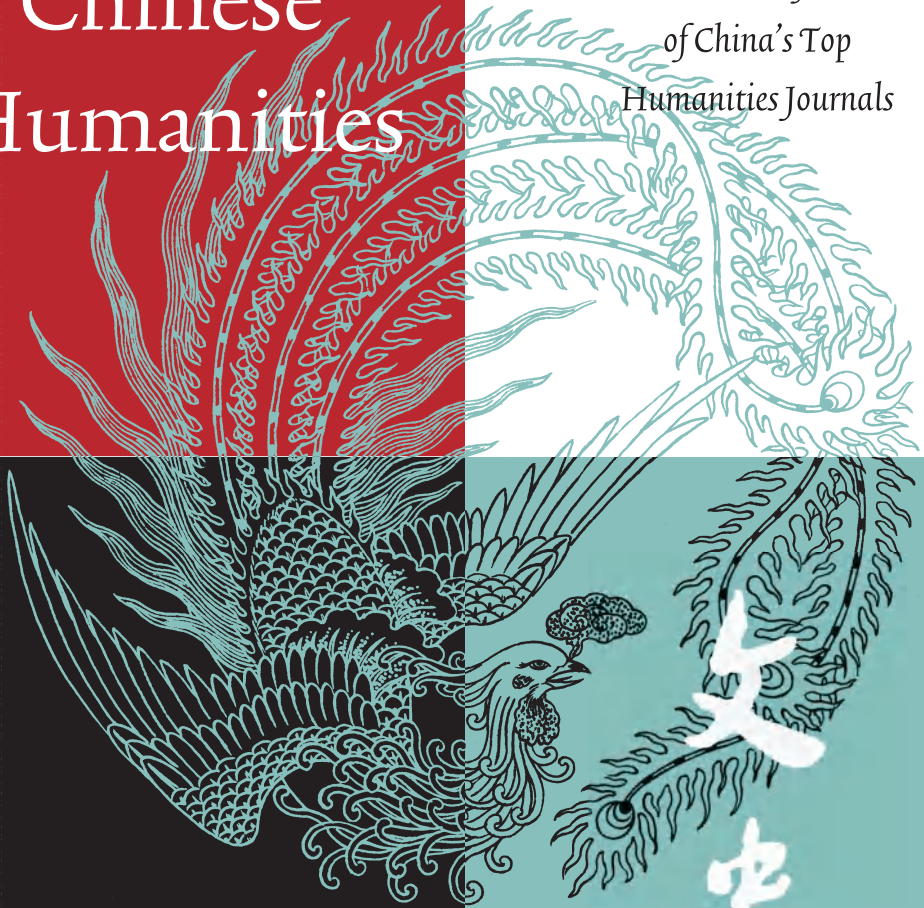


# Journal of Chinese Humanities

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: Reflections on Han *Fu* Poetry

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The Han Dynasty [206 BCE–220] was undeniably a crucial time period in the development of the cultural thought and governance structures of the Chinese people. The study of the Chinese Classics [*jingxue* 經學] along with the genre of Han literature known as Han *fu* are well-established as the central topics of inquiry of this time period.

While the Classical Studies movement embodies the major school of thought of the Han era, Han *fu* serves as this period's main literary corpus. Within the first twenty years of the twenty first century, the academic community has gathered the research and experience of the previous century's exploration of Han *fu* poetry. In the resulting discussion of Han *fu*'s place in the literary world, a platform for the critical analysis of the unique ideological and artistic aspects of Han *fu* was finally established. The efforts of these recent scholars have created even wider avenues for further research and deeper exploration. In seeking to establish a paradigm of scholarly inquiry, often the best method is not gazing towards the future but rather in reflectively returning to the essential principles in question. Regarding the study of Han *fu* poetry, in recent years scholarly inquiry has dynamically proceeded down a path of vivacious new discovery. Today, we will read a collection of essays which incorporate such robust research methods embodying this spirit of reflection and retrospection.

We begin with a reflection on the genre of Han *fu* poetry as a whole. The essay “The Origin and Formal Characteristics of *Fu* Prefaces” by Ma Lili 馬黎麗 provides a holistic and well-researched synopsis of the Han *fu* genre. Ma's examination of Han *fu* prefaces as a unique literary medium during the Early and Later Han dynasties takes readers deep into the heart of the genre.

Next, we examine the historical context in which Han *fu* poetry emerged. Whether belonging to the “sympathizing with the Qin” [*ai Qin* 哀秦] or “blaming the Qin” [*guo Qin* 過秦] school of literary thought, constructing a framework for Han morality was a frequent object of consideration for Han

political thinkers. As a poet present during both the Early and Later Han dynasties whose works and literary criticism embodied outstanding radical innovation and creativity, Yang Xiong 揚雄 [53 BCE–18] served as an instructive model for later poets. These Han poets who later emerged came to adopt many of his viewpoints when establishing their own moral worldviews. Xu Jie's 許結 article, "A Discussion on the Ethical Worldview Established in Yang Xiong's *fu* Poetry" begins by analyzing Yang's "Sweet Springs Palace [*Ganquan fu* 甘泉賦]" and moves on to "the practice of true *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets" [*shiren zhi fu* 詩人之賦] in general, and is a reflection of Yang Xiong's thoughts on moral construction while producing unique poetic contributions and literary commentary. In this way, Yang Xiong uses his *fu* poetry to explore the Zhou virtues [*Zhoude* 周德] and eventually codify the Han virtues [*Hande* 漢德].

Then we turn to the scholarly environment in which Han *fu* poetry was created. The Han Dynasty's most prolific school of learning was the Classical Studies movement. This school was inextricably related to the political ideology, cultural thought, and even pseudo-Confucian divination [*chenwei sichao* 讖緯思潮] prevalent during both the Early and Later Han dynasties. The article "The Influence of *Chenwei* on Han Dynasty Literature and Literary Theory" by Zhang Fengyi 張峰屹 explores the intimate relationship between Han literary innovation and Confucian divination during the period. As the article explains, the Han Classical School cannot be considered synonymous with Confucianism. In pursuing a deeper understanding of the relationship between Han Classical Studies and Han *fu* poetry, the crux lies in the thorough exploration of how Han *fu* poetry makes use of the Chinese Classics.

As an examination of precisely this point, Wang Sihao's 王思豪 article, "Citation of Han *Fu* in *Shijing* Exegetical Works", looks at the combined reception history of Han *fu* and the *Book of Poetry* [*Shijing* 詩經]. The *Shijing* was a major source of literary inspiration for the authors of Han *fu*, with frequent direct and indirect citations of *Shijing* appearing in the *fu*. This in turn became an important textual resource for those studying the usage and interpretation of the *Shijing* throughout history. Such research helps to understand both the formation of the Han *fu* and also how the *Shijing* was understood by Han dynasty literati.

With their critical attention to detail in seeking to more thoroughly understand Han *fu* poetry as a whole, the contributions of these scholars are pushing the field forward.

*Translated by Jon Formella*



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# The Origin and Formal Characteristics of *Fu* Prefaces

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## Abstract

Prefaces to *fu* compositions originated and developed during the Han Dynasty. Their beginnings can be traced to the Western Han when Sima Qian added brief introductions to Jia Yi's *fu* in the *Shiji*. This marked the creation of the commentator's preface. During the late Western and early Eastern Han, a transitional form of preface – in-between a commentator's and an author's preface – began to appear. Important examples can be found in Yang Xiong's "Autobiography" and Huan Tan's *New Treatise* where the authors commented on *fu* pieces they themselves had composed earlier in life. The use of author's prefaces eventually became popular during the Eastern Han. In addition to instructing the reader on the background of a composition, Han *fu* prefaces possessed a variety of additional functions. They served to clarify the central themes and outline the main contents of a *fu*, display the author's personal viewpoints, emotions, and literary talent and help attract potential readers. This shows an awareness of the reading experience of the recipients on the part of the authors. The basic characteristics of *fu* prefaces as a literary form can be described as richness of content, the use of diverse writing techniques as well as a versatility in literary style. Han *fu* prefaces additionally played a distinct role in the development of the literary genre of *xiaopin wen*.

## Keywords

*fu* literature – *fu* preface – commentator's preface – author's preface

*Fu* prefaces [*fu xu* 賦序] originated, developed, and matured during the Han Dynasty [206 BCE–220].<sup>1</sup> It was not customary for authors from the Western Han [206 BCE–25] to compose prefaces and many of the existing prefaces of *fu* pieces dating to this period were subsequently added by commentators. During the Eastern Han [25–220], *fu* prefaces mostly took the form of author's prefaces [*zi xu* 自序]. Han *fu* prefaces not only fulfilled numerous formal functions, but also possessed a literary aesthetic value. In addition, they proved influential for the development of the literary genre of *xiaopin wen* 小品文 [short, informal writing]. To treat *fu* prefaces as independent objects of study will allow us to describe their origin, outline their formal functions, appraise their aesthetic value, and study their role in the history of prose writing in a more objective manner.

## 1 The Definition and Origin of *Fu* Prefaces

Based on authorship, *fu* prefaces can be separated into two major categories: commentator's prefaces [*ta xu* 他序] and the author's prefaces. The evolution of *fu* prefaces occurred in three stages, the emergence of the commentator's preface, the creation of a transitional form in-between the commentator's and the author's preface, and the development of the author's preface.

Before further analysis, we will first need to answer the relatively complicated question of how to define a *fu* preface. Judging by contemporary literature, academics continue to hold diverging views on what constitutes a *fu* preface. If we compare Ma Jigao's 馬積高 [1925–2001] *Compilation of Cifu of Former Dynasties* [*Lidai cifu zonghui* 歷代辭賦總匯], Fei Zhengang's 費振剛 [1935–2021] *Complete Annotations of Han Fu* [*Quan Han fu jiaozhu* 全漢賦校注], and Gong Kechang's 龔克昌 *Commentary and Annotations on Han Fu* [*Liang Han fu pingzhu* 兩漢賦評注],<sup>2</sup> for instance, it becomes apparent that there is no consensus amongst the authors on which *fu* pieces should be labeled "with preface" [*bing xu* 並序]. The *Commentary and Annotations on Han Fu* mostly labels *fu* with author's prefaces in this manner. Notable exceptions to this rule include Mi Heng's 彌衡 [173–198] "Fu on the Parrot [*Yingwu fu* 鸚鵡賦]" and

1 Commonly used English translations for *fu* 賦 include rhapsody, rhyme prose, prose poem, or poetic exposition.

2 Ma Jigao 馬積高, ed., *Lidai cifu zonghui* 歷代辭賦總匯 [*Compilation of Cifu of Former Dynasties*] (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe, 2014), vol. 1; Fei Zhengang 費振剛 et al., ed., *Quan Han fu jiaozhu* 全漢賦校注 [*Complete Annotations of Han Fu*] (Guangzhou: Guangdong jiaoyu chubanshe, 2005); Gong Kechang 龔克昌 et al., ed., *Liang Han fu pingzhu* 兩漢賦評注 [*Commentary and Annotations on Han Fu*] (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 2011).

Zhang Heng's 張衡 [78–139] “Fu on Contemplating the Mystery [*Sixuan fu* 思玄賦]” both of which have commentator’s and not author’s prefaces.<sup>3</sup> The *Compilation of Cifu of Former Dynasties* relies on a similar standard of selection and mostly labels *fu* with author’s prefaces. A number of inconsistencies, however, remain. While Huan Tan’s 桓譚 [ca. 43 BCE–28] “Fu on the Immortals [*Xian fu* 仙賦]” is labeled as containing a preface, comparable *fu* pieces by Yang Xiong 揚雄 [53 BCE–18] are not included in the same category. The *Complete Annotations of Han Fu* employs a wider definition and categorizes all *fu* pieces with a prose introduction as having a preface, irrespective of the question of authorship. The book nevertheless fails to include the preface to Jia Yi’s 賈誼 [200–168 BCE] “Fu on Lamenting Qu Yuan [*Diao Qu Yuan fu* 吊屈原賦]”. The preface that sheds light on the origins of Jia Yi’s *fu* first appeared in the *Han Shu* 漢書 [*History of the Former Han*] from where it was copied and reproduced in the *Wen Xuan* 文選 [*Selections of Refined Literature*]. While the *Complete Annotations of Han Fu* generally follows the example of the *Wen Xuan*, the classification of the “Fu on Lamenting Qu Yuan” constitutes an exception. The book also fails to include the prose introductions to the *fu* pieces that are found in the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* [*Xijing zaji* 西京雜記]. Another example revealing the lack of consensus on how to categorize *fu* prefaces is the “Fu on the Old Chestnut Tree [*Huli fu* 胡栗賦]” by Cai Yong 蔡邕 [133–192]. While the *Compilation of Cifu of Former Dynasties* and the *Complete Annotations of Han Fu* label the “Fu on the Old Chestnut Tree” as a *fu* “with preface”, the *Commentary and Annotations on Han Fu* fails to do so.<sup>4</sup>

While these inconsistencies are due – in part – to inevitable oversight on part of contemporary editors and commentators, their roots date back much further. When Xiao Tong 蕭統 [501–531] first edited the *Wen Xuan*, he failed to categorize *fu* prefaces in a consistent manner. Instead, he labelled all *fu* pieces with a prose introduction as containing a preface, irrespective of whether the introduction consisted of extracts from historical writings, was subsequently added by a commentator, or composed by the *fu* writer himself.<sup>5</sup> In this vein,

3 If we analyze the first sentence of the preface of Mi Heng’s “Fu on the Parrot” that reads: “At that time Huang Yi 黃射, heir designate to Huang Zu 黃祖, hosted a large gathering”, we can conclude that the preface was not written by the author himself. Mi Heng would not have chosen to address the prefect Huang Zu by his name in writing.

4 The reference works discussed here list Cai Yong’s *fu* under three slightly different Chinese titles. The *Compilation of Cifu of Former Dynasties* uses the title “Fu on the Old Chestnut Tree [*Hu li fu* 胡栗賦]”. The same piece is titled “Fu on Grieving over the old Chestnut Tree [*Shang gu li fu* 傷故栗賦]” in the *Complete Annotations of Han Fu* and “Fu on Grieving over the Chestnut Tree [*Shang hu li fu* 傷胡栗賦]” in the *Commentary and Annotations on Han Fu*.

5 Xiao Tong 蕭統, ed., *Wen Xuan* 文選 [*Selections of Refined Literature*], comm. Li Shan 李善 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977).

several of Song Yu's 宋玉 [ca. 298–223 BCE] compositions as well as Fu Yi's 傅毅 [ca. 40–90] “Fu on Dancing [Wu fu 舞賦]” were marked “with preface” in the *Wen Xuan*. Ever since, scholars have argued that Xiao Tong mistakenly categorized parts of the main body of these fu as prefaces, castigating and at times even ridiculing the author for his decision.<sup>6</sup>

Yan Kejun 嚴可均 [1762–1843] seems to have been aware of these issues when compiling the *Complete Prose of Antiquity, the Three Eras, Qin, Han, Three Kingdoms, and the Six Dynasties* [*Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文] and attempted to label fu with prefaces in a more coherent manner.<sup>7</sup> Despite his efforts, however, a number of inconsistencies can still be discerned. While the book clearly describes Fu Yi's “Fu on Dancing” as a fu “with preface”, it fails to categorize Song Yu's “Fu on the Gaotang Shrine [Gaotang fu 高唐賦]” and “Fu on the Goddess [Shennü fu 神女賦]” in the same manner, despite the obvious structural similarities between those pieces. The book also fails to label Cai Yong's “Fu on Short People [Duanren fu 短人賦]” accordingly, even though the composition clearly contains an author's preface.

This serves to show that scholars have never reached a consensus on how to define and label fu prefaces correctly and coherently. The reasons behind this phenomenon are closely connected to the question how fu prefaces first originated. To clarify their origin will prove beneficial for gaining a more nuanced understanding of the nature of fu prefaces and the search for unified standards of classification. Overall, fu prefaces roughly developed in the following three stages:

The first stage saw the emergence of the commentator's preface during the Western Han, when court historians and anonymous authors added prefaces to existing fu compositions. In Jia Yi's biography in the *Shiji* 史記 [*Records of the Grand Historian*], Sima Qian 司馬遷 [145–90 BCE] added brief prose introductions to the “Fu on Lamenting Qu Yuan” and the “Fu on the Owl [Funiào fu 鵯鳥賦]”, providing additional background information and context for the

6 Su Shi 蘇軾 wrote in his “Letter in Reply to Supervisory Officer Liu Mian [Da Liu Mian ducao shu 答劉沔都曹書]”: “In his ‘Fu on the Gaotang Shrine’ and ‘Fu on the Goddess’, Song Yu briefly states the reasons for his dreams. This section can be compared to the exchange between Sir Vacuous and Lord No-Such in Sima Xiangru's works and should be considered a part of the main body of the fu. Xiao Tong, however, has called it a preface. How is this level of understanding to be distinguished from that of a novice?” See Su Shi 蘇軾, *Su Shi wenji* 蘇軾文集 [*Collected Writings of Su Shi*], ed. Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 1429.

7 Yan Kejun 嚴可均, ed., *Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 [*Complete Prose of Antiquity, the Three Eras, Qin, Han, Three Kingdoms, and the Six Dynasties*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), vol. 1.

reader. With slight alterations, these introductions were then reproduced in the *Han Shu*. When Xiao Tong eventually edited the *Wen Xuan*, he included the prose introductions from the *Han Shu* and labeled both of Jia Yi's *fu* "with preface". The *Wen Xuan* also recorded an introduction to the "Fu on the Tall Gate Palace [*Changmen fu* 長門賦]" – a legendary account added by an anonymous author – and categorized the *fu* as containing a preface.

The introductory paragraphs by historians, scholars, and anonymous authors were placed before the main text of the *fu* and designed to guide the readers in their understanding of the background and origin of the piece. Even though these types of introductions were only declared "prefaces" once they appeared in the *Wen Xuan*, they possessed both the functions and meaning of *fu* prefaces from the beginning and should therefore be regarded as precursors to the commentator's preface. The following examples will show their influence on the further development of Han *fu* prefaces. Zhang Heng's biography in the *Hou Han Shu* 後漢書 [*Book of the Later Han*], for instance, included the "Fu on Contemplating the Mystery". Imitating the style of the *Shiji* and the *Han Shu*, the authors of the *Hou Han Shu* decided to add a prose introduction to the *fu*, explaining the origins of Zhang Heng's composition to the readers. The introduction was then copied and included as a preface to Zhang Heng's *fu* in the *Complete Prose of Antiquity, the Three Eras, Qin, Han, Three Kingdoms, and the Six Dynasties*. Another example is the introduction to the "Fu on the Parrot" that sets the background for Mi Heng's famous composition by describing the occasion on which it was composed. Most likely inspired and influenced by the preface to the "Fu on the Tall Gate Palace", Xiao Tong recorded the introduction as a preface to Mi Heng's "Fu on the Parrot" in the *Wen Xuan*. These quasi-commentator's prefaces are similar in nature to an editor's foreword found in many modern publications. The author's prefaces of later generations of *fu* writers were clearly influenced by these early developments. Examples from the Eastern Han include Ma Rong's 馬融 [79–166] "Fu on the Long Flute [*Changdi fu* 長笛賦]" and the "Fu on Recounting a Journey [*Shu xing fu* 述行賦]" by Cai Yong. The prefaces to both pieces preserved the literary style used by historians to outline biographies and describe personal circumstances as well as historical events. The anecdotal nature of the preface to Cao Pi's 曹丕 [187–226] "Fu on Cai Yong's Daughter [*Cai Bojie nü fu* 蔡伯喈女賦]" is in turn reminiscent of the preface to the "Fu on the Tall Gate Palace".

The second stage of development in *fu* prefaces saw the creation of a transitional form in-between the commentator's and the author's preface. Important works belonging to this stage include the explanations on the "Fu on the Sweet Springs Palace [*Ganquan fu* 甘泉賦]", "Fu on the Plume Hunt [*Yulie fu* 羽獵賦]", "Fu on the Tall Poplars Palace [*Changyang fu* 長楊賦]", and "Fu on

Hedong [*Hedong fu* 河東賦] in Yang Xiong's "Autobiography [*Zixu* 自序]" and the discussion on the "Fu on the Immortals" in Huan Tan's *New Treatise* [*Xin lun* 新論]. Ban Gu 班固 [32–92] included the entire text of the "Autobiography" in Yang Xiong's biography in the *Han Shu* and matched the sections explaining the origins of Yang Xiong's writing with the corresponding *fu* pieces. In the *Wen Xuan*, the explanatory sections were then used as prefaces for Yang Xiong's compositions. The author of this article argues that Yang Xiong's explanations should be included in the category of *fu* prefaces. When Yang Xiong wrote the "Autobiography" in his later years, he discussed the reasons that had led him to compose *fu* pieces during his youth. In a wider sense, his explanations fulfilled a function similar to that of an author's preface. It is important to point out, however, that these explanations are not author's prefaces in the strict sense. Yang Xiong regretted parts of his earlier works and he felt the need to justify himself. His main intention, however, was not to explain that he had composed his *fu* on orders by the emperor, but rather to salvage and embellish his earlier writings. Yang Xiong's explanations were only turned into actual prefaces when they were recorded in the *Han Shu* and later in the *Wen Xuan*.

The preface to Huan Tan's "Fu on the Immortals" is written from a first-person point of view and similar in nature to an author's preface. As Li Zhi 力之 has pointed out, however, the preface to the "Fu on the Immortals" was created by commentators who slightly altered the writing found in the *New Treatise*.<sup>8</sup> The author of this article believes that the relevant sections in Huan Tan's *New Treatise* were not originally designed to introduce the "Fu on the Immortals" to potential readers. Instead, the text was only added to Huan Tan's *fu* in the form of a preface after having been altered. The text should therefore not be considered an author's preface. For readers of Yang Xiong's "Autobiography" and Huan Tan's *New Treatise* the paragraphs explaining the origin of the authors' *fu* fulfilled a function similar to that of prefaces. For *fu* writers, they also served as a source of inspiration and guidance for the creation of author's prefaces. The prefaces to several of Yang Xiong's *fu* as well as Huan Tan's "Fu on the Immortals" were therefore created in a similar manner. Commentators selected paragraphs of Yang Xiong's and Huan Tan's own writings and added them to existing *fu* pieces in the form of prefaces. These prefaces are examples of the transitional form in-between the commentator's

8 Li Zhi 力之, "Shi lun Han fu zhi fanwei yu Han fu 'xuwen' zhi zuozhe wenti: Du *Quan Han fu* 試論漢賦之範圍與漢賦'序文'之作者問題 – 讀《全漢賦》 [Discussing the Range of Han Fu and the Question of Authorship for their 'Prefaces': Reading *Complete Collection of Han Fu*]," *Henan shifan daxue xuebao* 河南師範大學學報, no. 1 (1999).

and the author's preface. More broadly, they can also be included in the category of the commentator's preface.

The third stage in the evolution of *fu* prefaces saw the development of the author's preface. During the Eastern Han, *fu* writers made use of prefaces to explain the origin of their compositions and express their intentions. This soon became common practice, and many authors including Feng Yan 馮衍 [ca. 20 BCE–60], Du Du 杜篤 [d. 78], Ban Gu, Wang Yanshou 王延壽 [140–165], Bian Shao 邊韶 [ca. 100–165], Zhao Yi 趙壹 [122–196], Zhao Qi 趙岐 [108–201], Ma Rong 馬融 [79–166], and Cai Yong composed *fu* with author's prefaces. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the process of development described here cannot be neatly separated into three clearly defined and strictly consecutive time periods. During the Eastern Han, for instance, we still find examples of *fu* with commentator's prefaces – such as Zhang Heng's "Fu on Contemplating the Mystery" or Mi Heng's "Fu on the Parrot" – even though the author's preface had already flourished and matured by that time.

After clarifying the three stages of development of *fu* prefaces, we will now examine the principles according to which prefaces were labeled, beginning with the category of the commentator's preface. Wang Qisun 王芑孫 [1755–1817] coined the saying "Western Han *fu* had no prefaces" and argued: "During the Zhou Dynasty *fu* did not yet have prefaces ... neither did they have prefaces during the Western Han.... Five of the seven *fu* dating to the Western Han in the *Wen Xuan* have prefaces: the 'Fu on the Sweet Springs Palace', the 'Fu on the Tall Gate Palace', the 'Fu on the Tall Poplars Palace', the 'Fu on the Plume Hunt', and the 'Fu on the Owl'. While these pieces were labeled as *fu* with prefaces, the prefaces were all added by commentators from later generations. Extracts from historical biographies that provide information on the origin of a *fu* are not real prefaces. The custom of writing *fu* with author's prefaces only developed during the Eastern Han."<sup>9</sup> Wang Qisun believed that only author's prefaces should be considered prefaces and therefore concluded that no *fu* prefaces had yet existed during the Western Han. Wang Qisun's point of view essentially negates the idea of a commentator's preface. Xiao Tong approached the question differently, choosing a more pragmatic approach. All *fu* prefaces found in the *Wen Xuan* – both commentator's prefaces as well as prefaces of the transitional form – fulfilled important functions for the readers, by introducing them to the background and origin of the compositions, by guiding them in their reading and comprehension of the pieces and even by improving their overall reading experience. It is therefore entirely reasonable

9 He Peixiong 何沛雄, ed., *Fu hua liu zhong 賦話六種* [Collection of Six Types of Remarks on Fu] (Hong Kong: Xianggang sanlian shudian, 1982), 16.

to consider them to be proper prefaces. Especially prefaces of the transitional form also played an important role in the emergence of the author's preface. They should therefore be included in the category of *fu* prefaces and loosely classified as belonging to the group of commentator's prefaces. When dealing with prefaces of the transitional form, editors should mark the respective *fu* pieces "with preface" and add an explanation clarifying the source of the preface in question. This principle should also have been applied to the introductory phrases to the *fu* pieces reproduced in the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital*, even if the authenticity and authorship of the book is still in question.<sup>10</sup>

We will now examine the question whether Song Yu's *fu* and Fu Yi's "Fu on Dancing" should be labelled as *fu* "with preface". As mentioned above, Xiao Tong was criticized for the manner in which he handled the question of prefaces in the *Wen Xuan*. A major point of contention was whether the popular format of a dialogue between host and guest at the beginning of a *fu* should be considered a preface. Su Shi 蘇軾 [1037–1101] and others contradicted Xiao Tong on this point and argued that these types of dialogues were not prefaces but parts of the main text of the *fu*. He Zhuo 何焯 [1661–1722], on the other hand, argued in defense of Xiao Tong: "The introduction and beginning of a *fu* is called preface, the ending is called *luan* 亂. Just like the ears, eyes, hands and feet of the human body, each part has its own name."<sup>11</sup> Wang Qisun and Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 [1738–1801] also provided useful observations on this question. The *Overflowing Words from the Reading of Rhapsodies* [*Dufu zhiyan* 讀賦卮言] states:

10 The *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* contains the following sentence introducing Mei Cheng's 枚乘 [ca. 210–138 BCE] "Fu on the Willow [*Liu fu* 柳賦]": "King Xiao of Liang 梁孝王 visited the Lodge of Cares Forgotten, asking each scholar who accompanied him to compose a *fu*." Before other *fu* pieces composed by scholars of the same group this introduction is omitted. Instead, the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* merely reproduces the name of the author, the title of the *fu* and the text of the composition itself. We believe that the introduction reproduced above should have been added before each of the *fu* in question, since several *fu* were composed on the same occasion. See Ma Jigao, *Lidai cifu zonghui*, 1:97.

11 Discussing Song Yu's "Fu on the Gaotang Shrine", He Zhuo argues: "Su Shi says: 'Everything before the line *Yu yue wei wei* 玉曰唯唯 [Song Yu answered: yes, yes] belongs to the main text of the *fu*. To call this part a preface is laughable.' Does this mean we should consider the beginning to Sima Xiangru's *fu* with the dialogue between Lord No-Such and the others as part of the main text as well? Su Shi's comments betray his lack of knowledge about the system of *fu* writing in the ancient times." See He Zhuo 何焯, *Yimen dushu ji* 義門讀書記 [*Reading Notes from the Gate of Propriety*], ed. Cui Gaowei 崔高維 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 882.

Fu Yi's "Fu on Dancing" from the Han Dynasty begins with the dialogue between King Xiang and Song Yu during which Song Yu was asked to compose the "Fu on the Gaotang Shrine". Xiao Tong considered this part a preface, which is not accurate. The dialogue was not in fact a historical event, but a fictional account created by the author Song Yu and merely the beginning of the *fu* composition. *Fu* writers from the Han dynasty frequently relied on such methods and the use of dialogues between host and guest originated during this period.<sup>12</sup>

Wang Qisun argued: "It was normal practice for ancient *fu* to begin with a prose introduction. These parts, however, were not prefaces in the real sense of the word."<sup>13</sup> Zhang Xuecheng also believed that a dialogue at the beginning of a *fu* should not be mistaken for a preface.<sup>14</sup> He Zhuo, on the other hand, declared "the beginning of a *fu* is called preface", arguing for a broader definition of the term. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the function of what He Zhuo termed "beginning" was at times markedly different from the function of a typical preface that often clarified the background and origin of a *fu*. A "beginning" as understood by He Zhuo was often fictional and used to create the setting for the entire *fu*. These beginnings were normally an integral part of the *fu* unable to stand on their own. It would therefore be wrong to call them prefaces lightly. It follows that neither Song Yu's *fu* nor Fu Yi's "Fu on Dancing" should be labelled as *fu* compositions "with preface". Liu Weisheng 劉偉生 has also analyzed this question in some detail.<sup>15</sup> Discussing the "Fu on Dancing", the "Fu on the Gaotang Shrine", the "Fu on the Goddess", and the "Fu on Master Dengtu Enamored of Beauty [*Dengtu zi haose fu* 登徒子好色賦]", Liu points to an organic connection between the introduction – everything before the lines with the expression "wei wei" 唯唯 [yes, yes] – and the main exposition. For this kind of introduction, Liu Weisheng suggests the term "internal preface" [*nei xu* 內序]. They are to be distinguished from "external prefaces" [*wai xu* 外序] that possess a greater degree of independence from the main body of the *fu* and mainly introduce the reader to the background and origin of the

12 He Peixiong, *Fu hua liu zhong*, 16.

13 He Peixiong, *Fu hua liu zhong*, 16.

14 Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠, ed., *Wenshi tongyi jiaozhu* 文史通義校注 [*Comprehensive Meaning of Literature and History with Annotations*], annot. Ye Ying 葉瑛 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 81.

15 Liu Weisheng 劉偉生, "Lidai fuhui fuxu yanjiu" 《歷代賦匯》賦序研究 [Research on Fu Prefaces in the Collection of Fu Through the Dynasties] (Master Thesis, Hunan University, 2006), 5–9.

composition. Hu Dalei 胡大雷 has also used the idea of internal and external prefaces in his analysis of the prefaces to Yang Xiong's works.<sup>16</sup>

Based on this argument, a number of *fu* compositions have both an external as well as an internal preface. One example is Cao Zhi's 曹植 [192–232] “Fu on the Luo River Goddess [*Luoshen fu* 洛神賦]”. In the external preface, the author describes how he attended court in the third year of the Huangchu 黃初 [220–226] reign. Upon his return and when crossing the Luo River, he felt inspired by Song Yu's dialogue with the king of Chu and decided to compose a *fu*. This is a classic example of an author's preface. In the text that follows, Cao Zhi gives an account of his journey and recounts a fictional conversation between him and his coachman during which he gives a description of the river goddess. This part is a typical example of an internal preface. A preface to the entire *fu* would necessarily possess more independence from the main text. The “Fu on the Luo River Goddess” should undoubtedly be labeled as a *fu* “with preface”. The *Complete Annotations of Fu of the Wei and Jin Dynasties* [*Quan Wei Jin fu jiaozhu* 全魏晉賦校注], however, did not label the *fu* in this manner.<sup>17</sup> Additional inconsistencies are also found in the *Complete Prose of Antiquity, the Three Eras, Qin, Han, Three Kingdoms, and the Six Dynasties*. While the book labeled the “Fu on Dancing” as a *fu* with preface, it removed the label from Song Yu's *fu* compositions. This led contemporary editors of works such as the *Compilation of Cifu of Former Dynasties*, the *Complete Annotations of Han Fu*, or the *Commentary and Annotations on Han* to follow suit and label the “Fu on Dancing” as a *fu* with preface. Academics, it seems, have to a certain degree neglected the question of *fu* prefaces till today. The author of this article believes that internal prefaces should be considered an organic part of a *fu* composition that lack any real independence from the main text. Internal prefaces should not be considered actual *fu* prefaces and *fu* pieces introduced by them should not be labeled as containing a preface. Only *fu* with commentator's or author's prefaces (external prefaces) should be labelled as *fu* “with preface”.

In summary, scholars have never been able to reach a consensus on the definition of *fu* prefaces due to their complex history and development briefly outlined above. Having clarified the origin of Han *fu* prefaces, the differences

16 Hu Dalei 胡大雷, “Cong *Wen Xuan* de wenti guannian lun *Wen Xuan fu* ‘xu’ 從《文選》的文體觀念論《文選》賦‘序’ [Discussing the Fu ‘Prefaces’ in the *Selections of Refined Literature* based on its Ideas of Literary Form],” *Huizhou xueyuan xuebao* 惠州學院學報, no. 2 (2007).

17 Han Geping 韓格平 et al., ed., *Quan Wei Jin fu jiaozhu* 全魏晉賦校注 [*Complete Annotations of Fu of the Wei and Jin Dynasties*] (Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 2008).

between commentator's and author's prefaces as well as internal and external prefaces, we can conclude the following: the concept of *fu* prefaces only includes the so-called external prefaces – either in the form of a commentator's or an author's preface. The concept does not, however, include internal prefaces. The term commentator's preface may in turn refer to either of the two forms of *fu* prefaces: first, a preface is written and then added to the *fu* in question by a person other than the author of the *fu* himself; second, the text of the preface is written by the author of the *fu* himself, but the text is only added in the form of a preface to the *fu* in question by a third person. All modern literary compilations should clearly label *fu* compositions with commentator's and author's prefaces as *fu* “with preface”. In the case of a commentator's preface, the editors should then proceed to explain the origin of the preface in more detail. *Fu* compositions with internal prefaces, on the other hand, should not carry the label “with preface”. In the following, this article will continue to focus on Han *fu* with either commentator's or author's prefaces.

## 2 The Development of Basic Formal Functions of *Fu* Prefaces

The standards that are normally used to classify literary forms such as poetry or prose are not directly applicable to prefaces. The term “preface” itself is clearly chosen with reference to its functionality, while the classification of many literary and poetic genres is based on formal characteristics. The formal characteristics of *fu* prefaces, however, are extremely varied and they can take the form of a statement, a discussion, a memory, a performance, or even another *fu*. Prefaces can be written in prose or parallel prose, and be either rhymed or unrhymed. Prefaces can also vary in length and employ a wide range of writing techniques, such as narration, description, expression of emotions, or discussion. The basic formal functions of *fu* prefaces gradually developed in response to their relationship with the main text of the *fu*.

Prefaces are – in contrast to many other literary forms – always dependent on a main text they complement. This characteristic is clearly reflected by the fact that prefaces rarely carry their own titles but are simply referred to as the “preface to” a certain piece of writing. Many prefaces can nevertheless also be studied and read as standalone texts. The relationship between a preface and the main text can therefore be described as both mutually connected as well as relatively independent. The main functions of *fu* prefaces are aptly described in the chapter “Elucidating the *Fu* [*Quan fu* 詮賦]” in the *Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* [*Wen xin diao long* 文心雕龍], which states: “In the preface, the main themes are proposed, and the fundamental feelings

made articulate.<sup>18</sup> In addition to introducing the readers to the background and origin of the *fu*, prefaces have developed a number of other important functions. The formal functions of Han *fu* prefaces are mostly reflected in the following three ways.

First, prefaces account for the reasons behind a composition, clarify the intent of the author, explain the central theme, or summarize the main contents of the *fu* in question. Yang Xiong, for instance, began to object to the extravagant language of *fu* writing during his later years. The prefaces to his *fu* were therefore designed to clarify and emphasize the author's intentions of remonstrating with his sovereign. In the preface to the "Fu on Hedong", Yang Xiong urges Emperor Cheng 漢成帝 [r. 33–7 BCE] to actively pursue change by suggesting that it would be preferable "to return and make a net than to stand by the river and crave the fish." In the preface to the "Fu on the Plume Hunt", he advises the emperor to reconsider the extravagance of the imperial hunting expeditions. The preface to the "Fu on the Tall Poplars Palace" clearly denounces the hunting season as detrimental to the lives of the local population by pointing out that "during this time, the farmers were unable to harvest their crops."<sup>19</sup> During his youth, Yang Xiong often disguised his criticism behind praise and the extravagant language of his *fu*. The *fu* prefaces were written with the intention of partly undoing what Yang Xiong perceived to be the harmful effects of his style of using "a hundred statements of encouragement for each statement of remonstrance" [*quanbai fengyi* 勸百諷一]. For the readers, the prefaces have the effect of clarifying both the author's intent as well as the central themes of the compositions. Another example is the preface to Yang Xiong's "Fu on Hedong". The preface not only offers a concise description of Emperor Cheng's travels to offer sacrifices to the earth spirits but is also a summary of the main exposition of the *fu*. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Feng Yan's "Fu on Making Clear My Aim and Disquisition on Self" [*Xian zhi fu bing zilun* 顯志賦並自論], in which the part entitled "Disquisition on Self" is in fact a preface to the *fu*. By recalling the achievements of his forefathers and lamenting his own dire circumstances, the author manages to clarify his intentions and outline the composition's main contents in the preface.

Second, prefaces can guide and entice the readers in the following ways: by providing important background information that can help readers reach

18 Liu Hsieh, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, trans. Vincent Yu-chung Shih (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2015), 60–61.

19 Xiao Tong, *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature: Rhapsodies on Sacrifices, Hunting, Travel, Sightseeing, Palaces and Halls*, trans. David R. Knechtges (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 2137.

a deeper level of understanding; by using anecdotes and legends to trigger the reader's interest; by choosing a lively style of narration that increases the appeal of the writing; and by providing additional background knowledge that heightens the reader's expectations. Jia Yi's prefaces from the Western Han, for instance, displayed a number of distinctive features reminiscent of the prose style found in historical biographies, especially the use of concise language to describe the experiences of the main characters. This type of *fu* preface contains extracts from classical works and provides background information for the readers that helps guide their understanding of the main exposition. The preface to the "Fu on the Tall Gate Palace", for instance, contains the legend of Empress Chen regaining favor with the emperor through the help of Sima Xiangru's 司馬相如 [179–118 BCE] *fu* composition. This legendary account turns what would otherwise be but a variation of the common theme of "palace complaints" [*gong yuan* 宮怨] into a narrative with defined characters and a plot. At the same time, the preface leaves the reader sufficient room for his own imagination and creates anticipation towards the main exposition of the *fu*. The preface to Wang Yanshou's "Fu on a Dream [*Meng fu* 夢賦]" uses fantastical and bizarre matters to create an atmosphere of wonder and attract potential readers. The author describes how he encountered demons in his sleep, how he came into possession of the "demon-cursing writings" [*magui zhi shu* 罵鬼之書] of Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 [ca. 161–93 BCE] and how the recital of *fu* can be used to drive away mystical creatures. In the preface to the "Fu on the Zhanghua Terrace [*Zhanghua tai fu* 章華台賦]", Bian Rang 邊讓 [ca. 150–193] employs an historical lesson to disparage the extravagance of the imperial court of his time. The story of King Ling of Chu and his lifelong passion for luxuries and excess is designed to spark the interest of the readers. Another example is the "Preface to the Fu on the Poplar Joint [*Yangjie fu xu* 楊節賦序]", the preface to a *fu* by Feng Yan, whose main text has since been lost. The preface consists of only a few words but is nevertheless similar to a complete *xiaopin wen*. With its vivid style of narration, the preface allows the reader to experience the author's state of aloofness and his detachment from all worldly matters. In the preface to the "Fu on the Long Flute", Ma Rong describes how he was deeply moved by the lonely and mournful tunes of a flute performance in a guesthouse. In the preface to the "Fu on Saixi [*Sai fu* 賽賦]", Bian Shao humorously declared that only the study of the techniques of the popular boardgames of his time could possibly prevent him from falling asleep during the daytime. For the readers, these types of prefaces create varied and delightful reading experiences. The preface to Wang Yanshou's "Fu on the Hall of Numinous Brilliance in Lu [*Lu lingguang dian fu* 魯靈光殿賦]" describes how the Hall of Numinous Brilliance was constructed during the reign of King Gong of Lu and how the hall "alone

survived intact” [*kuiran du cun* 巋然獨存] in times of unrest and upheaval.<sup>20</sup> This style of writing not only gives the readers additional background knowledge but is ideally suited to arouse interest and create anticipation.

Third, prefaces are less regulated than the main text of a *fu* composition and authors can use them to freely express their own emotions or viewpoints and display their literary abilities. During the Eastern Han, *fu* writers placed great importance on prefaces and they developed into important vehicles for the authors’ self-expression. One example is the preface to Du Du’s 杜篤 “Fu on Discussing the Capital [*Lun du fu* 論都賦]” that the author submitted to the emperor in the form of a petition [*zou* 奏]. The “preface” to the *fu* is written in the form of a dialogue between host and guest and can be considered an internal preface. The actual function of a preface, however, was in this case fulfilled by the “petition” in which the author expressed his political opinion on the proper location of the capital. Another example is the preface to Ban Gu’s “Fu on the Two Capitals [*Liang du fu* 兩都賦]” that took the form of a discussion about *fu* as a literary genre, presenting a systematic analysis of the origin and development of *fu* writing. The preface to Cai Yong’s “Fu on Short People”, on the other hand, was itself written in the form of a *fu* with four-character lines. The originality of this approach certainly serves to display the author’s literary talent. The prefaces discussed above were not primarily designed to elucidate the origin of the *fu* they preceded, but instead to give expression to the author’s personal viewpoints and bear witness to their literary talent.

