literary efforts of Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 [1644–1694], increasing the significance of Du Fu in Japanese literature.<sup>32</sup>

From the Northern Song in the 11th century to the present day, such a view has been maintained that Du Fu alone represents the Tang dynasty poets, counts as the greatest Chinese poet ever, and sits atop the world of Chinese poetry.<sup>33</sup>

It was his opinions, which were reinforced by textbooks and literary history studies, that firmly established in the collective mind of the Japanese people Du Fu's position as the canonical poet.

#### 4 The Canonization of Du Fu as Preeminent Poet atop the World of Korean Literature

Shin Wi 申緯 [1769–1845], who was hailed by Kim Taek-young 金澤榮 [1850–1927] as the greatest writer produced in the last five centuries,<sup>34</sup> commented in his poem, “How many people around the world are studying Du Fu? Where every household worships him, it is the easternmost area.”<sup>35</sup> The easternmost area refers to the Korean Peninsula. Shin Wi was not at all exaggerating by this comment, when we compare Du Fu's positions in the world of Chinese literature, of Korean literature, and of Japanese literature. Du Fu was revered in the world of Korean literature as the canonical poet, and it was in the world of Korean literature that his unique position as the canonical poet survived the longest duration and exerted the most extensive and profound impact.

Scholars from Korea, China, and Japan all had discussions about the time when Du Fu's poems were introduced into the Korean Peninsula, and they

32 Ibid., 12:592.

33 Ibid., 1:115.

34 Kim Taeg-yeong 金澤榮, *Sohodangjip* 韶濩堂集 [Collected Works of Sohodang], in vol. 2 of *Kimtaegyong jeonjip* 金澤榮全集 [Complete Collection of Kim Taeg-yeong's Works], ed. Hangukhak munheon yeonguso 韓國學文獻研究所 (Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 1978), 8.128.

35 Shin Wi 申緯, *Gyeongsudang jeongo* 警修堂全稿 [Complete Manuscripts of Gyeongsudang], in vol. 291 of *Hanguk munjip chonggan* 韓國文集叢刊 [Korean Literature Series], ed. Hanguk minjok munhwa chujinhoe 韓國民族文化推進會 (Seoul: Kyung-in Publishing, 2002), 11:375.

agreed that it was the 1080s at the latest.<sup>36</sup> Extant literature from the Goryeo dynasty [918–1392] is mainly literature produced in the Myeongjong's reign [1170–1197] and onwards, and it was Su Shi who held the position as the canonical poet during the Myeongjong's reign. According to Seo Geo-jeong's 徐居正 [1420–1492] *Remarks on Poetry by Easterners* [*Dongren shihua* 東人詩話], Su Shi was idolized by the Goryeo literati to the point where his art name Dongpo 東坡 was used to refer to the result of a pass for the imperial examinations, and when all the results of a pass were publicized, someone would shout "We have 33 Dongpos."<sup>37</sup> Some members of the Goryeo literati highly appreciated Du Fu's poetry, but their understandings of it were largely shaped by Su Shi's judgements of it; their interpretations of it were thus centered around Du Fu's grave concerns and great compassion for the people and the country, and his loyalty of "never letting one meal go by without thinking of the lord." For example, in the second volume of his *Sequel to the Collected Writings Interrupting My Leisure* [*Bu Xianji* 補閒集] (1254), Choi Ja 崔滋 [1188–1260] remarked that though living a miserable life of hunger and poverty, Du Fu never failed to include in every line of his poems his sworn loyalty and duty to the ruler.<sup>38</sup> The effect of such a remark reached as far as the Joseon dynasty [1392–1897]. In addition, according to the first volume of the *Remarks on Poetry by Easterners*, people in the past held Du Fu in high regard more because his poetry manifested his compassion for the people and loyalty to the ruler, than because he was a highly accomplished poet.<sup>39</sup> During the Joseon dynasty, the general assumption in relation to the learning of Du Fu's poetry techniques was that only some of the techniques were to be learned. According to the third volume of the *Collected Writings Interrupting My Leisure*, as desirable as it was to craft and refine a poem in the way Du Fu would, when those untrained

36 See Lee Byong-ju, *Dusiui bigyo munhakjeok yeongu*; Lee Chang-ryong 李昌龍, *Hanjungsiui bigyo munhakjeok yeongu: Leebaek Duboe daehan suyong yangsang* 韓中詩의比較文學的研究—李白、杜甫에 대한受容樣相 [A Comparative Study of Chinese and Korean Poetry: On the Influence of Li Bai and Du Fu] (Seoul: Ilji Publishing, 1984); Jeon Yeong-ran 全英蘭, *Hanguo shihua zhong youguan Du Fu jiqi zuopin zhi yanjiu* 韓國詩話中有關杜甫及其作品之研究 [A Study of Du Fu and His Works in Korean Poetry Remarks] (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1990); Li Lixin 李立信, *Dushi liuchuan Hanguo kao* 杜詩流傳韓國考 [A Study of Du Fu's Poetry in Korea] (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1991); Zuo Jiang 左江, *Li Zhi Dushi pijie yanjiu* 李植杜詩批解研究 [A Study of Lee Shik's Annotations of Du Fu's Poetry] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007).

37 Cho Cheong-gye 趙鍾業, ed, *Sujeong jeungbo Hanguk sihwa chongpyeon* 修正增補韓國詩話叢編 [Revised and Supplemented Collection of Korean Poetry Remarks] (Seoul: Taehaksa, 1996), 1:444.

38 *Ibid.*, 1:94.

39 *Ibid.*, 1:424.

in the art of poetry attempted to write and fine-tune a poem on the basis of a deliberate imitation of Du Fu, they would only end up with something grotesque.<sup>40</sup> As a result, despite staunch support for Du Fu within the circle of poets, the general tendency was to commend Su Shi's poetry, which was of a bold and forthright style, and refrain from Du Fu's poetry for its forbidding grimness, density of thoughts, and profundity.

When the Joseon dynasty was founded, Buddhism, which was the official fundamental state ideology of the Goryeo dynasty, was replaced by Confucianism. Upon an introspection of his own literary works, Du Fu once remarked "Confucianism gave rise to ideas of rules and etiquettes"; according to annotations by Zhao Cigong 趙次公 [n.d.], the rules of writing were established by, and hence inherent in, the school of Confucianism.<sup>41</sup> Du Fu's poetry was thus highly prized by the monarchs of the Joseon dynasty, paving the way for his ascent to his position as the canonical poet. Despite the many changes in the trends of literature, Du Fu's unparalleled position remained unchanged for five centuries during the Joseon dynasty. Indicators of this are as follows.

The first indicator is the mass woodblock-based reproduction of the collections of Du Fu's poetry. Using as evidence the *Series of Old Books Lost* [*Guyi congshu* 古逸叢書] by Li Shuchang 黎庶昌 [1837–1898], most previous researchers agreed that the first woodblocks of Du Fu's poetry could be traced back to the Goryeo dynasty. Du Fu's poetry was reproduced on woodblocks a total of 58 times, according to Sim Gyeong-ho's 沈慶昊 list, which records chronologically such reproductions carried out during the Joseon dynasty.<sup>42</sup> According to woodblock-based reproduction catalogs from the Joseon dynasty, many different regions in addition to the capital witnessed such reproductions of Du Fu's poetry.<sup>43</sup> In the 16th century, when courtiers were discussing whether all books procured from China should be reproduced on woodblocks, they unanimously agreed that the only literary work that should not was the *Collection of Du Fu's Poetry with Annotations* [*Dushi zhujie* 杜詩註解], citing the abundance of its woodblocks as the reason.<sup>44</sup> Large-scale reproductions

40 Ibid., 1:111.

41 Guo Zhida 郭知達, ed., *Jiujia jizhu dushi* 九家集註杜詩 [*Du Fu's Poems Collected with Nine Commentators*], in *Wenyuange siku congshu* 文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 30.

42 Sim Gyeong-ho 沈慶昊, "Rishichōsen niokeru tohoshishū no kankou nistuite 李氏朝鮮における杜甫詩集の刊行について [On the Publication of Du Fu's Poetry in the Joseon Dynasty]," *Chūgoku bungakuhou* 37 (1986): 51–93.

43 For details about these catalogs, see Zhang Bawei 張伯偉, ed., *Chaoxian shidai shumu congan* 朝鮮時代書目叢刊 [*Collections of Bibliographies in the Joseon Dynasty*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004).

44 Kim An-guk 金安國, *Mojaejip* 慕齋集 [*Collected Works of Mojae*], in vol. 20 of *Hanguk munjip chonggan* 韓國文集叢刊 [*Korean Literature Series*], ed. Hanguk minjok munhwa chujinhoe 韓國民族文化推進會, 175.

of Du Fu's poetry necessarily heralded its greatest ever popularization, laying a solid foundation for his ascent to the peak of world of literature as the canonical poet.

The second indicator lies in the fact that behind nearly every effort to reproduce woodblocks of the extant collections of Du Fu's poetry or create new collections of his poetry, the initiators tended to be the monarchs, whose views were reflected in these efforts. There are three most representative outcomes born out of such efforts. The first outcome is the *Classified Collection of Du Fu's Poetry with Annotations* [*Zuanzhu fenlei dushi* 纂註分類杜詩], compiled in the 26th year of King Sejong's reign [1444], and it was later reproduced for nine times. As the first annotated collection of Du Fu's poetry to be ever compiled by Koreans, the *Classified Collection of Du Fu's Poetry with Annotations* exerted an enormous influence.<sup>45</sup> The second outcome is the book entitled *Bilingual Vernacular Edition of Du Fu's Classified Poetry* [*Fenlei Du Gongbu shi yanjie* 分類杜工部詩諺解], which was compiled by courtiers in the 12th year of Seongjong's reign [1481] at the king's behest; when giving the order, the king stressed the necessity of interpreting Du Fu's poetry in the vernacular, among his praises for it. The third came when both Du Fu's poetry and Lu You's 陸遊 [1125–1210] were ordered by the king Jeongjo of Joseon [r. 1752–1800] to be put in one combined anthology for woodblock reproduction purposes; in addition, the king even wrote the preface, "I compare the present time to the primordial time, and nothing can better serve the need of enlightening and moralizing my people than Du Fu's and Lu You's poems."<sup>46</sup> Du Fu was thus crowned in his position as the canonical poet, so to speak. The monarch's views about Du Fu and his poetry were self-explanatory in the preface, and his views should be able to speak for the mainstream society. As a result, one member after another of the literati started to refer to Du Fu as "master" [*dajia* 大家] and "orthodox" [*zhengzong* 正宗]. Amid the monarch-initiated advocacy for Du Fu's poetry, the private practice of compiling annotated collections began to take hold in the society. In addition to Lee Shik's 李植 [1584–1647] *Commentary on the Annotated Collection of Du Fu's Poetry* [*Zuanzhu dushi zefengtang pijie* 纂註杜詩澤風堂批解], which is rather familiar to scholars, there are at least six other similar works that can be verified by reliable sources. These private efforts also helped Du Fu's poetry circulate among the grassroots.

The third indicator is the ubiquitous phenomenon of people reading, imitating, and collecting Du Fu's poems. Collections and anthologies compiled during the Joseon period that bear titles which reflect this trend exist in abundance. Du Fu's readership was so wide that it included people from all aspects

45 Zuo Jiang, *Li Zhi Dushi pijie yanjiu*, 321–358.

46 Zhang Bowei, *Chaoxian shidai shumu congan*, 1111.

of society, such as monarchs, courtiers, scholars, literati, Buddhist monks, women, and children. Also abundant are records about people who read Du Fu's poems up to one thousand times, such as Sung Kan 成侃 [1427–1456].<sup>47</sup> I shall use the two groups of monks and females for explanation purposes. During King Sejong's reign [1397–1450], a monk by the name of Manu 卍雨 [n.d.] acquainted himself with Lee Sung-in 李崇仁 [1347–1392] and Lee Saek 李穡 [1328–1396], with whom he would discuss poetry, and as a result, his grasp of poetry, especially the theoretical side of it, was further improved. When Manu was assigned to compile the *Classified Collection of Du Fu's Poetry with Annotations*, he used what he had learned in his work and was able to resolve longstanding questions about the poetry.<sup>48</sup> It was precisely because Manu was so educated on Du Fu's poetry that he was asked to be an advisor on such a project. The same can also be said about the people that were assigned to produce woodblocks of annotated collections of the poetry. For example, on the back of the ten-volume *A Thousand Commentaries on Du Fu's Poetry Collected and Annotated by Huang He* [*Huangshi ji qianjia zhu Du Gongbu shishi buyi* 黃氏集千家註杜工部詩史補遺] included in the *Series of Old Books Lost*, are the names of those who produced woodblocks of the content, and all these names are names of Zen masters, including Yixin 義信, Haishan 海山, Xindun 信頓, Xindan 信淡, Juelliao 覺了, Baoyi 寶義, Siyi 思一, Hfaifeng 海峰, Shangguan 善觀, Xuehe 雪和, Honghui 洪惠, Jingdun 敬頓, Xinhai 信海, Xingmin 性敏, and Dengxue 登雲. During the Joseon dynasty, despite the fact that females were not encouraged to engage in writing poems, female writers turned to Du Fu's poetry as the prime model for their literary efforts just as their male counterparts did, and this can be evidenced by extant collections and anthologies. In his poem "Written at the End of the *Collection of Du Fu's Regulated Verse* to Send to My Sister Nanseolheon [*Ti Dulü juanhou fengcheng meishi Lanxuexian* 題杜律卷後奉呈妹氏蘭雪軒]," Heo Bong 許筠 [1551–1588] said, "I have kept the invaluable *Selection of Du Fu's Regulated Verse* in my book container for years; I am giving it to you today for you to study it, and I hope you can live up to my high expectations."<sup>49</sup> Heo Nanseolheon 許蘭雪軒 [1563–1589] was a representative female poet of the Joseon dynasty, and her brother gifted to her his treasured *Selection of Du Fu's Regulated Verse* [*Dulü chao* 杜律鈔], which was

47 *Sejong sillok* 世宗實錄 [*Veritable Record of Sejong*], Photocopies, 1955–1958.

48 Kwon Byeol 權鰲, *Haedong Jammok* 海東雜錄 [*Miscellaneous Records of Eastern Sea*] (Seoul: Joseon goseo ganhaenghoe, 1909).

49 Zhang Bowei 張伯偉 et al., *Chaoxian shidai nüxing shiwen ji quanbian* 朝鮮時代女性詩文集全編 [*Complete Collection of Poems by Women of the Joseon Dynasty*] (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2011), 1163.

compiled by Shao Bao 邵寶 [1460–1527] from the Ming dynasty, in the hope she could live up to his expectation by both carrying on and adding to the merits of Du Fu's poetry. Since then, it had been all too common to see female poets either model their verses on Du Fu's poems, or follow, in their own poems, the rhymes used by his poems. For example, in the *Records of Linked Pearls* [*Lianzhu lu* 聯珠錄] and *Collection of the Flood-like Study* [*Haoran zhai ji* 浩然齋集], both created by the Andong Kim clan 安東金氏家族, ten poems authored by the sisters and brothers of the clan followed the rhymes used by Du Fu's poetry. It should not be difficult to surmise what the case would be for the other groups of Du Fu's readers, considering that both monastic readers, who lived outside the secular world, and female readers, who were marginalized in the circle of literati, demonstrated such intimate familiarity with the poems of Du Fu.

