

## Reflections on Han *Fu* Poetry

### 1-2 / Introduction: Reflections on Han *Fu* Poetry

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### 3-26 / The Origin and Formal Characteristics of *Fu* Prefaces

**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

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### 27-57 / A Discussion on the Ethical Worldview Established in Yang Xiong's *Fu* Poetry

**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

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### **58-115 / The Influence of *Chenwei* on Han Dynasty Literature and Literary Theory**

**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

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### **116-142 / Citation of Han *Fu* in *Shijing* Exegetical Works**

**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

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