



BRILL

JOURNAL OF CHINESE HUMANITIES 8 (2022) 210–232



brill.com/joch

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

Liu Yi 劉一

Lecturer of the College of Liberal Arts, Anhui University, Hefei,
Anhui, China
oxhead@yeah.net

Abstract

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

* This article is written as part of the Anhui Province Philosophical Sciences Program, which is supported by an incubator fund (approval number AHSKF2018D87) from the National Social Science Fund of China.

Keywords

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁶ Ibid., 2269.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁸ Ibid., 103.

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁰ Hu Yinglin, *Shi sou*, 105.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13 Hu Yinglin, *Shi sou*, 47.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.1 Formal Differences between “Kayō Jūei” Poems and Quatrains

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

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

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

16 Kojima Noriyuki, *Bunkashūreishū*, 226.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 Kojima Noriyuki, *Bunkashūreishū*, 278.

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

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

Stanza 2:

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

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

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

Stanza 5:

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

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

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

¹⁹ Ibid., 307–8.

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

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

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

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

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

²⁰ Ibid., 277.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 278.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translated by Casey Lee

Works Cited

- Fan, Kuang 范况. *Zhongguo shixue tonglun* 中國詩學通論 [*Discussion of Chinese Poetic Studies*]. Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2017.
- Frodsham, J.D. *The Collected Poems of Li He*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2016.

- Ge, Xiaoyin 葛曉音. "Chu Sheng Tang qiyan gexing de fazhan – jian lun gexing de xingcheng ji qi yu qigu de fenye 初盛唐七言歌行的發展—兼論歌行的行成及其與七古的分野 [The Development of the Seven-character *Gexing* Poem of the Early and High Tang: with Discussion of the Formation of *Gexing* Poems and how they Differ from Seven-character Ancient Verse]." *Wenxue yichan* 文學遺產 [Literary Heritage], no. 5 (1997): 47–61.
- Hanawa, Hokiichi 塙保己一, ed. *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類從 [Collected Writings According to Classification]. Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1932.
- Hu, Yinglin 胡應麟. *Shi sou* 詩藪 [Art of Poetry]. Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1958.
- Kojima, Noriyuki 小島憲之, ed. *Bunkashūreishū* 文華秀麗集 [Anthology of Splendid Literary Flowerings]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964.
- Lu, Qinli 逯欽立. *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 [Poetry from Antiquity to the Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.
- Lu, Zhaolin 盧照鄰. *Lu Zhaolin ji jiao zhu* 盧照鄰集校注 [Annotated Collected Works of Lu Zhaolin]. Annotated by Li Yunyi 李雲逸. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.
- Rabinovitch, Judith N. and Timothy R. Bradstock. *No Moonlight in My Cup: Sinitic Poetry (Kanshi) from the Japanese Court, Eighth to the Twelfth Centuries*. Leiden: Brill, 2019.
- Wang, Bo 王勃. *Wang Zi'an ji zhu* 王子安集注 [Collected works of Wang Zi'an with commentary]. Annotated by Jiang Qingyi 蔣清翊. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995.
- Wu, Guanwen 吳冠文, Tan Peifang 談蓓芳, Zhang Peiheng 章培恒, eds. *Yutai xinyong huijiao* 玉臺新詠彙校 [Annotated New Songs from a Jade Terrace]. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2014.