It follows from the above discussions of the three indicators that Du Fu was revered as the canonical poet atop the world of literature during the Joseon dynasty; and such a position as his can put him at the forefront of East Asian literature as the foremost poet.

## 5 Conclusion: The Canonization of Du Fu in the Context of East Asian Literature

The canonization of Du Fu in the three countries was the result of great support from three different cohorts of people, and this led to different outcomes. Du Fu's position as the canonical poet of Chinese literature was secured because of staunch endorsement from literary giants. In other words, his position was achieved due to the giants' own literary preferences, because as a general rule, literary preferences of the most revered literati were able to shape the literary preferences of the general public. However, as time changed, literary preferences shifted. In the history of Japanese literature, poets and writers chose Chinese literature as the source of prime models for their own literary studies and creations, and the most important selection criterion for such decisions was their own literary preferences, whether they made these decisions out of their own volition or not. It was only after the advent of modern scholarship that a correct understanding of the value and meaning of Du Fu's poetry to Japanese literature was obtained by scholars on the basis of academic evaluation. Du Fu's position as the canonical poet of Japanese literature was thus established in the end. Though the evaluation process might be rather long, Japan's acceptance of Du Fu as the preeminent poet was rather swift.

Undoubtedly, among the three countries in question, it was in Korea that Du Fu was given his highest honor for his poetry during the Joseon dynasty, and the outright endorsement from monarchs of the Joseon dynasty played a crucial role in this achievement. Since the Goryeo dynasty, contributors to literature had been mainly scholar-officials, and literature had been mainly serving its political function. Since the Joseon dynasty, Cheng-Zhu Confucianism had been the only ideology espoused by the state, and its literary views found their way into contemporary literary works. Meanwhile, since Yeonsangun's reign [1494–1505], Korean literati purges and political rivalries had been frequent due to flaws inherent in bureaucratic politics. As a result, contemporary literary works became more pronounced in their political tones, and this change was well matched by the defining character of Du Fu's poetry. His canonization in the world of Korean literature thus became unstoppable.

The three cohorts of premodern Chinese literati, modern-day scholars in Japan, and monarchs who once ruled on the Korean Peninsula, each played a dominant role in establishing the position of Du Fu as the canonical poet in the three regions of the Sinosphere. Even though the first two cohorts were composed of members of the ruled and the last cohort of the ruling, there were still amicable interactions between the last cohort and the masses. The topic of the literary canon has been widely debated by both European and American literary theorists since the 1970s. On the matter of canon transformation, feminists as well as literary critics of African heritage made fiery statements and wrote challenging treatises with a certain level of success in some areas.<sup>50</sup> This sent Harold Bloom [1930–2019], a defender of the Western canon, into classifying them as the “school of resentment,”<sup>51</sup> on the ground that they emphasized power, opposition, subversion, and revolution over other elements; he also believed that they sounded harsh and even neurotic in their opinions. After the 1990s, China also witnessed intense academic discussions pertaining to both the literary canon (or classics) and its related issues. In these

50 For example, the *Columbia Literary History of the United States* included a number of literary works by female writers as well as writers in the racial minorities, changing the landscape of American literary history. Other examples are the *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* and the *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*.

51 The publication of revised authoritative anthologies has created a brand-new landscape of literary canon. Studies of women writers and writers of African-American heritage have made its way into university curricula, expanding the literary canon. See Jin Li 金莉, “Jingdian xiuzheng 經典修正 [Revision of the Classics],” in *Xifang wenlun guanjianci 西方文論關鍵詞 [Key Words in the Western Literary Criticism]*, ed. Zhao Yifan 趙一凡 (Beijing: Waiyu jiaoxue yu yanjiu chubanshe, 2006), 294–305; and Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1994), 15–43.

academic discourses, such terms as power and subversion were highly frequent occurrences, because foreign thinking, or rather Western thinking, had an impact on Chinese academia in their research methods, theoretical frameworks, and ways in which they put forward questions. In discourses on the history of literature, Chinese scholars discussed what ideologies were reflected in a wide range of works from commentaries, to anthologies and collections, to even manuscripts, for the purpose of identifying the covert and overt exercise of “power” by their compilers and copyists.

In the history of East Asian literature, scenarios are plenty where classics old and new coexisted peacefully, hence the statement is untrue that tensions necessarily arose in the admission of different literary works into literary canon. For a piece of literature to become accepted into the literary canon, to start with, it is imperative the work itself possesses both an aesthetic appeal and an appeal to morality; then, even if the work has any form of endorsement from only a few literary giants or should such work even have support from monarchs, such endorsement or support should not be in contradiction with or opposition to the general views of the readership of such work, to say the least, because these literary giants or monarchs tend to base their endorsement or support on such general views. As a result, among the literary giants, monarchs, and readers, there exists an interactive relationship of an amicable nature rather than a relationship where power is asserted or even violence is appealed to, which is a norm particular to the Sinitic world in the admission of literary works into the literary canon. Before the 20th century, East Asia was a Sinitic sphere, and extant Sinitic materials are numerous, with copious literary works among them. Nowadays, it holds particular importance to carry out research on Chinese poetry in the Sinosphere framework and to relegate the Western literary paradigms to a referential role. In so doing, we will be enabled to break away from the many models and norms which were developed as a result of the acceptance of the Western influence. In addition, it can be quite beneficial to reinstate a geographical context in our research on Chinese literature. This can provide not only a more native understanding of the poems themselves but also an accurate picture of their transmission and growing influence throughout time.<sup>52</sup> Hopefully, the process can be set in motion for Chinese scholars in humanities to chart a new course by breaking away from the Western-centered orientation.

52 Zhang Bowei 張伯偉, “Jinri dongya yanjiu zhi wenti cailiao he fangfa 今日東亞研究之問題、材料和方法 [Issues, Materials and Methods in Today’s East Asian Studies],” *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化, no. 1 (2012): 23–26.

In terms of literary classics, there once existed quite many classics of different categories in East Asian literature. Some were accepted universally throughout the entire Sinitic world, while others existed only in some areas or for some periods of time; motifs of some classics remained the same across East Asia, while those of other classics were modified. Both commonality and particularity have been identified in the ascension of some literary works into classics as well as in their transmission, and examples of such classics include classics that were universally accepted, classics that were written by female writers, and classics intended for children. To explain all this, a dichotomous approach to the revision of literary canon, whether explicit or not, is simply not adequate, and more detailed explorations are warranted. It might be of benefit to make a review into how East Asian literary canons came into being, against the backdrop of the 21st century, when tensions and conflicts were rife between different genders, races, and cultures.

*Translated by Yue Wang*

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BRILL



# On the Shared Structure of the Early to High Tang *Gexing* and the Seven-Character Short Poem with a Discussion of “Kayō Jūei” as a Japanese Seven-Character Short Poem Sequence

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## Abstract

The seven-character short poem [*duan ge* 短歌] is a distinct poetic form that originated in Han dynasty ballads and peaked during the Liang dynasty. It is closely related to the *gexing* 歌行 [song or song poem], a poetic form that also flourished during the Qi and Liang dynasties. The two forms differ in substance, with the former tending towards brevity and, the latter, length; however, they share fundamental principles of compositional method. At the start of the Tang dynasty, the seven-character short poem had not yet been eclipsed by the seven-character quatrain [*jueju* 絕句]; rather, it maintained its place among Early and High Tang poetic forms and continued to develop on its own terms. The “Ten Songs on Kayō [Kayō jūei 河陽十詠]” is a seven-character short poem sequence from the Heian period in Japan. Its formal elements are similar to those of the Chinese seven-character short poem, and it shares structural qualities with Qi-Liang style *gexing* composed by Heian poets. At the same, it also shares characteristics of the Heian topic poem. Its unique existence prompts us to look back to old poetic forms as precious source materials from which we may excavate long-overlooked stylistic phenomenon in poetry.

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## Keywords

seven-character short poem – *gexing* poetry of the Early and High Tang – “Kayō jūei” – comparative studies of Sinitic poetry in China and Japan – the study of prosody

Starting from the Liang dynasty [502–557], there emerged in Chinese poetic history a seven-character four-lined short poem, or *short poem* [*duan ge* 短歌], with peculiar prosody. Subsequent scholars have generally treated it as the nascent form of what would eventually be known as the recent-style [*jinti* 近體] seven-character quatrain [*qiyan jueju* 七言絕句], pointing to those prosodic elements that most fit the defining characteristics of recent-style poetry as evidence of it as the prototype. Although the seven-character *short poem* is certainly one source of the seven-character quatrain, one only need look at some of its extant representative pre-Tang examples to see that it has its own distinct qualities. In fact, these qualities persisted even after the rules of recent-style poetry were established and continued to develop in their own vein. This is reflected in both the history of Tang [618–907] poetry as well as the history of Japanese poetry. By juxtaposing seven-character short poems from the two traditions, the differences between the short poem and quatrain becomes even clearer, as does its connection to Early Tang and High Tang *gexing* 歌行 [song poem], a poetic form that can be traced to the Qi [479–502] and Liang dynasties. In this study, I will draw on sources in Japanese poetic studies and focus my attention on poetic prosody in the hope of excavating poetic phenomena that have been overlooked by existing understandings of Chinese poetic history. By doing so, I hope to demonstrate the possibilities of an integrated research method.

### 1 The Origins of the Seven-Character Short Poem, Its Form, and Its Development during the Tang

Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 [1551–1602] was the first to clearly lay out the concept of the “seven-character short poem,” including its origins and characteristics, in his discussion of the origins of the seven-character quatrain in his work, *Shi sou* 詩藪 [*Art of Poetry*]. He writes,

The seven-character short poem [*qiyan duange* 七言短歌] originates in Xiang Yu’s 項羽 [233–202 BCE] “Song of Gaixia [*Gaixia ge* 垓下歌].” Following the Liang and Chen [557–589] dynasties, many more writers of the form emerged. At that time, every line of the four-line stanza rhymed,

with a rhyme change occurring every two lines. Such a pressing rhyme scheme made for an unpleasant musicality.<sup>1</sup>

The seven-character short poem Hu describes is a compact seven-character four-lined verse. He traces the form to Xiang Yu's "Song of Gaixia" and notes its rhyme scheme of rhyming throughout with a change every two lines. This unique style differentiates it from the seven-character quatrain. Hu further argues, based on the style, that works such as "Song of Holding a Zither [*Jiase ge* 挾瑟歌]," which were then commonly considered the precursor of the quatrain, should actually be considered seven-character short poems:

The *Tangshi pinhui* 唐詩品彙 [*Graded Collection of Tang Poetry*] holds "Song of Holding a Zither," "Song of the Roosting Crows [*Wu qi qu* 烏棲曲]," and "Song of Resentment [*Yuan shi xing* 怨詩行]" to be the ancestors of the quatrain. Based on my observations, the four songs comprising "Song of the Roosting Crows" each use two rhymes, the exact same rhyme scheme as that in Xiang Yu's "Song of Gaixia." Tang poets also mimic this structure, a good example being Li He's 李賀 [791–817] line "Willow Catkins Beat at the Curtains/Under Sweltering Spring Clouds [*Yanghua puzhang chunyun re* 楊花撲帳春雲熱]." In Jiang Zong's 江總 [519–594] "Poem of Resentment [*Yuan shi* 怨詩]," both couplets are antithetical, which diverges from the orthodox quatrain form. Only "Song of the Roosting Crows" follows orthodoxy, though its prosody does not.<sup>2</sup>

In this passage, Hu Yinglin gathers examples of many poetic works to demonstrate two important and noteworthy ideas.

First, early seven-character short verses were all based on *yuefu* 樂府 [music bureau] titles and greatly differed from other non-*yuefu* seven-character poems of the times in terms of syntax and sentiment. For example, Xiao Gang 蕭綱 [503–551], who composed seven-character short poems such as "Crows Flying Back to Their Nest [*Wuqi qu* 烏栖曲]," also composed many seven-character non-*yuefu* works. The first couplet of one such work, "Miscellaneous Verses on Spring [*Zaju chungqing shi* 雜句春情詩]," reads:

蝶黃花紫燕相追， Yellow are butterflies, purple are flowers, swallows  
give chase in flight,

1 Hu Yinglin 胡應麟, *Shi sou* 詩藪 [*Art of Poetry*] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1958), 6.105.

2 *Ibid.*, 106–107. The translation of Li He's line is from J.D. Frodsham, *The Collected Poems of Li He* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2016), 178.

楊低柳合露塵飛。<sup>3</sup> Poplars hang low, willow branches gather, dew flies upward with the dust.

Each line encompasses layered nuance without resorting to common *yuefu* techniques such as anadiplosis, alliteration, or palindromic phrasing. Whether in terms of writing technique or sentiment conveyed, the at once complex and compressed style of the poem is reminiscent of non-*yuefu* five-syllable ancient verse.<sup>4</sup> “Crows Flying Back to Their Nest” is a song sequence [*zushi* 組詩] that well represents the straightforward syntax and smooth, flowing style of the seven-character short poem. Note the following lines:

芙蓉作船絲作絳， Let the hibiscus be our boat, the lotus root threads,  
our rope,  
北斗橫天月將落。<sup>5</sup> As the big dipper cuts across the sky, the moon will soon set.

The same theme runs through the first four and last three characters of each line, with sound repetition cutting in at intervals. The two lines, when read aloud, roll smoothly off the tongue, further cementing its relationship with *yuefu*.

Second, Hu Yinglin, in being one of the first to track the formal evolution of the seven-character short poem prior to the Tang, notes that the seven-character short poem of the Liang dynasty followed the older style represented by “Song of Gaixia,” where there is rhyming throughout with a rhyme change occurring every two lines. Similarly, “Crows Flying Back to Their Nest,” the poem sequence by Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯 [487–537] and his sibling, also includes rhyming throughout with a rhyme change every two lines, plus tonal balancing. The rapidly changing rhyme scheme paired with the brevity of the poem generates an ornate and fast-paced feeling, recalling “Song of Gaixia.” Following the Chen dynasty, the rhyme scheme of the seven-character short poem underwent a gradual shift towards rhyming only the first, second, and fourth lines. This gave the works a more melodious and less austere feeling. Both Jiang Zong’s “Song

3 Lu Qinli 逯欽立, *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 [Poetry from Antiquity to the Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 1978.