Many of the formal functions that can be observed in *fu* prefaces from later periods were first displayed in prefaces dating to the Western and Eastern Han. The authors’ attention to the reading experience of the recipients was an expression of the slowly developing self-consciousness in Han literature. To analyze *fu* prefaces from the angle of functionality can better our understanding of the relationship between prefaces and the main exposition in Han *fu*. To analyze *fu* prefaces from the perspective of literary aesthetics will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of their external characteristics during their early stages of development. This approach will also be beneficial for further comparative research on *fu* prefaces from other time periods. For these reasons, the aesthetic characteristics of Han *fu* prefaces are equally deserving of scholarly attention.

20 Xiao Tong, *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature*, 2:263.

### 3 The Literary Aesthetic Characteristics of Han *Fu* Prefaces

Han *fu* prefaces have a distinctly literary nature and they can be appreciated and examined as comparatively independent objects of literary study. The prefaces written by court historians of the Han clearly display the succinct and lively writing techniques favored by historians of that time. The prefaces to Jia Yi's *fu* compositions, for instance, were first extracted from the *Shiji* and the *Han Shu* before being slightly altered for precision and clarity. The preface to the "Fu on the Owl" demonstrates this point. It reads:

Jia Yi served as tutor in Changsha. In his third year there a houlet flew into his house and perched on the corner of his mat. The houlet resembles the owl and is an unlucky bird. Jia Yi had been banished from the court and sent to live in Changsha. Changsha is low-lying and damp, and Jia Yi felt himself afflicted with sorrow and grief. He believed that his life span would not be long, and he thereupon composed a rhapsody to console himself.<sup>21</sup>

In only a few words, the preface relates the author's sudden encounter with the owl and describes Jia Yi's bitter experiences, his unfavorable circumstances as well as his precarious state of mind. Especially the four expressions to "live in banishment" [*zhe ju* 謫居], "low-lying and damp" [*bei shi* 卑濕], "afflicted with sorrow and grief" [*shang dao* 傷悼] and to "console himself" [*zi guang* 自廣] aptly summarize Jia Yi's misfortune of having been dismissed from court and sent into banishment, his poor living conditions, his gloomy mood, as well as his attempts so console himself with a *fu* amidst the hopelessness of the situation. Drawing on the ingenious techniques that historians employed to write biographies, the preface describes the whole scene with clarity, logic, and coherence.

Authors often emphasized the narrative nature and legendary characteristics of Han *fu* prefaces. One example in this regard is the preface to the "Fu on the Tall Gate Palace" whose literary style was similar to that of a *xiao shuo* 小說 [literally "small story"]. After Empress Chen had fallen out of favor with the emperor, she proceeded to spend extravagant amounts of money in order to procure *fu* compositions from gallant young scholars. Due to the *fu* pieces that were written at her request, she was eventually able to reverse her bad fortune. The strong legendary character of the story made it a popular subject for idle chatter and gossip. This is reminiscent of Ban Gu's definition

21 Xiao Tong, *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature*, 2:41.

of the term *xiaoshuo*, which he declared: “came from the petty officials of the court. They are fabrications by those who engaged themselves in idle talk in the streets and alleys and by those who heard gossip and rumors on the way.”<sup>22</sup> This type of preface possesses a strong literary attraction and affords the readers sufficient room for association and imagination with regard to the main text of the *fu*. Other pieces that exemplify this development and possess a strong narrative nature are the preface to Cao Pi’s “Fu on Cai Yong’s Daughter” from the Jian’an reign 建安 [196–220], and the preface to Fu Xuan’s 傅玄 [217–278] “Fu on Carriage Horses [*Cheng yuma fu* 乘輿馬賦]” from the Western Jin Dynasty [265–317].

Some of the Han *fu* writers even went on to compose prefaces in the style of a *fu* itself. While this approach betrays, to a certain extent, a clouded awareness of literary forms, it was also unique. Even though most prefaces were written in prose, the stylistic differences between the preface and the main exposition were almost negligible in some *fu* compositions. The preface to the “Fu on the Plume Hunt”, for instance, was clearly literary in nature. Yang Xiong chose magnificent wording and displayed [*puchen* 鋪陳] his extensive knowledge through the use of parallelisms [*paibi* 排比]. The most interesting point to note, however, is that this preface was not only similar to a *fu* in wording, but also in structure. The structure was exceedingly similar to that of a prose style “grand *fu*” [*da fu* 大賦], beginning with lavish descriptions and culminating in excessive praise designed to conceal criticism. This example shows that during the time the grand *fu* flourished it had a visible effect on other literary forms as well. The preface to Cai Yong’s “Fu on Short People”, on the other hand, was written purely in the style of a short *fu* [*xiao fu* 小賦]. The whole text of the preface is written in four-character lines that describe the special features of short people in an ingenious and unique manner. Pu Xian 浦銑 [fl. 1765] commented on this preface with the following sentence: “The preface in the ‘Fu on Short People’ uses four characters per line, a rhyming scheme, and closely resembles a short *fu*.”<sup>23</sup> During Cai Yong’s time in the Eastern Han, author’s prefaces had already become common practice in *fu* writing. But to write a preface in the form of another *fu* clearly shows the author’s desire to strive for originality and the display of literary talent.

22 Ban Gu 班固, *Han Shu* 漢書 [*History of the Former Han*], annot. Yan Shigu 顏師古 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 1745.

23 Pu Xian 浦銑, *Lidai fuhua jiaozheng* 歷代賦話校證 [*Annotations and Remarks on Fu over the Dynasties*], ed. He Xinwen 何新文 and Lu Chengwen 路成文 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007), 403.

*Fu* prefaces from the Eastern Han are often vivid displays of literary talent, full of force and intense feelings. They were suited to the expression of argument and reasoning as well as narration and human emotions. The “Disquisition on Self” (the preface) that precedes Feng Yan’s “Fu on Making Clear My Aim” runs to more than five hundred characters in length. It contains a discussion of how Feng Yan conducted himself in society, an account of how he met with his own misfortune, a description of the merits and virtues of his forefathers and an expression of his personal ambitions. The preface reveals Feng Yan’s noble and honest moral character and furnishes the reader with the author’s reasons for composing the *fu*. Feng Yan’s preface combines discussion and reasoning with narrative descriptions and the expression of emotion in a single piece of writing. The preface includes ample literary quotations and is exquisitely written, making ample use of descriptions and parallel structures. The fluent style and smooth language further serve to make the piece highly readable. In all, the preface is similar in nature to an independent and structurally complete piece of argumentative prose writing. The following lines are especially moving and reflect the author’s genuine feelings:

I used to possess a profound fondness for devising brilliant stratagems. Amongst my contemporaries, however, my ideas remained unheeded and unemployed. I cannot but let out a deep sigh, inwardly aggrieved with my talents unrecognized. I never succeeded in advancing beyond my own insignificant position and all my high aspirations must forever stay unfulfilled. It only remains for me to take control of my emotions and abandon my pursuits, yet I feel desolate and mournful.<sup>24</sup>

The preface to Du Du’s “Fu on Discussing the Capital” is similar in nature, with a length of more than two hundred characters and ample display of literary talent. The author presents detailed historical accounts of how sovereigns decided on the location of their capital in accordance with the requirements of their time. The historical examples are cleverly employed to strengthen the author’s own argument. The text is written in four-character lines and with a neat form, making substantial use of parallelisms and antitheses [*dui ou* 對偶]. The linguistic characteristics are similar to the argumentative style of the *Strategies of the Warring States* [*Zhanguo ce* 戰國策]. The partly rhyming lines create a feeling of ease and liveliness with the reader. One extract reads:

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24 Ma Jigao, *Lidai cifu zonghui*, 1:207.

Many different methods can be employed towards the goal of safeguarding a country: some have chosen to forsake dangerous territories and occupy plain and easily accessible areas instead; some have chosen to live with the Xiao Mountain in their backs and the Yellow River before them, desirous of annexing the six kingdoms east of the Hangu Pass; some have desired to return to their homelands after attaining riches, unfazed by the danger of being attacked by others; some have marched with their troops from Shu to attack the weak flank of an enemy; some were willing to apply the tactics of a simple soldier and settle on Chang'an as their capital within a day; some were knowledgeable about geography but unwilling to accept advice given by others, deciding on the inhospitable city of Luoyang as their capital instead.<sup>25</sup>

The characters “shu” 術 and “cu” 卒, which each conclude a line, rhyme, and the entire section rendered above consists of parallel structures beginning with the character “huo” 或. The author successfully displays both his literary talent as well as his historical knowledge. The preface to Ban Gu’s “Fu on the Two Capitals” runs to almost five hundred characters. Despite the considerable length, however, less than one hundred characters of the preface are allocated to introduce the reader to the background of the *fu*. The remaining parts consist of a discussion of the origin of *fu* as a literary genre and the history of its development. With elegant and flowing language, the preface is nevertheless well composed and rich in details. The preface to Wang Yanshou’s “Fu on the Hall of Numinous Brilliance in Lu” also discusses reasons for literary production and the meaning of literary works in proper and neat language. One section reads:

Alas! The inspiration of a poet arises from his reaction to things. Thus, when Xi Si 奚斯 lauded Duke Xi 魯僖公 and sang of the Grand Chamber, the duke’s feats and accomplishments were preserved in the lyrics, and his virtuous renown was displayed in the music. Objects are glorified in rhapsodies, and deeds are acclaimed in eulogies. Without rhapsodies, without eulogies, how can one relate anything about such things?<sup>26</sup>

In the preface to Cai Yong’s “Fu on Recounting a Journey”, the author narrates an unsettling story from the reign of the Emperor Huan of Han 漢桓帝

25 守國之執，同歸異術；或棄去阻阨，務處平易；或據山帶河，并吞六國；或富貴思歸，不顧見襲；或掩空擊虛，自蜀漢出；即日車駕，策由一卒；或知而不從，久都堙墮。Ma Jigao, *Lidai cifu zonghui*, 1:214.

26 Xiao Tong, *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature*, 2:263–264.

[r. 146–168]. The eunuchs successfully monopolized power at court and many loyal officials met with their untimely ends. The common people were freezing and starving to death in the fields under forced labor. Under these disturbing circumstances, the author was summoned to appear in court, only narrowly making his escape. With this faithful historical account, the author criticizes the ills of his times and expresses his indignation in a style similar to what can be found in the *Shiji*.

During the Eastern Han, there is another type of preface that deserves special attention for it is either partly or entirely written in the style of a *xiaopin wen*. A way of expression similar to that of a *xiaopin wen* can be found in the skillfully written preface to Huan Tan's "Fu on the Immortals" that reads: "I dwelt there, feeling joyful and with lofty aspirations, inscribed a short *fu* on the wall of the gate."<sup>27</sup> Despite the sparse language, the succession of the three verbs "ju" 居, "le" 樂 and "shu" 書 manages to create fluidity in the sentence. The three main points are made in a concise manner, while still giving the reader sufficient room for his own thoughts. The preface to Feng Yan's "Fu on the Poplar Joint" contains the following sentences:

At the foot of Mount Li on the south bank of the Wei River, Feng Yan tended to his crops. He neither extended his condolences to others, nor attempted to make friends amongst those seeking official positions. He only yearned for his lofty dream of detaching himself from all worldly matters. He had no intention of participating in the prevailing customs of his time.<sup>28</sup>

The use of words in this section is carefully thought out and the passage makes use of neatly designed antitheses. This results in the preface accurately conveying its meaning while leaving the reader to ponder the matter further. With the help of only a few words, the passage sketches the image of Feng Yan as a recluse, and he almost appears to be the original version of the "Master Five Willows" [*wuliu xiansheng* 五柳先生] that Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 [365–427] created during the Eastern Jin Dynasty. The preface closely resembles a *xiaopin wen* with a relatively complete structure. Another example is the preface to Ma Rong's "Fu on the Long Flute" that contains the following passage:

<sup>27</sup> 余居此焉，竊有樂高妙之志，即書壁爲小賦。Yan Kejun, *Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen*, 1:535.

<sup>28</sup> Ma Jigao, *Lidai cifu zonghui*, 1:211.

I have had no pressing matters and have been idling away my time alone in Pingyang Settlement in Mei Prefecture. There was a guest staying in the hostel who played on the flute the songs for instrumental accompaniment “Qi chu” and “Jing lie”. I have been away from the capital for over a year and, upon hearing this music, I suddenly felt both sad and happy over it.<sup>29</sup>

The description of the author’s feelings of melancholy upon hearing the sound of the flute creates a mood of serenity and distance that almost seem ineffable. Similarly, the preface to Xiang Ziqi’s 向子期 [227–272] “Fu on Recalling Old Friends [*Si jiu fu* 思舊賦]” describes how the author remembers his friends with melancholy upon hearing the sound of a flute. In both examples, the concise writing is able to express deep feelings, meaning, and emotions. Another example is the preface to Bian Shao’s “Fu on Saixi”, which is similar in form to a lively and humorous *xiaopin wen*. The light, self-ironic and playful style distinguishes the piece from most Han *fu* prefaces. The preface to Zhao Qi’s 趙岐 [108–201] “Fu on Indigo [*Lan fu* 藍賦]”, on the other hand, can be regarded as travel notes in the form of a *xiaopin wen*. The preface reads:

I travelled to Yanshi to seek medical advice and passed through Chenliu 陳留. Here, the locals all plant indigo and rely on the production of dye for their income. The fields of blue flowers stretched as far as the eye can see and it appears no one planted any grains. I sighed on seeing how they abandoned essential grains for the pursuit of profits.<sup>30</sup>

The brief piece combines narration, description, as well as discussion. After narrating his travels and experiences, the author describes the endless fields of blue he encountered, before eventually criticizing the local farmers for planting indigo instead of more essential crops. The preface to Zhao Yi’s “Fu on the Cornered Bird [*Qiongniao fu* 窮鳥賦]” can be regarded as a fable in the form of a *xiaopin wen*. The author uses two historical anecdotes as an analogy to express gratitude towards his friends who had managed to save his life. With its plain language and original form, the preface successfully expresses the author’s deep affection and emotions. This type of *fu* preface is often found in “short lyrical *fu* on things” [*yongwu shuqing xiao fu* 詠物抒情小賦]. Their

29 Xiao Tong, *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature: Rhapsodies on Natural Phenomena, Birds and Animals, Aspirations and Feelings, Sorrowful Laments, Literature, Music, and Passions*, trans. David R. Knechtges (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3:259.

30 Ma Jigao, *Lidai cifu zonghui*, 1:360.

themes went beyond what Liu Xie 劉勰 [ca. 465–520] had termed the “*fu* on the themes of capitals, palaces, parks, and hunting, as well as those describing travels and expressing thought”,<sup>31</sup> *Fu* writers ventured to express themselves more freely and describe their subtle feelings and sentiments with more depth.

Narrative prose [*xushi sanwen* 敘事散文] and argumentative prose [*shuoli sanwen* 說理散文] had already matured into successful literary forms prior to the Qin Dynasty [221–206 BCE]. During the Western and Eastern Han, political commentary began to flourish in addition to the established form of narrative prose. It can be said that during the pre-Qin and Han period, prose writing was mostly concerned with major events of the state and society as well as philosophical reflections. The writing was mostly dignified, and even unconventional and beautiful pieces still possessed an imposing manner. The tablet inscriptions [*beiwén* 碑文] and records of travel [*youji* 遊記] that appeared during the late Eastern Han shared the same characteristics. These types of prose writings were often relatively long, with contents of a dignified nature. With the *fu* prefaces of the Eastern Han, on the other hand, a lively, original, and intriguing form of *xiaopin wen* developed.

In conclusion, Han *fu* prefaces – especially during the Eastern Han – were not uniform in nature, but showed a great variety with regard to content, style, and form. During this period, the basic aesthetic characteristics of *fu* prefaces as a literary form were established. In addition to introducing the readers to the background of the composition, *fu* prefaces were also designed to accomplish the following: to express the intentions and emotions of the author, to comment on important matters of state, to criticize the ills of the time and convey feelings of hardship, to make use of analogies for the expression of hidden resentments, to entertain the reader with playful compositions, and even to clarify literary concepts. In terms of style, *fu* prefaces from the Western Han were either written in the prose style of the historians, the style of the *xiaoshuo*, or the prose style of the grand *fu*. During the Eastern Han, *fu* prefaces appeared in the prose style of the short *fu*, the style of political commentary and argumentative writing, and the style of the *xiaopin wen*. With regard to writing techniques, *fu* prefaces made use of narration, description, discussion, argumentation, as well as the expression of emotions. *Fu* prefaces dating to the Eastern Han were often quite emotional, which can be seen as an expression of the resurgence of expressive literature during the late Han more generally.

*Fu* prefaces originated, developed, and matured during the Han Dynasty. During the same time period, the basic formal characteristics of prefaces were established. *Fu* prefaces are an important component of literature and an

31 Liu Hsieh, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, 60.

aspect of the history of prose writing that should not be overlooked. While prefaces are always closely connected to the main body of the *fu*, they possess their own unique functions as well as literary aesthetic value. Outstanding prefaces often complement the main exposition favorably, but – when read on their own – can still be considered a superior piece of writing. The preface to Yu Xin’s 庾信 [513–581] “Fu on Lamenting the South [*Ai Jiangnan fu* 哀江南賦]”, for instance, has been more widely circulated and read than the *fu* itself. Pu Xian commented on the preface of Fu Xian’s 傅咸 [239–294] “Fu on the Comb [*Zhi fu* 櫛賦]” in the following manner: “In the ‘Fu on the Comb’, Fu Xian uses mundane things to explore bigger questions, imbuing them with his profound intentions. This is the highest form a *fu* on things can attain. The author’s main topic already finds expression in the preface. I therefore conclude that the preface cannot be ignored.”<sup>32</sup> At times, the preface is more important for the transmission of the author’s intentions than the main exposition of the *fu*. To treat *fu* prefaces as independent objects of study will allow us to ascertain their real significance and value in a more accurate manner.

*Translated by Anja Bihler*

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<sup>32</sup> Pu Xian, *Lidai fuhua jiaozheng*, 404.

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# A Discussion on the Ethical Worldview Established in Yang Xiong's *Fu* Poetry

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## Abstract

Yang Xiong lived through the collapse of the Former Han and emergence of the Later Han dynasty. His *fu* poetry creations and their critiques reflect significant shifts in thinking and new ideas, a very prominent one of which is the establishment of a particular ethical perspective. Yang Xiong's callbacks to the virtues of the Zhou dynasty exhibited in his *fu* poetry were used to establish his concept of “virtues of the Han”. This is reflected most conspicuously in his “Sweet Springs Palace” and his “Tall Poplars Lodge”. These demonstrate the formation of his standard for literary criticism called *lize* 麗則 – poetry consistent with Confucian morals – which highlights and elevates *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets rather than rhetoricians. The system of ethical thought established by Yang Xiong appears to have been based on his ideas on the Confucian Classics and discussions of *fu* poetry. This system became a source of imitation and guidance amongst the other great “*fu* masters” such as Ban Gu and Zhang Heng of the Eastern Han. Yang Xiong's views went on to become a major focus of *fu* poetry studies and the *fu* style as a post-Wei and Jin legacy. Yang Xiong's original work in establishing his *fu* poetry's ethical system still has insights to yield to us.

## Keywords

Yang Xiong – Han Dynasty literature – Han *fu* – Chinese classical literature

Yang Xiong 揚雄 [53 BCE–18] was a major *fu* 賦 poet of the Han Dynasty [206 BCE–220] whose works were inspired by figures such as Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 [179–118 BCE] and who himself later went on to inspire such other *fu*

poetry luminaries as Ban Gu 班固 [32–92] and Zhang Heng 張衡 [78–139]. As a *fu* poet who experienced the interregnum between the Former Han [206 BCE–25] and the Later Han [25–220], and who is classified as one of the Four Great *fu* Poets, he still holds major significance for us today as representing an important turning point in Han dynasty literature and important shifts in thinking. One will find, upon reviewing Yang Xiong’s compositions and criticisms, that he endeavored to establish a philosophy of “Han virtues” [*Hande* 漢德] with his *fu* poetry that sought to reduce the negative influence of Qin Dynasty-associated morality and customs [*Qinqi* 秦氣] in favor of Chu-associated poetry and customs [*Chufeng* 楚風], which contained frequent references to “Zhou virtues” [*Zhoude* 周德].

The idea of Zhou virtues first appears in the “Kings Who Have Wished to Resign the Throne [*Rangwang* 讓王]” chapter in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 where Zhuangzi writes: “Today’s world is plunged into chaos, and the rule of virtue of the Zhou dynasty has faded away, being not found commonly today.”<sup>1</sup> In the “Jidong Ji 季冬紀” chapter of *Master Lü’s Spring and Autumn Annals* [*Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋] Lü writes: “King Wu of Zhou ascended to the throne and watched over the virtuous rule of the Zhou dynasty”, whereas “the world is full of chaos today, and the virtuous rule of the Zhou Dynasty has faded away”.<sup>2</sup> We find further in the “Biography of Prince Yuan of Chu [*Chu yuanwang zhuan* 楚元王傳]” chapter of the *History of the Han Dynasty* [*Hanshu* 漢書] from Ban Gu that “The virtuous rule of the Zhou Dynasty has faded away, and luxurious living is instead esteemed. King Xuan of Zhou was a sage-king and led the Zhou dynasty into prosperity”.<sup>3</sup> We also find in Liu Xiang’s 劉向 [77–6 BCE] *Garden of Eloquence* [*Shuo yuan* 說苑]: “Confucius said: ‘If the virtuous rule of the Shang had not died out, then the virtuous rule of the Zhou would not have risen up. If the virtuous rule of the Zhou had not died out, then the *Spring and Autumn Annals* would not have been written.’”<sup>4</sup> From this we may observe the way in which “Zhou virtues” came to signify prosperity or failure during the Qin [221–206 BCE] and Han in the minds of many.

As regards Yang Xiong’s conception of Han virtues, we see our first glimpse of this in Sima Xiangru’s “Refuting the Elders of Shu [*Nan Shu fulao* 難蜀父老]”:

- 1 Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Zhuangzi jijie* 莊子集解 [*The Collection of Zhuangzi*], coll. Shen Xiaohuan 沈嘯寰 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 259.
- 2 Xu Weiyu 許維遜, *Lüshi chunqiu jishi* 呂氏春秋集釋 [*Collected Annotations of Spring and Autumn by Lü*], comp. Liang Yunhua 梁運華 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 267–268.
- 3 Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書 [*History of the Han Dynasty*], annot. Yan Shigu 顏師古 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 1955.
- 4 Liu Xiang 劉向, *Shuoyuan jiaozheng* 說苑校證 [*The Collated Garden of Stories*], coll. Xiang Zonglu 向宗魯 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 31.

“How great it was, Han Dynasty’s rule of virtue”,<sup>5</sup> and later we find Ban Biao’s 班彪 [3–54] interpretation of Han virtues in his “Treatise on the Mandate of Kings [Wangming lun 王命論]”, which heavily influenced the *History of the Han Dynasty*: “The virtuous rule of the Han Dynasty today is so great that even the far-off tribes of the Xiongnu stand in obedience”,<sup>6</sup> and “The mighty flourishing of the Han Dynasty’s virtuous rule is due to the Emperor Wen of Han’s personal implementation of a spirit of self-discipline and frugality”.<sup>7</sup> Wang Chong’s 王充 [27–97] elevation of the brilliance of the Han Dynasty in his “Necessity of Praise [Xu song 須頌]” chapter of the *Discourses Weighed in the Balance [Lun heng 論衡]* reflects a dominant trend of thought at the time. During this time, we find a section of praise from Yang Xiong’s “Filial Piety Perfected [Xiao zhi 孝至]” chapter of the *Model Sayings [Fa yan 法言]*: “The virtuous rule of the Han Dynasty may be said to have inspired much remembrance and fondness in the minds of the people”,<sup>8</sup> which is a particularly literary description, and thoroughly reflects his *fu* poetry perspective, from which we may glean much.

## 1 How Is the “Sweet Springs Palace” Deeply Wonderful?

Over the centuries scholars have written much about the Han dynasty *fu* and how it was a medium for extoling the virtues of the Han. One of the most well-known commentaries was Liu Xie’s 劉勰 [465–532] description of Yang Xiong’s “Sweet Springs Palace [Ganquan fu 甘泉賦]” as having a “shenwei” 深瑋 style, which we can approximate as “deeply wonderful”.<sup>9</sup>

Much of the past commentarial work was focused on Ban Gu’s and Zhang Heng’s *fu* poetry, particularly their poetry on the Eastern Capital. As Ban Gu declared that he was “exploring the origins of the Han dynasty’s virtuous rule”<sup>10</sup> in his “Eastern Metropolises [Dong jing fu 東京賦]”. This idea was followed up by Ming dynasty [1368–1644] scholar Sun Cong 孫琮 [1636–1705] in

5 Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shi ji* 史記 [Records of the Grand Historian], comm. Pei Yin 裴駟, Sima Zhen 司馬貞, and Zhang Shoujie 張守節 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 3053.

6 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 3029.

7 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 3175.

8 Wang Rongbao 汪榮寶, *Fayan yishu* 法言義疏 [Commentaries on the Model Sayings], coll. Chen Zhongfu 陳仲夫 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 546.

9 Liu Xie 劉勰, *Zengding wenxin diaolong jiaozhu* 增訂文心雕校注 [A Revised Edition of Commentaries on the Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons], annot. Huang Shulin 黃叔琳 and Li Xiang 李詳, comp. Yang Mingzhao 楊明照 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 95.

10 Fan Ye 範曄, *Hou hanshu* 後漢書 [History of the Later Han], annot. Li Xian 李賢 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 40.1369.

his commentaries on the “Two Capitals [*Liang du fu* 兩都賦]”: “The ‘Western Capital [*Xi du fu* 西都賦]’ starts with a discussion of the supreme beauty of Chang’an terrain, then follows it with a description of the magnificence of the mighty works of industry achieved by the Western Han in the area, and finally discusses hunting activities. The ‘Eastern Capital [*Dong du fu* 東都賦]’ entirely omits this content, and focuses its discussion on the establishment of ‘peace and prosperity under heaven’ enjoyed in the reign of the Jianwu and Yongping periods. It goes on to praise the literary, political, and military accomplishments of the time, and states that their ability to continue and recreate such former glories have enabled them even to surpass that vaunted state described in the ‘Western Capital.’”<sup>11</sup> Qing scholar He Zhuo 何焯 [1661–1722] remarks, when assessing the “Eastern Metropolises”, that “[its] description is grounded in the system of propriety of the Zhou dynasty era just as the description of the “Western Metropolises [*Xi jing fu* 西京賦]” is grounded in the politics and governance of the Qin dynasty era, and hence the author interprets the Zhou dynasty system as the main root or source of [the success or prosperity of] Luoyang (the capital) of the Eastern Han.”<sup>12</sup> The Han citizens are in some ways a successor of the Zhou in the sense of a continued transmission of their ethical system. If we compare Yang Xiong’s “Filial Piety Perfected” and the descriptions within his *fu* poetry with the praises lavished on Han virtues which appear in Ban Gu’s and Zheng Heng’s *fu* poetics on the capital city, then we may see the development of these ideas:

The virtuous rule of the Han Dynasty was something much longed for and much loved, and also rarely seen in the world. The brilliance, majestic virtuous rule of the Han inspired obedience even in the distant Xiongnu barbarians, which is greatest of all. It was mighty in military prowess, able to conquer the surrounding kingdoms, but this is secondary.

漢德其可謂允懷矣，世鮮焉。芒芒聖德，遠人咸慕，上也；武義璜璜，兵征四方，次也。<sup>13</sup>

The borders of the current Han Dynasty stretched to the Great ocean on the left side, to Qusou on the right, to Panyu in front and to Taotu behind. Their achievements included the establishment of a Du Wei

11 Yu Guanghua 于光華, ed., *Chongding wenxuan jiping* 重訂文選集評 [*Revised Commentary on Selections of Refined Literature*] (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2012), 183.

12 Yu Guanghua, *Chongding wenxuan jiping*, 211.

13 Wang Rongbao, *Fayan yishu*, 546–548.

in the southeast [Defender of Eastern Territories], a *Guan hou* [fort] in the northwest, upholding laws through severe punishment, the use of poetry and books, propriety and music to cultivate morals amongst the people such that the populace went to great effort and time to study Confucian mores and thinking.

今大漢左東海，右渠搜，前番禺，後陶塗。東南一尉，西北一候，徽以糾墨，制以質鈇，散以禮樂，風以《詩》《書》，曠以歲月，結以倚廬。<sup>14</sup>

Hence the *kylin* of the Jiuzhen area, the precious horse of the Dayuan area, the rhinoceros of the Huangzhi area, and rare birds of the Tiaozhi area crossed the Kunlun Mountains and the great seas, and generally there was found strange birds and beasts from every far-off place headed across thousands of *li* miles in order to come and offer their respectful tribute [in recognition of the Han Dynasty's excellence].

乃有九真之麟，大宛之馬，黃支之犀，條支之鳥，踰崑崙，越巨海，殊方異類，至于三萬裏。<sup>15</sup>

This general spirit of ethics and morality was gifted to All-Under-Heaven, and virtuous, benevolent government reached even as far as the barren, far off places, that is, reaching as far as Dingling to the north, Yuechang to the south, Daqin to the west, and Lelang to the east.

惠風廣被，澤洎幽荒。北變丁令，南諧越裳，西包大秦，東過樂浪。<sup>16</sup>

Yang Xiong drew upon the same set of historical descriptions in his writing and *fu* poetry, and later Ban Gu and Zhang Heng clearly attempted to imitate Yang's poetry in some respects. Relevant also is Yang Xiong's *fu* poetry critiques that imply the establishment of an ethical system, which may still appear

14 Yang Xiong 揚雄, *Yang Xiong ji jiaozhu* 揚雄集校注 [An Annotated Collection of Yang Xiong], annot. Zhang Zhenze 張震澤 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), 182.

15 Xiao Tong 蕭統, ed., *Wenxuan* 文選 [Selections of Refined Literature], annot. Li Shan 李善 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 24.

16 Zhang Heng 張衡, *Zhang Heng shiwen ji jiaozhu* 張衡詩文集校注 [An Annotated Collection of Zhang Heng Poems], annot. Zhang Zhenze 張震澤 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 152.

somewhat mysterious or opaque perhaps due to the so-called “deep wonderfulness” characteristic of his *fu* poetry.

Liu Xie assesses the “ten great *fu* poets” of the Qin and Han dynasties in his “Quan Fu 詮賦” chapter of the *Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* [*Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍]. In addition to discussing the meaning of other famous authors’ works, he states that “Yang Xiong’s ‘Sweet Springs Palace’ has a deeply wonderful style.” Although his assessment of “Sweet Springs Palace” with the term “deeply wonderful” may seem a little abstract, it does in fact encompass Yang Xiong’s style of *fu* poetry. To this point, we find in Liu Xie a panoramic perspective on such matters with this general comment on Yang Xiong’s compositions: “Yang Xiong’s ‘Counter to the Lament [*Fan Lisao* 反離騷]’ is full of deep significance and poetic simplicity, and hence the style of the piece is filled with intensity”; “Yang Xiong’s letter of reply to Liu Xin 劉歆 has a depth of thought and winding, turning sentiments”; “Yang Xiong’s work has a great depth of style with tremendous subtlety, and hence his system of thought is somewhat opaque to the reader – his purpose is hidden within”; “The style of Yang Xiong’s work has an ‘ethereality’ and distance about them, and possesses extraordinarily beautiful turns of phrase that plumb the depths of ingenuity, and hence his pieces are endowed with rich logic and reason as well as extraordinary expression”; “Yang Xiong described himself thus: ‘In my heart I enjoy compositions of deep significance, vast and expansive and yet beautifully composed’”.<sup>17</sup> When we turn to the interpretation of the “deep wonderfulness” of Yang Xiong’s *fu* poetry, perhaps from a more linguistic perspective, we find the following description: “Those such as Sima Xiangru, Yang Xiong, and others established their prose with such beauty and ability due to their perfect clarity in their use of characters”,<sup>18</sup> and hence were particularly skilled at the correct application of “rarely seen characters”, which endows their *fu* poetry with this ornate quality. From a more cultured perspective, the view is also expressed that Yang Xiong possesses “an intellectual personality, and hence in his essays he ‘often exhibits curiosity, competitiveness, depth, and breadth of knowledge’”.<sup>19</sup> We also find discussions of Yang Xiong that attempt to bring together his linguistic skills, sense of cultivation, and thought such as

17 Liu Xie, *Zengding wenxin diaolong jiaozhu*, 95, 168, 342, 376, 571, 589.

18 Liu Shipai 劉師培, *Lunwen zaji* 論文雜記 [*Miscellaneous Notes on Essays*], annot. Shu Wu 舒蕪 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1984), 108.

19 Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, *Lianghan sixiang shi* 兩漢思想史 [*A History of Thought in the Two Han Dynasties*] (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1985), 465.

Liu Yongji's 劉永濟 [1887–1966] interpretation of “deeply wonderful”, where he states:

Indeed, Yang Xiong once mocked Sima Xiangru's *fu* poetry for using an excessive amount of direct admonishments and rarely using satire. Thus Yang centered his composition “Sweet Springs Palace” mainly around satire and subtle criticism. Yang Xiong possessed a considerable familiarity with unusual Chinese characters, and reportedly enjoyed taking much time to still his mind and truly reflect on his compositions. Thus, we find the first half of the “Sweet Springs Palace” contains a reflection on the palatial quarters, and the latter half a description of the ritualistic ceremony. Both reflect, in their choice of characters, a “deep” but “beautiful” approach, and are thus described as having a “deeply wonderful” style.<sup>20</sup>

子雲嘗譏相如之賦“勸百而諷一”，故其賦《甘泉》，以諷諫為主；又多識奇字，喜沉思，故其文前半敘甘泉宮室，後半寫郊祀典禮，鑄詞用字，皆淵深而奇偉，故曰“構深瑋之風”。

From a theoretical perspective, to criticize Sima Xiangru's *fu* poetry as “using an excessive amount of direct admonishments and rarely using satire” and yet to anchor one's own *fu* poetry around satire and criticism, reveal something of the intrinsic significance of this “deeply wonderful” style. In our estimation, looking at Sima Xiangru's “complex breadth” and Yang Xiong's “deeply wonderful” *fu* poetry, if we can describe the former as still possessing much of the literary style of the great rhetoricians of the Warring States period [475–221 BCE], then the latter seems more evocative of the deep thoughtfulness characteristic of the Confucian scholars during the Han Dynasty. When we come to the composition of the “Sweet Springs Palace” and its proper categorization, we find it is the only example of *fu* poetic pieces pertaining to the annual sacrificial ceremonies held by the emperor [*jiaosi* 郊祀] recorded within the *Selections of Refined Literature* [*Wenxuan* 文選] and that it and the “Songs for the Suburban Sacrifice [*Jiaosi ge* 郊祀歌]” of the time were considered literary creations for a new era. In terms of the literary significance of these works, a composition centered around a *jiaosi* at Ganquan would of course be referring to Emperor Cheng of Han's 漢成帝 [r. 33–7 BCE] *jiaosi* ceremony at Ganquan Palace seeking an heir.<sup>21</sup> The establishment of such *jiaosi* ceremonies at Ganquan in worship of

20 Liu Yongji 劉永濟, *Wenxin diaolong jiaoshi* 文心雕龍校釋 [*Commentaries on the Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 28.

21 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 1259.

the Taiyi 泰一 divinity could also be traced back to Emperor Wu of Han 漢武帝 [r. 141–87 BCE]. Emperor Cheng was responsible for the further crafting of Emperor Wu's storied exploits. The pleas for an heir are genuine, the imitations less so, and in that space between the genuine and the exaggerated lies a reflection on the magnificence of the Emperor Wu's successes and the weaknesses of the Emperor Cheng's accomplishments. When we observe Han dynasty politics, from Emperor Wu of Han to Emperor Cheng of Han, and evaluate the history of the Han dynasty through its *fu* poetry traditions, from Sima Xiangru to Yang Xiong, we find a gradual "expansion of concern" from Han dynasty virtues to "Han dynasty tradition" [*Hantong* 漢統]. Thus, we find another layer reflecting an anxious awareness of "respecting tradition" versus the compositions of the Sima Xiangru's era as we explore the establishment of the ethics latent within the "Sweet Springs Palace".

This sort of anxiety first appears in the increasingly less flexible meaning and use of the term *feng* 諷 or *fengjian* 諷諫 [to criticize those in authority] in *fu* poetry, which seems to have caused Yang Xiong's *fu* poetry to turn more towards the direction of a sort of self-aware criticism, and its occasional murky presentation in the "Sweet Springs Palace" undoubtedly strengthens the depth of thought exhibited in the work. Yang Xiong was far more direct in his satire. The "Biography of Yang Xiong [*Yang Xiong zhuan* 揚雄傳]" of the *History of the Han Dynasty* draws on Yang Xiong's four *fu* poems, stating:

The emperor performed a priestly ceremony at Ganquan and Fenyin to ask for a successor to carry on his legacy under Heaven in the first month of the year. [Yang Xiong] accompanied the emperor to Ganquan Palace and, upon returning, presented the "Sweet Springs Palace" to the emperor as an example of criticism ... In the third month when the emperor was about to offer worship to Houtu, he led his great ministers across the Yellow River to congregate in Fenyin. After the ceremony was completed ... [Yang Xiong] presented the "He dong fu" in the manner of a criticism to the emperor ... In the twelfth month, during the hunting activities, Yang Xiong participated in the emperor's retinue ... Yang Xiong took this opportunity to present the "Jiao lie fu" in the manner of a criticism ... In the second year, when the emperor was planning to present a large number of wondrous birds and beasts to show his might to the barbarians ... [Yang Xiong] composed the "Tall Poplars Lodge [*Chang yang fu* 長楊賦]" to offer a criticism to the emperor.

上方郊祠甘泉泰畤、汾陰后土，以求繼嗣，召雄待詔承明之庭。正月，從上甘泉，還奏《甘泉賦》以風。.....其三月，將祭後土，上乃

帥群臣橫大河，湊汾陰。既祭……還，上《河東賦》以勸。……其十二月羽獵，雄從。……聊因《校獵賦》以風。……明年，上將大誇胡人以多禽獸。……上《長楊賦》。<sup>22</sup>

The author, Ban Gu, on the one hand considers that “the eloquence of [Yang Xiong’s] turn of phrase is not more magnificent than that presented by Sima Xiangru,”<sup>23</sup> which it imitates in some manner, while on the other hand he appears to oppose Sima Xiangru’s attitude of wanting to present a criticism, but instead exhibiting flattery as shown in his “Rhapsody on the Great Man [*Da ren fu* 大人賦]” and his non-serious or game-like “to play beautifully only at the end of a piece.”<sup>24</sup> And so Yang Xiong appears to have emphasized the value of “critical satire” in his works as a reflection upon and correction of Sima Xiangru.

As we turn our eyes to the “Ganquan,” we may find it to be a work in scope equivalent to Sima Xiangru’s “Rhapsody on the Great Man” and, furthermore, very stylistically creative and diverse as remarked upon by Sun Kuang 孫鑣 [1543–1613]: “The overall swathe of it appears to be in imitation of the “Rhapsody on the Great Man”, but it is only ostensibly similar in terms of the use of flowery language. The thinking behind the two pieces are rather different, which is what we might refer to by the expression of ‘to be thoroughly remade or reborn!’”<sup>25</sup> The “thinking” here refers to Yang’s creative ideas, which go deeper than flowery language, with Yang Xiong’s critical satire forming the heart of the piece. Critical satire may again be subdivided into direct criticism [*zhijian* 直諫] and implied satire [*yinfeng* 隱諷]. The admonishment used in “Sweet Springs Palace” offered to the emperor as well as the ethics [*de* 德] established in the closing phrase “the brilliant clouds soar above as rain enriches the earth; virtuous rule is the principle of ten thousand generations,”<sup>26</sup> both signify the main creative point of the author, and also double as phrases reflecting Yang’s direct criticism style. In regard to the more indirect criticism often seen in *fu* poetry, we may refer to Yang’s references to the grandeur of the Han Emperor Cheng’s soldiers on the way to battle, the magnificence of the Ganquan Palace, the height of the altar of the Taiyi divinity, the brilliant array of marvelous creatures within the palace, and the grandness of imperial sacrificial ceremonies. On the surface these are praising the scale and grandeur

22 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 3522–3557.

23 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 87:3583.

24 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 57:2609.

25 Yu Guanghua, *Chongding wenxuan jiping*, 314.

26 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 57:3533.

of imperial activities, but under the surface they are criticisms of waste and extravagance. We may look for an example of both in the following *fu* poetry extracts from Yang:

One ascends the cloud-like high pavilion which seems to track naturally along high mountains, almost intertwined. The pavilions which tower above the ground radiate shades of red, green, and jade. The Ganquan Palace is like a jade castle or towering citadel. One feels as if one is climbing a high mountain over a great abyss of the earth below, which is fearsome to look upon.

乘雲閣而上下兮，紛蒙籠以攄成。曳紅采之流離兮，颺翠氣之冤延。  
襲璇室與傾宮兮，若登高妙遠、肅虜臨淵。<sup>27</sup>

These heights draw in rosy clear clouds and allow one to imbibe drops of dew upon celestial tree branches ... one thinks of going to the Queen Mother of the West to congratulate her on her long life, and avoid disturbing the troublesome goddesses Yu Nü and Fu Fei.

