

# Style and Substance

ninety-three poems  
from the chinese

## Notes One

colin john holcombe

ocaso press

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Style and Substance:  
Ninety-three Poems  
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Volume Three: Notes  
on Poems 1 to 36

by

Colin John Holcombe

Ocaso Press 2021

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Volume Three: Notes on Poems 1 to 36  
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# FROM THE CHINESE: VOLUME 3

## NOTES ON INDIVIDUAL POEMS No. 1

### PREAMBLE

These notes provide the documentation needed to fully understand the translations of Volume One. Given here are the Chinese texts, word-for-word renderings, Notes, text sources, other translations, audio recordings and more general references to the poem or period. This material also gives the translator the freedom needed for literary renderings: readers can check the original Chinese to see where how and why the renderings diverge from the literal. Each style or genre is introduced by background information and generalizations that help define the 'model' applying.

These are personal notes, I should add, not academic compendiums essential to scholarly work. Rhymes, when not taken from specialist works, are my interpretation; they depend on how much licence one thinks the poet in question would have accepted. I have done my best to be accurate here, but the aim is more to show that rhyme is a constant feature of Chinese poetry, and one that calls for some comparable rhyme scheme in translation.

The 'rules' we devised in Volume Two, which characterise the various styles or genres are.

Period	Genre or Source	Substyle or Theme	Formal Name	Poem Length	Words per Line	Rhyme	Tonal Patterns
Pre-Han	<i>Shijing</i>	Shi	Shijing	various	4	often	no
Warring States	<i>Chuci zhangju</i>	Shi	Sao	various	3-7	yes	no
Han	<i>Chuci zhangju</i>	Shi	Fu	long	3-7	often	
Han	<i>Music Bureau</i>	Yuefu	Yuefu	various	4-5	yes	no
Han	<i>Wen xuan</i>	Early Pentasyllabic Verse	Nineteen Old Poems	various	5	yes	no
Six Dynasties	Shi	Farmstead & Landscape Shi	Tianyuan Shi	various	5	yes	no
Tang	Shi	unregulated	Gutishi	various	5	yes	no
Song	Shi	unregulated	Gutishi	various	7	yes	no
Ming - Qing	Shi	unregulated	Gutishi	various	7	yes	no
Tang – Song	Jintishi	Lushi	Wulu	8 lines	5	yes	yes

Tang – Song	Jintishi	Lushi	Qilu	8 lines	7	yes	yes
Tang – Song	Jintishi	Jeuju	Wujue	4 lines	5	yes	yes
Tang – Song	Jintishi	Jeuju	Qijue	4 lines	7	yes	yes
Ming - Qing	Jintishi	Lushi	Wulu	8 lines	5	yes	yes
Ming - Qing	Jintishi	Lushi	Qilu	8 lines	7	yes	yes
Ming - Qing	Jintishi	Jeuju	Wujue	4 lines	5	yes	yes
Ming - Qing	Jintishi	Jeuju	Qijue	4 lines	7	yes	yes
Yuan	Sanqu	unregulated	-	various	3-7	yes	yes
6 Dyn. - Qing	Ci	Xiaoling		short	varying, 3-8	yes	yes
6 Dyn. - Qing	Ci	Manci		long	varying, 3-8	yes	yes

And, again from Volume Two, the ‘spirit’ or nature of various styles in keywords, where keywords indicate extra features or special emphasis. All these are additional to indicating the line length correctly and rendering the overall spirit of Chinese poetry, which is refined, musical, structured, concise and allusive.

Style	Formal Name	Keyword 1	Keyword 2	Keyword 3	Keyword 4	Rhyme
Shijing	Hymns	ceremonial	reverent	simple	repetitive	basic
Shijing	Odes	commemorative	declamatory	simple	repetitive	basic
Shijing	Songs	melodious	folk-song	artless	bucolic	tight
Sao	Chuci	long	delicately musical	dream sequences	allusive	free
Sao	Nine Songs	martial	declamatory	heavy assonance	basic	as needed
Fu		long	rhapsodic	luxuriant in detail	descriptive	free
Yuefu		workmanlike	-	-	-	basic
Early Pentasyllabic	19 old songs	mood evocative	effective	-	-	basic
Early Pentasyllabic	Court poetry	mood evocative	refined		assonance	tight
Shi	Tianyuan	effective	spare	personal	blunt	basic
Shi	Gutishi	rich - textured	melodious	fresh-struck	traditional themes	varied
Shi	Gutishi	rich - textured	melodious	conventional	more personal	varied
Jintishi	Wulu	studied	melodious	dissociated	assonance	tight

Jintishi	Qilu	studied	melodious	dissociated	assonance	tight
Jintishi	Wujue	studied	melodious	dissociated	assonance	tight
Jintishi	Qijue	studied	melodious	dissociated	assonance	tight
Sanqu		open-textured	song-like	living speech		varied
Ci		song-like	catchy	personal	focused	as necessary

This 'spirit' or nature does not consist of characteristics imposed, but generalities gradually derived from the poetry itself, academic commentaries and the trial and error of translations.

Sections are arranged as per Volume One, but entries can also be looked up under poem number, i.e. Poem 1A, etc. Sections lacking references can be found in Volume Two.

## 2. POETRY OF THE SHIJING

### 2.1 Characteristics of Shijing

Shijing, or the Book of Songs, is one of six classics, approved and perhaps selected by Confucius, and so greatly influencing thought and literature throughout imperial times. The Shijing is not a seamless and coherent document, however, but a collection of varied work compiled by a certain Master Mao in Han times, when the Chinese had become so archaic as to be intelligible in places. Odd words had changed their meanings, moreover, sometimes quite radically, so that Han and subsequent scholars had to add explanations in glosses or commentaries, {3} explaining why Shijing scholars sometimes give renderings well beyond what the plain text says. I have tried to hint at those fuller meanings in my own renderings, but not stray too far from what the set number of characters per line could possibly encompass, i.e. strive more for literary quality than scholarly explication.

In their present form, the Shijing poems fall into three groups. Mao numbers 1-160 are airs or songs. Mao numbers 161-265 are odes (lesser 161-234, greater 235-265). And Mao numbers 266-305 are hymns. The airs is a diverse group, half of them referring to battles, court rituals, hunts and feasts, and half to personal matters like love affairs, homesickness and marital harmony; they date to the 8-7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The lesser odes refer to the regional courts under Zhou control (9-8<sup>th</sup> century BC). The greater odes refer to the Zhou Dynasty and its conquest of the Shang (10-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C) . And the hymns include pieces from various periods of the Zhou (11-10<sup>th</sup> century plus 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.). {6}

The Shijing are a difficult and specialized field, where simple English renderings can sometimes be rather notional. The odes are not particularly inviting, I find, though two are included for the sake of completeness: they should show that the same approaches to impersonal material will still give readable results. The airs, in contrast, are popular and have been much translated. Many have an early freshness, indeed frankness, which is largely missing from Chinese literature till modern times.

There are many ways of viewing this ancient material. One school looks behind the robust simplicity of the lyrics to find allegories, examples and meanings that support Confucian views of personal and political morality. Another, the Mao school, reads the songs more as records of historical events, though often presented in figurative and allegorical language. Another school yet again, popular even by Han times, saw the songs as simply portraying everyday situations, though not without a moral and emotional colouring. Further again, some fifteen hundred years later, in the Confucian revival of Song times, scholars wrote commentaries bringing the sexually and other explicit divergences into the fold of accepted behaviour. {2} How the Shijing has been regarded by the Chinese themselves is a changing and fascinating story {3} and finally, to complete the list, Li Chendong (1906-1983) saw the Shijing as much more autobiographical, indeed written by one man. {4}

Western views have also played their part. Marcel Granet's 1911 *Fêtes et Chansons anciennes de la Chine* stripped the songs of symbolic meaning, and argued that they were simply verses that accompanied specific rituals, particularly rural courtship. 'In particular, the love songs and their themes may have received a new significance due to the evolution, over time, of marriage institutions, or due to those institutions, through the transition from one social class to another, changing their value.' C. H. Wang, in his 1974 *The Bell and the Drum: Shih Ching as Formulaic Poetry in an Oral Tradition*, saw the songs as simply art, as things inherited, modified and recompiled by nameless singers, as had been Homeric epics under the Parry hypothesis.

Arthur Waley, {1} perhaps the best known of Shijing translators, shared Wang's views: the pieces 'were used for a variety of social and educational purposes which had nothing to do with their original intention.' He recognized the following topics in the songs: courtship, marriage, warriors and battles, agriculture, blessings on gentle folk, welcome, feasting, the clan feast, sacrifice, music and dancing, dynastic songs, dynastic legends, building, hunting, friendship, moral pieces and lamentations. 'The Shi Jing is thus an extensive storehouse of cultural and social practice as well as literary and popular art, with many scenes vividly evoked in detailed and decorative language, while other songs are filled with specific details of names, places and events. More than the major philosophical or historical works of the pre-Qin period, the classic offers a vision of the range of Chinese society, and the practices and situations of its people.'

{2} 'By the late fourth century BCE, and possibly for quite some time before that, the Poetry was not an isolated body of literature but part of the larger set of moral, pedagogical, ritual, and socio-political precepts and practices of the "Six Arts" that had gained currency across the Chinese cultural realm.' {5}

Martin Kern regards this ancient material as 'edited down', i.e. winnowed down so as to render individual attributions suspect if not wholly fanciful. {14} These rather scholarly considerations unfortunately matter for translation. Mao 1, for example, *The Ospreys*, may refer to Tai Si, queen consort to King Wen of Zhou (c 1099 - 1050 BC) who was glad to have found a suitable mate for her king. Or they may relate to rural courtship customs generally, when the translation should be freer and less dignified. Somewhat different again, Qu Wanli sees the poem as 'giving congratulations to a newly married person', when the rustic, outgoing element should be less conspicuous in the translation. Martin Kern sees the songs as largely 'performance texts', moreover, when the forms will guide the ceremonies and the words, often repeated, prescribe the exact ritual to be followed. If that is so, as seems likely, translation should feature the repetitions as they stand, with no attempt at elegant variation. {2}

I have created conspicuous sturdy stanzas for the *Shijing*, with lines regimented by heavy end-rhymes.

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# 1. SHIJING POETRY: Tender Is the Peach

## 周南 (THE ODES OF ZHOU AND THE SOUTH)

### Cai 1.2. Mao 6. MSZJ 1.6b-7a

Line	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Line Repetition	Word for Word Rendering*
	桃夭 (táo yāo)		peach tender
1	桃之夭夭 (táo zhī yāo yāo)	a	peach it tender tender
2	灼灼其華 (zhuó zhuó qí huá)	b	burning burning her splendour
3	之子于歸 (zhī zǐ yú guī)	c	her child to marry
4	宜其室家 (yí qí shì jiā)	b	suitable her room home
5	桃之夭夭 (táo zhī yāo yāo)	a	peach it tender tender
6	有蕢其實 (yǒu fén qí shí)	c	there-is luxurious her real
7	之子于歸 (zhī zǐ yú guī)	c	her child to marry
8	宜其家室 (yí qí jiāshì)	x	proper her family home
9	桃之夭夭 (táo zhī yāo yāo)	a	peach it tender tender
10	其葉蓁蓁 (qí yè zhēn zhēn)	d	her leaf luxuriant luxuriant
11	之子于歸 (zhī zǐ yú guī)	c	her child to marry
12	宜其家人 (yí qí jiā rén)	d	suitable her family person

Tender, tender is the peach,  
and burning, burning for her spouse:  
the girl who makes her marriage vows  
is fit for chamber and the house.

Tender, tender is the peach,  
and genuine her flourishing:  
the girl who makes her marriage vows  
is fashioned fit for everything.

Tender, tender is the peach,  
and rich and rich the leaves will be.  
The girl who makes her marriage vows  
is fit for her new family.

#### Comment

The key word here is 宜, which means 'at home between rafter and floor', 'fitting', 'appropriate' and 'ought to'. Other translators use 'will get along', and 'will order well', i.e. words neutral to the girl's own feelings on the matter. We have to be careful about projecting modern western outlooks into past situations where they don't apply. Life in a new family was doubtless difficult in pre-Han China, but one that most brides would accept: it was simply part of life at the time. Even today, many marriages in China are still arranged. Metrical needs suggest a

monosyllabic word, and it seems best to employ an objective word like 'fit' or 'at home', rather than 'trained', or 'stuck with', etc. implying some coercion. The other word of interest is 于, 'concerning', which at root means 'breath', which I've translated as something spoken: 'vows'.

The rhyme scheme given by Cai, page 17, is xbx b rather than xaax as above, but perhaps pronunciation has changed considerably.

By being used repeatedly over millennia, certain words like 'peach' have also acquired a rich symbolism, explored in the second reference in literary criticism below.

Arthur Waley's rendering is:  
Buxom is the peach-tree;  
How its flowers blaze!  
Our lady going home  
Brings good to family and house.  
Buxom is the peach-tree;  
How its fruit swells!  
Our lady going home  
Brings good to family and house.

Buxom is the peach-tree;  
How thick its leaves!  
Our lady going home  
Brings good to family and house.

James Legge's version is:  
The peach tree is young and elegant;  
Brilliant are its flowers.  
This young lady is going to her future home,  
And will order well her chamber and house.

The peach tree is young and elegant;  
Abundant will be its fruits.  
This young lady is going to her future home,  
And will order well her house and chamber.  
3 Jump to dictionary>Show parallel passages

The peach tree is young and elegant;  
Luxuriant are its leaves.  
This young lady is going to her future home,  
And will order well her family.

Drafts:

Tender, tender is the peach,  
and burning, burning are her powers:  
the girl who makes her marriage vows  
is fit for chamber and the house.

Tender, tender is the peach,  
and genuine her flourishing:  
the girl who makes marriage vows  
is fit for home in everything.

Tender, tender is the peach,  
and lush, lush, the foliage be.  
The girl who makes her marriage vows  
is one with her new family.

Tender, tender is the peach,  
and burning, burning is the flower.  
The girl at home with marriage vows  
is fit for chamber and the house.

Tender, tender is the peach,  
and that fine flourishing is real.  
The girl at home with marriage vows  
is fit for chamber and the house.

Tender, tender is the peach,  
and lavish, lavish are the leaves.  
The girl at home with marriage vows  
is fit for her new family.

Text Sources

Chinese Text Project: <https://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/odes-of-zhou-and-the-south>

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Other Translations

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Literary Criticism

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Recordings

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## 2. SHIJING POETRY: Collecting Duckweed

### Cai C.1.11. Mao 15. MSZJ 1.12a-13a

Line	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Rhyme	Word-for-Word*
	采蘋(cǎi pín)		pick duckweed
1	于以采蘋 (yú yǐ cǎi pín)	a	in to pick waterweed
2	南澗之濱 (nán jiàn zhī bīn)	a	south mountain-stream of coast
3	于以采藻 (yú yǐ cǎi zǎo)	b	go in-order-to pick watergrass
4	于彼行潦 (yú bǐ yán lǎo)	b	go those walk flooded
5	于以盛之 (yú yǐ chéng zhī)	c	in to hold of
6	維筐及筥 (wéi kuāng jí jǔ)	d	held-together basket and round-
7	于以湘之 (yú yǐ xiāng zhī)	c	bamboo-basket
8	維鑄及釜 (wéi yǐ jí fǔ)	d	in to sound of preserve cauldron and three- legged-cauldron
9	于以奠之 (yú yǐ diàn zhī)	c	In to sacrifice of
10	宗室牖下 (zōng shì yǒu xià)	x	ancestor room window under
11	誰其尸之 (shéi qí shī zhī)	c	who its remains of
12	有齊季女 (yǒu qí jì nǚ)	d	there is ready youngest daughter

Tell me, where is duckweed got?  
In southern valleys, is it not?  
And water-grasses, aren't they found  
on pathways by the flooded ground?

Where to lay the offerings out  
but in baskets square and round,  
or in pans and cauldrons with  
a mingled, dark metallic sound.

And at the great ancestral hall,  
beneath the gaze of ancestors,  
who's the spirit that receives them?  
This unwed one would offer hers.

Comment

One is *Cai pin* (Gathering Duckweed, Mao 15). Zong-Qi Cai gives a prose rendering: {12}

Where can I gather the duckweed?

On the banks of the southern dale.  
Where can I gather the watergrasses?  
in those rainwater pools along the paths.

Where can I deposit them?  
In baskets square and round,  
In cauldrons and pans  
and sing in a chorus of warbling.

Where can I offer them?  
Beneath the windows of the ancestral shrine?  
Who will represent the spirits?  
There is a reverent, unmarried maid.

Though early, these poems are still sophisticated, employing rhyme and a wide variety of tropes. There are not the strict rules on tone arrangements, however, though some form of parallelism is common. Remembering that this is a lyrical piece, rhymed aabb cdcd cece, we may catch some of the melody and form with rhymes and slant rhymes:

Tell me, where is duckweed got?  
In southern valleys, is it not?  
And water-grass, where's that obtained?  
From flooded path-sides when it's rained.

Where to put out what I've gained?  
Place in baskets round or square,  
in pans or cauldrons so contained?  
So I sing this artless air.

Tell me where a good girl leaves them.  
At the shrine of ancestors?  
Who's the spirit that receives them?  
This ingénue would offer hers.

Arthur Waley's rendering is:

Here we are gathering duckweed  
By the banks of the southern dale:  
Here we are gathering water-grass  
In those channeled pools.

Here we are packing them  
Into round basket, into square.  
Here we are boiling them  
In kettles and pans

Here we lay them beneath the window  
Of the ancestral hall.  
Who is the mistress of them? 1  
A young girl purified.

Waley's note:

1. I.e. for whose benefit is the ceremony performed?

James Legge's rendering:

She gathers the large duckweed,  
By the banks of the stream in the southern valley.  
She gathers the pondweed,  
In those pools left by the floods.

She deposits what she gathers,  
In her square baskets and round ones  
She boils it,  
In her tripods and pans

Line 7 is a problem. The Chinese is 于以湘之 (yú yǐ xiāng zhī), which has the unhelpful literal meaning of : *to by means of Hunan of her/him/it*. Legge has *boils it*, Waley has *Here we are boiling them*. Nienhauser has (with lines 7 and 8 transposed) *And sing a chorus of warbling*. I suspect it has something to do musical instruments taking the form of bells, and suggest *or in pans and cauldrons with / their mingled dark metallic sound*. But I'm not happy with the rendering, or much convinced by other interpretations.

She sets forth her preparations,  
Under the window in the ancestral chamber.  
Who superintends the business?  
It is [this] reverent young lady.

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3. SHIJING POETRY: The Ripening Wind  
 谷風 Gu Feng: Mao 35.

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word for Word Rendering
	谷風		Grain/valley wind
1	習習谷風 (xí xí gǔ fēng)	x	blow gently grain/valley wind
2	以陰以雨 (yǐ yīn yǐ yǔ)	a	according-to clouds according-to rain
3	黽勉同心 (mǐn miǎn tóng xīn)	x	tadpole/man and and wife strive get along
4	不宜有怒 (bù yí yǒu nù)	a	not suitable have anger
5	采芣菲 (cǎi fēng cǎi fēi)	b	Gather lush/mustard gather raddish
6	無以下體 (wú yǐ xià tǐ)	c	no-way-get by root and stem
7	德音莫違 (dé yīn mò wéi)	b	goodness speech none violate
8	及爾同死 (jí ěr tóng sǐ)	c	reach thus like death
9	行道遲遲 (xíng dào chí chí)	d	go road slow slow
10	中心有違 (zhōng xīn yǒu wéi)	b	in heart have disobey/move-in-opposition
11	不遠伊迤 (bù yuǎn yī ěr)	x	not far he/she near
12	薄送我畿 (báo sòng wǒ jī)	d	spread give my territory-round-capital
13	誰謂荼苦 (shuí wèi tú kǔ)	a	who say thistle bitter
14	其甘如飴 (qí gān rú yí)	c	that sweet as-if water-chestnut
15	宴爾新昏 (yàn ěr xīn hūn)	x	feast you new marriage
16	如兄如弟 (rú xiōng rú dì)	c	as-if older-brother as-if younger-brother
17	溱以清濁 (jīng yǐ wèi zhuó)	x	River/Jing according-to wei-river
18	滌是其止 (shí shí qí zhǐ)	c	pure-water clear-water its islet
19	宴爾新昏 (yàn ěr xīn hūn)	x	feast you new marriage
20	不我屑以 (bù wǒ xiè yǐ)	c	not me/I condescend according-to
21	毋逝我梁 (wú shì wǒ liáng)	x	not pass my bridge/beam
22	毋發我筭 (wú fā wǒ gǒu)	g	not issue my basket
23	我不閱 (wǒ gōng bù yuè)	x	my body not inspect
24	遑恤我後 (huáng xù wǒ hòu)	g	leisure anxiety/sympathy I/my afterwards
25	就其深矣 (jiù qí shēn yǐ)	c	already their deep /
26	方之舟之 (fāng zhī zhōu zhī)	d	honest of boat of
27	就其淺矣 (jiù qí qiǎn yǐ)	c	already their shallow /
28	泳之游之 (yǒng zhī yóu zhī)	d	swim of travel of
29	何有何亡 (hé yǒu hé wáng)	x	why have how gone
30	黽勉求之 (mǐn miǎn qiú zhī)	d	toad/anger exhort seek of
31	凡民有喪 (fán mǐn yǒu sāng)	x	mundane people exist die
32	匍匐救之 (pú fú jiù zhī)	d	crawl fall rescue of
33	不我能畜 (bù wǒ néng xù)	a	not I able-to bear
34	反以我為讎 (fǎn yǐ wǒ wéi chóu)	e	opposite by-means-of I serve collate
35	既阻我德 (jì zǔ wǒ dé)	x	already obstruct my goodness
36	賈用不售 (jiǎ yòng bù shòu)	g	buy therefore not sell
37	昔育恐鞠 (xī yù kǒng jù)	h	not I able-to bear
38	及爾顛覆 (jí ěr diān fù)	a	reach thus top cover/overturn
39	既生既育 (jì shēng jì yù)	a	already give-birth already have-children
40	比予于毒 (bǐ yú yú dú)	h	near me take poison
41	我有旨蓄 (wǒ yǒu zhǐ xù)	a	I/me is sweet store/grow/entertain
42	亦以御冬 (yì yǐ yù dōng)	f	also by-means-of resist winter
43	宴爾新昏 (yàn ěr xīn hūn)	x	feast you new marriage
44	以我維窮 (yǐ wǒ yù qióng)	f	by-means-of I/my resist/govern poor/exhaust

45	有光有漬 (yǒu guāng yǒu kuì)	c	exist sparkling-water exist break-down
46	既已我肆 (jì yǐ wǒ sì)	c	already bequeath I/my practice
47	不念昔者 (bù niàn xī zhě)	x	not read/study formerly /this
48	伊余來暨 (yī yú lái jì)	c	he/she remaining come brick-grave/snuff-out

Ripening blows the valley wind  
though rain will come and cloudy skies.  
A man and wife should get along  
through each and all adversities.

With mustard and the melon plant  
it's not the roots that satisfy.  
Let's speak the kindly words that make  
us bound together till we die.

How slowly on the road I went,  
against what heart was telling me.  
He did not go that far at all  
but thrust me from his territory.

Who will call the thistle bitter,  
and not as shepherd's purse is sweet?  
Some new marriage that you feast  
have young and elder brothers eat.

The Wei beside the river Jin  
has not its showy purity.  
In that new marriage, which you feast,  
I'm treated as poor company.

Do not break my water-dams,  
or what the fishing-trap affords.  
If now my person you detest,  
why should I care for afterwards?

Though the water's deep already,  
it's not for boat you're at a loss.  
Here the water's short and shallow,  
a swimming man would get across.

For anything I've always gone  
that want of it should not condemn.  
And if for something someone died,  
I went on knees to rescue them.

Still I'm the one you cannot bear.  
You treat me as the worst as well,  
contest my virtue, making me  
the peddler's wares that will not sell.

All too weighty, what I bear  
is overturned or given up.  
I've borne you children, borne you heirs:  
you treat me as some poison cup.

I gathered in the greatest store  
against what winter storms will do.  
But some new marriage that you feast  
exhausts the goods afforded you.

Water sparkles or goes dark.  
Must I be left in this deep pain?  
When you remember how it was,  
can your contempt of me remain?

#### Comment

The poem is one of the first in the abandoned woman' theme, one popular in Chinese poetry. The previous wife is complaining that not only is her husband neglecting her for the new wife, but has quite forgotten the many services she loyally afforded him: indeed he has induced her family to forget her. Wealthy men in pre-modern China were allowed only one wife, but commonly took concubines, as many as they could afford. The one exception were men like merchants living away from home, who could cohabit with another woman in a separate household: the woman would regard herself as a full wife, but would legally be regarded only as a concubine. Matters in the sexually relaxed Zhou times are not so clear. {5-6}

The poem is set in Zhou territories: the Jing flows into the Wei to the east of the old Zhou capital in Shaanxi. Lines 18 and 24 appear in other Shijing poems, and may be proverbs or a quotation. The imagery is of rural agriculture and fishing, openly sexual, and the one difficult word is zhǐ (止), which means 'islet', which I have read as inlet: i.e. the waters of the Jin only look fresher because they're shallower.

Waley (Pp. 30-32) notes that 'Islet purity' here is comparing the old and new, i.e. the old wife seems only shabby in comparison to new bride. The Jing flows into the Wei to the east of the old Zhou capital in Shaanxi. Lines 18 and 24 appear in other Shijing poems, and may be proverbs or a quotation. The Jing flows into the

Wei to the east of the old Zhou capital in Shaanxi. Lines 18 and 24 appear in other Shijing poems, and may be proverbs or a quotation. {6}

## Drafts

If we want something a little more contemporary, which uses the word-for-word rendering as much as possible, we can write a rhymed xaxa, xbx, etc. version:

Ripening blows the valley wind,  
but brings its rain and cloudy skies.  
A man and wife should get along  
and not let angry thoughts arise.

With mustard and the melon, it's  
not to roots that we apply.  
Let reputation still be good,  
but live together till we die.

How slowly on the road I went,  
against what heart was telling me.  
He did not go that far at all  
but thrust me from his territory.

Who will call the thistle bitter,  
and not as shepherd's purse is sweet?  
Some new marriage that you feast  
have young and elder brothers eat.

The Qi beside the river Wei  
has not its shoal-shown purity.  
In some new marriage that you feast:  
I'm treated as poor company.

Do not damage water-dams,  
or what the fishing-trap affords.  
If now my person you detest,  
why should I care for afterwards?

Though the water's deep already,  
it's not for boat you're at a loss.  
Though the only water's shallow,  
a man could swim to get across.

For anything I've always gone  
that want of it should not condemn.

And if a common person died,  
I went on knees to rescue them.

Still I'm the one you cannot bear.  
You treat me as the foe as well,  
contest my virtue, making me  
the peddler's wares that will not sell.

All too weighty, what I bear  
is overturned or given up.  
I've borne you children, borne you heirs:  
you treat me as the poison cup.

I gathered in the greatest store  
against what winter storms will do.  
But some new marriage that you feast  
exhausts the good afforded you.

Water sparkles or goes dark:  
must I be left in this deep pain?  
You won't remember how it was?  
Must only anger now remain?

Comment

James Legge's rendering is

Gently blows the east wind,  
With cloudy skies and with rain.  
[Husband and wife] should strive to be of the same mind,  
And not let angry feelings arise.  
When we gather the mustard plant and earth melons,  
We do not reject them because of their roots.  
While I do nothing contrary to my good name,  
I should live with you till our death.

I go along the road slowly, slowly,  
In my inmost heart reluctant.  
Not far, only a little way,  
Did he accompany me to the threshold.  
Who says that the sow thistle is bitter?  
It is as sweet as the shepherd's purse.  
You feast with your new wife,

[Loving] as brothers.

The muddiness of the Jing appears from the Wei,  
But its bottom may be seen about the islets.  
You feast with your new wife,  
And think me not worth being with  
Do not approach my dam,  
Do not move my basket.  
My person is rejected; -  
What avails it to care for what may come after?

Where the water was deep,  
I crossed it by a raft or a boat.  
Where it was shallow,  
I dived or swam across it.  
Whether we had plenty or not,  
I exerted myself to be getting.  
When among others there was a death,  
I crawled on my knees to help them

You cannot cherish me,  
And you even count me as an enemy.  
You disdain my virtues, -  
A peddler's wares which do not sell.  
Formerly, I was afraid our means might be exhausted,  
And I might come with you to destitution.  
Now, when your means are abundant,  
You compare me to poison.

My fine collection of vegetables,  
Is but a provision against the winter.  
Feasting with your new wife,  
You think of me as a provision [only] against your poverty.  
Cavalierly and angrily you treat me;  
You give me only pain.  
You do not think of the former days,  
And are only angry with me.

Legge's 1876 version, {2} is in pleasing verse that echoes the internal and end rhyme of the original.

X. The Kuh fung; metaphorical, allusive, and narrative. The Plaint of a Wife Supplanted by Another, and Rejected by Her Husband.

1 The east wind gently blows,  
With cloudy skies and rain.

'Twiſt man and wife ſhould ne'er be ſtrife,  
But harmony obtain.  
Radish and muſtard plants  
Are uſed, though ſome be poor;  
While my good name is free from blame,  
Don't thruſt me from your door.

2 I go along the road,  
Slow, with reluctant heart.  
Your eſcort lame to door but came,  
There glad from me to part.  
Sow thiſtle, bitter called,  
As ſhepherd's purſe is ſweet;  
With your new mate you feaſt elate,  
As joyous brothers meet.

3 Part clear, the ſtream of King  
Is foul beſide the Wei.  
You feaſt elate with your new mate,  
And take no heed of me.  
Loose mate, avoid my dam,  
Nor dare my baſket move !  
Perſon ſlighted, life all blighted,  
What can the future prove?

4 The water deep, in boat,  
Or raft-ſuſtained, I'd go;  
And where the ſtream did narrow ſeem,  
I dived or breaſted through.  
I laboured to increaſe  
Our means, or great or ſmall;  
When 'mong friends near death did appear,  
On knees to help I'd crawl.

5 No cheriſhing you give,  
I'm hoſtile in your eyes.  
As pedlar's, wares for which none cares,  
My virtues you deſpiſe.  
When poverty was nigh,  
I ſtrove our means to ſpare;  
You, now rich grown, me ſcorn to own;  
To poiſon me compare.

6 The ſtores for winter piled  
Are all unprized in ſpring.  
So now, elate with your new mate,

Myself away you fling.  
Your cool disdain for me  
A bitter anguish hath.  
The early time, our love's sweet prime,  
In you wakes only wrath.

Arthur Waley's rendering is:

Zip, zip the valley wind,  
Bringing darkness, bringing rain.  
"Strive to be of one mind;  
Let there be no anger between you."  
He who plucks greens, plucks cabbage  
Do not judge by the lower parts.  
In my reputation there is no flaw,  
I am yours until death.

Slowly I take the road,  
Reluctant at heart.  
Not far, no, near;  
See, you escort me only to the gateway 1  
Who says that sow thistle is bitter?  
It is sweeter than shepherd's-purse.  
You feast your new marriage-kin,  
As though they older brothers, were younger brothers.

"It is the Wei that makes the Jing look dirty;  
Very clear are its shoals 2  
You feast your new relations,  
And think me no fit company,  
"Do not break my dam,  
do not open my fish-traps.  
Though for my person you have no regard,  
At least pity my brood. 3

Where the water was deep  
I rafted it, boated it;  
Where the water was shallow  
I swam it, floated it.  
Whether a thing was to be had or no  
I strove always to find it.  
When any of your people were in trouble  
I went on my knees to help them.

Why do you not cherish me,  
But rather treat me as an enemy?

You have spoilt my value;  
What is used no merchant will buy.  
Once in times of peril, of extremity  
With you I shared all my troubles.  
But now that you are well nurtured, well fed,  
You treat me as I though I were poison.

I had laid by a good store,  
Enough to provide against the winter;  
You feast your new kin,  
And that provision is eaten up.  
Then you were violent, were enraged,  
And it gave me great pain,  
You do not think of the past;  
It is only anger that is left.

Waley's notes:

1. He hustles her off the premises without courtesy.
2. It is only in comparison to the new wife that I seem shabby. The Jing flows into the Wei to the east of the old Zhou capital in Shaanxi.
3. These lines, repeated several times in the Songs, must be a quotation.

Waley translates line 24 as 'At least pity my brood.', which I can't construe from 遑恤我後. Legge has 'What can the future prove?', which is close to my 'what should I care for afterwards?' Similar problems with lines 37-9, where Waley seems to have followed Legge. Mine is more literal, i.e. what the Chinese appears to say.

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#### 4. SHIJING POETRY: Spring Water

Mao 39.