4 Ge Xiaoyin 葛曉音, “Chu sheng Tang qiyan gexing de fazhan – jian lun gexing de xingcheng ji qi yu qigu de fenye 初盛唐七言歌行的發展—兼論歌行的行成及其與七古的分野 [The Development of the Seven-character *Gexing* Poem of the Early and High Tang: with Discussion of the Formation of *Gexing* Poems and how they Differ from Seven-character Ancient Verse],” *Wenxue yichan* 文學遺產, no. 5 (1997), 51.

5 Lu Qinli, *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, 1922.

of Resentment” and Wei Shou’s 魏收 [507–572] “Song of Holding a Zither” use this new rhyme scheme. I quote here the latter:

春風宛轉入曲房， The spring breeze gently blows through the inner  
chambers,  
兼送小苑百花香。 Bringing with it the fragrance of the garden’s multi-  
tude of flowers.  
白馬金鞍去未返， He who sits upon the golden saddle of a white horse  
is yet to return,  
紅妝玉筍下成行。<sup>6</sup> Adorned in stately attire, her tears run tracks like jade  
chopsticks.

Note the rhyming in the first, second, and fourth lines and how the four lines are arranged in pairs. The style and mood of the poem are similar to those of recent-style seven-character quatrains. However, since the tones are not quite balanced, Hu still categorizes it as a seven-character short poem.

During the Early Tang, the seven-character short poem continued to be composed while the seven-character quatrain began to grow more regulated. Early Tang court poets almost exclusively wrote semi-regulated or regulated seven-character quatrains. However, of the Four Talents [*sijie* 四杰] of the Early Tang, Wang Bo 王勃 [650–676] and Lu Zhaolin 盧照鄰 [ca. 630–686] did write seven-character short poems. In fact, they broke free from the convention of using *yuefu* titles as topics and began to use the form, instead, to describe everyday life and emotional experiences. Stylistically, seven-character short poems of the Early Tang tended to have a rhyme change every two lines. Such is the case in the second verse of Wang Bo’s “Two Free Verses on Remembering a Friend on a Cold Night [*Hanye huaiyou zati ershou* 寒夜懷友雜體二首]:”

複閣重樓向浦開， Overlapping buildings line astride the river,  
秋風明月度江來。 Autumn winds and the bright moon are carried to us  
across it.  
故人故情懷故宴， The deep feelings shared with old friends, how I miss  
those banquets of yesteryear,  
相望相思不相見。<sup>7</sup> Alas, now we can only yearn for one another from  
afar, never to meet.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 2269.

<sup>7</sup> Wang Bo 王勃, *Wang Zian ji zhu* 王子安集注 [Collected Works of Wang Zian with Commentary], annot. Jiang Qingyi 蔣清翊 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), 104–5.

In the first two lines of this poem, the level tones are balanced, evoking an easy, harmonious feel. In the latter two lines, there is balancing of the deflected tones, creating a desolate, sorrowful mood. The shift in moods is facilitated by the quick-changing rhyme patterns, as in “Song of Gaixia.” The Mid-Tang poet Li He also used this method in his “Butterflies Dancing [*Hudie fei* 蝴蝶飛],” a fact that belies Tang poets’ awareness of the seven-character short poem style. In the Early Tang, it was no longer common to see rhyme changes occurring every two lines. Instead, most works took to rhyming the first, second, and fourth lines, which had been the fashion since the Chen dynasty.

Early Tang seven-character short poems often made heavy use of repetition in word choice and syntax to generate a sense of urgency. Wang Bo’s “The ninth day in the Kingdom of Shu [*Shuzhong jiuri* 蜀中九日]” reads:

九月九日望鄉臺， On the ninth day of the ninth month, I ascend the  
homeward-gazing lookout,  
他席他鄉送客杯。<sup>8</sup> In foreign lands, I set tables to welcome and see off  
guests.

Lu Zhaolin’s poem “Climbing and Looking over Xuanwu Mountain on the Ninth Day of the Ninth Month [*Jiuyue jiuri deng Xuanwu shan lütiao* 九月九日登玄武山旅眺]” is also worth noting:

九月九日眺山川， On the ninth day of the ninth month, I gaze towards  
the landscape of my hometown,  
歸心歸望積風煙。<sup>9</sup> My longing to return gathers like dust upon the  
scenery.

Similar words and phrases repeat frequently across the two poems. Early Tang seven-character short poems leave the impression of an at once urgent and compact mode of expressing feelings.

During the High Tang, both the seven-character short poems and seven-character quatrains flourished. Eventually, the themes favored by each would converge. Many poets who composed seven-character short poems – such as Wang Wei 王維 [ca. 699–761], Wang Changlin 王昌齡 [ca. 690–ca. 756], Li Bai 李白 [701–762], and Cen Shen 岑參 [715–770] – were masters of the seven-character quatrain. The seven-character short poem of the High Tang inherited

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>9</sup> Lu Zhaolin 盧照鄰, *Lu Zhaolin ji jiao zhu* 盧照鄰集校注 [*Annotated Collected Works of Lu Zhaolin*], annot. Li Yunyi 李雲逸 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 165.

stylistic characteristics of its Early Tang predecessors, but their structural qualities harken back to the Liang dynasty. For instance, many seven-character short poems were still presented as poem sequences under a single topic/title. At the lower end, there were often no less than four poems under one title and, at the higher, sometimes ten or more. Wang Wei's "Songs of Youth [*Shaonian xing* 少年行]" includes four verses, Wang Changling's "Campaign Songs [*Congjun xing* 從軍行]" includes seven, Li Bai's "Ode to Prince Yong's Eastern Tour [*Yongwang dongxun ge* 永王東巡歌]" includes eleven, and Cen Shen's "Paeon to Lord Feng upon Destroying Boxian [*Xian Fengdafu po Boxian kaige* 獻封大夫破播仙凱歌]" includes six.

To summarize, the seven-character short poem originated in the Han dynasty [206 BCE–220 CE] ballad, "Song of Gaixia," and first flourished during the Liang dynasty. It did not conform entirely to the rules of regulated prosody. It had the sharp, sensitive feel of Liang poetry. During the Chen dynasty, the rhyme scheme of the seven-character short poem shifted so that, instead of rhyming throughout with a rhyme change every two lines, it became fashionable to rhyme every first, second, and fourth line. In the Early Tang period, the seven-character short poem diverged from seven-character quatrains, which became more regulated, and were, instead, revolutionized by the "Four Talents," who used it to freely describe personal experiences. In the High Tang period, seven-character short poems flourished alongside seven-character quatrains and stood out for being poem sequences. Their unique form and evident continuous evolution all point to it as a distinct poetic style that stands independently of the seven-character quatrain.

## 2 The Shared Structure of the Seven-Character Short Poem and Qi-Liang Style *Gexing* of the Early to High Tang

In the previous section, I argued that the development of the seven-character short poem occurred not as part of, but, rather, parallel to the seven-character quatrain. From the Liang to Tang dynasties, while the seven-character quatrain moved toward the regulated composition of recent-style poetry, the seven-character short poem maintained its prosodic idiosyncrasies and *yuefu* characteristics. According to Hu Yinglin, "all ancient poems and seven-character short verses from the Six Dynasties [222–589] period are *gexing*."<sup>10</sup> In *Discussion of Chinese Poetic Studies* [*Zhongguo shixue tonglun* 中國詩學通論], the Republican Era [1912–1949] scholar Fan Kuang 范況 [1880–1922] also

<sup>10</sup> Hu Yinglin, *Shi sou*, 105.

suggests a close connection between the seven-character short poem and *gexing*. In his discussion of poetic forms, he observes a seven-character short-form poem with one rhyme per four lines whose “structure is close to that of *gexing* poems, but is not a quatrain.”<sup>11</sup> Given these two perspectives, one must wonder how exactly the seven-character short poem and *gexing* are connected. In other words, what concrete expressive qualities tie them together?

The *gexing* emerged as a recognizable poetic form during the Liang dynasty. “Song of the Eastward Flying Shrike [*Dongfei bolao ge* 東飛伯勞歌]” is the work that scholars from the Ming [1368–1644] to Qing dynasties have credited with establishing the criteria for seven-character *gexing*. Its language is ornate and its prosody agile, all the while maintaining the liveliness and flow of *yuefu*. It heralds the *gexing* style of the Qi and Liang dynasties. During the Liang, the *gexing* style evolved in tandem with that of the seven-character short poem. Setting aside the issue length, “The Song of the Eastern Flying Shrike,” which includes verses by Xiao Gang and Liu Xiaowei 劉孝威 [496–549], is nearly indistinguishable from the seven-character short poem. I use Xiao Gang’s verse as an example.

翻階蛺蝶戀花情， Butterflies fluttering over stone steps pine for the  
flowers,  
容華飛燕相逢迎。 Lovely swallows fly to meet those sentiments.  
誰家總角歧路陰， Whose child stands shaded by a tree where the road  
divides?  
裁紅點翠愁人心。 His red and green attire, so brilliant they bring others  
melancholy.  
天窗綺井曖徘徊， Through rickety windows and patterned ceilings  
dances a suggestion of warmth,  
珠簾玉篋明鏡臺。 The boudoir is adorned with a curtain of pearls, a jade  
box, a bright mirror.  
可憐年幾十三四， At the cusp of becoming a cherished youth of thir-  
teen or fourteen,  
工歌巧舞入人意。 One who sings and is adept at dance, who elicits joy  
and adoration.  
白日西落楊柳垂， The sun is about to set and the willow branches hang  
low,

11 Fan Kuang 范况, *Zhongguo shixue tonglun* 中國詩學通論 [*Discussion of Chinese Poetic Studies*] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2017), 3.

含情弄態兩相知。<sup>12</sup> Heartfelt gestures as two lovers realize the depth of the other's feelings.

This verse's rhyme scheme is that of early seven-character short poems: every line rhymes and a rhyme change occurs every two lines. The rhyme scheme organizes the poem's thematic content around rapidly shifting two-verse units. The resulting jumps in logic give the poem a unique charm, which is exactly how Hu Yinglin characterizes the short poem, "Crows Flying Back to Their Nest," though the shorter length leaves little room for the same degree of dynamism. The length of "Song of the Eastward Flying Shrike" makes it less restrained in terms of composition, the unfurling of its meaning, harder to grasp and pin down. This can make for an exhilarating reading experience. From this discussion, one can see the seven-character short poem and the seven-character *gexing* of the Liang share many characteristics. While of different compositional lengths, they both use old-style elements reminiscent of "Song of Gaixia" and, in doing so, convey a similarly unique sense of beauty.

Towards the end of the Liang dynasty, the rhyme scheme of Qi-Liang style *gexing* shifted from two-line rhyme changes to one rhyme change occurring every four or six lines, resulting in a smoother rhythmic flow. "Song of Yan [*Yan gexing* 燕歌行]," which includes verses by Xiao Zixian, Yu Xin 庾信 [513–581], Wang Bao 王褒 [513–576], and Xiao Yi 蕭繹 [508–555], ushers in the Early Tang literary style with this new rhyme scheme. At the same, in such *gexing*, the rhyme scheme and the way of grouping of thematic content were not always in sync. In Wang Bao's "Song of Yan" verse, the rhyme changes every six lines, but the theme shifts once every four lines. One rhyme cycle does not correspond to a unit of thematic focus. Thus, content and form are not seamlessly coordinated.

It was not until the Northern Dynasties [386–581] writer Lu Sidao's 盧思道 [535–586] "Song of Soldiering [*Congjun xing* 從軍行]" that perfect harmony between content and form in *gexing* was achieved. "Song of Soldiering" has both four lines per rhyme cycle and four lines per thematic focus. The themes are layered one after another, unfettered by rhythmic dissonance, making its structure indistinguishable from that of Early Tang *gexing*. In *Shi sou*, Hu Yinglin writes that he considers Lu Sidao's "Song of Soldiering" and Xue Daoheng's 薛道衡 [540–609] "Song of Yuzhang [*Yu zhang xing* 豫章行]" to be "those among Six Dynasties *gexing* that can also be categorized as Early Tang *gexing*." He further describes the two works as having "balanced musicality and

12 Wu Guanwen 吳冠文, Tan Peifang 談蓓芳, Zhang Peiheng 章培恒, eds., *Yutai xinyong huijiao* 玉臺新詠彙校 [Annotated New Songs from a Jade Terrace] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2014), 648.

style; their pleasing form and literary charm especially stand out.”<sup>13</sup> I would argue this assessment greatly relies on the harmony between content and prosody. What poets such as Lu Sidao and Xue Daoheng achieved was the reinvention of Qi-Liang *gexing* by combining the formal elements of recent-style poetry with the syntax and composition of *yuefu*. With generally four lines per verse, one rhyme change per verse, and balanced tones, an entire *gexing* resembles many quatrains put together. Meanwhile, the use of such devices as palindromic phrasing and anadiplosis gives the poem a lingering melodiousness. The prosody is harmonious, without being restrictive. It is a self-assured, unrestrained verse that exists between ancient and recent-style poetry.

*Gexing* by Early Tang writers such as Lu Zhaolin, Luo Binwang 駱賓王 [640–684], Li Qiao 李嶠 [644–713], and Zhang Ruoxu 張若虛 [ca. 647–730] used ornate language and had idiosyncratic prosody. This makes it similar to the Northern Dynasties “Song of Soldiering” as well as to Qi-Liang style *gexing*, while at the same time differentiating it from the ancient-style *gexing* of Tang poets, such as Li Bai and Du Fu 杜甫 [712–770], who would follow. Li and Du’s poems, aside from the occasional addition of the three characters “jun bu jian” 君不見 (can’t you see) at the start, all consist of orderly seven-character lines. Some examples of Early Tang *gexing* include Lu Zhaolin’s “Chang’an: a mood [*Chang’an guyi* 長安古意],” Luo Binwang’s “Amorous Feelings: a Response to Lu Zhaolin on behalf of Miss Guo [*Yanqing dai Guoshi da Lu Zhaolin* 艷情代郭氏答盧照鄰],” Li Qiao’s “Song of Fenyin [*Fenyin xing* 汾陰行],” and, the most archetypal of them, Zhang Ruoxu’s “Flowers by the Spring River on a Moonlit Night [*Chunjiang huayue ye* 春江花月夜].” This last most archetypal example is divided into nine stanzas, with a break every four lines. A new rhyme is introduced in each stanza. Balanced level and deflected tones are scattered throughout at random. The first two stanzas introduce the topic while the last two bring it to a close. The five middle stanzas comprise the body of the poem, which holds all the hidden feelings and subtle thoughts of the writer. Thus, the nine stanzas work in tandem to bring forth the poem’s meaning, seamlessly and without a hint of contrivance. Taken separately, each of the nine stanzas could stand on its own as a short poem. In this way, the lengthy poem could structurally and visually be understood as a collection of nine seven-character short poems.