喻清雲之流瑕兮，飲若木之露英。.....想西王母欣然而上壽兮，屏玉女而卻宓妃。<sup>28</sup>

The former section describes the scenic vistas around the high pavilion, whereas the latter describes the period of fasting before the ceremony and a journey through the imagination, which provides the reader with the impressions of a magnificent atmosphere and an aura of free movement. Combined with the ornate language, this effectively masks the more critical meaning underneath the surface of the *fu* poem, and furnishes an example of Yang Xiong's habit of wanting to present satirical criticism but in fact presenting a much softer and less critical persuasion.

Yang Xiong's habit of implied satire in the "Sweet Springs Palace" is a particularly classic example of the way in which *fu* poets drew upon the Classics [*Jing* 經] as they made reference to history in their practice of satire and criticism. The aforementioned passages afford us a good example of the utilization of Classics such as the *Book of Songs* [*Shijing* 詩經] and the subtext within to carry out *feng*, a kind of criticism or satire: the jade castle and towering citadel refer to King Jie of Xia 夏桀 and King Zhou of Shang 商紂 [r. 1075–1046 BCE]. The

<sup>27</sup> Yang Xiong, *Yang Xiong jijiaozhu*, 56.

<sup>28</sup> Yang Xiong, *Yang Xiong jijiaozhu*, 62.

second passage alludes to the mythological story of the “Queen Mother of the West” in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* [*Shanhaijing* 山海經], and as Li Shan 李善 [630–689] later states:

What is being said here is that the poet has reached the outermost Western limits [of the land], and recalls the Queen Mother of the West and her blessings of long life, and the reader should then be reminded that lust is the kind of activity that ruins good morals and conduct, and hence the reader should wish to avoid the Yu Nü and Fu Fei goddesses. The “Sweet Springs Palace” also borrows upon such a construction to give a very subtle form of gentle admonishment.<sup>29</sup>

Later commentary has been quite diverse in its views due to the obliqueness of the language employed given the practice of “presenting the very subtle form of gentle admonishment” [*weijian* 微諫] applied here. If we want to look at Yang Xiong’s ethical thought established after combining these two sections, then we may find Fang Bohai 方伯海 to be the clearest commentator on the subject:

The first half uses a reference to a jade castle and towering citadel as a metaphor (for the Ganquan Palace), by which we can forecast that the Taiyi divinity will not descend upon this part of the Earth; the latter half uses language around “avoiding the Yu Nü and Fu Fei goddesses” to carry out satire and criticism, by which we can observe that the Taiyi may not take enjoyment in the emperor’s ritual contribution either. If we were to review the emperor’s conduct in an ethical sense, we might observe the author’s meaning to be something like: he [the emperor] seeks an heir to succeed him, but he is merely engaging in this activity of worship rather than focusing more on the just and virtuous rule of the country, and so the ceremony is merely a waste of everyone’s time. This is the main thrust of the “Sweet Springs Palace”.<sup>30</sup>

Both the desire for luxury [*she* 奢] and lust [*se* 色] are used as examples of ethically destructive conduct which puts the country on a path to destruction. If we combine our reflections here with what we know of Emperor Cheng’s favoring of his concubine Zhao Jieyu 赵婕妤 [d. 1 BCE], as well as the rather wasteful exercise of putting on this ceremony to seek an heir, we may surmise

29 Xiao Tong, *Wenxuan*, 114.

30 Yu Guanghua, *Chongding wenxuan jiping*, 312.

that these two sections are the main gist of the “Sweet Springs Palace”. We may view the warning against ostentatious luxury and lust reflected in the “Sweet Springs Palace” to be two branches of the ethical worldview established by the author.

This brings us back to the question of the establishment of the “Han virtues morality system” and the conservation of Han tradition described above. If Han Dynasty morality referred to by Sima Xiangru in his “Refuting the Elders of Shu” represented a kind of pleasant moral tidings [*deyin* 德音] and somewhat superficial expression of comfort from the Son of Heaven to the border residents, then the language in relation to Han tradition and Han virtues after the Emperor Xuan 漢宣帝 [r. 74–49 BCE] and Emperor Yuan 漢元帝 [r. 49–33 BCE] points in a much more specialized direction, most conspicuously to the habit of allowing interventions into the affairs of government by the empress’s relatives. Arrows were also launched at the current dynasty by the use of history to present criticism. Han dynasty virtues had been established with the formation of Han dynasty traditions which had been set down, as described by Mei Fu 梅福 [fl. 16 BCE], by Emperor Gaozu 漢高祖 [r. 202–195 BCE], Emperor Wen 漢文帝 [r. 180–157 BCE], and Emperor Wu. They also form a part of Yang Xiong’s description in another work of his titled “Tall Poplars Lodge”. His innovative style here is in his conception of Han tradition being inherited mostly from Zhou dynasty tradition [*Zhoutong* 周統]. Thus, Zhou dynasty virtues become a source of inspiration for Han virtues, and appear to have since become a major part of many *fu* poets’ conceptions of the “Greater Han being [in many ways] a successor to the Zhou”.

## 2 A Discussions of “Tall Poplars Lodge”

Yang Xiong appears to have composed his four *fu* poems in imitation of Sima Xiangru. One of these, the “Tall Poplars Lodge”, says something to the effect of “These things are quite absurd”, leading many historical thinkers to believe the “Two Capitals” of Ban Gu is actually providing a commentary on current affairs through *fu* poetry. For example, during the Western Jin dynasty [265–317], Liu Kui 劉逵 [fl. 299] states that: “The reasoned discussion in Ban Gu’s the ‘Two Capitals’ transcends mere flowery language”,<sup>31</sup> and that both *fu* poems were

31 Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 et al., *Jin shu* 晉書 [*Book of Jin*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 2376.

in actuality “composed in imitation of the ‘Tall Poplars Lodge’”.<sup>32</sup> Zhu Yao 祝堯 [fl. 1318] discussed the *fu* poetry style exhibited in the “Tall Poplars Lodge” in the fourth volume of his *On Ancient Fu Styles* [*Gufu bianti* 古賦辯體], remarking that “Yang Xiong’s *fu* poetry in these verses is of a pure literary *fu* structure from beginning to end, which is rarely seen. Later writers from the Tang and Song Dynasties would tend to compose their *fu* poetry in a looser prose style. Could they not, in this endeavor, have begun here from Yang Xiong himself?”<sup>33</sup> Yang Xiong’s works received plenty of commentary throughout the centuries, of which perhaps He Zhuo 何焯 [1661–1722] has been the most exhaustive. He wrote: “The order of the ‘Plume Hunt [*Yu lie fu* 羽獵賦]’ is that it begins with a commentary, but the main body of the text is a description of events; the order of the ‘Tall Poplars Lodge’ is that it starts with a description of events, but the main body of the text is a commentary”;<sup>34</sup> “The words of the guest [*keqing* 客卿] are a frontal and direct commentary; the words of the master [*zhuren* 主人] are a subtle, latent commentary [*weici* 微辭]. Frontal, direct commentary has a way of offending people, whereas indirect, subtle commentary finds itself relatively more acceptable to its hearers ... This is exactly where the ‘Tall Poplars Lodge’ shines in its offering of persuasive criticism to higher authority”.<sup>35</sup> Other writers have offered different points of view, for example in stating that: “The ‘Plume Hunt’ does not possess much in the way of criticism of authority amid all of its cozying up to authority whereas the ‘Tall Poplars Lodge’ is entirely swept up in cozying up to authority.”<sup>36</sup> In comparing these views, one positive and one negative, we might find that the cause of the disagreement lies precisely in the extreme subtlety of what is meant by being “good” at remonstrating with authority. When we turn to the evaluation of the criticism exhibited in the “Tall Poplars Lodge”, we find its core innovation to be Han virtues based on or established by Zhou virtues. We can also turn to the main gist of the commentary offered in the “Tall Poplars Lodge”:

32 Yu Zukun 余祖坤, ed., *Lidai wenhua xubian* 歷代文話續編 [*Sequel Compilation of Literature of Former Dynasties*] (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2013), 658.

33 Zhu Yao 祝堯, “Gufu bianti 古賦辯體 [On Ancient Fu Styles],” in *Fuhua guangju* 賦話廣聚 [*A Wide Ranging Discussion on Fu*], ed. Wang Guan 王冠 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2006), 2:215.

34 Yu Guanghua, *Chongding wenxuan jiping*, 357.

35 Yu Guanghua, *Chongding wenxuan jiping*, 358.

36 Hong Ruogao 洪若皋, “Chang yang fu 長楊賦 [Tall Poplars Lodge],” vol. 2 of *Liang Zhaoming wenxuan yue cai* 梁昭明文選越裁 [*Commentaries on Zhaoming’s selection of refined Literature*], in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu:jibu* 四庫全書存目叢書: 集部 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1997), 287:749.

Zimo the guest asks master Hanlin: “It is said that the sage emperors nurtured the people, and allowed All-Under-Heaven to experience the joys of virtuous rule, in which (the fruits of) justice and beneficence were widely distributed to the four seas”. ... Master Hanlin then responds: “Under the rule of the powerful and violent Qin Dynasty ... the people had no respite from torment. The Heavens watched over Emperor Gaozu ... and heard the people’s cries, acting to save the people from their miseries ... and then we came to the Emperor Wen of Han ... he hated extravagant luxury and hence would remain far from it ... He hated to hear decadent sounds, and thus the North Star became correct in its alignments and the heavenly Taijie became firmly consistent (the weather was clear and there was peace under heaven). Whereas later on there was the chaos provoked by the Xiongnu barbarians, and disasters under heaven ... which provoked Emperor Wu of Han to anger ... he restored peace to the nation and forever eliminated the threat of disasters and war from the border.<sup>37</sup>

“The current dynasty observes pure ethics, follows the right way, and promotes ethical ideas ... Scholars who do not follow the kingly path are mocked even by the woodcutter ... and hence the land enjoys good harvests, and a well-disciplined army of many soldiers ... (The emperor) then became afraid that his posterity would be too absorbed in such matters and would consider such matters to be major affairs of state ... actually (what the emperor did) was a glorious merit in service of Emperor Gaozu and the legal systems of the Emperor Wen and Emperor Wu in restoring the original purposes of field hunting from the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors; he allowed the farmers to be continually engaged in their agricultural work, and for women not to unduly leave their weaving but rather to promptly get married ... a general air of harmony and happiness sprang up ... How could it be said that the rulers sought only to pass the time in travelling and hunting, riding as they pleased around the people’s carefully ploughed fields, walking in forests of fruit trees, and showing off the vast hauls they had acquired from the hunt!”

子墨客卿問於翰林主人曰：“蓋聞聖主之養民也，仁霑而恩洽.....窮覽極觀.....擾于農民.....娛樂之游.....乾豆之事。”.....主人曰：“昔有彊秦.....羣黎爲之不康。“於是上帝眷顧高祖.....展民之所誦，振民之所乏。.....逮至聖文.....惡麗靡而不近.....憎聞鄭衛幼眇之聲，是以玉衡正而太階平也。其後熏鬻作虐.....於是聖武勃怒.....使海內澹然，永亡邊城之災，金革之患。

37 Yang Xiong, *Yang Xiong ji jiaozhu*, 117–124.

“今朝廷純仁（成帝），遵道顯義……士有不談王道者，則樵夫笑之。……迺時以有年出兵，整輿竦戎，振師五秭。……又恐後世迷於一時之事，常以此取國家之大務，淫荒田獵……亦所以奉太宗之烈，遵文武之度，複三王之田，反五帝之虞；使農不輟耰，工不下機，婚姻以時……帥與之同苦樂。……豈徒欲淫覽浮觀，馳騁粳稻之地，周流梨栗之林，蹂踐芻蕘，誇詡眾庶，盛狝獲之收，多麋鹿之獲哉！”<sup>38</sup>

If we begin with the discussion proper with the guest, and then proceed to the more subtle commentary by the master, we find two passages reflecting on the punishments of the tyrannical Qin [221–206 BCE]: first, we find there is an “elevation of the government by Emperor Gaozu, Emperor Wen and Emperor Wu”, which furnishes us with a view of Han virtues, and then we get a description of the current dynasty’s “governance by observation of [such] principles”.<sup>39</sup> Two points may be well worth discussing as we turn to the “subtle commentary” offered herein: the first is in what Han virtues were modeled after, and the answer is that they were modeled after Zhou virtues. Moreover, this aligns well with the Han *fu* poets’ habit of determining the main gist of a *fu* poem based on the Confucian Classics. Although the praises mentioned by the “Tall Poplars Lodge” about the “heavenly virtues” [*tiande* 天德], “virtue of frugality” [*jian de* 儉德], and “meritorious virtue” [*gongde* 功德] of Emperors Gaozu, Wen, and Wu must be related to the “arguments on the system of emperors’ temples” from and following the days of Emperors Yuan and Cheng of Han,<sup>40</sup> the description is also similar to Kuang Heng’s 匡衡 [fl. 36 BCE] supplications to Emperor Gaozu, Emperor Xiaowen 孝文 (Emperor Wen of Han), and Emperor Xiaowu 孝武 (Emperor Wu of Han) on account of his illness.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, as a piece of *fu* poetic literature, Yang Xiong’s creative work here is again attempting to imitate the meaning in the Zhou Classics such as the *Book of Songs* and *Book of Documents* [*Shang shu* 尚書]. As stated in the “Great Is the God Di [*Huangyi* 皇矣]” chapter of “Greater Odes of the Kingdom [*Da ya* 大雅]” of the *Book of Songs*: “Heaven protected the sage monarchs, and the Quanrong 犬戎 were defeated and forced to flee for their lives. Heaven established this monarch as the ‘Son of Heaven’, who was tasked with the Mandate of Heaven, and enjoyed much stability and prosperity in national affairs ... Heaven established

38 Yang Xiong, *Yang Xiong ji jiaozhu*, 128–129.

39 Yu Guanghua, *Chongding wenxuan jiping*, 359.

40 Jiang Xiaoguang 蔣曉光 and Xu Jie 許結, “Yuan Cheng miao yi yu ‘Chang yang fu’ de jiegou ji yingxiang 元成廟議與‘長楊賦’的結構及影響 [Structure and Influence of the Yuan Cheng Temple Debates and ‘Chang Yang Fu’],” *Zhejiang daxue xuebao* 浙江大學學報, no. 6 (2011).

41 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 3121.

the Zhou Kingdom, which began with Taibo 太伯 and King Ji 王季. King Ji had great love for his friends and great concern for his brothers, and he enabled the Zhou Kingdom to achieve prosperity and joy ... King Wen of Zhou later succeeded to the kingship, and he was a ruler of unmatched morals. He received the Blessing of Heaven, which would also continue to posterity.”<sup>42</sup> As recorded in the “Annals of the Zhou [*Zhou benji* 周本紀]” chapter of *Records of the Grand Historian* [*Shiji* 史記], the era of the sage kings was from two generations from Houji 后稷 to Duke Liu 公劉, and the eight generations to King Tai 太王 (Ji Dan 姬亶), and then from King Tai to King Ji, and then to King Wen of Zhou 周文王 [r. 1106–1056 BCE]. This perspective illuminates Yang Xiong’s perspective in the “Tall Poplars Lodge” toward the ethics of these three generations of Han Emperors. To be specific, Yang Xiong is writing with reference to the era of the sage kings of the Zhou Dynasty [1046–256 BCE], and Yang Xiong is also undertaking a transformation in this piece from a method of lifting sections from other classical works commonly used by Han Dynasty *fu* poets drawing upon the *Shi* to a literary model in imitation of the Classics. If we line this up with the way in which the “Against Luxurious Ease [*Wu yi* 無逸]” chapter of *Book of Documents* has been composed, we find this point to be even more conspicuous. The “Against Luxurious Ease” records a warning in relation to King Cheng of Zhou’s 周成王 [r. 1043–1021 BCE] succession to the rulership:

The Duke of Zhou says: “Ay! I have heard that the monarchs from King Zhongzong of Yin in the past ... to Gaozong ... and to Zujia ... the monarchs from Gaozong onwards have been born with a hedonistic mindset. They are [practically] born with a hedonistic mindset. They follow a hedonistic mindset, they do not understand the difficulties of planting crops and reaping harvests; they do not understand the suffering of the common people, only how to absorb themselves in indulgence.”

The Duke of Zhou says: “Ay! Only we, King Tai and King Ji, of the Zhou Kingdom can exercise great caution. King Wen of Zhou strictly followed the endeavors of King Tai and King Ji, and paid careful attention to the farmers agricultural production ... He did not dare to be overly involved in such hedonistic pursuits.”<sup>43</sup>

42 Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Shisanjia yi ji shu* 詩三家義集疏 [*Collected Commentary on the Meaning of the Three Versions of the Book of Odes*], ed. Wu Ge 吳格 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 852–855.

43 Sun Xingyan 孫星衍, *Shangshu jinguwen zhushu* 尚書今古文注疏 [*Notes on the Old Text and New Text Versions of the Book of Documents*], coll. Chen Kang 陳抗 and Sheng Dongling 盛東鈴 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 440–41.

The above section contains several instances of negative or accusatory language. For example, the “Three Shang Rulers” [*Yin san zong* 殷三宗] and “Three Kings of Zhou” [*Zhou san wang* 周三王] are established as classic paradigms of ethical conduct, which Yang Xiong’s “Tall Poplars Lodge” is obviously imitating in its description of the “Three Emperors of Han” [*Han san di* 漢三帝]. This makes for the establishment of a kind of system of “Han virtues.” Prior to Yang Xiong, this kind of imitative writing had appeared frequently in other texts from the Western Han era, for example, in the congratulations offered by Wuqiu Shouwang 吾丘壽王 to Emperor Wu of Han. Wuqiu Shouwang writes:

I have heard that the virtuous governance of the Zhou Dynasty began with Houji, and continued to accumulate in the time of Duke Liu; it was made more magnificent in the time of King Tai and further perfected in the time of King Wen of Zhou and King Wu of Zhou. As was obvious in the time of the Duke of Zhou, the virtuous governance of the Zhou Dynasty is illuminated to All-Under-Heaven, and is informed by Heaven ... we, Gaozu of Han, carry on the great work of the Zhou Dynasty as ethical luminaries of equal measure, bestowing beneficence unto All-Under-Heaven and establishing virtuous government such that All-Under-Heaven is at peace and harmony. As we come to you, Your Majesty, you have revitalized Emperor Gaozu’s fundamental work, being even more glorious and successful in meritorious achievements and virtuous actions.<sup>44</sup>

We find here an idea that the “Han” has succeeded the “Zhou”, and that these “imitating” descriptions or writings concerning Zhou-era “sage kings” are essentially the same in containing symbolic reference to the “Han Dynasty Emperors”. In the same way, the previously cited Mei Fu is very similar in his style of *fu* poetry to Yang Xiong in his description of “Han virtues” which he discusses in relation to Wang Zhang’s 王章 [d. 24 BCE] passing. It is not, however, a “literary work”, but entirely a “memorial to the throne” [*zoushu* 奏疏]. Hence, to draw upon or imitate something like the “Against Luxurious Ease” in a literary style of *fu* poetry to promote an ethical viewpoint can be described as one of Yang Xiong’s creative legacies. The exhortations in the “Against Luxurious Ease” pointing the reader to emulate the “ethics” of the First Kings would be easily regarded as the positive example cited in the text, the negative being that “successive kings from hence onward should not indulge in traveling, hedonism, or hunting in the field”.<sup>45</sup> Hence, the use of “King Cheng” of Zhou

44 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 2798.

45 Sun Xingyan, *Shangshu jinguwen zhushu*, 442.

also implies the object of Yang Xiong's "discrete (or wonderfully subtle)" praise is the Emperor Cheng of Han himself. Thus, we find the "*feng*" of this *fu* poet actually buried somewhere in between these two examples.

Hence, our second point would be that the "*feng*" characteristic of Yang Xiong's "wonderfully subtle commentary", must be in his method of establishing an ethical system by juxtaposition of "negative" and exaltation of the "positive" in his compositions, which marks Yang Xiong as rather distinct from other authors. As we look at the language used in the "Against Luxurious Ease", we find the key phrase to be "[the importance of] knowing the difficulty of sowing, cultivating, and harvesting crops".<sup>46</sup> This is the warning or admonition here in the "Against Luxurious Ease". When we turn to the "Tall Poplars Lodge", we find praise for the ethics of the "Three Han Emperors", the key to which is their "frugal virtue", that is, the *fu* poem contains great praise for Emperor Wen of Han's frugal restraint and wise governance with the phrase "he hated extravagant luxury and hence would remain far from it". As recorded in the "Biography of Yi Feng [*Yi Feng zhuan* 翼奉傳]" chapter of the *History of the Han Dynasty*, Yi Feng 翼奉 [fl. 49 BCE] remarked when presenting to Emperor Yuan of Han that the "source of the Han Dynasty's flourishing rule by virtuous governance is in Emperor Wen of Han's exercise of restraint and frugality, which saved much effort on the part of the people. At that time, such great palaces as the Ganquan, Jianzhang, and the many palace pavilions in the Shanglin Yuan 上林苑 had not been built",<sup>47</sup> and it was a common consensus held on the part of the scholars of the day that doing so would have been a waste of resources. If we turn then to the creative motivations and targets of the *fengjian* in the "Tall Poplars Lodge" for a comparison, there is something similar in the descriptions in the preface to the *fu* with "the emperor was planning to present a large number of wondrous birds and beasts to show his might to the barbarians" and the "farmers had no way of collecting their crops in good time".<sup>48</sup> It fits with the exhortations in the "Against Luxurious Ease" against excess and wantonness and the encouragement around "knowing the difficulty of sowing, cultivating, and harvesting crops". With this in mind, if we then turn again to the first reference to "the pure ethics" of the current dynasty in the poem, we find it is not only a construction of a new "system of virtue" [*rende* 仁德] in the author's mind tracing its antecedents back to the "heavenly virtues", "frugal virtue", and "meritorious virtue" of the "Three Han Emperors", we also find a "veiled

46 Sun Xingyan, *Shangshu jinguwen zhushu*, 434.

47 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 3175.

48 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 3557.

criticism” [*fengyu* 諷喻] of today’s ruling emperor in light of the “virtue” painted and implicit view on such “excesses”.

We can look to another description offered by Yang Xiong in his hunting themed-poem “Plume Hunt” for further validation of his “subtle” and very “*feng*-like” meaning. Yang Shen 楊慎 [1488–1559] once assessed Yang Xiong’s work, “Plume Hunt”, thus:

It achieves a profound subtlety in the art of offering criticism to superiors during the Warring States period; the main gist of Sima Xiangru’s “Into the Forest [*Shang lin fu* 上林賦]” has been grasped and indeed fully mastered by Yang Xiong. It is easy for the reader to find himself powerfully convinced and moved by Yang Xiong’s poetry due to his forceful elucidation and understanding of the luminaries of the Warring States period and the masterful stroke of this most talented poet’s pen ... (Yang Xiong) has set down many new paradigms for the creative works possible to *fu* poets<sup>49</sup>

which highlights Yang Xiong’s talent for, the critical significance of his subtle criticism of authority. In actual fact, Yang Xiong had claimed in his “Plume Hunt” that he was following Emperor Cheng of Han’s imperial retinue on their hunting trip and, presupposing “[one] does not want to infringe upon or steal from the lands and fields of the common people”,<sup>50</sup> he then looks back on the meaning and significance of the hunting expeditions mounted by the various Sons of Heaven throughout history, the critical significance of which is obvious, particularly in comparison between King Wen of Zhou and Emperor Wu of Han:

The people considered the hunting grounds (or gardens) of King Wen of Zhou to be rather small at around 100 *li* in diameter, whereas the people considered the grounds of King Xuan of Qi, which was 40 *li* in diameter, to be too large; the reason for this is that King Wen of Zhou used his gardens to provide for the people, whereas King Xuan of Qi established his gardens through forceful acquisition. Emperor Wu of Han undertook new land clearing of the forest on a large scale ... Here he was able to enjoy such luxurious pleasures to his heart’s content ... This forms an unpleasant contrast with the hunting habits of Emperor Yao, Emperor Shun, Tang of Shang, and King Wen.

49 Yu Guanghua, *Chongding wenxuan jiping*, 354.

50 Yang Xiong, *Yang Xiong ji jiaozhu*, 83.

文王囿百里，民以爲尚小，齊宣王囿四十裏，民以爲大；裕民之與奪民也。武帝廣開上林……周袤數百里。……游觀侈靡，窮妙極麗。……非堯、舜、成湯、文王三驅之意也。<sup>51</sup>

Yang draws upon the hunting habits of Emperor Wu of Han to form a subtle criticism of Emperor Cheng of Han's hunting habits with the objective of condemning an "idle attitude". Thus, he does not criticize the hunting undertaken itself, but in fact uses it as an example of the other Emperor's brilliance and moral conduct as he discusses its meritorious functions with regard to providing for religious ceremonies, entertaining guests, and providing for everyday food needs. It is respectful of "ancient habits of propriety" [*guli* 古禮], but finds criticism as to luxurious indulgence. The virtue of frugality is also a frequent component of later *fu* poetry centered around hunting themes as shown by, e.g. Ban Gu's "Eastern Capital" where he writes: "Orders should be strict in three of four parts, but allow for some tolerance in one part";<sup>52</sup> and Zhang Heng's "Eastern Metropolises" where he writes: "Systems of propriety should be tolerant in one of four parts"<sup>53</sup> as well as Li Bai's 李白 [701–762] "Great Hunt Preface [*Da lie fu xu* 大獵賦序]" where he writes: "[That] is not a virtuous ethic as it is tolerant in one part of four".<sup>54</sup> This picture continues to build as we turn again to the criticism offered by Yang Xiong in his "Tall Poplars Lodge" towards the current ruler's "excessive indulgence in travel and riding as he pleased around the people's carefully ploughed fields" after assessing the historical fact of Yang Xiong's other criticisms in the "Plume Hunt", e.g. "Emperor Wu of Han undertook new land clearing of the forest on a large scale", as well as what the Tang scholar Hu Ceng 胡曾 [b. 839] wrote of the "Tall Poplars Lodge" in the "Lodge for Shooting Bears [*She xiong guan* 射熊館]" that: "Emperor Cheng of Han was outrageous in his actions, unaware of the anxieties of the common people, and used his large-scale hunting exercises as a means of showing the glory of his rulership, but which in actual fact frustrated his farmers' efforts. Emperor Cheng of Han would presumably not have been considering the difficulty of Emperor Gaozu's pioneering works when Yang Xiong (probably

51 Yang Xiong, *Yang Xiong ji jiaozhu*, 83–84.

52 Ban Gu 班固, "Dong du fu 東都賦 [The Eastern Capital]," in *Lidai fu pingzhu, Handai juan* 歷代賦評注: 漢代卷 [*Commentary of Fu Poetry over the Ages: Han Dynasty Volume*], ed. Zhao Kuifu 趙逵夫 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2010), 529.

53 Ban Gu, "Dong du fu," 668.

54 Li Bai 李白, "Da lie fu 大獵賦 [Great Hunt Preface]," in *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 [*The Complete Literature of Tang*], ed. Dong Gao 董誥 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 347:3521.

rather matter-of-factly) presented his “Tall Poplars Lodge.”<sup>55</sup> “Fu of the Snake Cutting Sword [*Zhanshe jian fu* 斬蛇劍賦]” by Xu Yin 徐寅 [fl. 904] notes:

The creeping poison of the ostentatious indulgence of the Qin Dynasty seeped down to posterity like a great long snake. The frugal virtuous rule of the Han Dynasty came at it like a celestial sword. Indeed, such ostentatious luxury must be replaced by frugality and thrift just like the great serpent is beheaded by this celestial sword.

秦毒之奢，變作長蛇，漢德之儉，化爲神劍，奢以儉陷，蛇以劍斬。<sup>56</sup>

The “ethical” ideas established in Yang Xiong’s “wonderfully subtle commentary” were again exhibited in later creative works by other authors who carried these thoughts forward, particularly in the idea that the virtue of frugality and the rule of propriety [*lizhi* 禮治] were key principles inherited from the “virtues of the Zhou” and which could proclaim and elevate the greatness of “Han virtues”.

### 3 Yang Xiong’s Ideas around “the True *Fu* Poet’s Practice of True *Fu* Poetry”

The ethical ideas established in Yang’s *fu* poetry were reflected in his commentaries on *fu* poetry, the most classic example of which would be his promotion and praise of the idea of “the practice of true *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets” [*shiren zhi fu* 詩人之賦]. When we look at assessments of *fu* poetry offered by contemporaries of the Han Dynasty, particularly with regard to Yang Xiong himself, he had not only plenty to say on his own experiences of writing *fu* poetry, but also quite a lot in terms of assessing *fu* poetry itself. We also find a number of references where he discusses *fu* poetry in the “My Sir [*Wu zi* 吾子]” chapter of the *Model Sayings*, discussing concepts such as *fengjian* and *lize* 麗則 [poetry consistent with Confucian morals] which would be very relevant to the *fu* poets of later years. If we are, however, to try to find the absolute core of his critiques,

55 Peng Dingqiu 彭定求, ed., *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 [*The Complete Tang Poems*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), 647.7436.

56 Chen Yuanlong 陳元龍, ed., “Lidai fu hui 歷代賦匯 [Compilation of Fu of Former Dynasties],” in *Jingyin wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), 1420.846.

we find that it remains with the ethical system established and implied within his idea of the *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets.

Han scholars discussing the idea of the *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets may have discussed the way in which “*fu* poets do not sing [their verses], but only read them aloud” or the “flowing streams of ancient poems [that come down to us]”, but we find on review that all of the content in the *Records of the Grand Historian* and the *History of the Han Dynasty* related to “poets” [*shiren* 詩人] to be the specific references made in 300 compositions in the *Book of Songs*.<sup>57</sup> Yang Xiong often compared *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets with the *fu* used by Confucian scholars, that is, making a pointed reference to the significance of the Confucians’ (most notably Confucius’) use of the *Book of Songs*. Much of the writings from the poets in the Han Dynasty era make significant reference to the meanings in the Classics to adopt some sort of broader meaning, whereas Yang Xiong differentiated “the *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets”, using *lize* as an essential point of demarcation, which is of original theoretical value. We can turn first to the original text of the “My Sir” for a further elucidation of this point:

The *fu* poetry of the poets is decorated with beautiful turns of phrase, and thus endowed with norms; the *fu* poetry of the poet-rhetorician is decorated with beautiful turns of phrase, and thus rendered excessive. If Confucius’ disciples used *fu* poetry as an educational means or format, then we might say that Jia Yi could have entered into the Grand Hallway, and Sima Xiangru could have entered into the Inner Sanctum. But did the Confucians indeed not engage in *fu* poetry?

詩人之賦麗以則，辭人之賦麗以淫。如孔氏之門用賦也，則賈誼升堂，相如入室矣。如其不用何？<sup>58</sup>

The phrase “[then] Jia Yi could have entered into the Grand Hallway, and Sima Xiangru could have entered into the Inner Sanctum” is different from the criticism offered in the “Treatise on Arts and Letters [*Yiwen zhi* 藝文志]” chapter of the *History of the Han Dynasty* toward the *fu* poetry by Sima Xiangru and the like, that is, toward “essays full of flowery language which are excessively ostentatious and flow with large and vast meanings, which lose the essential

57 Chen Yunzhu 陳韻竹, *Lun fu zhi yuanqi* 論賦之緣起 [*On the Origins of Fu Poetry*] (Taipei: Taiwan wenjin chubanshe, 2015), 225–233.

58 Wang Rongbao, *Fayan yishu*, 49–51.

significance and importance of criticism of higher authority”,<sup>59</sup> which actually does reflect an affirmation of the important “function” of the *fengjian* in Jia Yi 賈誼 [200–168 BCE] and Sima Xiangru’s poetry as discussed by Sima Qian 司馬遷 [145–90 BCE] by implication. Another useful reference is provided in the discussion in the “My Sir” which is quite reminiscent of the *lize* proper to the *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets.

Someone asks: “Does the ruler elevate fine, ostentatious language?” The response comes: “What the ruler elevates is content ... content and fine language that complements the other is near to the heights of the Classics.”

或問：“君子尚辭乎？”曰：“君子事之爲尚。……事、辭稱則經。<sup>60</sup>

And hence the core of his critique becomes a sort of “compromise” around the principles of *lize*, opposition to chaotic yardsticks by which one evaluates such works [*fadu* 法度], and an admiration for the ethics of the ancient sages. Hence, the Song Dynasty [960–1279] scholar Zhao Dingchen 趙鼎臣 [fl. 1101] integrates Confucius and Yang Xiong when he describes *fu* poetry thus:

Confucius said: “It is difficult for plain speech to avoid appearing rather crude in comparison to artful language, but then again it is difficult for artful language to better plain speaking in the avoidance of pointless contentiousness.” Yang Xiong also said: “Content above form becomes abrupt, form before content becomes empty and ostentatious.” It is clear that *fu* poetry, as a literary style, was a continued legacy of ancient Chinese poetry. The source of its inspiration was to be found in external objects and external matters ... it gave descriptions in line with events while actually being closer to books of history ... *fu* poetry which “finds its feet” amid the system of virtuous propriety may be considered “true” *fu* poetry of a “true” *fu* poet.<sup>61</sup>

If we turn to Yang Xiong’s own interpretation of “the *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets”, we find that it may not be entirely consistent with this sentiment. Nonetheless, it is easy to see the way in which *lize* went on to accompany the *fu* poets’ ideas

59 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 1756.

60 Wang Rongbao, *Fayan yishu*, 60.

61 Zhao Dingchen 趙鼎臣, “Ye du fu xu 鄴都賦序 [Preface to Fu of the Capital at Ye],” vol. 1 of “Zhuyin jishi ji 竹隱畸士集 [Selected Writings from Zhao Dingchen],” in *Jingyin wenyuange siku quanshu*, 1124:115.

of what “the *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets” meant and which became a traditional system of critique in *fu* poetry. If we look, for example, at the way in which ancient *fu* poetry was used in the imperial examination system of the Yuan Dynasty [1206–1368], or as noted by Yang Weizhen 楊維禎 [1296–1370] in his preface to the *Sayings and Wisdom from Venerable Exemplars* [*Lize yiyin* 麗則遺音]: “Yang Xiong said: ‘The *fu* poetry of the poets is decorated with beautiful turns of phrase, and thus endowed with norms; the *fu* poetry of the poet-rhetorician is decorated with beautiful turns of phrase, and thus rendered excessive.’ Thus we consider Yang to have possessed a strong understanding of the *fu* poetry of the ancients.”<sup>62</sup>

However, the derivation of meaning must be based on *ci* 詞, that is, the precise words or language used, as illustrated by the following explanation of the word *li* 麗 offered in the *Discussing Writing and Explaining Characters* [*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字]: “*Li* has the meaning of ‘travel’. It is the habit of deer that deer must travel when food is scarce,”<sup>63</sup> and as noted by Duan Yucai 段玉裁 [1735–1815]: “The pairing of two is *li*, as the *Book of Changes* [*Zhou yi* 周易] states: ‘*Li*, of what is bright and what is catching. The sun and the moon accompany the heavens, and the crops and vegetation accompany the land’, this is the meaning of *li*.”<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, the meaning of *li* is extended in the creative works and interpretations of the Han Dynasty poets from *liang* 兩 [two, coupling or pairing] to *meihao* 美好 [beautiful or wonderful] as seen in the “Da Yu 達鬱” chapter of *Master Lü’s Spring and Autumn Annals* which records: “Gong is beautiful” [公姣且麗], with Gao You 高誘 [fl. 205] noting that “*jiao* and *li* both refer to the state or quality of being beautiful.”<sup>65</sup> *Ze* 則 [norms] refers to *faze* 法則 [laws] on a fundamental level as evidenced from Chinese bronze inscriptions, but it can also be interpreted as “guidelines”, “rules”, “codes” and so on. Yang Xiong’s advocacy of “*fu* poetry by true *fu* poets” was founded on his thoughts around the meaning of the Classics, and did not heavily emphasize discussions around forms of *fu* poetry. The potential sameness and interchangeability of the meaning of *dian* 典 [code, or classic] and *li* 麗 [beauty] is referenced by Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 [1753–1818] in his notes on the “Many Regions [*Duo fang* 多方]” chapter of *Book of Documents* where, on further elucidating the roles of the “Assistant Ministers of the Laws and Regulations [*Xiao Sikou* 小司寇]” chapter of *Rites of Zhou* [*Zhou li* 周禮] and

62 Yang Weizhen 楊維禎, “Lize yiyin 麗則遺音 [Sayings and Wisdom from Venerable Exemplars],” in *Jingyin wenyuange siku quanshu*, 1222.146.

63 Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 [*Discussing Writing and Explaining Characters*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 471.

64 Duan Yucai, *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, 471.

65 Xu Weiyu, *Lüshi chunqiu jishi*, 566.

the “Penal Law of Marquis Lü [*Lü xing* 呂刑]”, he states: “*Li* has to do with punishment”.<sup>66</sup> Yang Yunru 楊筠如 [1903–1946] offers a further interpretation of this point in his *Collation of the Book of Documents* [*Shangshu hegu* 尚書核詁]:

Zheng Xuan remarks in the “*Lü xing*” regarding the nature of *li* that: “[It regards] processing and handling.” The interpretation of *li* here offered might refer to legal rules, or to *xinglü* criminal law and punishment, but neither mean “processing and handling”. In fact, “*li*” always refers to criminal law and punishment. The connotation here is very similar to the terms “*xinglü*” [criminal discipline], “*xingfa*” [criminal punishment] in English ... as stated in the chapter of “Biography of Dongfang Shuo [*Dongfang Shuo zhuan* 東方朔傳]” of the *History of the Han Dynasty*: “The reign of Emperor Wen of Han was distinguished by ‘*li*’ of virtue and an exactness of *renyi* [benevolence].” The juxtaposition of “*li*” and “*zhun*” [to permit, to be exact, in accordance with] refers to law or legal norms.<sup>67</sup>

The fact that the *Book of Documents* and *Rites of Zhou* use *li* to define *xing* 刑 (having to do with punishment or criminal justice) can provide an explanation of Yang Xiong’s conjoined use of the term *lize*. That is, both *li* and *dian* can be interpreted interchangeably as “*dianze* 典則”, whereas the *li* in the term *liyin* 麗淫 may be interpreted as “wonderful”, referring to exceeding *faze* or *dianze* due to ostentatious language, or may also be interpreted as *xing* where the character *yin* 淫 denotes a transcendence of norms due to ostentatious language. Although this is merely conjecture, it does fit very well with the aforementioned interpretations when we look at the way in which Yang Xiong imitated the *Book of Songs* and *Book of Documents* in his *fu* poetry in order to highlight ethics and sought to establish “ethics as a norm” in order to praise and elevate the frugal virtues of Emperor Xiaowen. From these compositions, the idea in Yang Xiong’s “Sweet Springs Palace” that “virtuous rule is the principle of ten thousand generations”, and his idea in the “Plume Hunt” that “norms are truly that which is sacred”,<sup>68</sup> can we find that this appears to signify his advocacy “for imitating King Wen of Zhou as an ideal model”<sup>69</sup> as reflected in the “Wen Wang 文王” chapter of “Greater Odes of the Kingdom”, and hence his theoretical advocacy of the practice of true *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets as a conceptual

66 Sun Xingyan, *Shangshu jingwen zhushu*, 461.

67 Yang Yunru 楊筠如, *Shangshu hegu* 尚書核詁 [*Collation of the Book of Documents*] (Xi’an: Shaanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1959), 256.

68 Yang Xiong 揚雄, “Yu lie fu 羽獵賦 [The Plume Hunt],” in *Lidai fu pingzhu*, 268.

69 Wang Anshi 王安石, *Shiyi gouchen* 詩義鈎沉 [*Exploration into the Deeper Meaning of the Odes*], coll. Qiu Hansheng 邱漢生 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 225.

system promoting good ethics on the basis of the Confucian Classics and in following the *dianze* (codes). The concepts of *de* and *xing* and the concepts of *sheng* 生 [life] and *ke* 克 [counter-action] are also reflected in Yang Xiong's *fu* poetry. For example, we find an imitation of the "Against Luxurious Ease" chapter of *Book of Documents* in the "Tall Poplars Lodge", where there is a process of thought whereby "*de*" applies to the governance of the "Three Kings of Zhou" and *xing* to the chaos of King Zhou of Shang, whereby Yang establishes "Han virtues" in his descriptions of the violent Qin being punished and in support of our imitation of Zhou virtues. Similarly, Yang Xiong also states in his "Zhong Li 重黎" chapter of the *Model Sayings* that: "In the Ancients we had several dynasties, the Xiong, Gaoyang, Gaoxin, Tang, and Yu, all of which possessed conspicuous virtue, and so Heaven protected them ... This was also the will of the people, and the good fortunes of their kingdoms endured for a great length of time. However, kingdoms such as the Qin and Chu oppressed their people and others. Even those of their own household thought of overturning such a country, let alone the people!"<sup>70</sup> The logic may be that it is easier to simply describe the Qin and Chu as having lost their "*de*" directly rather than the failure of the kingdoms as having originated in their offences committed against Heaven. Yang Xiong also points out as a result of his adherence to this "*de*" system of moral teaching in the "Filial Piety Perfected" that: "The Xiongnu barbarians were always the miserable source of wartime chaos previously in the days of Emperor Gaozu, Emperor Wen of Han and Emperor Wu of Han. The reason why today they are willing to bend their heads in service, and are willing to do work for the Han Dynasty in the north, is because the *zongmiao sheji* 宗廟社稷 [temple shrines] protect the Han Dynasty".<sup>71</sup> This is the same kind of thinking behind his admonishments against the barbarians to Emperor Ai of Han 漢哀帝 [r. 7–1 BCE], and his opposition to the imperial minister's granting the barbarians very dignified treatment along with his advocacy for generosity toward the people and empathetic ethics.