	Traditional Chinese and (Modern Pinyin)		Word for Word Rendering
	泉水 (quan shui)		Spring Water
1	崧彼泉水 (bì bǐ quán shuǐ)	a	careful that spring water
2	亦流于淇 (yì liú yú qí)	b	also flow go Qi
3	有懷于衛 (yǒu huái yú wèi)	d	exist heart/mind go protect/health/Wei
4	靡日不思 (mí rì bù sī)	b	waste day/sun not consider
5	變彼裙姬 (luàn bǐ zhū jī)	b	beautiful those various women
6	聊與之謀 (liáo yǔ zhī móu)	x	talk/depend-on give/and of plan/seek
7	出宿于泂 (chū sù yú jiǎo)	-	come night go/take Ji
8	飲餞于禰 (yǐn jiàn yú mí)	b	drink dinner go/take complete/memorial tablet
9	女子有行 (nǚ zǐ yǒu xíng)	x	female child exist go/behavior
10	遠父母兄弟 (yuǎn fù mǔ xiōng dì)	a	distant father-and-mother brothers
11	問我諸姑 (wèn wǒ zhū gū)	x	ask me/my various aunt
12	遂及伯姊 (suì jí bó zǐ)	a	succeed reach elder aunt
13	出宿于干 (chū sù yú gān)	c	come lodge in concern/manage/Gan
14	飲餞于言 (yǐn jiàn yú yán)	c	drink dinner in Yan
15	載脂載膏 (zài zhī zài qiāo)	c	convey fat/rouge convey draw/pull
16	還車言邁 (huán chē yán mài)	e	still chariot speech stride
17	遄臻于衛 (chuán zhēn yú wèi)	d	hurry arrive go defend/Wei
18	不瑕有害 (bù xiá yǒu hài)	e	not blemish exist harmful
19	我思肥泉 (wǒ sī féi quán)	c	I consider FeiQuan/ fertile spring
20	茲之永歎 (zī zhī yǒng tàn)	x	here/now of always sigh
21	思與漕 (sī yǔ cáo)	x	consider must/wait and Yu/transport-by-
22	我心悠悠 (wǒ xīn yōu yōu)	f	Cao/water
23	駕言出游 (jià yán chū yóu)	f	I/my heart/center lasting-ages
24	以寫我憂 (yǐ xiě wǒ yōu)	f	harness speech go walk/tour by-means-of roof/write I/my worry/sorrow

As careful waters of the spring  
but bubble back to join the Qi,  
so my heart is with the Wei.  
A day from which I'd never be,  
where female members of the Ji  
would surely come to counsel me.

I lodged at Ji the journey out,  
and drank the parting cup at Ni.  
The girl that takes the marriage path  
must leave behind her family  
But I would ask to see my aunts,  
and elder sister presently.

But still I went and lodged at Gan  
and drank the parting cup at Yan.  
I'd grease myself the axle pin  
to help the journey back again,  
the one that took me back to Wei  
and to the world that once was then.

And so to think of Feiquan  
in springtime brings this wistful air.  
I think of Xu and think of Cao,  
I think my heart's forever there.  
Come, yoke the horses, let me go  
free of all this hurt I bear.

#### Comment

Arthur Waley, perhaps the best known of Shijing translators, thought the airs served a variety of social and educational purposes, which had nothing to do with their original intention. He recognized the following topics in the songs: courtship, marriage, warriors and battles, agriculture, blessings on gentle folk, welcome, feasting, the clan feast, sacrifice, music and dancing, dynastic songs, dynastic legends, building, hunting, friendship, moral pieces and lamentations. 'The Shijing is thus an extensive storehouse of cultural and social practice as well as literary and popular art, with many scenes vividly evoked in detailed and decorative language, while other songs are filled with specific details of names, places and events. {2}

Maps of China during the Zhou and Period of the Warring States will show many of the places listed: they are located from Shandong west to Shaanxi, i.e. in the lower courses of the Wei and Yellow Rivers. {5}

Since the pinyin here denotes only the modern pronunciation, which has changed greatly since Zhou times, the rhyming shown is very notional: all we can safely surmise is that the piece was tightly rhymed, as were many poems of the period. As we've noted with 1C, the word-for-word rendering is not wholly clear, and it's wise to consult specialist work. The University of Virginia rendering is similar to the James Legge version, in fact, but avoids the excessive rhyming and rather dated wording to be expected of Victorian verse. That Victorian version runs:

House of Wei, Married in Another State, Expresses Her Longing to revisit Wei

1 As the streamlet from its spring  
Flows into the river K/e,  
So my daily thoughts on wing

Fly, my native Wei, to thee ;  
For I long with cousins there  
Counsel sweet and love to share.

2 For a night, at Tse I stayed ;  
Drank the cup to Ne when come;  
Parents, brothers, farewell bade: —  
Such the fate on leaving home.  
Parents are not now alive;  
Aunts and sister still survive.

3 Lo! I hasten home again.  
Let the rushing chariot-wheel  
Pause at Kan, and part at Yen,  
Pebbles flashing to its steel.  
Does my heart go far astray,  
Panting for its native Wei ?

4 By the Fei-tsfeuen's winding stream  
Daily sighing thought will stray.  
Seu and Ts'aou in' memory gleam,  
Broken glints of childhood's day.  
Spring, my horses ! Speed, my wheels !  
Gone the grief my bosom feels !

Arthur Waley's rendering is

High spurt the waters of that fountain,  
yet it flows back into the Qi.  
My love is in the Wei,  
no day but I think of him.  
Dear are my many cousins; 1  
it would be well to take counsel with them.

“On the journey you will lodge at Ji, 2  
You will drink the cup of parting at Ni,  
A girl that goes to be married,  
Leaving parents, leaving brothers.”  
I will ask all my aunts  
And next, my elder sister:

“On the journey you will lodge at Gan;  
You will drink the cup of parting at Yan,  
Grease wheels, look to axle-caps,  
And the returning carriages will go their way:

A quick journey to the court of Wei,  
And may you get there safe and sound.”

I think of the Forked Fountain,  
Long now I sigh for it.  
I think now of Mei and Cao,  
And how my heart yearns!  
Come, yoke the horses, let us drive away,  
That I may be rid at last of my pain.

Waley's notes

1. Literally the various female members of the Ji clan.
2. This their river, so too in verse 3.

The James Legge translation is:{1}  
How the water bubbles up from that spring,  
And flows away to the Qi!  
My heart is in Wei;  
There is not a day I do not think of it.  
Admirable are those, my cousins;  
I will take counsel with them.

When I came forth, I lodged in Ji,  
And we drank the cup of convoy at Ni.  
When a young lady goes [to be married],  
She leaves her parents and brothers;  
[But] I would ask for my aunts,  
And then for my elder sister.

I will go forth and lodge in Gan,  
And we drink the cup of convoy at Yan.  
I will grease the axle and fix the pin,  
And the returning chariot will proceed.  
Quickly shall we arrive in Wei: -  
But would not this be wrong?

I think of the Feiquan,  
I am ever sighing about it.  
I think of Xu and Cao,  
Long, long, my heart dwells with them.  
Let me drive forth and travel there,  
To dissipate my sorrow.

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5. SHIJING POETRY: Zhong Zi

鄭風 (THE ODES OF ZHENG)

Cai C.1.4. Mao 76. MSZJ 4.8a-9a

Line	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Rhyme	Word-for-Word
	將仲子 (qiāng zhòng zǐ)		request zhong zi
1	將仲子兮 (qiāng zhòng zǐ xī)	a	request zhong zi /
2	無逾我里 (wú yú wǒ lǐ)	e	don't cross-over my hamlet
3	無折我樹杞 (wú zhé wǒ shù qǐ)	e	don't exceed trees willow
4	豈敢愛之 (qǐ gǎn ài zhī)	a	how dare love it
5	畏我父母 (wèi wǒ fù mǔ)	x	fear my father mother
6	仲可懷也 (zhòng kě huái yě)	b	zhong may heart also
7	父母之言 (fù mǔ zhī yán)	x	father mother their talk
8	亦可畏也 (yì kě wèi yě)	b	and may fear also
9	將仲子兮 (qiāng zhòng zǐ xī)	a	request zhong zi /
10	無逾我牆 (wú yú wǒ qiáng)	c	don't cross-over my wall
11	無折我樹桑 (wú zhé wǒ shù sāng)	c	don't break tree mulberry
12	豈敢愛之 (qǐ gǎn ài zhī)	a	how dare love it
13	畏我諸兄 (wèi wǒ zhū xiōng)	x	fear my all older-brothers
14	仲可懷也 (zhòng kě huái yě)	b	zhong may heart also
15	諸兄之言 (zhū xiōng zhī yán)	x	all elder-brothers his words
16	亦可畏也 (yì kě wèi yě)	b	and may fear also
17	將仲子兮 (qiāng zhòng zǐ xī)	a	request zhong zi /
18	無逾我園 (wú yú wǒ yuán)	d	don't cross-over my garden
19	無折我樹檀 (wú zhé wǒ shù tán)	d	don't break tree hardwood
20	豈敢愛之 (qǐ gǎn ài zhī)	a	how dare love it
21	畏人之多言 (wèi rén zhī duō yán)	d	fear people their words
22	仲可懷也 (zhòng kě huái yě)	b	zhong may heart also
23	人之多言 (rén zhī duō yán)	d	people also too-much say
24	亦可畏也 (yì kě wèi yě)	b	and may fear also

Where / is xī marking end of sentence

And so I ask of you, Zhong Zi,  
 you leave the village to my care,  
 not venture in my willow lair.  
 These I love wholeheartedly,  
 and fear my parents, both of them.  
 Zhong, to you my heart is swayed,  
 but father and my mother talk,  
 and of them both I'm much afraid.

And so I ask of you, Zhong Zi,  
 you do not scale my garden wall;  
 nor would you make my mulberries fall.  
 These I love wholeheartedly,  
 and fear my older brothers too.  
 Zhong, to you my heart is swayed,

but older brothers, how they talk!  
and of my kin I'm much afraid.

And so I ask of you, Zhong Zi,  
you do not through my garden rove,  
nor break into my hardwood grove.  
These I love wholeheartedly,  
and fear what other people say.  
Zhong, to you my heart is swayed,  
but think of people, what they'd say:  
and of them all I'm much afraid.

#### Comment

Martin Kern has commented in detail on this poem. {5}

'According to its Mao Poetry preface, the poem satirizes Duke Zhuang of Zheng who in 722 BCE had failed to rein in his mother and younger brother, bringing strife and chaos into his state. According to the Zuo Tradition, the poem was recited in 547 BCE in order to have the Marquis of Wei released from imprisonment in the state of Jin; and according to the "Kongzi's Discussion of the Poetry" manuscript, one must be fearful of the words of "Qiang Zhong [zi]." In the "Five Modes of Conduct" manuscript from Mawangdui, the poem is invoked in a discussion of the rhetorical device of "using sexual allure to illustrate ritual propriety," where it is paraphrased through a series of rhetorical questions asking whether someone would copulate in front of his parents, brothers, or neighbors. Much later readings by Zheng Qiao (1104-1162) and Zhu Xi (1130-1200) take the received poem as "the words of a licentious eloper," while modern readers see it as the words of a young woman who fears that her lover's impetuosity will compromise her social reputation.'

Waley's rendering is:

I beg of you, Zhong Zi,  
Do not climb into our homestead,  
Do not break the willows we have planted.  
Not that I mind the willows,  
But I am afraid of my father and mother.  
Zhong Zi I dearly love;  
But of what my father and mother say  
Indeed I am afraid.

I beg of you, Zhong Zi,  
Do not climb over our wall,  
Do not break the mulberry trees we have planted.  
Not that I mind about the mulberry trees,  
But I am afraid of my brothers.  
Zhong Zi I dearly love;  
But of what my brothers say  
Indeed I am afraid.

I beg of you, Zhong Zi,  
Do not climb into our garden,  
Do not break the hard-wood we have planted.  
Not that I mind about the hard-wood,  
But I am afraid of what people will say.  
Zong Zi I dearly love;  
But of all that people say  
Indeed I am afraid.

James Legge's rendering is:  
I pray you, Mr. Zhong,  
Do not come leaping into my hamlet;  
Do not break my willow trees.  
Do I care for them?  
But I fear my parents.  
You, O Zhong, are to be loved,  
But the words of my parents,  
Are also to be feared.

I pray you, Mr. Zhong,  
Do not come leaping over my wall;  
Do not break my mulberry trees.  
Do I care for them?  
But I fear the words of my brothers.  
You, O Zhong, are to be loved,  
But the words of my brothers,

Are also to be feared

I pray you, Mr. Zhong,  
Do not come leaping into my garden;  
Do not break my sandal trees.  
Do I care for them?  
But I dread the talk of people.  
You, O Zhong, are to be loved,  
But the talk of people,  
Is also to be feared.

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## 6. SHIJING POETRY: Cock's A-Crow

### Mao 82

A	Traditional Chinese and (Modern Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	雞鳴 (nu yue ju ming)		Chicken cry
1	女曰雞鳴 (nǚ yuē jī míng)	x	woman say chicken cry
2	士曰昧旦 (shì yuē mèi dàn)	a	man say time-before-daybreak
3	子興視夜 (zǐ xīng shì yè)	x	son rise inspect night
4	明星有爛 (míng xīng yǒu làn)	a	bright star exist decay
5	將翱將翔 (jiāng áo jiāng xiáng)	x	will soar will hover
6	弋鳧與雁 (yì fú yǔ yàn)	a	shoot mallard and wild-geese
7	弋言加之 (yì yán jiā zhī)	b	shoot word in-addition
8	與子宜之 (yǔ zǐ yí zhī)	b	give/take_part_in son appropriate (noun suffix)
9	宜言飲酒 (yí yán yǐn jiǔ)	c	should speech drink wine
10	與子偕老 (yǔ zǐ xié lǎo)	d	and son grow-old-together
11	琴瑟在御 (qín sè zài yù)	c	string-instruments/marital harmony exist manage
12	莫不靜好 (mò bù jìng hǎo)	d	do-not no calm proper
13	知子之來之 (zhī zǐ zhī lái zhī)	b	know child it arrive it
14	雜佩以贈之 (zá pèi yǐ zèng zhī)	b	mix girdle-ornament by-means-of give /
15	知子之順之 (zhī zǐ zhī shùn zhī)	b	know son of arrange /
16	雜佩以問之 (zá pèi yǐ wèn zhī)	b	mix girdle-ornaments by-means-of ask /
17	知子之好之 (zhī zǐ zhī hào zhī)	b	know son of proper /
18	雜佩以報之 (zá pèi yǐ bào zhī)	b	mix girdle-ornament by-means-of inform /

Says the wife, the cock's a-crow.  
Says the man, not break of day.  
Get up, good sir, and view the night:  
is not the day star burning bright?

Bestir yourself and move about,  
shoot the goose and shoot the duck.  
Shoot the word, and in addition,  
do what is appropriate.

So after speech then let us drink,  
and afterwards grow old together.  
Marriages need harmony:  
won't the zither make you think?

When I know just who will come  
I'll give my girdle ornaments.  
When I know that all's arranged

I'll mingle girdle ornaments.  
When I know that all's done well  
I'll speak with girdle ornaments.

#### Comment

Waley remarks that such 'albas' or dawn songs can be found in many literatures, and that 'shoot' refers to fowling using a dart attached to a thin string.

'Girdle ornaments' is more perplexing: is it an invitation to sexual congress or simply dressing appropriately for an honoured guest? From Zhou times, girdle ornaments in men and women were important, not only for decoration and securing clothes, but indicating the wearer's rank and wealth. Status was indicated by headwear, the colour of the garment, and by the girdle ornament. {7}

Michael Broughton {3} argues that Shijing love poems not only illustrate how to repress and eliminate sexual desire, but as a method through which the poems themselves were transformed and refined into powerful tools of social intercourse. Confucius stressed that the self-cultivation practiced through study of the Shijing led to appropriate, thought and conduct in social interaction. Sexual attraction was acknowledged, but actions were governed by appropriate codes. In short, there should be no depravity in thought. Poems in the Shijing are each prefaced by a short introduction in the Mao recension, which suggests how they should be interpreted in Han times. The 'airs' were not simply rustic love songs, but guides to social communication, most particularly in the flexible and refined speech needed to make appropriate criticism of superiors. But of course the Shijing has been reinterpreted dynasty after dynasty since.

As in the case of 1D, I have not found a pinyin rendering of the early Chinese pronunciation, so that, once again, all we can safely surmise is that the original was tightly end- and internally-rhymed.

Guided by the University of Virginia rendering, but again referring to the rather enigmatic words (something between a folk-song and nonsense nursery rhyme) more closely, we can write:

Says the wife, the cock's a-crow.  
Says the man, not break of day.  
Get up, my boy, and view the night:  
is not the star there shining bright?

Bestir yourself and move about,  
shoot the goose and shoot the duck.  
Shoot the word, and in addition,  
do what is appropriate.

So after speech then let us drink,  
and afterwards grow old together.  
As marriages are harmony  
have that zither make our link.

When I know just who will come  
I'll give my girdle ornaments.  
When I know that all's arranged  
I'll mix my girdle ornaments.  
When I know that all's done well  
I'll speak with girdle ornaments.

Waley's rendering is:

The lady says: "the cock has crowed";  
The knight says: "Day has not dawned."  
"Rise, then, and look at the night;  
The morning star is shining.  
You must be out and about.  
Must shoot the wild-duck and wild-geese.

When you have shot them, you must bring them home  
And I will dress them for you,  
And when I have dressed we will drink wine  
And I will be yours till we are old.  
I will set your zithers before you;  
All shall be peaceful and good.

Did I but know those who come to you,  
I have girdle-stones of many sorts to give them;  
Did I but know those that have followed you,  
I have girdle-stones of many sorts as presents for them.  
Did I but know those that love you,  
I have girdle stones of many sorts to requite them."

Waley remarks that to 'shoot' means fowling with a short dart attached to a string.

James Legge's rendering is:

Says the wife, ' It is cock-crow; '  
Says the husband, ' It is grey dawn. '  
' Rise, Sir, and look at the night, - '  
If the morning star be not shining.  
Bestir yourself, and move about,  
To shoot the wild ducks and geese.

When your arrows and line have found them,  
I will dress them fitly for you.  
When they are dressed, we will drink [together over them],  
And I will hope to grow old with you.  
Your lute in your hands,  
Will emit its quiet pleasant tones.

When I know those whose acquaintance you wish,  
I will give them of the ornaments of my girdle.  
When I know those with whom you are cordial,  
I will send to them of the ornaments of my girdle.  
When I know those whom you love,  
I will repay their friendship from the ornaments of my girdle.

Both Legge and Waley translate line 8 of the poem as 'preparing or dressing what has been shot', but I do not see how 與子宜之 can be strictly rendered so. The Shijing have been the subject of innumerable glosses and interpretations through the centuries, but I haven't been able to find out whether these two distinguished translators consulted them. From scattered Notes in the scholarly literature, I suspect not, and of course the later authorities noted by Joseph Allen {6} were not available to them. Since my concern throughout is translation and not scholarly interpretation, I am going to stick with a literal rendering: 'do what is appropriate'. Perhaps dressing the fowl is indeed doing what is appropriate. A small point, but one that illustrates my approach, which is to work directly from the text.

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7. SHIJING POETRY : 11<sup>th</sup>-10th Centuries BC

Cai C1.13. [MSZJ 16.4b–7b] Mao 237.

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	綿 (mián)		continuous
1	綿綿瓜瓞 (mián mián guā dié )	a	continuous continuous gourd young-melon
2	民之初生 (mín zhī chū shēng)	i	people of first birth
3	自土沮漆 (zì tǔ cú qī)	c	from Du stop Qi
4	古公亶父 (gǔ gōng dǎn fǔ)	b	ancient fair/duke Dan Fu
5	陶復陶穴 (táo fù táo xué)	a	pottery resume pottery cave
6	未有家室 (wèi yǒu jiā shì)	x	not have home room
7	古公亶父 (gǔ gōng dǎn fǔ)	b	ancient fair/duke Dan Fu
8	來朝走馬 (lái zhāo zǒu mǎ)	x	come morning run horse
9	率西水滸 (shuài xī shuǐ hǔ)	b	lead west river bank
10	至于岐下 (zhì yú qí xià)	x	as-far-as Qi below
11	爰及姜女 (yuán jí jiāng nǚ)	b	thus reach Jiang woman
12	聿來胥宇 (yù lái xū yǔ)	b	then come all room
13	周原膺膺 (zhōu yuán yǒng yǒng)	b	Zhou level multitude multitude
14	萑荼如飴 (hān tú rú yí)	c	plant bitter as-if syrup
15	爰始爰謀 (yuán shǐ yuán móu)	x	thus begin thus plan
16	爰契我龜 (yuán qì wǒ guī)	c	thus carve my turtle/tortoise
17	日止日時 (yǔe zhǐ yǔe shí )	c	say stop say time
18	築室于茲 (zhù shì yú zī)	c	build room at now
19	迺慰迺止 (nǎi wèi nǎi zhǐ )	d	thereupon comfort thereupon stop
20	迺左迺右 (nǎi zuǒ nǎi yòu)	x	thereupon left thereupon right
21	迺疆迺理 (nǎi jiāng nǎi lǐ )	d	thereupon border thereupon reason
22	迺宣迺畝 (nǎi xuān nǎi mǔ)	b	thereupon announce thereupon field-measure
23	自西徂東 (zì xī cú dōng)	e	from west reach east
24	周爰執事 (zhōu yuán zhí shì)	d	complete therefore execute matter
25	乃召司空 (nǎi zhāo sī kōng)	e	thus call manage space
26	乃召司徒 (nǎi zhāo sī tú)	x	thus call manage apprentice
27	俾立室家 (bì lì shì jiā)	x	cause set-up room family
28	其繩則直 (qí shéng zé zhí )	c	that rope then straight
29	縮版以載 (suō bǎn yǐ zǎi)	x	withdraw wood-plank use carry
30	作廟翼翼 (zuò miào yì yì)	d	grow temple cautious solemn

31	球之陬陬 (jiū zhī réng réng)	i	long-and-curved of stone-mason-sound sound
32	度之萋萋 (duó zhī hōng hōng)	e	measure of swarming swarming
33	築之登登 (zhù zhī dēng dēng)	i	build of mounting mounting
34	削履馮馮 (xuē lǚ féng féng)	f	pare/peel tread-on assist assist
35	百堵皆興 (bǎi dǔ jiē xīng)	f	one-hundred wall every rise
36	鼙鼓弗勝 (pí gǔ fú shèng)	x	large-drum strike not success
37	迺立皋門 (nǎi lì gāo mén)	g	thereupon set-up bank gate
38	皋門有伉 (gāo mén yǒu kàng)	x	bank gate is tall
39	迺立應門 (nǎi lì yìng mén)	g	thereupon set-up complying gate
40	應門將將 (yìng mén qiāng qiāng)	x	complying gate desire desire
41	迺立冢土 (nǎi lì zhǒng tǔ)	x	thereupon set-up burial-mound earth
42	戎醜攸行 (róng chǒu yǒu xíng)	f	Rong shameful distant behaviour/perform
43	肆不殄厥愠 (sì bù tiǎn jué yùn)	x	unrestrained not exterminate its indignant
44	亦不隕厥問 (yì bù sǔn jué wèn)	x	also not fall its mouth/door
45	柞棫拔矣 (zuò yù bá yǐ)	d	oak shrub pull-up /
46	行道兌矣 (xíng dào duì yǐ)	d	go way add /
47	混夷駟矣 (kūn yí tuì yǐ)	d	Kun barbarians approach /
48	維其喙矣 (wéi qí huì yǐ)	d	preserve their pant /
49	虞芮質厥成 (yú ruì zhì jué chéng)	g	Yu/expect Rui pledge is succeed
50	文王蹶厥生 (wén wáng guì jué shēng)	g	Wen king trample their birth
51	予曰有疏附 (yù yuē yǒu shū fù)	b	I say exist thin attach
52	予曰有先後 (yù yuē yǒu xiān hòu)	h	I say exist prior follow
53	予曰有奔奏 (yù yuē yǒu bēn zòu)	h	I say exist hurry present-petition
54	予曰有禦侮 (yù yuē yǒu yù wǔ)	b	I say exist defend disgrace.

More connected grow the gourds,  
so seen by folk of early birth,  
where, from the Du and to the Qi,  
Dan Fu was good towards the earth.  
He gave them caves and pottery,  
but not true homes of proper worth.

Ancient, honourable Dan Fu,  
the morning after had his horse  
go west along the river bank.  
10. The Qi itself was then his course,  
and with the Jiang woman he  
traced our homeland to its source.

And on the swelling plain of Zhou  
a bitter plant is sweet as well.  
In this began the plan of things,  
the carving on the turtle shell.  
It's time to stop and time to stay  
and at this place we now may dwell.

Content he was, and so he stayed,  
20. appointing both the left and right.  
And in those borders fields were laid,  
and work in them was bound up tight,  
when from the east and to the east  
he governed well in plain good sight.

He summoned those who managed space  
and those on whom disciples wait  
and charged them there to build their homes  
upright and to a plumb-line straight.  
With carried wood and carried earth  
30. he had a solemn temple built.

They heard the mason hammer hard,  
and workmen clambering all around,  
the buildings ever mounting high  
and worker's footsteps on the ground:  
a hundred walls on every hand  
rose faster than the drum can pound.

And through the walls was built a gate,  
a gate high soaring, ever tall:  
a high stone gate it was, and more  
40. than any man could then recall,  
enabling burial mound contain  
the Rong defeated as they fall.

He could not terminate their wrath,  
nor bid their wrongful mouths abstain.  
He cut down oak shrubs, pulled them up,  
to have clear highways through the plain:  
how much the Kun barbarians  
calumniated there in vain.

The Yu and Rui broke the peace,  
50. that King Wen put them in their place.  
I say he made them follow him,

and first to last to merge apace,  
I say, and fast petition him,  
that all protect him from disgrace.

#### Comment

The poem commemorates the founding of the Zhou dynasty, when the legendary king Wu overthrew the previous Shang dynasty at the battle of Muye in or around 1046 BC. Several periods of Zhou history are being conflated here. According to Chinese legend and Han historians, the Zhou lineage was begun by Jiang Yuan, a consort of the legendary Emperor Ku, who miraculously conceived a child, Qi. (The Du and Qi in line 3 of the poem, are rivers, however, the area being referred to is that around the confluence of the Wei and Yellow rivers, now southeast Shaanxi.) Dan Fu (literally 'generous man') was the grandfather of King Wen (1099-1050), who in turn was father to King Wu (1049-1053). Dan Fu moved his people away from the Rong-Di tribes to the area being referred to, termed the plain of Zhou in the poem. what southeastern Shaanxi today. The Yu and Rui tribes are termed barbarians, but the Zhou, Shang and other peoples probably all spoke a dialect of archaic Chinese.

This first or western Zhou dynasty (c. 1045 BC – 771 BC) was a feudal society, but one that introduced the Mandate of Heaven. Beneath the son of heaven were successively the great lords, the ministers, the knights and court attendants. Finally came the common people, farmers, who may have been tied to the land in a serf-like manner. Grave goods indicate a rich culture, with silk-weaving, bronze casting, and elaborate court and temple ceremonies. The practice of human sacrifice gradually declined, as did the oracle reading of heat-cracked turtle-shells and the casting of ornamental bronzes with their helpful inscriptions.

By 800 BC, there were some 200 lords, but only 25 had domains large enough to count for much. As is often the case in feudal societies, the lords gradually grew more powerful, overshadowing the king's authority. By the beginning of the eastern Zhou dynasty, also called the Spring and Autumn period (722-481 BC) the kings enjoyed only nominal authority. The turning point was an alliance of Zhou vassals and Rong tribesmen, which overthrew and killed the reigning Zhou monarch in 721 BC. A son of the former ruler was then put on the throne, and the capital moved for safety reasons eastwards out of the Wei valley to modern Luoyang.

Cities were protected by thick walls made by tamping earth between wooden planks lashed together by ropes. {4-5}

Waley gives this rendering:

The young gourds spread and spread.  
The people after they were first brought into being  
From the River Du 1 went to the Qi.2  
Of old Dan-fu the duke  
Scraped shelters, scraped holes;  
As yet they had no houses.

Of old Dan-fu the duke  
At coming of day galloped his horses,  
Going west along the river 3 bank  
Till he came to the foot of Mount Qi. 4  
Where with the help of the lady Jiang  
He came to look for a home.

The plain of Zhou was very fertile,  
Its celery and sowthistle sweet as rice-cakes.  
"Here we will make a start; here take counsel,  
Here notch our tortoise." 5  
It says "Stop," it says "Halt.  
Build houses here."

So he halted, so he stopped.  
And left and right  
He drew the boundaries of big plots and little,  
He opened up the ground, he counted the acres  
From west to east;  
Everywhere he took his task in hand.

Then he summoned his Master of Works,  
Then he summoned his Master of Lands  
And made them build houses.  
Dead straight was the plumb-line,  
The planks were lashed to hold the earth;  
He made the Hall of Ancestors, very venerable.

They tilted the earth with a rattling,  
They pounded it with a dull thud,  
They beat the walls with a loud clang,  
They pared and chiseled them with a faint *ping, ping*,  
The hundred cubits all rose;  
The drummers could not hold out. 6

They raised the outer gate;  
The outer gate soared high.  
They raised the inner gate;  
The inner gate was very strong.

They raised the great earth-mound,  
Where excursions of war might start. 7

And in the time that followed they did not abate their sacrifices,  
Did not let fall their high renown;  
The oak forests were laid low,  
The roads were opened up.  
The Kun 8 tribes scampered away;  
Oh, how they panted.

The peoples of Yu and Rui 8 broke faith,  
And King Wen harried their lives.  
This I will say, the rebels were brought to allegiance,  
Those that were first were made last.  
This I will say, there were men zealous in their tasks,  
There were those that kept the insolent at bay.

Waley's notes;

:

- 1 I.e. the Wei.
2. Lacquer River in western Shaanxi
3. The Wei.
4. Mount Qi, west of the capital city of Hao, was earlier the home of Zhou people, who had been led there by Dan-fu.
5. The drummers set the rhythm for the workman, but they tired more quickly than the indefatigable builders.
6. The shrine where soldiers were "sworn in" for combat.
7. The same as the Dog Barbarians?
8. In western Shaanxi.

James Legge's rendering:

In long trains ever increasing grow the gourds.  
When [our] people first sprang,  
From the country about the Ju and the Qi,  
The ancient duke Dan-fu,  
Made for them kiln-like huts and caves,  
Ere they had yet any houses.

The ancient duke Dan-fu,  
Came in the morning, galloping his horses,  
Along the banks of the western rivers,  
To the foot of [mount] Qi;  
And there, he and the lady Jiang,  
Came, and together looked out for a site on which to settle.

The plain of Zhou looked beautiful and rich,  
With its violets and sowthistles [sweet] as dumplings.  
There he began with consulting [his followers];  
There he singed the tortoise-shell, [and divined].  
The responses were - there to stay, and then;  
And they proceeded there to build their houses.

He encouraged the people and settled them;  
Here on the left, there on the right.  
He divided the ground into larger tracts and smaller portions;  
He dug the ditches; he defined the acres;  
From the west to the east,  
There was nothing which he did not take in hand.

He called his superintendent of works;  
He called his minister of instruction;  
And charged them with the building of the houses.  
With the line they made everything straight;  
They bound the frame-boards tight, so that they should rise regularly.  
Uprose the ancestral temple in its solemn grandeur.

Crowds brought the earth in baskets  
They threw it with shouts into the frames;  
They beat it with responsive blows;  
They pared the walls repeatedly, and they sounded strong.  
Five thousand cubits of them arose together,  
So that the roll of the great drum did not overpower [the noise of the builders].

They set up the gate of the enceinte;  
And the gate of the enceinte stood high.  
They set up the court gate;  
And the court gate stood grand.  
They reared the great altar [to the Spirits of the land],  
From which all great movements should proceed.

The chiefs of] Yu and Rui were brought to an agreement,  
By king Wen's stimulating their natural virtue.  
Then, I may say, some came to him, previously not knowing him;  
And some, drawn the last by the first;  
And some, drawn by his rapid success;  
And some, by his defence [of the weak] from insult.

Nienhauser's rendering is similar. {1}

Rhyme here is irregular, but still tight, in internal and end rhymes. A minimal expression would be tetrameters rhymed on even-numbered lines:

## Text Sources

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Nienhauser, W.H. Tetrasyllabic Shi Poetry in Cai, Z-Q (2008) How to Read Chinese Poetry: A Guided Anthology. Pp.30-32.