Qi-Liang style *gexing* composed by High Tang poets such as Wang Wei, Meng Haoran 孟浩然 [689–740], Gao Shi 高適 [ca. 704–765], and Cen Shen are structurally similar to the seven-character short poem. Wang Wei’s “Song of Yanzhi [*Yanzhi xing* 燕支行],” Meng Haoran’s “Song of Returning to Mount Lumen at Night [*Ye gui Lumen shan ge* 夜歸鹿門山歌],” and Gao Shi’s “Song

13 Hu Yinglin, *Shi sou*, 47.

of Yan” all have four-lined stanzas that change rhymes once every four lines. Each verse also has its distinct identity while contributing to the work’s sense of completeness. Among these poets, Cen Shen’s *gexing* are the most unique. He was enamored with the two-line rhyme change of the old-style seven-character short poem. “Drinking with Friends at a Night Gathering in Liangzhou [*Liangzhou guanzhong yu zhupanguan yeji* 涼州館中與諸判官夜集],” “Song of Luntai Presented to Lord Feng upon His Departure to the Western Expedition [*Luntai ge fengsong Feng dafu chushi xizheng* 輪臺歌奉送封大夫出師西征],” “Song of Snow on Mount Tian Presented to Xiao Zhi upon His Return to the Capital [*Tianshan xue ge song Xiao Zhi guijing* 天山雪歌送蕭治歸京],” and “Rejoicing at Han Zun Passing by My Abode [*Xi Han Zun xiangguo* 喜韓樽相過]” all make use of this rhyme scheme for a fast, dynamic feel, only to return to a four-line rhyme change at the end for a slower pace. This play on tension and release is a remarkably effective way of expressing sentiment. Many view this rhyme scheme as Cen Shen’s innovation, but a closer look at the history of poetic style, particularly how seven-character *gexing* and short poems developed, shows that Cen Shen actually inherits this rhyme scheme from “Song of Gaixia” and the seven-character short poem. In contrast, Qi-Liang style *gexing* by Wang Wei, Meng Haoran, and Gao Shi all have four-line stanzas, with one rhyme change per stanza. Each stanza can stand alone and, at the same time, harmoniously and seamlessly comprise a larger work. These characteristics can also be found in the Northern Dynasties “Song of Soldiering” as well as the Early Tang “Flowers by the Spring River on a Moonlit Night.” Taken as a whole, the composition of *gexing*, once again, is like a collection of several seven-character short poems.

From the above discussion, one can see that, structurally, collections of seven-character short poems are precisely what Qi-Liang style *gexing* are. The reverse can also be argued. Earlier, I mentioned a genre of semi-regulated seven-character quatrain song sequences that emerged during the Early and High Tang that was, in essence, a group of seven-character short poems. Each verse stood as a distinct poem, but was related to the others thematically and logically. This compositional method is similar to taking each stanza of a long-form Qi-Liang style *gexing* and presenting them as verses in a poem sequence. High Tang poets who were adept at composing such long-form Qi-Liang style *gexing* also composed song sequences made up of seven-character short poems. Examples of this include the four verses comprising Wang Wei’s “Songs of Youth” and the six comprising Cen Shen’s “Paeon to Lord Feng upon Destroying Boxian.”

The four verses that comprise Wang Wei’s “Songs of Youth” are usually considered a sequence of seven-character quatrains; yet, only the third verse

conforms to the prosodic rules of recent-style poetry, whereas the other three have idiosyncratic prosody. Rather than quatrains, it is more appropriate to regard them as seven-character short poems. The four short poems in this sequence each stand alone as complete poems; upon closer examination, however, it is evident a consistent train of thought binds and interlinks them. The first song describes the boldness of Chang'an youths indulging in drink in a tavern in a tall building. The second describes the heroic spirit of a young man joining the army to serve the kingdom. The third describes the bravery and patriotic conviction of a young man who enters the battlefield. The final song describes a youth returning after numerous battles with no recognition or rewards to show for his achievements. From start to finish, there is a clear and logical development. If one were to treat this set of poems as not a series, but one, single work, it would be a long-form Qi-Liang style *gexing* poem.

From the above discussion, one can see the intimate connection that exists between Qi-Liang style *gexing* and the seven-character short poem. At the start of the Liang dynasty, the rhyme scheme of Qi-Liang style *gexing* was rhyming throughout with a rhyme change every two lines. The language of this form is ornate and, the expression of sentiment, dynamic. In terms of both form and style, it is very similar to seven-character short poem. As Qi-Liang style *gexing* continued to evolve, there was a period when its rhyme scheme and thematic content were not in sync, but this was resolved during the Northern dynasties period, when prosody and meaning were synchronized. Thereafter, *gexing* were composed of four-line verses, a rhyme change that occurred every verse, and tonal balance, all of which contributed a lingering sense of melodiousness. Composition-wise, the *gexing* of this period was essentially a cluster of several seven-character short poems. In the Early Tang, *gexing* composed by the "Four Talents," as well as Li Qiao and Zhang Ruoxu, were all overflowing with their scholarly gifts. In the High Tang, Wang Wei, Meng Haoran, Gao Shi, Cen Shen and others adeptly composed both Qi-Liang style *gexing* and seven-character short poems. In the hands of these masters, both forms underwent experimentation and transformation. The resulting long-form poems were *gexing* and the short-form ones were seven-character short poems composed as single-titled sequences.

### 3 "Kayō Jūei" as a Japanese Seven-Character Short Poem

So far, I have traced the structure, origin, and development of the seven-character short poem prior to the Song dynasty [960–1279]. I have traced its divergent characteristics from recent-style seven-character quatrains as well

as its overlap with Qi-Liang style *gexing* composed in the Early and High Tang periods. In fact, the dissemination and development of the seven-character short poem was not limited to the borders of China; it also found resonance within the literary world of the Heian [794–1192] period in Japan. A closer look at this resonance may further cement the importance of the seven-character short poem within Chinese literary history.

The *Bunkashūreishū* 文華秀麗集 [*Anthology of Splendid Literary Flowerings*], a Heian imperial anthology of *kanshi* 漢詩 [Sinitic poems], has, in the section on “Unclassified Verses [*zatsuei* 雜詠],” a set of seven-character four-lined poems under the title “Ten Songs on Kayō/Heyang [*Kayō jūei* 河陽十詠].” It is an antiphonal poem sequence beginning with verses by Emperor Saga 嵯峨天皇 [r. 809–823] and followed by those in response by his court officials. There are a total of fourteen poems in the sequence, but only nine of the titles are extant. They are “Flowers of Kayō [*Kayō no hana* 河陽花],” “Boat on the River [*Kōjō no Fune* 江上船],” “Grass on the River Bank [*Kōhen no Kusa* 江邊草],” “Bell of the Mountain Temple [*Yamadera no kane* 山寺鐘],” “Willows in the Mountain Pass [*Kokan no Yanagi* 故關柳],” “Moon of the Fifth Watch [*Goya no Tsuki* 五夜月],” “Boat on the River [*Kajō no Fune* 河上船],” “Seagulls on the Water [*Suijō no kamome* 水上鷗],” and “Kajō Bridge [*Kajō no hashi* 河陽橋].” Each poem is given a succinct three-character title. The last character of the title determines the rhyme. They are seven-character verses that formally approach recent-style quatrains. Emperor Saga’s “Flowers of Kayō” serves as a good example.

三春二月河陽縣， Kayō district in the second month of spring,  
 河陽從來富於花。 Known since old times for its abundant flowers.  
 花落能紅復能白， The blossoms fall in whites and reds,  
 山嵐頻下萬條斜。<sup>14</sup> Across foggy hills in endless streams of floral rain.

As was the case in Chinese literary history, the quatrain was a later development in the history of Japanese Sinitic poetry. The first anthology of Sinitic poetry, *Kaifūso* 懷風藻 [*Florilegium of Cherished Arts*], collected mostly five-syllable Qi-Liang style poems with four or more rhymes. There are very few quatrains in the collection and, of them, only one is a seven-character quatrain. Instead, the seven-character quatrain was brought into fashion when collected in the *Ryōunshū* 凌雲集 [*Cloud-Soaring Collection*] and *Bunkashūreishū*. In both of these works, Saga, who was one of the first to compose seven-character quatrains in great quantity, emphasized the importance of balance in poetic

14 Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲之, ed., *Bunkashūreishū* 文華秀麗集 [*Anthology of Splendid Literary Flowerings*] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964), 277.

composition. *Ryōunshū*, an anthology created through imperial edict, contains six seven-character quatrains, three of which were composed by the emperor himself. It also contains the first seven-character *kanshi* to be designated a quatrain “Shinjisadanushi ga shoshun kansaishu ga kyūtaku ni sukirite chōzenshōkaisurusaku ni wasu”.<sup>15</sup> Aside from being an avid poet himself, Saga also held literary banquets to encourage officials to compose seven-character quatrains. It is perhaps due to his influence that there are a great many more seven-character quatrains in the later-compiled *Bunkashūreishū*.

### 3.1 Formal Differences between “Kayō Jūei” Poems and Quatrains

Although the poems in “Kayō jūei” may appear similar to quatrains, they differ greatly from other categories of quatrains (“Excursions [*yūran* 遊覽],” “Banquets [*enshū* 宴集],” “Parting [*senbetsu* 餞別],” and “Exchanges [*zōtō* 贈答]”) of the *Bunkashūreishū* in three main ways. First, the poems of “Kayō jūei” are not told from the perspective of the poet, and second, the scenes which appear in the poem are not related to their personal experience. Instead, the poem is expressed through a distanced, objective voice, as if speaking on behalf of someone else. The last two lines of “Willows in the Mountain Pass,” by Fujiwara no Fuyutsugu 藤原冬嗣 [755–826], speak of how the willow tree will get another chance at life with the arrival of spring; however, of those who reluctantly left for war with only a torn branch of the willow as a parting gift, most would likely not return. Rather than the poet’s personal experience, these lines relay a generally relatable truth. In contrast, quatrains under other categories of the *Bunkashūreishū* tend to prioritize the expression of authentic, moving personal feelings. A good example of this is Shigeno no Sadanushi’s 滋野貞主 [785–851] “Lodging in the Kōrokan on a Spring Night, for the Parhae Royal Ambassador [*Shun'yashukukōro kanbokkaijūchōdaishi* 春夜宿鴻臚, 簡渤海入朝王大使],” which is collected under “exchanges.”

枕上宮鐘傳曉漏， As I lie on my pillow, bell and water clock sound day-  
break in the palace,  
雲間賓雁送春聲。 The cries of returning wild geese break through the  
sky, signaling spring.  
辭家里許不勝感， Even I, who have parted a mere few *li* from home,  
can't help feel despondent,  
況復他鄉客子情。<sup>16</sup> It is hard to fathom the feelings of guests visiting  
from lands afar.

15 The Chinese version of this poem is 和進士貞主初春過營祭酒宅悵然傷懷簡布臣藤三秀才作一絕。

16 Kojima Noriyuki, *Bunkashūreishū*, 226.

This poem expresses the personal feelings of Sadanushi who, while experiencing a sleepless night in the palace, imagines with empathy how terribly the visiting ambassadors from Parhae must be missing their homeland. Compared to such a poem that excels at expressing heartfelt emotion, the “Kayō jūei” poems’ objective distance and other-speaker perspective reflects a harder style, one that has deep ties with *yuefū*.

Secondly, the degree of regulation in “Kayō jūei” poems is relatively low. There is occasional deflected tonal balance, without much attention to how tones are otherwise distributed or match across lines. An extreme case of this is Prince Nakao’s 仲雄王 “Seagulls on the Water,” which includes eleven unregulated characters. More common cases of this include Yoshimine no Yasuyo’s 良岑安世 [785–830] “Moon of the Fifth Watch” and Asano no Katori’s 朝野鹿取 [774–843] “Boats on the River,” which each have about three to five unregulated characters. The question is whether this reflects a widespread prosodic idiosyncrasy among seven-character four-lined poems of the period or if it is particular to “Kayō jūei.” To take Emperor Saga’s poems from this work as a case study, “Grass on the River Bank” has deflected tonal balance, but five instances of tonal imbalance; in “Bell of the Mountain Temple,” the tonal rhymes do not match and there are five instances where the tones are out of balance; “Flowers of Kayō” and “Boat on the River” also have many instances where they do not conform to the rules of regulated verse. In contrast, the quatrains in the *Ryōunshū* rarely ever defy the rules of recent-style poetry. One example of this is “Presenting a Hat and Sable Coat to Ono no Minemori, Junior Assistant Head of the Ministry of Ceremonial, After Learning that He Was Heading to the Frontier [*Rihōjirō nomi ga hennjō ni tsukaisu to kikite bōkyō o tamau* 史部侍野美聞使邊城賜帽裘].”

歲晚嚴冬寒最切， Year’s end, severe winter, the cold extremely harsh.  
 忠臣為國向邊城。 Our loyal subject for the nation’s sake heads to the  
 frontier.  
 貂裘暖帽宜羈旅， A sable coat, a warm hat – perfect for such travels.  
 特贈卿之萬里行。<sup>17</sup> These I specially present to you for your journey of  
 ten thousand *li*.

17 Hanawa Hokiichi 塙保己一, ed., *Ryōunshū* 凌雲集 [*The Cloud-soaring Collection*], in *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類從 [*Collected Writings According to Classification*] (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1932), 455. The English translation by Judith N. Rabinovitch and Timothy R. Bradstock can be found in *No Moonlight in My Cup: Sinitic Poetry (Kanshi) from the Japanese Court, Eighth to the Twelfth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 144.

This is a perfectly regulated verse. Considering that the *Ryōunshū* is dated earlier than the *Bunkashūreishū*, it seems unlikely that the unregulated verses of “Kayō jūei” should be attributed to Saga’s failure to establish the regulated verse of recent-style. Rather, it is more likely “Kayō jūei,” as a distinct poetic form, was not meant to have strict prosody and was composed without much concern for the prosodic rules of regulated verse.

Finally, “Kayō jūei” is a poem sequence that frequently makes use of common *yuefu* techniques such as anadiplosis and repetitive syntax, which have the effect of layering mood and melody as smoothly as if stringing pearls. A good example is the previously cited “Flowers of Kayō.” Saga’s use of anadiplosis at the transition of every line lends the poem a circular feeling of melodiousness that is pleasing to the ear. As a whole, the poems in “Kayō jūei” also frequently make use of reduplication, which reverberate to further cohere the poem through sound. A good example of this is Saga’s “Grass on the River Bank.”

春日江邊何所好， What is most cherished on the riverbank?  
 青青唯見王孫草。 The moment you’re elsewhere, you recall the young  
 grass.  
 風光就暖芳氣新， Warmth returns to daylight and new foliage scents  
 afresh,  
 如此年年觀者老。<sup>18</sup> This scene renews yearly, while those who enjoy it  
 grow old.

The use reduplication in the second line *qing qing* 青青 and in the fourth *nian nian* 年年 creates a sense of resonance between the two. The playful musicality of “Kayō jūei,” while markedly different from the refined control of the seven-character quatrain, is quite comparable to the lively flowing quality of *yuefu*.