The "establishment" or "raising up" of the Classics is itself a kind of corrective work, and Yang Xiong's establishment of the practice of true *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets is also a reflection on and criticism of the *fu* poetry of his time. This would include his own experience of *fu* poetry from imitating Sima Xiangru in his Four Great *fu* Poets to his later attitude of dislike of *fu* poetry [*hui fu* 悔賦]. We have some relevant text on this point recorded in the "My Sir":

70 Wang Rongbao, *Fayan yishu*, 362.

71 Wang Rongbao, *Fayan yishu*, 551.

Someone asks: “Did you like composing *fu* poetry in your younger days, sir?” Yang Xiong responds: “I did. It was just fun with words in the days of my youth.” He then continues after a brief pause: “I did not engage in *fu* poetry again upon becoming an adult.”

Someone then asks: “Can *fu* poetry be used to criticize those in authority?” Yang Xiong replied: “Absolutely! Criticizing those in authority is of course a good thing, but I am concerned that *fu* compositions will be unable to avoid flattering their counterparts, and hence cannot play the proper role or function of criticizing those in authority.”

The *Jianke Lun* states: “Studying the mastery of the sword helps people to love and protect their own bodies.” Yang Xiong asks: “Can the Bi An (the mythical creatures painted on the entrances to prisons) enable people to understand ethics and propriety?”

或問：“吾子少而好賦。”曰：“然。童子雕蟲篆刻。”俄而，曰：“壯夫不爲也。”

或曰：“賦可以諷乎？”曰：“諷乎！諷則已，不已，吾恐不免于勸也。”

《劍客論》曰：“劍可以愛身。”曰：“狴犴使人多禮乎？”<sup>72</sup>

Li Gui 李軌 makes a note on this point in regard to Yang Xiong’s apparent “regret for his own *fu* poetry”, writing: “Sima Xiangru composed the ‘Rhapsody on the Great Man’ which gave Emperor Wu of Han a feeling of being swept up into the clouds as a celestial upon reading it”. “Mastery of the sword can help us to protect and nourish our own bodies, and *fu* poetry can be used to offer moral persuasion to try to convince others to do the right thing.”<sup>73</sup> See the “Yang Xiong zhuan” of the *History of the Han Dynasty* for a further discussion on Li’s perspective on Sima Xiangru’s language in the “Rhapsody on the Great Man”:

Yang Xiong was of the view that the “original purpose” of *fu* poetry, the literary form, should be to criticize authority and urge people to do better, and yet he also understood that he must pave the way to this purpose with analogies and the most ornate, impressive, and flowery language and terms possible crafting his compositions in a grand artistic style. The ultimate effect of this was to impress the author with the thought that there is “nothing grander or more impressive than the content so described” before bringing the reader back to the main point, by which time the

72 Wang Rongbao, *Fayan yishu*, 45.

73 Wang Rongbao, *Fayan yishu*, 45.

reader has already been drawn in by the honest language and colorfulness of expression, and is already enchanted by the beautiful scene that he has witnessed. In former times, Emperor Wu took pleasure in supplicating the celestials, and Sima Xiangru contributed his “Rhapsody on the Great Man” with the actual intent of presenting a criticism to the emperor. What actually happened is that the emperor was instead inspired by a feeling of “soaring to the clouds like a celestial” by his words. From this point of view, it is very apparent that the desire of *fu* poets to present a criticism to authority is not always, or even likely, to be successful.<sup>74</sup>

We may also refer to the “Biography of Sima Xiangru [*Sima Xiangru zhuan* 司馬相如傳]” of the *History of the Han Dynasty* for another view on the ability for *fu* poetry to be used to remonstrate with people:

Although Sima Xiangru’s *fu* poetry may have been rather too ostentatious in its form and perhaps too exaggerated in its content, it nonetheless has the objective of guiding people towards a frugal mode of conduct. So what is the essential difference between this and the criticism of authority exhibited in the *Book of Songs*? Yang Xiong was of the view that extremely ostentatious *fu* poetry contains too much in the way of “polite urging to do the right thing” and too little in the way of direct criticism. It might be perhaps compared to a musician who plays beautifully only at the end of a piece.<sup>75</sup>

Yang Xiong’s critique that *fu* poetry might intend to criticize authority, but will not be successful and that it “plays beautifully only at the end of a piece”, is obviously a pointed reference to the “Rhapsody on the Great Man’s” “grand artistic style” and ostentatious language and exaggerated content, but it is by no means a criticism of the whole of *fu* poetry itself. So we perhaps ought to look at Yang Xiong as still substantively supporting the *lize* perspective on the proper role of the practice of true *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets.

The “deep wonderfulness” of the “Sweet Springs Palace” and the idea of the practice of true *fu* poetry by true *fu* poets as discussed in the “Tall Poplars Lodge” paint a picture of the moral views established in Yang Xiong’s perspective on *fu* poetry from his creative compositions to his criticisms. We may well describe the ideas of the *zun* 尊 [admire] (ethics) and *jin* 禁 [prohibition] (*yin* or wantonness) within Yang Xiong’s *fu* compositions as having been formed

74 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 3575.

75 Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 2609.

with “Classical” sentiments in mind, and which, to some degree, created a greater template of *fu* poetry extending from Yang Xiong himself of the Late Western Han to Ban Gu and Zhang Heng of the Eastern Han and onwards. Later scholars would, in their discussions of *fu* poetry, emphasize “the paradigm set by *Li Sao* and Han *fu* poetry”, and although the *zun* and *jin* exhibited by such Han Dynasty thinking already possessed something of the awareness of “ancient *fu* poetry” [*gufu* 古賦], the *de* perspective on virtuous governance which remained intrinsic within the system ended up becoming a kind of “shared memory” that it seems no *fu* poets could forget. It appears that Yang Xiong’s initial efforts in embarking on a *fu* poetry according to his *lize* system may have become deeply embedded within this tradition, in which it was also shown to be an enduring and creative force.

*Translated by William Green*

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# The Influence of *Chenwei* on Han Dynasty Literature and Literary Theory

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## Abstract

Apocryphal *chenwei* ideas and beliefs rose to prominence in the Han dynasty as a political and cultural movement that became closely intertwined with orthodox classical scholarship. These ideas and beliefs profoundly influenced the literature and literary theory of this period, and their influence must be taken into consideration – alongside that of classical scholarship – when undertaking Han dynasty literary and cultural research. A comprehensive understanding of Han dynasty literature and literary thought can only be obtained when connections to both *chenwei* themes and classical scholarship have been recognized. Accordingly, this article seeks to shed light on the strong links between *chenwei* concepts and Han dynasty literary thought through an examination of *chenwei* influence on Han dynasty poetry and literary theories.

## Keywords

*chenwei* – Han *fu* – Han dynasty poetry – Han dynasty literary thought

Academic works on the Han dynasty [206 BCE–220] often speak of *chenwei* 讖緯, a concept commonly translated as “apocryphal texts”. Made up through a combination of the word *chen* – generally understood as referring to prophetic texts such as oracles and predictions – and *wei*, a word that contrasts with *jing* 經 [canonical texts, classics], the term commonly refers to esoteric and unorthodox explanations of classical texts. But what really is *chenwei*? Is it a single concept, or does it refer to two separate things? How do we determine what constitutes *chenwei*? Generations of scholars have, ever since the Tang

dynasty [618–907], held differing understandings of the term *chenwei*, with the majority falling into roughly two camps: one holding that there is a distinction between *chen* and *wei* with the other maintaining that no such distinction exists. This latter understanding has been generally favoured by most scholars and academics since the beginning of the twentieth century. Yet an examination of historical records suggests that both these positions do not completely correspond with historical facts.

During the Han dynasty the terms *chen* and *wei* referred to distinctly separate ideas, yet, at the same time they would combine and separate in a complex web of meanings in the writings of scholars. The terms went through a process of dynamic change that roughly took place as follows. During the Qin [221–206 BCE] one can find the concept of *chen* but not of *wei* (as *wei* is a term relative to canonical *jing*, in a time when there were no *jing* then there could be no *wei*). The term *chen* continued to be used at the beginning of the Western Han [206 BCE–25], but this period also saw the emergence of *wei* as an intellectual practice in which prophetic *chen* texts were used to create esoteric commentaries of canonical *jing* texts. It should be noted that the term *wei* did not first appear until the later stages of the Eastern Han [25–220], with the combined term *chenwei* only emerging at the end of the Eastern Han. The use of *chen* to interpret and supplement canonical texts was a new intellectual trend that emerged with the rise of canonical studies in the early stages of the Western Han.

In the following four hundred years of Han dynastic reign, the relationship between *chen* and canonical texts deepened as it gradually became standard scholarly practice to use *chen* to interpret the canon. The written records that were formed in these endeavors have come to be known as *weishu* 緯書 [apocryphal writings], suggesting that the concept of *wei* as opposed to *jing*, is, in fact, merely referring to the use of prophetic *chen* texts. The concept of *wei* only arose because these prophecies [*chenyan* 讖言], prognostication texts [*chenji* 讖記], prediction charts [*tuchen* 圖讖], and omens marking the Mandate of Heaven [*fuming* 符命] were integrated with canonical texts, thereby forming what is now known as *wei* and distinguishing this term from the individual concept of *chen*. This trend became increasingly popular during the later stages of the Western Han and, by the reigns of Emperor Ming 明帝 [r. 57–75] and Emperor Zhang 章帝 [r. 75–88] in the Eastern Han, had become the ideological orthodoxy of the Han state, culminating with the discussions at the White Tiger Hall in 79 and the formation of the *Baihutong* 白虎通 treatise. Both the appearance of *chen* during the Qin and *chenwei* during the Han had a powerful influence on the intellectual fabric of society, an

influence that was highly political in nature. In essence, the rise of *chenwei* in the Han dynasty was a political and cultural movement, and it was this fact that provided the grounds for its dynamism and vibrancy.

In short, as an academic construct, *chenwei* can be characterized as prophetic *chen* texts used to create esoteric *wei* commentaries of canonical texts. Therefore, a more precise understanding of what *chenwei* is and is not needs to focus on the way that *chen* were used in the interpretation of canonical texts, while also considering the political motivations for such interpretations. This will provide a more accurate assessment of *chenwei*, one that can grasp its essential nature and avoid generalized understandings.<sup>1</sup>

When did *chenwei* first emerge? Scholars have held differing opinions regarding the origins of *chenwei* since the Eastern Han.<sup>2</sup> The question of the origin of *chenwei* is itself closely intertwined with what does and does not constitute *chenwei*. Answering this question requires consideration of both historical facts and logical reasoning. Applying the basic criteria for *chenwei* given above, that it was the politically motivated use of *chen* to interpret canonical texts, then it becomes clear that mere prophecies and prognostication texts can not be seen as *chenwei* per se: they can only be considered as *chen*. It is only when these prophecies and prognostication texts intersect with classical scholarship and politics that they become *chenwei*. The logical conclusion of this understanding is that the origins of the academic construct of *chenwei* must lie after the emergence of the canon and classical scholarship (at the earliest, it could only have emerged in tandem with the rise of the canon). It therefore follows

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- 1 For a more detailed investigation into the meaning and characteristics of *chenwei* see the following: Zhang Fengyi 張峰屹, "Lishi weidu de queshi: Zi Tang qi jin chenwei mingyi yanjiu zhi shuping 歷史維度的缺失 – 自唐迄今讖緯名義研究之述評 [Lacking a Historical Perspective: A Critique of Studies into the Meaning of *Chenwei* from the Tang to the Present]," *Wenxue yu wenhua* 文學與文化, no. 2 (2010): 89–98; Zhang Fengyi 張峰屹, "Liang Han chenwei kaolun 兩漢讖緯考論 [An Exploration of *Chenwei* in the Han Dynasty]," *Wen shi zhe* 文史哲, no. 4 (2017): 5–24.
  - 2 Different theories regarding the origin of *chenwei* have been outlined by Jiang Zhongkui 姜忠奎, *Weishi lunwei* 緯史論微 [Detailed Investigations into the History of *Wei*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2005), 18–37. Jiang separates these theories into three broad categories that explore the origins of *wei* in terms of different time periods, historical figures, and canonical texts. Zhong Zhaopeng 鍾肇鵬 has identified twelve different theories in the first chapter of his monograph *Chenwei lunlie* 讖緯論略 [A General Study of *Chenwei*] (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991), 11–21. Scholars and academics have proposed a range of time periods for the origin of *chenwei* that have ranged from pre-history, the Spring and Autumn period, the Warring States period, the crossover between the Qin dynasty and the Han, the Western Han, somewhere between the Western Han and Eastern Han, the Eastern Han, and even (though there is not much evidence for it) as the invention of scholars in the Tang and Song.

that, in light of existing historical sources, the origins of *chenwei* can, at the earliest, be traced back to the beginning of the Western Han. In other words, the gradual establishment of the canon during the early stages of the Han dynasty witnessed an emerging association between prophetic *chen* texts as well as the increased use of *chen* within the field of politics.<sup>3</sup>

How did *chenwei* evolve during the Han dynasty? What influence did it have on the scholarly class of the Western and Eastern Han? An analysis of historical sources suggests that the evolution of *chenwei* during the Han dynasty can be roughly divided into three major periods: from the beginning of the Western Han to the reign of Emperor Ai 哀帝 [r. 7–1 BCE]; from the Wang Mang 王莽 [r. 8–23] interregnum (including the reign of Emperor Ping 平帝 [r. 1 BCE–5]) to Emperor Guangwu 光武帝 [r. 25–57]; and from the reign of Emperor Ming to the end of the Eastern Han.

During the first period prior to the reign of Emperor Ai, the use of *chenwei* was marked by an antagonistic attitude towards the ruling regime and a tendency towards moral suasion and even political criticism. This meant that many of the *chenwei* scholars of this time were ignored, expelled, imprisoned or even sentenced to death. However, the increasing use of *chenwei* during the reigns of Wang Mang and Emperor Guangwu saw a change in this dominant trend as *chenwei* came to be used to justify the legitimacy of the political regime. *Chenwei* scholars in this period who were able to meet the political demands of the times would inevitably be rewarded with official positions and titles, while those few who came into conflict with the ruling regime would fall out of favor or even be punished. By the time of Emperors Ming and Zhang, the integration of *chenwei* with classical studies and its use as a tool to interpret (and be interpreted by) the canon had become the state ideological orthodoxy. During this period, *chenwei* became a path to office and would be studied by all scholars alongside the canon. Looking across the intellectual sphere of the Western and Eastern Han periods, it is evident that all scholars were well acquainted with both the canon and *chenwei* texts and would freely make use of both, regardless of whether they were orthodox scholars employed by the government, learned practitioners engaged in prophecy and divination, or independent thinkers and philosophers.<sup>4</sup> This had a profound influence on Han dynasty literary thought.

3 For a more detailed analysis see Zhang Fengyi, “Liang Han chenwei kaolun,” 5–24.

4 See further Zhang Fengyi 張峰屹, “Chenwei sichao yu liang Han shiren xintai zhi bianqian 讖緯思潮與兩漢士人心態之遷變 [Chenwei Thought and the Changing Attitudes of Scholars During the Han Dynasty],” *Nankai xuebao* 南開學報, no. 5 (2017): 114–38.

## 1 *Chenwei* Influences on Han *Fu*

During the Han dynasty, the highest forms of artistic expression were to be found in the *fu* 賦 [rhyme-prose, or rhapsody] and *shi* 詩 [lyrical poetry] genres.<sup>5</sup> Taking these two genres as the focus of investigation, this article aims to provide a general description of the relationship between the rise of *chenwei* ideas and literary trends during the Han dynasty. This section will first examine how this relationship played out in the composition of Han *fu*.

Before the reign of Emperor Ai, the use of *chenwei* was marked by an antagonistic attitude towards the ruling regime that often adopted a politically critical stance. Careful analysis suggests that the development of *chenwei* during this period can be divided into two sub-periods, the first running from the beginning of the Western Han to the reign of Emperor Wu 武帝 [r. 141–87 BCE]; the second commencing with the reign of Emperor Zhao 昭帝 [r. 87–74 BCE] and lasting until the reign of Emperor Ai. While *chenwei* tendencies can be found in literature prior to the reign of Emperor Wu, they had not yet come to hold sufficient political influence to attract the attention of those in power. During this period the intellectual association between *chenwei* and the scholarly class was still relatively rare. The use of *chenwei* as a tool for political critique reached a high-water mark during the second half of the Western Han between the reigns of Emperor Zhao and Emperor Ai. Scholars writing at this time began to use their knowledge of *chenwei* to actively shape political discourse, and, in doing so, forged a stronger connection between *chenwei* ideas and politics.

There are just over fifty *fu* from the Western Han period in existence today, all of which were composed prior to the end of the reign of Emperor Ai. Of these, eleven *fu* have themes that touch upon *chenwei* related content.<sup>6</sup>

5 While other literature in the Han dynasty was not without aesthetic beauty and literary form, they were generally more pragmatic and practical texts on politics and history or treatises and letters. Given the limitations imposed on the length of this article these genres are not delved into here.

6 These eleven *fu* are Jia Yi's 賈誼 "The Owl [*Funiao fu* 鵞鳥賦]" and "Dry Clouds [*Han yun fu* 旱雲賦]"; Kong Zang's 孔臧 "The Owl [*Xiao fu* 鴞賦]"; Liu Xiang's 劉向 "Praying for Rain at Mount Hua [*Qing yu Huashan fu* 請雨華山賦]" (parts missing); Wang Bao's 王褒 "Eulogy on the Sweet Springs Palace [*Ganquan gong song* 甘泉宮頌]" (parts missing); and Yang Xiong's 揚雄 "The Shu Capital [*Shu du fu* 蜀都賦]", "Sweet Springs Palace [*Ganquan fu* 甘泉賦]", "East of the River [*Hedong fu* 河東賦]", "The Barricade Hunt [*Jiaolie fu* 校獵賦]", "Tall Poplars Lodge [*Changyang fu* 長楊賦]", and "Examining the Spirit [*He ling fu* 覈靈賦]" (parts missing).

### 1.1 *Influences on Han Fu During the Early Western Han*

Han *fu* written prior to the reign of Emperor Wu include Jia Yi's 賈誼 [ca. 200–168 BCE] “The Owl [*Funiaofu* 鷗鳥賦]” and “Dry Clouds [*Han yun fu* 旱雲賦]” and Kong Zang's 孔臧 [ca. 201–ca. 123 BCE] “The Owl [*Xiaofu* 鴞賦]”. While Jia Yi's “The Owl” was written in the political context of being dismissed from court and sent into exile, it is clear that his specific representation of the owl as an inauspicious portent is an expression of personal anxiety for his own fate and is not directly related to politics. Similar ideas can be found in Kong Zang's “The Owl”. Though this *fu* also sees Kong Zang worrying about his own fate, it differs from the work of Jia Yi in that Kong Zang expresses his commitment to further cultivate his Confucian education. Again, this text should be seen as the manifestation of personal sentiments and not as political criticism. It is only in Jia Yi's “Dry Clouds” where elements of *chenwei* can be found expressing the political idea that there is a resonance between the human and cosmic orders [*tianren ganying* 天人感應]. Jia Yi begins “Dry Clouds” describing how an imbalance in cosmic forces has resulted in a drought, “During this summer's great drought, the natural order of balanced forces has been lost.” The drought is then later shown to be the result of the dishonorable conduct of the ruling regime, and “... there is resentment in the people's hearts which cannot be relieved, this disaster is due to a failure of those who rule ... their conduct is not virtuous, state affairs are handled inappropriately and proper standards are violated.”<sup>7</sup> However, it is important to note that the political critique in “Dry Clouds” is still bound within Jia Yi's expression of his own intense personal sentiments and is markedly different from the dispassionate, rational critiques found in *fu* after the reign of Emperor Zhao. That is to say, the use of *chenwei* as a political critique in “Dry Clouds” is ancillary to the expression of personal expression. It should not be seen as the deliberate use of *chenwei* concepts as a tool for political critique. This is reflected in Zhang Qiao's 章樵 [d. 1235] commentary on “Dry Clouds” which interprets the metaphor of the dry cloud that does not bear rain as an analogy for Jia Yi's inability to put his talents to good use following his exile from the capital.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.2 *Influences on Han Fu During the Late Western Han*

The eight *fu* composed by Liu Xiang 劉向 [77–6 BCE], Wang Bao 王褒 [ca. 84–ca. 53 BCE] and Yang Xiong 揚雄 [53 BCE–18] were all written during the period

7 Zhang Qiao 章樵, annot., *Gu wen yuan* 古文苑 [Garden of Ancient Literature], *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, Yingyin tieqin tongjian lou cang Song kan ben 影印鐵琴銅劍樓藏宋刊本, vol. 3.

8 See Zhang Qiao, *Gu wen yuan*, vol. 3.

from Emperor Zhao to Emperor Ai, with the majority expressing a clear political intention to praise or criticize the ruling regime. Generally speaking, these *fu* have a tendency to veer more towards criticism rather than praise, especially those composed by Yang Xiong. In a similar fashion to “Dry Clouds”, Liu Xiang’s “Praying for Rain at Mount Hua [*Qing yu Huashan fu* 請雨華山賦]” touches on *chenwei* concepts through expressing resonances between human and cosmic orders. Although the *fu* as it has been passed down is a corrupted text with missing and distorted words, the gist of the piece can be summarized as follows: Following a long drought, the emperor accompanied by his officials made their way to Mount Hua to pray for rain and perform a rain sacrifice [*yu* 雩] – one of the most important ceremonies undertaken by the state. The god of rain was moved by their call and “the sky became cloudy and rain fell”.<sup>9</sup> The final section of the *fu* praises the illustrious virtues of the emperor. Liu Xiang is here using his *fu* to express the accepted political idea that there were resonances between the cosmic and human orders, while at the same time using these resonances to eulogize the virtue of the emperor. In a similar vein, Wang Bao’s “Eulogy on the Sweet Springs Palace [*Ganquan gong song* 甘泉宮頌]” is also another example of using *chenwei* concepts to praise the emperor. Although the text only exists as a fragment, it is evident that the first part of the eulogy depicts the majestic beauty of the Sweet Springs Palace while the second half touches on a range of *chenwei* motifs such as auspicious creatures and symbols in what is clearly a celebration of the Han emperor’s Mandate of Heaven.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to the works of Liu Xiang and Wang Bao, Yang Xiong’s “Sweet Springs Palace [*Ganquan fu* 甘泉賦]”, “East of the River [*Hedong fu* 河東賦]”, “The Barricade Hunt [*Jialie fu* 校獵賦]”, and “Tall Poplars Lodge [*Changyang fu* 長楊賦]” were, according to his biography in the *History of the Han* [*Hanshu* 漢書], primarily works of subtle criticism and moral suasion. These *fu* contain a vast range of *chenwei* material of which a few examples are given below.

“Sweet Springs Palace”: Written after Yang Xiong accompanied Emperor Cheng 成帝 [r. 33–7 BCE] to the Sweet Springs Palace north of Chang’an 長安,

9 James Legge, trans., *The Li Ki*, vol. 28 of *Sacred Books of the East*, ed. Max Müller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1966), 273–74.

10 Wang Bao describes the emperor as follows: “Alone, I imagine the leisurely life of our sagely emperor, often with a joyful and relaxed spirit. I imagine him sitting in his phoenix hall, listening to the chiming carriage bells, entering the Qilin pavilion, examining auspicious portents that have been presented to him, singing melodious music, and incanting peaceful eulogies.” [竊想聖主之優遊，時娛神而款縱。坐鳳皇之堂，聽和鸞之弄。臨麒麟之域，驗符瑞之貢。詠中和之歌，讀太平之頌。] See Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢, ed., *Songben yiwen leiju* 宋本藝文類聚 [*Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories, Song Edition*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2013), 62.1680.

this *fu* describes the journey of the imperial entourage to the palace and the sacrifice that was made on their arrival. The use of *chenwei* can be seen in Yang Xiong's analogy between the palace and the "hanging garden" [*Xuan pu* 懸圃], said to be the residence of the Celestial Lord situated at the top of the Kunlun Mountains, as well as in his reference to the blessings of the "Three Spirits" [*San shen* 三神] on the Emperor.

"East of the River": Composed roughly around the same time as "Sweet Springs Palace", Yang Xiong's "East of the River" describes the journey of Emperor Cheng and his entourage of ministers as they traveled to Fenyin 汾陰 to make sacrifices to Houtu 后土 [the deity of soil and earth]. The *fu* describes the purpose of the sacrifice as an opportunity for the emperor to leave behind a grand legacy and create an auspicious climate in which fortune and prosperity would cover his empire. The sacrifice is shown as bringing order to the spiritual world whereby "the numinous earth-spirits having been feted, the five positions are in proper sequence."<sup>11</sup>

"The Barricade Hunt": A description of an imperial hunt held by Emperor Cheng in 10 BCE, this *fu* is preceded with a preface in which Yang Xiong extols the virtuous rulers of the past for the way they cared for the land. In only hunting for what they needed and not giving over to extravagant indulgence, these rulers were, according to Yang Xiong, able to create a wealthy state that was blessed with auspicious omens of good government such as the yellow dragon, phoenix, and *qilin* 麒麟.

"Tall Poplars Lodge": Composed after another hunt following "The Barricade Hunt", this *fu* describes the founding of the Han dynasty through astrological symbolism. Metaphors symbolizing adherence to the will of heaven are found in the description of the first Han emperor Liu Bang 劉邦 [r. 206–195 BCE] following the direction of the Dipper and the Pole star, while the harmonious reign of Emperor Wen 文帝 [r. 180–157 BCE] is symbolized through the ordering of the Grand Stairway [*taijie* 太階], a six star constellation that was seen to reflect political and social hierarchy.<sup>12</sup>

11 The "Five Positions" refer to the lords of the five directions, East, West, North, South, and Center. [靈祇既鄉, 五位時敘。] English translation taken from David Knechtges, *The Han shu Biography of Yang Xiong (53 B.C.–A.D. 18)* (Tempe, Arizona: Center for Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1982), 2.115.

12 The *fu* says of Liu Bang: "Thereupon, the Lord on High turned a kindly nod toward Gaozu [Liu Bang], and Gaozu received the mandate. Following the Dipper and Pole, turning with the Celestial Barrier, he traversed the giant sea, shook the Kunlun." [於是上帝眷顧高祖, 高祖奉命, 順門極, 運天關, 橫鉅海, 票昆侖。] After extolling the deeds of Liu Bang, Yang Xiong then describes the reign of Emperor Wen: "Next came sage Emperor Wen, who, following the founder's customs and riding in his wake, cast all his thoughts on perfect concord ... Thus, the Jade Transverse was correct and the Grand

These four *fu* are examples of the *chenwei* concept that there is a resonance between the celestial and terrestrial worlds. This can be seen in the way the emperor connects with the spirits of the heavens and the earth in “Sweet Springs Palace” and “East of the River”, in the way in which good governance is reflected in a harmonious environment as found in “The Barricade Hunt”, and in the way the Mandate of Heaven is received and a new dynasty is established in “Tall Poplars Lodge”. The purpose of Yang Xiong’s adept use of *chenwei* concepts in these *fu* was to provide the emperor with subtle criticisms and moral suasion and can be seen as a manifestation of the late Western Han tendency to use *chenwei* as a political critique.

### 1.3 *Influences on Han Fu During the Wang Mang Interregnum and Early Eastern Han*

*Chenwei* use changed during the Wang Mang interregnum (including the reign of Emperor Ping) and the rule of Emperor Guangwu and was marked by a tendency to meet political demands and directly serve the ruling regime. The development of *chenwei* during this period can also be broken into two sub-periods. The first stage can be seen just prior and during the Wang Mang interregnum as he began to monopolize power before usurping the throne in 9 CE. The development of *chenwei* during this stage was complicated by the fact that, while mainstream discourse primarily used *chenwei* to justify Wang Mang’s usurpation of the Han dynasty, there were others during this time who were using prediction charts to oppose him. This conflicting use of *chenwei* was resolved with the return of the Han under Emperor Guangwu during which time *chenwei* concepts were all used to validate the restoration of the Han dynasty. While there were some during this time who criticized the use of *chenwei* (such as Huan Tan 桓譚, Zheng Xing 鄭興, and Yin Min 尹敏), they were only denouncing *chenwei* as absurd and unorthodox from an academic standpoint and not as a form of political critique.

Only a small number of *fu* written during this time have survived, with eleven in total (including those of which only fragments remain) composed by Cui Zhuan 崔篆 [fl. 10–25], Feng Yan 馮衍 [fl. 30], Ban Biao 班彪 [3–54] and Du Du 杜篤 [d. 78].<sup>13</sup> Of these eleven, five contain *chenwei* related themes: Feng Yan’s

Stairway was well-ordered.” [逮至聖文，隨風乘流，方垂意於至寧 ... 是以玉衡正而太階平也。] English translation taken from David Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982–96), 2:141–43.

13 Han *fu* recorded in both Fei Zhengang 費振剛 et al., *Quan Hanfu jiaozhu* 全漢賦校注 [Collation and Annotation of Complete Han Fu] (Guangzhou: Guangdong jiaoyu chubanshe, 2005) and Gong Kechang 龔克昌, ed, *Quan Hanfu pingzhu* 全漢賦評註 [Notes and Commentary of Complete Han Fu] (Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 2003)

“Making Clear My Aims [*Xian zhi fu* 顯志賦], Ban Biao’s “Viewing the Sea [*Lan hai fu* 覽海賦]” and “Nomadic Sojourn [*You ju fu* 遊居賦]” (also known as “On Jizhou [*Jizhou fu* 冀州賦]”), and Du Du’s “The Many Auspicious Portents [*Zhong rui fu* 眾瑞賦],” and “Discussing the Capital [*Lun du fu* 論都賦]”. All five were written during the reign of Emperor Guangwu.

The reign of Wang Mang from the end of the Western Han to the Xin Dynasty [9–23] witnessed a continued increase in prognostication texts and omens marking the mandate of a new dynasty. However, no *fu* survive from this time<sup>14</sup> and it is not possible to analyze the relationship between *chenwei* and *fu* composition during this period. Of the five *fu* touching on *chenwei* themes composed during the reign of Emperor Guangwu, Feng Yan’s “Making Clear My Aims” is rather unique. Written late in life during his retirement after a failed official career that had left him in poverty, “Making Clear My Aims” is an early autobiographical *fu* in which Feng Yan describes his travels both to actual places near his new home and ancestral home, as well as to imaginary places in which he makes a complete circuit of the world. During the latter journey, Feng Yan employs the use of *chenwei* concepts including *yin-yang*, the five elements and the four auspicious beasts. However, these references do not seem to be directly connected to the politics of the times and are more likely to be representations of the anger and frustration felt by Feng Yan after being rejected and stripped of his position by Emperor Guangwu.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, the use of *chenwei*

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for this time are the same. The only exception is the anonymous *fu* of *The Divine Crow* [*Shenwu fu* 神鳥賦] which the *Quan Hanfu jiaozhu* also lists as coming from this period. This is inappropriate, however, as *The Divine Crow* was found in the sixth tomb at Yinwan 尹灣 in Lianyungang 連雲港, where both the identity of the tomb-owner and the date of internment have been identified. According to the report on the tombs by the Lianyungang shi bowuguan, the tomb-owner was Shi Rao 師饒, a scribe in the Bureau of Merit [*Gongcao* 功曹] in the Donghai Commandery 東海 and the year of internment was the third year of the Yuanyan 元延 [12–9 BCE] era. Lianyungang shi bowuguan 連雲港市博物館, “Jiangsu Donghaixian Yinwan Hanmu fajue jianbao 江蘇東海縣尹灣漢墓發掘簡報 [Report on Excavations at the Han Tombs at Yinwan in Donghai County Jiangsu],” *Wen wu* 文物, no. 8 (1996): 24. For an English article on the tombs and *The Divine Crow* see Hans van Ess, “An Interpretation of the *Shenwu fu* of Tomb No. 6, Yinwan,” *Monumenta Serica* 51, no. 1 (2003): 605–28. This evidence suggests that *The Divine Crow* was composed at the end of the reign of Emperor Cheng or even earlier.

14 The possible different reasons for this are very complex. See the analysis in section one of chapter fourteen in Zhang Fengyi 張峰屹, *Liang Han jingxue yu wenxue sixiang* 兩漢經學與文學思想 [*Classical Scholarship and Literary Thought During the Han Dynasty*] (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhì sanlian shudian, 2014), 379–80.

15 For details, see his biography in the *History of the Later Han* and his entry in David Knechtges and Taiping Chang, ed., *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1:229–32.

in the other four *fu* was solely to praise the restoration of the Han dynasty and the rule of the Liu clan.

“Viewing the Sea”: Most likely written around 37 when Ban Biao was the magistrate of Xu 徐 (modern day Xuzhou, Jiangsu),<sup>16</sup> this *fu* draws heavily on characters, objects and locations associated with the world of immortals [*xian* 仙]. Beginning with a description of the sea and the mountains of immortals, Ban Biao then portrays his journey through an imaginary emperor’s palace that includes auspicious plants, legendary immortals, and mythological beings. The poem finishes with an expression of Ban Biao’s desire to climb up the social hierarchy through the support of those in power: “and then via the heralds of the Purple Palace, worship the deity Taiyi 太一 and receive his auspicious talisman.”<sup>17</sup> Given that religious Daoism had not yet emerged in the early stages of the Eastern Han, Ban Biao’s metaphors and allusions to immortal beings and the *xian* realm should be seen here as the use of *chenwei* concepts.

“Nomadic Sojourn”: Presumably written while he was governor of Jizhou 冀州 (hence the alternative title “On Jizhou”), “Nomadic Sojourn” begins with Ban Biao’s travels throughout the central plains before delving into the mytho-historical events of the places he records. At Mengjin 孟津, the place where King Wu of Zhou 周武王 [ca. 1056–1043 BCE] forded the Yellow River on his expedition to conquer the Shang [ca. 1600–1046 BCE], Ban Biao writes of the white fish that leapt into King Wu’s boat as he made the crossing, an auspicious portent that was seen as heralding the passing of the Mandate of Heaven from the Shang to the Zhou [ca. 1046–256 BCE]. This is followed by a description of Emperor Wu of Han making his way to perform the *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 sacrifices (rituals publicly announcing the Mandate of Heaven) at Mount Tai. By describing these two events together, Ban Biao is clearly stating that the Han dynasty had inherited the virtue of the Zhou dynasty and had also received the Mandate of Heaven.

“The Many Auspicious Portents”: Only seven lines of this *fu* still exist, making it difficult to understand the general context. However, taking into account the name chosen for the title and the years in which Du Du was active, it is clear that this piece extols Emperor Guangwu’s restoration of the Han through the description of numerous auspicious signs and portents.

16 Born to the northeast of modern day Xianyang 咸陽, Shaanxi, Ban Biao spent his youth in the western and central areas of China and saw the sea for the first time during his tenure as the magistrate of Xu. Zhang Cangshou 章滄授, “Lan hai xianyou ganwu rensheng: Ban Biao *Lan hai fu* shangxi 覽海仙游 感悟人生 – 班彪《覽海賦》賞析 [Feeling Life Through Viewing the Sea and Travelling in Immortal Realms: Appreciating Ban Biao’s *Lan hai fu*],” *Gudian wenxue zhishi* 古典文學知識, no. 1 (2003): 9–12. Translator’s note.

17 Kirkova, *Roaming into the Beyond*, 163.

“Discussing the Capital”: Written by Du Du as a mock debate between himself and an imaginary guest on whether the capital should be in Luoyang 洛陽 or Chang’an, this *fu* uses *chenwei* themes to praise the Han dynasty. The text includes narrative accounts of the founding of both the Western Han under Liu Bang and the Eastern Han under Emperor Guangwu that draw heavily on auspicious omens and portents which, during the Han, were seen as signs that each emperor had received the Mandate of Heaven. These include “the cleaving of the white snake, the gathering of the dark clouds,<sup>18</sup> and the conjunction of the Five Planets in the Eastern Well constellation”<sup>19</sup> during the ascendancy of Liu Bang, and the emergence of the *Red Hidden Tally* [*Chifu fu* 赤伏符]<sup>20</sup> prophecy foretelling the rise of Emperor Guangwu. Du Du describes how the blessing of the mandate and the assistance of spirits and magical weapons

- 18 The “cleaving of the white snake” [斬白蛇] and the “gathering of the dark clouds” [屯黑雲] both allude to stories found in the Basic Annals of Liu Bang in the *Records of the Grand Historian* [*Shiji* 史記]. In the first, a drunken Liu Bang slew a great white snake by cutting it in two. As Sima Qian relates, when one of Liu Bang’s retainers came to the spot where the snake lay, he found an old woman crying and claiming that her son had been killed. “My son was the son of the White Emperor.” “He had changed himself into a snake and was lying across the road. Now he has been cut in two by the son of the Red Emperor, and therefore I weep.” See Burton Watson, trans., *Records of the Grand Historian of China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 80. The story was understood as a metaphor of the passing of the mandate from the Qin dynasty (represented by the white snake) to Liu Bang and the Han (which was later to revere the color red). The anecdote regarding the gathering clouds takes place shortly after the incident with the white snake and similarly alludes to Liu Bang being blessed with the Mandate of Heaven. As narrated by Sima Qian, the First Emperor of Qin 秦始皇 [r. 247–210 BCE] had noticed that there were signs in the sky indicating the presence of the “Son of Heaven” and set out to suppress this threat to his power. Liu Bang, believing that he was the cause of this sign, went into hiding deep into the mountains and the marshes. However, regardless of where he hid, his wife, the future Empress Lü 呂太后 [d. 180 BCE], was always able to find him. When he asked how this was possible, she replied, “There are always signs in the clouds over the place where you are. By following these we manage to find you every time.” See Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian*, 81.
- 19 The “conjunction of the Five Planets in the Eastern Well constellation” [聚五星於東井] was understood as an omen that a virtuous man could win the Mandate of Heaven. William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Grand Scribe’s Records* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), 8:18. For a more in-depth examination of the way in which conjunctions of the planets were interpreted as portents of dynastic change see David W. Pankenier, “The Cosmo-Political Background of Heaven’s Mandate,” *Early China* 20 (1995), 135.
- 20 The *Red Hidden Tally* was a prophecy delivered to the Emperor Guangwu prior to his accession to the throne. The prophecy specifically named Emperor Guangwu as the future emperor and was used to bolster support for his claim to the throne. See Zhao Lu, “The Great Peace and the Ends of Time in Early Imperial China,” in *The End(s) of Time(s): Apocalypticism, Messianism, and Utopianism through the Ages*, ed. Hans-Christian Lehner (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 81–83. Translator’s note.

allowed both emperors to establish dynastic reign, with Liu Bang defeating the Qin and Emperor Guangwu pacifying the empire and restoring Han rule.

#### 1.4 *Influences on Han Fu During the Late Eastern Han*

The years between the reign of Emperor Ming to the end of the Eastern Han saw the complete integration of *chenwei* ideas with orthodox classical scholarship, best illustrated by the conference held at White Tiger Hall in 79 on the meaning of the classics and the written report of these discussions in the *Baihutong*. This era saw the state set out the intellectual framework within which *chen* texts could be used to interpret the classics (and vice versa), with *chenwei* rising to become the central intellectual belief of the Eastern Han period.<sup>21</sup> Intellectuals, *chenwei* scholars and *fangshi* 方士 [doctors, diviners, magicians] active after the reign of Emperor Ming would invariably incorporate the orthodox canon into their work, while most official classical scholars as well as highly independent and critical thinkers would similarly incorporate *chenwei* concepts and beliefs in their own writings. This phenomenon is reflected in the *fu* written during this period.

Of the approximately 60 *fu* composed from the reign of Emperor Ming to the end of the Eastern Han, 19 display *chenwei* related themes.<sup>22</sup> This proportion, roughly a third of all *fu* written during this era, shows a much higher prevalence than found during the Western Han, and was directly related to the rising prestige of *chenwei* during the Eastern Han. *Chenwei* related *fu* during this period can be divided into the following categories.

21 See Zhang Fengyi 張峰屹, “Jing chen qianhe, yi chen shi jing: Dong Han jingxue zhi sixiang tezheng gaishuo 經讖牽合，以讖釋經：東漢經學之思想特徵概說 [The Synthesis of the Canon and *Chen*, Using *Chen* to Interpret the Canon: An Outline on the Intellectual Features of Classical Scholarship in the Eastern Han],” *Wenxue yu wenhua* 文學與文化, no. 2 (2017).

22 These 19 *fu* are as follows: Fu Yi’s 傅毅 “The Luo Capital”; Cui Yin’s 崔駰 “Returning to the Capital [*Fan du fu* 反都賦]”; Ban Gu’s 班固 “The Two Capitals [*Liang du fu* 兩都賦]”, “Communicating with the Hidden [*Youtong fu* 幽通賦]”, “Zhongnan Mountain [*Zhongnan shan fu* 終南山賦]”; Ban Zhao’s 班昭 “The Great Bird [*Daque fu* 大雀賦]”; Huang Xiang’s 黃香 “The Nine Chambers [*Jiu gong fu* 九宮賦]”; Li You’s 李尤 “The Hangu Pass [*Hangu guan fu* 函谷關賦]”, “Fu on the Royal Academy [*Piyong fu* 辟雍賦]”; Zhang Heng’s 張衡 “The Hot Springs [*Wenquan fu* 溫泉賦]”, “The Southern Capital [*Nan du fu* 南都賦]”, “The Two Metropolises [*Er jing fu* 二京賦]”, “Responding to Criticism [*Ying jian* 應間]”; Ma Rong’s 馬融 “The Zither [*Qin fu* 琴賦]”; Deng Dan’s 鄧耽 “Suburban Sacrifices [*Jiaosi fu* 郊祀賦]”; Cui Shi’s 崔寔 “The General Amnesty [*Dashu fu* 大赦賦]”; Wang Yanshou’s 王延壽 “Hall of Numinous Brilliance [*Lu Lingguang dian fu* 魯靈光殿賦]”, “A Dream [*Meng fu* 夢賦]”; and Cai Yong’s 蔡邕 “Defense Against Admonition [*Shi hui* 釋誨]”.