## Other Translations

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## References and Further Reading

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## 8. SHIJING POETRY: Hymn to the State of Lu

### 周頌閔予小子之什(SACRIFICIAL ODES OF ZHOU, DECADE OF MIN YOU XIAO ZI)

#### Mao 300

A	Traditional Chinese and (Modern Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	閔宮 (bì gōng)		hidden temple
1	閔宮有恤 (huī gōng yǒu 恤)	-	hidden temple is silent
2	實實枚枚 (shí shí méi méi )	x	real real classifier classifier
3	赫赫姜嫄 (hè hè jiāng yuān)	-	impressive-brilliant Jiang Yuan
4	其德不回 (qí dé bù huí)	a	her virtue not return
5	上帝是依 (shàng dì shì yī)	a	Shang di is listening
6	無災無害 (wú zāi wú hài)	b	not disaster not cause-trouble
7	彌月不遲 (mí yuè bù chí)	a	full month not delayed
8	俾民稼穡 (shì shēng hòu jì)	g	enable people How-ji
9	降之百福 (jiàng zhī bǎi fú)	x	descend of hundred fortunes
10	黍稷重穆 (shǔ jì zhòng 穆)	-	millet repeat fast-growing grain
11	樽惟茲麥 (zhī zhī shū mài)	b	plant young pulse wheat
12	奄有下國 (yǎn yǒu xià guó)	x	suddenly exist inferior country
13	俾民稼穡 (bǐ mín jià sè)	x	cause people sow harvest
14	有稷有黍 (yǒu jì yǒu shǔ)	c	exist millet exist millet
15	有稻有秬 (yǒu dào yǒu 秬)	-	exist rice exist black-millet
16	奄有下土 (yǎn yǒu xià tǔ)	c	suddenly exist below earth
17	續禹之緒 (zǔn yǔ zhī xù)	c	inherit Yu of beginnings
18	后稷之孫 (hòu jì zhī sūn)	x	Hou ji of sun/grandson
19	實維大王 (shí wéi dà wáng)	x	honest preserve great king
20	居岐之陽 (jū qí zhī yáng)	d	reside Qi of south
21	實始翦商 (shí shǐ jiǎn shāng)	d	real start cut Shang
22	至于文武 (zhì yú wén wǔ)	c	arrive as writing/wen war/wu
23	續大王之緒 (zǔn dà wáng zhī xù)	c	succeed great king of beginnings
24	致天之屆 (zhì tiān zhī jiè)	e	send sky of period
25	于牧之野 (yú mù zhī yě)	e	go Mu of plain
26	無貳無真 (wú èr wú yú)	x	not betray not worry
27	上帝臨女 (shàng dì lín n 鍤斤拷)	-	Shang di arrive female
28	敦商之旅 (dūn shāng zhī 鍤斤拷)	-	place Shang of army
29	克咸厥功 (kè xián jué gōng)	x	able thin faint achievement
30	王曰叔父 (wáng yuē shū fù)	c	Wang speak uncle father
31	建爾元子 (jiàn ěr yuán zǐ)	g	establish thus first son
32	俾侯于魯 (bǐ hóu yú lǔ)	c	cause marquis go Lu
33	大啟爾宇 (dà qǐ ěr yǔ)	c	much open thus universe
34	為周室輔 (wéi zhōu shì fǔ)	c	act-as Zhou house assist
35	乃命魯公 (nǎi mìng lǔ gōng)	f	thus command Lu Duke
36	俾侯于東 (bǐ hóu yú dōng)	f	cause marquis in east

B	Traditional Chinese and (Modern Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
37	錫之山川 (xī zhī shān chuān)	x	confer of mountain river
38	土田附庸 (tǔ tián fù yōng)	f	earth field vassal ordinary
39	周公職孫 (zhōu gōng zhí sūn)	x	Duke-of-Zhou duty grandson
40	莊公之子 (zhuāng gōng zhī zǐ)	g	Zhuang Duke of child
41	龍旂承祀 (lóng qí chéng sì)	g	dragon flag carry sacrifice
42	六轡耳耳 (liù pèi ěr ěr)	x	six bridle handle handle
43	春秋匪解 (chūn qiū fěi jiě)	e	spring autumn not remove
44	享祀不忒 (xiǎng sì bù tè)	e	use sacrifice not change
45	皇皇后帝 (huáng huáng hòu dì)	g	emperor empress Huang-di
46	皇祖后稷 (huáng zǔ hòu jì )	g	emperor Zu after Hou-ji
47	享以騂犧 (xiǎng yǐ wēn xī)	a	use by red sacrifice
48	是饗是宜 (shì xiǎng shì yí )	a	exist entertain exist suitable
49	降福既多 (jiàng fú jì duō)	x	blessings of Heaven already many
50	周公皇祖 (zhōu gōng huáng zǔ)	c	Duke-of-Zhou emperor Zu
51	亦其福女 (yì qí fú n 錕斤拷)	-	also his good-fortune female
52	秋而載嘗 (qiū ér zài cháng)	h	autumn yet convey already
53	夏而福衡 (xià ér 福 héng)	i	summer yet ox-yoke measure
54	白牡騂剛 (bái mǔ wēn gāng)	h	white animal reddish exactly
55	犧尊將將 (xī zūn jiāng jiāng)	h	sacrifice honour use use
56	毛爓臠羹 (máo 爓 臠 gēng)	i	raw roast cut-meat soup
57	籩豆大房 (biān dòu dà fáng)	h	basket sacrificial-vessel big house
58	萬舞洋洋 (wàn wǔ yáng yáng)	h	ten-thousand dance impressive
59	孝孫有慶 (xiào sūn yǒu qìng)	x	piety grandson exist celebrate
60	俾爾嶽而昌 (bǐ ěr chì ér chāng)	h	cause thus blaze prosperous
61	俾爾壽而臧 (bǐ ěr shòu ér cáng)	h	cause thus long-life and store
62	保彼東方 (bǎo bǐ dōng fāng)	h	defend that east power
63	魯邦是常 (lǔ bāng shì cháng)	h	Lu nation is always
64	不虧不崩 (bù kuī bù bēng)	i	not deficit not collapse
65	不震不騰 (bù zhèn bù téng)	i	not shake/excite not soar/clear
66	三壽侑朋 (sān shòu zuò péng)	i	three life/age grow/regard friend
67	如岡如陵 (rú gāng rú líng)	j	as-if mound as-if tomb
68	公車千乘 (gōng chē qiān chéng)	i	Duke chariot thousand ride
69	朱英綠縑 (zhū yīng lǜ 縑)	-	vermilion/Zhu flower/excellent green bind-
70	二矛重弓 (èr máo zhòng gōng)	f	up two spear heavy bow
71	公徒三萬 (gōng tú sān wàn)	x	Duke believer three ten thousand
72	貝冑朱紱 (bèi 冑 zhū 紱)	-	treasure Zhu vermilion crest
73		i	many believers increase increase
74	烝徒曾曾 (烝 tú zēng zēng)	j	weapons officials yes receive
	戎火是膺 (róng dí shì yīng)		

C	Traditional Chinese and (Modern Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
75	荆舒適愨 (jīng shū shì chěng)	x	Chu unfold old-age punish
76	則莫我敢承 (zé mò wǒ gǎn chéng)	i	follow do-not I dare carry
77	俾爾昌而熾 (bǐ ěr chāng ér chì)	g	cause thus prosperous and burn
78	俾爾壽而富 (bǐ ěr shòu ér fù)	c	cause thus long-life and wealth
79	黃髮台背 (huáng fā tái bèi)	x	falls-through hair support turn-back
80	壽考與式 (shòu kǎo yǔ shì)	g	long-life assist and test
81	俾爾昌而大 (bǐ ěr chāng ér dà)	x	cause thus prosperous and large
82	俾爾耆而艾 (bǐ ěr qí ér ài)	k	cause thus old-man yet redress
83	萬有千歲 (wàn yǒu qiān suì)	g	ten exist thousand year
84	眉壽無有害 (méi shòu wú yǒu hài)	k	eyebrow long-life not exist do-harm
85	泰山巖巖 (tài shān yán yán)	l	Tai shan rock rock
86	魯邦所詹 (lǔ bāng suǒ zhān)	l	Lu country place excellent
87	奄有龜蒙 (yǎn yǒu guī měng)	i	sudden exist Gu Meng
88	遂荒大東 (suì huāng dà dōng)	f	succeed shortage great east
89	至于海邦 (zhì yú hǎi bāng)	h	until go ocean country
90	淮夷來同 (huái yí lái tóng)	f	Huai non-han-people come similar
91	莫不率從 (mò bù shuài cóng)	f	exist none to-lead follower
92	魯侯之功 (lǔ hóu zhī gōng)	f	Lu marquis of meritorious-service
93	保有鼻繹 (bǎo yǒu bí yì)	g	protect exist Fu Yi
94	遂荒余宅 (suì huāng yú zhái)	x	succeed desolate Xu residence
95	至于海邦 (zhì yú hǎi bāng)	h	until go sea nation
96	淮夷蠻貊 (huái yí mán mò)	x	Huai non-han-people Man Mo
97	及彼南夷 (jí bǐ nán yí)	a	reach those south non-han-people
98	莫不率從 (mò bù shuài cóng)	f	exist none to-lead follower
99	莫敢不諾 (mò gǎn bù nuò)	m	none dare not consent
100	魯侯是若 (lǔ hóu shì ruò)	m	Lu marquis to-be alike
101	天錫公純嘏 (tiān xī gōng chún gǔ)	c	bestow sky honourable fortune
102	眉壽保魯 (méi shòu bǎo lǔ)	c	eyebrow long-life protect Lu
103	居常與許 (jū cháng yǔ xǔ)	c	Reside Chang and Xu
104	復周公之宇 (fù zhōu gōng zhī yǔ)	c	return Duke-of-Zhou of universe
105	魯侯燕喜 (lǔ hóu yàn xǐ)	g	Lu marquis feast fond-of
106	令妻壽母 (líng qī shòu mǔ)	x	virtuous wife aged mother
107	宜大夫庶士 (yí dà fū shù shì)	g	proper great official common-people
108	邦國是有 (bāng guó shì yǒu)	x	minister
109	既多受祉 (jì duō shòu zhǐ)	g	country state is exist
110	黃髮兒齒 (huáng fā ér chǐ)	g	already many receive felicity yellow hair son tooth
111	徂來之松 (cú lái zhī sōng)	f	reach next of pine

112	新甫之柏 (xīn fǔ zhī bǎi)	k	Xin-fu of cedar
113	是斷是度 (shì duàn shì dù)	c	were cut-down were measure
114	是尋是尺 (shì xún shì chǐ)	g	exist search exist length
115	松桷有烏 (sōng jué yǒu wū)	g	relax rafter exist Xi
116	路寢孔碩 (lù qǐn kǒng shuò)	m	sort lie-down hole large
117	新廟奕奕 (xīn miào yì yì)	g	new temple abundant graceful
118	奚斯所作 (xī sī suǒ zuò)	m	Xi-si place do
119	孔曼且碩 (kǒng màn qiě shuò)	m	hole handsome yet large
120	萬民是若 (wàn mín shì ruò)	m	ten-thousand people exist as-if

The temple, silent and withdrawn,  
 commemorates fidelity,  
 celebrating one Jiang Yuan  
 and virtue now we rarely see.

So Shang-di listened and decreed  
 no hurt or mishap come her way,  
 she was delivered in due course  
 of one Hou-ji, who would convey

a hundred blessings to a people  
 10. planting pulse and slower wheat.  
 He taught in one inferior state  
 the ways to plough and sow and reap.

And so they sow and reap their harvest,  
 millet in its various strains,  
 black millet here, in places rice,  
 and from that earth they forged their gains.

Hard work it was, from Yu beginning,  
 but soon the descendents of How-ji  
 were governed by a mighty king  
 20. residing to the south of Qi.

The realms of Shang began to shrink,  
 when came the kings of Wen and Wu  
 furthering the the great king's task;  
 and as the heavens desire anew.

They met there on the plain of Mu  
 without betrayal or much fear

from those who were of Shang-di's birth.  
So the host of Shang appear

but win but passing victory.  
30. When Wang to elder uncle spoke,  
I would have your first son here  
the Marquis Lu of our good folk.

That he may aid the House of Zhou,  
his territories are much increased.  
Thus so decreed the Duke of Lu,  
who made him Marquis of the East.

Then given him were hills and rivers,  
the fields and lands and fiefs thereof:  
the Duke of Zhou, so through his son,  
40. the Duke of Zhuang, made fly above.

the sacrifice the dragon flag,  
with harness too, and six-fold reins,  
that spring and autumn never cease  
from honouring such blessed remains.

At which the spirit of Wang-di,  
as much as ancestor Hou-ji,  
receiving offerings of white and red:  
what was asked for, then would be.

And so the heavens shower their blessings  
50. on Emperor Zu and Duke of Zhou,  
on descendants of Hou-ji  
that the autumn riches show.

So summer's horn-yoke to the ox,  
the bulls of white and reddish skin  
are sacrificed to yield a meat  
that's roasted, boiled or minced to thin.

And in those ample offerings  
with dancers too, a thousand strong,  
descendants paid their just receipts  
60. in all-embracing blaze and song.

And through those rites they looked ahead  
who were a bulwark of the east:  
the State of Lu will always be

firmly standing, undecreased

by any tumult of events.  
So are Orion's three-fold friends,  
as the hills are, or the tomb,  
or power a thousand chariot sends.

Vermillion flowers fast bound in green:  
70. each had the strong bow, double spear:  
in all were thirty-thousand men  
on whom Zhu's rich crests appear.

Still that soldiery increases;  
it is the Rong and Di they meet,  
and the ancient Chu they punish,  
from none of them will they retreat.

The causes carry, blazing through  
the length of life and wealth they give:  
when hair is grey and backs are bent  
80. it is in future ease they live.

Successes are what settles out,  
one where old men find redress,  
and turmoil of ten thousand years  
the length of eyebrow will repress.

85. Tai Shan is peaceful, towering rock,  
and Lu's rich bounty is increased,  
but suddenly, at Gui and Meng,  
trouble from the Greater East

as far as countries of the coast.  
90. For peace the Huai people sue,  
for none will dare to disobey:  
so all saw the Duke of Lu.

The Fu and Yi were thus protected,  
as indeed the lands of Xu  
95. as far as countries of the coast,  
the Man, the Mo and Huai too

The non-Han people of the south  
did not dare to disobey.  
Nor would any contradict  
100. what the Lord of Lu would say.

And so the sky bestowed its blessings  
on one who has protected so,  
and in the settlements of Chang and Xu  
restored to them the realms of Zhou.

105. So let the Duke of Lu rejoice,  
with aged mother, virtuous wife,  
with ministers and commoners  
who gave his country greater life.

Many blessings he received  
110. that serene old age has children's teeth  
Accordingly they turn to pine,  
to cedars Xin-fu hills bequeath.

All were measured out and cut  
into units as appropriate,  
a well-extended, floated length  
of beams encompassing a state

deemed as proper for a shrine.  
So the place of Xi-si fame  
created such majestic space  
120. a worshipping ten thousand came.

#### Comment

The poem commemorates the exploits of the three rulers who did most to create a stable Zhou kingdom. King Wen (the 'Cultured King') formed alliances with surrounding states and tribes to attack and overthrow the Shang dynasty. His son, King Wu (the 'Martial King') built a capital further east and launched a military expedition that captured the Shang capital and royal house. One son was left as nominal ruler to give sacrifice to powerful ancestors. King Wu died young, and his brother, the Duke of Zhou acted as regent for Wu's son. The Duke of Zhou extended rule over the whole Wei valley, destroying, it is said, some fifty states. He built a new city at modern Loyang, and moved former Shang nobles to its court. He retired when Wu's son came of age. {8}

Shang-di was the supreme deity of the Shang dynasty, but probably here refers to the Zhou lineage as Jiang Yuan is also mentioned, a consort of the legendary (Zhao) Emperor Ku. Waley {10} has Dan Fu as marrying the Lady Jiang, siring sons and moving his people to Mount Qi. Hou Ji also goes back to mythological past, to the Xia dynasty (before 1600 BC) and is credited to introducing millet into northern China. He was miraculously conceived by Jiang Yuan when she stepped

on a footprint left by Shangdi, the supreme sky god of the early Chinese pantheon. {9}

Proper names in the text: {3}

'Elder uncle' was the Duke of Zhou

'Duke of Zuang' was Duke Xi 659-627 B.C.

'Horn yoke' was a bar placed on horns to mark animals as sacrificial.

The Rong tribes raided the Zhou capital in 649 B.C.; the Di attacked central China towards the middle of the seventh century.

'Orion's three-fold friends', the stars in Orion's belt are the gods of fortune, prosperity and longevity.

Jing were better known later as the Chu. The Xu of southwest Shandong and Anhui were non-Chinese but often fought in alliance with them.

Gui and Meng are hills near the Tai-shan.

Greater East refers to the central part of Shandong.

Fu and Xi are hills in south-central Shandong

Chang and Xu is western Shandong.

Mount Chu-lai are near present day Dai'an.

Xin-fu is also near Dai'an.

Zhao history, and the Shijing to some extent, are specialist areas of research where scholars naturally disagree on details. {12} Nonetheless, the background to these poems is a late bronze age culture of great sophistication. The buildings — courts, temples, forts and cities— being entirely of wood, have naturally disappeared without trace, and we are left with objects excavated from the few graves that have escaped tomb-robbers. Jade objects, scraps of woven silk, carved wood and ivory, sometimes inlaid with turquoise, suggest that the kings and nobles of the Shang and Zhou dynasties were surrounded by objects of great beauty and luxury. {8}

Scraps of writing on bamboo slips also throw out clues, but even here the record is not unambiguous. The Shijing were collected in the Han, but we do not know in most cases how much they were 'improved', i.e. rewritten, amended and/or corrupted, in Han times and later. Even the bamboo fragments unearthed from graves cannot always be taken at their face value. Zhou rulers had their reasons for rewriting history. {12}

The battles of Muye involved large masses of troops: chronicles speak of 300 chariots, 3000 warriors and an army of 45,000 in the Zhou army, later joined by allies providing another 4,000 chariots, that met a Shang force of 7000,000. Numbers have to be treated with cautions, and even the odd bronze excavated in recent years have inscriptions that can be variously interpreted. Dates are particularly controversial, many coinciding with astrological events, part of the ritual and magic of pre-Qin China. The lands of the defeated Shang do seem to have been divided into fiefdoms and statelets, perhaps some forty in all and ruled

by blood relations. The Zhou, continually at war with barbarian tribes, seems to have had some 14 standing armies, with each division numbering 2,500 men. The barbarians themselves often migrated over hundreds if not thousands of miles, so that the westward conquests of the Tang, featuring so often in poetry, were preceded by equally tortuous and costly campaigns fifteen hundred years earlier. Later Zhou campaigns, often to the south and north, were less successful, and the western Zhou dynasty effectively ended when the Zhou capital of Haojing was captured and sacked by a barbarian confederation. {12}

The fiefdoms set the pattern for later times, particularly the blood-soaked Period of Warring States. The Qi principality occupied the Shandong peninsula. The Jin lay in Shanxi. The Chu principality lay in the south. The Wu lay in the Yangtze delta, as did the Yue. {12}

The 'barbarians' were not only marginal threats but also made up 'statelets' within the Zhou lands, sometimes peacefully coexisting with Zhou fiefdoms and sometimes at war with them. Occasionally, as the Han histories relate, the 'barbarian' united and became a serious force. The Shan-rong and Guzhu in present day Manchuria had to be defeated in 664 BC, and Bai-di barbarians of central Shanxi in 651 BC. Throughout much of the 6th century BC there were battles against the Di tribes at Taiyuan. {12}

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Many of these events were noted by Sima Qian (145-c85 BC) in his Historical Records (Shiji), an immense 130-chapter compilation of political narratives, treatises on key institutions and biographies of important individuals. The last were not only kings, great officials and generals, but philosophers, poets, merchants, merchants and assassins. Movements of non-Han peoples along the borders were also recorded in narratives. Sima Qian did not spare the guilty, but perhaps favoured those whose courage, chivalry and loyalty had gone unrecognised in their day. The Shiji became the model for later histories, and helped shape the Chinese world-view. Very different, the mirror-image as it were of the settled Chinese were the tribal peoples grouped together as the Xiongnu. They sought only booty, excelling at warfare, but having no cities or permanent dwellings, no agriculture or written language, no family names, respect for the elderly. {13}

## Rhyme Matters

Given the pronunciation changes, the rhyme annotation here is very notional: all that can be safely assumed is that the piece was tightly rhymed, by line end and internal rhyme. The Chinese is taken from James Legge {1}, who gives a fairly literal translation, but the word-for-word renderings in the table above are my own, as they are throughout this book unless stated otherwise. I prefer to work from the Chinese text as much as possible, though accepting that early texts will have some changes in the meaning of words.

## Textural Problems

Because some lines are so obscure, it's wise to look at previous renderings. Unfortunately, that on the University of Virginia's site is as baffling as the James Legge version from which it clearly derives. The Chinese of 120 lines has been condensed to 106, perhaps to remove the repetitious central section, which is hard to follow anyway, and may perhaps be a later interpolation. The Virginia rendering in fact follows the Chinese text until around line 80 odd, and again in lines 101 to 106, but the intervening section seems to come from a different text altogether, apparently not uncommon in Allen's work {5}. The James Legge version is rhymed, quite pleasingly in places, but also rather free and expanded to 148 lines by those rhyming needs. I reproduce it here:

The Peih laing; narrative. IN PRAISE OF DUKE HE, AND AUSPICING FOR HIM A  
MAGNIFICENT CAREER OF SUCCESS, WHICH WOULD TAKE LOO ALL THAT IT HAD EVER  
BEEN :—WRITTEN PROBABLY ON AN OCCASION WHEN HE HAD KEPAIRD ON A GRAND  
SCALE THE TEMPLES OF THE STATE, OF WHICH PIOUS ACT HIS SUCCESS WOULD BE  
THE REWARD.

Solemn the temples stand, and still,  
Strong, built throughout with nicest skill.  
From them our thoughts to Keaiig Yuen go,  
The mother of our Chow and Loo.  
She grandly shone with virtue rare  
That nought could bend. So did she share  
God's favour^ and How-tseih she bore,  
Without a pang, or labour sore,  
Just when her carrying days were o'er.  
10. On How-tseih then all blessings came.  
That millets' times were not the same,  
This ripening quickly, and that slow,  
He knew, and first the pulse to sow,  
And then the wheat, where each should grow.  
Soon called a State, though small, to rule,  
It under him became a school,

Where husbandry men learned to know,  
To sow, to reap, to weed, to hoe.  
Millets,—the early, black, and red,  
20. And rice that loves the watery bed;—  
All these through all the land were known,  
And of Yu's toils the worth was shown.

Long after How-tseih, in his line,  
King T'ae arose, quick to divine  
Heaven's will, who eastward came and dwelt  
South of mount K'e. There first was felt  
The power of Chow, and Shang's fierce sway  
Began to dwindle and decay.  
From him we pass to Wan and Woo,  
30. Continuing T'ae's great work to do,  
Till in the plain of Muh 'twas given  
To see th' accomplished will of Heaven.  
There met the hosts, both well arrayed,  
And when Woo feared, his general said,  
" Let not a doubt your mind possess !  
With you is God, your arms to bless."  
The troops of Shaiig defeat sustained;  
Woo's men, all fire, grand victory gained.  
His son, king Ching, next wore the crown,  
40. And said to Tan of wide renown,  
Still as the duke of Chow well known,  
" Your eldest son, O uncle great,  
I will appoint to rule the State  
Of Loo, and there on you bestow

A territory that shall grow,  
And help afford our House of Chow."  
Thus first did Loo a ruler get,  
Who marquis in the east was set.  
The lands and fields, each stream and hill,  
50. Were granted to him, at his will  
To hold, and many States attached,  
Whose fealty jealously he watched.  
From him derived, our present chief,  
Son of duke Chwang, now holds the fief.  
With dragon banner raised aloft,  
Grasping the pliant reins and soft,  
Here comes he sacrifice to pay.  
In spring and autumn, no delay  
He makes; but soon as dawns the day,  
60. Correct his offerings appear;—

The victims, red and pure, are here :—  
First for the great and sovereign Lord,  
Then for How-tseih, our sire adored.  
The victims these enjoy and own,  
And send abundant blessings down.  
Nor they alone, O prince, do so,  
But from the duke of Chow gifts flow,  
And all your sires their grace bestow

In autumn comes th' autumnal rite,  
70. With bulls, whose horns in summer bright  
Were capped with care :—one of them white,  
For the great duke of Chow designed;  
One red, for all our princes shrined.  
And see ! they set the goblet full,  
In figure fashioned like a bull;  
The dishes of bamboo and wood;  
Sliced meat, roast pig, and pottage good;  
And the large stand. Below the hall  
There wheel and move the dancers all.  
80. O filial prince, your sires will bless,  
And grant you glorious success.  
Long life and goodness they'll bestow  
On you, to hold the State of Loo,  
And all the eastern land secure,  
Like moon complete, like mountain sure.  
No earthquake's shock, no flood's wild rage,  
Shall e'er disturb your happy age.  
And with your aged nobles three  
Unbroken shall your friendship be,  
90. In long and firm security.  
A thousand are the cars of war.  
Aloft on each, seen from afar,  
Rise the two spears, with tassels red.  
In each two bows in case are laid,  
To frames with green strings firmly bound.  
Guarding those cars, and all around,  
March thirty thousand footmen bold,  
And on their helmets can be told  
The shells, strung on vermilion string:—  
100. Such is the force our State can bring.  
We'll quell the tribes both west and north,  
And against King and Shoo go forth.  
O prince, the Spirits of your dead  
With blaze of glory crown your head !  
Give you long life, and riches great,

And round you trusty helpers set,  
Of wrinkled back and hoary hair,  
With counsel wise for every care !  
You may those Spirits prosper thus,  
110. And make your old age vigorous,  
For thousands, myriads of years,  
With bushy eyebrows, free from fears !

To us belongs T'ae's frowning height,  
For all in Loo the grandest sight.  
Both Kwei and Mung we safely keep ;  
To farthest east our sway shall sweep,  
Till all the States along the sea  
To Loo obedient shall be.  
The tribes of Hwae will own our might,  
120. Proud to our prince their faith to plight.  
Such the memorial he shall leave !  
Such deeds our marquis shall achieve !

Both Hoc and Yih he shall maintain,  
And victory over Seu shall gain,  
Till all the States along the sea  
To him obedient shall be.  
The tribes of Hwae, the Mih whose home  
Is in the north, the Man who roam  
The south, and tribes more southern still  
130. Shall bow, submissive to his will.  
Prompt they shall answer to his call,  
And homage pay, his subjects all.

Oh ! Heaven our prince will greatly bless,  
And he the eyebrows shall possess,  
That show long life, and Loo maintain;  
Both Chaug and Heu he shall regain.  
Whatever land belonged of yore  
To Tan, our prince shall soon restore.  
Then shall his joy at feast be told  
140. To his good wife, and mother old.  
There too his chiefs, of virtue rare,  
Each in his place, the joy shall share.  
He thus shall all our region rule;  
His cup of blessing shall be full.  
Like child's his teeth shall still be seen,  
With hoary hair,—an old age green !

The pines from Tsoo-lae's hill were brought,

And cypresses on Sin-foo sought  
The trees were felled, and hewn exact.  
150. The workmen, with the nicest tact,  
Using of various lengths the line,  
Projected far the beams of pine,  
While rose the inner chambers great.  
Grand are those temples of the State,  
New built, the work of He-sze skilled,  
So wide, so deep, that all are filled  
With admiration of his art!  
158. How well has He-sze done his part

A more concise rendering is given on the ctexts.org site. This is James Legge again, apparently, but the poem now has 119 lines and generally matches the Waley rendering below.

How pure and still are the solemn temples,  
In their strong solidity and minute completeness!  
Highly distinguished was Jiang Yuan,  
Of virtue undeflected.  
God regarded her with favour;  
And without injury or hurt,  
Immediately, when her months were fulfilled,  
She gave birth to Hou-ji.  
On him were conferred all blessings, -  
10. [To know] how the millet ripened early, and the sacrificial millet late,  
How first to sow pulse, and then wheat.  
Anon he was invested with an inferior State,  
And taught the people how to sow and to reap,  
The millet and the sacrificial millet,  
Rice and the black millet;  
Ere long all over the whole country; -  
[Thus] continuing the work of Yu.  
Among the descendants of Hou-ji,  
There was king Da,  
20. Dwelling on the south of [mount] Qi,  
Where the clipping of Shang began.  
In process of time Wen and Wu,  
Continued the work of king Da,  
And [the purpose of] Heaven was carried out in its time,  
In the plain of Mu.  
'Have no doubts, no anxieties, ' [it was said];  
'God is with you. '  
[Wu] disposed of the troops of Shang;  
He and his men shared equally in the achievement.  
30. [Then] king [Cheng] said, ' My uncle,

I will set up your eldest son,  
And make him marquis of Lu.  
I will greatly enlarge your territory there,  
To be a help and support to the House of Zhou. '

Accordingly he appointed [our first] duke of Lu,  
And made him marquis in the east,  
Giving him the hills and rivers,  
The lands and fields, and the attached States.  
The [present] descendant of the duke of Zhou,  
40. The son of duke Zhuang,  
With dragon-emblazoned banner attends the sacrifices,  
His six reins soft and pliant.  
In spring and autumn he does not neglect [the sacrifices];  
His offerings are all without error.  
To the great and sovereign God,  
And to his great ancestor Hou-ji,  
He offers the victims, red and pure.  
Then enjoy, they approve,  
And bestow blessings in large number.  
50. The duke of Zhou, and [your other] great ancestors,  
Also bless you.

In autumn comes the sacrifices of the season,  
But in summer the bulls for it have had their horns capped.  
They are the white bull and the red one;  
[There are] the bull-figured goblet in its dignity;  
Roast pig, minced meat, and soups;  
The dishes of bamboo and wood, and the large stand;  
And the dancers all-complete.  
The filial descendant will be blessed.  
60. [Your ancestors] will make you gloriously prosperous!  
They will make you long-lived and good, -  
To preserve this eastern region,  
Long possessing the State of Lu,  
Unwaning, unfallen,  
Unshaken, undisturbed!  
They will make your friendship with your three aged [ministers],  
Like the hills, like the mountains!

Our prince's chariots are a thousand,  
[And in each] are the vermilion tassels and the green bands of the two spears  
and two bows.  
70. His footmen are thirty thousand,  
With shells on vermilion-strings adorning their helmets.  
So numerous are his ardent followers,

To deal with the tribes of the west and north,  
And to punish [those of] Jing and Shu,  
So that none of them will dare to withstand us.  
May [the Spirits] make you grandly prosperous!  
May they make you long-lived and wealthy!  
May the hoary hair and wrinkled back,  
Marking the aged men, be always in your employment!  
80. May they make you prosperous and great!  
May they grant you old age, ever vigorous,  
For myriads and thousands of years,  
With the eyebrows of longevity, and ever unharmed! (NB 17 characters and 16  
lines of translation)

The mountain of Da is lofty,  
Looked up to by the State of Lu.  
We grandly possess also Gui and Meng;  
And we shall extend to the limits of the east,  
Even the States along the sea.  
The tribes of the Huai will seek our alliance: -  
90. All will proffer their allegiance:  
Such shall be the achievements of the marquis of Lu.

He shall maintain the possession of Hu and Yi,  
And extend his sway to the regions of Xu,  
Even to the States along the sea.  
The tribes of the Huai, the Man, and the Mi,  
And those tribes [still more] to the south,  
All will proffer their allegiance:  
Not one will dare not to answer to his call,  
Thus showing their obedience to the marquis of Lu.

100. Heaven will give great blessing to our prince,  
So that with the eyebrows of longevity he shall maintain Lu.  
He shall possess Chang and Xu,  
And recover all the territory of the duke of Zhou.  
Then shall the marquis of Lu feast and be glad,  
With his admirable wife and aged mother;  
With his excellent ministers and all his [other] officers.  
Our region and State shall be hold,  
Thus receiving many blessings,  
To hoary hair, with a child's teeth.

110. The pines of Cu-lai,  
And the cypresses of Xin-fu,  
Were cut down and measured,  
With the cubit line and the eight cubits line.

The projecting beams of pine were large;  
The large inner apartments rose vast.  
Splendid look the new temples,  
The work of Xi-si,  
Very wide and large,  
119. Answering to the expectations of all the people.

Mao 300 is a long poem. Its Chinese is somewhat archaic, and translators will have approached it through the Mao and other commentaries, I imagine, (though exactly where and how is not explained). Even by Han times, some parts of the Shijing were almost in a foreign tongue. {1} This is not a contribution to the vast scholarship of the Shijing, of course, but a literary translation based on current understandings.