To summarize, while “Kayō jūei” is comprised of neat seven-character four-lined verses, close analysis of its formal elements show that its tonal balancing is inconsistent and its prosody does not adhere to the rules of regulated verse. Instead of recent-style poetry, the speaker’s perspective, tone of voice, and sentiments all recall *yuefu*. One could say that, in essence, “Kayō jūei” is a sequence of *yuefu*-style seven-character short poems.

18 Kojima Noriyuki, *Bunkashūreishū*, 278.

### 3.2 *Compositional Similarities between “Kayō jūei” and Qi-Liang Style Gexing of the Heian Court*

Just as seven-character short poem and Qi-Liang style *gexing* were composed in similar ways in China, so do “Kayō jūei” and contemporaneous Qi-Liang style *gexing* composed in Japan share many formal qualities. Antiphonal Qi-Liang style *gexing* composed by members of the Heian court are collected in three *kanshi* anthologies: *Bunkashūreishū*, *Zatsugen Hōwa* 雜言奉和 [*Miscellaneous Verses in Response*], and *Ryōunshū*. Sample titles include “A Poem Versifying Fallen Blossoms at the Shinsen'en Flower Banquet [*Shinsen'en no kaennishite rakukahen* 神泉苑花宴賦落花篇],” “A Poem on Falling Leaves at Shinsen'en on the Ninth [*DayShinsen'en kokonuka no rakuenhen* 神泉苑九日落葉篇],” “Resentment from One's Boudoir in Spring [*Shunkei no urami* 春閨怨],” “A Verse for Fallen Blossoms on the River [*Kōjō no rakukanoshi* 江上落花詞],” “Cherishing Autumn and Taking Pleasure in Remaining Chrysanthemums [*Aki o oshinde zankiku o asobu* 惜秋玩殘菊],” and “A Poem to Match One by Sadanushi, Secretary in the Central Affairs Ministry: Song of Autumn Moon [*Naishisadanusi shūketsuka ni washu* 和內史貞主秋月歌].” These seven-character poems generally have four-line stanzas, with the first, second, and fourth lines of each stanza rhyming and thematic content grouped in four-line units. They are characterized by harmonious prosody and subtle feelings. Unlike “Kayō jūei,” however, such *gexing* do not necessarily consist uniformly of seven-character lines or four-line stanzas. At times, a *gexing* stanza might have six lines, or the length of stanzas within each poem is not necessarily uniform, with the occasional six-line stanza or a random three-syllable line appearing among otherwise seven-character lines. Collected in *Bunkashūreishū* is a poem by Emperor Saga titled “A Poem to Match One by Sadanushi, Secretary in the Central Affairs Ministry: Song of Autumn Moon.” This poem consists of six stanzas, each of which works so well as a stand-alone poem that it would not be strange to see them as six short poems collected under the topical theme “autumn moon.” Each poem is told from a different perspective. They are characterized by lyrical descriptions of scenery and clever, natural imagery. The second and fifth stanzas illustrate this well.

#### Stanza 2:

雲暗空中清輝少， Clouds cover the sky, dimming the moon's brightness,  
風來吹拂看更皎。 Wind scatters them, the bright moon appears even  
starker.

形如秦鏡出山頭， Its shape like Emperor Qin's truth-revealing mirror as  
it scales the hilltop,

色似楚練疑天曉。Its color like the silks of the Chu kingdom, a white you  
take for daybreak.

Stanza 5:

三更露重絡緯鳴， On the third watch, when dew is heavy, the katydids  
hum,  
五夜風吹砧杵聲。 On the fifth watch, autumn wind carries the thump of  
cleaning rods against cloth.  
明月年年不改色， The complexion of the moon is constant year after  
year,  
看人歲歲白髮生。<sup>19</sup> While those who gaze upon it yearly grow white  
hairs.

The second stanza captures the perfect clarity of the autumn moon with a set of flawlessly executed metaphors. In the fifth stanza, the first two lines describe the scenic moon on an autumn night and the last two evoke the depth of life's vicissitudes with alarming skill. Such a lyrical approach to the short poem leaves the reader with a strange sense of both closure and lingering resonance. The nuances and sentiment are contained within the language of the poem, but also echo long after the words have ended. While each stanza is strong enough to stand as its own distinct poem, the potential continuity suggested by the resonances also ties them together. This is true of the remaining stanzas as well. The third stanza zeros in on the moon, how its light shines over the joy and sadness of humanity. Autumn's melancholy is the theme of the fourth stanza, with the speaker ascending a building and expressing to the moon their yearning for their spouse, in the tradition of a wife who misses her faraway husband. The third and fourth stanzas both appropriate classical allusions and playfully arrange the end rhymes. These elements link two stanzas that could otherwise be seen as free-standing short poems, at the same time introducing narrative elements, such as foreshadowing, to *gexing*. Once again, we have a case of a Qi-Liang style *gexing* that stylistically and thematically can be described as a coherent sequence of seven-character short poems.

However, unlike Early and High Tang poets, Heian *kanshi* poets rarely if ever composed such interconnected seven-character short poem sequences. This may partly be due to the overwhelming influence of topic poetry. With short poem composition, it is not necessary for its four lines to undertake the task of embodying an assigned topic. Short poem composition feels more spontaneous

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 307–8.

and improvisational. Technically, “Kayō jūei” is a poem sequence based on an assigned topic, which means that the success of the poem hinges critically on the success of the topic’s proper treatment. With topic poems, the topic must be introduced within the first two lines and the poets must hone their intellectual and artistic abilities according to its parameters. The nine extant “Kayō jūei” poems each have titles that are neatly expressed in three characters; in each case, the last of the three is an object that is modified by the first two. For instance, “bell,” the last character in the title, is the object in “Bell of the Mountain Temple” and it is modified by the first two characters, “mountain” and “temple.” A common way of bringing up the topic in the opening couplet is to focus each of the two opening lines on a different key aspect of the titular theme. Emperor Saga’s “Boats on the River” serves as a good example.

一道長江通千里， A long river cuts through a thousand *li*,  
漫漫流水漾行船。<sup>20</sup> Atop its vastness passing boats rock to and fro.

Here, having to meet the condition of introducing the topic limits the poet’s freedom. It is quite difficult to be concerned with the titular theme while also trying to express oneself in a natural voice. Additionally, this condition impacts the poem’s structure and direction, as the first two lines invariably set the course for the last two. At the end of the first two lines, you can either choose to resolve and carry out or deny and diverge from the thematic content. The consequences of this restrictive compositional method are evident the last two lines of this poem.

風帆遠沒虛無裏， Winds beat sails, ‘til distance reduce the boats to  
nothingness,  
疑是仙查欲上天。<sup>21</sup> Like the legendary raft traversing the sea to galaxies,  
they edge towards the sky.

Another example is the concluding pair of lines to “Grass on the River Bank,” which reads, as cited earlier, “Warmth returns to daylight and new foliage scents afresh, this scene renews yearly, while those who enjoy it grow old.”<sup>22</sup> The ending of “Boats on the River” is an example of resolution. It expounds on the introduction of the titular theme (i.e., “river” and “boat”) by describing how the image of a boat being carried further away recalls the legend of

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 277.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 278.

a raft that commutes between sea and sky. The ending of “Grass on the River Bank,” on the other hand, is a case of divergence. Whereas the first two lines focus on the image of the returning green of spring, the last two pivot with the antithetical theme of time irrecoverable once past. It is possible the restrictive conditions of topic poems give “Kayō jūei” a condensed feeling. While, in fact, in a poem sequence, each verse resembles the opening four-lines of a *gexing* poem.

We can test this theory by examining the opening four-lines of Qi-Liang style *gexing* that were contemporaneous with “Kayō jūei.” The following is from “Written to Respectively Match One by His Majesty Called ‘Fallen Blossoms on the River’ [*GyoseiKajōrakukanoshi ni Washitatematsuru* 奉和聖制河上落花詞],” which can be found in *Zatsugen Hōwa*.

天子乘春幸河陽， Spring, the Emperor’s chance for an excursion to  
Heyang,  
河陽舊來花作縣。 Heyang, long known as a district of abundant flowers.  
一縣併是落花時， As flowers across the district begin to wilt and fall,  
落花颺颺映江邊。<sup>23</sup> Fallen blossoms dance, reflected along the river.

From this example, it would seem the opening four lines of Qi-Liang style *gexing* can stylistically and thematically stand alone as a complete verse. The result is a *yuefu*-like seven-character short poem that has a semi-regulated feel. In other words, the result is a poem that is very similar to the verses of “Kayō jūei.”

This section has focused on “Kayō jūei,” a Heian poem sequence comprised of semi-regulated seven-character four-line verses that feel more similar *yuefu* than to recent-style quatrains. Its existence indirectly confirms the validity of the seven-character short poem as an energetic poetic form with its own identity and value. As one of many Chinese poetic forms that apparently disseminated to and took root elsewhere, the distinct Tang dynasty seven-character short poem interacted with literary trends in Japan and inevitably took on a different appearance. The “Kayō jūei” poems may reflect the developmental path of the short poem influenced by the prominence of topic poetry in Heian literary society. This helps account for some the idiosyncrasies of “Kayō jūei,” which, while a sequence of topic poems, also feels like a collection of Qi-Liang style *gexing* that have been cut off after the first four lines.

23 Hokiichi, ed., *Zatsugen Hōwa* 雜言奉和 [*Miscellaneous Verses in Response*], in *Gunsho ruijū*, 258.

#### 4 Conclusion: Studying Prosody by Comparing Sinitic Poetry in China and Japan

In this paper, I juxtaposed analysis of the Tang dynasty seven-character short poem with that of the Heian seven-character poem sequence, “Kayō jūei.” My analysis, which was carried out through a comparative Sino-Japanese lens, traced the origin of the seven-character short poem to Han dynasty folk ballads and its first period of flourishing to the Liang dynasty. I emphasized its close relationship to another popular poetic form of the Liang, the Qi-Liang style *gexing* by pointing out their shared connection to *yuefu* as well as their shared status as old-style poetry of the Qi and Liang dynasties. During the Tang dynasty, far from being absorbed into the system of recent-style poetry composition, the seven-character short poem became its own distinct style with distinct characteristics. While excelling at brevity, its compositional methods were similar to those of the longer form Qi-Liang style *gexing*. On the other hand, the seven-character quatrain was so different from both *yuefu* and *gexing* that Early Tang poets who composed seven-character quatrains did not compose *yuefu*. In the High Tang period, poets like Wang Wei and Meng Haoran inherited the practice of composing seven-character short poems, using *yuefu* topics to create poem sequences whose verses could almost be confused for quatrains. In actuality, such poems should stylistically be considered seven-character poems and have little in common with recent-style poetry.

Formal elements of the Japanese poem sequence “Kayō jūei” seem to suggest it may originate in the seven-character short poem developments that took place starting from the Liang to Chen dynasties. It is the result of cross-hybridization with Heian poetic culture, sharing qualities, for instance, with Qi-Liang style *gexing* being composed in Japan at the time. Through comparison, it is clear that *kanshi* poets in Japan simply followed in the footsteps of poetic developments in China. “Kayō jūei” does not exhibit the ornate and delicate qualities of Qi-Liang style *gexing* of China, but it does reflect many qualities of *yuefu*, especially its directness, its natural and playful expression, and its attentiveness to study. Common *yuefu* themes such as parting, pining from the boudoir, passing through mountains, and wandering can all be found in “Kayō jūei.” Its use of topics in poetic composition is also connected to the history and definition of *yuefu*. The uniqueness of “Kayō jūei” reflects the efforts of studious and adventurous *kanshi* poets, who established a poetic culture that, while originating in China, came to have its own quirks and characteristics.

Moreover, studying a work of Japanese Sinitic poetry such as “Kayō jūei” provides a unique opportunity to excavate the seven-character short poem from the messy and massive archive of Chinese poetic studies and to recognize

it and examine it – its origins and its stylistic qualities – on its own terms. The academic world has already acknowledged, in the case Six Dynasties poetic studies, that because source materials have their own histories of being edited through compilation and archival processing, they do not arrive to us as they existed during their times, but with countless stylistic and textural characteristics lost, perhaps, to well-meaning alterations. Therefore, one must consider source materials with caution, particularly when stylistic elements are the basis of research. Since early *kanshi* composition in Japan was established through a process of intense imitation, there is a strong possibility that the results would tend to be formulaic or modular. Hence, it is also likely, under specific circumstances, for certain sources on poetic style that may have found their way to corpus of Japanese literary source materials to provide important clues to those missing pieces or to serve as a reflective lens through which to reconsider Chinese poetry. This perspective on research means that source materials on Japanese poetry may not just have instrumental value as collated and edited texts; they also serve as an invaluable archive that can facilitate sorting through and reconstituting our understanding of pre-modern poetic forms.

The discipline of classifying pre-modern poetry enjoyed a particularly productive period from the Ming to Qing dynasties. Authors of works like *Shi sou* and *Shiyuan bianti* 詩源辯體 [*On the Source of Poetry and Distinguishing between Styles*] were masters of their field. Scholars today still treat these texts as foundational to studying poetic prosody and much has been achieved doing so. However, finding new scholarly resources invariably pushes us to question whether prevailing research methodologies are thorough and effective, whether they challenge us to break through past methodological habits and innovate. Fortunately, non-Chinese studies of Sinitic poetry are just now on the rise. If we were to combine the foundational knowledge of premodern poetic classification with resources on Sinitic poetry from other cultures, this would be a promising and enlivening direction for the study of Chinese poetic prosody.

*Translated by Casey Lee*

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## Article



# Qing-Southeast Asian Interactions in the Context of Border Control and Sovereignty, 1700s–1800s

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### Abstract

This paper discusses Qing China's interaction with Southeast Asia in the context of border enforcement, that is, the control of movement, and expression of sovereignty. It employs both the imperial logic and the commoners' daily logic to consider how these three topics interacted with each other in the eighteenth century. I argue that the Qing court considered these issues not in terms of population, territory, or maritime prohibition, but from a standpoint of security and stability, around which the border concerns, ways of controlling people, and sovereignty were all organized. For commoners, simply making a living was the primary concern and the court's overseas activities had little to do with identity, or an anachronistic concept of sovereignty. The Qing court forbade journeys to Luzon and Batavia, the "barbarian countries" dominated by Spanish and Dutch colonial powers, but intentionally left the door open for commoners to travel to Vietnam. However, when those Chinese people stirred up trouble in Vietnam and returned to the maritime border of China, the Qing government quickly intervened. It had its own logic for enforcing domestic sovereignty and controlling the migration of people between countries.