### 1.5 *Fu on Metropolises and Capitals*

The most influential *fu* on metropolises and capitals written during this era were Fu Yi's 傅毅 [d. 90] "The Luo Capital [*Luo du fu* 洛都賦], Cui Yin's 崔駰 [d. 92] "Returning to the Capital [*Fan du fu* 反都賦], Ban Gu's 班固 [32–92] "The Two Capitals [*Liang du fu* 兩都賦]" and Zhang Heng's 張衡 [78–139] "The Two Metropolises [*Er jing fu* 二京賦]". These four pieces all draw heavily on *chenwei* elements to both praise the Han dynasty and put forward the personal opinions and beliefs of their authors. Zhang Heng's "The Southern Capital [*Nan du fu* 南都賦]" can also be included in this category. While the *fu* does not touch on the capitals at Luoyang or Chang'an, its exposition of the ancestral home of the Emperor Guangwu at Nanyang 南陽 and the origins of the Liu clan celebrates the Han regime by presenting the ruling family as the descendants of the sage ruler Yao 堯 and by suggesting that the dynasty has inherited the power of the fire element [*huode* 火德]. This celebration of the Han and Emperor Guangwu is further seen in Zhang Heng's allusions to a prophecy foretelling that the ninth descendant of Liu Bang – said to be the Emperor Guangwu – would encounter great glory.<sup>23</sup> The use of *chenwei* themes in "The Southern Capital" as a means of praising the Han is no different to those found in the four *fu* mentioned above.

### 1.6 *Fu on Rites and Institutions*

*Fu* composed after the reign of Emperor Ming also show a tendency towards using *chenwei* concepts to extol Han dynasty rites and institutions. This is most evident in Li You's 李尤 [44–126] "Fu on the Royal Academy [*Piyong fu* 辟雍賦]", a glorification of the religious, political, and educational institutions of the Eastern Han. The *fu* honors these institutions through grandiose descriptions of the building complex situated just south of the walled city of Luoyang where sacrifices, government affairs and educational activities were carried out during the Eastern Han. Made up of the Luminous Hall [*Mingtang* 明堂], the Royal Academy [*Piyong* 辟雍], the Divine Tower [*Lingtai* 靈臺], and the Imperial University [*Taixue* 太學],<sup>24</sup> the complex was a physical manifestation

23 The prophecy is found in the biography of Cao Bao 曹褒 [d. 102] in the *History of the Later Han* which records it as coming from a text known as the *Chart of the Yellow River* [*Hetu* 河圖]. The prophecy reads: "The Red ninth will encounter glory. In the tenth generation it will be luminous, and in the eleventh it will rise." [赤九會昌、十世以光、十一以興。] See Gopal Sukhu, "Yao, Shun, and Prefiguration: The Origins and Ideology of the Han Imperial Genealogy," *Early China* 30 (2005–2006): 141.

24 For the functions and location of these four buildings see Hans Bielenstein, "Lo-yang in Later Han Times," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 48 (1976): 61–71, 124–25. Translator's note.

of the interaction between the cosmic and human worlds and oversaw the ritualized meeting of heaven and earth and the regulation of human affairs. “Fu on the Royal Academy” takes these resonances between the cosmic and human domain – which are likely to have originated from *chenwei* concepts – and uses them to glorify Eastern Han institutions and celebrate the Liu clan’s attainment of the Mandate of Heaven. Another important *fu* praising the rites of the Han dynasty is Deng Dan’s 鄧琬 [fl. 114] “Suburban Sacrifices [*Jiaosi fu* 郊祀賦]”, a composition on the meaning and magnificence of the important suburban sacrifices<sup>25</sup> – the primary purpose of which was for the emperor to support the order of heaven as a means of governing the empire.<sup>26</sup> These sacrifices were rooted in *chenwei* concepts of *yin-yang* and the resonance between the cosmic and human realms. This is reflected in the *fu*, which tells of the emperor following in the path of ancient rulers, observing the signs of Heaven and complying with auspicious signs and portents. Deng Dan’s work, while only existing today as a short fragment, was evidently a eulogy on the power and fortune of the Han and the auspicious blessings and portents that the Liu clan had received from Heaven. In addition to these two *fu*, Cui Shi’s 崔寔 [ca. 103–170] “The General Amnesty [*Da she fu* 大赦賦]”, while ostensibly praising the pardon issued by Emperor Huan 桓帝 [r. 146–168] in 157, can also belong to this category. The *fu* employs a wide range of *chenwei* related themes – from *qilin* and phoenixes to stars of fortune [*jing xing* 景星] and auspicious grain [*jia he* 嘉禾] – in combination with an emphasis on continuing the mandate of past sage rulers and adhering to heaven and earth in the establishment of laws and regulations (concepts based on *chenwei* understandings of receiving the mandate). In a similar manner to the use of *chenwei* in “Fu on the Royal Academy” and “Suburban Sacrifices”, Cui Shi’s use of *chenwei* elements in “The General Amnesty” serves to extol the mandate of the Liu clan and celebrate the many auspicious omens and portents that they have received as a result of their benevolent rule.

25 While commonly used, the translation “suburban sacrifices” is somewhat problematic given that *jiaosi* sacrifices in the early Western Han were conducted far from the capital. For a general outline of the term’s changing meaning see Michael Loewe, *Problems of Han Administration: Ancestral Rites, Weights and Measures, and the Means of Protest* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 24–26. Translator’s note.

26 This interpretation is found in the memorial submitted to Emperor Cheng at the beginning of his reign by his ministers Kuang Heng 匡衡 [d. 30 BCE] and Zhang Tan 張譚 [fl. 40 BCE] – as recorded in the “Treatise on the Suburban Sacrifices [*Jiaosi zhi* 郊祀志]” in the *Hanshu*. Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 [*History of the Han*], comm. Yan Shigu 顏師古 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 1253–54.

### 1.7 *Fu on Natural Scenery and Imperial Buildings*

Another characteristic of *fu* during the post-Emperor Ming era is a tendency to apply *chenwei* concepts to descriptions of the natural world and palace and temple buildings. Representative *fu* in this category include Li You's "The Hangu Pass [*Hangu guan fu* 函谷關賦]", Wang Yanshou's 王延壽 [ca. 143–ca. 165] "Hall of Numinous Brilliance [*Lu Lingguang dian fu* 魯靈光殿賦]", Ban Gu's "Zhongnan Mountain [*Zhongnan shan fu* 終南山賦]" and Zhang Heng's "The Hot Springs [*Wenquan fu* 溫泉賦]". Li You's *fu* on the Hangu Pass – a key mountain pass situated between Chang'an and Luoyang – is a poignant example of the way in which *chenwei* elements were integrated into the celebration of building structures and their restoration. Introducing the pass through associated historical anecdotes from the Zhou through to the Western Han, Li You goes on to describe the gradual deterioration of the pass in the later stages of the Western Han before alluding to its restoration during the reign of Emperor Guangwu. This latter section of the text draws heavily on *chenwei* symbolism with Li You praising the emperor for fulfilling the prophecies and portents that predicted his rise and the restoration of the Han dynasty. Li You then celebrates the longevity of Han dynasty comparing the achievements of Emperor Guangwu with those of the Han dynasty founder Liu Bang. Wang Yanshou's "Hall of Numinous Brilliance"<sup>27</sup> is another example of the use of *chenwei* in the depiction of imperial buildings. Connecting the design of the physical hall to corresponding constellations, Wang Yanshou celebrates the grandeur of the hall through an array of auspicious signs and portents that glorify the Han as the heir to the virtue of ancient sage rulers. The poem ends with *chenwei* inspired lines that extol the longevity of the dynasty: "It was spirits who built her, to bless our house of Han, that it never decay."<sup>28</sup>

In a similar vein, *chenwei* themes describing natural scenery were also used to celebrate the Han. This is evident in Ban Gu's "Zhongnan Mountain", in which auspicious signs – such as the call of the phoenix and numerous rare objects – assemble on the mountain and are used by the author to honor the magnificence of the Han. Ban Gu explicitly writes that it is only with the perfect virtue of the emperor that such auspicious signs can appear. The natural world in Zhang Heng's "The Hot Springs" is also heavily imbued with *chenwei* concepts glorifying the empire. Written during his younger years while traveling

27 This *fu* was written during the author's stay in the former state of Lu 魯. The hall in question was constructed by King Gong of Lu 魯恭王 [d. 128 BCE] to the southeast of the Confucian Temple in Qufu 曲阜. For a full English translation see Knechtges, *Wen xuan*, 2:262–79.

28 Knechtges, *Wen xuan*, 2:279.

between Chang'an and Luoyang, Zhang Heng's description of the hot springs at Lishan 驪山 (which would later become the site of the famous Huaqing Pool 華清池 during the Tang) compares the springs to the mythical Dawn Valley [*Yanggu* 暘谷] in Yingzhou 瀛州, a fabled island in the eastern sea from which the sun and moon rose each day. This cosmologically inspired *chenwei* connection is furthered with a reference to the sun and moon bathing in the *Yingshi* 營室 constellation, which is interpreted in Zhang Qiao's commentary as the reason why the springs were heated.<sup>29</sup> Zhang Heng then employs *chenwei* concepts to compare the spring with the Han dynasty itself, celebrating the benefit they both bestow to the populace with the washing of the waters metamorphizing into the purification of evil and the implementation of the correct way.

### 1.8 *Fu* Expressing Personal Feelings and Aspirations

Expression of personal sentiment in *fu* composition during this period would also regularly incorporate elements of *chenwei*, with prominent examples found in Ban Gu's "Communicating with the Hidden [*Youtong fu* 幽通賦]", Zhang Heng's "Responding to Criticism [*Yingjian* 應間]" and Cai Yong's 蔡邕 [133–192] "Defense Against Admonition [*Shi hui* 釋誨]". Written in his early twenties during an intense period of contemplation and introspection following the death of his father, Ban Gu's "Communicating with the Hidden" taps into a deep sense of ennui that consumed him as a young man as he struggled to find his purpose and make his own way in the world. The *fu* takes place in a land of dreams that feels at once both real and surreal, and in an environment that, like the dream, is both realistic and fantastical. *Chenwei* concepts abound throughout the *fu*, with Ban Gu conveying his feelings through references to historical events and stories, many of them relating to *chen* practices such as divination, dream predictions and oracle consulting.<sup>30</sup> The other two *fu* in this category, "Responding

29 Quoting from the Classic of Mountains and Seas [*Shanhajing* 山海經], Zhang Qiao states that the Dawn Valley has a tree known as the *fusang* 扶桑 on which ten suns bathe. He then provides his own interpretation noting that the feminine and masculine essences of the sun and moon are washed into the waters thereby causing the springs to be slightly warm. [日月坎離之精濯乎其中，故液泉微溫。] See Zhang Qiao, *Gu wen yuan*, vol. 5. It is interesting to note that the characters used for the Dawn Valley by Zhang Heng, Zhang Qiao and the *Shanhajing* are not *Yanggu* 暘谷 but *Tanggu* 湯谷, literally: Hot Water Valley. The idea that the valley was understood as containing hot water is also found in Guo Pu's 郭璞 [276–324] commentary to the *Tanggu* in the *Shanhajing* where he notes that the "valley contains hot water." [谷中水熱也。] See Yuan Ke 袁珂, ed., *Shanhajing jiaozhu* 山海經校注 [*Collation and Annotation of the Classic of Mountains and Seas*] (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1992), 308.

30 See especially the beginning of the fifth verse: "The Way is long and far, human life is short; The course of things is distant and dark – one cannot fully comprehend it. Thus, one must rely on divination and consult with the gods; then he may explore time and

to Criticism” and “Defense Against Admonition”, appear as appropriations of Dongfang Shuo’s 東方朔 [ca. 161–93 BCE] “Replying to a Guest’s Objections [*Da ke nan* 答客難]” in which Dongfang Shuo explains why he has not attained a high ministerial position in spite of his vast learning. Yet while Zhang Heng and Cai Yong’s *fu* do not display original expressions of personal sentiment, they nevertheless express the intellectual spirit of their times with each incorporating a considerable number of lines dealing with *chenwei* knowledge and concepts. Accordingly, Zhang Heng’s defense of his relatively low official position is supported through references to mythological figures such as Fenghou 風后, Chong 重 and Li 黎 who had met opportune times and been able to put their services into practical use.<sup>31</sup> Cai Yong’s argument in “Defense Against Admonition”, namely that it is important to know when to act and when to withdraw – an allusion to the dangers of seeking office during a time of factional struggles between powerful families – is similarly given through a range of *chenwei* inspired analogies that describe resonances between man and the cosmos.

A number of *fu* written from the reign of Emperor Ming to the end of the Eastern Han that do not fall into the above four categories also make frequent use of *chenwei* themes. Ma Rong’s 馬融 [79–166] “The Zither [*Qin fu* 琴賦]”, for instance, celebrates the power and virtue of the instrument through an allusion to an anecdote from the *Han Feizi* 韓非子 that describes the way in which music was thought to influence the workings of the cosmos.<sup>32</sup> Huang Xiang’s 黃香 [ca. 68–122] use of *chenwei* in “The Nine Chambers [*Jiu gong fu* 九宮賦]” is also clearly apparent. One of the earliest works on the ancient Chinese magical square, “The Nine Chambers” is the earliest *fu* that is dedicated to a description of the two cosmological diagrams commonly used in divination practices and explanations of the *Book of Changes* [*Yijing* 易經] – the *Yellow River Map* [*Hetu* 河圖] and the *Luoshu Square* [*Luoshu* 洛書].<sup>33</sup> *Chenwei* tropes also abound in

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communicate with the hidden. That Gui would live with the Jiang was divined in infancy; Dan calculated the years from a notched tortoise shell.” See Knechtges, *Wen xuan*, 3:95.

31 Zhang Heng contrasts references to Fenghou (a minister of the Yellow Emperor) and Chong and Li (ministers of the ruler Zhuangxi 顛頊) – all three of whom were able to put their services into practical use – with a reference to Confucius, who did not meet with the opportune time and could only wait for later generations to put his ideas into practice. For an English translation of this section of the *fu* see Yeong-Chung E. Lien, “Zhang Heng, Eastern Han Polymath, His Life and Works,” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2011), 185–87.

32 See Burton Watson, trans., *Han Feizi: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 53–55. For Ma Rong’s *fu* see Ouyang Xun, *Songben yiywen leiju*, 44.1201.

33 As noted in the commentary attached to “The Nine Chambers” in the *Quan Hanfu pingzhu*, the *Yellow River Map* and *Luoshu Square* had not, prior to Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 [127–200], been described in such detail as they are in this *fu*.

Wang Yanshou's "A Dream [*Meng fu* 夢賦]" in which he recounts a nightmare where he battles with an imaginary host of "devils and demons, four-horned, serpent-necked, fishes with bird-tails, three-legged bogies from six eyes staring; dragons hideous, yet three-part human."<sup>34</sup> The *fu* ends with an epilogue in which Wang Yanshou references a number of *chenwei* themed stories where the nightmares and visions of others turned out to be auspicious portents. The stories reveal Wang Yanshou's determination not to cower in the face of evil and misfortune. Ban Zhao's 班昭 [ca. 49–ca. 120] "The Great Bird [*Daque fu* 大雀賦]", written to memorialize the presentation of ostriches as a tribute gift to the court, also veers into *chenwei* territory with the *fu* comparing the birds to auspicious beasts before ending with a celebration of the Han:

嘉大雀之所集，	How I admire the place where these "big sparrows" roost,
生昆侖之靈丘。	They live on the numinous peaks of the Kunlun Mountains.
同小名而大異，	Although they share the small sparrow's name, they differ in size,
乃鳳皇之匹疇。	And as such they are comparable to the phoenix and <i>luan</i> .
懷有德而歸義，	Longing for the One with Virtue they submitted to duty,
故翔萬里而來遊。	Winging ten thousand miles they traveled and came.
集帝庭而止息，	Roosting in the royal courtyard they rest and repose,
樂和氣而優遊。	Enjoying its stately harmony they feel at ease.
上下協而相親，	High and low are unified and linked in love,
聽《雅》《頌》之雍雍。	One hears the majestic tones of the Odes and Hymns.
自東西與南北，	From East to West, from South to North,
咸思服而來同。 <sup>35</sup>	All wish to join and come and share!

34 Arthur Waley, *The Temple and Other Poems* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1923), 91–94. See Ouyang Xun, *Songben yiwén leiju*, 79.2034.

35 Translation taken from Wilt Idema and Beata Grant, *The Red Brush: Writing Women of Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 27–28. See Ouyang Xun, *Songben yiwén leiju*, 92.2366. Translator's note.

Before drawing this section on Han *fu* to an end, it is also worth mentioning Ban Gu's "Elaboration on the Canon [*Dian yin* 典引]" written in 74. Over the course of history, this essay has not generally been regarded as a *fu*, and during its inclusion in the *Selections of Refined Literature* [*Wen Xuan* 文選] anthology under the direction of Xiao Tong 蕭統 [501–531], it was placed within the *fuming* 符命 genre (alongside Sima Xiangru's "Essay on the Feng and Shan Sacrifices [*Feng shan wen* 封禪文]" and Yang Xiong's "Denigrating Qin and Praising Xin [*Ju Qin mei Xin* 劇秦美新]"). However, when considered in light of Han dynasty literary genres, "Elaboration on the Canon" (as well as the other two works by Sima Xiangru and Yang Xiong), can be classified as *fu*. The lengthy text, which describes the virtue of the Eastern Han imperial house as well as numerous prophetic signs and auspicious omens, can rightly be regarded as an almost exhaustive collection of prognostication records for the Eastern Han.

To summarize, *fu* composed during the period from Emperor Ming to the end of the Eastern Han reflect the profound influence wielded by *chenwei* concepts during this time. This influence was closely bound up with the development of *chenwei* as a political ideology and popular movement and with the way in which it was incorporated into official classical studies.

## 2 *Chenwei* Influences on Han Lyrical Poetry and Songs

While the lyrical poetry [*shi* 詩] of the Han dynasty never achieved the same fame as the *fu*, the number of lyrical poems and songs composed during the period was, nevertheless, comparatively high. "The Book Catalogue [*Yiwen zhi* 藝文志]" chapter in the *Hanshu* records 316 works across 28 categories and authors under the *geshi* 歌詩 [song-verse] genre,<sup>36</sup> though unfortunately many of these have been lost throughout history and only a few remain.<sup>37</sup> Of course, the "Book Catalogue" should not be seen as an exhaustive list of the lyrical poems and songs composed during the Western Han. There are many examples of recorded works which were not entered into the *Yiwen zhi*. To date, one of the more comprehensive anthologies of Han dynasty poetry is Lu Qinli's 逯欽立

36 The genre referred to as *geshi* in the Han dynasty is today known as *yuefu*. See Knechtges and Chang, *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature*, 3:2091. Translator's note.

37 Lyrical poetry and songs extant today include the "Song of the Great Wind [*Da feng ge* 大風歌]" and "Song of the Swan [*Honghu ge* 鴻鵠歌]" which are attributed to Liu Bang and may reflect the two pieces by Liu Bang recorded in the *Yiwen zhi*. It is also possible that some of the Western Han poetry in which the author is named may have been listed in the *Yiwen zhi* under the category "Miscellaneous Lyrical Poems And Songs that Have Named Authors: 10 Works [*Za ge you zhuming ge shi shi pian* 雜各有主名歌詩十篇]".

section on Han dynasty poetry in *The Poetry of the Pre-Qin, Han, Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties* [*Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩].<sup>38</sup> The anthology includes 174 lyrical poems and songs from the Western Han period. As the *History of the Later Han* [*Hou Hanshu* 後漢書] does not include a separate treatise cataloging poetry in the Eastern Han, it is difficult to guess the number of lyrical poems and songs composed during this time. From records in the *History of the Later Han* found throughout the “Biographies of Literary Men [*Wenyuan zhuan* 文苑傳]” chapter as well as the numerous other individual biographies of scholars and literati, it is clear that most learned scholars during this time were composing lyrical poetry and songs. Scholars who produced a large volume of work in these genres include Wang Yi 王逸 [fl. 120], who is credited with 123 lyrical poems included in a work titled “Poems on the Han [*Han shi* 漢詩]”; Ying Feng 應奉 [fl. 144], who composed “Moved by the Sao [*Gan sao* 感騷]” in thirty *pian* 篇; and Zhao Qi 趙岐 [d. 201], who is recorded as writing “Song of Troubles and Travails [*E tun ge* 厄屯歌]” in twenty-three stanzas. (All three scholars have individual biographies in the *History of the Later Han*.) None of these works are extant today. Lu Qinli’s anthology includes 464 lyrical poems and songs from the Eastern Han period, though this number certainly does not represent the total number of lyrical poems and songs composed during this period.

In total, Lu Qinli’s anthology records 638 Han dynasty lyrical poems and songs. This is the basic body of literature through which scholars today can understand the lyrical poetry landscape during this period. Of these six hundred or so poems, there are roughly one hundred that clearly incorporate *chenwei* related themes.

### 2.1 *Chenwei Themes in Western Han Lyrical Poems and Songs*

Around fifty *yuefu* 樂府 poems and authored lyrical poems and songs from the Western Han explicitly touch upon *chenwei* elements and concepts.

One of the major sources of these poems and songs was Emperor Wu himself, with *chenwei* themes found in many of his surviving works. These include the two-part “Song of the Huzi Dike [*Huzi ge* 瓠子歌]”, five songs attributed to him from the ritual hymns in the “Songs for Suburban Sacrifices [*Jiaosi ge* 郊祀歌]”, as well as the “Song of Lady Li [*Li Furen ge* 李夫人歌]” and “Song of Yearning for the Commandant of Imperial Carriages Zihou [*Si Fengche Zihou ge* 思奉車子侯歌]”. These songs are all deeply steeped in

38 Lu Qinli 逯欽立, *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 [*The Poetry of the Pre-Qin, Han, Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983).

*chenwei* concepts that include calling for blessings in the wake of a natural disaster, celebrating the virtue of empire through the portrayal of auspicious omens, and embodying ideas of the resonance between the cosmos and the world of man in his longing for others.

“Song of the Huzi Dike”: Composed in the second year of the Yuanfeng 元封 period [110–105 BCE] as repairs were being made to a breach in the Yellow River,<sup>39</sup> this two-part song is not only a lament on the destructive power of the flooding waters and the difficulties involved in the repair work, but also a invocation to the deity of the river that epitomizes the resonance between cosmic and human order. The song expresses the emperor’s complaints and supplication to the river spirit, “Ask the Lord of the River for me, ‘Why are you so cruel? Your surging inundations will not cease; you grieve my people ...’” which is then followed by a sacrifice to the spirit of a white horse and jade to obtain their favor, “and cast the precious jade. The Lord of the River hears our plea.” The song then concludes with a prayer that the raging waters will be calmed and that fortune will descend on the empire, “We will stem the break at Xuanfang 宣防 and bring ten thousand blessings!”<sup>40</sup>

“Songs for Suburban Sacrifices”: Five of these nineteen ritual hymns deal directly with auspicious omens and portents that occurred during the reign of Emperor Wu. The two-part “Song of the Heavenly Horse [*Tian ma ge* 天馬歌]” – composed upon the acquisition of the blood sweating horses from Ferghana in 101 BCE<sup>41</sup> – is recorded in both the “Book on Music [*Yueshu* 樂書]” in the *Records of the Grand Historian* [*Shiji* 史記] and the “Treatise on Ritual and Music [*Li yue zhi* 禮樂志]” in the *Hanshu*, though the two versions vary quite significantly.<sup>42</sup> Yet despite these differences, the central idea behind the two versions is the

39 As recorded in the “Annals of Emperor Wu [*Wudi ji* 武帝紀]” in the *Hanshu*: “In the second year, in the winter, the tenth month, the Emperor traveled, and favored Yong 雍 with a visit, where he sacrificed at the altars to the Five Lords on High. In the spring, he favored Goushi 緄氏 with a visit, and thereupon went to Donglai 東萊 Commandery. In the summer, the fourth month, he returned and sacrificed at Mount Tai. He went to Huzi and visited the breach in the dikes of the Yellow River. He commanded those courtiers who had followed him, from the rank of general on down, all to bear brush to stop up the breach in the dike of the Yellow River. He made ‘Song of Huzi.’” See Homer Dubs, trans., *History of the Former Han Dynasty* (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1944), 2:89–91.

40 Translation taken from Burton Watson, trans., *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty II* (Hong Kong: Columbia University Press, 1993), 59.

41 For an English translation and summary of the circumstances in which “Song of the Heavenly Horse” was written, see Anne Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1993), 13–16.

42 For an outline of the textual revision and changes of the two versions, see Zhang Fengyi, *Liang Han jingxue yu wenxue sixiang*, 399–401.

same, with both abounding in *chenwei* concepts of the auspicious connection between humans and the natural world. The first part highlights the virtue of Emperor Wu in attracting such auspicious beasts to his empire, while the second emphasizes the might of the emperor in subjugating the barbarian tribes. Four other hymns explicitly celebrating the occurrence of auspicious omens are also included in the “Songs for Suburban Sacrifices”. Hymn seventeen, “Turning to the Top of Mount Long [*Chao Long shou* 朝隴首]”, was composed upon the capture of a white unicorn [*bai lin* 白麟] around 122/123 BCE, and interweaves this auspicious omen with a celebration of the emperor’s rule and military achievements on a cosmic scale.<sup>43</sup> Hymn twelve, “The Auspicious Star [*Jing xing* 景星]”, was written to celebrate the acquisition of a precious tripod [*bao ding* 寶鼎] in 113 BCE, an auspicious omen symbolizing the legitimacy of Emperor Wu’s reign.<sup>44</sup> Hymn eighteen, “The Beautiful Chariot [*Xiangzai yu* 象載瑜]”, eulogizes the capture of six red wild geese at Donghai 東海 in 94 BCE. Hymn thirteen, “The Abstemious Room [*Qi fang* 齊房]” (also known as the “Song of the Fungus of Immortality Room [*Zhi fang zhi ge* 芝房之歌]”), celebrates the growth of a magical fungus [*zhi* 芝] at the sacrificial center of Ganquan in 109 BCE. The hymn’s origins are recorded in the “Annal of Emperor Wu [*Wudi ji* 武帝紀]” in the *Hanshu* which states:

In the sixth month, an imperial edict said, “In an inner chamber of Ganquan Palace, there has sprung up a fungus of immortality with nine stalks and interconnected leaves. The Lords on High visit widely and do not disdain the inferior rooms; they have granted Us an eminent favor. Let an amnesty be granted to the empire. Let an ox and wine be granted to every hundred households in the Yunyang capital.” The “Song of the Fungus of Immortality Room” was made.<sup>45</sup>

Through singing of auspicious omens that occurred during the reign of Emperor Wu, these four hymns glorified the benevolent rule of the emperor and the

43 The “Annals of Emperor Wu” in the *Hanshu* records that, “In the period Yuanshou 元狩, the first year, in the winter, the tenth month, the Emperor travelled and favored Yong 雍 by a visit, where he sacrificed at the altars to the Five Lords on High [*wuzhi* 五時] and a white unicorn was captured. The ‘White Unicorn’ song was composed.” See Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, 2:57. For a complete translation and analysis of the ritual hymn see Martin Kern, “Religious Anxiety and Political Interest in Western Han Omen Interpretation: The Case of the Han Wudi Period (141–87 B.C.),” *Studies in Chinese History* 10 (2000): 16–21.

44 This event is also recorded in the “Annals of Emperor Wu” in the *Hanshu*. See Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, 2:75.

45 See Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, 2:91–92.

harmony between heaven and earth. Manifestations of the divine protection bestowed on the Han, the hymns represent the desire for a prosperous empire that would be forever blessed.

“Song of Lady Li” and “Song of Yearning for the Commandant of Imperial Carriages Zihou”: Emperor Wu’s “Song of Lady Li” was written as a lament for his deceased concubine of the same name who had died young not long after giving birth to a son. His “Song of Yearning for the Commandant of Imperial Carriages Zihou” was, in a similar fashion, composed in memory of Huo Shan 霍嬭 [120–110 BCE] (style name Zihou 子侯), Commandant of Imperial Carriages and son of his most esteemed military leader Huo Qubing 霍去病 [140–117 BCE]. While the sentiment expressed in both songs is obviously sincere and deep, it is the context in which these feelings arose which is of interest here. With the “Song of Lady Li”, Emperor Wu’s passionate longing for his dead concubine was elicited by the wizardry of Shao Weng 少翁 [d. 117 BCE], who, with the help of wine, dim candles and curtains, was able to have the emperor believe that he had brought back Lady Li’s spirit from the dead. Although this was clearly a setup, the fact that Emperor Wu actually believed he was seeing Lady Li – even taking into account the irrational state of mind that his emotions had left him in – suggests that in his mind he believed in such supernatural occurrences. In the case of his song for Huo Shan, Emperor Wu was moved to passion by Huo Shan’s ascendancy into the immortal realm. This is described in an introduction to the poem recorded in Huo Shan’s biography in *Biographies of Cave Immortals* [*Dongxian zhuan* 洞仙傳] which states:

[Commandant of Imperial Carriages] Zihou was a man of Fufeng. Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty loved him for his purity and youth and transferred his position to that of Palace Attendant. One morning he announced to his family, “Now I will fill an immortal post. I shall depart this spring, but in midsummer I will return briefly.” He returned for a while and departed again, just as he had said. Missing him, Emperor Wu then composed a song: ...

車子侯者，扶風人也。漢武帝愛其清淨，稍遷其位至侍中。一朝語家云：“我今補仙官，此春應去，至夏中當暫還，還少時復去。”如其言。武帝思之，乃作歌。<sup>46</sup>

46 See Zhang Junfang 張君房, comp., *Yunji qi qian* 雲笈七籤 [*Seven Lots from the Book-bag of the Clouds*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 110:2404. English translation taken from Thomas E. Smith, *Ritual and the Shaping of Narrative: The Legend of the Han Emperor Wu* (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1992), 140. The entry in the *Biographies of Cave*

Always wanting to become an immortal himself, Emperor Wu's song is filled with both longing for his friend and envy as he mourns not only the loss of a friend but his own inevitable fate. As there was no religious Daoism during the Western Han, the desire to become immortal and roam the immortal realm reflected in this song should be seen in terms of *chenwei* mysticism.

Another song attributed to a Western Han emperor is the "Song of the Yellow Swan [*Huang hu ge* 黃鵠歌]", which has, throughout history, been attributed to Emperor Zhao. The song narrates the appearance of a swan at the Jianzhang Palace 建章宮 in Chang'an, with the "Diverse Notes on the Western Capital [*Xijing zaji* 西京雜記]" recording that during the first year of the Shiyuan 始元 period [86–80 BCE] a swan came down to the Taiye Pool 太液池 after which Emperor Zhao composed a song. The sighting of the swan is also recorded in the "Annal of Emperor Zhao [*Zhaodiji* 昭帝紀]" in the *Hanshu* (though the text does not mention the song), with Fu Zan's 傳瓚 [fl. 280] commentary of this passage stating: "during the Han dynasty the ruling element was the virtue of earth [*tude* 土德] while the favored color for robes was yellow [note that in the theory of five elements, earth is associated with yellow]. As all swans are white, the fact that this one had become yellow was seen as an auspicious omen and thus recorded. It is said that the Taiye Pool is made up through a gathering of the liquid essence of *yin* and *yang*." Ru Chun's 如淳 [fl. 198–265] commentary on this section in the *Hanshu* notes that the pool's liquid was formed through a combination of the liquids of heaven and earth. Given the propitious nature of the yellow swan and the symbolism behind the Taiye Pool this event would have been seen as doubly auspicious and hence led to the creation of a song to celebrate these fortuitous omens.<sup>47</sup>

The Western Han belief in the resonance between cosmic forces and the human world was already firmly in place from the reign of Emperor Wen and all subsequent Emperors continued to hold to this understanding of the world. They may well have all composed lyrical poems and songs touching on this idea that have since been lost to time. There are even fewer surviving works on this theme by ministers and courtiers, with the only traces of *chenwei* influenced lyrical poetry found in Wei Meng's 韋孟 [ca. 228–156 BCE] "Poem of Admonition [*Fengjian shi* 諷諫詩]". According to his biography in the *Hanshu*, this poem was made to criticize the wantonness of Liu Wu 劉戊

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*Immortals* erroneously omits part of Huo Shan's title and lists this entry under Fengche Zihou.

47 Fu Zan's commentary, Ru Chun's commentary and the line from the "Diverse Notes on the Western Capital" are all cited by Yan Shigu in his commentary of the "Annal of Emperor Zhao" in the *Hanshu*. See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 218.

(King of Chu 楚王, r. 174–153 BCE) who was under his tutelage at that time. The poem reads like an historical epic, starting in remote antiquity and then proceeding through the Shang, Zhou and Qin dynasties before singing of the passing of the mandate to the Han and finishing with a blunt and scathing rebuke of Liu Wu. Wei Meng celebrates the legitimacy of Han rule through the receiving the mandate from a personified heaven:

悠悠嫚秦，	But lo the wanton Qin –
上天不寧。	Heaven on high was not appeased.
乃眷南顧，	And thence cast Its eye southward,
授漢於京。 <sup>48</sup>	And presented [the mandate] to the Han in the [Qin] capital.

## 2.2 *Western Han Sacrificial and Ceremonial Hymns*

Western Han sacrificial and ceremonial hymns have survived relatively intact to the present within the “Treatise on Ritual and Music” in the *Hanshu*. The treatise records two genres of ritual hymns: songs of the temple – made up of seventeen songs under the title “Songs to Pacify the World for Inside the Palace [*Anshi fangzhong ge* 安世房中歌]”; and songs for suburban sacrifices, which today exist as a collection of nineteen short songs – “Songs for Suburban Sacrifices”. According to traditional sources, the temple songs were composed by Lady Tangshan 唐山夫人,<sup>49</sup> the wife of Liu Bang, while the suburban sacrifice songs were said to have been written by Emperor Wu with Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 [179–118 BCE] and other learned scholars. As the primary function of temple and sacrifice songs was to celebrate virtue through following the will of

48 Yan Shigu’s commentary notes that Liu Bang’s home in Pei 沛 was far to the south of the Qin capital Xianyan 咸陽, hence the reference to looking southward. He then notes that the following line refers to Liu Bang assuming the mandate at the Qin capital. Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 3102. For the English translation see Zeb Raft, “The Beginning of Literati Poetry: Four Poems from First-century BCE China,” *T’oung Pao* 96 (2010): 94.

49 The “Treatise on Ritual and Music” records that Lady Tangshan composed the “Music for the Sacrifice in the Inner Chamber [*Fangzhong ci yue* 房中祠樂]” modelled on the “Music for the Inner Chamber [*Fangzhong yue* 房中樂]” of the Zhou times. The songs for *Music for the Inner Chamber* were said to be composed to the music of Chu 楚 which Liu Bang, whose hometown was in the Chu area, was known to be fond of. In 193 BCE the Director of the Office of Music [*yuefu ling* 樂府令], Xiahou Kuan 夏侯寬 [fl. 193 BCE], was ordered to arrange the songs for flute accompaniment. The name of this set of songs was then changed to “Songs to Pacify the World for Inside the Palace”. See Martin Kern, “In Praise of Political Legitimacy: The *Miao* and *Jiao* Hymns of the Western Han,” *Oriens Extremus* 39, no. 1 (1996): 36; and Zong-qi Cai, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 85. See also Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 1043.

heaven and honoring the ancestors, these songs employed more frequent and in-depth use of *chenwei* concepts. In the case of the “Songs to Pacify the World for Inside the Palace”, which in essence were songs that worshipped and revered the ancestors and past generations as a means of glorifying the Han and establishing temple music standards for later generations, *chenwei* concepts were interwoven with concepts of family reverence and filial piety. This connection between *chenwei* and family reverence can be seen in passages of the *Classic of Family Reverence* [*Xiaojing* 孝經] in which Confucius is recorded as saying:

Indeed, family reverence is the constancy of the heavenly cycles, the appropriate responsiveness of the earth, and the proper conduct of the people. It is the constant workings of the heavens and the earth that the people model themselves upon.<sup>50</sup>

It is evident that the concept of family reverence is not just limited to respecting one’s parents but is extended out into respecting and adhering to cosmic principles. This line of thought is continued by Confucius:

In such a world, the parents while living enjoyed the comforts that parents deserve, and as spirits after death took pleasure in the sacrificial offerings made to them. Hence, the empire was peaceful and free of strife, natural disasters did not occur, and man-made calamities were averted.<sup>51</sup>

Just as understandings of *chenwei* were closely connected with the concept of a resonance between the cosmic and human order, the above passage from the *Classic of Family Reverence* reveals that family reverence also takes on this resonance. Indeed, chapter sixteen of the *Classic of Family Reverence* is entitled “Resonance [*Ganying* 感應]” and contains the following lines:

The Master said, “Of old the enlightened kings served their fathers with family reverence, and in so doing, served the heavens with acuity; they served their mothers with family reverence, and in so doing, served the earth judiciously ... With the enlightened kings being acute and judicious in their service to the heavens and to the earth, the gods and spirits sent

50 English translation taken from Henry Rosemont, Jr. and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009), 108. Translator’s note.

51 See Rosemont and Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence*, 109. Translator’s note.

down their blessings upon them ... When at the ancestral temple the Emperor offers his respects, the ghosts and spirits acknowledge him with appreciation. When familial and fraternal deference reaches this level, the feeling resonates with the gods and spirits, shines throughout the four corners of the world, and affects everything everywhere.”<sup>52</sup>

The idea that extending family reverence from one's parents to the earth and the greater cosmos at large could lead to a prosperous empire that is blessed by the heavens is found throughout the “Songs to Pacify the World for Inside the Palace”, with many lines celebrating the blessings that have been received by the empire through its reverence to both man and cosmos: “We receive and maintain the blessings of Heaven”.<sup>53</sup> These blessings are often described in terms of light and radiance: “The great filial piety is truly completed: the splendid virtuous power radiant and clear.” “We receive the shining of the Heavenly Emperor ... We obtain the brilliance of the Heavenly Emperor!”<sup>54</sup>

In contrast to the focus on extensions of family reverence found in the hymns of the temple, the hymns written for the suburban sacrifices – sacrifices made to heaven and earth as prayers for good fortune – focus on celebrating the empire's virtue and fortune through lines that praise the heavens and earth and depict man both in adherence to and in harmony with the heavens. Examples include the second hymn, “The Sovereign Approaches [*Di lin* 帝臨]”, which describes how the Han imperial house maintained harmony with the cosmos (“Clear and harmonious the sixfold united universe”) and used the theory of the five elements to establish standards across music, the calendar and the color of imperial garments as a means of achieving peace, prosperity and order (“We regulate the numbers after the five ... In auspicious vestments We raise the colour yellow!”).<sup>55</sup> Examples celebrating the empire's virtue and fortune are found in the first hymn, “We Have Chosen a Timely Day [*Lian shi ri* 練時日]”, which sings of the blessings the Han imperial house had received from the heavens (“For the Gods journey forth, they send down sweet grace, bounteous good fortune”);<sup>56</sup> and in the seventh hymn, “Behold, the Grand Unity [*Wei Taiyuan* 惟泰元]”, in which by “following the virtue of august heaven”, the Han imperial house is blessed with “sweet dew and rain,” numerous auspicious

52 See Rosemont and Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence*, 114–15. Translator's note.

53 承保天休。See Kern, “In Praise of Political Legitimacy,” 44.

54 大孝備矣，休德昭清。承帝之明 ... 受帝之光。See Kern, “In Praise of Political Legitimacy,” 43.

55 See Kern, “In Praise of Political Legitimacy,” 51. Translator's note.

56 See Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 6–8.

omens and success in their military campaigns (“the Nine Yi tribes shall come to pay tribute in obedience”).<sup>57</sup> The final hymn “The Red Water Dragon [*Chi jiao* 赤蛟]” also sings of heaven blessing the Han with prosperity and fortune and ensuring the eternal reign of the imperial household. These examples are representative of the majority of the nineteen hymns that make up “Songs for Suburban Sacrifices”.

### 2.3 *Songs for the Nao-Bell*

Another important genre of Western Han songs were the *nao*-bell 鐃 songs recorded in Shen Yue’s 沈約 [441–513] “Treatise of Music [*Yue zhi* 樂志]” in the *History of the Southern Song* [*Songshu* 宋書]. The treatise lists eighteen songs under the title “Songs for the Nao-bell [*Nao ge* 鐃歌]”, though many are not completely intelligible due to the numerous corruptions of the text as characters were added and deleted. These eighteen songs are unique for their wide breadth of thematic content that incorporates both popular folk songs and high culture literati compositions – a peculiarity that the literary scholar Xiao Difei 蕭滌非 [1906–1991] believed was a result of the diverse ways in which the songs were used during the Han.<sup>58</sup> Of the eighteen songs, there is only one complete song that can be seen as clearly influenced by *chenwei* concepts: “Up the Mound [*Shang ling* 上陵].”<sup>59</sup> From the line in the poem noting the Ganlu 甘露 [53–50 BCE] era name – “Early in Ganlu’s second year, fungus appeared in Bronze Pool”<sup>60</sup> – the song can be dated to the second year of the Ganlu period during the reign of Emperor Xuan 宣帝 [r. 74–48 BCE]. In a similar vein to his predecessor Emperor Wu, Emperor Xuan had a penchant for great deeds, a tendency to present an image of false peace and prosperity, and a desire to pursue immortality. This is reflected in the number of auspicious signs and omens that occurred over the twenty-five-year period of his reign as recorded in his annal in the *Hanshu*, which is full of portents ranging from sightings of supernatural birds and sweet dew to the discovery of precious tripods and mythical beasts. Many of these events led to changes in the era names used by Emperor Xuan, with his last four era names – Shenjue 神爵 [61–58 BCE], Wufeng 五鳳

57 See Zong-qi Cai, *How to Read Chinese Poetry*, 88–89. Translator’s note.

58 See Xiao Difei 蕭滌非, *Han Wei Liuchao yuefu wenxue shi* 漢魏六朝樂府文學史 [*The Literary History of Yuefu in the Han, Wei, and Six Dynasties*] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1984), 49–50.