Translation is best approached in stages. Because the text is often ambiguous, with many possibilities in each word-for-word translation, we first produce the table above, a word-for word rendering that keeps an eye on both the University of Virginia and Legge versions.

Next we draft out an unrhymed version in quatrains, line for line, aiming for something pleasing but faithful to the original Chinese:

#### Non-Rhymed Version

The temple, here retired to silence,  
is witness to fidelity,  
commemorating Jiang Yuan,  
whose virtue none will see again.

Shang-di listened, gave his favour,  
decreed there would be no mishaps.  
The months came round, and she delivered  
Hou-ji, who would bless the people.

From this much fortune would descend,  
10. first planting pulse and then the wheat,  
he taught in that first smallish state  
the people how to sow and reap.

And so they sowed, and gained their harvest  
millet, black, and clean white rice.  
When all too soon, across the earth,  
inheriting the work of Yu,

these same descendents of Hou-ji,  
were governed by a mighty king

residing to the south of Qi:  
20. the realms of Shang begin to shrink.

The gods of war and word arrived,  
promising a new beginning,  
Shang-di's great spirit or a god  
accomplishing the will of heaven  
All met then on the plain of Mu.

With no anxieties, betrayals,  
Shang-di's will was given birth,  
and from the land of Shang the armies  
won but thin and faint achievements.

30. Wang then spoke to elder uncle:  
I'll set up here your eldest son,  
and I will make him Marquis Lu,  
and much enlarge his territory.

He thus may help the house of Zhou.  
So commanded was the Duke of Lu,  
and made the marquis of the east,  
and given him were hills and rivers  
the fields and lands and fiefs thereof,  
all holdings of the Duke of Lu.

40. And so the son of Duke of Zhuang  
with dragon flags at sacrifice,  
with bridals and the six-fold reins,  
through spring and autumn does not cease  
to make appropriate sacrifice

45. to that great spirit of Shang-di  
and to his ancestor Hou-ji  
he makes his offering of red  
48. as they enjoy and as is fit.

Many blessings of the heavens  
50. the Duke of Zhou and Emperor Zu  
were given in such fertility,  
which autumn had itself conveyed.

The summer fits the horn-yoke to the ox,  
and animals both red and white  
55. to sacrifice are both approved.  
Meat roasted, minced and boiled to soup.

So are the ample offerings:  
ten thousand dance to vast effect,  
the pious sons so celebrate,  
60. causing thus a prosperous blaze  
and laying up long life to come.

The eastern power is thus defended,  
the State of Lu will always be  
then prosperous, will not collapse,  
nor be shaken by events.

Three lives would grow as closest friends  
as is the mound that holds the tomb.  
A thousand chariots with the Duke,  
vermillion flowers bound up in green,  
70. two spears to each and heavy bow.

The Duke's supporters, thirty thousand,  
Zhu riches with vermillion crest,  
the many followers still more increase:  
officials and weapons they receive.

Against the State of Chou they fight,  
which no one dares to countermand,  
which brings prosperity, a blaze  
of glory, length of life and wealth.  
And such it is grey hair approves  
80. and gives it counsel and support.

Success then brings prosperity,  
one where an old man finds redress,  
through turmoil of ten thousand years  
the length of eyebrows brings no harm,  
the mountain's peaceful is as rock,  
the State of Lu a thriving place.

But suddenly through dimming sight  
there comes a threat from further east  
and from the sea another people,  
90. and not of Han though much alike.

With none to lead the followers,  
the Marquis Lu would render arms,  
when happiness was all destroyed,  
with desolation of the house.

And so the people by the sea,  
barbarians from the river Hua,  
reached southwards to a non-Han people,  
with one there to send them hence.

None would dare to not consent,  
100. through person of the Marquis Lu,  
the heavens not give their worthy grace  
to eyebrows long-protected Lu.

Success was his and would allow  
the Duke of Zhou his many lands,  
the Marquis Lu his pleasing feasts,  
his virtuous wife and aged mother.

Officials, ministers, common people  
residing in that country's state,  
received and promptly many blessings  
110. as shown by age and children's teeth.

And so they wrought at length in pine,  
and equally of cedar wood,  
with all cut down and measured up  
carefully for added length.

Extended rafters of the Xi  
allowing easily an inner space,  
and so the graceful temple was  
erected at the Xi-si place:  
enormous spaces there extended  
120. as ten thousand people wished

At this point it seems wise to look at Waley's version, which is somewhat different  
in places: The Closed Temple

Holy is the Closed Temple,  
Vast and mysterious:  
Glorious was Jiang Yuan,  
Her power was without flaw.  
God on high succored her;  
Without hurt, without harm,  
Fulfilling her months but not late,  
She bore Hou Ji,  
Who brought down many blessings ,

10. Millet for wine, millet for cooking, the early planted and the late planted,  
The early ripening and the late ripening, beans and corn.  
He took possession of all lands below,  
Setting the people to husbandry.  
They had their millet for wine, their millet for cooking,  
Their rice, their black millet,  
He took possession of all the earth below,  
Continuing the work of Yu.

Decendant of Hou Ji  
Was the Great King  
20. Who lived on the southern slopes of Mount Qi  
And began to trim the Shang.  
Till at last came King Wen and King Wu,  
And continued the Great King's task,  
Fulfilled the wrath of Heaven  
In the field of Mu:

"No treachery, no blundering!  
God on high is watching you."  
He overthrew the hosts of Shang.  
He completed his task.

30. The king said, "Uncle, 1  
Set up your eldest son,  
Make him lord in Lu;  
Open up for yourself a great domain,  
To support the house of Zhou."

So he caused the Duke of Lu  
To be lord of the east,  
Give him the hills and streams,  
Lands, fields, dependencies.  
The descendents of the Duke of Zhou, 2

40. Son of Duke Zhuang  
With dragon-painted banners made smoke-offering and sacrifice,  
His six reigns so glossy,  
At spring and autumn so diligent,  
In offering and sacrifice never failing:  
"Very mighty is the Lord God,  
A mighty ancestor is Hou Ji."

Of a tawny bull we make offering,  
It is accepted, it is approved,  
Many blessings are sent down.  
50. The Duke of Zhou is a mighty ancestor;  
Surely he will bless you.  
In autumn we offer the first-fruits:

In summer we bind the thwart 3  
Upon white bull and upon tawny.  
In many a sacrificial vase  
Is roast pork, mince and soup.  
The vessels of bamboo and of wood are on a great stand;  
The Wan dance is very grand.  
To the pious descendent comes luck;  
60. The ancestors have made you blaze, have made you glorious,  
Long-lived and good;  
Have guarded the eastern realm.  
The land of Lu shall be forever,  
Shall not crack or crumble,  
Shall not shake or heave.  
In long life you shall be Orion's peer,  
Steady as the ridges and the hills.  
A thousand war-chariots has the duke,  
Red tassles, green lashings,  
70. The two lances, bow lashed to bow,  
His footmen thirty thousand;  
Their helmets hung with shells on crimson strings.  
Many footmen pressing on  
Have faced the tribes of Rong and Di. 4  
Have given pause to Jing and Xu, 5  
None dares resist us.

The ancestors shall make you glorious, shall make you blaze,  
Shall make you long-lived and rich,  
Till locks are sere and back is bent;  
80. An old age easy and agreeable.  
They shall make you glorious and great,  
Make you settled and secure,  
For thousands upon ten thousands of years;  
Safe shall you live for evermore.

To Mount Tai that towers so high  
The land of Lu reaches.  
He took Gui and Meng,  
Then he laid hands on the Greater East,  
As far as the coastal lands.  
90. The tribes of the Huai River came to terms,  
There were none that did not obey.  
Such were the deeds of the Lords of Lu.

In his protection are Fu and Yi,  
In his hold are the realms of Xu  
As far as the coast lands.

The tribes of Hui, the Mian, and the Mo,  
And those tribes of the south—  
There were none that did not obey,  
None that dare refuse assent.  
100. All have submitted to the Lord of Lu.

Heaven gives the duke its deepest blessings.  
In hoary age he has protected Lu,  
He has made settlements in Chang and Xu,  
Restored the realm of the Duke of Zhou.  
Let the Lord of Lu feast and rejoice,  
With his noble wife, his aged mother,  
Bringing good to ministers and commoners,  
Prosperity to his land and realm.  
Very many blessings he has received;  
110. In his time of serene locks he has cut new teeth!

The pines of Mount Chu-lai, 6  
The cypresses of Xin-fu 7  
Were cut, were measured  
Into cubits, into feet.  
The roof-beams of pine-wood stick far out,  
the great chamber is very vast,  
the new shrine very large,  
The Xi-si made;  
Very long and huge;  
120. With all the people come in homage.

#### Waley's Notes

1. Duke of Zhou
2. Duke Xi 659-627 B.C.
3. Bar placed on horns to mark animals as sacrificial.
4. The Rong tribes raided the Zhou capital in 649 B.C.; the Di attacked central China towards the middle of the seventh century.
5. Jing were better known later as the Chu. The Xu of southwest Shandong and Anhui were non-Chinese but often fought in alliance with them.
6. Western Shandong
7. Hills near present-day Dai'an.

Somewhat questionable in Waley's rendering, I'd have thought, are the Biblical overtones of lines 45-46, the jack-and-jill language of lines 115-120, and the projecting lines, beyond the Chinese allows, in lines 10-11, 41, and 57. But the serious differences are as follows:

Line 2. Both Legge and Waley expand what the Chinese says, which is just 'reality'.

Line 22: which I read as 'arrive as writing war' rather than 'came King Wen and king Wu, given by both Legge and Waley. I have corrected my rendering, and tweaked the two lines that follow.

Lines 66-67: which I read as 'three life/age grow/regard friend / as-if mound as-if tomb' In China, the three stars of Orion's belt are known as the gods of fortune, prosperity and longevity, hence Waley's interpretation, which is sensible. The next line is enigmatic. Waley adds a 'steady'. I added a 'hold'. It's probably best to omit both.

Line 74. I had translated 戎狄是膺 as 'weapons officials yes receive.' It is better translated as Rong Di exist breast. I have corrected the line to 'it is the Rong and Di they meet,' and recrafted the two lines following.

Line 77-78 I had translated these as 'cause thus prosperous and burn cause thus long-life and wealth', correctly but the rhymed rendering 'The order carries, blazing through / the men of action, wealth and thought', which is clearly wrong. My corrections brings lines 77-80 close to Waley's rendering.

Line 84: Waley omits 'eyebrow', which for the Chinese indicates temperament and length of life.

Lines 85-89: I first mistranslated what are proper names. This is now corrected, though I can't find the substance of Waley's 'he laid hands'. I have written 'trouble' in the rhymed version, though 荒 today means shortage or desolation.

Line 89. I had translated 海邦 as 'ocean state', which Legge and Whaley both read as 'states along the ocean', which I've accepted.

### Rhymed Version

Finally we write the fair copy, rhyming on even-numbered lines, as in usual in Chinese verse, though the original here is more fully rhymed. The exercise also provides the opportunity of correcting the unrhymed version, of pulling it back to a more word-for-word rendering:

The temple, silent and withdrawn,  
is witness to reality,  
commemorating one Jiang Yuan,  
whose virtues we no longer see.

So Shang-di listened and decreed  
no hurt or mishap came her way,

she was delivered in due course  
of one Hou-ji, who would convey

a hundred blessings to a people  
10. planting pulse and slower wheat.  
He taught in one inferior state  
the ways to plough and sow and reap.

And so they sow and reap their harvest,  
millet in its various strains,  
black millet here, in places rice,  
and from that earth they forged their gains.

Hard work it was, from Yu beginning,  
but soon the descendents of How-ji  
were governed by a mighty king  
20. residing to the south of Qi.

The realms of Shang began to shrink,  
when came the kings of Wen and Wu  
furthering the the great king's task;  
and as the heavens desire anew.

They met there on the plain of Mu  
without betrayal or much fear  
from those who were of Shang-di's birth.  
So the host of Shang appear

but win themselves thin victory.  
30. When Wang to elder uncle spoke,  
I would have your first son here  
the Marquis Lu of our good folk.

That he may aid the House of Zhou,  
his territories are much increased.  
Thus so decreed the Duke of Lu,  
who made him Marquis of the East.

Then given him were hills and rivers,  
the fields and lands and fiefs thereof:  
the Duke of Zhou, so through his son,  
40. the Duke of Zhuang, made fly above.

the sacrifice the dragon flag,  
with harness too, and six-fold reins,  
that spring and autumn never cease

from honouring such blessed remains.

At which the spirit of Wang-di,  
as much as ancestor Hou-ji,  
receiving offerings of white and red:  
what was asked for, then would be.

And so the heavens shower their blessings  
50. on Emperor Zu and Duke of Zhou,  
on descendants of Hou-ji  
that the autumn riches show.

So summer's horn-yoke to the ox,  
the bulls of white and reddish skin  
are sacrificed to yield a meat  
that's roasted, minced or boiled to thin.

And in those ample offerings  
with dancers too, a thousand strong,  
descendents paid their just receipts  
60. in all-embracing blaze and song.

And through those rites they looked ahead  
who were a bulwark of the east:  
the State of Lu will always be  
firmly standing, undecreased

by any tumult of events.  
So are Orion's three-fold friends,  
as the hills are, or the tomb,  
or power a thousand chariot sends.

Vermillion flowers fast bound in green:  
70. each had the strong bow, double spear:  
in all were thirty-thousand men  
on whom Zhu's rich crests appear.

Still that soldiery increases;  
it is the Rong and Di they meet,  
and the ancient Chu they punish,  
from none of them they will retreat.

The causes carry, blazing through  
the length of life and wealth they give:  
when hair is grey and backs are bent  
80. it is in future ease they live.

Success is what settles out,  
one where old men find redress,  
and turmoil of ten thousand years  
the length of eyebrow will repress.

85. Tai Shan is peaceful, towering rock,  
and Lu's rich bounty is increased,  
but suddenly, at Gui and Meng,  
trouble from the Greater East

as far as countries of the coast.  
90. For peace the Huai people sue,  
for none will dare to disobey:  
so all saw the Duke of Lu.

The You and Yi were thus protected,  
as indeed the lands of Xu  
95. as far as countries of the coast,  
the Man, the Mo and Huai too.

The non-Han people of the south  
did not dare to disobey.  
Nor would any contradict  
100. what the Lord of Lu would say.

And so the sky bestowed its blessings  
on one who has protected so,  
and in the settlements of Chang and Xu  
restored to them the realms of Zhou.

105. So let the Duke of Lu rejoice,  
with aged mother, virtuous wife,  
with ministers and commoners  
who gave his country greater life.

Many blessings he received  
110. that serene old age has children's teeth  
Accordingly they turn to pine,  
to cedars Xin-fu hills bequeath.

All were measured out and cut  
into units as appropriate,  
a well-extended, floated length  
of beams encompassing a state

deemed as proper for a shrine.  
So the place of Xi-si fame  
created such majestic space  
120. in awe ten thousand people came.

With minor changes, this is the version preceding the Notes above

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### 3.3 Sao Poetry

Sao poetry, also called Chuci, or the lyrics of Chu, flourished in a particularly bloody period of Chinese history, that of the Warring States (403-227 BC). The poems, which number nearly 60, have many textual and authorship problems, but were probably put together by Wang Yi in the former Han dynasty. They fall into two groups. The first was apparently assembled by the statesman Qu Yuan (c 340-278 BC). The second group imitates the earlier, but was written by later poets, including Wang himself. Both groups differ from contemporary Shi poetry: they have longer lines, commonly of six or seven characters, and show an interest in Shamanism. The lines also feature *xi* (兮), which was probably a relationship or musical device, since the word doesn't mean anything by itself.

Poets of the Han dynasty were greatly interested in the Chuci, as were its statesmen and rulers, who often poetry themselves. Most approved of the form, seeing it as continuing the Shi traditions, but there were also doubters criticising Qu Yuan for being arrogant and inflating his lines with empty words. Qu Yuan was indeed driven to commit suicide by opponents jealous of his imperial favour, but was later resurrected as a literary hero, the first real poet of China, who widened the possibilities of Chinese.

The poem below is an excerpt from *On Encountering Trouble*, and comes from a section of the Chuci entitled *Nine Songs*. There are some ambiguities and uncertainties in the text, which seems to be dialogue between two deities of the Xiang River, the largest river in the shamanistic Chu state. Since *jūn* is ambivalent in gender, scholars are divided as to whether the deities are male or female, though I have accepted Fusheng Wu's views in what follows. The speaker is a poetic persona that amalgamates shamanism, ancient history and philosophic ideas of the time in a symbolism through which Qu Yuan expresses himself. The various fragrant flowers denote inward qualities of purity and moral cultivation, and are thus comparable with the 'compare and evoke' (*bi-xing*) of Shi poetry, in which the above-mentioned *xi* also plays a part.

On Encountering Trouble (Li Sao) is thus a colossal political lyric (370 lines, 2400 characters) in which the poet recounted his life, his beliefs and misfortunes,

expressing his concerns with the Chu State and his determination to maintain his lofty aspirations. In this poems, riding on a rainbow chariot driven by dragons as white as jade, guarded by the god of wind, god of sun, and god of moon, he soared to heaven in search of his ideals, before being forced to leave his beloved Chu State.

The poem is clearly allegorical. Fine birds and fragrant flowers equate to loyalty and steadfastness. Their opposite, slanderous and villainous people, are denoted by foul and ugly objects. Godly creatures speak for the monarch. Dragons, heavenly birds and phoenixes denote gentlemen. Clouds and whirlwinds refer to villains. And so on: the approach proved very useful to later poets.

#### References

I've shaped and rhymed the piece in the manner of the original, adopting scholarly interpretations {Knechtges} of rare words.

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9. SAO "POETRY: Qu Yuan: Lord of the Xiang River ACCENTS TO HERE

[CCBZ, 59–64] Cai 2.1

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
1	君不行兮夷猶 ( jūn bù xíng xī yí yóu)	a	lord not go . hesitate
2	鸞難留兮中洲 ( jiǎn shuǐ liú xī zhōng zhōu)	a	difficult who remain . on island
3	美要眇兮宜修 ( měi yāo miǎo xī yí xiū)	b	beautiful want blind . suitable embellish
4	沛沅兮滢舟 ( pèi wú chéng xī guì zhōu)	a	vigorous I use . cassia boat
5	令沅兮無波 ( lìng yuán xiāng xī wú bō)	x	order Yuan Xiang . lack wave
6	使江水兮安流 ( shǐ jiāng shuǐ xī ān liú)	b	instruct river water . calm flow
7	望夫君兮未來 ( wàng fū jūn xī wèi lái)	x	expect man lord . not-yet arrive
8	吹參差兮誰思 ( chuī cēn cī xī shuí sī)	x	play participate uneven . who consider
9	駕飛龍兮北征 ( jià fēi lóng xī běi zhēng)	x	ride fly dragon . journey north
10	遺吾道兮洞庭 ( zhān wú dào xī dòng tíng)	c	not-make-progress my way Dong-ting
11	蘇荔兮蕙綯 ( pì lì bó xī huì chóu)	a	fig lychee tree . <i>mellilot</i> *silk
12	葆華兮蘭旌 ( sūn rǎo xī lán jīng)	c	banner radius . orchid show
13	望岑陽兮極浦 ( wàng cén yáng xī jí pǔ)	f	gaze Cen . top river-bank
14	橫大江兮揚靈 ( héng dà jiāng xī yáng líng)	c	Great River . raise spirit
15	揚靈兮未極 ( yáng líng xī wèi jí)	g	raise spirit . not-yet top
16	女嬃媛兮為余太息 ( nǚ chān yuán xī wèi yú tài xī)	g	women beautiful emotionally-involved. because-of
17	橫流涕兮潺湲 ( héng liú tì xī chán yuán)	e	surplus great breath
18	隱思君兮別剏 ( yīn sī jūn xī fēi cè)	d	across flow tears . trickle rush
19	桂櫂兮蘭枻 ( guì zhào xī lǎn yì)	x	conceal consider lord . <i>make grieve</i>
20	斲冰兮積雪 ( zhuó bīng xī jī xuě)	d	cassia oar . orchid oar chop ice . store wipe-away
21	採蘋荔兮水中 ( cǎi pì lì xī shuǐ zhōng)	x	pick fig lychee . water in
22	搴芙蓉兮木末 ( qiān fú róng xī mù mò)	x	seize lotus . tree top
23	心不同兮媒勞 ( xīn bù tóng xī méi láo)	x	heart not-the same . matchmaker exhausted
24	恩不甚兮輕絕 ( ēn bù shèn xī qīng jué)	x	favour not very . light cut-short
25	石瀨兮淺淺 ( shí lài xī jiǎn jiǎn)	e	stone water-rush . shallow shallow
26	飛龍兮瀾翻 ( fēi lóng xī piān piān)	e	fly dragon . graceful graceful
27	交不忠兮怨長 ( jiāo bù zhōng xī yuàn cháng)	x	friendship not honest . elder complain
28	期不信兮告余以不聞 ( qī bù xìn xī gào yú yǐ bù wén)	e	period not confidence . denounce surplus because not leisure
29	鼙鼓兮江皋 ( zhāo chēng wǔ xī jiāng gāo)	x	<i>chariot</i> rush fast . river bank
30	夕陽兮北渚 ( xī yǎng xī běi zhǔ)	f	evening stop festival . north bank
31	鳥次兮屋上 ( niǎo cì xī wū shàng)	x	bird next . room upper
32	水周兮堂下 ( shuǐ zhōu xī táng xià)	x	river circuit . hall go-down
33	捐余玦兮江中 ( juān yú jué xī jiāng zhōng)	x	donate surplus jade-pendant . river in
34	遺余佩兮澧浦 ( yí yú pèi xī lǐ pǔ)	f	leave I wear . Li bank
35	采芳洲兮杜若 ( cǎi fāng zhōu xī dù ruò)	x	pick fragrant island . <i>lavander</i> seem
36	將以遺兮下女 ( jiāng yǐ wèi xī xià nǚ)	f	shall use . lower woman
37	言不可兮再得 ( shí bù kě xī zài dé)	x	<i>lost-moment</i> cannot . again have
38	聊逍遙兮容與 ( liáo xiāo yáo xī róng yǔ)	f	chat leisurely . together take-part-in

My lord, who does not come, is hesitant,  
and loath to leave — but why? — this island haunt.  
So beautiful my lady, delicate,  
that instantly I launch my cassia boat.

It's calm the Yuan and the Xiang should know:  
I tell the Yangtze then to ease its flow.

I look for him, my lord: he is not there.  
Why do I play — for whom — this panpipe air?  
I ride my flying dragons northwards; on  
10. to Dongting Lake my quest has gone.

My sail has melilot and fig-tree leaves,  
the flagpole, orchids and these irises,  
I scan the prospect northward to the Gen  
I cross the mighty river once again.

He can't, for all my magic, meet my eyes:  
my women, saddened by it, heave long sighs.  
For me, my tears stream down, there's no relief  
when all remembering must bring me grief.

With cassia oars, and orchid, still I go  
20. towards the hard, cold knock of ice and snow.

I scour the waters where the fig leaves float  
and pluck from treetops there the lotus growth.

When hearts are different-made, they will not meet,  
and love quick broken must be incomplete.  
If like a bouldery stream is showy love,  
the dragon, stern and graceful, hangs above.

Love unfaithful makes for bitterness —  
he has no time for meeting, nonetheless —  
my chariot hastes along the river's length,  
30. on evening's north bank rests its strength.

The homing birds in branches make their nest,  
but waters round the hall can never rest.  
Into their depths I toss my ring of jade,  
in Li's wide river mouth is pendant laid.

Lavender I'll pick. The fragrant isle  
will have my women scented all this while.  
Again the moment lost we'll never see  
but we can talk at length here openly.

Comment

When the Zhou empire decayed into princely states, that of Chu was particularly prosperous and encouraged popular religious songs that were collected under the title *Nine Songs*, becoming in time the model for a new genre. The following century saw Qu Yuan's *Lisao* (*Encountering Sorrows*), when an unmistakably personal elements enters Chinese poetry. {1}

Born in 340 BC, Qu Yuan was a poet and statesmen of the Chu state, who advocated alignment with other states as protection against the threatening Qin. Unfortunately, he was slandered by rival officials, who turned the king against these policies. When by trickery the Chu fell to the Qin, the much-loved Qu Yuan drowned himself, an event remembered today by the annual customs of rowing dragon boats and eating zongzi. Qu Yuan wrote some of the most famous poetry in Chinese history, which expressed his love for his kingdom and its future. He's actually thought to be the first poet in Chinese history to have his name attached to his works. His most famous work is *Li Sao*, "Encountering Sorrow," an exceptionally long poem of 350 lines and 2,400 characters. {4-5}

*Li Sao*, "Encountering Sorrow," an exceptionally long poem of 350 lines and 2,400 characters, in which the poet recounted his life, his beliefs and misfortunes. Riding on a rainbow chariot driven by dragons as white as jade, guarded by the god of wind, god of sun, and god of moon, he soared to heaven in search of his ideals, before being forced to leave his beloved Chu State. The poem is clearly allegorical. Fine birds and fragrant flowers equate to loyalty and steadfastness. Their opposite, slanderous and villainous people, are denoted by foul and ugly objects. Godly creatures speak for the monarch. Dragons, heavenly birds and phoenixes denote gentlemen. Clouds and whirlwinds refer to villains. {1}

The *Lisao* and the *Nine Songs* were novel in many ways. The lines are longer, often of six or seven characters, and use the character *xi* (兮), which doesn't mean much but may have served a musical purpose. The *Nine Songs*, polished up by Qu, were accepted, probably being performed in shamanistic rituals, but over *Lisao* there was much more controversy, some recognising its greatness, others seeing it as personal vanity expressed in a poetic language inflated with 'empty words'. Poem 2A duplicates the 'rhyming couplets' of the original, but the *Lisao* tends to rhyme abab, and the character *xi* (兮) has moved to the line end. {1}

The *Nine Songs* probably originated as shamanistic rituals, and were accepted as such. For this reason, I've emphasized the echo of couplets in the original's rhyme scheme (in this section aaba xbxx xcac fcgg edxd xxxx eexe xfx xfx xf) by rhyming aa bb, etc. throughout, but the original is in fact more varied. A caesura after the third stress echoes the line structure: I scan the prospect northward | **to** the **Cen** / I cross the mighty river | **once again**.

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## Other Translations

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## 10. SAO POETRY: To the Nation's War Dead

Number 10 in the *Nine Songs*, itself the second of 17 sections assembled as *Songs of Chu or Songs of the South*.

Line	Traditional Chinese	Pinyin		Word for Word
	國殤	guó shāng		country war-dead
1	操吳戈兮被犀甲	cāo wú gē xī bèi xī jiǎ ,	x	grasp wu spear/ cover rhinoceros hide
2	車轆轤兮短兵接	chē cuò gǔ xī duǎn bīng jiē 。	x	chariot grind wheel/ short weapon meet
3	旌蔽日兮敵若雲	jīng bì rì xī dí ruò yún ,	x	banner cover sun/ enemy seem cloud
4	矢墜兮士爭先	shǐ jiǎo zhuì xī shì zhēng xiān	x	arrow deliver fall/ soldier strive-for first
5	凌余陣兮躐余行	líng yú zhèn xī liè yú xíng ,	x	approach remainder wave/ cross remainder go
6	左騶躐兮右刃傷	zuǒ cān yì xī yòu rèn shāng 。	x	left outside-horse exterminate/ right blade-edge injure
7	霾兩輪兮繫四馬	mái liǎng lún xī zhì sì mǎ ,	x	haze both exterminate/ tie-up four horse
8	援玉枹兮擊鼙鼓	yuán yù 枹 xī jī míng gǔ 。	a	help jade oak/ strike cry drum
9	天時懃兮威靈怒	tiān shí duì xī wēi líng nù ,	a	heaven hour hate/ power spirit anger
10	嚴殺盡兮棄原野	yán shā jìn xī qì yuán yě 。	x	stern kill exhaust/ abandon former field
11	出不入兮往不反	chū bù rù xī wǎng bù fǎn ,	x	produce not join/ go-to not return
12	平原忽兮路超遠	píng yuán hū xī lù chāo yuǎn	x	peace former neglect/ journey exceeding distance
13	帶長劍兮挾秦弓	dài cháng jiàn xī xié qín gōng	c	band chief sword/ clasp Qin bow
14	首身離兮心不懲	shǒu shēn lí xī xīn bù chěng	x	head body leave/ intention not punish
15	懲既勇兮又以武	chéng jì yǒng xī yòu yǐ wǔ	a	punish already brave/ also according-to Wu
16	終剛強兮不可凌	zhōng gāng qiáng xī bù kě líng	b	finish strong compel/ not can insult
17	身既死兮神以靈	shēn jì sǐ xī shén yǐ líng	b	body already die/ soul by-means-of spirit
18	魂瑩毅兮為鬼雄	hún yì gǐ xī wéi guǐ xióng	c	soul soul resolute/ become ghost grand

We warriors move as one great tide  
of battering shield and toughened hide.  
The closing chariot wheels afford  
no shelter from the stabbing sword.  
Over us unfettered banners run,  
and blotted out like clouds the sun.  
And thick the air with arrows still:  
all press, regardless, to the kill.

5. Our battle order breaks, is lost  
and troops, disordered, count the cost.  
Our left horse whinnies and is dead  
the right one flounders on instead.

The shattered chariot mass now reels,  
    each locked and tangled in the wheels,  
Then sound of jade sticks whirling comes  
    with harsh, reverberating battle drums.

The War God has an angry eye,  
    on combatants here soon to die.  
10. Sober killing is the yield  
    on this exhausting battle field.  
So went young hearts that hope and yearn  
    but are not fated to return:  
beneath a mute, unfriendly sky  
    in scattered, far-off fields they lie.

Across dropped swords the battle flows,  
    abandoned, too, the long Qin bows.  
Though heads from bodies hacked and gone  
    still their bravery is fighting on:  
the God of Wu himself approves  
    how spirit in still bodies moves,  
that nothing dishonourable condemn  
    our admiration owed to them.

Decayed their bodies: mightier still  
    is that indomitable fighting will,  
when soul on soul, by valour led,  
    exults among the hallowed dead.

#### Comment

Under today's pronunciation, this poem is unrhymed, but there is more than a suggestion of aa bb couplets in jiǎ jiē yún xiān, etc.

There are many popular tales of martial heroes, but Chinese literature does not glorify war, nor usually celebrate its generals in the way we think of Marlborough or Napoleon. One exception is the poem here, which comes from the 'Nine Songs' collection, possibly dating from end of the Period of Warring States. The piece is well known to western readers, and has been widely translated. Again this features the internal placing of the character *xí* (兮), but is clearly an altogether different poem from the delicate and melancholic 2A, and requires a different treatment. I have split the seven character lines into tetrameters, adding end-rhyme for shaping purposes. The original uses assonance more and much internal rhyme.

It is difficult to exaggerate the violence of these times, aptly called the Period of the Warring States, when all inhabitants of enemy towns and cities, women and children included, were commonly massacred. Shi Huangdi, the ruler of the successful Qin state, waded through horrific bloodshed to create the first Chinese empire. In 293 BC he defeated the Han and Wei kingdoms, taking 240,000 heads in the process, and then another 150,000 in a subsequent campaign. In 260 BC he defeated the Chao, taking as bounty another 400,000 heads. Those same methods he used to centralise the empire he had created, but the peasant founder of the subsequent Han dynasty, who took the title of Gaozu (r.202-195 BC) also kept power firmly in his own hands. Most Chinese were simple farmers, unconcerned by power struggles, but poets were often attached to courts, and these could be perilous positions.

The strong-willed Empress Lu took control when her husband Gaozu died, for example, promoting her relatives to positions of power, but when in time the Empress died wide swathes of those relatives and their families were executed. Wang Mang usurped the throne in 9 BC, imposed policies that displaced peasants and landlords, and was himself overthrown in AD 25, with the bloodshed of civil war. The bureaucratic machinery of government, which served China for two millennia, was not always benign, therefore, and poets who graced one administration could find themselves exiled to the far provinces in the next. Many left voluntarily, disheartened by the incessant struggles for wealth and influence.

The poem can be rendered in hexameters:

We grasp our battle spears, we don our toughened hide;  
the chariot wheels get tangled, short sword hacks at sword;  
banners blot out sun, fume hides the foeman ranks,  
but thick the arrows fall, each soldier pressing on.

The lines of men approach, encounter, break across.  
The left-hand horse is killed, the right encounters blade:  
and in that haze is death, confused as men with horse,  
but jade the drumsticks drumming, war-cries that they yell.

Heaven decides their hour, the vengeful spirits choose,  
and men, exhausted, die on that fierce killing field.  
They went with one intent but will not so return,  
but lie at peace, neglected, vast distances away.