## Keywords

Qing history – sovereignty – security – Southeast Asia – border

In 1724, the Fujian and Zhejiang governor-general, Gioroi Mamboo 覺羅滿保 [1673–1725], presented a memorial to Qing [1616–1911] emperor Yongzheng 雍正 [r. 1722–1735], informing him of problems with Qing maritime policy, particularly with reference to three regions: Annam 安南, Batavia 噶喇吧 (the Dutch East Indies), and Luzon 呂宋 (the Philippines). Mamboo indicated that Chinese “ocean-going commercial ships are not allowed to sail to places in the Southwestern Sea such as Luzon and Batavia,” but due to the restrictions, ships had learned to fake reports claiming to be “returning from the Eastern Sea” or “returning from Annam,” legal according to Qing regulations. He complained that “some people have also lied in stating that they had encountered [strong] winds and hence had drifted to Annam [unintentionally].”<sup>1</sup>

While trade with Annam was legal in the sub-statutes of Guangdong Province, Chinese maritime authorities still had their suspicions that the claimed drifting to Annam was a sham, and that the real places visited were Batavia and Luzon, both, by contrast, illegal for trade. In any case, given winds and currents, where else could they have gone other than these places.<sup>2</sup>

Mamboo also explained how he had confirmed that the merchants had been lying about Annam:

[I] have checked and know that the commodities produced around the Eastern Sea are different from those produced around the Western Sea, but the commodities carried by the three ships [in question] are mostly from the Western Sea. [I] also hear that [they] are afraid to declare Western Sea dutiable goods, violating the prohibition; hence, [they] fake reports claiming that they are “returning from Annam.”<sup>3</sup>

1 “Fujian Zhejiang zongdu Manbao zou wei xiyang shangchuan buxu qianwang xiyang Lüsòng Galuoba dengchu maoyi shi zhe, 1724 福建浙江總督滿保奏為西洋商船不許前往西洋呂宋噶囉吧等處貿易事摺 (1724) [General Governor of Fujian and Zhejiang Gioroi Mamboo’s Memorial asking for the Forbidding of Commercial Ship Sailings to Luzon and Batavia for Trade, 1724],” in *Qingdai Zhongguo yu dongnanya geguo guanxi dang’an shiliao huibian, Feilübin juan* 清代中國與東南亞各國關係檔案史料彙編（菲律賓卷）[*The Collection of Archives between Qing China and other Southeast Asian Countries: Volume for the Philippines*], ed., Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’an guan 中國第一歷史檔案館 (Beijing: Guojia wenhua chubanshe, 2004), 111.

2 *Ibid.*, 111–113.

3 *Ibid.*, 111.

What worried Mamboo was not just that people violated imperial policy, but that there were internal dangers that would further jeopardize the foundations of the empire. Some Qing customs officers were also publicly allowing ships to sail to restricted areas:

As long as the [obligated] tariff is at least one times greater in value, they are in practice to double that per unit. Furthermore, each of the civil and military *yamen* 衙門 at the ports have their [own] “regulations,” and they have been paid varying amounts, from dozens to hundreds of taels. Moreover, the officials receive [overseas] local products, individually. Only the newly appointed Dinghai 定海 Regional Commander Zhang Pu 張溥 refused.<sup>4</sup>

According to this description, bureaucratic officers were conspiring with law-breakers. Mamboo found this a troublesome issue since it related to the agenda involved in the empire’s control of its borders, and over the movement of people and goods: “This crucial issue relates to the affairs of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong provinces, and I humbly beg Your Majesty to adjudicate secretly and indicate how we should proceed. It is for this reason that I submit this secret memorial.”<sup>5</sup> The Yongzheng emperor, in addition to indicating his decision, commented in writing at the end in red: “The way of maritime defense is that it is only proper to supervise from a single position. This idea cannot be altered or deviated from in any way.”<sup>6</sup> The emperor did not agree with relaxing the existing prohibition, but he also did not want to tighten channels of overseas trade. This echoes the emperor’s earlier judgment that “commercial ships are not allowed to sail to places in the Southwestern Sea areas such as Luzon and the others; let the Southwestern Sea products come on their own.” It seems that the emperor confirmed Mamboo’s judgment about how the Dutch in Batavia, and the Spaniards in Luzon, could “dare secretly covet Chinese wealth.”<sup>7</sup>

In terms of border enforcement, and control of movement, Mamboo’s memorial raised questions beyond general discussion of the tributary system. His discussion was more about the attitude and the ways that the “Central Empire” claimed its power in terms of looking at the outside world, and in

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4 Ibid., 111.

5 Ibid., 111–112.

6 Ibid., 112.

7 Ibid., 111.

dealing with its own people. In other words, the discussion was about power and sovereignty.

Sovereignty is the supreme power or authority of a governing body over itself. In modern times, land and border control are heavily emphasized in terms of sovereignty.<sup>8</sup> By relying on a conceptualization of domestic sovereignty and the idea of an interdependent sovereignty, a cooperative sovereignty, this paper offers a new account of China's historical sovereignty, one that focuses primarily on the power of the government over people as this power relates to borders. In it, I discuss Qing China's interaction with Southeast Asia in the context of border enforcement, the control of movement, and thus sovereignty. I argue that the Qing court considered these issues not in terms of population, territory, or maritime prohibition, but from a standpoint of security and stability, around which the concerns of the border, ways of controlling people, and sovereignty were all structured.

## 1 The Background of the Border Enforcement and the Control of Movement

Chinese domestic people have a very long "tradition" of moving to Southeast Asia by crossing the borders. Before the coming of the Western colonists, overseas Chinese had controlled sites on the Malay Archipelago, either through small military forces, or through negotiation with local chiefs, as their successors did several centuries later in southern Vietnam.

Ma Huan 馬歡 [b. 1400], one of the main interpreters with the Zheng He 鄭和 [1371–1433] Armada, visited Gresik in the early fifteenth century. He wrote: "Moving east to Turban for another half day [we] reached Gresik, whose barbarian name is Geerxi. It was originally a place of sandy beaches, but since the Chinese have come and settled down there, it has become a 'New Village.' The head of the village is, so far, a Cantonese, and the village has thousands of [Chinese] households. Many barbarians come there from everywhere to trade."<sup>9</sup>

8 About the debates of the concepts of sovereignty, see Jorge Emilio Núñez, "About the Impossibility of Absolute State Sovereignty," *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 27, no. 4 (2014). Stephen D. Krasner, *Problematic Sovereignty: Contested Rules and Political Possibilities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

9 Ma Huan 馬歡, *Yingya shenglan 瀛涯勝覽* [*The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1955), 9–10. Gresik was the central port of East Java in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Later it was replaced by Surabaya. The Shunta state (Bantam) which managed Gresik, was also well known to the Hokkien as "the Lower Harbor." See Zhang

According to the records of Fei Xin 費信 [b. 1388], another military personnel with Zheng He's fleet, over one century before Zheng and Fei's team reached Southeast Asia during its fourth expedition [1413–1415], Kubilai Khan 忽必烈 [r. 1260–1294] had sent a fleet and squadrons of soldiers to invade Java in 1293. Some people in this group of Yuan [1206–1368] soldiers settled down in Java after the battle.<sup>10</sup> The “chief” Fei Xin mentions was Jayakatwang [d. 1293], who led the Kediri (Gelang-gelang) army to attack the Singhasari Empire (East Java) in 1292, and successfully usurped power from and killed King Kertanegara [r. 1268–1292].

Kertanegara's son-in-law, Raden Wijaya (Nararya Sanggramawijaya, r. 1293–1309), took the opportunity to lead Yuan Chinese troops astray in 1293, to take revenge for the Mongol overthrow of Jayakatwang. While the unsuspecting Yuan troops thought they were fighting against the arrogant Kertanegara, who had humiliated Kubilai Khan's envoys by cutting and scarring their faces, they were confused by “ally” Raden Wijaya's sudden attack on their column. As a result, the Yuan troops were in chaos and had to withdraw.<sup>11</sup>

There were many other Chinese in the areas of the islands of Java and Sumatra before the Dutch settlement.<sup>12</sup> According to a Chinese record, Palembang was

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Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., *Ming shi* 明史 [*History of the Ming Dynasty*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 324.8405. Shunta is also written Shunda or Shunha, Shunta, Xintuo, and Xintiao. All transliterations of Sunda, but Xintuo more broadly refers to the western Java, and Shunta mostly only refers to Bantam.

- 10 Fei Xin 費信, *Xingcha shenglan jiaozhu* 星槎勝覽校注 [*Annotation of the Description of the Starry Raft*], annot. Feng Chengjun 馮承鈞 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1954), 9–10.
- 11 For the confused history of the invasion see now David Bade, *Of Palm Wine, Women and War, the Mongolian Naval Expedition to Java in the 13th Century* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013); Toru Aoyama, “Where was the ‘Eastern Capital’ of Java? Reconsidering the Division of Majapahit 1379–1406” (Paper presented at the 13th Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, Jōchi Daigaku, 1994). On November 2 in the same year, Raden Wijaya established the Majapahit Empire. For a general description of the process, see Ooi Keat Gin, ed., *Southeast Asia: A Historical Encyclopedia, from Angkor Wat to Timor* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 1208–9.
- 12 For example, Zhang Lian 張璉 [d. 1562], another Teochew native who came from Raoping 饒平 County, was a “notorious” escaped criminal. Although whether Zhang really succeeded in escaping to Palembang is doubtful, his title – “Master of the Flying Dragon” [*feilong renzhu* 飛龍人主] – remained as a banner for those pirates. Charles Wheeler also refers to Zhang Lian and the Ming Loyalist community which used the false imperial name “Flying Dragon.” But he wrongly identifies Zhang as a Fujianese pirate (should be Teochew pirate/bandit) and mixes his case up with those of the “Japanese bandits” [*wokou* 倭寇]. See Charles Wheeler, *Cross-Cultural Trade and Trans-Regional Networks in the Port of Hoi An* (PhD diss., Yale University, 2001), 135–136. Others such as the Cantonese Shi Jinqing 施進卿 [1360–1423] built his autonomous kingdom with the support of Zheng

permanently occupied by the overseas Chinese [*Huaren liuyu zhe* 華人流寓者] militarily:

There was a man named Liang Daoming 梁道明 who came from Nanhai County in Guangdong. He had lived in that country [Palembang] for a long time, and several thousands soldier families and commoners in Fujian and Guangdong followed him when he took to the sea, electing him to be their leader.<sup>13</sup>

Another famous pirate, Chen Zuyi 陳祖義 [d. 1407], one of the main leaders of the overseas Chinese, was originally a Hokkien-dialect-speaking Teochew native. After he fled to Palembang, the ruler appeased him and let him be the leader of the “Old Harbor” (Palembang). “The Cantonese Chen Zuyi et al. fled there with his whole family. He plundered the properties of any ships passing by.”<sup>14</sup>

In the sixteenth century, there were also some very famous incidents stirred up by overactive overseas Chinese in the Philippines. For example, Pan Hewu 潘和五 [1567–1622], a man from Jinjiang 晉江 County in South Fujian, led laborers to assassinate Philippine Governor Dasmariñas [1539–1593] and kill his soldiers.<sup>15</sup> Lin Feng 林鳳 [d. 1575] was also involved, but little was known even as late as the 1930s, when his name was misread.<sup>16</sup> Given too the activities

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He's armada, and he even passed his leadership position on to his daughter: “He died [but] did not pass the position to [his] son, hence his daughter Shi Erjie 施二姐 became the king.” See Ma Huan, *Yingya shenglan*, 17.

13 Zhang Tingyu, *Ming shi*, 324.8408.

14 Ma Huan, *Yingya shenglan*, 16–7. For the full English translation, see J.V.G. Mills, trans., *Ma Huan: Ying-yai Sheng-lan: “The Overall Survey of the Ocean’s Shores”(1433)* (Cambridge: University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1970). As the Arabic translator, Ma Huan accompanied Zheng He's fleet three times to Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean in 1413, 1421, and 1431. He began to write this book in 1416 and finished it thirty-five years later.

15 While Pan's case has been a common theme in the Chinese academic world, it has been less stressed in English writing, although John E. Wills, Jr., Edgar Wickberg et al. have discussed it. See John E. Wills, Jr., “Relations with Maritime Europeans, 1514–1662,” in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 2*, eds., Denis C. Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 333–75. The record of this case has been translated and introduced to the English-speaking world only recently, see Timothy Brook, *Mr. Selden's Map of China: Decoding the Secrets of a Vanished Cartographer* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2013), 124–5.

16 A few Chinese scholars did reveal his history at the time, although they generally misunderstood his name. Scholarship in English first mentions him some time later, but also is limited in what is said. Andrew Wilson only mentions Lin Feng once in his monograph, with a brief notice that he attacked Manila. See Andrew Wilson, *Ambition and Identity:*

and huge numbers of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, Chinese imperial governments were cautious and maintained a stance of denial.

The early Qing regime showed that its ideas of border enforcement and control of movement were not that different from the approach of Ming [1368–1644]. The control of borders was quite loose from a modern perspective. The essential part of this control was that Chinese people registered in their former districts, maintaining their status as residents in the empire without “unnecessary” movement, especially the crossing of borders. Mobile people returned to their original places of residence.<sup>17</sup>

The issue of sovereignty was also far from being just a consideration of land, especially in the overseas regions. The case of Taiwan before 1700 shows the interplay of sovereignty, border enforcement, and control of movement. Emma Teng explains “how an island that was *terra incognita* for the better part of Chinese history came to be regarded as an integral part of China’s ‘sovereign’ territory.”<sup>18</sup> Tonio Andrade indicates that the Japanese, the Dutch, and the Spaniards had different understandings of territoriality and taxation rights in the case of Taiwan in the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries.<sup>19</sup> This problem disappeared only after the expulsion of the Dutch by Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 [1624–1662], and the Chinese administration of Taiwan. In these terms, border issues were closely connected with power and sovereignty.

By then the Manchu emperor had had to fight with anti-Qing powers in Taiwan, and the Qing court debated whether it needed to establish prefectures or counties in Taiwan. The final decision was not based on land considerations but on security: no more anti-Qing powers could be allowed to set up house on the island. Hence, the Qing court kept Taiwan as its administrative region, and as a foreign barrier of the empire.

While sovereignty and the border enforcement were clear, the control of movement was even clearer: the empire did not allow its people to migrate to this island out of concern that it become occupied by too many people and able to challenge the empire from its periphery.<sup>20</sup>

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*Chinese Merchant Elites in Colonial Manila, 1880–1916* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

17 Boyi Chen, “Borders and Beyond: Contested Power and Discourse around Southeast Coastal China in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *International Journal of Asian Studies* 15, no. 1 (2018).

18 Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 7.

19 Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 1–99.

20 It was not until late in the second year of the Yongzheng reign, over forty years after the Qing had taken over the island from the Zheng regime, that the court allowed Cantonese

It is in this sense that Mamboo's memorial connects the imperial ideas of sovereignty and the control of movement. Earlier scholarship has also shown that the court was quite active in pushing overseas trade in the early Qing era.<sup>21</sup> The Qing court forbade sailing to Luzon and Batavia, the "barbarian countries" dominated by Spanish and Dutch colonial powers, but intentionally left the door open for commoners to travel to "the Eastern Sea" (Japan, Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan island, *etc.*) and Vietnam (and for those who claimed to be returning from Vietnam). This clear signal given by the policy is apparent: it was the concept of sovereignty that guided border enforcement and the control of movement for the sake of security and stability.