59 *Chenwei* concepts do however appear in several stanzas of the other eighteen songs. Examples include *A Sage Emerges* [*Shengren chu* 聖人出], where the emergence of a sage is connected with the harmonization of *yin* and *yang*, the six flying dragons and the accord of the four seasons.

60 See Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 43–45. Translator’s note.

[57–54 BCE], Ganlu, and Huanglong 黃龍 [49–48 BCE] – all changed to commemorate some auspicious sign or portent.<sup>61</sup> Composed in this context, “Up the Mound” contains numerous references to similar auspicious signs. Lines describing “the waters of nectar springs”, the magical fungus that appeared by Bronze Pool and the “sparrows of the vast seas” with “vermilion wild swans winging” are clearly celebrations of similar propitious occurrences.<sup>62</sup> An entry in the “Treatise on the Suburban Sacrifices [*Jiaosi zhi* 郊祀志]” in the *Hanshu* recording Emperor Xuan’s reinstatement of the cult sacrifices to Taiyi at Ganquan in 61 BCE notes that he composed many songs inspired by these rituals.<sup>63</sup> It would have been likely that many of the songs that he wrote during this occasion would have concerned the harmony between man and the cosmos as well as numerous auspicious portents. Unfortunately, none of these songs are extant today.

#### 2.4 *Chenwei Influences on Songs, Lyrical Poetry and Yuefu Poetry in the Eastern Han*

Existing records of lyrical poems and *yuefu* poems from the Eastern Han include around twenty pieces that incorporate content related to *chenwei* concepts.<sup>64</sup>

The tendency for Eastern Han emperors to favor *chenwei* texts is clearly evident with Emperor Ming, who in addition to being described by traditional histories as a hard working and just ruler, was also an ardent believer in *chenwei* concepts. This can be seen from the multiple allusions to *chenwei* predictions in his edicts and the many auspicious signs and portents that are recorded in his annal in the *History of the Later Han*. Further evidence of Emperor Ming’s

61 For a condensed account of the occurrences behind these era names see the “Treatise on the Suburban Sacrifices” in the Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 1248–53.

62 Shen Yue 沈約, *Songshu* 宋書 [*History of the Liu Song Dynasty*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 641.

63 The *Hanshu* reads “In the first month of the next year, the emperor visited the palace at Ganquan and performed the suburban sacrifices at the Taizhi altar, during which there appeared several auspicious omens. Imitating the example set previously by Emperor Wu, [the emperor arranged for] stately chariots and splendid imperial robes, fasted to show his respect, and composed many songs.” [明年正月，上始幸甘泉，郊見泰畤，數有美祥。修武帝故事，盛車服，敬齊祠之禮，頗作詩歌。] See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 1249.

64 It is interesting to note that current records of Han lyrical poetry where the author is known are all dated either prior to the reigns of Emperor Xuan and Emperor Yuan 元帝 [r. 49–33 BCE] or after the reign of Emperor Ming (but prior the period of Emperor Huan and Emperor Ling 靈帝), with no works surviving from the end of the Western Han to the beginning of the Eastern Han. That is to say, these works were all composed during the first and third stages of *chenwei* development during the Han dynasty.

fondness for *chenwei* writings can be found in the change he made to the title of the imperial officer of music based on an apocryphal *wei* text at the suggestion of Cao Chong 曹充 [fl. 56–60].<sup>65</sup> With such enthusiasm for *chenwei* coming from the emperor himself, it is only natural that the lyrical poems and songs composed during this period contain traces of *chenwei* concepts. An example of such a work extant today is the “Song-verse for Military Virtue [*Wude wu ge shi* 武德舞歌詩]” composed by Emperor Ming’s brother, Liu Cang 劉蒼 [d. 83], King of Dongping 東平. As recorded in the “Treatise on the Suburban Sacrifices” in the *Han Records on the Eastern Institute* [*Dongguan Han ji* 東觀漢記], on the fourth day of the eighth month in the third year of the Yongping 永平 period [58–75], court discussions were held concerning the songs and dances that should be used in the temple ceremony to honor Emperor Guangwu. Liu Cang suggested that dances should consist of the *Wenshi* 文始 [Civil Beginning], *Wuxing* 五行 [Five Elements], and *Wude* 武德 [Military Virtue] and thereupon submitted a lyrical poem regarding this matter to the Emperor. The poem celebrates the great achievements of Emperor Guangwu in restoring the Han imperial house and bringing the empire into order and ends with an invocation for the empire to be blessed with eternal fortune. References to *chenwei* influences can be seen in lines that talk of the Han as manifesting the meaning of the prophecies and emulating the virtue of the sage ruler Yao. Another example of a *chenwei* influenced work in this period is Wang Ji’s 王吉 [fl. 72] “Song on Shooting the Crow [*She wu ci* 射烏辭]”. As recorded in both the *A Primer for Beginners* [*Chuxue ji* 初學記] and the *Universal Geography of the Taiping era* [*Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記],<sup>66</sup> Wang Ji was acting as a guard during Emperor Ming’s eastern inspection to Mount Tai 泰山 when, as they arrived in Xingyang 滎陽, a cawing crow flew over the emperor’s carriage. Wang Ji immediately

65 During questioning from the emperor in relation to a memorial that he had written arguing that the Han needed to establish its own ceremonial code, Cao Chong cited a prediction from a *wei* text based on the *Shangshu* entitled *The Book of Documents: The Big Dipper Key* [*Shangshu xuan ji qian* 尚書璇機鈴] which stated that a Han dynasty emperor with harmonious virtue would create music entitled *yu* 予. This pleased Emperor Ming and he thereupon changed the title of the imperial officer of music from *Tai yue* 太樂 [Grand Musician] to *Tai yu yue* 太子樂 [Grand Yu Musician]. See the biography of Cao Chong’s son Cao Bao in the *History of the Later Han*.

66 See Xu Jian 徐堅, ed., *Chuxue ji* 初學記 [*A Primer for Beginners*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 30.732; and Yue Shi 樂史, *Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記 [*Universal Geography of the Taiping Era*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 168. The entry in the *Chuxue ji* was taken from a line in the now lost “Collected Statements [*Ji shi* 輯事]” chapter of the *Comprehensive Meanings of Popular Customs* [*Fengsu tong* 風俗通], which itself was taken from another lost text, the *Imperial Diary of Emperor Ming* [*Mingdi qiju zhu* 明帝起居註].

shot down the bird and composed the following song: “Caw the crow cries. I have drawn the bow and fired, piercing it under the left wing. Your majesty will live for ten thousand years, and I will become a 2000-bushel official.”<sup>67</sup> The emperor then rewarded him with 2.4 million cash and ordered that pictures of the crow should be painted on the walls of a pavilion. While the lyrics of the song are vulgar and crude, the large reward given to Wang Ji was a result of *chenwei* symbolism that saw the crow as a symbol for the sun and the sun as a symbol for the emperor.<sup>68</sup> In light of this interpretation, Wang Ji’s shooting of the crow over the carriage of Emperor Ming was an auspicious portent implying that Emperor Ming had obtained the sun and that his virtue was in harmony with the cosmos.<sup>69</sup> The three “Songs of the Zuodu People [Zuodu yi ge 荊都夷歌]” by King Tangzou of the White Wolf tribe 白狼王唐叟 [fl. 74] are also examples of Eastern Han songs influenced by *chenwei* concepts. The songs, which are recorded in the “Treatise on the Southwest Barbarian Tribes [Xinan yi zhuan 西南夷傳]” of the *History of the Later Han* were originally sung in the dialect of the Zuodu people and were translated by the clerical officer Tian Gong 田恭 [fl. 74] under the direction of Zhu Fu 朱輔 [fl. 70s], inspector of Yi province 益州, before being presented to Emperor Ming. The highly stylized songs liken the emperor to the rising sun and celebrate the Han imperial house for its virtue, benevolence and harmonious accord with the cosmos.<sup>70</sup>

67 烏鳥啞啞，引弓射左腋。陛下壽萬歲，臣為二千石。 Officials in the Han were ranked according to their salaries which were paid in both grain and cash. Only high ranking officials such as ministers would earn 2000 bushels [*dan* 石] or more. See Rafe de Crespigny, *A Biographical Dictionary of Later Han to the Three Kingdoms (23–220 AD)* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 817, 1221.

68 Crows have been used as a symbol for the sun since ancient times with many old texts referring to this association. As recorded in the “Great Wilderness: East [*Da huang dong jing* 大荒東經]” chapter of the *Shanhaijing*, “Above the Tang Valley [*Tanggu*] is the Fu Tree [*Fu mu* 扶木]. When one sun reaches it, another sun goes out; all of them carried by birds.” Guo Pu’s commentary notes that in the sun there is a three-legged crow. See Yuan Ke, *Shanhaijing*, 408–9. For the English translation of the quoted passage in the *Shanhaijing* and an analysis of the three-legged crow see Sarah Allan, *The Shape of the Turtle: Myth, Art, and Cosmos in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 28–34. Translator’s note.

69 The apocryphal *wei* text *Spring and Autumn Annals: Movement of the Big Dipper* [*Chunqiu yundou shu* 春秋運斗樞] contains a line stating: “When the *Wei* star is seen then the sun and moon shine, the crow has three legs, people practice the rites and are righteous, and all things are in accord.” [維星得，則日月光，烏三足，禮義循，物類合。] See Li Fang 李昉, ed., *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 [*Taiping Reign Period Imperial Encyclopedia*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 4083.

70 See Nathan Wayne Hill, “Songs of the Bailang: A New Transcription with Etymological Commentary,” *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême Orient* 103 (2017): 389–91.

Any analysis of *chenwei* related lyrical poems and songs during the reign of Emperor Ming must also take into account the five lyrical poems listed at the end of Ban Gu's "The Two Capitals", namely "The Luminous Hall [*Ming tang* 明堂]", "Fu on the Royal Academy", "The Divine Tower", "The Precious Tripods [*Bao ding* 寶鼎]", and "The White Pheasant [*Bai zhi* 白雉]"; all of which have pronounced *chenwei* influences. The first three pieces take their titles from the names of buildings which, since ancient times, had been used as eminent seats of education, governance and sacrifice. Through their associated institutions and practices, these buildings played an important role in realizing the political need to communicate with the heavens and cultivate men of talent and were thus imbued with the idea of divine instruction. These *chenwei* influences are furthered by the precious tripod in the fourth piece (an auspicious vessel that was associated with conquering and obtaining all under heaven) and the white pheasant in the fifth (a powerful symbol that was considered a divine omen), both of which had overt political connotations of receiving the Mandate of Heaven. Ban Gu's glorification of the Han through songs on the auspicious nature of the empire's institutions highlight the profound *chenwei* influences on his understanding of the world. In addition to these five pieces, the *Taiping Reign Period Imperial Encyclopedia* [*Taiping yulan* 太平御覽] contains fragments of two other songs written by Ban Gu that contain elements associated with *chenwei* themes. The first of these, "Song of Auspicious Grain [*Jiahe ge* 嘉禾歌]", sings of timely springs rains and the sprouting of auspicious grain as signs of a bountiful harvest. This celebration of the cosmic world is also a celebration of the Han in which the benevolent and virtuous rule of the dynasty is manifest through the proper timing of the seasons and the blessings of nature. The second, "Song of the Magic Fungus [*Lingzhi ge* 靈芝歌]", praises the virtue of the Han as matching that of the heavens through a description of the auspicious magic fungus [*Lingzhi* 靈芝].<sup>71</sup>

Apart from Ban Gu's works above, other writers in the mid to late Eastern Han using *chenwei* elements in lyrical poems and songs include Cui Yin, Zhang Heng and Hou Jin 侯瑾 [fl. 190]. Cui Yin's "Panegyric for the Northern Tour [*Beixun song* 北巡頌]" – one of four panegyrics written to celebrate the

71 The songs are recorded as being part of a set in Ban Gu's (no longer extant) "Song-verses on Appraising Merit [*Lungong geshi* 論功歌詩]" which was said to have been included in his *Eulogies of Han* [*Han song* 漢頌] (also no longer extant). *Song of Auspicious Grain* appears without a title in volume 1 of the *Taiping yulan* (the title was added by Lu Qinli in his *Poetry of the Pre-Qin, Han, Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties*) while "Song of the Magic Fungus" is listed under volume 570. See Li Fang, *Taiping yulan*, 2578.

inspection tours of Emperor Zhang – contains elements of *chenwei* omens and signs that are highlighted in his preface to the poem:

In the first month of the third year of the Yuanhe period the emperor had completed the suburban sacrifices.<sup>72</sup> Thereafter, he headed east on a tour of inspection. He went out of Henei, passed through the outskirts of Qingzhou and Yanzhou, turned the carriages back to Jizhou, and then performed the rites for the Northern Summit [Mount Heng 恒山]. The emperor's benevolence spread throughout the land to all his subjects and a number of auspicious omens and signs appeared. Thereafter, a panegyric was composed [in praise of the tour].

元和三年正月，上既畢郊祀之事，乃東巡，出於河內，納青、兗之郊；回冀州，禮北嶽。聖澤流浹，黎元被德，嘉瑞並集，乃作頌。<sup>73</sup>

Cui Yin's "Seven-syllable Line Poem [*Qi yan shi* 七言詩]"; which today only exists in fragments, shows further examples of *chenwei* influences with references to the mythical *luan* 鸞 bird symbolizing that the virtuous governance of the empire was in line with the wishes of the cosmos. Zhang Heng's use of *chenwei* themes in his "Pronouncements for the Eastern Tour [*Dongxun gao* 東巡誥]" is also given in the form of mythological birds.<sup>74</sup>

On the auspicious first day of the second month, the emperor made an inspection to Mount Tai ... on that day, a pair of phoenixes alighted on

72 According to records in the "Annal of Emperor Zhang [*Zhangdi ji* 章帝紀]" in the *History of the Later Han*, the *Records of the Later Han* [*Hou Han ji* 後漢紀] and the *Han Records on the Eastern Institute* the Eastern Tour took place at the beginning of the second year of the Yuanhe 元和 period [84–87] during the reign of Emperor Zhang. The date given above is probably the result of a printing error in the *Grove of Writing from the Academy of Culture* [*Wenguan cilin* 文館詞林].

73 Once thought to be lost, Cui Yin's panegyrics were rediscovered in Japan at the end of the 19th century as part of the 7th century collection, *Grove of Writing from the Academy of Culture*, volume 346. The second half of the panegyric quotes a large section from a song and hence can be seen as an example of the use of *chenwei* in Eastern Han songs. For an analysis of Cui Yin's four inspection tour panegyrics see Sharon Sanderovitch, *Presence and Praise: Writing the Imperial Body in Han China* (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2017), 68–101. Parts of the above translation have been drawn from this study. Translator's note.

74 Zhang Zhenze 張震澤 believes that this text was composed during the third year of the Yanguang 延光 period [122–125] of Emperor An 安帝 [r. 106–125]. See Zhang Zhenze 張震澤, *Zhang Heng shiwen ji jiaozhu* 張衡詩文集校注 [*Poetry and Literary Collection of Zhang Heng with Collated Commentaries*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 318.

the tower ... upon reflecting on this auspicious occurrence, a member of the retinue accompanying the inspection and assisting with the sacrifices made the following song ...

惟二月初吉，帝將狩於岱嶽。.....是日也，有鳳雙集於臺。.....從巡助祭者，茲惟嘉瑞，乃歌曰.....<sup>75</sup>

Writing towards the end of the Eastern Han, Hou Jin's use of *chenwei* elements also show a similar tendency to celebrate auspicious omens and signs in the form of animals. An example is his reference to the omen of the white fish jumping into King Wu's boat which appears in a fragment of a surviving poem recorded in *juan* 51 of the Tang dynasty encyclopedia *Transcribed Texts from the Northern Hall* [*Bei tang shu chao* 北堂書鈔] compiled by Yu Shinan 虞世南 [558–638].

## 2.5 *Lyrics for Zither Songs*

The Eastern Han also saw the integration of *chenwei* content with the *yuefu* genre known as “Lyrics for Zither Songs [*Qin qu ge ci* 琴曲歌辭]”. Numerous examples of this integration can be found in *Zither Tunes* [*Qin cao* 琴操], a collection of melodies and songs for the zither attributed to Cai Yong. Entries in *Zither Tunes* commonly begin with prefaces that give a brief background on the context in which the songs were written, and it is through these that the powerful influence of *chenwei* on this genre can be seen. “King Wen Receives the Mandate [*Wenwang shou ming* 文王受命]” is one such example, with the preface to the song describing the virtuous conduct of King Wen in contrast with the corrupt behaviour of King Zhou 紂王, whose tyranny and brutality had driven away his ministers and officials to the court of King Wen. The preface then recounts the *chenwei* inspired story in which King Wen received the Mandate of Heaven, namely in the form of a prophetic message held in the mouth of a phoenix, an auspicious occurrence that inspired him to compose the song. The song's lyrics, which are given after the preface, continue to reflect these *chenwei* themes. Another example from the *Zither Tunes* collection is “Song of the Attending Phoenix [*Yifeng ge* 儀鳳歌]”, which the preface attributes to King Cheng of Zhou 周成王 [r. 1043–1021 BCE]. The preface begins by highlighting the virtuous rule of King Cheng before recounting the many auspicious omens and signs that symbolized the peace and prosperity the king had achieved. These include *qilin* roaming in the walled gardens, phoenixes flying in the courtyard, as well as the presentation of pheasants as a tribute gift from

75 Ouyang Xun, *Songben yiwén leiju*, 39.1080.

the Yuechang 越裳 people in the south. These *chenwei* elements continue in the song proper that follows the preface. The “Song on Capturing the Lin [*Huo lin ge* 獲麟歌]”, which is appended as an additional song at the end of *Zither Tunes*, is another example of the way in which *chenwei* stories and ideas are integrated into Eastern Han literature.<sup>76</sup> The preface associates the composition of the song with a famous *chenwei* story in which Confucius meets a woodcutter who has captured a *lin* 麟. Understanding the auspicious nature of such an occasion, Confucius was deeply moved by the sight of the beast and proceeded to weep and embrace the *lin*. The preface describes how, just as Confucius was holding the creature’s head between his hands, the *lin* suddenly spat out three prophecies that foretold the fall of the Zhou and the restoration of the Han by Emperor Guangwu. These three songs and their prefaces in *Zither Tunes*, while traditionally ascribed to sages and rulers of the Zhou, are in fact Eastern Han compositions, and reflect the profound influence of *chenwei* culture on song lyrics during this period.<sup>77</sup> Another Eastern Han zither song that echoes this trend is “Song of the Southern Winds [*Nan feng ge* 南風歌]” which survives in *juan* 57 of Guo Maoqian’s 郭茂倩 [ca. 1046–1099] *Collection of Yuefu Poetry* [*Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集]. The song is ascribed to the sage ruler Shun 舜, who is recorded in the “Book on Music” chapter in the *Shiji* as using a five-stringed zither to play “Southern Winds”. Shun’s playing of this song was, according to Sima Qian 司馬遷 [145–90 BCE], full of life-giving energy and in accord with the cosmos. This harmony is reflected in the lyrics of “Song of the Southern Winds”, which record the coming of phoenixes and the emergence of the Yellow Dragon from the Yellow River bearing auspicious signs and portents on its back, yet another example of the incorporation of *chenwei* concepts into Eastern Han literature.

## 2.6 Folk Songs and Ditties

While the brief examples given above show the close connection between *chenwei* concepts and Han lyrical poetry and songs, popular forms of literature such as folk songs and ditties also have strong associations with *chenwei* culture, further highlighting the profound influence that *chenwei* ideas and beliefs held over society during the Han dynasty. Today, there are around twenty Han folk ditties still extant which show elements of *chenwei* themes, with most of them taking the form of children’s songs.

76 The title for this song was not recorded in *Zither Tunes* and has been taken from *Record of Ancient Poetry* [*Gu shi ji* 古詩紀].

77 For a detailed examination on the dating of these songs see Zhang Fengyi, *Liang Han jingxue yu wenxue sixiang*, 414–16.

穎水清，        While the waters of the Ying run bright  
 灌氏寧。        It means the Guans are still all right;  
 穎水濁，        But when the waters run polluted  
 灌氏族。<sup>78</sup>      We'll know they've all been executed!

Children's song from Yingchuan 穎川 during the reign of Emperor Wu: This children's song foretells the death of Guan Fu 灌夫 [d. 131 BCE], a stalwart war hero famed for his absolute honesty, who, due to his obstinate behaviour, found himself in a dispute with Tian Fen 田蚡 [d. 130], the half-brother of the Empress Dowager Wang 王皇后 [d. 126]. Tian Fen's close relationship with the dowager resulted in Emperor Wu ordering the execution of Guan Fu and his family.<sup>79</sup>

井水溢，        Well-water overflows,  
 滅竈煙，        Extinguishing the hearth,  
 灌玉堂，        Pouring into jade halls,  
 流金門。<sup>80</sup>      Flowing through golden gates.

Children's ditty during the reign of Emperor Yuan 元帝 [r. 48–33]: This ditty was interpreted as foretelling the rise of Wang Mang who was seen by historians in the Eastern Han as representing the Power of Water [*shuide* 水德]. The metaphor of the hearth is a symbol of the Han, which, by the end of the Western Han period, was believed to be governed by the Power of Fire [*huode* 火德]. The water coming out of the well to extinguish the hearth, was, therefore, understood as a prophecy of Wang Mang's eventual overthrow of the Han.<sup>81</sup>

78 See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 52.2384.

79 See Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 [*The Grand Scribe's Records*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), 1465. See "The Biographies of the Marquises of Weiqi and Wuan" in Burton Watson, trans., *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty*, 2:89–106.

80 See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 1395; Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 84–85.

81 Ban Gu explained in the "Treatise on the Five Elements [*Wuxing zhi* 五行志]" chapter in the *Hanshu*: "This is a children's ditty from the reign of the Han Emperor Yuan. In the reign of Emperor Cheng, on the day *wuzi* 戊子 of the third month of the year 31 BCE, the well-springs in the north palace gradually rose and overflowed, streaming in a southerly direction. 'Well-water' is the power of *Yin*; 'the hearth' is the power of *Yang*; 'jade halls' and 'golden gates' refer to the residences of royalty. This symbolizes the flourishing of *Yin* and the extinction of *Yang*, and corresponds to the usurpation of the throne. Wang Mang was born in the fourth year of the reign-period Chuyuan 初元 [48–44 BCE] of Emperor Yuan. In Emperor Cheng's reign he was ennobled; he became assistant-in-government to the Three Ministers and then he usurped power." See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 1395; Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 85–86. Translator's note.

燕燕尾涎涎，	Swallow, swallow, sleek, sleek is your tail!
張公子，	Lord Chang
時相見。	Is always having audience.
木門倉瑯根，	At timbered gates with green bronze rings,
燕飛來，	Swallow flies in,
啄皇孫，	Pecks at princes,
皇孫死，	The princes die,
燕啄矢。 <sup>82</sup>	Swallow pecks their dung!

Children's ditty during the reign of Emperor Cheng: This ditty was said to predict the misfortune brought upon the empire by Zhao Feiyan 趙飛燕 [d. 1 BCE], the entertainer who rose to become empress. With her name Feiyan literally meaning "flying swallow", the ditty was seen as a prediction of her rise to power with the acts of regal infanticide that she would be accused of reflected in the lines "pecks at princes, the princes die".<sup>83</sup>

邪徑敗良田，	Crooked paths ruin fine fields,
讒口亂善人。	Twisted words confuse good folk.
桂樹華不實，	Cassia blooms, but bears no fruit,
黃爵巢其顛。	A yellow sparrow nests in its crown.
故為人所羨，	Once the envy of others,
今為人所憐。 <sup>84</sup>	Now pitied by all.

Folk ballad during the reign of Emperor Cheng: Another example of folk prediction that Wang Mang would usurp the Han, this ballad was interpreted in

82 See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 1395; Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 87.

83 Ban Gu's explanation of the meaning behind the ditty given in the "The Treatise on the Five Elements" is translated by Birrell as follows: "This is a children's ditty from the period of Emperor Cheng, Later, when the emperor left the palace incognito on pleasure outings, he was always accompanied by the Marquis of Fuping 富平侯, Zhang Fang 張放, and pretended he was one of the marquis's household. He once called on Princess Yang-a 陽阿主 who used to hold musical performances, and there he saw Zhao Feiyan the dancer and favored her sexually. That is why the ditty says, 'Swallow, swallow, / Sleek, sleek is your tail!' as she was lovely in appearance. 'Lord Zhang' refers to the Marquis of Fuping. 'Timbered gates with green bronze rings' refers to the bronze metal rings on the palace gates, which indicates that Lord Zhang had been elevated to the peerage. Later on, when Zhao Feiyan was promoted to the rank of empress, she brought criminal harm to the imperial heirs. She conceded her guilt, which is alluded to in the lines, 'Swallow flies in, / Pecks at princes, / The princes die, / Swallow pecks their dung!'" See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 1395; Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 87.

84 See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 1396; Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 86.

terms of the Five Elements theory in which the cassia tree, which took on the color red and represented the imperial house of Han, was taken up by the yellow sparrow, an allusion to Wang Mang who was said to be governed by the virtue of earth [*tude* 土德] and hence associated with yellow.<sup>85</sup>

出吳門，	Going out the Wu gate,
望緹群。	Gazing up at Mount Tiqun.
見一蹇人，	I see a cripple hobbling past,
言欲上天。	Who says he wants to go to heaven.
令天可上，	If the heavens could be reached,
地上安得人？ <sup>86</sup>	Why would people stay on earth?

Children's song from Tianshui 天水 during the final years of Wang Mang's rule: This song was interpreted as referring to the downfall of Wei Xiao 隗囂 [d. 33], a high minister under Wang Mang who later joined forces with Gongsun Shu 公孫述 [d. 36] before being defeated by Emperor Guangwu. Said to have suffered from a walking disorder in his youth, Wei Xiao was recorded in later commentaries as harboring thoughts of claiming the empire for himself – reflected above in the line stating that he “wants to go to heaven.”<sup>87</sup>

諧不諧，	Peace or war?
在赤眉。	Red Eyebrows have the final say.
得不得，	Who will be emperor?
在河北。 <sup>88</sup>	The answer lies up in Hebei.

Children's song from the southern regions during the Gengshi 更始 period [23–25]: Quoted in Li Xian's 李賢 [655–684] commentary of the “Annal of

85 Birrell translates Ban Gu's interpretation of this ballad: “This is a ditty from the period of Emperor Cheng, which also says [text of the song]. The ‘cassia’ tree is red in colour, which is the symbol of the Han house; ‘blooms, but bears no fruit’ means to be without offspring. Wang Mang assumed the symbolic colour yellow, which is indicated by the ‘yellow sparrow’ which ‘nests’ on the ‘crown’ of the tree.” See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 1396; Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 86.

86 Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 [*History of the Later Han Dynasty*], comm. Li Xian 李賢 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 53; Lü Zongli, *Rumor in the Early Chinese Empires*, trans. Kek Koon Wee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 222.

87 See the commentary of Li Xian et al in Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, 531. Both Wu gate and Mount Tiqun refer to locations around Tianshui, in modern day Gansu. For another English translation and analysis see Lü Zongli, *Rumor in the Early Chinese Empires*, trans., Kek Koon Wee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 222. Translator's note.

88 See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 11.

Emperor Guangwu [*Guangwu ji* 光武紀] in the *History of the Later Han*, this song was interpreted as predicting the defeat of the Gengshi Emperor Liu Xuan 劉玄 by the Red Eyebrows and the ascendancy of Emperor Guangwu, who was appointed as a commissioner in Ji province north of the Yellow River during the Gengshi period.<sup>89</sup>

## 2.7 *Eastern Han Songs and Ditties*

黃牛白腹，      Yellow ox's belly's white;  
五銖當復。<sup>90</sup>    Restored Five-grainer'd make things right.

Children's song from Shuzhong 蜀中 (present day Sichuan): Traditionally dated to the sixth year of Emperor Guangwu's reign, this rhyme was interpreted as foretelling Emperor Guangwu's victory over Gongsun Shu. References to the colors reflect the Five Element theory with the white (Metal) seen as representing Gongsun Shu and the yellow (Earth) interpreted as alluding to Wang Mang (the succession between the two men thus symbolized as metal overcoming earth). As a coin of the Han imperial house, the "Five-grainer" [*wuzhu* 五銖] was interpreted as referring to Emperor Guangwu, with its return foretelling his victory over Gongsun Shu.<sup>91</sup>

直如弦，      Straight as a bowstring  
死道邊。      You'll die by the wayside!  
曲如鉤，      Crooked as a hook  
反封侯。<sup>92</sup>    You'll be dubbed a duke!

Children's song from Luoyang during the latter stages of Emperor Shun's 漢順帝 [r. 125–144] reign: Interpreted as referring to the period of palace plots and succession schemes following the death of Emperor Shun, this song was seen as foretelling the death of Grand Commandant Li Gu 李固 [94–147], who had supported the candidacy of Liu Suan 劉蒜 [d. 147], and the enfeoffment of Zhao Jie 趙戒 [d. 154] and Hu Guang 胡廣 [91–172], ministers who had at first placed their support with Liu Suan but were eventually persuaded by the

89 Note that "Hebei" here should not be read anachronistically for the modern-day province but rather as a general term for the regions north of the Yellow River.

90 Peng Xinwei 彭信威, *A Monetary History of China, Volumes One and Two*, trans. Edward H. Kaplan (Bellingham: East Asian Studies Press, 1993), 114. Translator's note.

91 See Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, 3281; Peng Xinwei, *A Monetary History of China, Volumes One and Two*, 114.

92 Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 91. Translator's note.

brother of the Empress Dowager Liang Ji 梁冀 [98–159] to support the accession of the future Emperor Huan. Li Gu's support for Liu Suan eventually led to his imprisonment and death, with his body placed by the roadside as a warning to others.<sup>93</sup>

城上烏，	Crows on city walls,
尾畢逋。	Tails down in retreat.
公為吏，	Father became an officer,
子為徒。	Son became a conscript.
.....	...
梁下有懸鼓，	Under the rafter there is a hanging drum,
我欲擊之丞	I want to strike it, but the minister will be angry.
卿怒。 <sup>94</sup>	

Children's song during the early years of Emperor Huan's reign: Interpreted within the context of the social upheaval caused by war and the greed of Emperor Ling's 靈帝 [r. 168–189] mother, Dowager Dong 董太后 [d. 189], this song was said to predict many of the political events that occurred throughout the reigns of Emperor Huan and Emperor Ling.<sup>95</sup>

白蓋小車何	Countless white carriages a-coming.
延延。	
河間來合諧，	Peace – He will come from Hejian,
河間來合諧。 <sup>96</sup>	Peace – He will come from Hejian.

Children's song from Luoyang during the last years of Emperor Huan's reign: This song was said to foretell the death of Emperor Huan and the factional struggles that followed the accession of his successor Emperor Ling.<sup>97</sup>

93 The actions of Zhao Jie and Hu Guang were seen as “crooked” by later historians with Fan Ye likening them both to excrement [猶糞土也], See Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, 3281.

94 Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 93. Translator's note.

95 See Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, 3281–82; Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 93–94.

96 Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, 3283–84.

97 As Emperor Huan had left behind no heir, a conference was held to determine his successor by the then empress dowager Dou Miao 竇妙 [d. 172] with all participants eventually agreeing to the proposal of the imperial clerk Liu Shu 劉儵 [d. 168] to have Liu Hong 劉宏 [156–189], the marquis of Jiedu Village 解犢亭 in Hejian take the throne. The “white carriages” in the song were interpreted as the royal procession taking Liu Hong to the capital. In the year of factional struggles that followed Emperor Ling's accession, Liu Shu was driven to death by the eunuch Hou Lan 侯覽 [d. 172] who was jealous of his potential influence with the young emperor. Mourning the death of his friend, the emperor

承樂世，董逃。	Born into a happy world, Dong flees!
遊四郭，董逃。	Roving through the city's four quarters, Dong flees!
蒙天恩，董逃。	Enjoying blessings from Heaven, Dong flees!
帶金紫，董逃。	Girdled with gold dark red, Dong flees!
行謝恩，董逃。	Showing his gratitude, Dong flees!
整車騎，董逃。	Preparing carriage and riders, Dong flees!
垂欲發，董逃。	Soon to set off, Dong flees!
與中辭，董逃。	To the main house bids farewell, Dong flees!
出西門，董逃。	Leaving West Gate, Dong flees!
瞻宮殿，董逃。	Staring at the palace, Dong flees!
望京城，董逃。	Staring at the capital city, Dong flees!
日夜絕，董逃。	The sun dying at night, Dong flees!
心摧傷，董逃。 <sup>98</sup>	Heart broken with sorrow, Dong flees!

*Dong Flees* song from Luoyang during the reign of Emperor Ling: Interpreted in the context of Dong Zhuo's 董卓 [d. 192] palace coup in 189 and his tyrannical control over Luoyang and then Chang'an, this song was seen as a prediction of his death and the massacre of his family.

千里草，	Grass nurtured over dale,
何青青，	A sea of green.
十日卜，	Omens under horizon's zenith,
不得生。 <sup>99</sup>	Dead human being.

Children's song from Luoyang during the first years of Emperor Xian's 漢獻帝 [r. 189–220] reign: This short song was said to foretell the rise and fall of Dong Zhuo through a play on the characters of his name. Similar to the reverse acronym on Dong Zhuo's name given in lines one and three above, the Chinese characters used in these lines would, when placed on top of each other, form Dong Zhuo's name [Line one: 千里草 = 董; line three: 十日卜 = 卓]. While stroke order norms dictate that characters should be written from top to bottom and left to right, these two lines of split up characters were deliberately

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arranged for Liu Shu's brother Liu He 劉郃 [d. 179] to come from Hejian to the capital and take on an official position as an Excellency. The line "Peace – He will come from Hejian" was said to allude to Liu He's arrival, with his name "He 郃" also punning with the word for "peace and harmony" [*hexie* 合諧/和諧]. See Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, 3283–84.

98 See Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 95.

99 See Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, 3285.

given from bottom to top to reflect that Dong Zhuo, in usurping control from the emperor, would turn cosmic order on its head.<sup>100</sup>

From this overview of *chenwei* content in lyrical poetry and songs during the Han dynasty, the use of *chenwei* concepts can be seen in lyrical poetry written by emperors, in *yuefu* poetry and zither songs, as well as in popular songs and ditties of the common populace. *Chenwei* themes in the poetry of emperors and extant *yuefu* and zither song lyrics tend to be rather homogenous in their universal glorification of the Han, using a range of omens, signs and portents to celebrate the receiving of the mandate and the virtuous accord between the dynasty and the cosmos. In contrast, popular songs and ditties were more likely to use *chenwei* concepts as expressions of satire and irony, with the genuine sentiment found in these songs closely associated with the social and lived realities of the times in which they were written.

### 3 *Chenwei* Resonances in Han Dynasty Literary Thought

Within the fragments of *chenwei* writings extant today, there are some lines and passages that can be seen as referring to ideas concerning literary thought. These fragments touch upon ideas around artistic modes of thought, theories surrounding the production and function of literature, the place of *xingqing* 性情 [feelings] in literature, as well as theories expounding the influence of geography and environment on art and culture. For a preliminary overview of the *chenwei* influences on these theories see this author's article on "Literary Theories in Extant *Chenwei* Writings [*Chenwei yiwen de wenyi guannian* 識緯佚文的文藝觀念]". This section will focus on theories regarding the generation and use of literature in an attempt to uncover the connections between Han literary thought and the literary theories implicit within Han dynasty *chenwei* texts.

#### 3.1 *Orthodox and Apocryphal Theories regarding the Production of Poetry and Music*

Two of the earliest and most influential texts regarding the generation of literature and music are the "Great Preface" to the *Mao Tradition of the Shijing* [*Mao*

100 See Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, 3285. A more faithful rendition of the translation is given by Timothy Wai Keung Chan: "A thousand *li* of grass – How green, so green. The divination on the tenth reads: It will not live." See Timothy Wai Keung Chan, "A New Reading of an Early Medieval Riddle: 'Utterly Wonderful, Lovely Words?'" *T'oung Pao* 99, 1–3 (2013): 68.

*Shi da xu* 毛詩大序] and the introduction to the “Record of Music [Yueji 樂記]” chapter in the *Book of Rites* [Liji 禮記]:

The poem is that to which what is intently on the mind [zhi 志] goes. In the mind [xin 心] it is “being intent” [zhi]; coming out in language [yan 言], it is a poem. The affections [qing 情] are stirred within and take on form [xing 形] in words [yan].<sup>101</sup>

From the “Great Preface”

All tones [yin 音] that arise are generated from the human mind [xin]. When the human mind is moved [dong 動], some external thing [wu 物] has caused it. Stirred [gan 感] by external things into movement, it takes on form [xing] in sound ... Music originates in tone. Its root [ben 本] lies in the human mind’s being stirred [gan] by external things.<sup>102</sup>

From the “Record of Music”

Both the “Great Preface” and the “Record of Music” highlight the pivotal role played by the mind (affections and intent) in the relationship between the external world of things, the mind and poetry (or music). At the same time, these works also expound on the socio-political (or external world) causes behind these affections and intentions:

The tones of a well-managed age are at rest and happy; its government is balanced. The tones of an age of turmoil are bitter and full of anger; its government is perverse. The tones of a ruined state are filled with lament and brooding; its people are in difficulty.<sup>103</sup>

Recorded in both the “Great Preface” and the “Record of Music”

When the royal Way declined rites and moral principles [yi 義] were abandoned; the power of government to teach failed; the government of the states changed; the customs of the family were altered. And at this point the mutated [bian 變] feng 風 [Airs of the States] and the mutated ya 雅 [Odes] were written.<sup>104</sup>

From the “Great Preface”

101 Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1992), 40–41.

102 Owen, *Chinese Literary Thought*, 51.

103 Owen, *Chinese Literary Thought*, 43.

104 Owen, *Chinese Literary Thought*, 47.

A human being is born calm: this is his innate nature [*xing* 性] endowed by Heaven. To be stirred by external things and set in motion is desire occurring within that innate nature. Only after things encounter conscious knowledge do likes and dislike take shape [*xing* 形].<sup>105</sup>

From the “Record of Music”

The ideas in the “Great Preface” and the “Record of Music” have been summarized by many scholars as a manifestation of the theory that external things stir the mind [*wugan shuo* 物感說]. However, this article argues that, while these passages are certainly referring to the mind as being stirred by external things, their emphasis is not on the effect that external things have on the mind, but rather the role of the mind in being stirred by the external world. This can be seen in the “Great Preface”, in the lines directly after the section quoted above on the tones of the well-ordered and ruined state:

Thus to correct [*zheng* 正] (the presentation of) achievements [*de* 得] and failures, to move Heaven and Earth, to stir the gods and spirits, there is nothing more apposite than poetry. By it the former kings managed the relations between husbands and wives, perfected the respect due to parents and superiors, gave depth to human relations, beautifully taught and transformed the people, and changed local customs.<sup>106</sup>

The focus of the “Great Preface” here is clearly to highlight the political, didactic and transformational role that poetry itself plays, with particular emphasis on the educational functions of the *Shijing*. This is the reason why the “Great Preface” states the principle that poems should “emerge from affections [*qing*], but go no further than rites and moral principles,” requiring that poetry, which is imbued with political and educational functions, must itself be proper and correct. This is expressed even more clearly in the “Record of Music”.

Music originates from tone. Its root [*ben*] lies in the human mind’s being stirred [*gan*] by external things. Thus, when a mind that is miserable is stirred, its sound is vexed and anxious. When a mind that is happy is stirred, its sound is relaxed and leisurely. When a mind that is delighted is stirred, its sound pours out and scatters. When a wrathful mind is stirred, its sound is crude and harsh. When a respectful mind is stirred, its sound

<sup>105</sup> Owen, *Chinese Literary Thought*, 53.

<sup>106</sup> Owen, *Chinese Literary Thought*, 45.

is upright and pure. When a dotting mind is stirred, its sound is agreeable and yielding.<sup>107</sup>

It is clear that what the “Record of Music” is emphasizing is not the act of an external thing moving the mind, but rather that the mind is being stirred by the external world. The nature and meaning of music are not determined by external things, but by one’s mind. It is through being stirred that the mind embodies music with form and meaning. This is why the “Record of Music” only acknowledges the music of the former kings and rejects all other rich and varied kinds of music (not just the “licentious” music of Zheng 鄭 and Wei 衛):

The airs of Zheng go to a wild excess, and debauch the mind; those of Song 宋 tell of slothful indulgence and women, and drown the mind; those of Wei are vehement and rapid, and perplex the mind; and those of Qi 齊 are violent and depraved, and make the mind arrogant. The airs of those four states all stimulate libidinous desire, and are injurious to virtue.<sup>108</sup>

*Chenwei* passages dealing with the generation of literature and music also emphasize the importance of emotions and intent:

Poetry is the essence of Heaven and Earth, the orbit of the stars and planets and moral integrity of men. When it is about affairs it becomes poetry. When it is incipient, it is contemplation. When it is in equilibrium, it is the mind. When it is in thinking, it is intent. Therefore, poetry is that which articulates what is on the mind intently.<sup>109</sup>

*Chunqiu: Explications of Words in Titles* [*Chunqiu shuo tici* 春秋說題辭]

After the poet is stirred, he begins to reflect. Reflecting, their thoughts are gathered. Their thoughts gathered, they become full to brimming.