The chieftain clasps his sword, the archers their Qin bows,  
though head from body severed, their spirit yet survives.  
Brave as each one was, as the God of War repeats,  
here their compelling going, which no one can impugn.

In body they are dead, but spirit-enfabled souls  
but stand more resolute, ghosts clamour in our ears.

But a fuller and more pleasing rendering employs tetrameters: early draft:

We warriors move as one great tide  
of battering shield and toughened hide.  
The chariot axles smash and grate  
as stabbing short-sword meet their mate.  
Over us unfurling banner run,  
like clouds is blotted out the sun.  
And thick the air with arrows still,  
all press, regardless, to the kill.

Our battle order breaks, is lost  
and troops, disordered, mounting cost.  
Our right horse whinnies and is dead  
the left one flounders on instead.  
The shattered chariot mass now reels,  
each locked and tangled in the wheels,  
And all about us, slowly comes  
the harsh, reverberating battle drums.

The War God has an angry eye,  
all combatants are now to die.  
Gore and horror is the yield  
on this forlorn, hard battle field.  
So went young hearts that hope and yearn  
but never more will now return,  
Beneath a mute, unfriendly sky  
in distant, scattered fields they lie.

And so the tide of battle flows  
across discarded swords and bows,  
so are their severed bodies still  
with heads and limbs to feel night's chill.  
And each a brother, kinsman, friend  
who bravely went to meet their end,  
and that the unafraid exult  
no later words of ours insult.

Though bodies to the ground have gone:  
we feel the spirit flooding on,  
and soul on soul, by valour led,  
at length attain the hallowed dead.

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### 3.5 Fu Poetry

Fu poetry, which is variously translated as ‘rhapsody’, ‘rhyme-prose’ or ‘poetic description’, has no counterpart in English. Gufu, or ancient style fu, is poetry in a splendidly ornate style, with lines of unequal length, a mixture of rhymed and unrhymed passages, much parallelism and antithesis, elaborate description, hyperbole, repetition in synonyms, often ending in a moral precept. Its mature form became important in the former Han dynasty (206BC-8AD), from which it branched into various types in the later Han (25-220 AD), from something more personal when scholar-officials felt unappreciated by their contemporaries into forms like yongwu, which are short, descriptive poems on plants, animals, household objects and the like.

The piece translated below is part of a poem entitled *Fu on the Imperial Park* by Sima Xiangru, an official charged by the Emperor Wudi (r.140-87 AD) to provide such poetry to his court. The poem is a long one, and takes the form of a debate between three personages. Sir Vacuous represents the Chou as an emissary to Qi. Master Improbable represents the Qi. Both describe their hunting parks in lavish terms. Lord-Such, the third protagonist, describes the wonders of the Emperor’s Shanglin Park, and it is section three of that description which is translated here.

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# 11. FU POETRY: Sima Xiangru: Fu on the Imperial Park: Extract III

## Cai 3.1

Line	Traditional Chinese (Pinyin)	Rhyme	Word-for-Word Rendering
	上林賦 (shànglín fù)		Shanglin Fu
108	於是乎崇山嶺巒 (yú shì hū chóng shān chù chù)	a	in are in high mountain high high
109	龍崖聳巍 (lóng sǒng cuī wéi)	x	steep precipitous towering
110	深林巨木 (shēn lín jù mù)	a	deep forest immense
111	巖巖參差 (chán yán cēn cī)	b	high rock participating-in uneven
112	九嶷巖巖 (jiǔ yí zā è)	x	Juizong <i>sheer</i> high
113	南山岷峨 (nán shān é é)	c	South Mountains lofty lofty
114	巖地駢崎 (yán dì pián qí)	b	rock hill-side earthenware cauldron
115	摧裂岷崎 (cuī wēi jué qí)	b	break <i>jagged steep</i> mountainous
116	振發通谷 (zhèn fā tōng gǔ)	a	vibrate rivulet go-through valley
117	蹇若溝澗 (jiǎn ruò gōu juàn)	g	slow produce gully ditch
118	豁牙豁閘 (huō yá huō zhā)	x	opening oh! opening
119	阜陵別鳴 (fù líng bié máng)	x	mound hill separate <i>isle</i>
120	巖巖岩塊 (wēi kuí tiáo huì)	f	precipitous rocky lofty-peak
121	丘墟堀壘 (qiū xū jué lěi)	e	hillock hole
122	隱巖巖巖 (yǐn yán yán yán)	e	secret rumbling mythical-bird
123	登陔施靡 (dēng gāi shī mǐ)	b	rise fall give waste
124	陂池埒埒 (pí chí liè liè)	f	reservoir pond <i>levels out</i>
125	允溶空羈 (yǔn róng kōng jī)	a	allow dissolve excess <i>flood</i>
126	散煥夷陸 (sǎn huàn yí lù)	a	scatter dissipate raze land
127	亭皋千里 (tíng gāo qiān lǐ)	f	erect marsh thousand li

128	靡不被築 (mǐ bú bèi zhù)	a	waste not <i>tamped smooth</i>
129	揜以綠蕙 (yǎn yǐ lǜ huì)	f	cover-up by-means-of <i>green patchouli</i>
130	被以江離 (bèi yǐ jiāng lí)	b	cover by-means-of <i>lovage shoots</i>
131	糝以靡蕪 (sǎn yǐ mí wú)	g	mix by-means-of millet weeds
132	雜以留夷 (zá yǐ liú yí)	b	<i>strewn with peonies</i>
133	布結縷 (bù jié lǜ)	g	spread knot thread
134	攢異莎 (cuán yì suō)	k	<i>clustered green galangale</i>

135	揭車衡蘭 (jiē chē héng lán)	h	<i>cart-halt, asarum bugleweed</i>
136	橐本射干 (tōu běn shè gān)	h	<i>Sichuan-lovage blackberry-lily</i>
137	芷薑藁荷 (zhǐ jiāng gǎo hé)	c	<i>purple-ginger mioga-ginger</i>
138	歲時若蓀 (suì shí ruò sūn)	x	<i>winter-cherry ground-cherry polia sweet-flag</i>
139	鮮支黃礫 (xiān zhī huáng lì)	f	<i>malabar-spinach virgin's-bower</i>
140	蔣茅青蘋 (jiāng máo qīng fán)	h	<i>water-bamboo burreed tuber, green sedge</i>
141	布澗芴澤 (bù huàn fú zé)	c	spread <i>sprawl</i> big damp
142	延曼太原 (yán màn tài yuán)	h	extend large great level

143	離靡黃衍 (lí mí guǎng yǎn)	x	<i>over plain</i> extravagant spread-out
144	應風披靡 (yīng fēng pī mí)	b	<i>bent blown</i> swept-up by-wind
145	吐芳鬱烈 (tǔ fāng yáng liè)	j	throw-up fragrant intense
146	有陶蔚菲 (yù yù fēi fēi)	x	dense dense fragrant fragrant
147	歟香發越 (zhòng xiāng fā yuè)	j	<i>issue forth</i> aromatic exceeding
148	脍馨布寫 (xì xiāng bù xiě)	j	scatter <i>permeating everything</i>
149	掩薏以菲 (yǎn ài bí bó)	k	hide fragrant luxuriant-growth
	於是乎周旋口觀 (yú wū shì hū zhōu fàn guān)	-	Oh! is because complete take-control-of
	繽紛卉芬 (zhēn fēn gá hū)	-	in-profusion dense crush together
	芒芒况忽 (máng máng hū hū)	-	grass bristle suddenly overlook
150	視之無端 (shì zhī wú duān)	h	look-at of has-no origin
151	察之無涯 (chá zhī wú yá)	x	examine of not limit
152	日出東沼 (rì chū dōng zhǎo)	x	sun rise east pond
153	入壑西坡 (rù hū xī bēi)	x	enter exhale west pond-bank
154	其南則 (qí nán zé)	c	it south then
155	隆冬生長 (lóng dōng shēng zhǎng)	x	mid-winter grow increase
156	涌水躍波 (yǒng shuǐ yuè bō)	k	bubble water leap ripple

157	其嚙則 (qí shòu zé)	c	such <i>animals</i> follow
158	庸旒莫犖 (yōng liú mò lí)	b	<i>zebu grunting-ox</i> tapir yak
159	沈牛塵麋 (chén niú zhū mí)	b	<i>plunging</i> bull stag <i>elaphure</i>
160	赤首圓蹄 (chì shǒu yuán tí)	b	red head <i>round hoof</i>
161	窮奇象犀 (qióng qí xiàng xī)	b	extremely wonderful elephant rhinoceros
162	其北則 (qí běi zé)	c	such north follow
163	盛夏含凍裂地 (shèng xià hán dòng liè dì)	f	mid summer keep crack ground
164	涉水揭河 (shè bīng jiē hé)	c	wade ice expose river
165	其嚙則 (qí shòu zé)	c	such <i>animals</i> follow
166	麒麟角端 (qí lín juéduān)	h	Chinese unicorn <i>horn-snout</i>
167	駝駝橐駝 (táo tú tuó tuó)	k	<i>tarpan</i> , hump-backed camel
168	蛩蛩駞駞 (qióng qióng diān xī)	b	cricket grasshopper horse
169	駝馬盧盧 (jué tí lú lú)	k	<i>hinny ass mule</i>

The mountains soar, high towering hence  
from rims of over-bearing cliffs,  
110. below are forests, dark, immense,  
athwart the rock falls, savage rifts.

The Juizong reaches to the skies,  
and Southern Mountains rise and rise,  
hill slopes sheer as cauldron sides  
115. show mountainous and sharp divides.

Rivulets thin-tremble here, collect  
to run through valleys, and elect  
to take the course that opens wide  
past hillocks islanded, and cliffs  
120. ascending into clouded peaks.  
By hillocks and by secret caves  
the river rumbles, shouts and raves,  
and bursts out into rocky wastes.

Vast lakes it fills and levels out,  
125. submerging banks at every hand  
and thus effacing all the land  
till one great marsh lies miles about.

The hillocky remains unsmoothed  
but green the ground with patchouli.  
130. Or carpeted with lovage leaves  
and millet too, whose tufted heads  
will bristle round the peonies,  
and here are spreading knot-weed threads

The galingale here also grows,  
135. and cart-halt, asarum, bugleweed.  
Wild blackberry lilies and lovage seed  
with purple and mioga ginger,  
and pollia, cherries, scented flag,  
rich spinach and the virgin's bower ,  
140. water bamboo, tubers and green sedge  
and marshy places interfinger.

While all around, a vast expanse  
of lush and green extravagance,  
is bent and blown back by the wind  
145 that's filled with fragrance, wafting there  
such heavy perfumes, strong and sweet  
that, permeating everything,  
impart a sensuous longing to the air,  
encouraging luxuriant growth.

And so bewilderment, an overwhelming rich profusion, all so pressed together of  
the senses, of smell and sight and touch.

150. Look at it, it has no start;  
examine it: it has no end.  
The sun that lights the eastern pool  
will set upon the western bank.  
And in the furthest south  
155 the deepest winter show some growth  
and water bubbles, is alive.

Here the animals  
are zebu, yak, the tapir, ox,  
the plunging bull and various deer,  
160. the red-head, round-hoof, heavy boss  
of elephant, rhinoceros.  
and north, at intervals,

where summer is but freezing cold:  
and water's sunk in icy ground.  
165. these animals are found:  
the horn-snout and the unicorn.  
The camel and the wild horse rule,  
Tibetan and Mongolian ass,  
the hinny and domestic mule.

## Comment

Like most things Chinese, the term Fu is used rather variously, and though best known in the Han as the ancient style Fu, the style was written right through imperial times when something in the nature of a tribute was intended. Some poems of the Shijing were even termed Fu.

Nonetheless, it is in the early Han dynasty that Fu achieved its greatest effects and popularity. It was written, for example, by Jia Yi, on his way to exile when he composed 'Lament for Qu Yuan', and again prior to recall in 'Owl'. When Emperor Wu came to the throne in 141 BC, he summoned the greatest Fu writers, and among many pieces presented to court were the 'Seven Stimuli', admonitions against over-indulgence, and Sima Xiangru's Fu on the Imperial Park. Later reigns saw Yang Xiong's more moralistic poems.

At their most characteristic, Fu poems fused entertainment and oral instruction in exuberant demonstrations of poetic licence. Later poets toned down the excesses, believing that the extended rhetorical arguments and complex vocabulary of the grand style only intoxicated their audiences, losing them in the beauty of the language to the marked detriment of the message.

In this excerpt from Fu on the Imperial Park, I have replicated the rhyme scheme but substituted 'miles' for li, though the latter generally measured a third of a mile.

Much of the beauty of original Chinese evades any English rendering, of course, and there are always celebrated lines, of great resonance to the Chinese, which become the mundane or downright ugly in literal translation, a consideration which I hope explains my quest throughout for literary quality rather than scholarly exactness, though this particular rendering is close, as all are unless otherwise designated.

The main points to be noticed are the richness of description coupled with exact terminology. Chinese flower paintings, most of which surviving are no earlier than the Qing, also show this rich exactitude.

Everything is faithfully painted — leaf, stalk, veins, flower head, associated butterflies, leaves in decay and half-eaten by insects — but the spatial design is superb and whole effect exceptionally refined. The Chinese, said Bertram Russell, aim to be reasonable in life and exquisite in their art, a maxim worth remembering in poetry translation.

Today we prize novelty in art and audacious theory, but the Chinese did not, and indeed were rather contemptuous of foreign notions of progress, most unwisely so in the face of gunboat policy and their 'century of humiliation'. But that more cyclical view of history, where the arts continually return to extract greater depth and richness from earlier models, is surely one escape from today's obsessive preoccupation with novelty, with change for the sake of change. Art is not science, but more a continued refinement in our search for understanding and expression of man's fundamental nature.

Where the dictionary turns up nothing, or nothing sensible, I have adopted Professor Knechtges' interpretations (Cai Pp. 59-83). {1} These renderings are shown in italics in the wor-for-word table above.

Designed to celebrate the wealth and prestige of the emperor Wudi, this poem is probably as close to the epic as Chinese poetry comes. Shanglin Park was one of many notable accomplishments by Wudi, a place filled with exotic plants, creatures and precious objects, which also served for imperial hunts and military displays.

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### 3.7 Yuefu Poetry: Music Bureau Poems

The poetry of the Han Dynasty was diverse. In addition to the Sao and Fu poems, written by court officials and the literati, there were poems termed Yuefu or Music Bureau Poems.

Yuefu means folk ballads, and from the 5<sup>th</sup> century was a term applied to all poetry of this singing style, Han or later. The Tang poet Li Bai would sometimes adopt this style, for example. The Music Bureau was something different, a government department charged with collecting popular songs from the countryside, both to keep an eye on what was being said, and to entertain the court aristocracy, the songs no doubt being polished up a little. The Music Bureau was firmly established in the Han dynasty, but, in fact, as archeological finds indicate, goes back at least to the Qin dynasty.

Music Bureau Poems form two distinct groups. The first are ceremonial and sacrificial hymns, generally written in four-character lines and certainly dating from the Han, probably the Eastern (earlier) Han. The language was somewhat archaic, and specialists can differ on their interpretation of lines. These poems were clearly a continuation of the earlier Shijing Odes and Hymns, and did not much influence later poetry. I have translated only one (4A) to illustrate their form.

The second group is much more varied, in style, themes and language. They were probably collected or written in the Western Han, but may include a few later pieces. The themes tend to be more personal, often narratives, and pentasyllabic lines become more popular. Nonetheless many poems have lines of unequal length, which is (confusingly) a feature of the much later Ci Poetry. To add to interpretation troubles, Yuefu poems were collected by a Guo Maoqian in the twelfth century and grouped under twelve musical categories, although the associated tunes had long been lost by then.

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12. YUE FU: Anonymous: Eastern Han. Songs to Pacify the World, for Inside the Palace, No. 3. Cai C4.2. [HS 22.1047]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
1	我定曆數 (wǒ dìng lì shù)	x	I set calendar number
2	人告其心 (rén gào qí xīn)	a	person set my mind
3	敕身齊戒 (chì shēn qí jiè)	x	imperial-orders conduct all-together exhort
4	施教申申 (shī jiào shēn shēn)	x	bestow teach repeat repeat
5	乃立祖廟 (nǎi lì zǔ miào)	x	thus stand ancestor temple/shrine
6	敬明尊親 (jìng míng zūn qīn)	a	respect bright senior parent
7	大矣孝熙 (dà yǐ xiào xī)	x	great (is) filial-piety splendid
8	四極爰臻 (sì jí yuán zhēn)*	x	four pole therefore (arrive)

\* 臻 is not in online dictionaries. Jui-Lung Su {1} gives zhēn (arrive), which I accept here.

Comment

A word needs to be said about Chinese temples and temple worship. The temples are quite unlike mosques or churches, and often consist of many buildings set in the middle of towns or in auspicious locations on mountains and hills, tucked in among the trees. There can be shrines, rooms and/or large halls, often orientated on north-south axes. Pagodas can be adjuncts to temples, or temples in their own right, open to access or closed. Traditional temples had characteristically shaped and roofs, tiled green or yellow, and sat atop eaves decorated with religious figures and good luck symbols. The roofs are often supported on magnificently carved and decorated beams, which in turn are supported by intricately carved stone dragon pillars.

Being so often a blend of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and folk traditions, Chinese religion involves many different practices and associated paraphernalia: spirit tablets, shrine and altars with inscriptions honouring ancestors, gods, and other important figures. Often two tablets are made, one of paper and one of wood, a ceremony transferring the ancestor's spirit from one to another. There are ceremonies where prayers are said and joss sticks burned. Less formal are the many spirit tablets devoted to the host of deities that preside over the cosmos, which are placed in temples or wayside shrines. {3}

We who set the calendar  
inform our subjects what will be:  
imperial orders that together  
Teach profound humility.

This temple to our parents stands,  
respectful of our ancestry,  
and great the filial piety  
from all quarters flooded here.

#### Text Sources

Jui-Lung Su. Shi Poetry: Music Bureau Poems (Yuefu) in Cai, Z-Q. (2008). How to Read Chinese Poetry. Columbia University Press Pp. 86-7.

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13. YUE FU POETRY: Anon. There's One I Think About  
Cai C4.6 [SS 22.642]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	有所思 (yǒu suǒ sī)		exist actually think
1	有所思 (yǒu suǒ sī)	a	exist actually think
2	乃在大海南 (nǎi zài dà hǎi nán)	b	thus in large sea south
3	何用問遺君 (hé yòng wèn yí jūn)	x	how use ask lose lord
4	雙珠翡翠簪 (shuāng zhū dài mào zān)	b	two pearl tortoiseshell jade hairpin
5	用玉篸線之 (yòng yù shàn liáo zhī)	a	employ jade continue wind-round (of it)
6	聞君有白心 (wén jūn yǒu tà xīn)	x	hear lord have it heart
7	拉雜摧燒之 (lā zá cuī shāo zhī)	a	drag mix break burn (of it)
8	摧燒之 (cuī shāo zhī)	a	break burn (of it)
9	當風颺其灰 (dāng fēng yáng qí huī)	a	match wind scatter its ash
10	從今以往 (cóng jīn yǐ wǎng)	x	from today in-the-past
11	勿復相思 (wù fù xiāng sī)	a	not again mutually consider
12	相思與君絕 (xiāng sī yǔ jūn jué)	x	yearn and lord cut-short
13	雞鳴狗吠 (jī míng gǒu fèi)	x	fowl cry dog bark
14	兄嫂當知之 (xiōng sǎo dāng zhī zhī)	a	elder-brother-and-wife ought know (of it)
15	妃呼唏 (fēi hū xī)	a	imperial concubine cry
16	秋風肅晨風颺 (qiū fēng sù sù chén fēng tiáo)	x	autumn wind solemn solemn morning cool-breeze
17	東方須臾高知之 (dōng fāng xū yú gāo zhī zhī)	a	east direction quickly high tall know (of it)

I was to love you, live as well  
a long way south of that great sea,  
accept your gifts most happily —  
that hairpin with the two white pearls,  
and fashioned out of tortoiseshell,  
a jade to sheave my hair, to show it well —  
but heard your heart had changed to me:

At which I break the hairpin, have it cast  
to bits and bits of scattered ash:  
I stamp it under foot, and dash  
all memory of what is past.

Let's together make our mark,  
and have all yearning cut off short,  
chickens cackle, dogs to bark.

And elder brother will be told  
inlaws also and their daughters:  
outrage in the women's quarters.

That news is on the autumn wind,  
by morning's solemn breezes blown,  
when speedily the eastern dawn  
illuminates, makes all things known.

## Comment

The poem comes from the Guchui qu ci (Lyrics for Drum and Pipe Songs) as is exceptionally outspoken for fifth century China: it may have started life as a folk song which was then polished up by the literati. Not until line 3, which uses the jūn denoting male in classical Chinese, is the speaker identified as a woman. That line would read as 'What shall I send you?' but 何用 (hé yòng in Han times generally meant 'why should'. {3} The Chinese of line 13 is particularly rustic, though gǒu for dog is not used until the Han. The last two characters of line 16 are commonly read as 'sparrow hawk shrieks', but 'news cool autumn breeze' would be the more conventional interpretation. Whatever the correct reading, it's clear that this is not a casual affair lightly broken off, but a betrayal of trust and convention, with ominous consequences. {2} The allusions to imperial concubines suggest that the speaker has some status, and is not someone to be trifled with.

At this point appreciation has to stop. As usual in poetry of this period, unknown as to author and intention, however interpreted in later dynasties, further analysis is only speculation, which only hampers translation.

I was to love you and to dwell  
a long way south of that great sea,  
accept your gifts most gratefully —  
those two white pearls that formed  
    a hairpin made of tortoiseshell,  
a jade to bind my hair and bind it well —  
but you've some other love, it's come to me:

At which I break the hairpin, have it cast  
to bits and bits of scattered ash:  
I break and spurn this bit of trash,  
to make you truly of the past.

Let's together make our mark,  
have all such yearning cut off short,  
chickens cackle, dogs to bark.

And elder brother will be told  
    inlaws also and their daughters:  
trouble in the women's quarters.

That news is on the autumn wind,  
    by morning's solemn breezes blown:  
it comes as light illuminates  
    the eastern dawn and all's made known.

In thought of one I was to dwell:  
far, far south of that great sea  
and though I'd not ungrateful be —  
two white pearls there were,  
    and fashioned with the tortoiseshell,  
a jade to braid my hair and show it well —  
some other love you have has come to me:

At which I break the hairpin, have it cast  
to bits and bits of scattered ash:  
I break and burn this bit of trash:  
you're well and truly of the past.

Mutually let's make our mark,  
have all such yearning cut off short,  
chickens cackle, dogs to bark.

And elder brother will be told  
    inlaws also and their daughters:  
what cries to come from women's quarters.

That news is on the autumn wind,  
    by morning's solemn breezes blown:  
it comes as light illuminates  
    the eastern dawn and all is known.

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#### 14. YUEFU: Anonymous: Chengnan South

	Traditional Chinese and (pinyin)		Word-for-Word Renderin
	战城南 (zhàn chéng nán)		war city (Chengnan) south
1	去年征战, (qù nián zhēng zhàn)	a	last year expedition war
2	桑干之源; (sāng gān zhī yuán)	b	Sang Gan of source
3	今年转战, (jīn nián zhuǎn zhàn)	a	this year turn war
4	葱河之畔。(cōng hé zhī pàn)	a	Cong river of edge
5	条支海中, (tiáo zhī hǎi zhōng)	x	Tiao zhi sea in
6	兵器洗刷; (bīng qì xǐ shuā)	x	weapons wash brush
7	天山草原, (tiān shān cǎo yuán)	b	Tian shan grass level
8	牧放战马。(mù fàng zhàn mǎ)	x	herd place warhorse
9	不远万里, (bù yuǎn wàn lǐ)	c	not distant ten-thousand li
10	来此征战; (lái cǐ zhēng zhàn)	a	arrive these campaigns
11	三军将士, (sān jūn jiāng shì)	c	all-ranks soldiers-and-men
12	辛苦万端。(xīn kǔ wàn duān)	b	exhausting ten-thousand end
13	耗尽青春, (hào jìn qīng chūn)	x	consume exhaust youth joy
14	心衰力竭; (xīn shuāi lì jié)	x	intention wane force exhaust
15	杀戮掠夺; (shā lù lüè duó)	x	murder massacre plunder seize
16	匈奴大业。(xiōng nú dà yè)	x	Xiong nu great undertaking
17	古今将士, (gǔ jīn jiāng shì)	c	then-and-now officers-and-men
18	数量巨大; (shù liáng jù dà)	x	number quantity immense
19	战死荒漠, (zhàn sǐ huāng mò)	x	fight die desolate barren
20	白骨黄沙。(bái gǔ huáng shā)	x	white bone yellow sand
21	秦筑长城, (qín zhù cháng chéng)	f	Qin build great wall
22	防御胡人; (fáng yù hú rén)	d	guard-against defend non-Han person
23	延至汉代, (yán zhì hàn dài)	x	protect until Han dynasty
24	烽火仍焚。(fēng huǒ réng fén)	d	fire beacon still burn
25	烽火一起, (fēng huǒ yī qǐ)	c	beacon-fire urgent all-same-place
26	燃无尽时, (rán wú jìn shí)	g	burn not exhausted time
27	战事同样, (zhàn shì tóng yàng)	e	hostilities like same
28	结束无期。(jié shù wú qī)	g	finish indefinitely
29	荒野战斗, (huāng yě zhàn dòu)	x	wilderness battle
30	残酷无穷; (cán kù wú qióng)	x	cruelty boundless
31	战败马匹, (zhàn bài mǎ pǐ)	c	lose war horse mate
32	战场悲鸣。(zhàn chǎng bēi míng)	x	battle-field utter-sad-call
33	主人早被, (zhǔ rén zǎo bèi)	x	master person early/morning quilt/cover
34	喂了鸦鹗; (wèi liǎo yā jù)	x	feed finish crow vulture
35	肠子挂上, (cháng zǐ guà shàng)	e	intestines hang on
36	枯树枝头。(kū shù zhī tóu)	x	dried-up tree branch head
37	士卒惨烈, (shì zú cǎn liè)	x	soldier die miserable fierce
		f	not meaning sacrifice-life

38	无谓牺牲; (wú wèi xī shēng)	g	general come-to-end one not-have according-to-abilities
38	将军到头; (jiāng jūn dào tóu)	f	
39	一无所能; (yī wú suǒ néng)		
40			
41	战争绝非; (zhàn zhēng jué fēi)	x	war strive-for absolutely not good action one stake virtue monarch be-compelled employ his attack defence
42	好事一桩; (hǎo shì yī zhuāng)	h	
43	德君被迫; (dé jūn bèi pò)	x	
44	用其攻防; (yòng qí gōng fáng)	h	

All last year our fighting traced  
the San Gang River to its source,  
and this year we have fought on banks  
along the River Cong's far course.

By the sea of Tiaozhi  
we scoured our armour, shield and sword:  
We fed our horses on the grass  
the plains of Tienshan afford.

No thousand li were journeyings  
but prompt to battle once again:  
all ranks of soldiers were inured  
to long exhaustion and to pain.

So lost was youth's inherent joy,  
in hurts no bodies can sustain:  
bloodshed, massacre, and plundering:  
against the Huns, a hard campaign.

Uncounted officers and men,  
immense the numbers in these lands  
of deserts and of barren wastes  
where bones are lost to yellow sands.

It was the Qin with their great wall  
against invaders from the north,  
and from the dynasty of Han  
would the beacon fires go forth.

And all at once and everywhere  
the warnings seem as half-begun:  
inexhaustible the greed of war,  
and fighting that is never done.

Always battle, wilderness  
with new barbarities unloosed:  
on far battlefields the horse  
whinny they are badly used.

As for masters, they are fed  
to crows and vultures: here one sees  
intestines, carcasses and head  
on dried-up branches of the trees.

All soldiers here die miserably,  
all sacrifices are in vain,  
and generals' best abilities  
will not secure a lasting gain.

War's perpetual, absolute,  
has no limits, has no end,  
and even the most virtuous emperor  
attacks when he should more defend.

#### Comment

The rhyming above is rather notional, given vowel changes since.

One of many poems lamenting the hardship of a frontier soldier's life, its unending pointlessness and danger of dying in far off places where no descendants would venerate the ancestor.

These frontier wars were unfortunately necessary, to keep the western trade routes open to the Kushan and Parthian Empires with their ready supplies of horses, and, more particularly, to bring the fight to the enemy, those steppeland peoples continually threatening China's northern and western borders. The Qin emperor built the Great Wall, and sent 100,000 soldiers against them in 213 BC. The early Han emperors tried to but them off with generous gifts and even princesses as barbarian brides, but appeasement rarely worked for long. In 166 BC, some 160,000 horsemen raided deep into China, coming within 100 miles of the capital. Wu Di, the energetic and long-lived emperor took the offensive, sending 300,000 troops far into Xiongnu territory in 133 BC, and over 100,000 men in 124, 123 and 119, securing territories as far west as Kashgar and Yarkand. The Xiongnu threat retreated after their confederation broke up in 55 BC, but these central Asia territories were lost in the An Lushan Rebellion. {3}

Drafts:

Last year our expedition traced  
the San Gang River to its source:  
and this year we have fought on banks  
of the River Cong's long course.

By the far-off Tiaozhi Sea  
we scoured our weapons after fights:  
We grazed our horses on the grass  
that grows on Tianshan Mountain heights.

No thousand li journeyings  
but back to battle once again:  
all ranks of soldiers were inured  
to long exhaustion and to pain.

And so expended youth's first joy,  
and what no body can sustain:  
bloodshed, massacre, plundering spent  
upon the Xiongnu's long campaign.

Uncounted officers and men,  
immense the numbers in these lands  
of deserts and of barren wastes  
their white bones rot in yellow sands.

It was the Qin with their great wall  
against invaders from the north,  
and from the dynasty of Han  
still the beacon flames go forth

And all at once and everywhere  
the beacons and the warnings run,  
inexhaustible the greed of war,  
hostilities are never done.

Always battle, wilderness  
such the cruelties unloosed,  
and on lost battlefields the horse  
whimper all are badly used.

Their masters are unhorsed and fed  
to crows and vultures: one sees  
intestines, carcasses and head  
on dried-up branches of the trees.

All soldiers here die miserably,  
their sacrifices are in vain,  
and even generals' best abilities  
do not achieve a lasting gain.

War's perpetual, absolute,  
has no limits, has no end,  
and even the most virtuous emperor  
attacks when he should more defend.

#### Comment

The Sanggan river lies 60 miles south of present-day Datong in Shanxi province. The Conghe is in Xinjiang. Conghe, Tiaozhi and Tianshan were frontier posts. Kites feed off carrion. The Qin emperor Shihuang sent Meng Tian north to build the Great Wall that would keep out the Xiongnu (barbarians).

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## 15. YUE FU POETRY: Cai Yong (132-92) Watering Horses at Long Wall Hole

	Traditional Chinese		
	飲馬長城窟行		drink great wall hole row
1	青青河畔草 (qīng qīng hé pàn cǎo)	a	green green river edge grass
2	綿綿思遠道 (mián mián sī yuǎn dào)	a	continuous continuous think distant path
3	遠道不可思 (yuǎn dào bù kě sī)	b	distant path not may consider
4	夙昔夢見之 (sù xī mèng jiàn zhī) (夙昔一作 宿昔) (sù xī yī zuō sù xī)	b b	morning past dream see/meet it (morning past one write in-past)
5	夢見在我傍 (mèng jiàn zài wǒ bàng)	x	dream see at my approach
6	忽覺在他鄉 (hū jiào zài tā xiāng)	x	ignore aware in foreign land
7	他鄉各異縣 (tā xiāng gè yì xiàn)	c	foreign land every different country
8	轉不相見 (zhuǎn bù xiāng jiàn)	c	turn turn not each-other see
9	枯桑知天風 (kū sāng zhī tiān fēng)	x	dried-up mulberry-tree know sky wind
10	海水知天寒 (hǎi shuǐ zhī tiān hán)	d	sea-water know heaven/sky cold
11	入門各自媚 (rù mén gè zì mèi)	x	enter door each self flatter
12	誰肯相為言? (shéi kěn xiāng wéi yán)	d	who agree each-other as speech?
13	客從遠方來 (kè cóng yuǎn fāng lái)	x	visitor from far away come
14	遺我雙鯉魚 (yí wǒ shuāng lǐ yú)	e	lose/leave I/me/my pair carp fish
15	呼兒烹鯉魚 (hū ér pēng lǐ yú)	e	call son boil carp fish
16	中有尺素書 (zhōng yǒu chě sù shū)	e	among have foot raw-silk letter
17	長跪讀素書 (cháng guì dòu sù shū)	e	long kneel read raw-silk letter
18	書中竟何如? (shū zhōng jìng hé rú)	e	letter within unexpected how about
19	上言加餐食 (shàng yán jiā cān shí)	b	on-top words add meal eat
20	下言長相憶 (xià yán zhǎng xiàng yì)	x	down words chief grow recollect

How green and green there grows the river grass,  
how long forever goes that distant road,  
the distant road that travels round the mind,  
as meeting in that morning's dream has showed.