## 2 High Qing: The Southern Sea Prohibition and the *de Facto* *Laissez-faire*

Early Qing maritime policy, as seen above, emphasized imperial security and stability in terms of its border enforcement and control of movement. In the fifty-sixth year of the Kangxi 康熙 reign [r. 1661–1722], to deal with the challenge of pirates, and border-crossing Han Chinese who were stirring up riots, the emperor prohibited trade in Luzon and Batavia (the so-called "Southern Sea Prohibition") and mentioned the potential dangers from Taiwanese collusion with the Philippines.<sup>22</sup>

Shi Lang 施琅 [1621–1696], the Fujian commander-in-chief of the Qing navy, asked to offer a deadline for those who had gone overseas to return. Later, the Emperor Kangxi approved. Those who had left before 1717 could return provided they did it during a three-year grace period. In general the prohibition

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to migrate to Taiwan. In 1732, the court further allowed that the migrants could bring partners along with them.

21 Xu Yi 許毅 and Long Wuhua 隆武華, "Shilun Qingdai qianqi duiwai maoyi zhengce yu haijin de xingzhi 試論清代前期對外貿易政策與海禁的性質 [On the Foreign Trade Policy and the Nature of the Sea Prohibition in the Early Qing Dynasty]," *Caizheng yanjiu* 財政研究, no. 7 (1992); Gang Zhao, *The Qing Opening to the Ocean: Chinese Maritime Policies, 1684–1757* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013).

22 *Shengzu shilu* 聖祖實錄 [Veritable Record of Shengzu], tome 6 of *Qing shilu* 清實錄 [Qing Veritable Record] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 270.649–650; 271.658. For Kangxi's concern of the western threat and reaction to issuing a ban, see Gang Zhao, *The Qing Opening to the Ocean: Chinese Maritime Policies*, 153–161. As to the background and the influence of the prohibition, see Dong Lingfeng 董凌鋒, "Lun Qingdai Nanyang jinling shishi de lishi Beijing yu lishi yingxiang 論清代南洋禁令實施的歷史背景與歷史影響 [The Background of the Restriction Order for the Southern Sea and its Significance]," *Liuzhou shizhuan xuebao* 柳州師專學報, no. 1 (2007).

policy of the Kangxi era was quite loose, more concerned about national security than other things, and without any cases of legal punishment.

The early Qing policy toward overseas trade actually benefited and facilitated mobility to the Vietnamese eastern coast. Even in 1717, when the Qing court forbade commercial ships to sail to Southern Sea destinations such as Luzon and Batavia, Vietnam was not targeted.<sup>23</sup> In 1718, the Ministry of War confirmed with Yang Lin 楊琳 [d. 1724], the governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi, that “Macao’s foreign ships trading in the South Sea and inland commercial ships trading in Annam ... were not on the list of those trading with forbidden destinations.”<sup>24</sup> These policies pushed many sojourners to sail to Vietnam since other places were illegal to visit.

Of course, due to the Qing prohibition, we could also imagine that some people did not actually sail to Vietnam but just used it as a camouflage. Vietnam, not on the list of prohibited places, had gained an advantage in terms of legal sailing compared to other places. As a seventeenth-century scholar-official described this situation: “Vietnam is located in the southwest and neighbors China, and is also far from countries such as Luzon and Batavia. Hence, its case should follow the statutes of the Eastern Sea [trade] and [we should] allow the merchants to trade there.”<sup>25</sup> The official policy deliberately retained loopholes. In other words, in practice, a *de jure* prohibition evolved into a *de facto laissez-faire*, and involved tremendous personal profit and corruption.

Against this background, Mambo tried very cautiously to test if the new emperor Yongzheng would be willing to lift the ban. Mambo raised the key concerns of security over sovereignty, informing the emperor: “I find that the original purpose of the sub-statutes was to guard against the foreign barbarians. In the Southwestern Sea, *hongmao* 紅毛 (‘the Red Hairs,’ which refers to the Dutch), Luzon, and other states are located beyond the ocean’s extremity, and they all rely on trade to survive; hence, how dare they secretly hide their intentions to covet Chinese wealth?”<sup>26</sup>

But as a sophisticated high official, he also tried another approach in the following statement suggesting moving back: “However, since [we] have followed [the edict of the Kangxi emperor] to prohibit [overseas trade], [we] should

23 *Shengzu shilu*, 270.650; 271.658.

24 *Ibid.*, 277.719.

25 Chen Menglei 陳夢雷, ed., “Lüling bu huikao 律令部彙考 68 [Collected Substantial Studies of the Laws and Statutes],” vol. 82 of “Xiangxing dian 祥刑典 [The Judicial System],” in *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 [Complete Collection of Illustrations and Writings from the Earliest to Current Times] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju; Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1985), 772:32b.

26 “Fujian Zhejiang zongdu Manbao zou,” 111.

obey the imperial rules."<sup>27</sup> Still, he was not sure if the new emperor wanted to solve the disconnection between ban and reality:

Regarding the distant "barbarians" in the outer ocean, since they have no other intentions by nature, and the coastal merchants and commoners rely on [trade to] live, if it were I, having the insights of Your Majesty into the desire for relaxing the previous prohibition, I would then defer for a while until the imperial edict [is issued].<sup>28</sup>

Mamboo's discretion was rewarded. Although Yongzheng did not want to lift the ban, he also did not want to create vulnerability, or block any loop-hole. Although he criticized Mamboo's "improper" thinking on loosening the prohibition, his attitude of maintaining the status quo was clear in his remarks written in red with a brush:

Perusing your memorials, I think that you want to lift the ban on selling to the Southwestern Sea and the others by using [the excuse of] this case. This is very improper. Over the past decade or so, the sea has been at peace, and that is a most proper situation. [You should know that] only the proper rules deserve to be defended, and that the normal practices should not be changed. You should still adhere to the spirit of the old rules checking and taxing, executing a strenuous effort, strictly regulate subordinates, and not act with partiality or defeat the goals of justice.<sup>29</sup>

Although the Yongzheng emperor did not officially abandon the earlier Kangxi policy, the Southern Sea Prohibition existed in name only during the first several years of his reign.<sup>30</sup> When Yongzheng finally lifted the ban in 1727, still, he did not approve overseas Chinese freely returning to China. This distinction thus echoes the focuses of this paper: border enforcement, the control of movement, and sovereignty.

The emperor realized it was a problem that related to sovereignty since "those people who choose to stay in those lands were all eager to live in the

27 Ibid., 111.

28 Ibid., 112.

29 Ibid., 113.

30 Before the prohibition in 1717, there were 16 ships that went to Batavia for trade each year on average. In 1723 and 1724, the number of ships reached 21 and 18 respectively, indicating that the ban was gone and the number of ships had returned to what they were. See Wu Jianyong 吳建雍, "Qing qianqi Zhongguo yu Badaweiya de fanchuan maoyi 清前期中國與巴達維亞的帆船貿易 [The Sailing Trade between China and Batavia during Early Qing]," *Qingshi yanjiu* 清史研究, no. 3 (1996): 31–34.

foreign countries.”<sup>31</sup> His second concern regarding such border-crossing people was that they “stayed overseas for a long time, but then suddenly returned back inland [to China].” Hence, “their traces are untraceable.” “If they have had a connection with foreigners, their evil and sly conspiracies,”<sup>32</sup> it should be prevented.

When control of the movement of these people failed, Yongzheng asked local officials to “double check” and “try to gradually lure and interrogate to make sure that their backgrounds are all known well”<sup>33</sup> when the overseas migrants returned. The court specially indicated that two types of people should be focused on:

... The rogues who illegally migrated to the barbarian states and lived there for years; they served the barbarians as *kapitan*. There are also the poor people who have fallen away to the barbarian lands, but have lured overseas women to marry them, and have had children; when they have had nothing to live on, they have attempted to move inland [to China] again and wantonly lure and act ostentatiously.<sup>34</sup>

These two types of people, apparently, related to security and stability. The former might be too close to the foreigners and the latter, a loose prick (metaphor of a single man), might cause problems of instability in inland society. For other overseas commoners, Yongzheng generally just let them pay a penalty for violating the statute against delayed sojourning overseas and go. On the twenty-sixth day of the twelfth month of the eleventh year of the Yongzheng reign, when Fujian Governor Hao Yulin 郝玉麟 [d. 1745] and Governor-general Zhao Guolin 趙國麟 [1673–1751] asked if Batavian sojourners Chen Wei 陳魏 and Yang Ying 楊營 could donate 13,000 *shi* [of rice] to offset the established punishment, the emperor commented that “in the matter of their attachment to their hometown,”<sup>35</sup> it should be approved.

31 *Shizong shilu* 世宗實錄 [Veritable Record of Shizong], tome 7 of *Qing shilu*, 58.892b.

32 *Zhupi yuzhi* 硃批諭旨 [Vermillion Rescripted Decree and Remarks] (Shanghai: Dianshizhai, 1887), 46.33a; for a similar but slightly different version, see Zhang Shucai 張書才, ed., *Yongzheng chao Hanwen zhupi zouzhe huibian* 雍正朝漢文硃批奏摺彙編 [A Compilation of Chinese Language Vermillion Rescripted Palace Memorials for the Yongzheng Reign] (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1989), 11.353a.

33 *Ibid.*, 46.46b; Zhang Shucai, *Yongzheng chao Hanwen zhupi zouzhe huibian*, 13.167a.

34 Chen Shouqi 陳壽祺, ed., *Chongzuan Fujian tongzhi* 重纂福建通志 [Recompiled General Gazetteer of Fujian] (Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1968), 270.5131b–5132a.

35 *Zhupi yuzhi* 硃批諭旨 [Vermillion Rescripted Decree and Remarks], in *Jingyin Wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 [Complete Collection of the Imperial Four Treasuries] (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), 214.277–283.

In short, before the maritime prohibition in the seventeenth century, the Qing Empire was quite active in overseas trade. Border enforcement and control of movement turned into a separate consideration. In the early eighteenth century, the Southern Sea Prohibition turned into a *de facto laissez-faire*. After 1727, although the ban was lifted, the court considered more the issues of security and stability; hence, the restrictions against Chinese in Southeast Asia were maintained.

Previous studies tend to use cases from the Qianlong 乾隆 reign [r. 1736–1796] to prove that the persecution of overseas Chinese was fierce. However, this perspective ignores a special context. The Qianlong emperor seems to have been stricter in the control of movement, and less forbearing to returning overseas Chinese, but his position had a reason. In 1741, Fujian officials asked if the court would like to ban the Southern Sea trade to destroy it, in reaction to the 1740 Batavia massacre [*Hongxi can'an* 紅溪慘案]. A scholar-official suggested that if it was only the Batavian regime that had insulted Chinese merchants, then it would be fine for the government to just ban the trade with Batavia.<sup>36</sup> It was in this context that the Qing court was on its guard against Batavia.

In this regard the most famous case, Chen Yilao's 陳怡老 persecution, was the one that mixed state politics with security considerations. In 1749, Chen brought thirty-two people, including six or seven family members and other "barbarians," to go back home to Longxi 龍溪 County by secretly hiring fishing boats in Xiamen. However, local officials had been waiting to catch them. The Qianlong emperor received a memorial from the Fujian Governor Pan Siju 潘思榘 [1695–1752], who considered Chen as the Chinese leader in Batavia (*kapitan*), and who might "take the opportunity to threaten the barbarians and bluff, or he might also reveal the inland situation and stir up other matters,"<sup>37</sup> since Chen had lived in Batavia for over ten years. Unfortunately, Pan's information was wrong. Chen was actually not the *kapitan* but the deputy, the lieutenant. He had very little real power and was more like the channel between the Chinese community and the Dutch authorities. He did not have the ability, political power, or intention to harm Qing imperial security and stability.

Protecting its sovereignty in this over-sensitive way, the Qing court also provided its bailiffs and government office (*yamen*) runners with the opportunity to blackmail returning sojourners. After the case of Chen Yilao, the Chinese in Southeast Asia were very hesitant to return home without a lot

36 *Zhangpu xianzhi* 漳浦縣志 [*Gazetteers of Zhangpu*] (Guangxu 光緒 version) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2000), 22.13–14.

37 *Gaozong shilu* 高宗實錄 [*Veritable Record of Gaozong*], tome 13 of *Qing shilu*, 346.785a.

of preparation. But we can speculate that most of them were quite safe once they paid their “tributes.”

The only two cases we know of are those of Yang Tingkui 楊廷魁 and Chen Lisheng 陳歷生 [d. 1784]. Yang was a Fujian military provincial examination military degree holder [*wu juren* 武舉人] doing business in the Philippines. He returned to China as vice ambassador of a tributary mission, and was exiled by the Qing court to the borderland for labor, as well as having his personal property confiscated. By contrast, Chen Lisheng was *kapitan* in Semarang. He asked others to bury him in China after his death. When his coffin reached China, he was charged by local officials of “illicitly having had a liaison with a foreign country.”<sup>38</sup> His relatives bribed the officials, and his coffin was then passed. In other words, both Yang and Chen (or his dead body) both encountered trouble as a political threat, or local government sensitivities, but not on account of the prohibition of sojourning itself.

Indeed, Qianlong was sensitive to the political threat from overseas, and his concerns about security and stability were not that different from those of his predecessors. His idea about sovereignty was not as much about juridical or administrative power, as about security and stability that should be closely focused on in border enforcement, and in the control of movement.

In the nineteenth year of the Qianlong reign, the same year that the Qing government caught Yang Tingkui, the court offered those overseas Chinese wishing to return home “generous” provisions, but only if they were “good commoners” that the boatmen could guarantee. Hence, what the real concerns of the empire were is very clear. Many Chinese in Southeast Asia as a consequence also felt quite safe to return to China, especially after the second half of the eighteenth century, or Chen Lisheng would not have asked people to take his body back.

Another Chinese lieutenant in Batavia, Gao Genguan 高根官 [d. 1787], required his servants to send his children back to China in his will: “[you] must send my children back home and let them bring the money back to my mother.”<sup>39</sup> Gao and the others knew the line and the logic of the Qing Empire well, but while the “good commoners” would not be targeted, what if the Chinese caused troubles overseas? This was another concern entirely.

38 Ibid., 364.1009.

39 Leonard Blussé 包樂史 and Wu Fengbin 吳鳳斌, annot., *Gong an bu* 公案簿 [*Minutes of the Board Meetings of the Chinese Council*] (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2002), 1:8–11.

### 3 Qianlong: Hitting the Pirates and the Interactions with Quảng Nam

Overseas Chinese engaged in the new Vietnamese civil war (“the Fighting between New and Old Nguyễn”) as mercenaries, and played key roles during 1773–1802. It was a war between the new rebel leader Nguyễn Nhạc 阮岳 [r. 1788–1793], and the *de facto* rulers, the Nguyễn and Trịnh lords. In 1774, the Trịnh lord of northern Vietnam ordered his troops to advance southward. For him, it was a great opportunity to “unify” with the southern regime by taking advantage of the chances for riot in southern Vietnam.