107 Owen, *Chinese Literary Thought*, 51.

108 Legge, *The Li Ki*, 118–19. For a detailed analysis see Zhang Fengyi 張峰屹, *Xi Han wenxue sixiang shi* 西漢文學思想史 [*History of Literary Thought During the Western Han*] (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 2013), 172–75.

109 This line and the following *chenwei* lines and passages have been taken from Yasui Kōzan 安居香 and Nakamura Shōhachi 中村璋八, ed., *Weishu jicheng* 緯書集成 [*Complete Collection of Wei Texts*] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1994), 856. It should be noted that some entries in this collection have been erroneously edited, given out of order or entered with typographical errors. This article has verified the original sources and changed these entries in instances where errors were made.

Brimming, they begin to compose. If words alone are inadequate, they speak them out in sighs. If sighing is inadequate, they sing them. If singing is inadequate, unconsciously their hands dance them and their feet tap them.<sup>110</sup>

*The Classic of Music: Motion and Principles of Sound* [Yue dong sheng yi 樂動聲儀]

Music is something that flourishes in harmony internally before finding expression externally. Responding to the age in which it is expressed, the ruler institutes ritual and composes music to perfect the age. For this reason, those who compose music must return to what first brought joy to the people of the world and take this as their root. In the time of Emperor Shun, the people rejoiced in the manner in which he continued [*shao* 紹] the undertakings of Yao. Therefore *Shao* 韶 means to continue. In the time of Emperor Yu 禹, the people greatly rejoiced in the mutual succession of the Three Sages. Therefore *Xia* 夏 means grand. In the time of Emperor Tang 湯, the people rejoiced in being rescued from distress and injury. Therefore *Hu* 濩 means to rescue. In the time of King Wen, the people rejoiced when he raised troops and carried out a punitive attack [against the Shang]. Therefore *Wu* 武 means to attack. These four rulers were the same in that the world uniformly rejoiced in them, but the reason why the people uniformly rejoiced in their rule differed.<sup>111</sup>

*Spring and Autumn Annals: Germ of the Primordial Mandate* [Chunqiu yuan ming bao 春秋元命苞]

[Music is made through] examining the workings of the way of Heaven and Earth, bringing the sentiment of the living and spirits into accord, expressing it through the male and female pitchpipes, measuring it through the [harmony] of the *yin* and *yang*, displaying it through the order of all under Heaven, and releasing it through tones and sounds.<sup>112</sup>

*The Classic of Music: Harmonization and Verification of Diagrams* [Yue xie tu zheng 樂叶圖徵]

110 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 544. Second half of the translation taken from Owen, *Chinese Literary Thought*, 41.

111 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 617. The terms *Shao*, *Xia*, *Hu* and *Wu* refer to music composed during the reigns of the respective rulers. This paragraph is almost identical to a passage in the “King Zhuang of Chu [Chu Zhuang wang 楚莊王]” chapter in the *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn* [Chunqiu fanlu 春秋繁露] and the majority of the above translation has, therefore, been taken from Sarah A. Queen and John S. Major, trans., *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 77.

112 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 562.

In terms of the generation of poetry, the first two passages above both express an understanding that poetry is the sung expression of emotions and intent (seen in lines such as “poetry is that which articulates what is on the mind intently” in the *Chunqiu shuo tici* and in the description of poetry composition resulting from the gathering of reflections in the *Yue dong sheng yi*). The second two passages express similar ideas, namely that music is the expression of emotions and intent through tones (especially the lines “flourishes in harmony internally before finding expression externally” in the *Chunqiu yuan ming bao* and “bringing the sentiment of the living and spirits into accord, expressing it through the male and female pitchpipes” in the *Yue xie tu zheng*). From these lines it is apparent that *chenwei* texts understood emotions and intent to be one of the sources of poetry and music, or that emotion and intent were the direct source of poetry and music.

Yet, from where did such emotion and intent emerge? All four of the above passages suggest that this emotion and intent was brought about through being stirred by the external world. This can be seen in the definition of poetry in the *Chunqiu shuo tici*, which correlates “the essence of Heaven and Earth” with the “moral integrity of men”; in the first lines of the *Yue dong sheng yi* where it notes that “after the poet is stirred, he begins to reflect”; in the way that the *Chunqiu yuan ming bao* explains the music of ancient times as arising because people delighted in the governance of their sage rulers; and in the way the *Yue xie tu zheng* places “examining the workings of the way of Heaven and Earth” before “bringing the sentiment of the living and spirits into accord”. All four texts are, in essence, suggesting that the reflection which leads to poetry is brought about through being stirred by the external world. However, it would not be accurate to generalize these ideas under the umbrella of the *wugan shuo* theory that external things stir the mind. To fully understand the relationship between the mind and the external world expressed within *chenwei* texts, other important factors need to be taken into account:

All changes in the heavens are the result of being stirred by the affairs of men. Therefore, when a spirit of rebellion is manifest [in the actions of men], the baleful star appears.<sup>113</sup>

*Chunqiu yuan ming bao*

Man is in harmony with the cosmos, the five elements and the *yin* and *yang*. Extreme *yin* returns to *yang*, extreme *yang* returns to *yin*. Calamitous disasters occur in response to the actions of men, they are stirred by

113 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 654.

them. Emergence, response and change [in the cosmos] is either in compliance with, or in opposition to, the various minds of men.<sup>114</sup>

*Spring and Autumn Annals: Tallies of Bestirred Essences* [Chunqiu gan jing fu 春秋感精符]

Deviation in the *yang* is called up by the resentment of the people, it is stirred by them.<sup>115</sup>

*Spring and Autumn Annals: Investigations of Deviations and Abnormalities* [Chunqiu kao yi you 春秋考異郵]

Here it is clear that the concept of the resonance between the cosmic order and human affairs is first and foremost centered on the world of men. Describing changes in the heavens as “the result of being stirred by the affairs of men” illustrates that these *chenwei* texts understood human affairs to be the cause of both natural calamities and auspicious occurrences. The many *chenwei* passages expressing the idea that the authority and influence of a ruler is reflected in the disasters and auspicious events that occur during their reign is another example of this interpretation. When describing the resonance between the cosmic and terrestrial realms, *chenwei* texts are more likely to give priority to the stirring effect that man has on the cosmos, and then use this focus as their main method and approach to discussing politics and governance. When this interpretation is applied to theories surrounding the origin of poetry and music, *chenwei* discussions on the resonance between the mind and external things tend to emphasize the stirring role that the mind has on the external world. This is in keeping with both the “Great Preface” and the “Record of Music”.

### 3.2 *Chenwei Resonances in Theories on the Function of Literature and Music*

In regard to the function of literature and music, it is well known that Han dynasty literary thought, which was closely connected with classical

114 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 789.

115 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 744. Titles of apocryphal *wei* texts are notoriously difficult to make sense of. This translation has followed the reading by Sun Jue 孫穀 in the Ancient Mysterious Writings [*Gu weishu* 古微書] which reads *you* 郵 as referring to *you* 尤. As Liu Ming 劉明 notes, this corresponds with the *Discussing Writing and Explaining Characters* [*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字] interpretation of *you* 尤 as *yi* 異 [abnormality, deviation]. See Liu Ming 劉明, “Handai Chunqiu wei yanjiu 漢代初秋緯研究 [Research on Han dynasty *Wei* Texts Associated with the Spring and Autumn Annals]” (PhD. diss., Hebei Normal University, 2010), 53.

scholarship, emphasized their didactic nature. This understanding is also upheld in *chenwei* texts, with lines describing the function of poetry similarly focusing on moral instruction:

Poetry means “to hold”. To use one’s hands to support. It has the meaning of carrying and bearing [*chengfu* 承負],<sup>116</sup> that is, to support with hands from below and carry in the arms.

When used to teach goodness and sincerity, [poetry can] hold up one’s own mind. When used as a means of criticism and moral suasion, [poetry] can support the state.<sup>117</sup>

*Shijing: The Engulfing Holy Mist* [*Shi han shen wu* 詩含神霧]

The Odes are used to govern while social morals are brought about through the Eulogies [*Song* 頌].<sup>118</sup>

*Yue dong sheng yi*

The ruler was not upright and neglected the affairs of the state, thus the “Crying Ospreys [*Guanju* 關雎]” was sung to stir them.<sup>119</sup>

*Spring and Autumn Annals: Movement of the Big Dipper* [*Chunqiu yundou shu* 春秋運斗樞]

The Jade Transverse [*Yuheng xing* 玉衡星] falls to become a corus [*changpu* 菖蒲]. When the ruler is far from the Odes and Eulogies and prefers vulgar music and entertainment then the Jade Transverse darkens and the crown of the corus forms into the shape of a ring.

The Jade Transverse falls to become a black kite [*chi* 鴟]. When the ruler is far from the Odes and Eulogies and prefers vulgar music and

116 In later texts such as the *Scripture of Great Peace* [*Taiping jing* 太平經], *chengfu* is an important concept that takes on a meaning of something akin to inherited evil. As the above quote is the first usage of this term known to exist, it is difficult to determine if such meanings are meant here. Given that, as noted by Hendrichske, Kamitsuka Yoshiko has argued that *chengfu* should be understood in relation to theories regarding the origin of disasters, it seems likely that some of the term’s later meanings are intended here. See Barbara Hendrichske, “The Concept of Inherited Evil in the *Taiping Jing*,” *East Asian History* 2 (1991): 25; and Yuet-Keung Lo, “Destiny and Retribution in Early Medieval China,” in *Philosophy and Religion in Early Medieval China*, eds. Alan K.L. Chan and Yuet-Keung Lo (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 322.

117 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 464.

118 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 543.

119 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 857.

entertainment then roosters grow five legs and are transformed into rabbits.<sup>120</sup>

*Chunqiu yundou shu*

The didactic nature of poetry is clearly seen throughout these passages. In defining the meaning of poetry as “to hold”, the *Shi han shen wu* expresses poetry as a vehicle that “carries” the praise and criticism of moral instruction at both an individual and political level. The lines in the *Yue dong sheng yi* and *Shi han shen wu* expound further on the political role of poetry with the former highlighting poetry’s role in good governance and the latter interpreting the “Guanju” as a poem to criticize an immoral ruler. The connection between good governance and poetry is again seen in the *Chunqiu yundou shu* example, a warning to rulers that forsaking the *Shijing* for “vulgar music and entertainment” will lead to numerous inauspicious and unusual occurrences.

This didactic function is seen even more clearly in *chenwei* understandings of music.

King Wen saw that the rites were in disarray, that music had collapsed and that no one was following the way. Thus he established the three hundred rules of the *Classic of Rites* [*Lijing* 禮經] and the three thousand rules of demeanor.

Confucius said to Zixia 子夏: “Music is used for internal cultivation; the rites are used for external cultivation.”<sup>121</sup>

*The Rites: Examinations of the Omens of the Mandate* [*Li ji ming zheng* 禮稽命徵]

[The ancient sage rulers] established rites and music to transform mores and customs and to bring about auspicious winds and timely rain and dew so that their people may receive the blessings of the lord in heaven. When the sages composed music they were guided by the five *yuan* 元<sup>122</sup> and the five planets. They took virtue as what was proper and rules and regulations as a means of leading the people. They appointed the worthy and dismissed the clever talkers.

Music transforms mores and changes customs.<sup>123</sup>

*Yue dong sheng yi*

120 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 716.

121 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 507.

122 These are recorded in the *Taiping yulan* as the *shang yuan zhe* 上元者 [related to the celestial realm], *xia yuan zhe* 下元者 [related to the earthly realm], *zhong yuan zhe* 中元者 [related to the realm of men], *shi yuan zhe* 時元者 [related to the seasons], *feng yuan zhe* 風元者 [related to the wind/customs]. See Li Fang, *Taiping yulan*, 565:2552.

123 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 538.

Music was established to prevent excess and regulate excessive expressions of emotions.<sup>124</sup>

*The Classic of Music: Examination of Glorious Blessings* [Yue ji yao jia 樂稽耀嘉]

The former kings established music to regulate all matters and affairs.<sup>125</sup>

*Ye xie tu zheng*

When discussing the primary purpose and rationale behind the establishment of music and rites, these *chenwei* passages highlight their didactic functions. The also relate the way in which music reflected the political reality of a state:

When *gong* 宮 takes the lead melody and *shang* 商 is the harmony, this is called goodness. It is the music of a state in great peace. When *jue* 角 takes the lead and *gong* follows, this is called sorrow. It is the music of a decaying state. When *yu* 羽 takes the lead and *gong* follows, this is called anguish. It is the music of a ruined state.<sup>126</sup>

*Yue dong sheng yi*

When tones lose their proper sound, the state is led to ruin. When the *shang* tone is off key, it is because immoral officials have not been managed. When the *jue* tone rings with melancholy, it is because the ruler has abused his people and they hold resentment. When the *zhi* 徵 tone is sorrowful and bitter, it is because the ruler is debauched and many decrees have been issued which have left the people feeling weary. When the *yu* tone is unstable, it is because the state is falling into crisis.<sup>127</sup>

*The Apocrypha of Music* [Yue wei 樂緯]

However, if a ruler is to rule with benevolence and if their state abounds in peace and harmony, then rites and music are established to praise their deeds.

Confucius said: The “Xiaoshao 箫韶” music has been passed down from the time of Shun. It is mild and gentle in its harmony, as if it was a warm southern breeze.<sup>128</sup>

*Yue dong sheng yi*

124 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 548.

125 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 558.

126 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 543.

127 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 566.

128 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 540.

Duke Wen of Zhou 周公 handed over power of the state to King Cheng when all under heaven was at peace and proceeded to establish rites and music, which led to phoenixes flying in the courtyard. King Cheng picked up his zither and began to sing, “Phoenixes fly in the royal courtyard, what is the virtue that I possess to attract such auspicious spirits? By the grace of the benevolence of former kings, all rejoice and the people are at peace.”<sup>129</sup>

*Book of Documents: Accurate Observations* [Shangshu zhong hou 尚書中候]

These examples of *chenwei* understandings regarding poetry and music are, in essence, all pointing to the didactic way in which they were used. This is consistent with popular conceptions of the didactic nature of art and literature during the Han dynasty.

This article has given an overview of the influence that *chenwei* ideas and beliefs had on Han dynasty literature and the way in which these ideas and beliefs integrated with Han literary thought. Why did *chenwei* have such a powerful influence on Han dynasty literature? Simply stated, such influence was brought about by the very nature of *chenwei* in combination with the status of literature during the Han dynasty. As a political cultural movement associated with classical scholarship, *chenwei* would inevitably become highly integrated with Han dynasty literature and literary thought which themselves were also used in the service of politics and classical scholarship. At the same time, concepts inherent to *chenwei* ideas such as the resonance between the cosmic and terrestrial realms – in addition to its propensity for imaginative thinking – were, in their very nature, highly conducive to literature and art. This, coupled with a Han dynasty intellectual environment in which history, culture and philosophy were not differentiated, provided the important framework for the seamless integration between *chenwei* ideas and literature.

*Translated by Michael Broughton*

129 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Weishu jicheng*, 540. Zhang Jiazi 張甲子 argues that the *zhong hou* 中候 in the title of this text does not refer to the official government position sometimes translated as “Watch Officer” and that this term should be read as two separate words. See Zhang Jiazi 張甲子, “Shangshu zhong hou tiyi kao 尚書中候題意考 [On the title of the Shangshu zhong hou],” *Henan keji daxue xuebao* 河南科技大學學報, no. 3 (2010): 14–17. This translation of *zhong hou* has been taken from Grégoire Espeset, “Epiphanies of Sovereignty and the Rite of Jade Disc Immersion in Weft Narratives,” *Early China* 37 (2014): 413.

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## Citation of Han *Fu* in *Shijing* Exegetical Works

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### Abstract

The various rhapsodies or poetic expositions of the Han dynasty known as Han *fu* are replete with passages from the classic Chinese poetry collection the *Shijing*, or *Book of Poetry*. The reverse is also true: *Shijing* scholarship has likewise cited Han *fu* in many of its exegetical works. As a result, the various editions of the Han *fu* are important sources in the study of the Confucian classics, a discipline commonly known in Chinese as *jingxue*. The classical citations of the *Shijing* throughout the Han *fu* can be placed into one of two categories: “language citation” and “meaning citation”, while the “ironic citation” of Han *fu* in exegeses of the *Shijing* that is prevalent in the interpretative system of the Confucian classics can be further broken down into three types: “meaning and principle”, “verification and justification” and “language and exposition”. In the meaning-based citations of the *Shijing* by the Han *fu* – especially those of “persuasive remonstrance” and “hymns and eulogies” – the conveyed messages were ironically cited by later generations of interpreters of Confucian classics, which helped form new meanings and principles. The main themes, subject matter, emotional expression and language style of Han *fu* are lifted heavily from the *Shijing*. Later generations of Confucian scholars then cited text from the Han *fu*, thereby constructing new forms of language and exposition. The unique characteristics of *fu* to “describe things and express themselves clearly” and reference a wide range of “names and things” were used by later Confucian scholars who sought to better understand a whole host of signifiers referred to in the classic texts, from herbs, trees and birds, to beasts, insects and fish. Meanwhile, the perception of *fu* as knowledge-laden texts inspired Confucian scholars to carry out textual research on them. Scholarly comparisons in premodern China between the *Shijing* as a Confucian classic, the *Shijing* as a literary corpus, and Han *fu* developed during a process of ordinary citation and ironic citation. This resulted in the practice of “complementary citations” of meaning and principle, verification and justification,

and language and exposition. A scholarship cycle was thus formed in which the classics were used to revere the *fu*, then the classics were used to enrich the *fu*, and interpretations of the *fu* started to be used to transmit canonical messages. It was a cycle that was imbued with a cross-permeation of neo-Confucian, historical and literary dimensions, eventually resulting in the construction of a new interpretative system for premodern Chinese scholarship of classic texts.

## Keywords

*Shijing* – *Book of Poetry* – Han *fu* – complementary citation

### 1 Problem Statement

The relationship between Han *fu* 漢賦 and the study of the Confucian classics can not be said to be equivalent to the relationship between Han *fu* and Confucianism itself. One must look to citations to explore the relationship between Han *fu* and the study of the Confucian classics. It is only by collecting and interpreting classical citations in Han *fu* that one can understand their significance. The quintessential tradition within Chinese literature of Han *fu* classical citation is an important one. However, there has not been much in-depth discussion on the topic due to a lack of theoretical criticism. From the functional practice of “reciting the odes” [*fu shi* 賦詩] that was prevalent during the Warring States Period [475–221 BCE], to later “revering the classics” [*zong jing* 宗經] and “seeking [the way of] the Sage” [*zheng sheng* 征聖], approaches to literature ultimately transitioned to “deriving meaning from the classics” [*yi jing li yi* 依經立義]. This trend was manifested in a particularly explicit fashion in the early development of Chinese literature and is demonstrated by the disputes on the origin of the *fu* form and the “unified” [*yi* 一] and “varied” [*bai* 百] debates on the topic of “persuasive remonstrance” [*fengjian* 諷諫]. During the Han dynasty [206 BCE–220 CE], most of the *fu* that were composed revolved around the classics, and among the Five Classics [*wujing* 五經], the relationship between the *Shijing* 詩經 [*Book of Poetry*] and the Han *fu* is the closest, with the former being a model for a generation of Confucian scholars, and the latter being an archetype for a generation of literary figures. Contemporaries of the Han dynasty read the classics so as to make use of them. Thus, sources for much of the literature of the Han dynasty can be traced back to the Six Classics [*liujing* 六經], and citation of the classics is

widespread among the literary works of the Han dynasty.<sup>1</sup> However, of particular note is the “ironic citation” [*fanyong* 反用] of Han *fu* by *Shijing* exegetical works. “Understanding the Great Way through language” [*yin wen jian dao* 因文見道] is only possible by accessing speech in the written form. Composers of *fu* who used writing to study the Confucian classics believed that “their speech stands on its own” [*qi yan you li* 其言猶立] because they lived at a time “not too distant from the Sage” [*qu sheng wei yuan* 去聖未遠] and therefore could act as a “personified voice of the Sage” [*sheng she ren* 聖舌人].<sup>2</sup> As a result, words written by composers of *fu* have been conducive to the interpretive practices of later generations of Confucian scholars. This is particularly obvious in scholarship on the *Shijing*, from *fu* citing *Shijing*, to *Shijing* scholarship citing *fu*. In this way, the various editions of the Han *fu* are critical documentary sources to be consulted when tracing the original meaning of the Confucian classics.

So how do exegetical works employ ironic citations of passages from Han *fu*? This question touches upon the nature of traditional Chinese scholarship. During the Western Han [206 BCE–25 CE] dynasty, there was “learning of New and Old Script classics” [*Jing jin gu wen xue* 經今古文學] both in the officialdom and hidden among academic circles. Scholarship consisted mainly of “chapter-and-verse commentaries” [*zhangju* 章句] and investigations into “meaning and principle” [*yili* 義理] and “philology” [*xungu* 訓詁]. During the Northern Song [960–1127] dynasty, distinctions were made between studies of “belles-lettres” [*wenzhang* 文章], philology and “literati” [*ruzhe* 儒者]. However, sole reverence for the study of the literati resulted in a preference for meaning and principle. The Qing [1616–1911] philosopher Dai Zhen 戴震 [1724–1777] said, “When it comes to ancient and contemporary scholarship, there are three approaches: some deal with meaning and principle, some systems, some belles-lettres. The approach that deals with belles-lettres is the last of the three.” He went on to say, “There is study of meaning and principle, study of belles-lettres and study of examination and evaluation.

1 Regarding the question of classical citations of Han *fu*, the reader may consult the three articles, all of which offer a relatively detailed discussion. See Xu Jie 許結 and Wang Sihao 王思豪, “Hanfu yongjing kao 漢賦用經考 [A Study of Classical Citations in Han *Fu*],” *Wenshi* 文史, no. 2 (2011): 5–46; Xu Jie 許結 and Wang Sihao 王思豪, “Han fu yong *Shi* de wenxue chuantong 漢賦用《詩》的文學傳統 [Literary Traditions Surrounding Citation of the *Shijing* in Han *Fu*],” *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學, no. 4 (2011): 190–204; Wang Sihao, “The Creation of a ‘Magnificent Literary Style’: Stylistic Innovation in Borrowings in Han Rhapsodies from *The Classic of Poetry*,” *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China* 15.1 (2021): 109–135.

2 Gong Zizhen 龔自珍 and Wang Peizheng 王佩誥, *Gong Zizhen quanji* 龔自珍全集 [*The Complete Works of Gong Zizhen*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 632.

Meaning and principle is the source of belles-lettres and examination and evaluation. Once one becomes familiar with meaning and principle, one may carry out examination and evaluation and compose belles-lettres.”<sup>3</sup> This perspective considers the study of belles-lettres to be the last step in the process. Yao Nai 姚鼐 [1732–1815], who was the epitomy of the Tongcheng School 桐城派, wrote in the “Preface to the Writings of Shu’an [Shu’an wenchao xu 述庵文鈔序],” “I have previously spoken on the topic of scholarship, that there are three essential elements: meaning and principle, verification and justification, and belles-lettres. Those who become adept at employing them may find they complement each other. Those who cannot become adept at employing them may find they interfere with each other.”<sup>4</sup> These three points of scholarship can be similarly applied in investigating the phenomenon of ironic citation of classic texts in chapter-verse commentaries of Han *fu*. This article explores the use of such ironic citation by exegetical works on the *Shijing*. This will be done by examining the complementary scholarly relationship between meaning and principle, verification and justification [*kaoju* 考據], and language and exposition [*cizhang* 辭章]. The interpretive system formed during this process of “cross-justification” [*huzheng* 互證] will also be discussed.

## 2 Verification and Justification: “Examining Antiquity” via *Fu* Commentaries

There are no records of Han *fu* citations in either the *Mao Commentary to the Shijing* [*Mao zhuan* 毛傳] or the *Zheng Annotations on the Mao Text* [*Zheng jian* 鄭箋]. Current documentary sources indicate that the earliest instance of Han *fu* citation in *Shijing* exegetical scholarship was made by Lu Ji 陸璣 [261–303] from the Wu 吳 domain of the Three Kingdoms Period [220–280] in his *Commentary on Herbs, Trees, Birds, Beasts, Insects and Fish in the Mao Edition of the Shijing* [*Maoshi caomu niaoshou chongyu shu* 毛詩草木鳥獸蟲魚疏]. There were four citations of Han *fu*, and all were made in the interests of verification and justification of “names and things” [*mingwu* 名物]. For example, in the upper facsimile it reads: “*Shaoyao* is a medicinal herb used today. It is not the case that it does not have a fragrance. It is not clear what herb it is today. Sima Xiangru mentioned in his *fu* that *shaoyao* was a mixing herb, while Yang

3 Dai Zhen 戴震, *Dai Zhen ji* 戴震集 [*The Collected Works of Dai Zhen*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 189, 451–2.

4 Yao Nai 姚鼐, *Xibao xuan shiwen ji* 惜抱軒詩文集 [*Anthology of Yao Nai*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 61.

Xiong said in his *fu* said that *shaoyao* was sweet and delicious.”<sup>5</sup> Here, the *fu* of Sima and Yang are being cited – the “Fu on Sir Vacuous [*Zi xu fu* 子虛賦]” and “Fu on the Capital of Shu [*Shu du fu* 蜀都賦]” respectively. In the Tang dynasty [618–907], *The Correct Significance of the Mao Edition of the Shijing* [*Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義] by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 [574–648] cited Han *fu* seven times in its exegetical text. In addition to three instances of verification and justification of names and things, there are also two instances of word interpretations. For example, in “There Was a Girl with Us in the Carriage [*You nü tong zhe* 有女同車]” there is the sentence, “She is the fair Meng Jiangnü, an elegant and generous lady”. Here, the *Correct Significance of the Mao Edition of the Shijing* cites Sima Xiangru’s 司馬相如 [179–118 BCE] “Fu on the Imperial Park [*Shang lin fu* 上林賦]” – “fair and elegant” 妖冶閑都 – interpreting *du* 都 as *xian* 閑.<sup>6</sup> In the Ming dynasty [1368–1644], the *Textual Research on the Ancient Pronunciation of the Mao Edition of the Shijing* [*Maoshi guyin kao* 毛詩古音考] by Chen Di 陳第 [1541–1617] used Han *fu* to justify the ancient readings of many of the characters used in the *Shijing*. In its “Preface” [*zixu* 自序] he wrote: “The rhyme schemes used in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳, *Guoyu* 國語, *Yi* 易, *Xiang* 象, *Chuci* 楚辭, Qin stelae, Han *fu*, even the folk songs of antiquity, and admonishing epigraphs and tributes often echo those used in the *Shijing*. In fact, this can be taken as evidence for ancient pronunciations.”<sup>7</sup> Later, Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 [1613–1682] and Jiang Yong 江永 [1681–1762] would consult Han *fu* in their respective works *Original Rhymes in the Shijing* [*Shi ben yin* 詩本音] and *Standards of Ancient Rhymes* [*Guyun biao zhun* 古韻標準] to verify and justify the pronunciation and meaning of passages in the *Shijing*. Some scholars also referred to *fu* in their textual criticism of the astronomical topics laid out in the *Shijing*. For example, in the *Maoshi tianwen kao* 毛詩天文考 [*A Study of the Astronomical Information in the Mao Edition of the Shijing*], Hong Liangji 洪亮吉 [1746–1809] of the Qing dynasty writes: “According to the *Classic of Heaven and Earth*, ‘quail’s head’ refers to the territory of Qin. In ‘Fu on the Western Metropolis [*Xijing fu* 西京賦], Zhang Heng states, ‘In ancient times, the Celestial Ruler was pleased with Duke Mu of Qin, so he summoned

5 Lu Ji 陸璣, *Maoshi caomu niaoshou chongyu shu* 毛詩草木鳥獸蟲魚疏 [*Commentary on Herbs, Trees, Birds, Beasts, Insects and Fish in the Mao Edition of the Shijing*], in *Wenyuange siku quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), 70:15.

6 Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, comm., Kong Yingda 孔穎達, coll., *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 [*The Correct Significance of the Mao Edition of the Shijing*], in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經註疏 [*Annotations and Commentaries on the Thirteen Classics*], ed. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 412–3.

7 Chen Di 陳第, *Maoshi guyin kao* 毛詩古音考 [*Textual Research on the Ancient Pronunciation of the Mao Edition of the Shijing*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 10.

him for an audience. Thereupon, the Celestial Ruler bestowed to the Duke a golden slip with which to rule the land and wipe out many of the tribes on the Qin domain.”<sup>8</sup> It is thus evident that, when citing Han *fu*, verifications can be made of words, pronunciations, names, and astronomical phenomena laid out in the *Shijing*.

The earliest instance of citing Han *fu* to verify and justify names and things in the *Shijing* is that of the aforementioned case of *shaoyao* in the *Commentary on Herbs, Trees, Birds, Beasts, Insects and Fish in the Mao Edition of the Shijing* by Lu Ji. Although the *Mao Commentary* defined *shaoyao* as a kind of herb, Lu was not sure what herb was being referred to. In the *Dissection and Interpretation of the Mao Commentary to the Shijing* [*Maoshi zhuanjian tongshi* 毛詩傳箋通釋], Ma Ruichen 馬瑞辰 [1782–1853] writes:

In the *Mao Commentary* it is recorded that *shaoyao* is a kind of fragrant herb. In the *Zheng Annotations* it is written that the herb is given to a lady on departing to symbolize a blossoming of affection ... *Shaoyao* also means “to mix”. The “Fu on Sir Vacuous” reads, “*Shaoyao*, as in to mix.” Yang Xiong’s “Fu on the Capital of Shu” reads, “*Shaoyao*, as in to mix soup.” The “Seven Stimuli” reads, “*Shaoyao*, as in to mix sauce.” The *Seven Commands* reads, “*Shaoyao*, as in to mix medicine” ... All take *shaoyao* to mean “to mix” and not as a kind of herb.<sup>9</sup>

This reading of *shaoyao* as “to mix” is reflected in the *fu* of Mei Cheng 枚乘 [ca. 210–138 BCE], Yang Xiong 揚雄 [53–18 BCE] and Zhang Heng 張衡 [78–139]. Regarding this, Ma Ruichen provides the following inference: “I suspect that the Qi and Lu editions of the *Shijing* interpret *shaoyao* as ‘to mix’, so it is very tempting to take this as a basis.”<sup>10</sup> Chen Qiacong 陳喬樞 [1809–1869] even took the words used in the Han *fu* and directly added them to *A Study of the Missed Insights of the Lu Edition of the Shijing* [*Lushi yishuo kao* 魯詩遺說考].<sup>11</sup> Later, in *A Compilation of Three Schools of Commentaries on the Shijing* [*Shi*

8 Hong Liangji 洪亮吉, *Maoshi tianwen kao* 毛詩天文考 [A Study of the Astronomical Information in the Mao Edition of the Shijing], Qing Daoguang sanshi nian Zhang shi chongsu tang keben 清道光三十年張氏崇素堂刻本.

9 Ma Ruichen 馬瑞辰, *Maoshi zhuanjian tongshi* 毛詩傳箋通釋 [Dissection and Interpretation of the Mao Commentary to the Shijing] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 290.

10 Ma Ruichen, *Maoshi zhuanjian tongshi*, 290–1.

11 Chen Shouqi 陳壽祺, *Lushi yishuo kao* 魯詩遺說考 [A Study of the Missed Insights of the Lu Edition of the Shijing], vol. 1 of 2 卷二之一 Qing ke Zuo Hai xuji ben 清刻左海續集本.

*sanjia yi jishu* 詩三家義集疏], Wang Xianqian 王先謙 [1842–1917] likewise deferred to this reasoning.<sup>12</sup>

Let us now turn to the verification and justification of the term *zouyu* 騶虞 as denoting either the name of a creature or the title of an official in charge of birds and beasts on behalf of the Son of Heaven [*tianzi* 天子]. *Zouyu* is the title of a section of the “South of Shao [*Shao nan* 召南]” chapter of the *Shijing*. In the *Mao Commentary* it is written: “The *zouyu* is a righteous beast. It is a white tiger with black markings that does not eat living things. Those of utmost virtue respond to it.”<sup>13</sup> It is clear that the *Mao Commentary* interprets *zouyu* as the name of a creature. However, in *Differing Interpretations of the Five Classics* [*Wujing yiyi* 五經異義] by Xu Shen 許慎 [ca. 58–147] it is written: “At present, the Han and Lu Editions of the *Shijing* state that *zouyu* was an official in charge of birds and beasts on behalf of the Son of Heaven.” In a recompilation of the Qi 齊 edition of the *Shijing* by Wang Xianqian it is said that, “The appointment of a suitable official to oversee the animal enclosures is something to rejoice about,”<sup>14</sup> also supporting the interpretation of *zouyu* as an official title. In “Fu on the Eastern Metropolis [*Dongjing fu* 東京賦],” Zhang Heng states, “The stable is used to raise the righteous beast *zouyu* of the Lin clan domain; it also tames the celestial horses *zema* and *tenghuang*.”<sup>15</sup> Here, Zhang juxtaposes *zouyu* with *tenghuang*, both referring to the names of beasts. In *Selections of Refined Literature* [*Wenxuan* 文選], Li Shan 李善 [630–689] annotates the “Charts of Auspicious Correspondences [*Ruiying tu* 瑞應圖]” thus: “*Tenghuang*, a celestial horse, is also known as *jiguang*.”<sup>16</sup> Xu Shen points out that the Lu 魯 edition of the *Shijing* believes that *zouyu* is the title of an official in charge of birds and beasts on behalf of the Son of Heaven, while Zhang Heng’s mention of *zouyu* in “Fu on the Eastern Metropolis” refers to the name of a righteous beast. Typically, Zhang defers to the Lu edition. It is unclear why he did not do so in this case. In “Fu on the Eastern Capital [*Dongdu fu* 東都賦],” Ban Gu 班固 [32–92] writes, “The system is similar to that of the *zou* official in Liang,” and notes, “having read ‘Zouyu’ [chapter of the *Shijing*].” Chen Shouqi 陳壽祺

12 Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Shi sanjia yi jishu* 詩三家義集疏 [A Compilation of Three Schools of Commentaries on the *Shijing*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 373.

13 Ma Ruichen, *Maoshi zhuanjian tongshi*, 104.

14 Wang Xianqian, *Shi sanjia yi jishu*, 119.

15 園林氏之騶虞，擾澤馬與騰黃。Zhao Kuifu 趙逵夫, ed., *Lidai fu pingzhu, Handai juan* 歷代賦評注：漢代卷) [Commentary on Fu Poetry Throughout the Dynasties] (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2010), 672.

16 Zhao Kuifu, *Lidai fu pingzhu, Handai juan*, 673.

[1771–1834] also mentioned this as the content recorded in the Qi edition of the *Shijing*.<sup>17</sup>

Alternatively, one needs to consider whether *xiejiao* 歇驕 refers to the name of a dog or something else. The “Odes of Qin [Qin *feng* 秦風]” chapter of the *Mao Edition of the Shijing* [*Maoshi* 毛詩] reads: “The *luan* bells jingle as the light carriage travels, carrying with it a hunting dog of meritorious service.” In the *Mao Commentary* it is written: “*Xian* 獫 and *xiejiao* are both names for hunting dogs. The long-snouted one is known as a *xian*, while the short-snouted one is known as a *xiejiao*.”<sup>18</sup> Here it is clear that the Mao edition believed that *xiejiao* referred to the name of a dog. However, Song dynasty [960–1279] scholar Yan Can 嚴粲 believed that *xiejiao* was not the name of a dog, but rather meant “becoming arrogant and complacent due to sluggishness.”<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Hu Chenggong 胡承珙 [1776–1832] stated that, “The ‘carrying with it a hunting dog of meritorious’ service passage in ‘Fu on the Western Metropolis’ referred to a time before going hunting ... Later scholars thought that the hunting was over, and so they played in the North Garden and transported the hunting dogs in their carriages to cultivate their strength. It is common to play after hunting, but it is not necessary follow with a hunting dog.”<sup>20</sup> The verification and justification of *xiejiao* as referring to the name of a dog by way of consulting the descriptions contained in the *Shijing* and “Fu on the Western Metropolis” defers to the reasoning set out in the *Mao Edition of the Shijing*.

The composition of Han *fu* exhibits certain historical tendencies. As a result, their language and exposition have been applied to the verification and justification of historical events mentioned in the *Shijing*. There is, for instance, the question of Xi Si 奚斯 [ca. b. 650 BCE] in the “Eulogies of Lu [*Lu song* 魯頌]” chapter of the *Shijing* in which it is written:

松栢有梲，	The pine wood square rafters are large and thick,
路寢孔碩。	The grand chamber is spacious and magnificent.
新廟奕奕，	The new temple is splendid,
奚斯所作。 <sup>21</sup>	Made by Xi Si.

17 Chen Shouqi 陳壽祺, *Qishi yishuo kao* 齊詩遺說考 [A Study of the Missed Insights of the Qi Edition of the *Shijing*], Qing ke Zuo Hai xuji ben 清刻左海續集本, vol. 1.

18 Mao Heng 毛亨, annot., Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, comm., and Lu Deming 陸德明, coll., *Maoshi zhuanjian* 毛詩傳箋 [Explanations to the Mao Commentary to the *Shijing*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2018), 161.

19 Chen Qiyuan 陳啟源, *Maoshi jigu bian* 毛詩稽古編 [Examining Antiquity in the Mao Edition of the *Shijing*], Qing Daoguang jiumian Guangdong xuehai tang kan *Huangqing jingjie* ben 清道光九年廣東學海堂刊《皇清經解》本, vol. 2.

20 Hu Chenggong 胡承珙, *Maoshi houjian* 毛詩後箋 [An Epilogue to the Mao Edition of the *Shijing*] (Hefei: Huangshan shushe 黃山書社, 2014), 561.

21 Mao Heng, *Maoshi zhuanjian*, 489.

In the *Mao Commentary* the following explanation is given: “The new temple is that of Duke Min of Lu. It is an ancestral hall made by the high officer Xi Si.”<sup>22</sup> By *zuo*, is it meant that Xi Si wrote the poem or built the temple? In “Preface to the Fu on Two Capitals [*Liang du fu xu* 兩都賦序]” Ban Gu wrote: “Gao Yao sung the praises of [Shun of] Yu, while Xi Si sung the praises of [the domain of] Lu. Both were adopted by Kongzi and listed in the *Shijing* and *Shangshu*.”<sup>23</sup> In “Preface to the Fu on Lingguang Palace [*Lu lingguangdian fu xu* 魯靈光殿賦序]”, Wang Yanshou 王延壽 [140–165] writes: “The poet is inspired to write from the perception of objective things. Therefore, Xi Si wrote the ‘Bi Gong 闕宮’ hymn in the ‘Eulogies of Lu’ chapter of the *Shijing* to praise Duke Xi of Lu and the palace he built. Thereupon, Duke Xi’s meritorious service remains in the verse, while his virtuous words are manifested in the music.”<sup>24</sup> This account differs from that recorded in the *Mao Commentary*; both *fu* agree that Xi Si wrote a poem to eulogize the domain of Lu. Fan Chuyi 范處義 [fl. 1154], a scholar of the Song dynasty, disagreed with the reasoning of Ban and Wang, writing that,

The “Bi gong” hymn clearly states that the new temple is splendid, that it was made by *Xi Si*, and the *Hanshi zhangju* 韓氏章句 states that Xi Si eulogized the domain of Lu by making it, claiming the *Shijing* as basis. Thus, the Mao edition of the *Shijing* is correct. The claim by the *Hanshi zhangju* is absurd, it is plain to see. Meanwhile, Ban Gu’s “Preface to the Fu on the Western Capital [*Xi du fu xu* 西都賦序]” and Wang Yanshou’s “Preface to Fu on Lingguang Palace” both state that Xi Si eulogized Lu. Yang Xiong’s “Model Sayings [*Fa yan* 法言]” also says, “Prince Xi Si admired Zheng Kaofu.” This is probably because the three of them had not seen the Mao Edition of the *Shijing*.<sup>25</sup>

Other scholars of the Song like Wang Zhi 王質 [1135–1189] and Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 [1104–1162] also agreed with the perspective set forth in the Mao edition of the *Shijing*, believing that Xi Si built the temple. Scholars of the Qing like Ma Ruichen and Wang Xianqian critiqued this view from the perspective of the scattered Qi, Lu, and Han 韓 editions of the *Shijing*, known as the *sanjia shi* 三家詩.<sup>26</sup> How *zuo* should be interpreted here depends on the four different understandings of meaning and principle prevalent during the Han dynasty.

22 Mao Heng, *Maoshi zhuanjian*, 489.

23 Wang Xianqian, *Shi sanjia yi jishu*, 27.1062.

24 Zhao Kuifu, *Lidai fu pingzhu*, *Handai juan*, 803.

25 Fan Chuyi 范處義, “Lu song 魯頌 [Eulogies of Lu],” in *Shi buzhuo* 詩補傳 [A Supplementary Commentary on the *Shijing*], in *Wenyuange siku quanshu*, 72:27.401.

26 Ma Ruichen, *Maoshi zhuanjian tongshi*, 1155–1156; Wang Xianqian, *Shi sanjia yi jishu*, 1088.

Verification and justification – whether directed at names and things or historical events – is done on the basis of the various editions of Han *fu*. It also requires changing the way meaning and principle are sought.