For in that morning's dream I saw approach  
one unaware it was a foreign place,  
a foreign place that is a different country:  
I turned and turned but could not see the face.

Heaven's winds afflict the dried-up mulberry tree,  
and water feels the cold winds off the sea:  
the words that travellers at the door exchange,  
although companionable, were not for me.

But then one came, and from a distant country,  
and leaving, laid two silver carp aside.  
I asked my son prepare and cook the gift:  
he found a raw silk letter wrapped inside.

I knelt and that silk letter read at length,  
so unexpected, mind put out of sorts.  
The first ran, 'please to eat these two fine carp'  
and then, 'remember you are in our thoughts.'

### Comment

These and similar poems, which can only be odd samples from the long and complex period predating the Tang, show two developments. The first is the growing importance of the five-character line, which gives greater semantic depth and emotive subtlety. The second is the personal element, the way the straightforward narrative is giving way to the emotive importance of the matter to the speaker. Narrative poems would continue to be written, throughout imperial times, but the evocative distillation of emotions would now be an essential feature of Chinese poetry. Note here also how the poem proceeds through repetition, a defining feature in one repeated in the next. {3}

How green and green is grass along the river,  
how long, forever goes that distant road,  
the distant road we cannot consider,  
nor meeting that my morning's dream had showed.

For in that morning's dream I saw approach  
one unaware it was a foreign place,  
a foreign place that is a different country:  
I turned and turned but could not see the face.

Heaven's winds will scorch the dried-up mulberry tree,  
the water knows how cold is wind that's off the sea,  
and words that travellers at the door exchange,  
although companionable, are not for me.

But then one came, and from a distant country,  
and also left for me two carp beside.  
I asked my son prepare and cook the offering:  
he found a raw silk letter tucked inside.

I knelt and that silk letter read at length:  
how strange the words to one long out of sorts.

the first ran. 'Please to eat these two fine carp'  
and then 'recall you're always in my thoughts.'

How green, how green the grass is by the river,  
and far, forever going on that road:  
that far, far road I cannot bear to think on  
or meeting that the dream this morning showed.

I dreamt I saw him at that dream approaching,  
though unaware it was foreign land.,  
a foreign land that is another country,  
I turned to hold him: he was not at hand.

The keen wind hurts the dried up mulberry tree  
the water knows how cold the wind is off the sea  
when travellers at the door, however kindly,  
come to speak they have no words for me.

Then someone came, and from a distant country,  
and brought, moreover, two fine carp besides:  
I called my son to cook the meal awaiting:  
he found a raw silk letter wrapped inside.

I knelt and read at length that raw silk letter:  
and with those words the world came back to sorts.  
First is 'eat the more of what is worth the giving'  
then 'know you're always in my thoughts.'

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## 16. YUE FU POETRY: Cao Cao (155-220 AD) Though the Tortoise Lives Long

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	龜雖壽 (guī suī shòu)		tortoise although long-life
1	神龜雖壽 (shén guī suī shòu)	x	spirit tortoise although long-life
2	猶有竟時 (yóu yǒu jìng shí)	a	as-if have actually time
3	騰蛇乘霧 (téng shé chéng wù)	x	soar serpent ride mist
4	終為土灰 (zhōng wéi tǔ huī)	a	finish as earth ash
5	老驥伏櫪 (lǎo jì fú lì)	b	old thoroughbred-horse fall/concede stable
6	志在千里 (zhì zài qiān lǐ)	b	aspire in thousand li
7	烈士暮年 (liè shì mù nián)	c	ardent scholar sunset year
8	壯心不已 (zhuàng xīn bù yǐ)	b	strong mind not then/afterwards
9	盈縮之期 (yíng suō zhī qī)	a	full withdraw of/him period
10	不但在天 (bù dàn zài tiān)	c	not only in sky
11	養怡之福 (yǎng yí zhī fú)	x	raise/support harmony of/him good-fortune
12	可得永年 (kě dé yǒng nián)	c	can obtain always/forever year
13	幸甚至哉! (xìng shèn zhì zāi)	x	fortunate very arrive <i>exclamation</i>
14	歌以詠志 (gē yǐ yǒng zhì)	b	song use sing record

The tortoise must, though living long,  
accept the roles in which he's cast.  
The soaring serpent rides the mists  
but comes to earth and ash at last.

The old war-horse, though led to stall,  
will ride in thought a thousand li.  
The noble man advanced in years  
still holds his hopes and constantly.

Life's rich fullness to its ends  
is not alone as heaven sends

One brought up well, in harmony  
with all, can live both well and long.  
Good fortune may indeed arrive,  
for which I'll simply hum this song

Comment.

Cao Cao's work was in the traditional four-character metre, but he also, with his two sons, created the Jian'an style that was to greatly influence Tang poetry, turning poetry away from narrative, towards the personal expression of sentiment. His poetry, outwardly simple but evocative, revitalized poetry by replacing archaic words with contemporary diction.

The poem is making the sensible recommendation that man should learn to live within his natural capacities, accepting what heaven wills but making his own efforts towards advancement, as do the three animals mentioned. As in the west, the tortoise signifies longevity, but was also thought by the Chinese to hold the secrets of heaven and earth within its body — hence its use of its shell for divination in Zhou and Shang times. And whereas the dragon is a wise and beneficent animal, the serpent is much less so, although people born under its influence are thought to possess the gifts of divination. Fine horses from central Asia were eagerly sought by the Chinese, and the animal represents courage, integrity, diligence and power.

Cao Cao and his two gifted sons, his sons Cao Pi and Cao Zhi are known as the three Caos, who, with others, contributed to Jian'an style influencing Tang and later poetry. Cao Cao also wrote verse in the old four-character per line style of the Shijing. Holoong.com's rather over-rhymed version:

Although long lives the tortoise wise,  
In the end he cannot but die.  
The serpent in the mist may rise,  
But in the dust he too shall lie.

Although the stabled steed is old,  
He dreams to run for mile and mile.  
In life's December heroes bold  
Won't change indomitable style.

It's not up to Heaven alone  
To lengthen or shorten our day.  
To a great age we can live on,  
If we keep fit, cheerful and gay.

How happy I feel at this thought!  
I croon this poem as I ought

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## 4.2 Early Syllabic Verse

The earliest coherent group of pentasyllabic verses are found in the *Wen xuan*, compiled by the crown prince of Liang, Xiao Tong (501-31). Their date of composition is disputed; some perhaps were written in the former Han dynasty, and some in the later Han. Increasingly these poems become less songs, however, and more the polished reflections of the literati. In official compilations, the oral tradition was being left behind. Moreover, while Yufu verse was often narrative, telling a story, verse in this group of poems focussed on evoking a definite mood or sentiment.

The most characteristic of the poems, the so-called 'Nineteen Old Poems' have five characters to the line, though the number of lines can vary a little. The lines are usually organised into couplets, moreover, and rhymed at the conclusion of each couplet, i.e. on even-numbered lines. The lines also possess a characteristic structure: an opening disyllable is followed by a trisyllable, the last usually appearing as 2.1. With their structured pauses (caesura), the lines had a more varied and fluid structure, a development important for later poetry.

Equally important is what is known as *shiyān* (literally 'verse eyes') where nouns or adjectives serve to animate descriptions of nature and prefigure the intended emotion. In poem 3.1, for example, the tenth line is a metaphor for unscrupulous self-advancement, the 'beating wings' image being echoed by the cicadas, the departing swallows and the whirling constellations. Like the stars themselves, these achievements are insubstantial and ever changing.

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## 17. YUE FU POETRY: Nineteen Poems: Late Han

### Cai 5.7. [WX 29.1346]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	明月皎夜光(míng yuè jiǎo yè guāng)		bright moon white night light
1	明月皎夜光(míng yuè jiǎo yè guāng)	x	bright moon bright night light
2	促織鳴東壁(cù zhī míng dōng bì)	a	urgent weave sound east wall
3	玉衡指孟冬(yù héng zhǐ mèng dōng)	x	Big Dipper indicate early winter
4	衆星何沓沓(zhòng xīng hé lì lì)	a	suffer star why each each
5	白露沾野草(bái lù zhān yě cǎo)	b	white dew moisten wild grass
6	時節忽復易(shí jié hū fù yì)	a	season abridge suddenly return change
7	秋蟬鳴樹間(qiū chán míng shù jiān)	x	autumn cicada sound tree among
8	玄鳥逝安適(xuán niǎo shì ān shì)	a	black bird pass calm suitable
9	昔我同門友(xī wǒ tóng mén yǒu)	c	former-times I similar family friend
10	高舉振六翮(gāo jǔ zhèn liù hé)	x	high raise flap six quill
11	不念攜手好(bù niàn xié shǒu hǎo)	b	not study bring hand be-fond-of
12	棄我如遺跡(qì wǒ rú yí jī)	x	abandon I/me like leave-behind footprint
13	南箕有北斗(nán jī yǒu běi dòu)	c	south winnow-basket exist Great Dipper
14	牽牛不負軛(qiān niú bú fù è)	a	pull ox not bear yoke
15	良無磐石固(liáng wú pán shí gù)	x	very not firm rock hard
16	虛名復何益(xū míng fù hé yì)	a	empty name return what benefit

The sky is dark but lit up by the moon:  
and eastwards, seeming closer, crickets sound.  
The Dipper indicates that winter's soon,  
encouraging the stars to gather round.  
The unkempt grass is white with dew, the seasons,  
interrupted, pause from flooding on.  
Cicadas in their buzzing myriads fill the trees,  
and where have dark-tailed, flitting swallows gone?

And when we studied then as friends, you soared,  
remember, on such strongly beating wings,  
but that's some other matter now, and I  
am left a footprint of forgotten things.  
The Southern Winnower, the Northern Dipper,  
the Draft Ox, even, have but empty claims.  
My friend, there's nothing there, no rocky base:  
what good can come to you from these mere names?

#### Comment

The Dipper, the Southern Winnower, the Northern Dipper, and the Draft Ox are constellations, but serve to remind us that the stars are eternal forms forever on

the move, to whose configuration we give names, but which are indifferent to our lives on earth. Equally important in the poem above is what is known as *shiyān* (literally ‘verse eyes’) where nouns or adjectives — closer seeming, unkempt grass, buzzing myriads of crickets — serve to animate descriptions of nature and prefigure the intended emotion. The tenth line here is a metaphor for unscrupulous self-advancement, the ‘beating wings’ image being echoed by the cicadas, the departing swallows and the whirling constellations. Like the stars themselves, our achievements are insubstantial though part of the unchanging pageant of human aspirations. {1}

Lines 2 and 3 both point to oncoming winter. The first section as a whole, from lines 1 to 8, are thus prelude to the remainder of the poem, i.e. that life is ever pressing on and fame but transient. All the Nineteen Poems have a sad, meditative and thoughtful air, which here enters the mainstream of Chinese poetry.

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## 18. YUE FU POETRY: Ban Jieyu: Song of Resentment

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
1	新裂齊紈素 (xīn liè Qí wán sù,)	x	new cut Qin white silk
2	鮮潔如霜雪 (xiān jié rú shuāng xuě)	a	fresh clean as frost snow.
3	裁為合歡扇 (cái wèi hé huān shàn,)	x	cut for fit joyous fan
4	團團似明月 (tuán tuán sì míng yuè.)	a	round round like bright moon.
5	出入君懷袖 (chū rù jūn huái xiù)	x	go-out enter lord bosom sleeve
6	動搖微風發 (dòng yáo wēi fēng fā)	x	move shake tiny wind issue
7	常恐秋節至 (cháng kǒng qiū jié zhì)	x	often fear autumn festival arrive
8	涼飈奪炎熱 (liáng biāo duó yán rè)	a	cool whirlwind take-away flame heat
9	棄捐篋笥中 (qì juān qiè sì zhōng)	x	abandon contribute box bambo in
10	恩情中道絕 (ēn qíng zhōng dào jué)	a	favour feeling among path cut-short

Fresh cut, entire, from clear Qi silk,  
as snow or frost, in sheerest white,  
this fan of 'conjoined happiness'  
is round as moon is, full and bright.  
With fan retrieved from breast or sleeve  
my lord can make a gentle breeze,  
but still I fear that autumn comes  
when cool winds quench the summer's heat,  
and in a box is locked away  
our love, before it is complete.

### Comment

Consort Ban, real name unknown, was a concubine of Emperor Chengdi, bearing him two sons who unfortunately died in infancy. Later in life, the emperor became infatuated with a dancing girl Zhao Feiyan and her sister Zhao Hede, who were favoured over the Empress Xu and Consort Ban. In 18 BC, both empress and consort Ban were accused of witchcraft, but consort Ban, being an accomplished poet and scholar, was able to argue for and obtain their acquittal. Consort Ban then chose to become a lady in waiting to the empress dowager, and was eventually buried in the emperor's funeral park.

Consort Ban wrote two Fu poems but is best known for her *Song of Resentment*, much admired by Li Bai and later poets, although doubts remain over its authorship. It is refined court poetry, with the reproach only implied as lingering regret. The style is: reserved, refined and indirect.

As far as one can tell, since pronunciation has somewhat changed since Han times, the original is rhymed on lines 2, 4, 8 and 10, with lines 5 and six forming a key but unrhymed couplet. The poem, written some 700 years earlier, is close to

the Regulated Shi of the Tang, but does not have its characteristic tone patterns.  
{2-3}

#### Drafts

Cut out, fresh, from pure Qi silk,  
as frost and snow are, lucid white,  
this fan of 'conjoined happiness'  
appears as moon is, round and bright.  
With this retrieved from breast or sleeve,  
my lord can have a gentle breeze.  
But still I fear that autumn comes  
when cool winds quench the summer's heat,  
and in a box be laid away  
our love that's lost and incomplete.

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#### 4.4. Unregulated Shi Poetry: Six Dynasties

Two poets of the Six Dynasties period set Chinese poetry on new tracks. One was Tao Qian, who called himself Tao Yuanming (365-427) who retired from office early in life and devoted himself to writing about a simple rural life. The second was Xie Lingyun (385-433) who created a landscape verse that recorded his treks through beautiful and untamed mountainous regions. Both used a simple pentasyllabic Shi poetry that aimed to make each word count.

Tao Qian wrote effective poetry in a spare style that personal, blunt and clear.

From around the end of the fifth century, Chinese poets began balancing the tones of the Chinese language to achieve more melodious effects. The full effect wasn't achieved until the regulated verse of the Tang dynasty, but there were many individual poets striving to that end. Some of the best known are Xiao Gang (r549-551), Xie Lingyun (385-433) and Yu Xin (513-581).

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19. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: SIX DYNASTIES: Tao Qian :  
Returning to Live on the Farm No. 1 Cai 6.1 [TYMJJJ, 73]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	歸園田居 其一 (guī yuán tián jū qí yī)		return land farm reside one
1	少無適俗韻 (shào wú shì sú yùn)	x	young not fit common appeal/sound
2	性本愛丘山 (xìng běn ài qiū shān)	a	nature origin love hill mountain
3	誤落塵網中 (wù luò chén wǎng zhōng)	b	error fall dust net in
4	一去三十年 (yí qù sān shí nián)	a	one go thirty year
5	羈鳥戀舊林 (jī niǎo liàn jiù lín)	x	restrain bird long-for old wood
6	池魚思故淵 (chí yú sī gù yuān)	a	pond fish think go deep
7	開荒南澗際 (kāi huāng nán yǎn)	x	open/start desolate south field border
8	守拙歸園田 (shǒu zhuō guī yuán tián)	a	guard awkward return growing-land field
9	方宅十餘畝 (fāng zhái shí yú mǔ)	x	honest residence ten extra mou(field class)
10	草屋八九間 (cǎo wū bā jiǔ jiān)	a	straw house eight nine room
11	榆柳陰後簷 (yú liǔ yīn hòu yán)	a	elm willow shade rear eaves
12	桃李羅堂前 (táo lǐ luó táng qián)	a	peach plum gather hall front
13	曖曖遠人村 (ài ài yuǎn rén cūn)	x	dim dim distant person village
14	依依墟里煙 (yī yī xū lǐ yān)	a	depending-on depending-on village li/inside smoke
15	狗吠深巷中 (gǒu fèi shēn xiàng zhōng)	b	dog bark deep alley in
16	雞鳴桑樹顛 (jī míng sāng shù diān)	a	chicken cry mulberry-tree tree top
17	戶庭無塵雜 (hù tíng wú chén zá)	x	household hall not dust mix
18	虛室有餘閒 (xū shì yǒu yú xián)	a	empty room have extra leisure
19	久在樊籠裡 (jiǔ zài fán lóng lǐ)	x	long-time exist in cage basket inside
20	復得返自然 (fù dé fǎn zì rán)	a	must must return self nature

In youth I did not seek the common crowd,  
but was of hills and mountains thinking on,  
an error dropped me in a dusty net:  
and all at once those thirteen years were gone.

As birds when caged recall the ancient wood,  
and fish for weedy depths of ponds have yearned,  
so I, in clearing fields on south's rough border,  
to former plainness and my farm returned.

The simple holding comes to ten odd mu;  
thatched hut with sections, eight or nine in all:  
while elm and willow shade the rearward eaves,  
the gathered plum and peach trees face the hall.

Far away are people, lost in haze  
the villages and village smoke one sees,  
a dog will bark from some deep alleyway,  
and chickens cluck from tops of mulberry trees.

The hall is always clean, swept free of dust,  
and empty rooms have leisure's peace to ask.  
With life for all too long a wicker cage,  
it's time I went back to my own self's task.

#### Comment

Tao Qian, also known as Tao Yuanming, retired from a short and unsuccessful career in officialdom to live the life of a small farmer and write strongly individual poems that became important later, creating indeed a new genre: 'farmstead' (*shanshu*) poetry.

Tao's poems are very plain and to the point, celebrating the simple pleasures of the recluse — reading books, playing the zither, writing poetry for his own pleasure — but do not gloss over cold, hunger and hard toil of rural life.

The text reads thirty years rather than thirteen (i.e. 三十 rather than 十三) but most scholars think thirteen is meant, as the period corresponds to Tao's distasteful years in office. Similar problems arise over 間 (jiān), which some read as spans or bays and others, like myself, as rooms. Unfortunately, the choice matters as a nine-room house is not a rural hovel. Lines 15-16 are lifted almost verbatim from a Han ancient-style poem. {2}

#### Returning to live on the Farm: One

I did not, from youth, attract the common crowd,  
but more of hills and mountains thought upon,  
an error dropped me in a dusty net:  
and all at once some thirty years were gone.

As birds when caged recall the ancient wood,  
and fish for weedy depths of ponds have yearned,  
so I, in clearing fields on south's wild border,  
to former plainness and my farm returned.

The simple holding comes to ten odd mu;  
thatched hut with sections, eight or nine in all:  
while elm and willow shade the rearward eaves,  
the gathered plum and peach trees face the hall.

Far away are people, lost in haze  
the villages and village smoke one sees,  
a dog will bark from some deep alley-way,  
and chickens cluck from tops of mulberry trees.

The hall is always clean, swept free of dust,  
and empty rooms have leisure's peace to ask.  
With life for all too long a wicker cage,  
it's time I gave myself to nature's task.

From youth I was not of the common crowd,  
and more on hills and mountains thinking on.  
Some error led me to a dusty net:  
and all at once some thirty years were gone.

As wild birds want the dark and ancient wood  
and fish for weedy depths of ponds have yearned,  
so I, in clearing fields on the south's wild border,  
but keeping plainness, to my farm returned.

My simple holding comes to ten odd mu;  
my hut has rooms, some eight or nine in all,  
while elm and willow shade the rearward eaves,  
and gathered plum and peach trees front the hall.

Far away are people, lost in haze  
the villages and the smoke one sees,  
an odd barks in some deep alley off  
and chickens cluck from tops of mulberry trees.

The hall is always clean, swept free of dust,  
and empty rooms have leisure's peace to ask.  
With life for all too long a wicker cage,  
it's time I gave myself to nature's task.

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20. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: SIX DYNASTIES: Tao Qian : On Drinking Wine No. 5. Cai 6.2 [TYMJJJ, 219–220]

Line	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Rhyme	Word-for-Word Rendering
	飲酒其五 (yǐn jiǔ qí wǔ)		drink wine his five
1	結廬在人境 (jié lú zài rén jìng)	x	build house at person place
2	而無車馬喧 (ér wú jū mǎ xuān)	a	and-so not cart horse noise
3	問君何能爾 (wèn jūn hé néng ěr)	x	ask sir how can like-that
4	心遠地自偏 (xīn yuǎn dì zì piān)	a	heart keep-away by self slant
5	採菊東籬下 (cǎi jú dōng lí xià)	x	pick chrysanthemum east fence below
6	悠然見南山 (yōu rán jiàn nán shān)	a	unhurriedly see south mountain
7	山氣日夕佳 (shān qì rì xī jiā)	x	mountain air day evening beautiful
8	飛鳥相與還 (fēi niǎo xiāng yǔ huán)	a	fly bird mutually together still
9	此中有真意 (cǐ zhōng yǒu zhēn yì)	x	this among exist true meaning
10	欲辨已忘言 (yù biàn yǐ wàng yán)	a	wish recognize already forget words

It is a home I've built, a human place,  
at far remove from noisy cart or horse.  
You ask of me: good sir, how can that be?  
I say the heart will find its natural course.  
Chrysanthemums I pick, and have plain sight  
at easy leisure of the Southern Hills.  
The mountain air brings beauty, day and night,  
and pairs of birds can nest as each one wills  
with something deeper that I would explain  
if words misused had not so lost their force.

Comment

Tao achieved a local standing, but his reputation was made in the Tang dynasty, when poets like Du Fu and Li Bai, unhappy with court life, came to admire his rugged independence. Han poetry, Jian'an poetry, the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, and the other earlier Six dynasties poetry all foreshadowed Tao's symbolism and return to the country theme, but Tao's poems broke new ground, and his pentasyllabic verse forms became a staple of the Gushi, or old-style, Unregulated Shi poetry. Tao absorbed the essentials of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, but his verse above all shows great perseverance and integrity.

The difficulty in translation is conveying Tao's honesty and simple elegance without the diction becoming too pedestrian. I have rhymed this piece on alternate lines and used two rhymes, as does the original, but made something more of the last two lines. These are commonly rendered as something like: *In*

*this return there is a fundamental truth, / I am going to explain it, but have already forgotten the words.* The reference may be to the Daoist saying: *The Tao can be explained is not the eternal Tao (or truth),* {1} but I suspect Tao Quin is saying something more, that poetry is not a painless juggling with words but expressing the essence of an experience that has been actually lived, often painfully so. The chrysanthemums alluded to were grown by Tao in his garden. The Southern Mountains are a symbol of immutability. {1-2}

The chrysanthemums alluded to were grown by Tao in his garden.

#### Drafts

1. This home I've built, which is a human place,
2. is far from rasping noise of cart or horse.
3. And so you ask: good sir, how can that be?
4. I say the heart will find its natural course.
5. There's chrysanthemums to pick, and I have sight,
6. at easy leisure of the Southern Hills.
7. The mountain air brings beauty, day and night.
8. Birds flown together nest as each one wills
9. with something deeper that I would explain
10. had truth I recognise not lost its force.

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21. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: SIX DYNASTIES: Xie Lingyun: Climbing Yongjia's Green Crag Mountain

Cai 6.5. [XLYJJZ, 56]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	登永嘉綠嶂山 (dēng yǒngjiā lǜ zhàng shān)		climb Yongjia cliff mountain
1	裹糧持策 (guǒ liáng zhì cè)	a	wrap food staff light plan
2	懷暉上幽室 (huái huī shàng yōu shì)	a	heart/mind delay go-up hidden room
3	行原學曠遠 (xíng yuán xué kuàng yuǎn)	x	walk origin path turn far
4	踰壑情未畢 (yú hè qíng wèi bì)	a	at-a-distance shore feeling not-yet finish
5	澹澹澗姿 (dàn dàn jiàn zī)	a	placid full-of-water glossy cold beauty
6	團欒開靄質 (tuán luán kāi ài zhì)	a	group flowering-tree sleek wind-frost nature
7	澗委水塵迷 (jiàn wěi shuǐ lǚ mí)	a	mountain-stream wind water repeatedly bewilder
8	林回巖逾密 (lín huí yán yú mì)	a	forest distant rock exceed dense
9	眷西帶初月 (juàn xī wèi chū yuè)	a	look west speak/sense beginning moon
10	顧東疑落日 (gù dōng yí luò rì)	a	look east doubt setting sun
11	踐夕奄昏曙 (jiàn xī yǎn hūn shǔ)	x	walk evening suddenly twilight dawn
12	蔽翳皆周悉 (bì yì jiē zhōu xī)	a	cover shade all circuit know
13	壘上貴不事 (lǚ shàng guì bú shì)	a	poison top noble not matter
14	履二美貞吉 (lǚ èr měi zhēn jí)	a	tread two satisfactory chaste lucky
15	幽人常坦步 (yōu rén cháng tǎn bù)	x	secluded person always level step
16	高尚繼緜亘 (gāo shàng jiē miǎo nán pǐ)	a	high value profound remote mate
17	頰阿竟何端 (jiàn ā jìng hé duān)	x	cheek flatter actually how end
18	寂寂寄抱一 (jì jì jì bào yī)	a	silent silent entrust embrace whole
19	性既已交 (xìng jì yǐ jiāo)	x	calm as already then deliver
20	繕性自此出 (shàn xìng zì cǐ chū)	x	repair nature from this produce

Light staff in hand, and with provisions packed  
I climbed the heart's high, hidden place,  
but as I walked the way more wound away,  
nor were my feelings emptied at their base.

All things were calm and filled with water's beauty,  
flowering, wind-thinned trees in frosted white:  
with falling rivulets repeatedly bewildered,  
far crags and forests thickly rose to sight.

I looked out west and saw the rising moon,  
I looked out east: how odd — the setting sun.  
I walked until the evening merged with dawn,  
the unfamiliar known to everyone.

Serve none when states start rotting from the head:  
it is to second place the wise should keep,  
recluses learn to walk with level step  
with ways to high preferment all too steep.

Avoid the flatterers, the wanted end  
is what an inwardness in truth will earn.  
That silent calmness will in time deliver:  
and what's belonging to you will return

## Comment

Xie Lingyun was born into a family of great wealth and political influence, but unfortunately backed the wrong faction, which led to his demotion and subsequent execution. His biography paints him as an outlandish and temperamental character, who, on the disappointment of his political hopes, turned towards the spiritual quest for enlightenment. He was one of the first poets to employ the natural scenery, not only as expressions of his inner thoughts and feelings, but also as something worth contemplating in its own right. Being dense with meaning, the lines are difficult to fully understand in Chinese, and impossible to properly convey in English, but this poem dates to a journey Xie made in Yongjia (modern Zhejiang) during his 422-3 exile. It clearly combines, narration, scene description, stirred emotion, meditation, and political satire, but lines 13-14 allude to the hexagrams of the i-ching. *He does not serve kings and princes / Sets himself high goals, and The path to tread is smooth and level. / Practise constancy here to have good fortune.* {4}

A difficult poem uniting narration, scene description and philosophic mediation. See Swartz {4} for details, but in brief: Xie takes the Book of Changes (Xijing) as a microcosm mediator between heavens and earth. Line 13 alludes to the top yang of the hexagram Gu (decay): He does not serve kings and princes, / Sets himself higher goals. Line 14 is drawn from the second yang of the hexagram Lu (treading): The path to tread on is level and smooth, and, if one secluded here practises constancy, he will have good fortune. These landscape poems have carefully crafted lines, but are also thick with allusion and obscure words: my literal translations differ a little from those of Wendy Swartz.

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22. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: SIX DYNASTIES: Xie Lingyun:  
Climbing the Lakeside Tower. Cai 6.7. [XLYJJZ, 63-64]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	登池上樓 (dēng chí shàng lóu)		climb lake above tower
1	潛虬隱姿 (qián qiú yǐn zī)	x	submerge young-dragon charm hidden beauty
2	飛鴻響遠音 (fēi hóng xiǎng yuǎn yīn)	a	fly goose echo distant sound
3	薄霄愧雲浮 (bó xiāo kuì yún fú)	x	approach heaven ashamed cloud float
4	樓閣作滯沉 (lóu gé zuò zhì chén)	a	rest river ashamed deep submerge
5	進德智所拙 (jìn dé zhì suǒ zhuō)	x	goodness virtue wisdom actually dull
6	退耕力不任 (tuì gēng lì bù rèn)	a	retreat plough force not assign/appoint
7	徇祿反窮海 (xún lù fǎn qióng hǎi)	x	give-in-to salary/fortune contrary poor/return sea
8	臥疴空林 (wò kē kōng lín)	a	lie disease face/correct empty forest
9	衾枕昧節候 (qīn zhěn mèi jié hòu)	x	quilt pillow conceal festival period
10	褰開暫窺臨 (qiān kāi zàn kuā lín)	a	lift open temporary peer face
11	傾耳聆波瀾 (qīng ěr líng bō lán)	x	overturn ear hear wave swelling-water
12	舉目眺區嶽 (jǔ mù tiào qū yuē)	a	lift eye into-distance-gaze rugged loftiness
13	初景革緒風 (chū jǐng gé xù fēng)	x	first bright reform beginning wind
14	新陽改故陰 (xīn yáng gǎi gù yīn)	a	new sun change happening cloudy
15	池塘生春草 (chí táng shēng chūn cǎo)	x	pond bank grow spring grass
16	園柳變鳴禽 (yuán liǔ biàn míng qín)	a	plant-land willow change cry bird
17	所願傷離歎 (suǒ yuàn shāng lí tàn)	x	vast vast wound Bin song
18	萋萋感楚吟 (qī qī gǎn chǔ yīn)	a	lush lavish feel Chu song
19	索居易永久 (suǒ jū yì yǒng jiǔ)	x	isolated stay easy forever time
20	離群懷適心 (lí qún huái shì xīn)	a	away-from crowd reside mind
21	持操豈獨古 (chí cāo qǐ dú gǔ)	x	hold grasp how monopolise old
22	無悶致在今 (wú mèn zhì zài jīn)	a	not depressed evidence/recruit in today

A dragon underwater hides its charms.  
A goose in flight will echo distant cries:  
The heavens baulk me with a floating cloud,  
and river by the depth in which it lies.

My goodness, virtue, wisdom: all proved false,  
nor was my taking up the plough much good.  
Employment brought me to the sea's wide edge,  
and ill I lie and face an empty wood.

The quilt and pillow served to hide festivities,  
and from the passing moment peered a face.  
I turned to hear the swelling water waves  
and gazed towards a distant, lofty place.

Spring winds will grow from slight beginnings,  
and sun new-risen changes the clouded sky.  
and by the pond will brighten thick new grasses,  
from sun-clad garden willows, birds will cry.

How wide and wounding is the song of Bin,  
but rich and lavish sound the songs of Chu.  
Here isolated, one can feel the time,  
and far from crowds the mind will settle too.  
No grasp of principles is out of date,  
nor forced repentances be counted true.

### Comment

If at first baffling with its imagery, this poem is really quite simple. By stanzas the meanings are. 1. Life will be as it will. 2. My various enterprises came to nothing. 3. I took refuge in everyday pleasures but nonetheless sensed their inner emptiness. 4. Look at life around, dark days brighten with new opportunities. 5. Reflect how others have faced misfortunes, and keep to your principles.

Xie's poetry is dense with allusion, verse eyes, unusual phrasing and textural felicities. Line 1 draws on the *Yijing*: the submerged dragon does not act: i.e. the superior man has yet to reveal his virtue and capabilities. Ditto for line 2, where the flight of the wild goose is from shoreline to hills: Xie has not been successful at court. Lines 15-16 are famous, both for their exact description, and their sardonic illustration of the political advice to change according to circumstances.