During the march, the Vietnamese encountered a group of armed men from Guangdong led by Chaozhou 潮州 merchant Jiting 集亭 [Tập Đình, or Li Aji 李阿集, d. 1775]. Jiting and his soldiers were mostly from the southeastern coastal macro-economic region as defined by William Skinner.<sup>40</sup>

According to the Vietnamese official record, this group was unexpectedly formidable: “Tập Đình’s mercenaries were all people from Guangdong and they wore red cloth wrapped on their heads. They were adorned with gold and silver paper, and were armed with rattan shields and broadswords. They broke through [our troops], stripping half-naked to fight more vigorously.”<sup>41</sup> The Vietnamese leader, General Hoàng Ngũ Phúc 黃五福 [1713–1776], had to expend considerable effort to turn impending defeat into victory through his use of cavalry.

This key battle changed the political and military situation in Vietnam. The rebellious Tây Sơn 西山 leader Nguyễn Nhạc surrendered to the northern lord, while his partner moved to stand on the side of the southern lord Nguyễn Phúc Thuần 阮福淳 [r. 1765–1777].

Born in Chaozhou, Jiting had migrated to Quy Nhơn 歸仁 before 1759, and had established connections there with a group of local overseas Chinese. Jiting’s partner, Li Cai 李才 [Lý Tài, or Li Azhi, d. 1777], moved to Quảng Nam 廣南 from southern Fujian in the Qianlong reign to earn a living. He led another force to stir the pot.<sup>42</sup>

40 Most of them were from southern Fujian province and from Chaozhou prefecture in eastern Guangdong province. As William Skinner has highlighted, they belonged together to the same “macro-economic region” in southeast coastal China. See G. William Skinner, *Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China* (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 2001).

41 Phan Thanh Giản 潘清簡, *Khâm Định Việt Sử Thông Giám Cương Mục 欽定越史通鑑綱目* [*The Imperially Ordered Annotated Text Completely Reflecting the History of Vietnam*] (Taipei: Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, 1969), 44.23.

42 Li Shiyao 李侍堯, “Zou wei nahuo zaifan zishi Hong Ahan Li Aji deng gefan zunzhi fenbie shenni shi 奏為拿獲在番滋事洪阿漢李阿集等各犯遵旨分別審擬事 [A Memorial on Capturing the Trouble Makers Hong Ahan, and Li Aji et al. in the Land of ‘Barbarian,’

Jiting played a major role in stirring up domestic conflict in Vietnamese national politics by joining the Tây Sơn army to go against the southern lord, capturing the Lord Nguyễn Phúc Dương 阮福暘 [1750–1777], and forcing him to go together within him to Hội An 會安 before the northern army's attack. However, Jiting was defeated by General Hoàng, and escaped back to China, and then was captured by the governor-general in Guangdong.

Although Jiting was later executed by the Qing government, and he failed to influence politics, he had played an important role in Quảng Nam, and had influenced Vietnamese national politics. His partner Li Cai, who allied with the Tây Sơn army, also helped further develop Vietnamese “national” politics.<sup>43</sup>

In terms of these contexts, the significance of overseas Chinese in the history of Vietnam was special. The cases of Jiting and Li Cai, especially the waves they made, also reveal interesting facets of border, movement, and sovereignty in the context of Sino-Vietnamese relations. When such Chinese people stirred up trouble in Vietnam and returned to the maritime borders of China, the Qing government quickly intervened.

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and on Interrogating Them Respectively under the provisions of an Imperial Edict],” in *Junjichu lu fu zouzhe* 軍機處錄副奏摺 [Grand Council Copies of Palace Memorials], Archival No.04-01-01-0347-038, Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'an guan 中國第一歷史檔案館. This memorial is also preserved in Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan lishi suo 中國社會科學院歷史所, ed., *Gudai Zhong-Yue guanxi shi ziliao xuanbian* 古代中越關係史資料選編 [Selected Sources of Ancient Sino-Vietnamese Relations] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan, 1982), 654–56, but the date given for it is incorrect. Li Aji's case is also seen in three other memorials preserved at the Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'an guan: Li Shiyao 李侍堯, “Zoubao xuhuo Liu Amei dengren ji chachu Li Aji jiagai shi 奏報續獲劉阿眉等人及查出李阿集家財事 [A Memorial on Continuing the Apprehending of Liu Amei et al., and Finding the Home Property of Li Aji],” Archival No.03-1419-001; Li Shiyao 李侍堯, “Zou wei shenni Li Aji deng zai yang qiangduo sharen yi'an zhong zaishi renfan zhongzui qingni fengzhi shenchi xie'en shi 奏為審擬李阿集等在洋搶奪殺人一案中在事人犯重罪輕擬奉旨申飭謝恩事 [A Memorial on Reviewing the Convicted Felony Crimes Receiving Light Punishment in the Proposal for the Case of Li Aji et al., Robbing and Killing People at Sea: Accepting the Rebuke of the Emperor and Thanking the Emperor for Favor],” Archival No. 04-01-01-0361-020; Yang Jingsu 楊景素, “Zouqing jiang Li Aji qi Chenshi deng liuming fenshang Jiangning dengchu zhufang bingding shi 奏請將李阿集妻陳氏等六名分賞江寧等處駐防兵丁事 [A Memorial on Requesting Permission to Respectively Award Li Aji's Wife Miss Chen and Five Others to the Soldiers of Jiangning Garrison Etc.],” Archival No.03-1360-041.

- 43 Cheng Swag-Ming has given many examples. See Cheng Swag-Ming 鄭瑞明, “Shi lun Yuenan huaren zai xin jiu Ruan zhi zheng zhong suo banyan de juese 試論越南華人在新舊阮之爭中所扮演的角色 [The Roles of Chinese in Vietnam during the Conflict between the Two Nguyens: A Preliminary Discussion],” in *Yuenan, Zhongguo yu Taiwan guanxi de zhuanbian* 越南、中國與台灣關係的轉變 [Changes in Relations among Vietnam, China, and Taiwan], ed., Xu Wentang 許文堂 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 2001), 1–36.

In 1776, after reading the interrogation recording Jiting's last confession in prison, the Qianlong emperor instructed that Jiting and others should be "executed immediately" for the crime of "robbing and killing people overseas," "causing troubles in the barbarian area," and "accepting an illegal official position."<sup>44</sup> The Tây Sơn Uprising offered an opportunity for Jiting to assert himself, and show the fearful potential power of the overseas Chinese.<sup>45</sup> Qianlong's attitude toward this case also provided an indication of his position: his first concern was the control of movement and the overseas order, and then sovereignty.

Unlike the Qing logic of enforcing the domestic sovereignty and controlling the movement of people overseas, the search for a better life meant everything for the commoners and even the so-called pirates. For commoners, the pursuit of wealth or simply making a living was the primary concern and their overseas activities had little to do with identity or an anachronistic concept of sovereignty. Hence, many chose to follow Jiting, and he could then assign different individuals from various places in China to be in charge of different issues, including army provisioning, weapons, horses, and other necessities.

Also, Jiting "recalled Fujian native Luo Aqi 羅阿奇 to ghostwrite an official denunciation of the enemy, calling upon the Chinese guest people [*neidi kemín* 內地客民] to take up arms. As a result some merchants and commoners felt discouraged and angry. For example, Wu Azhu 吳阿珠 and his seventy-two men feared Jiting's power but could not help but agree to offering the soldiers, due to being controlled by Jiting."<sup>46</sup>

Despite the fact that such records of opposition exist, other records make clear the bravery and ferocity of Li Aji's troops, explaining the possibility of their victory that was foreseen at the time.<sup>47</sup>

During the Tây Sơn Uprising, many overseas Chinese joined the side of the Nguyễn lords, and helped to restrain their opponent. Most of these Chinese were lower class migrants, as is revealed in Qing records. They were utilized by the dominating local powers in the civil war: Li Cai's gang is a good example of overseas Chinese involvement; He Xiwen's 何喜文 [d. 1801] gangs,

44 Li Shiyao, "Zou wei nahuo zaifan zishi Hong Ahan Li Aji deng," "Zou wei shenni Li Aji deng zai yang qiangduo sharen yi'an"; Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan lishi suo, *Gudai Zhong-yue guanxi shi ziliao xuanbian*, 656; *Gaozong shilu*, tome 21 of *Qing shilu*, 999.360. It was the twelfth month of the fortieth year of the Qianlong reign in the lunar calendar, so it was early 1776.

45 For a detailed study of this movement, see George Edson Dutton, *The Tay Sơn Uprising: Society and Rebellion in Eighteenth-Century Vietnam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

46 Li Shiyao, "Zou wei nahuo zaifan zishi Hong Ahan Li Aji deng."

47 Phan Thanh Giản, *Khâm Định Việt Sử Thông Giám Cương Mục*, 44.23.

including Liang Wenying 梁文英, Zhou Yuanquan 周遠權, Zhang Baguan 張八觀, and some other pirates, was another good example of those serving the regime in 1786.<sup>48</sup>

Most lower-class overseas Chinese in Vietnam however joined the Tây Sơn side, no doubt due to common connections in economic status and a common social background. Dian H. Murray has pointed out it was the Tây Sơn regime that supplied the pirates warm nests to breed in on the coasts from Vietnam to Guangdong.<sup>49</sup> Most of the so-called pirates were connected with Tây Sơn power and developed Tây Sơn strongholds.

According to Chinese records, Fang Weifu 方維富 led Liang Wenke 梁文科, and together they went to give themselves up. They “confessed that Chen Tianbao 陳添保, the head of the pirates, is now in Vietnam, and wants to try to lead the gangs in the direction of showing their allegiances to him.”<sup>50</sup> Chen contributed to on-going battles with the Quảng Nam regime, then returned to coastal Guangdong to recruit Mo Guanfu 莫觀扶 [d. 1802], Zheng Qi 鄭七 [1760–1802], and Fan Wencai 樊文才 [d. 1802] for Vietnam, and so obtained an official rank.<sup>51</sup> According to the *Qing Veritable Records* [*Qing shilu* 清實錄], Chen Tianbao “is a famous big pirate. [He] once accepted illegal Vietnamese grants ... send him to Ying County of Nanxiong Prefecture to restrain him.”<sup>52</sup> Mo Guanfu, a Cantonese who plundered on the sea and fought against the Nguyễn force, recruited over one thousand bandits and pirates. He was defeated in 1801 and captured by the Nguyễn army.<sup>53</sup>

Like Jiting and Chen Tianbao, He Xiwen was also accused of accepting “illegal official ranks” overseas. He and two other pirates were sent back to the Qing by Nguyễn Phúc Ánh 阮福映 [r. 1802–1820], and were accused of “accepting illegal official positions” and being Chinese villains who “robbed a company of travelling merchants.”<sup>54</sup>

Another two pirates, Fan Wencai and Liang Wengeng 梁文庚 [d. 1802], were executed, together with Mo Guanfu. Some other famous pirates, such as Lun Guili 倫貴利 [d. 1800], Zheng Qi, Zhang Yalu 張亞祿 [d. 1802], and

48 *Dại Nam chính biên liệt truyện sơ tập* 大南正編列傳初集 [*The First Biography of the Veritable Records of Greater Vietnam*] (Sài Gòn: Nhà xuất bản Hồ Văn Thiêng, 1967), 28.1–2.

49 Dian H. Murray, *Pirates of the South China Coast, 1790–1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

50 *Renzong shilu* 仁宗實錄 [*Veritable Record of Renzong*], tome 28 of *Qing shilu*, 50.624b.

51 Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo 歷史語言研究所, ed., *Ming-Qing shiliao geng bian* 明清史料庚編 [*The Seventh Collection of Ming-Qing Historical Sources*] (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan, 1960), 3.211–212.

52 *Renzong shilu*, tome 29 of *Qing shilu*, 89.172.

53 Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, *Ming-Qing shiliao geng bian*, 3.211–12.

54 Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan lishi suo, *Gudai Zhong-Yue guanxi shi ziliao xuanbian*, 577–587.

Feng Liangui 馮聯貴 (Tiedanzi 鐵彈子, d. 1808), Wu Shi'er 烏石二 (Mai Youjin 麥有金, 1765–1810), were also executed sooner or later by Qing court or the Nguyễn court, except for Huang Wenhai 黃文海 who, like Chen Tianbao, went to surrender and confessed.<sup>55</sup>

Interestingly enough, while we might feel familiar with the accusations against such people, the details of the accusations show us more about imperial concerns in the areas of security and stability than simply about criminal activities. Nguyễn Quang Toàn 阮光纘 [r. 1792–1802], the third and last emperor of the Tây Sơn Dynasty [1788–1802], was also accused by the Qing court as “sheltering traitors and refugees,” “harboring Chinese bandits and criminals,” “feeding the pirates,” and “being ungrateful for the kindness of the emperor and betraying him.”<sup>56</sup>

It is clear here that the concerns for security and stability, more than the “tributary system” or “diplomatic relations,” held greater importance than the idea of imperial sovereignty. The Qing court considered border enforcement and the control of movement not in terms of population, territory, or any prohibitions, but as security and stability issues.

#### 4 Conclusion: A Natural Evolution

As we can see from the discussions above, with a very conservative (if not negative) guiding ideology, the Qing Empire developed its relations with Southeast Asia as well as with the migrating people going to that region in similar ways. Relying on border enforcement and the control of movement to guard sovereignty, or maintain security and stability, turned out to be the mainstream approach. Ways to interact with polities abroad also partly shaped the Qing Empire’s conceptual frameworks of national interest or sovereign rights. From the perspectives of the emperors and officials, the regimes in Batavia and Luzon were not just “barbarian states,” but more a potential source of threat that should be taken into serious consideration. Regimes in Annam, although not that dangerous to begin with, could turn into hotbeds of maritime challenge to the empire (e.g. Tây Sơn), that would need to be nipped in the bud.

Individuals who participated in the construction of Qing overseas policy also helped to redefine the concept of “China,” and this redefinition introduced their agendas and advanced their interests. Chinese in Southeast Asia,

55 Ibid., 577–587.

56 *Renzong shilu*, 102.361, 106.427.

including merchants, laborers and soldiers that were overseas, showed their talents in military assistance and in diplomatic negotiation.

We can also observe those “Chinese” under the colonial system, working with the British, going against the Chinese in China when political loyalty superseded “ethnic” identity. In the nineteenth century, some overseas Chinese were not that “Chinese” anymore, or some were not “Chinese” before and even after their migration. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the separation has continued.

The distinctions involved were not necessarily the result of imperial enforcement or division. They were a natural evolution of the idea of sovereignty expressed in terms of border, movement, and administration and jurisdiction enforcement, at least the process giving rise to the distinctions was speeded up by this fact. (Somehow too the process was in resonance with the identity splits of British, French, and Spanish in the Americas.) Although the conflicts in terms of border and sovereignty never stopped, regulation and separation likewise never stopped the development of peoples. After all, the search for a better life meant everything, involving those borders-crossers in business, conflict, and war.

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