### 3 Meaning and Principle: Interpreting the *Shijing* by Citing *Fu*

Prior to the arrival of Western modes of learning, scholarship in China had for almost two thousand years been dominated by the “ancient-script/modern-script debate” [*jin gu wen zhi zheng* 今古文之爭] and “Han/Song learning debate” [*han song xue zhi zheng* 漢宋學之爭]. These disputes mostly centered around meaning and principle on the one hand and verification and justification on the other. In essence, they were controversies arising from two different ways of studying and interpreting the classics between Confucian schools of different periods. Scholarship surrounding verification and justification involved carrying out tasks on written works and historical materials, such as rhyming, phonological and etymological research, and collating and comparing texts. It also required precise descriptions and critiques of historical institutions, events and personages, with the ultimate aim of observing and understanding meaning and principle. Regarding scholarship on the *Shijing*, the Han/Song learning debate was mostly tangled up on the question of whether to “respect the preface” [*zun xu* 尊序] or “discard the preface” [*fei xu* 廢序], while the ancient-script/modern-script debate pitted the Mao edition of the *Shijing* on one side against the *sanjia shi* on the other. Eventually, a tacit understanding between the contenders was reached: they would cite *fu* to justify the meaning and principle contained in the *Shijing*. This understanding was made in the midst of a burgeoning “revitalization of classical traditions” [*fugu zhuyi* 復古主義].

In the “Odes of Cao [*Cao feng* 曹風]” chapter of the *Shijing*, there is a poem titled *houren* 候人 to which the “Preface to the *Maoshi* [*Maoshi xu* 毛詩序]” comments: “*Houren* mocks verse that comes close to *xiaoren* [petty men]. Lord Gong of Cao keeps his distance from *junzi* [men of integrity], and yet is fond of approaching *xiaoren*.”<sup>27</sup> Song-dynasty scholars Li Chu 李樞 and Huang Chun 黃樞 [fl. 1187] cite a passage from “*Fu Lamenting Qu Yuan* [*Diao Qu Yuan fu* 吊屈原賦]” by Jia Yi 賈誼 [200–168 BCE] to justify their interpretation of *junzi* 君子 and *xiaoren* 小人. Li Chu follows the reasoning of Su Zhe 蘇轍 [1039–1112] as set forth in the *Collected Commentaries to the Shijing* [*shi ji zhuan*

27 Mao Heng, *Maoshi zhuanjian*, 186.

詩集傳] – that the *Preface* was written by Lord Mao. Huang Chun provides a further explanation:

Jia Yi, having been banished from Chang'an, was discontented. When he was crossing the Xiang River, he wrote a *fu* in homage to Qu Yuan as a self-analogy ... The text subverted the *junzi* and the *xiaoren* to such an extent that the ruler could not distinguish between loyalty and treachery. The upstanding men of the domain of Wei became officials in charge of music, while the *junzi* of the domain of Cao were employed as *houren* – officials of the lookout office – in charge of meeting and seeing off visitors on the road.<sup>28</sup>

The description provided by Jia Yi was that of a chaotic, upside-down world. Both Li Chu and Huang Chun used messages contained in the *fu* to interpret meaning and principle in the *Preface to the Shijing*.

Li Chu and Huang Chun took the “Preface to the Maoshi” to be true and the prefaced attributed to Wei Hong 衛宏 [fl. 25–57] to be false. This is a much discussed issue in *Shijing* studies. In *Discussion on Literature* [*Jingji lun* 經籍論], Song-dynasty scholar Ye Mengde 葉夢得 [1077–1148] wrote,

There are no citations of the “Preface to the Maoshi” in the Cao edition of the *Shijing*. There is an imperial edict from the fourth year of the Huangchu era of Wei that reads, “The Cao edition of the *Shijing* mocks the ruler for being far from *junzi* and close to *xiaoren*.” It was around about this time that the “Preface to the Maoshi” started to become popular.<sup>29</sup>

In the second fascicle of the *History of the Wei* [*Wei shu* 魏書] in the *Treatises of the Three Kingdoms* [*Sanguo zhi* 三國志] – it is recorded, “In the fourth year [of the Huangchu era of Wei] ... In the fifth month of summer, pelicans gathered at Lingzhi Pond. An imperial edict proclaimed, “This is none other than the water bird depicted by the poets. The Cao edition of the *Shijing* mocks the Lord for being far from *junzi* and close to *xiaoren*.”<sup>30</sup> Here, Ye reveals two key points of scholarly value. One is that the *Preface to the Shijing* was not in circulation until the Cao Wei [220–265] dynasty, which suggests that it is probable

28 Li Chu 李樛 and Huang Chun 黃樛, *Maoshi jijie* 毛詩集解 [*Collected Commentaries to the Mao Edition of the Shijing*], in *Wenyuange siku quanshu*, 71:16, 329–30.

29 See Wang Yinglin 王應麟, *Kun xue ji wen* 困學紀聞 [*Record of Observances from Arduous Studies*], comp. Sun Haitong 孫通海 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2019), 3:195.

30 Chen Shou 陳壽, *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 [*Treatises on the Three Kingdoms*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 82–3.

that Wei Hong wrote it. This would also correspond with the doubting of the *Preface* by Zheng Qiao. Two is that one may confirm a lack of citations of the *Preface to the Shijing* among the belles-lettres of the Han dynasty.

This raises the question of whether the *Preface to the Shijing* was extant during the Han dynasty. Chen Qiyuan 陳啟源 [d. 1683], a scholar of the Qing dynasty, set about recompiling the Han-era *Preface to the Shijing*. He did this in *Examining Antiquity in the Mao Edition of the Shijing* [*Maoshi jigu bian* 毛詩稽古編]. Passages from Han *fu* were important documentary sources during this process. In the ninth fascicle, “Fish-scale [Yuli 魚麗]”, he offers a retort of the reasoning put forth by Ye Mengde, stating,

What Ye Mengde said is incorrect. In *Refuting the People of Shu* [*Nan shu fu lao* 難蜀父老], Sima Xiangru stated, “It is not the case that a true king did not start with worry and diligence and end with happiness and comfort.” This is a preface to “Fish-scale”. In “Fu on the Eastern Capital”, Ban Gu spoke of “benevolence spread wide”. This is text from the preface to the “The Han River is Wide [*Han guang* 漢廣]”, as well as “Drum and Bell [*Gu zhong* 鼓鐘]” from the *Mao Commentary to the Shijing*. One originates from the time of Emperor Wu of Han, while another originates from the time of Emperor Ming of Han 漢明帝. Both use speech from the “Preface to the Maoshi”. Could it be said that it is not from the Han dynasty?<sup>31</sup>

Chen lists *Shijing* citations from *fu* composed by Sima Xiangru and Ban Gu: “Moreover, it is not the case that a true king did not start with worry and diligence and end with happiness and comfort. However, the tallies showing the reception of the mandate are all here. The *feng*-sacrifices at Mount Tai and the services at Mount Liangfu will cause the *luan*-bells on the chariots to jingle harmoniously with the sound of music. Above he comes close to the Five Emperors, while below he mounts to the heights of the Three Dynasties.”<sup>32</sup> It is not clear which edition of the *Shijing* Sima Xiangru consulted. However, there is no doubt a match between the message conveyed in the *fu* and the preface to “Fish-scale”. In addition, Chen Qiyuan writes in a preface to the poem “The Cricket [*Xishuai* 蟋蟀]”:

In *Fu on Dance*, Fu Yi of the Han dynasty wrote, “*Ai* [Sympathize with] the *jucu* 局促 of the cricket.” The ancient poem goes, “The cricket has *shang*

31 Chen Qiyuan, *Maoshi jigu bian*, vol. 9.

32 Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 [*History of the Former Han*], annot. Yan Shigu 顏師古 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 57.2588.

[sorrow] for *jucu*.” The meaning of *jucu* can be compared to the sense of “frugality to the point of ritual failure” in the “Preface to the Maoshi”. Both *ai* and *shang* may be taken as *lian* [to take pity], as recorded in the *Preface ...* At that time, Mao poetics had not yet become popular. Nevertheless, there were grounds for talking about the *Shijing* and the *Preface* in this way. That can be acknowledged. Zhu Xi’s *Collected Commentaries to the Shijing* thought of the populace as being hard-working and frugal, which is a virtue. How could this be described as *jucu*?<sup>33</sup>

“The Cricket” is a poem in the “Odes of Tang [*Tang feng* 唐風]” chapter of the *Shijing*. In the “Preface to the Maoshi” it is written: “‘The Cricket’ makes a mockery of Lord Xi of Jin. Lord Xi was frugal but did not abide by the rituals. Thus, this poem expresses a sense of regret and a hope that Lord Xi can perform the ritual music for Yu on time. It is an expression of deep concern expressed by the domain of Jin under the guise of Tang that takes local customs as its basis. Frugality and respect for the ritual system is the legacy of Yao.”<sup>34</sup> Though the “Preface to the Maoshi” had not yet emerged in the times of Emperor Jing of Han 漢景帝 [r. 157–141 BCE] and Emperor Ming of Han 漢明帝 [r. 57–75 BC], its meaning was already in existence. Therefore, it can be taken that there was an extant version of the *Preface* at that time.

During the Song, there was an ideological trend of being doubtful towards or even discarding the preface, led mostly by Zheng Qiao, Zhu Xi 朱熹 [1130–1200], Wang Bo 王柏 [1197–1274] and Ye Mengde. In response to this trend, scholars of the Qing retorted by espousing a reverence for the preface in the name of “examining antiquity”, which was mainly supported by passages from *Han fu*. This “citing *fu* to justify interpretations of the *Shi*” [*yin fu yi zheng shi yi* 引賦以證詩義] was an outstanding contribution to the debate. Chen Qiyuan had the following to say about the poem “White Flower [*Baihua* 白華]”:

The *Preface* took the position that this poem was composed by a man of the Zhou, just like how the poem *Little Crest* was composed by the Mentor of the Heir Apparent. Zhu Xi’s *Collected Commentaries to the Shijing* claimed that Consort Shen of King You of Zhou wrote it. I am not sure what the basis of this is. Pieces written by later generations like “Fu on Changmen Palace [*Changmen fu* 長門賦]” and “Ci on the Wise Ruler [*Mingjun ci* 明君詞]” came from the pens of the literati. How could

33 Chen Qiyuan, *Maoshi jigu bian*, vol. 6.

34 Mao Heng, *Maoshi zhuanjian*, 147.

it be that Empress Chen and Wang Zhaojun wrote a piece like this by themselves?<sup>35</sup>

Here, Chen uses the depiction by Sima Xiangru of the misfortune of Empress Chen 陳皇后 [fl. 140 BCE] in “Fu on Changmen Palace” to counteract claims by Zhu Xi that *Baihua* was written by Consort Shen 申后 [fl. 782 BCE] herself. There is also the poem “Moat by the Eastern Gate [*Dongmen zhi chi* 東門之池]”. In the “Preface to the Maoshi” it is written: “Moat by the Eastern Gate’ is a mockery of the times that expresses the hope that a virtuous lady may be matched with a *junzi*.”<sup>36</sup> In the *Collected Commentaries to the Shijing* by Zhu Xi, the *Preface to the Shijing* is discarded. Zhu stated that he believed the poem was a “poem [depicting] a gathering between men and women”. In *Investigation into Questions on the Shijing* [*Shi yi bian zheng* 詩疑辨證], the Qing-dynasty scholar Huang Zhongsong 黃中松 provides a retort, the grounds for which derive from the creative style of *fu* and their distinctly ornate rhetoric.<sup>37</sup>

Naturally, excessive praise for the Mao edition of the *Shijing* may be ill-advised. In “Fu on a Northward Journey [*Beizheng fu* 北征賦]”, Ban Biao 班彪 [3–54] wrote:

日暍暍其將暮兮，	The sun is dim and it is almost dusk,
睹牛羊之下來。	The cattle and sheep have descended the hills.
寤怨曠之傷情兮，	I feel the pain of unmarried men and unmated women,
哀詩人之嘆時。 <sup>38</sup>	And the sadness of the poet’s lament.

This originates from the “Odes of Wang [*Wang feng* 王風]” chapter of the *Shi*:

君子于役，	My husband is away on service,
不知其期，	And I know not when he will return,
曷至哉？	Where is he now?
雞棲於塒，	The fowls roost in their holes in the walls,
日之夕矣，	And in the evening of the day,

35 Chen Qiyuan, *Maoshi jigu bian*, vol. 16.

36 Mao Heng, *Maoshi zhuanjian*, 176.

37 The source reads: 朱子以詩中不見可刺之故，改為男女聚會之詞，而以淫詩例之，玩經彼美淑姬句，乃男悅女之詞，淫放之人自以為美，自以為淑，正如後世詞賦家敷華揚藻，艷羨誇美之語，非真有賢淑之德也。See Huang Zhongsong 黃中松, *Shi yi bian zheng* 詩疑辨證 [*Investigation into Questions of the Shijing*], in *Wenyuange siku quanshu*, 88:3,321.

38 Zhao Kuifu, *Lidai fu pingzhu*, *Handai juan*, 376.

羊牛下來。                   The goats and cows come down [from the hill].  
君子于役，                   But my husband is away on service,  
如之何勿思。<sup>39</sup>           How can I but keep thinking of him?

Wang Xianqian believed that “long separation and sentimental feelings” [*yuan kuang shang qing* 怨曠傷情] conveyed the message contained in the song “My Lord is On Service [*Junzi yu yi* 君子于役]” in *Qi Poems* [*Qi shi* 齊詩].<sup>40</sup> Hu Chenggong believed that “long separation and sentimental feelings” in fact referred to the poem “Male Pheasant [*Xiong zhi* 雄雉].”<sup>41</sup> According to what is recorded in the “Preface to the Maoshi”, “*Male Pheasant* is a satire of Duke Xuan of Wey. The Duke was promiscuous and did not care about affairs of the state. War broke out many times, the nobles served a long time in the military, and men and women grieved in separation. The people of Wey resented this, so they wrote this poem.”<sup>42</sup> Hu Chenggong had high regard for the Mao edition of the *Shijing*, and thus cited Li Shan’s annotations to the “Preface to the Maoshi”. It is not clear whether Li Shan had seen the Qi edition of the *Shijing* or Ban Biao’s Preface to it.

#### 4 Language and Exposition: Citing *Fu* to Interpret *Shi*

The citing of language and exposition in Han *fu* that is present in the *Shijing* exegetical works is intrinsically a literary practice. When writing the *Summary to the Commentary on Herbs, Trees, Birds, Beasts, Insects and Fish in the Mao Edition of the Shijing* [*Maoshi caomu niaoshou chongyu shu guangyao* 毛詩草木鳥獸蟲魚疏廣要] by Lu Ji, the Ming scholar Mao Jin 毛晉 [1599–1659] added additional explanations to Lu’s *fu* citations which were philological studies of particular names and things. For example, regarding the aforementioned case of *shaoyao*, Mao added the following text: “In ancient times there was *shaoyao* sauce, a mixture of five flavors of orchid and osmanthus. It was used to add flavor to food. The five-flavor sauced was called *shaoyao*. ‘Seven Stimuli [*Qi fa* 七發]’ talks about *shaoyao* sauce, while ‘Fu on Sir Vacuous’ talks about

39 Mao Heng, *Maoshi zhuanjian*, 97.

40 The source reads: 班氏世習齊詩，賦云：怨曠傷情，知齊義以此詩君子為室家之詞。郭引詩泛曆樞云：牛羊來暮，亦用齊文，是齊作牛羊也。See Wang Xianqian, *Shi sanjia yi jishu*, 318.

41 The source reads: 不知李善注文選於上二句引此詩，於下二句引雄雉序曰：“大夫久役，男女怨曠”，是則怨曠者，並不指此詩，不得援以為證。See Hu Chenggong, *Maoshi houjian*, 336.

42 See Mao Heng, *Maoshi zhuanjian*, 46.

presenting food served with *shaoyao* [to the King of Chu].<sup>43</sup> After Lu's citation of Sima Xiangru's "Fu on Sir Vacuous" and Yang Xiong's "Fu on the Capital of Shu", he also cited passages from the "Seven Stimuli" and "Fu on Sir Vacuous". This formed a practice of increasing literariness in which *fu* and annotations ran parallel with each other. Another case in point is Mao Jin's addition of the following text: "The *fu* bird portrayed by Jia Yi is active after dark ... When Jia Yi was banished to Changsha, it gathered at his residence. Jia Yi believed that its lifespan was not long, so he wrote poems to comfort himself, but in the end he could not prevent it from dying young."<sup>44</sup> This is a discussion of why Jia Yi wrote the *fu* after the verification of the names and things, seemingly composing a preface to the *fu*. He supplemented that with two instances of verification and justification of names and things in the language and exposition of the *fu*.<sup>45</sup> This may be read as a conscious effort to increase the literariness of the text by adding a philological study of names and things, and is consistent with the custom of using literature to interpret the *Shijing* that prevailed during the Ming era.

Consider, also, the literary aspects of philological studies. *Philology of the Shijing* [*Shijing xiaoxue* 詩經小學] by Duan Yucai 段玉裁 [1735–1815] is a relevant case in point. The language and exposition it employs is highly literary.<sup>46</sup> The use of Han *fu* citations to carry out philological studies on passages from the *Shijing* not only interprets the meanings of individual words, but also reveals deeper meanings in the wider text. What is perhaps of even more interest is that Hu Chenggong believed that the literariness of Duan's interpretations could have been raised. As a result, Hu added his own citations after Duan's, in this case referencing the poem "Fu to Mourn Madam Li [*Dao li furen fu* 悼李夫人賦]" composed by Emperor Wu of Han 漢武帝 [r. 141–87 BCE].<sup>47</sup> This added

43 See Lu Ji 陸璣 and Mao Jin 毛晉, *Maoshi caomu niaoshou chongyu shu guangyao* 毛詩草木鳥獸蟲魚疏廣要 [Summary of the Commentary on Herbs, Trees, Birds, Beasts, Insects and Fish in the Mao Edition of the *Shijing*], Ming Chongzhen nianjian yushan Mao shi jiguge kan *Jindai mishu ben* 明崇禎年間虞山毛氏汲古閣刊《津逮秘書》本.

44 Lu Ji and Mao Jin, *Maoshi caomu niaoshou chongyu shu guangyao*.

45 Consider, example, the lower fascicle in which Mao Jin cited the "Fu on the Imperial Park": 鴻鵠鵠鵠，駕鵝屬玉，交精旋目，煩驚庸渠，箴疵鸞盧，群浮乎其上也。See Lu Ji and Mao Jin, *Maoshi caomu niaoshou chongyu shu guangyao*.

46 For example, note this passage which cites six different *fu*: 宋玉賦“眉聯娟以蛾揚”，揚雄賦“何必揚累之蛾眉”，“慮妃曾不得施其蛾眉”，皆娥之假借字。娥者，美好輕揚之意。《方言》：“娥，好也”。秦晉之間，好而輕者謂之娥。《大招》“娥眉曼只”，枚乘《七發》“皓齒娥眉”，張衡《思元賦》“嫵眼娥眉”。See Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shijing xiaoxue* 詩經小學 [Philology of the *Shijing*], Qing Jiaqing er nian Wujin Zang shi baijing tang keben 清嘉慶二年武進臧氏拜經堂刻本, vol. 1.

47 The passage read: 連流視而娥揚。See Hu Chenggong, *Maoshi houjian*, 291.

an extra layer of detail and richness to the literary flavor of the philological critique.

In “A Letter to Master Chen [Yu Chen shuoshi shu 與陳碩士書],” Yao Nai wrote: “[Regarding] the best place to carry out verification and justification of belles-lettres, [we happen] to be in it.”<sup>48</sup> On the contrary, the use of belles-lettres to bolster the process of verification and justification is precisely the “best place” of exegetical works. The aforementioned practice in which *fu* and annotations are placed side by side to examine names and things, distinguish characters and interpret words is a highly literary tendency. Meanwhile, when interpreting the meaning and principle contained in the *Shijing*, citing the perceived motivations for composition, and language and exposition, of *fu*, is likewise an interpretation of *Shijing* through a literary lens.<sup>49</sup> This method involves using the *Preface* to the interpret the *Shijing*, a typical classicist approach.<sup>50</sup> Fan Yichu, when discussing the meaning of *zheng xiao ya* 正小雅, cited text written by Sima Qian 司馬遷 [145–87 BCE] that read, “The Major Court Hymns [*Da ya* 大雅]’ first talks about the virtues of the nobles and then the people. The ‘Minor Court Hymns [*Xiao ya* 小雅]’ first mocks the suffering of the self, which is related to the gain and loss of the reigning monarch.”<sup>51</sup> The creative thought process that Sima Xiangru had when composing *fu* can be said to be derived from the same origin as that of the *Shijing*. It is a case of using the mind of the *fu* composer to guess at the mind of the *Shijing* composer.

48 Yao Nai 姚鼐, “Yu Chen shuoshi shu 與陳碩士書 [A Letter to Master Chen],” in *Yao Xibao xiansheng chidu* 姚惜抱先生尺牘 [Letters of Yao Nai], Qing Xuantonq yuannian xiao wanliu tang keben 清宣統元年小萬柳堂刻本, vol. 6.

49 Consider that, in their interpretation of the verse, “You do not think of the former days / And are only angry with me” [不念昔者，伊余來壑] in the “Odes of Bei [Beifeng 邶風]” chapter of the *Shijing*, Li Chu and Huang Chun wrote: 壑，息也，言君子忘舊，不念往昔年，我始來之時，安息我也，欲其不忘舊也。夫妻者，齊也，一與之齊，則終身不改，豈有淫其新昏者，一為好色所移，則棄舊而圖新哉。

50 Note, however, the subsequent passage of interpretation: 司馬相如為陳皇后嘗作長門賦，哀陳皇后之見棄，及其惑於嬖妾，而文君又有白頭吟之嘆，躬自蹈之，好色之事，其惑於人者如此。It aims to compare the psycho-creative process of the *fu* author with that of the *Shijing* so that the reader may better understand the *Shijing*. See Li Chu and Huang Chun, *Maoshi jijie*, 71:120.

51 Note his verification and justification follows thus: 遷之言為司馬相如而發，論大雅固已近之，論小雅獨取諷刺，與相如詞賦相似者：如賓之初筵言天下之淫佚，以諷幽王之荒廢。白華言下國之用孽妾，以諷幽王之黜後，所謂譏小己之得失，其流及上者如此，然特變雅之事耳，概而言之，亦非通論也。See Fan Chuyi, *Shi buzhuanyuan*, 72:177.

*Fu* are considered one of the “six principles” [*liuyi* 六義] of traditional Chinese poetics. It is said that “*Fu* are a development of the ancient *shi*.”<sup>52</sup> Naturally, much discussion on the meaning of *fu* can be found among the *Shijing* exegetical works, which in turn may be used to support literary criticism of the *fu* form. In addition, the exegetical works contain a large amount of content which discuss passages of *fu*. These passages hold significance in literary criticism.<sup>53</sup>

In *General Discourse on the Shijing* [*Shijing tonglun* 詩經通論], Qing-dynasty scholar Yao Jiheng 姚際恆 [1647–1715] offers the following discussion on “The Peach Tree Is Flourishing [*Tao zhi yaoyao* 桃之夭夭]”: “The color of peach blossoms, being most resplendent, is used as a metaphor for women. It gave rise to the longstanding practice of eulogizing beauties through *ci* and *fu*.”<sup>54</sup> To this one may add the discussion of another Qing scholar, Cheng Tingzuo 程廷祚 [1691–1767]. In part one of “On Saofu [*Sao fu lun shang* 騷賦論上],” Cheng writes: “When it comes to describing affairs and objects, ‘Four Iron-black Horses [*Si tie* 駟驥],’ ‘Our Chariots Attacked [*Che gong* 車攻]’ and ‘Auspicious Day [*Ji ri* 吉日]’ were the originators of literature about hunting. ‘Assorted Banks [*Si gan* 斯干]’ and ‘Numinous Terrace [*Ling tai* 靈臺]’ were the first to portray imperial palaces and gardens. ‘The Vastness of Bin’ in ‘Patriarch Liu [*Gong Liu* 公劉]’ and ‘As Far as the Foot of Qi Hill’ in ‘Silk Floss [*Mian* 綿]’ were the first literary works that described scenes of a capital.”<sup>55</sup> The discussions on *fu* present in the *Shijing* exegetical works can be said to resemble Cheng’s remarks on *fu*, which demonstrates a clear sense of literary criticism.

The *Shijing* exegetical works also contain passages that are relevant to points of discussion in the field of *fu* literary criticism. Yang Xiong put forth the distinction between “*fu* of the poets” [*shiren zhi fu* 詩人之賦] and “*fu* of the rhetoricians” [*ciren zhi fu* 辭人之賦]. Regarding the poem “Our Chariots Attacked,” Li Chu and Huang Chun wrote:

52 Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 483.

53 Take, for instance, the following text on the “Originators of the *fu*” [*Fu zu* 賦祖] contained in the *Shijing*: 宋儒嚴粲《詩緝》：“《小雅·斯干》‘秩秩斯干，幽幽南山’，《西京賦》言長安‘於前則終南、太一’，猶此詩言‘幽幽南山’；‘於後則據渭、踞涇’，猶此詩言‘秩秩斯干’，《西京賦》祖述《斯干》也。” See Yan Can 嚴粲, *Shi ji* 詩緝 [*Compilation Concerning the Shijing*], in *Wenyuange siku quanshu*, 75:19.254.

54 Yao Jiheng 姚際恆, *Shijing tonglun* 詩經通論 [*General Discourse on the Shijing*], Qing Daoguang shiqi nian tieqin shanguan keben 清道光十七年鐵琴山館刻本, vol. 1.

55 Cheng Tingzuo 程廷祚, “Sao fu lun shang 騷賦論上 [On Elegiac Rhapsody I],” in *Qingxi ji* 青溪集 [*Qingxi Collection*], Jinling congshu (yi ji) ben 金陵叢書 (乙集) 本, vol. 3.

There are eight chapters in the poem “Our Chariots Attacked”, which describe the graceful demeanor of King Xuan of Zhou 周宣王, which can be said to be perfect. It has been written that King Xuan’s chariots were repaired, and that he was fully equipped. Archery and driving, all kinds of excellent skills that are possessed by the lord – this is what the poet is good at describing. Like Sima Xiangru’s “Fu on the Imperial Park”, it is probably an imitation of this poem, but the length of that *fu* is many times as long as that of “Our Chariots Attacked”, even dozens of times as long. How does the morality of the prince described in it compare to “Our Chariots Attacked”? ... Judging from this poem and that *fu*, the difference between composers of poetry and composers of *fu* is very clear.<sup>56</sup>

There has been a wide range of views discussed on the topic of “*fu* of the poets” and “*fu* of the rhetoricians” in the field of *fu* literary criticism. Indeed, scholarly consensus has not been reached. Comparing “Our Chariots Attacked” with “Fu on the Imperial Park” to demonstrate the difference between the “poets” and “rhetoricians” may be considered an original approach.

Now let us turn to the question of “praise and mockery” [*meici* 美刺] in the composition of *fu*. In the “Greater Encomia [*Daya* 大雅]” chapter of the *Shijing* it is written:

王猶允塞，	The king’s plans were directed in truth and sincerity,
徐方既來。	And the region of Xu came [at once to terms].
徐方既同，	Its [chiefs] were all collected together,
天子之功。	Through the merit of the Son of Heaven.
四方既平，	The country was all reduced to order,
徐方來庭。	Its [chiefs] appeared before the king.
徐方不回，	They would not again change their minds,
王曰還歸。 <sup>57</sup>	And the kings said, ‘Let us return.’”

From a specific chapter analysis perspective, Fan Chuyi points out that the tendency of Han *fu* to “advise one hundred and persuade the one” [*quan bai feng yi* 勸百諷一] originated from the *Shijing*.<sup>58</sup> However, a more detailed literary

56 Li Chu and Huang Chun, *Maoshi jijie*, 71:422.

57 Mao Heng, *Maoshi zhuanjian*, 442.

58 The source reads: 前數章所稱宣王之用兵，盛矣美矣！而非常武之所尚也。召穆公之意謂：德為可常，武不可黷，故先極言其盛美，以滿宣王之欲，卒章乃陳警戒之言，故其言易入也。後之為辭賦者，或竊取其義，而學者以曲終奏雅，勸百諷一譏之，是不知其得古詩人之遺意也。 See Fan Chuyi, *Shi buzhuàn*, 72:372.

interpretation of the *Shijing* necessitates an understanding of the cohesive devices in the source text. Liu Yuru 劉玉汝 [fl. 1341] of the Yuan dynasty [1206–1368] took a passage from the “South of Shao” chapter that read:

何彼禮矣，	How great is that luxuriance,
唐棣之華.....	Those flowers of the sparrow-plum!
其鈞維何。 <sup>59</sup>	What are used in angling?

and analyzed the use of *he* [何] as follows: “*He* is an interrogative word that should be placed at the beginning of the next sentence. This structure has been used before in Song Yu’s ‘Nine Variations [Jiu bian 九辨]’ and Sima Xiangru’s ‘Fu on Changmen Palace’. The use of *he* at the end of a section is a way to avoid repetition and use synonyms in adjacent sentences to express the same meaning.”<sup>60</sup> This is an example of using *fu* to interpret the *Shijing* from a syntactic perspective. In his analysis of the poem “Determining the Cardinal Directions [Ding zhi fang zhong 定之方中]”, Gu Yanwu, stated, “Zhang Heng’s ‘Fu on the Eastern Metropolis’ wrote phrases like, ‘the divination gives an auspicious reading’, grammar of this nature.”<sup>61</sup> When Zhang Heng cited the *Shijing*, he often altered the text. Here, Gu was pointing out changes in the grammar arising from such alterations. Ming-dynasty scholar Wan Shihua 萬時華 [1590–1639] was a poet who was fond of composing poems to discuss the *Shijing*.<sup>62</sup> This involved interpreting textual features in Han *fu* like word selection, literary style, semantic creativity, “word smelting” [*lianzi* 煉字] and scenic descriptions to better understand the *Shijing*.

The practice seen in exegetical works in which Han *fu* are cited to interpret the *Shijing* can be considered a kind of literary interpretation in *Shijing* scholarship. During this process, the verification and justification of particular passages results in a kind of literariness emerging from the literary language of the *fu* source text. Moreover, this kind of interpretative practice of the *Shijing* is characterized by reference to literature. First, the citing of language and

59 Mao Heng, *Maoshi zhuanjian*, 30.

60 Liu Yuru 劉玉汝, *Shi zuanxu* 詩續緒 [A Compilation of the *Shijing*], in *Wenyuange siku quanshu*, 77:2.591, 648.

61 Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, *Shi benyin* 詩本音 [Original Rhymes of the *Shijing*], in *Wenyuange siku quanshu*, 241:2.48.

62 In particular, consider his poem *Old Together* [*Xielao* 偕老] in which he wrote: 胡然而天，全是詫異，聲響如雲，恍惚天仙帝女下臨人世，不知何處得來。子虛賦：眇眇忽忽，若神仙之方髯。正此意，然為蚊為螭為雲為雨之狀，筆端自寫出。 See Wan Shihua 萬時華, *Shijing oujian* 詩經偶箋 [Occasional Annotations on the *Shijing*], Ming Chongzhen liu nian Li Tai keben 明崇禎六年李泰刻本, vol. 2.

exposition of Han *fu* invites a comparison between the creative mindset of the composers of *fu* with that of the perceived authors of the *Shijing* to facilitate reader understanding of the *Shijing*. Second, the deliberate placement of *fu* with annotative descriptions in parallel form allows for the revelation of meanings within the *Shijing*. Third, by using verses of *fu* to gain a thorough understanding of the *Shijing*, the myriad purposes of the source text can be ascertained. In this way, a literary interpretation of the *Shijing* that offers a wide range of approaches and layers of meaning is made possible. The various proponents of the “appreciation school” [*xinshang pai* 欣賞派] in their *Shijing* exegetical works made a large quantity of *fu* citations for the purposes of interpreting meaning and principle, carrying out verification and justification, and examining questions of phonology and etymology. As a result, they were able to attempt to better appreciate the *Shijing*, and generate new language and exposition in the process. In the “cross-justification” of the classics, this led to the formation of a new kind of literary interpretation of the *Shijing*; it is also a unique approach to literary criticism in Chinese literature.

## 5 Conclusion: An Interpretative System for Complementary Citation

Among the Five Classics, the *Shijing* has been most frequently cited in Han *fu*. Furthermore, this article has demonstrated that, among the many literary forms present in Chinese literature, there is none that has been so widely used in the interpretation of the *Shijing* like Han *fu*. Considered as a development of the ancient *shi*, *fu* are also considered “originally a vassal among the six principles of poetry that now assumes the status of a great domain.”<sup>63</sup> As a literary form, *fu* are intimately bound up with the *Shijing*. They are unique among all other literary forms in that they have the potential to “integrate [the study of] canon with [that of] history.”<sup>64</sup> Han *fu* are laden with knowledge and are characterized by their ability to “promote the virtues of rulers and express the feelings of the people.”<sup>65</sup> Their historical emergence is deeply rooted in the tradition of *Shijing* scholarship during the Han dynasty. Composers of *fu* not only used the *Shijing* to enrich their prose, but also used their poetic expositions

63 Liu Xie 劉勰, *Wenxin diaolong yizhu* 文心雕龍譯注 [Translation and Annotation of the *Wenxin Diaolong*], trans. and annot. Lu Kanru 陸侃如 and Mou Shijin 牟世金 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2009), 163.

64 Zhu Tingzhen 朱庭珍, “Xiaoyuan shihua 筱園詩話 [Notes on Poetry by Zhu Xiaoyuan],” in *Qing shihua xubian* 清詩話續編 [Collection of Notes on Poetry from the Qing Dynasty], ed. Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), 4:1.2348.

65 Zhao Kuifu, *Lidai fu pingzhu*, *Handaijuan*, 484.

to carry on the teachings of the *Shijing*, allowing for the further interpretation and consolidation of canonical messages. The reception of Han *fu* transitioned from “a grown man does not compose *fu*” to being perceived as “governing the state and managing the outer divisions, their meaning being to honor glory and grandeur.” This transition, along with the simultaneous praising of *fu* as a literary form, meant that the Six Classics ended up being used to promote the merits of *fu*. This is a classic example in literary history of “integrating the meaning of the classics [with that of literature]” and “making grand speech for the self”.<sup>66</sup> This meant that the thoughts Liu Xie 劉勰 [ca. 465–532] had on “[seeking] evidence from the Sage” [*zheng sheng* 徵聖] and “revering the classics” [*zong jing* 宗經] were well-founded in the context of literary texts.

Interpretation of classic texts in China has long been characterized by a reverence for traditional approaches. As a result, classicists throughout the ages have adopted the examining-of-antiquity paradigm, or similar means, to comprehend the classics. The understanding was that Han-dynasty composers of *fu*, perceived as being not too distant from the Sage, could speak for the ancients. Furthermore, they believed that their speech could stand on its own. Thus, the *fu* they composed naturally became reference material for the classicists. Later generations of scholars then started to use *fu* to interpret *Shijing*, a reversal of the original state of affairs in which composers of *fu* cited the *Shijing* during their creative process. This was a historical merging of disciplines: the study of literature merging with the study of the classics. This led to using the classics to revere *fu*, using the classics to enrich *fu* and using *fu* to transmit the classics.<sup>67</sup> This culminated in the *fu* being used to interpret the classics, which closed the loop. This had paradigmatic significance in the history of the study of classics and literature.

Citations of the *Shijing* in Han *fu* were both linguistic and semantic in function. Meanwhile, *Shijing* exegetical works carried out ironic citations of Han *fu* in an interpretative system. These citations were targeted at meaning and principle, verification and justification, and language and exposition. There are also the six principles of traditional Chinese poetics: “ballads” [*feng* 風], “exposition”

66 Huang Kan 黄侃, *Wenxin diaolong zhaji* 文心雕龍札記 [*Reading Notes to the Wenxin Diaolong*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 29.

67 Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 [1904–1982] believed that “the *Zuozhuan* used historical events to interpret *Chunqiu*” [以歷史之事實解釋春秋] and that it “used historical accounts to transmit canonical meanings” [以史傳經]. See Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, *Lianghan sixiangshi* 兩漢思想史 [*An Intellectual History of the Han Dynasty*] (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2001), 164–7. Han *fu* citation of the classics as a vehicle for canonical transmission can be referred to as “using *fu* to transmit canonical meanings” [以賦傳經]. For a relevant discussion on this topic, see Xu Jie and Wang Sihao, “Hanfu yongjing kao.”

[*fu* 賦], “comparison” [*bi* 比], “stimulation” [*xing* 興], “elegance” [*ya* 雅] and “hymn” [*song* 頌]. In the view of Kong Yingda, “Exposition, comparison and stimulation are the rhetorical methods employed in the *Shijing*. Ballads, elegance and hymns are the three literary forms of the *Shijing*. The three methods and the three forms are called together by the common name of meaning.”<sup>68</sup> Ballads, elegance and hymn make up the “three forms” [*santi* 三體], while exposition, comparison and stimulation make up the “three uses” [*sanyong* 三用]. In the latter, exposition – unlike the other two – forms an independent literary form, which creates a kind of demand for deriving meaning from the classics. The reliance *fu* had on *Shijing* for this establishment of meaning is intrinsically linked with the traditional use of *Shijing* during the Warring States Period as an educational vehicle. Han *fu*, which were used as documentary sources by later generations of scholars, were a highly developed literary form as early as the Warring States Period. Moreover, *fu* primarily originated from the *Shi*. In the Han dynasty, composers of *fu* carried on the tradition of “citing poetry to express intent”, which entailed reciting the *Shijing* in various social situations to express personal positions, points of view and feelings. Han *fu*, as originators of ancient poetry, to some extent were also originators of *Shijing* teachings. There was a shift from *fu* taking the canonical messages of the *Shijing* out of context, to deriving meaning from them. Consider the following quotation from the Grand Scribe [*Tai shi gong* 太史公], aka Sima Qian: “Although there is much fictitious speech and obscene rhetoric, the subject matter is frugality. They may be in the same category as the hymns and eulogies of the *Shijing*.”<sup>69</sup> Here, Sima provides a description of how the various editions of the Han *fu* were created.<sup>70</sup> Meaning-based citations of the *Shijing* by Han *fu* are mostly references to the significance of persuasive remonstrances and hymns and eulogies [*yasong* 雅頌] contained in the *Shijing*. Moreover, the meaning and principle of these passages were later ironically cited by classicists of later generations in their literary interpretations, thereby creating new kinds of meaning and principle.

It can be said that the “narration and exposition” [*pu cai chi wen* 鋪採摛文] of Han *fu*, although mere citations of the *Shijing*, surpassed them in literary achievement. A writer of the Eastern Jin dynasty [317–420] Ge Hong 葛洪 [283–363] made the following observation:

68 Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda, *Maoshi Zhengyi*, 271.

69 Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 [*Records of the Grand Historian*], comm. Pei Yin 裴駰, Sima Zhen 司馬貞, and Zhang Shoujie 張守節 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 117.3073.

70 Alternatively, consider the words of Ban Gu: 或以抒下情而通諷喻, 或以宣上德而盡忠孝……抑以雅頌之亞也。

*The Mao Edition of the Shijing* is a work of literary grace. However, it cannot be compared to the magnanimity and erudition of “Fu on the Imperial Park”, “Fu on the Beplumed Hunt [*Yu lie fu* 羽獵賦]”, “Fu on Two Capitals”, and “Fu on Three Metropolises [*San du fu* 三都賦]” ... In describing the imperial palace, how could the odes *Xi Si* and *Dew Court* compare to Wang Yanshou’s “Fu on Lingguang Palace”? Similarly, on narrating playing and hunting, how could the poems *Shu Lue* and *Lu Ling* compare to Sima Xiangru’s “Fu on the Imperial Park”<sup>71</sup>

However, this also demonstrates how the themes, subject matter, emotional expression and language style of Han *fu* are mostly borrowed from the *Shijing*. Thus, later generations of classicists went the reverse direction by making language-based citations of Han *fu*, which helped form new language and exposition. One of the basic functions of *fu* is to describe names and things, something that was taken advantage of by later generations of scholars in their quest to better understand exact referents for herbs, trees, birds, beasts, insects and fish. The various designations given to *fu* – like “rhyming text” [*you yun zhi wen* 有韻之文], “forest of characters” [*zilin* 字林], “miscellany” [*leishu* 類書] and “gazetteer” [*zhicheng* 志乘] – also suggest that Confucian scholars were able to consult Han *fu* in their research on historical and textual matters.

The Qing dynasty historian Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 [1738–1801] once said: “Meaning and principle lie in knowledge. Language and exposition lie in talent. The verification and justification of truth lie in erudition.”<sup>72</sup> The dialogue between the various editions of Chinese classic texts such as the *Shijing* with the early editions of the *Shijing* and Han *fu* created space for ordinary and ironic citation, which in turn allowed for the complementary citation [*xiang ji wei yong* 相濟為用] of meaning and principle, verification and justification, and language and exposition. The cross-justification of canonical text with *fu* compositions created a cycle of scholarship with neo-Confucian, historical and literary dimensions. This formed an interpretive system for premodern Chinese philology that benefitted from the exemplary and pioneering nature of the *Shijing* and the Han *fu* themselves.

*Translated by Carl Gene Fordham*

71 Ge Hong 葛洪, *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 [*The Book of the Master who Embraces Simplicity*] (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), 155.

72 Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠, “Shuolin 說林 [A Collection of Thoughts],” in *Wenshi tongyi jiaozhu* 文史通義校注 [*Critically Commented Edition of the Wenshi Tongyi*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 351.

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# Journal of Chinese Humanities Volume 8, Issue 1

## Reflections on Han *Fu* Poetry

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