A difficult poem with many allusions to the *Shijing* and the hexagrams of the *Book of Changes*. See Swartz {1} for a full explication. In brief: Two landscapes feature here: the symbolic one of lines 1-6, and the more tangible of lines 11-16. The song of Bin (*Shijing*, Mao No. 154) refers to a girl hoping to return home, just as Xie Lingyun hopes to return to court, here expressed in lines 17-20. The song of Chou summoned the recluse from the mountains. Three allusions to the *Book of Changes* develop the poem. The submerged dragon refers to the superior man who has yet to act. The goose cries refers to the gradual progress of the successful man. Those two lines, success at court and retirement, set up the binary oppositions for the next four lines. (3-6). The last line again refers to the submerged dragon: one who has the dragon's virtue remains hidden: he does not change to fit in with the world, nor does he regret not winning approval: 無悶 (wú mèn) he is not sad. Lines 11-16 are typical of Xie's poetry: the pairing of sight and sounds, of mountains and water. Lines 15-16 are a particularly celebrated evocation of spring. {2}

### Drafts

A dragon underwater hides its power.  
A goose in flight will swallow distant cries:  
The heavens baulk me with a floating cloud,  
and river by the depth in which it lies.

My goodness, virtue, wisdom: all proved false,  
nor was my taking up the plough much good.  
A wage has brought me to the sea's wide edge,  
and ill I lie and face an empty wood.

The quilt and pillow served to hide festivities,  
and from the passing moment peered a face.  
I turned to hear the swelling water waves  
and gazed towards a distant, lofty place.

Spring winds will grow from slight beginnings,  
and sun new-risen changes the clouded sky.  
and by the pond will brighten thick new grasses,  
from sun-clad garden willows, birds will cry.

How wide and wounding is the song of Bin,  
but rich and lavish sound the songs of Chu.  
Here isolated, one can feel the time,  
and far from crowds the mind is settled too.

Hold fast to principles, they're not outmoded:  
there's no unhappiness in staying true.

A dragon underwater hides its power.  
A goose in flight will echo distant cries:  
I'm baulked of heaven by a floating cloud,  
and in the river sense what depth it lies.

My goodness, virtue, wisdom: all proved false,  
nor was my taking up the plough much good.  
Thus chasing wage has brought me to the sea's wide edge,  
and now not well I lie and face an empty wood.

The quilt and pillow served to hide festivities,  
I glanced a moment from a lifted dress.  
I turned an ear towards the swelling water waves  
and gazed towards a distant loftiness.

Spring winds will grow from light beginnings,  
and sun reborn will change the cloudy sky.  
and by the pond's side brighten thick new grasses,  
from planted willows, sunlight-altered, birds will cry.

How wide and wounding is the song of Bin,  
but rich and lavish still the song of Chu.  
Here isolated, one can feel the time,

and far from crowds the mind is settled too.

Hold fast to principles, they're not outmoded:  
there is no sadness now in staying true.

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## 5: UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: TANG DYNASTY

In the Tang, the old-style unregulated pentasyllabic poetry comes of age. It was written by all the great names of the time, and allows freedom and musicality in rich-textured verse that can be on personal or more traditional themes. This Gushi poetry consciously avoided the confining requirements of regulated verse, i.e. the prescribed tone and rhyme patterns, the central parallel couplets, and the eight-line length. This seems to me some of the most attractive Chinese poetry ever written: it has freed itself from the homely workmanship of the pre-Tang poets, and has not yet succumbed to refinements of regulated verse, which too often produce a rather artificial air.

The keywords for translation purposes are vigour, rich-textured verse, melodious workmanship but also freedom in theme and arrangement

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## 5.2 Social Background: Tang Dynasty

From the disorders and many rival states and kingdoms that followed the collapse of the Han dynasty, there rose the splendid Tang dynasty (AD 618-907), renown for the arts, the opening of the Grand Canal linking the north and south, and the growth of Chang'an, its capital, as the largest city in the world at the time. Its one million-odd inhabitants drew traders, students and pilgrims from all parts of the globe. The early Tang was also noted for strengthening, standardising and codifying its political institutions. The civil service was expanded and increasing numbers of young men from all classes sat the necessary examinations. Taxes were made uniform and extensive, but fairly acceptable. The code of 653 AD had more than 500 articles specifying crimes and their punishment, from a token beating to penal servitude and execution. The Tang was significantly expansive, creating divisional militia and sending armies into central Asia. Confucianism flourished, but there was also an increasing interest in Buddhism, with travels to India for original manuscripts.

The high point of Tang culture came with the reign of Xuanzong (r.712-56), an able administrator and great patron of the arts. Unfortunately, in his sixties, he became enamoured with Yang Guifei, a great beauty who shared his interest in music and dance. Her dalliance with An Lushan, a governor of non-Chinese origin, encouraged Xuanzong to entrust 160,000 troops to his command. In 755, An Lushan rebelled and, marching on Loyang and Chang'an, compelled the emperor to flee. An appalling civil war followed, and the Tang was never the same again, becoming dependent on the support of Turkish tribes. Disgruntled troops indeed compelled Xuanzong to have Yang Guifei strangled, an event remembered in Chinese literature as the 'everlasting sorrow'.

The Tang was less centralised after the An Lushan revolt. The rebel leaders had to be eventually pardoned, and activities once regarded as government monopolies opened to private enterprise. Government no longer controlled land sales, but still taxed holdings, either directly, or by adding a surcharge to the salt it sold through licensed distributors. Merchants gradually became increasingly powerful, and overcame cash shortages by circulating silver bullion and notes of exchange. The population also shifted south, into the more productive areas of the lower Yangtze basin. The Uighur Turks, who had helped put down the An

Lushan rebellion, had to be paid off with huge quantities of silk, thus setting the pattern for the more pacific Song dynasty that followed.

### 5.3 China's Civil Service

Since so many poets were government officials, it may help to understand the Chinese civil service. Throughout its imperial history, from the Qin (221-206 BC) to the Qing (AD 1644-1911) dynasties, China was governed as a centralized bureaucracy. Everything — public works, irrigation, roads, canals, security, administration of the towns and cities, law and justice, and frontier security — was supervised by various grades of officials who reported to ministers and thence to the emperor holding the 'mandate of heaven'. Until 700 AD, the more important officials were generally nobles or relatives of the emperor, but from Tang times the bulk were selected by the imperial examination system theoretically open to all, i.e. appointment was on merit. Most emperors took their duties seriously, particularly those of the early Qing dynasty (1662-1796) who were exceptionally sensible, hard-working and long-lived rulers. The Chinese civil-service system gave the Chinese empire stability for more than 2,000 years and provided one of the major outlets for social mobility, serving as a model for the later civil-service systems in other Asian and western countries.

The Qin dynasty (221-207 BC) established the first centralized Chinese bureaucratic empire. Recruitment was based on recommendations by local officials, a system initially adopted by the succeeding Han dynasty. But in 124 BC, under the reign of the Han emperor Wudi, an imperial university was established to train and test officials in the techniques of Confucian government. The Sui dynasty (581-618 AD) adopted this Han system, but applied it much more systematically, adding rules that officials of a prefecture must be appointees of the central government rather than local aristocrats, and that the local militia were to be subject to officials of the central government. The Tang dynasty (618-907) created a system of local schools where scholars could pursue their studies, and this system gradually became the major method of recruitment into the bureaucracy.

By the end of the Tang dynasty, the old aristocracy had largely disappeared, and their position was taken by the scholar-gentry. This nonhereditary elite would

eventually become known to the west as 'mandarins', a reference to Mandarin, the dialect of Chinese they spoke. The civil-service system expanded to its highest point during the Song dynasty (960-1279). Public schools were established throughout the country to help the talented but indigent, business contact was barred among officials related by blood or marriage, relatives of the imperial family were not permitted to hold high positions, and promotions were based on a merit system in which a person who nominated another for advancement was deemed entirely responsible for that person's conduct. The higher levels of the bureaucracy required passing the *jinshi* degree, and after 1065 the examinations were held every three years for those who had passed qualifying tests on the local level.

Under the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the civil-service system reached its final form, and the succeeding Qing dynasty (1644-1911) virtually copied the Ming system wholesale. No man was allowed to serve in his home district, and official's positions were rotated every three years. The recruitment exam was divided into three stages, but only achieving the *jinshi* made one eligible for high office. Other degrees gave one certain privileges, such as exemption from labour service and corporal punishment, government stipends, and admission to upper-gentry status (*juren*). Elaborate precautions were taken to prevent cheating, different districts in the country were given quotas for recruitment into the service to prevent the dominance of any one region, and the knowledge tested became limited to the Nine Classics of Confucianism. As such, it bore no relation to the candidate's ability to govern and was often criticized for setting a command of style above thought. The examination system was finally abolished in 1905 by the Qing dynasty, which was itself overthrown in 1911-12.

## 5. UNREGULATED SHI

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The keywords for translation purposes are a certain amplitude, i.e. variety in theme and treatment, a noticeable vigour in verse that is rich textured, melodious and accomplished. Rhyme varies: it can be dense or lightly patterning.

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## 23. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Li Bai: A Lu Mountain Tune, sent to Minister Lu Xuzhou Cai 11.3 [LBJJZ 1:863–867]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Rhyme	Word-for-Word Rendering
	廬山謠寄盧侍御虛舟 (lú shān yáo jì lú shì yù xū zhōu)		lu mountain ballad send lu govern imperial xuzhou
1	我本楚狂人 (wǒ běn chǔ kuáng rén)	x	I original Chu madman
2	鳳歌笑孔丘 (fèng gē xiào kǒng qiū)	a	phoenix sing laugh Confucius
3	手持綠玉杖 (shǒu chí lǜ yù zhàng)	x	hand grasp green jade staff
4	朝別黃鶴樓 (zhāo bié huáng hè lóu)	a	morning leave yellow crane building

5	五嶽尋仙不辭遠 (wǔ yuè xún xiān bù cí yuǎn)	c	five high-mountain seek immortal not decline far
6	一生好入名山遊 (yì shēng hào rù míng shān yóu)	a	all life like enter Ming Shan/famous roam
7	廬山秀出南斗傍 (lú shān xiù chū nán dòu páng)	b	Lu Shan blooming rise south Big Dipper near
8	屏風九疊雲錦張 (píng fēng jiǔ dié yún jīn zhāng)	b	screen style nine fold cloud brocade spread
9	影落明湖青黛光 (yǐng luò míng hú qīng dài guāng)	b	reflection fall bright lake green umber-black light
10	金闕前開二峰長 (jīn quē qián kāi èr fēng cháng)	b	gold watchtower ahead open two peak long
11	銀河倒挂三石梁 (yín hé dào guà sān shí liáng)	b	silver river invert suspend three stone bridge
12	香爐瀑布遙相望 (xiāng lú pù bù yáo xiāng wàng)	b	fragrant furnace waterfall announce distant gaze appear
13	迴崖沓嶂凌蒼蒼 (jiǒng yá tà zhāng líng cāng cāng)	b	distant precipice many cliff above vast hazy
14	翠綠紅霞映朝日 (cuì yīng hóng xiá yìng zhāo rì)	x	green-blue shadow red cloud reflect morning sun
15	鳥飛不到吳天長 (niǎo fēi bú dào wú tiān cháng)	b	bird fly not reach wu sky length
16	登高壯觀天地間 (dēng gāo zhuàng guān tiān dì jiān)	c	scale high observe magnificent-sight heaven earth between
17	大江茫茫去不還 (dà jiāng máng máng qù bù huán)	c	great river boundless go not return
18	黃雲萬里動風色 (huáng yún wàn lǐ dòng fēng sè)	x	yellow cloud ten-thousand li move wind colour
19	白波九道流雪山 (bái bō jiǔ dào liú xuě shān)	c	white ripple nine way flow snow-capped mountain
20	好為廬山謠 (hào wéi lú shān yáo)	x	fond-of be Lu Mountain song
21	興因廬山發 (xīng yīn lú shān fā)	x	encourage because Lu Mountain issue
22	閒窺石鏡清我心 (xián kuī shí jìng qīng wǒ xīn)	x	idle peep stone mirror clear my mind
23	謝公行處蒼苔沒 (xiè gōng xíng chù cāng tái mò)	x	Xie honourable walk place moss drowned
24	早服還丹無世情 (zǎo fú huán dān wú shì qíng)	x	morning dose return cinnabar not-to-have worldly feeling
25	琴心三疊道初成 (qín xīn sān dié dào chū chéng)	b	lute heart three repeat way just finish
26	遙見仙人彩雲裡 (yáo jiàn xiān rén cǎi yún lǐ)	x	distant see Immortal colour cloud lining
27	手把芙蓉朝玉京 (shǒu bǎ fú róng cháo yù jīng)	b	hand hold lotus make-pilgrimage Jade Capital
28	先期汗漫九垓上 (xiān qī hàn màn jiǔ gāi shàng)	b	beforehand Han Man nine boundary above
29	願接盧敖遊太清 (yuàn jiē lú áo yóu tài qīng)	b	wish meet Lu Ao tour great clear

I am the mad and elemental Chu  
 who'd sing the Phoenix and confound Confucius.  
 I too, with green jade staff in hand, at dawn  
 will leave the Yellow Crane Pavilion.

5. I laugh at distance, through Five Mountains  
 stride to find the great Immortals.

All my life I've loved to wander  
through the mountains, wild and free.  
The Lu Hills now are filled with blossom  
beneath the Southern Dipper star.  
The nine folds of the Windscreen Mountains  
are clothed in cloud embroidery.  
The shadows on the Shining Lake  
fall thick with green and inky light.

10. In front, the Golden Portico  
is opening into two far peaks.  
And there the Silver River falls  
inverted from the Three-Stone Bridge,  
and in the distance, rimmed in mist,  
the Incense Burner Waterfall.  
The hazy cliff and precipice  
are far-off rising into blue.  
The clouds are green and iridescent,  
crimson-touched by morning sun,

birds that flit the length of sky  
cannot traverse the lands of Wu.  
I climb on higher, view the sight  
of earth commingling with the heavens,  
the Yangtze River, long and boundless,  
unreturning, flowing on.  
The saffron clouds, ten thousand li,  
are interfolded with the wind.  
Nine Rivers with their white-curling waves  
beneath eternal snowy peaks.

20. I love to sing of Lu Shan Mountains,  
the sight of Lushan lifts my thoughts.

To stare, if idly, where Stone River  
cleanses to the very heart.  
The places Master Xie would walk  
are marked by prints of sunken moss.  
The alchemy of cinnabar  
relieves me of my worldly cares.  
And in the lute-strings of the heart  
I find the three-fold Dao done.

25. Far off, I view the sought Transcendents  
at home within their coloured mists.

With lotus bloom in hand, at their  
    Jade Capital I'll pay my court.  
But first I'd meet the Man of Han  
    beyond the fabled Ninefold Lands,  
and greet Lu Ao as well, and roam  
    the regions of Great Purity.

### Comment

In this poem, which combines elements of Regulated Shi, Fu and Sao poetry, Li Bai is at his egotistical best, posing as the follower of Chen Zi'ang in his search for the Immortals and elixir of life. The Chu reference is to the Analects (18.5) and the Zhuangzi, where a madman mocked Confucius for his efforts to restore the Way in an age that had lost interest in such things. Here the story serves to place the poem in context. In the usual fashion of Chinese poetry, where many interpretations are possible, the 'original' (本, běn: also stem, root, source, inherent, etc.) of line 1 may mean 'I descend from the madman of Chu', 'I have changed from being originally the madman of Chu' or 'I am at heart the madman of Chu', but probably all three at once — thus conflating the present and past, reality and unreality.

In the next couplet, lines 3–4, Li Bai has become the famous Immortal Zi An, who left the pavilion on the back of a yellow crane, never to return to this mundane world. In lines 5-6, which now have seven characters, where the immortal would have soared into the heavens, Li Bai has descended to become the earth-bound seeker of Immortals.

As such, he sees vistas of the mountain peaks (lines 7-9, all rhymed in the original), and the varied landscape around (lines 10-14), closed off by line 15 that notes that even 'birds cannot traverse the lands of Wu. In the next couplet, lines 3–4, Li Bai has become the famous Immortal Zi An, who left the pavilion on the back of a yellow crane, never to return to this mundane world. In lines 5-6, which now have seven characters, where the immortal would have soared into the heavens, Li Bai has descended to become the earth-bound seeker of immortals. As such, he sees vistas of the mountain peaks (lines 7-9, all rhymed in the original), and the varied landscape around (lines 10-14), closed off by line 15 that notes that even 'birds cannot traverse the lands of Wu.' At line 16, announced by a new rhyme, a poem within a poem appears, Li Bai in the traditional role of climbing high. Lines 18-19 are the one truly parallel couplet in the poem, where a new rhyme appears, can be read as two variations, depending on how we think the verbs 動 (dòng, to fly) and 流 (liú, to flow) are applying. I have left matters open by omitting both verbs.

In lines 20-21, we return to plain reality in 5-character lines, where Li Bai makes simple declarations. In line 22 comes the reference to Xie Lingyun, (Poems 6C and 6D), here introduced as Master Xie. By the moss-grown footsteps, Li Bai is



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## 24. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Li Bai (701-62): Chengnan South

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	战城南 (zhàn chéng nán)		war city (Chengnan) south
1	去年战干源 (qù nián zhàn sāng gān yuán)	a	last year fight Sang gan source
2	今年战葱道 (jīn nián zhàn cōng hé dào)	b	this year fight Cong river course
3	洗兵戈海上波 (xǐ bīng tiáo zhǐ hǎi shàng bō)	x	wash army article weapon Hai shang wave
4	放马天山雪中草 (fàng mǎ tiān shān xuě zhōng cǎo)	b	release horse Tian shan snow in grass
5	万里长征战 (wàn lǐ cháng zhēng zhàn)	x	thousand li length campaign
6	三军尽衰老 (sān jūn jìn shuāi lǎo)	b	three/whole army use old-and-weak
7	匈奴以杀戮为耕作 (xiōng nú yǐ shā lù wéi gēng zuò)	x	Xiong nu use massacre serve-as farming
8	古来唯见白骨黄沙田 (gǔ lái wéi jiàn bái gǔ huáng shā tián)	a	from-ancient-times only see bone-of-dead yellow sand field
9	秦家筑城避胡 (qín jiā zhù chéng bì hú chǔ)	x	Qin family construction wall avoid non-Han-people situated
10	汉家正有烽火然 (hàn jiā zhèng yǒu fēng huǒ rán)	a	Han family also fire-beacon thus
11	烽火然不息 (fēng huǒ rán bù xī)	c	fire-beacon thus no break
12	征战无已时 (zhēng zhàn wú yǐ shí)	c	campaign endlessly period
13	野战格斗死 (yě zhàn gé dòu sǐ)	d	battlefield rule fight die
14	败身鸣天悲 (bài mǎ hào míng xiàng tiān bēi)	x	defeat cavalry roar cry face sky sad
15	乌鸦啄人肠 (wū yā zhuó rén cháng)	a	crow kite peck man intestines
16	衔飞挂枯枝 (xián fēi shàng guà kū shù zhī)	c	hold-in-mouth fly upon hang dried-up branch
17	士卒涂草莽 (shì zú tú cǎo mǎng)	x	soldier die daub grass thick
18	将军空尔为 (jiāng jūn kōng ěr wéi)	x	general in-vain like-that behave
19	乃知兵者是凶器 (nǎi zhī bīng zhě shì xiōng qì)	d	thus be-aware army very-much is lethal weapon
20	圣人不得已而用之 (shèng rén bù dé yǐ ér yòng zhī)	c	wise man not allow stop and employ of

We, fighting last year to the source  
of Sang Ganyuan, had to go,  
and, fighting this year through its course,  
the River Cong we got to know.  
We scoured our swords and armour where  
the slow Tiaozi waters flow.  
Our horses grazed the high Tianshan  
where grasses penetrate the snow.

Ten thousand li we went, both to and fro:  
how tired and old our soldiers grow.

The Xiongu burned our homesteads where  
we cared for crops not long ago:  
still fights from ancient times leave bones  
where only yellow sand-storms blow.

The Qin that built the Great North Wall  
to keep the northern hordes at bay  
are not so different from the Han  
that had the beacons pour their endless  
warning plumes of smoke to say:  
brutal are the long campaigns: they prey

on men, on battlefields, where death's delay  
is never long, where to the sky  
the broken, scattered horses bray.

Their owner's innards feed the kite and crow,  
as, with a giblest-laden beak,  
to dried-up trees each takes its way.

With soldier's blood bedaubed, the grasses may  
betoken generals no less lost than they.

All parties to this emptiness  
are soldiers mortal to the fray,  
and men, if wise, avoid these ills  
and seek to find some other way.

#### Comment

Li Bai could turn his hand to most poetry genres, and is here producing his own version of Poem 4C. But now the lines are five characters long, allowing Li Bai to generate greater effect and — being Li Bai — be more specific in his criticism of imperial policies.

Du Fu documents the suffering of the common people during the An Lushan Rebellion without being overly moralistic. Li Bai is more self-centered, and less respectful of authority. The common soldier is lumped together with the general, and both are deluded in their search for victory. Where Du Fu will soften criticism by alluding to the Han expansionist policies, Li Bai makes no bones about attacking the moral emptiness of the Tang emperors. Du Fu did not make a good courtier, and Li Bai, who never even deigned to sit the civil service examinations, was expelled from court on several occasions.

As before, the Sanggan river lies 60 miles south of present-day Datong in Shanxi province. The Conghe is in Xinjiang. Conghe, Tiaozhi and Tianshan were frontier posts. Qin is the first Chinese empire, and Xiongnu is the general name given to barbarians: they were in fact several distinct races of steppe peoples, but all given to marauding the settled Chinese lands.

Li Bai's rewriting of poem 4B. It is not restricted to the Yuefu four-character line, and is more critical of martial policies than its Han original. The Sanggan River lies 60 miles south of present-day Datong in Shanxi province. The Conghe is in Xinjiang. Conghe, Tiaozhi and Tianshan were frontier posts. Kites feed off carrion. The Qin emperor Shihuang sent Meng Tian north to build the Great Wall that would keep out the Xiongnu (Huns). We have represented 5 character lines by pentameters and 7 character lines by two tetrameters.

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25. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Li Bai: (701-62): Drinking Alone by  
Moonlight

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		
	花間一壺酒 (huā jiān yī hú jiǔ)		
1	花間一壺酒 (huā jiān yī hú jiǔ)	x	flower among one jug wine
2	獨酌無相親 (dú zhuó wú xiāng qīn)	a	alone drink not-have each-other intimate
3	舉杯邀明月 (jǔ bēi yāo míng yuè)	x	lift cup invite bright moon
4	對影成三人 (duì yǐng chéng sān rén)	a	match-together shadow become three person
5	月既不解飲 (yuè jì bù jiě yǐn)	x	moon both-and not understand drink
6	影隨我身 (yǐng tú suí wǒ shēn)	a	shadow disciple follow my body
7	暫伴月將影 (zàn bàn yuè jiāng yǐng)	x	for-now companion moon both-and shadow
8	行樂須及春 (xíng lè xū jí chūn)	a	travel pleasure must reach spring
9	我歌月徘徊 (wǒ gē yuè pái huái)	x	I sing moon go-up-and-down
10	我舞影零亂 (wǒ wǔ yǐng líng luàn)	a	I dance shadow in-disorder
11	醒時同交歡 (xǐng shí tóng jiāo huān)	x	sober time in-same exchange happiness
12	醉後各分散 (zuì hòu gè fēn sàn)	a	intoxicated afterwards each separate scatter
13	永結無情遊 (yǒng jié wú qíng yóu)	x	forever contract not-have feelings wander
14	相期邈雲漢 (xiāng qī miǎo yún hàn)	a	echo make-date distant Milky Way

With flowers I tipple at this pot of wine.  
I'm on my own, and quite companionless:  
I raise a glass and ask the round bright moon  
to mingle shadows with me, make up three.  
But moon dislikes such antics, and my own  
poor shadow bobs along quite stupidly.  
And so I'll settle now for self and shadow,  
and in this happy shape at least make spring.

The moon goes up and down, but if I dance  
my shadow lurches round alarmingly.  
So, though when drunk we are the best of friends,  
we go off lost when sober, separately.  
But let us wander nonetheless and meet  
ourselves in Silver River, moon and me.

## Comment

Of an independent and bohemian nature, and well-off, Li Bai never sat the official examinations, nor bothered much about finding a position, but by impressing the many scholars who befriended him with his poetry, he was brought to court notice, and in 742 appeared before Emperor Xuanzong. He became a member of the Hanlin Academy, an appointment that lasted only two years. The association between China's most gifted literary magician and its dilettante emperor was not a happy one, and Li Bai was exiled from court on several occasions, the result of dubious political connections and the poet's distaste for tradition and authority.

Li Bai continued his wanderings, and in this poem is indulging in his favourite occupation: wine tipping. There are many such poems from Li Bai, often with the moon for company and indulging in wild fantasy: Silver River is the Milky Way.

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## 26. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Li Bai: River Merchants' Wife

Line	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Rhyme	Word-for-Word Rendering
	长干行 (cháng gān xíng)		Changan Song
1	妾发初覆额 (qiè fà chū fù é)	a	concubine hair young cover forehead
2	折花门前剧 (zhē huā mén qián jù)	b	collect flower gate in_front_of play
3	郎骑竹马来 (láng qí zhú mǎ lái)	a	young_man ride bamboo horse come
4	绕床弄青梅 (rào chuáng nòng qīng méi)	a	around trellis play blue plums
5	同居长干里 (tóng jū cháng gān lǐ)	a	together reside Chang Gan village
6	两小无嫌猜 (liǎng xiǎo wú xián cāi)	a	couple small have_no hate conjecture
7	十四为君妇 (shí sì wéi jūn fù)	b	fourteen be sovereign wife
8	羞颜未尝开 (xiū yán wèi cháng kāi)	a	shy face not_yet experience initiate
9	低头向暗壁 (dī tóu xiàng àn bì)	a	hang head towards dark wall
10	千唤不一回 (qiān huàn bù yī huí)	a	thousand call not one turn_round
11	十五始展眉 (shí wǔ shǐ zhǎn méi)	a	fifteen only_then extend eyebrows
12	愿同尘与灰 (yuàn tóng chén yǔ huī)	a	desire together_with ashes with ashes
13	常存抱柱信 (cháng cún bào zhù xìn)	x	normal live embrace lean_on trust
14	岂上望夫台? (qǐ shàng wàng fū tái)	a	how go_up hope husband tower
15	十六君远行 (shí liù jūn yuǎn xíng)	x	sixteen sovereign distant travel
16	瞿塘滟滪堆 (qú táng yàn yù duī)	a	Ju embankment overflowing in_advance pile_up
17	五月不可触 (wǔ yuè bù kě chù)	b	five month no may touch
18	猿声天上哀 (yuán shēng tiān shàng āi)	a	ape sound sky send_up mournful
19	门前迟行迹 (mén qián chí xíng jì)	a	gate in_front_of slow go track
20	一一生绿苔 (yī yī shēng lǜ tái)	a	one one lifetime green moss
21	苔深不能扫 (tái shēn bù néng sǎo)	c	moss deep not able clear_away
22	落叶秋风早 (luò yè qiū fēng zǎo)	c	fall leaf autumn wind soon
23	八月蝴蝶来 (or: 黄) (bā yuè hú dié lái)	a	eight month butterfly butterfly returning
24	双飞西园草 (shuāng fēi xī yuán cǎo)	c	couple dart westward garden grass
25	感此伤妾心 (gǎn cǐ shāng qiè xīn)	x	feel then wound concubine heart
26	坐愁红颜老 (zuò chóu hóng yán lǎo)	c	base worry_about blush face experienced
27	早晚下三巴 (zǎo wǎn xià sān bā)	d	soon evening under San Ba
28	预将书报家 (yù jiāng shū bào jiā)	d	prepare future letter announce family
29	相迎不道远 (xiāng yíng bù dào yuǎn)	x	mutual welcome not way far
30	直至长风沙 (zhí zhì cháng fēng shā)	d	high very long Chang Feng Sha

How simple it was, and my hair too,  
picking at flowers as the spring comes;  
and you riding about on a bamboo  
horse; playing together, eating plums.

Two small people: nothing to contend  
with, in quiet Chang Gan to day's end.  
All this at fourteen made one with you.  
Married to my lord: it was not the same.  
Who was your concubine answering to  
10. the thousand times you called her name?

I turned to the wall, and a whole year passed  
before my being would be wholly yours —  
dust of your dust while all things last,  
hope of your happiness, with never cause

to seek for another. Then one short year:  
at sixteen I sat in the marriage bed  
alone as the water. I could hear  
the sorrowing of gibbons overhead.

How long your prints on the path stayed bare!  
20. I looked out forever from the lookout tower,  
but could not imagine you travelling there,  
past the Qutang reefs, in the torrent's power.

Now thick are the mosses; the gate stays shut.  
I sit in the sunshine as the wind grieves.  
In their dallying couples the butterflies cut  
the deeper in me than yellowing leaves.

Send word of your coming and I will meet  
you at Chang-feng Sha, past San Ba walls.  
Endless the water and your looks entreat  
30. and hurt me still as each evening falls.

## Comment

Some 1,100 of Li Bai's poems survive, and are noted for rich fantasy, brilliant improvisation, unmatched technical felicity, and for Taoist and alchemical leanings — the Tao, unknown and unfathomable, lying behind the flow of pattern and process in the universe, which we can abstract into concepts but not fully comprehend. Li Bai made few innovations but seemed effortlessly to seize what was available to poets at the time.

He was often at his best when speaking in other voices, here in the person of the River Merchant's wife. This is a poem made famous in the west by Ezra Pound, and like his translation, my rendering is rather free, especially towards the end. In fact, there have been many translations, often more faithful to the original text, but not over successful as poetry.

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comprehend. Li Bai made few innovations but seemed effortlessly to seize what was available to poets at the time.

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One approach always open to literary translations is to ignore the forms of Chinese poetry and simply write something that conveys the meaning as effectively as possible. That was Sin-wai Chan's view, who remarked "It is imperative to realize that as far as poetry translation is concerned, form cannot be reproduced." The distinguished translator Stephen Owen stated "There is also no way to echo the forms of Chinese poetry and still produce translations that are accurate and readable." That is the approach of Frederick Turner, who has produced pleasing translations in simple English verse forms: the concluding section of his Li Bai's *Song of Chang Gan*:

I still can see your tracks beside the doorway.  
But now they're almost covered up with moss  
So deep, it is forbidden now to sweep them,  
And early autumn winds blow leaves across.

In August two bright butterflies together  
Fluttered above the western garden grass;  
It hurts me that my heart is full of worry,  
My pretty face grows old within the glass.

When you reach Chongqin, write to me and tell me  
How soon you're coming home, and how you are,  
And I'll come out and meet you on your journey,  
Even if it's as far as Chang Feng Sha.

Your woman first, hair covering forehead,  
playing at gate and picking flowers:  
there you came riding on your bamboo horse,  
throwing blue plums round the trellised house.  
Just two small people, not vexed or worried,  
in Chang Gan village, and always close.

At fourteen I surrendered whatever powers  
I had to be yours, but only was  
shy and embarrassed, could not turn my head  
10. however you called, if a thousand times.

At fifteen that stopped; I smoothed my brows,  
desired to be one with you: as life consumes  
that which is mine into ash with yours,  
nor climb to the tower with lookout cause.

15. At sixteen my lord on distant journey  
far to the reefs in the Qutang gorge  
that no one may cross in the hot June hours:  
the monkeys sound sorrowful in the skies.

The marks you left in your unhurried  
20. going are green as moss inset in floors:  
whatever that moss, too thick to clear  
as leaves and the wind come soon this year.

Eight months: the butterflies have me gaze  
on the heart and its hurting, make me stare  
on couples fled westward over orchard grass:  
I find myself blushing, as though you're near.

Soon it is evening at far San Ba.  
Send me a letter, tell me arrival where:  
wherever you go is my homeward there,  
30. though great the distance to Changfengsha.

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## 27. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Li Bai: Questioning the moon with a cup of wine in my hand

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for Word Rendering
	把酒問月 (bǎ jiǔ wèn yuè)		raise wine-cup ask moon
1	青天有月來幾時? (qīng tiān yǒu yuè lái jǐ shí)	a	blue sky there-is moon arrive how much time
2	我今停盃一問之 (wǒ jīn tíng bēi yī wèn zhī.)	a	I now stop cup one ask it
3	人攀明月不可得 (rén pān míng yuè bùkě dé.)	x	person claim bright moon can not obtain
4	月行却與人相隨 (yuè xíng què yǔ rén xiāng suí.)	a	moon go however together-with person each-other follow
5	皎如飛鏡臨丹闕 (jiǎo rú fēi jìng lín dān què.)	b	bright like fly mirror neighbourhood vermilion palace-gate
6	綠煙滅盡青燐發 (lǜ yān miè jìn qīng huī fā.)	x	green mist destroy use-up pure radiant emit
7	但見宵從海上來 (dàn jiàn xiāo cóng hǎi shàng lái)	b	but see night from ocean above arrive
8	寧知曉向雲間沒 (níng zhī xiǎo xiàng yún jiān méi.)	b	peaceful know dawn towards cloud interval drown
9	玉兔搗藥秋復春 (yù tù dǎo yào qiū fù chūn)	c	jade rabbit pound drug autumn return spring
10	姮娥孤理誰憐? (héng é gū lǐ shéi lián?)	c	lady-of-moon lonely rest together-with who pity
11	今人不見古時月 (jīn rén bù jiàn gǔ shí yuè)	x	modern people not see ancient period moon
12	今月曾經照古人 (jīn yuè céng jīng zhào gǔ rén)	c	modern moon already path shine ancient people
13	古人今人若流水 (gǔ rén jīn rén ruò liú shuǐ)	d	ancient people modern people like flow water
14	共看明月皆如此 (gòng kàn míng yuè jiē rú cǐ)	d	share see bright moon all-cases in-this way
15	唯願當歌兼酒時 (wéi yuàn dāng gē duì jiǔ shí)	d	only hope act song correct wine time
16	月光常照金樽裡 (yuè guāng cháng zhào jīn zūn lǐ)	d	moon-light always shine gold cup inside

In the deep blue sky there hangs the moon,  
 and what it's doing there, I ask.  
 I'll down my cup and will not drink  
 until it says how it's inclined.  
 If those who'd pull the bright moon down  
 and find such things elude their grasp,  
 would let it have its peaceful way,  
 the moon will follow on behind.

It's like a floating mirror, gazes  
 on vermilion palace gates.  
 When greenish mists have cleared away  
 it blazes out with all its fire.  
 But from the sea at night you'll see  
 most splendidly its sovereign states.  
 For all that curiously at dawn  
 the clouds can force it to retire.

The white hare's pounding at his drugs,  
 and autumn turns to spring again.  
 10. The moon's a hermit, lives alone  
 with solitude for company.  
 Today, in fact, no one can see  
 the ancient moon as it was then.

But that same moon shone down on them,  
on mundane, plain reality.

The modern and the ancient folk  
are both like water, flow away.  
And we who walk this way with moon,  
intoxicated with its shine,  
must only ask that wine and song  
be not long absent, and behave  
as moonlight does, that pours on down  
to shimmer in our golden wine.

### Comment

Another of Li Bai's drinking songs, again widely known and translated, but here with a stronger emotive message. All things on the earth pass away, though the same moon looks down on us. The hare or moon rabbit is fancifully seen in the dark patches of the moon. The Chinese also recognise a beautiful goddess in the moon, who is remembered for stealing an elixir of immortality from her husband, Hou Yi. As told in the Mid-Autumn Festival, Hou Yi's pursuit was prevented by the rabbit, who would not let the irate husband pass until he made up with his wife.

Li Bai was born in the Gang Xiao Sheng territory of China, and, when five years old, followed his merchant father to Sichuan. He may well have been of central Asian stock, or a descendent of an unsuccessful rival for the dragon throne. Li Bai seems to have had a happy childhood: he read the classics, composed poetry, dabbled in astrological and metaphysical writings, and learnt to ride, hunt and fence. By his swordsmanship he claimed to have killed several men in chivalrous escapades.

Li Bai was married four times, first to the granddaughter of a former government minister, with whom he stayed in Anlu (Hubei) for some ten years. In 744, wandering again, he was married a second time, to a fellow poet in what now is the Liangyuan District of Henan. The two other marriages seem to have been less respectable, to a Mingyue slave and to a woman into whose house Li Bai moved (rather than the other way round, which was usual in China). Children were born, but Li Bai continued his itinerant ways: drinking, exchanging poems, maintaining his independence until swept up in events of the An Lushan Rebellion.

Du Fu is often seen as the greater poet: a more humane man, who also made innovations in diction and line control that were useful later. Many Chinese prefer

Li Bai, however — for his astonishing technical gifts and mercurial spirit. Even in translation those qualities should come over. Indeed it is one of the curiosities of translation, that while bad work can ruin a good original, good translations generally come from good originals. In that light, the studied correctness of Du Fu's work often seems a little wooden, whereas Li Bai is never so.

In 755, Li joined the force led by the emperor's sixteenth son, Prince Lin, just surviving subsequent capture and a death sentence when the old emperor died. There are many legends surrounding Li Bai's death, but he probably died at Dangtu, possibly of cirrhosis of the liver or mercury poisoning, in Anhui province in 762.

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## 28. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Tang: Wang Wei

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word for Word Rendering
	桃源行 (táo yuán xíng)		peach source journey
1	漁舟逐水愛山春 (yú zhōu zhú shuǐ ài shān chūn)	a	fishing/fisherman boat pursue river love mountain spring
2	兩岸桃花古石津 (liǎng àn táo huā jiǎ gǔ jīn)	a	both bank peach blossom press/between old ferry-crossing
3	坐看紅樹不知遠 (zuò kàn hóng shù bù zhī yuǎn)	a	sit see red tree not know far
4	行盡青溪不見人 (xíng jìn qīng xī bù jiàn rén)	a	travel end green/blue creek not see/meet person
5	山口潛行欲覓嶼 (shān kǒu qián xíng yù wēi yù)	b	mountain pass secret/hidden travel start bay/cove bay/cove
6	山開曉望空平陸 (shān kāi xiǎo wàng xuán píng lù)	b	mountain open vast gaze revolve flat land
7	遙看一處蒼巖樹 (yáo kàn yī chù cāng yán shù)	b	distant look one place collect cloud tree
8	近入千家散花竹 (jìn rù qiān jiā sǎn huā zhú)	b	near enter thousand home scattered flower bamboo
9	樵客初傳漢姓名 (qiāo kè chū chuān hàn xìng míng)	c	gather-wood guest first transmit Han name surname
10	居人未改秦衣服 (jū rén wèi gǎi qín yī fú)	b	inhabitant not yet change Qin clothes
11	居人共住武陵源 (jū rén gòng zhù wǔ líng yuán)	d	inhabitant together live Wuling source
12	還從外走田園 (hái cóng wài zǒu tián yuán)	d	still from thing exterior raise field garden/countryside
13	明月松下房櫺靜 (yuè míng sōng xià fāng líng jìng)	c	moon bright pine below/arrive house bar/window quiet
14	日出雲中雞犬聲 (rì chū yún zhōng jī quǎn shēng)	d	sun rise cloud among chicken dog noise
15	驚聞俗客爭來集 (jīng wén sú kè zhēng lái jí)	e	scared hear common visitor strive/argue/how come collect
16	競逐強家更住邑 (jìng zhuī qiáng jiā gèng zhù yì)	e	compete draw still-more home ask all village/city
17	平明闌掃花開 (píng míng lán sǎo huā kāi)	x	calm bright village alley clean/sweep flower open/start
18	薄暮漁人起水入 (bó mù yú qiāo chéng shuǐ rù)	b	dusk gather-wood fisherman ride/use river enter
19	初因避地去人間 (chū yīn bì dì qù rén jiān)	d	at-first cause avoid earth go person among
20	及至名山遂不還 (jí zhì chéng xiān suì bù huán)	d	by-time-that become immortal thereupon not return
21	峽裏誰知有人事 (xiá lǐ shuí zhī yǒu rén shì)	e	gorge interior who know exist person affair
22	世中遙望空雲山 (shì zhōng yáo wàng kōng yún shān)	d	world among distant gaze sky cloud mountain
23	不疑遊漢境聞見 (bù yí yóu hàn jìng wén jiàn)	d	not doubt/suspect spirit border/territory difficult hear see
24	塵心未盡思鄉縣 (chén xīn wèi jìn sī xiāng xiàn)	d	earth/dust heart/mind not-yet exhaust think home county
25	出門無復問山水 (chū mén wú fù wèn shān shuǐ)	e	leave cave not discuss separation mountain river
26	辭家終擬長遊沅 (cí jiā zhōng nǐ cháng yóu yuán)	d	resign home finish plan length roam superfluous
27	自謂經過聲不迷 (zì wèi jīng guò shēng bù mí)	e	self say pass-through by-means-of former not bewildered
28	安知峯壑今來變 (ān zhī fēng hè jīn lái biàn)	d	secure aware summit gully today come change
29	當時只記入山深 (dāng shí zhǐ jì rù shān shēn)	a	then time only remember enter mountain depth
30	青溪幾度到雲林 (qīng xī jǐ dù dào yún lín)	a	green/blue creek how-many pass until cloud forest
31	春來處處桃花水 (chūn lái chù chù táo huā shuǐ)	e	spring arrive everywhere exist peach blossom water
32	不辨山原處處尋 (bù biàn shān yuán chù chù xún)	a	not recognize immortal source what place search

To springtime in the mountains gladly  
 press the boats of fisher-folk,  
 on both the ancient ferry banks  
 bloom rich flowerings of the peach  
 but, sat, beguiled by those red trees,  
 they never know how far they go:  
 and to the end of that green stream  
 will meet with no one on their reach.

Yet one will find a mountain pass  
 to enter through a secret cove.  
 And thereupon the mountain walls  
 fall back to give a wider view,  
 and at one place and distantly  
 the trees are gathered in with clouds,  
 and near the entrance are a thousand  
 homes, with flowers and bamboo.

And here he meets a forester  
who takes his surname from the Han,  
a resident and dressed in clothes  
here plain unaltered from the Qin.  
They live together, still are found  
about the Wuling river source:  
for having come from far beyond  
they tend the country more within.

Bright the moon and pines: beneath  
are house and windows breathing calm.  
With cloudy sunrise came the dog  
and chicken cluckings just the same:  
and then the people, at first wary,  
compete to draw him to their house:  
congregating, all of them, to ask  
the home and county whence he came.

The village streets are cleanly swept,  
and free of any opening flowers.  
The river brought the woods- and fisher-men  
back with evening on the turn,  
avoiding from the first the earth  
and all the fretful people there:  
they had indeed become immortals  
and saw no reason to return.

And, deep within that gorge, who knew  
that there existed other folk  
who, in that far-off world, would gaze  
on empty cloud and mountain air?  
No doubt the borders of the spirit  
world are hard to ascertain or hear  
and in that world it was enough  
to think of village homestead there.

He left the place, did not disclose  
what river and the mountain held,  
returning home had journeys planned  
that proved bewilderment and more.  
Although he could, and well, remember  
that earlier route he'd have to take,  
he found the mountain and the river  
discretely other than before.

That interlude he long recalls,  
the cove that led to mountain depths.  
How many blue-green streams he passes  
beneath the clouds and forest rise.  
The spring arrives, and everywhere  
are peach blooms scattered on the stream,  
but path to those immortals lies  
beyond what men can recognize.

#### Comment

Modest, supremely gifted but detached from life, Wang Wei was the model scholar official, and his 400 poems are in many anthologies. Wang was a man of outstanding talents — courtier, administrator, poet, calligrapher, musician and painter — enjoying a long and successful career in service, though he was happiest in monasteries and at his country home in the Changnan hills. Buddhist attitudes colour his poetry, but Wang never preaches or illustrates points of doctrine.

The poem featured here is an early one, developing a theme of Tao Yuanming's, an imagined journey to the Celestial World ('Peach Blossom Spring'), and is Buddhist only in the suggestion of worlds within worlds, i.e. that the apprehensions of our everyday senses are passing illusions. Wang probably belonged to the Chan persuasion of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which believed that a Buddha-like openness could be reached by the enlightened mind simply as it was, without intervening concepts or laborious devotional practices — a view with some parallels to Rimbaud's derangement of the senses and the French Symbolists generally.

The peach carries special significance for the Chinese, symbolising a young women's cheeks, marriage and the springtime, and indeed the head of the Eight Immortals is often portrayed holding the fruit. The poem is self-explanatory when Tao Yuanming's poem is known, but we should note that this hidden world, secure from the political turmoil of Tao Yuanming's time, and which Wang Wei would fondly look back on in the terrible years of the An Lushan Rebellion, is one where time stands still ('free of any opening flowers') and which the inhabitants wish to keep from general knowledge. The hidden world is not a blueprint for social change, resembling all Chinese villages ('the dog and chicken hubbub just the same') but only a personal refuge where the reference to 'unaltered from the Qin' suggests escape from the manifest cruelties of the first Chinese emperor. The traveller returns and betrays the secret, but the hidden world is never found again because this Shangri-la exists only on the spiritual plane, by looking on the world with the right attitudes. As Daoists insist, awareness can only be attained without intention: those who search deliberately will not find the way. In this sense, all paradises are remembered paradises.

The journey to an enchanted world is not limited to Chinese poetry, of course: it crops up frequently in children's stories, and in literature from Homer's *Odyssey* to Alain Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes*.

Wang Wei was also a noted painter, and painters in China were more concerned with portraying essences of places than topographic exactitudes. Behind the wind-stunted pines and soaring limestone cliffs were both magnificence and nothingness, that Buddhist dichotomy we shall meet again in Wang's *The Deer Park Enclosure*, poem 12D. None of Wang Wei's paintings survive, but the nostalgia that pervades this present poem, 7F, is also a feature of the backward-looking Ming dynasty, from which come most of the early landscape paintings that we possess. The arts in China are interrelated, and themes are often picked up centuries later which to western eyes are no more than essences, inclinations, shared trains of thought. Suggestion, allusion, vague evocations: these aspects have to be present for our renderings to be valid translations.

It is possible to squeeze this piece as an hexameter with extra syllables, i.e. technically 'free verse', but the measure is ungainly:

The fisherman's boat loves the spring in the mountains:  
On both banks are peach blossoms at the old crossing place.  
How far had he travelled, then, gazing at the pink-coloured trees?  
Along the blue waters he saw no one, not a mortal face.

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## 29. UNREGULATED SHI VERSE: Du Fu: Official at Stone Moat Village

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	陕县有石壕镇 (xiá xiàn yǒu shí háo zhèn)		shan county exist stone moat village
1	暮投石壕村 (mù tóu shí háo cūn)	a	evening refuge stone moat village
2	有吏夜捉人 (yǒu lì yè zhuō rén)	a	exist functionary night catch people
3	老翁踰墙走 (lǎo wēng yú qiáng zǒu)	x	old man cross wall go
4	老妇出门看 (lǎo fù chū mén kàn)	a	old woman go-out door look
5	吏呼一何怒 (lì hū yī hé nù)	b	functionary call-out all what anger
6	妇啼一何苦 (fù tí yī hé kǔ)	b	woman weep all why bother?
7	听妇前致词 (tīng fù qián zhì cí)	x	hear woman forward make speech
8	三男戍城戍 (sān nán yè chéng shù)	b	three male Ye city-wall garison
9	一男附书至 (yī nán fù shū zhì)	c	one male add letter arrive
10	二男新战死 (èr nán xīn zhàn sǐ)	c	two male new battle die
11	存者且偷生 (cún zhě qiě tōu shēng)	x	survive one who-is without purpose
12	死者长已矣 (sǐ zhě cháng yǐ yǐ)	c	deadest long already (end)
13	室中更无人 (shì zhōng gēng wú rén)	a	room within even-more no person
14	惟有乳下孙 (wéi yǒu rǔ xià sūn)	x	only exist breast down grandson
15	有孙母未去 (yǒu sūn mǔ wèi qù)	b	exist grandson mother not-yet go
16	出入无完裙 (chū rù wú wán qún)	a	go-out enter not whole skirt
17	老妪力虽衰 (lǎo yù lì suī shuāi)	x	old woman strength although decline
18	请人吏夜回 (qǐng cóng lì yè guī)	e	ask through functionary night return
19	急应河阳役 (jí yīng hé yáng yì)	c	urgent answers Heyang military-service
20	犹得备晨炊 (yóu dé bèi chén chuī)	e	as-if must prepare morning food
21	夜久语声绝 (yè jiǔ yǔ shēng jué)	d	night long speech sound disappear
22	如闻泣幽咽 (rú wén qì yōu yè)	x	as-if hear sob remote choke (in crying)
23	天明登前途 (tiān míng dēng qián tú)	b	sky bright record up front route
24	独与老翁别 (dú yǔ lǎo wēng bié)	d	alone and old man leave

At Stone Moat village I'd put up for the night.  
 Officials came from the recruiting corps.  
 At once the old man dropped behind a wall,  
 but left his woman stood there at the door.

Peremptory, the sergeant barked out orders.  
 The woman motioned they had all gone hence.  
 Conscripted everyone, she wailed, my three  
 good sons have garrisoned your Ye's defence.

And only one is left to sometimes write,  
 to say his brothers died not long ago.  
 The living have a short-term hold on life,  
 and those now gone from us stay always so.

So look around, good sir: there's no one left,  
except my grandson, suckling at the breast.  
His mother is not placed to go, has not  
the one good skirt to make her decent dressed.

Although the strength I had is largely gone,  
I will, commanded, go with you tonight  
to meet that need you have at Heyang base:  
I'll see the morning's meal is got out right.

All night I seemed to hear her wailing on  
till distance swallowed up each sob and groan.  
And on that road, when morning brightness came,  
I left an old man stood there on his own.

#### Comment

Du Fu, often seen as China's greatest poet, had an outwardly unsuccessful career, one cursed by the An Lushan Rebellion, imperial disfavour, ill health and bouts of poverty. Though Du Fu found his vocation in brooding on the sufferings of the common people, he too led an itinerant life, at the mercy of famine and the hazards of war. Here he is drawing parallels: faced with conscription, the old man abandons his wife, and is abandoned by Du Fu in turn. These were desperate times.

Du Fu wrote from life, on whatever came into his thoughts, and his language, as I've represented here, could be direct and down-to-earth. The poetry lies not in rhetorical flourishes or leaps of imagination, but in the exact placing of words, a subtlety that is difficult to convey in English, and which escaped the understanding of his contemporaries.

Du Fu has been canonized as China's greatest poet, and the embodiment of true Confucian values: notably his loyalty to the empire, his repeated and unwelcome attempts to point out the consequences of unwise political decisions, and his empathy with the poorer classes, particularly those uprooted, conscripted and killed during the terrible An Lushan rebellion of 755-763.

The siege of Ye was a fiasco, in which troops were needlessly wasted, as they were in many battles of the Rebellion, under divided loyalties and inept generals. Du rarely comments, but expects characters to live up to their responsibilities.

There are many contradictions in Du's life. He was thwarted from gaining office in Xuanzong's reign, but not threatened by later reprisals. The rebellion brought him close to destitution, but at other times he was comfortable off, owning farms, fields and orchards. Nonetheless, food was a constant preoccupation, in keeping his family alive and in his poetry. His health, as he often reminds us, was never

good: from his thirties he suffered from diabetes, inflammation of the lungs, asthma, fevers, and 'the aches and pains of old age'. Few Chinese poets suffered so many changes in life, or has written on so many everyday topics: 1400 of his poems survive, exceptionally fortunate given the circumstances. Du Fu was reinterpreted in the Song dynasty and again in the Ming-Qing transition, when scholars learned to re-experience the poem through Du Fu's eyes, i.e. see the poems less as autonomous, free-standing works of art and more transcriptions of experience shaped by Du's extraordinary control of diction and line structure.

Behind the best of Du Fu's poems lie ethical convictions, a view of how the world should work, but Du Fu generally lets these considerations rise out of the poem, and doesn't moralise. There can be a good deal of irony in his work, sometimes smiling, sometimes bitter, but Du adopts many moods and is not afraid of laughing at himself.

Du Fu seems to have written from an early age but much of this work has been lost. He was conscientious poet, revising and turning the 'diary jottings' into a many-faceted autobiography. After the An Lushan Rebellion, Du Fu took his family and his scrolls of poem on a long journey, from the region around the capitals to the bleak northwest, then down through the mountains in a harrowing journey to Chengdu, and, later, on down the Yangzi to Kuizhou, Jiangling, and across Lake Dongti down to Changsha in Hu'nan. All these journeys, as the others before them, in prosperity and hardship, left their mark on Du Fu's work, allowing him to be called the most universal of poets. {4}

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### 30.. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Du Fu: Ballad of the War Waggons

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)	Word-for-Word Rendering
	兵車行 (bīng jū xíng )	army chariot behaviour
1	車轢轢 (chē lín lín)	x cart rumble rumble
2	馬蕭蕭 (mǎ xiāo xiāo)	a horse miserable miserable
3	行人弓箭各在腰 (xíng rén gōng jiàn gè zài yāo)	a walk person bow arrow each at waist
4	爺孃妻子走相送 (yè niáng qī zǐ zǒu xiāng sòng)	x grandfather mother wife children walk mutually see-off
5	塵埃不見咸陽橋 (chén āi bú jiàn xiān yáng qiáo)	a dirt dust not see Xianyang bridge
6	牽衣頓足攔道哭 (qiān yī dùn zú lán dào kū)	x lead dress stop foot block way weep
7	哭聲直上干雲霄 (kū shēng zhí shàng gān yún xiāo)	a weap sound straight above in-vain cloud heavens
8	道旁過者問行人 (dào páng guò zhě wèn xíng rén)	b path beside ask thus walking person
9	行人但云點行頻 (xíng rén dàn yún diǎn xíng pín)	b walking person yet say point go frequently
10	或從十五北防河 (huò cóng shí wǔ běi fāng hé)	x maybe join 15 north protect river
11	便至四十西營田 (biàn zhì sì shí xī yíng tián)	c then until 40 west camp field
12	去時里正與裏頭 (qù shí lǐ zhèng yǔ guǒ tóu)	d go when lining first-month give wrap head
13	歸來頭白還戍邊 (guī lái tóu bái hái shù biān)	c return next hair white still garrison border
14	邊亭流血成海水 (biān tíng liú xuè chéng hǎi shuǐ)	e edge pavilion flow blood become ocean water
15	武皇開邊意未已 (wǔ huáng kāi biān yì wèi yǐ)	e Wu emperor start border idea not-yet stop
16	君不聞漢家山東二百州 (jūn bù wén hàn jiā shān dōng èr bǎi zhōu)	d lord not hear Han home mountain 200 district
17	千村萬落生荊杞 (qiān cūn wàn luò shēng jīng qǐ)	e 1000 village 10,000 settlement grow bramble willow
18	縱有健婦把鋤犁 (zòng yǒu jiàn fù bǎ chú lí)	f north-south exist healthy women hold hoe plough
19	禾生隴畝無東西 (hé shēng lǒng mǔ wú dōng xī)	f grain grow Gansu field not-have east west
20	況復秦兵耐苦戰 (kuàng fù qín bīng nài kǔ zhàn)	x moreover repeat Qin soldier tolerate bitter war
21	被驅不異犬與雞 (bèi qū bú yì quǎn yǔ jī)	f meet drive not different dog and chicken
22	長者雖有問 (zhǎng zhě suī yǒu wèn)	g long this although have question
23	役夫敢申恨 (yì fū gǎn shēn hèn)	g forced-labour he dare explain hate/regret
24	且如今年冬 (qiě rú jīn nián dōng)	x moreover as-if today year winter
25	未休關西卒 (wèi xiū guān xī zú)	h not-yet stop Guanxi soldier
26	縣官急索租 (xiàn guān jí suǒ zū)	h county official pressing demand tax
27	租稅從何出 (zū shuì cóng hé chū)	h rent tax from how come?
28	信知生男惡 (xìn zhī shēng nán è)	x at-random be-aware birth male ashamed
29	生女猶得嫁比鄰 (shēng nǚ yóu dé jià bǐ lín)	x birth female still get marry-off daughter close neighbour
30	生男埋沒隨百草 (shēng nán mái mò suí bǎi cǎo)	x birth male bury not follow hundred grass/weed
31	君不見青海頭 (jūn bù jiàn qīng hǎi tóu)	d lord not see Qing-lake side
32	古來白骨無人收 (gǔ lái bái gǔ wú rén shōu)	d ancient come white bone not-have person receive
33	新鬼煩冤舊鬼哭 (xīn guǐ fán yuān jiù guǐ kū)	h new ghost trouble injustice former ghost cry
34	天陰雨濕聲啾啾 (tiān yīn yǔ shī shēng jiū jiū)	h sky overcast rain wet sound wailing wailing

Loud the army wagons go,  
less the horses, tired and slow.

All watch the ranks of soldiers march  
with bow and quiver clipped to waist,  
whole families to see them off,  
with old, the children, womenfolk.  
with such a violent set about  
that Xianyang bridge lies hid by dust;  
Stamping, howling, tearing clothes  
as though that sheer injustice spoke,  
and cries and lamentations rose  
in indignation to the skies.  
But one there marching by the road  
is stopped and questioned, asked the cause.  
'It's all conscripted men you see,  
increasingly the case these days.

At fifteen we can find ourselves  
despatched to northern river shores.  
and then, till forty, we will guard  
the field-camps stationed in the west.  
The head-scarf, which the chieftain gives  
each one who leaves his village, serves  
to bind white hair if he returns,  
who thence to garrisons is pressed  
at once, post haste, to border forts  
till that great sea of blood extend  
commensurate with Emperor Wu's commands:  
from whose concerns there's never rest.

Have you not heard, good sir: how the Han now hold  
two hundred mountain districts: that's, all told,  
a thousand villages, ten thousand homes  
rough-scattered on the brambled ground,  
where, north to south, their women learn  
to work the plough or drag the hoe,  
where grain that's tossed on Gansu sands  
can never know what's east or west.  
Such is the bitterness of war  
the Qin encountered years ago.  
with soldiers sent as rabid dogs  
on flocks of chickens, cackling on.

Here men must learn to keep their real thoughts in  
whatever the corvee labour they resent.

Last snow, I saw a Guanxi soldier win  
a tax-collector's suit. Respectfully, he said;  
good sir, please tell me how I might begin  
to pay a settlement with nothing earned.  
Today I'm too ashamed to have a son.

Perhaps a daughter I could wed  
to neighbour or to anyone,  
a son will only earn a grave  
beneath the grass of endless plains.

And round Lake Qing are heaped, you've doubtless heard,  
wide tracts of wind-bleached bones, all ways blown,  
unvisited and uninterred,  
where ghosts of new injustices  
must join and jostle with the old:  
grey skies and wailing, ever wailing on  
through rain and wet and endless cold.

#### Comment

There are many contradictions in Du's life. He was thwarted from gaining office in Xuanzong's reign, but not threatened by later reprisals. The Rebellion brought him close to destitution, but at other times he was comfortable off, owning farms, fields and orchards. Nonetheless, food was a constant preoccupation, in keeping his family alive and in his poetry. His health, as he often reminds us, was never good: from his thirties he suffered from diabetes, inflammation of the lungs, asthma, fevers, and 'the aches and pains of old age'. Few Chinese poets suffered so many changes in life, or written on so many everyday topics: 1400 of his poems survive, exceptionally fortunate given the circumstances.

I have greatly simplified the original's rhyme scheme in this translation (xaaxaxabb xcdceedeffx ggxhhhxxddhh), wanting something that represents Du Fu sturdy matter-of-factness.

Du Fu was reinterpreted in the Song dynasty and again in the Ming-Qing transition, when scholars learned to re-experience the poem through Du Fu's eyes, i.e. see the poems less as autonomous, free-standing works of art and more transcriptions of experience shaped by Du's extraordinary control of diction and line structure.

Behind the best of Du Fu's poems lie ethical convictions, a view of how the world should work, but Du Fu generally lets these considerations rise out of the poem, and doesn't moralise. There can be a good deal of irony in his work, sometimes smiling, sometimes bitter, but Du adopts many moods and is not afraid of laughing at himself.

Du Fu seems to have written from an early age but much of this work has been lost. He was conscientious poet, revising and turning the 'diary jottings' into a many-faceted autobiography. After the An Lushan Rebellion, Du Fu took his family and his scrolls of poems on a long journey, from the region around the capitals to the bleak northwest, then down through the mountains in a harrowing journey to Chengdu, and, later, on down the Yangtze to Kuizhou, Jiangling, and across Lake Dongti down to Changsha in Hu'nan. All these journeys, as the others before them, in prosperity and hardship, left their mark on Du Fu's work, allowing him to be called the most universal of poets.

Behind the best of Du Fu's poems lie ethical convictions, a view of how the world should work, but Du Fu generally lets these considerations rise out of the poem, and doesn't moralise. There can be a good deal of irony in his work, sometimes smiling, sometimes bitter, but Du adopts many moods and is not afraid of laughing at himself.

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#### Other Versions

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### 31. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Du Fu: Song of the Beautiful Ladies

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	麗人行 (lì rén xíng)		beautiful person behaviour
1	三月三日天氣新 (sān yuè sān rì tiān qì xīn)	a	three month three day sky weather new
2	長安水邊多麗人 (cháng ān shuǐ biān duō lì rén)	b	Chang An water side many beautiful people
3	態濃意遠淑且真 (tài nóng yì yuǎn shū qiě zhēn)	b	appear dense intention distant virtuous and true
4	肌理細膩骨肉勻 (jī lǐ xì nì gǔ ròu yún)	c	muscle texture slender soft bone flesh uniform
5	繡羅衣裳照暮春 (xiù luó yī cháng zhào mù chūn)	c	embroidery gauze dress skirt evening spring
6	蹙金孔雀銀麒麟 (cù jīn kǒng què yín qí lín)	a	wrinkled gold peacock silver unicorn
7	頭上何所有? (tóu shàng hé suǒ yǒu)	x	head above what place have?
8	翠微葉裏黃鸝青 (cuì wēi hé yè chuí bìn chún)	c	blue-green tiny why-not leaf hang hair lip
9	背後何所見? (bèi hòu hé suǒ jiàn)	x	back behind what-place see?
10	珠圓豔麗稱身 (zhū yān guà wén chēng shēn)	b	pearl press waist hang formal weigh body
11	就中真箇是親 (jiù zhōng yún mù jiāo fáng qīn)	a	already among cloud screen pepper house relative
12	賜名大國與秦 (cì míng dà guó yǔ qín)	a	bestow famous great state Guo and Qin
13	紫袍之峯出翠釜 (zǐ tuó zhī fēng chū cuì fǔ)	x	purple hump of camel go-out blue-green kettle
14	水精之盤行銀鱗 (shuǐ jīng zhī pán xíng sù lín)	a	water essence of plate conduct plain scales
15	犀簪麗久未下 (xī zhū yàn yù jiǔ wèi xià)	x	rhinoceros chopstick loathe satiety long not-yet decline
16	鸞刀裁切空分綸 (luán dāo lǚ qiē kōng fēn lún)	c	phoenix knife strand slice empty numerous classify
17	黃門曉空不動塵 (huáng mén fēi yù bù dòng chén)	b	yellow gate fly bridle not move dust
18	御廚絡繹送八珍 (yù chú luò yì sòng bā zhēn)	b	imperial kitchen twist continuous deliver eight delicacy
19	簫鼓哀吟感鬼神 (xiāo gǔ āi yín gǎn guǐ shén)	b	pipes drum grieve moan sense supernatural beings
20	賓從雜遝實要津 (bīn cóng zá tà shí yào jīn)	a	guests from various mixed real vital saliva/key-post
21	後來鞍馬何逡巡 (hòu lái ān mǎ hé qūn xún)	c	behind arrive saddle horse what hesitate
22	當軒下馬入錦茵 (dāng xuān xià mǎ rù jǐn yīn)	a	act-as high go-down horse person brocade mattress
23	楊花雪落覆白蘋 (yáng huā xuě luò fù bái píng)	x	poplar blossom snow fall receive white apple
24	青鳥飛去銜紅巾 (qīng niǎo fēi qù xián hóng jīn)	a	blue bird fly go link red cloth
25	炙手可熱勢傾倫 (zhì shǒu kě rè shì jué lún)	c	roast hand can heat cut human-relationship
26	慎莫近前丞相真 (shèn mò jìn qián chéng xiāng zhēn)	b	careful do-not approach front prime minister angry

The third month, third day festival,  
 which, with the Chang'an weather fine,  
 has many beauties by the river  
 walking, lingering everywhere.  
 Voluptuous as each appears,  
 they're also distant, upright, pure,  
 however neatly fit the muscles,  
 flesh and bone paraded there.  
 So through this springtime's gathering dusk  
 the gauzy skirts' embroideries  
 undulate with silver unicorns,  
 and peacocks in a golden flare.

And on their heads? Blue-green trinkets  
 that, leaf-like tinkling, reach on down

to play about the spread of lips,  
for so our etiquettes dictate.  
And on their backs they wear? Waistbands  
but here so thickly packed with pearls  
that, graceful as deportments are,  
their slender backs scarce bear the weight.  
But in the cloud-pavilions sat  
are Pepper-Chambered Go and Qin:  
both sisters of the favourite  
and waited on in sumptuous state.

Camel hump in great mauve chunks  
brims from simmering green-jade ewers,  
on crystal platters, water-clear,  
accumulate vast heaps of scales,  
but, surfeited, the diners drop  
the chopsticks wrought of rhino horn,  
and agency of phoenix knives,  
the thinly slicing, also fails.  
From yellow-gated imperial kitchens  
slowly horse-drawn platters come.  
Eight-fold are the delicacies,  
with such a solemn hum around  
of panpipes and of muffled drums,  
that ancestors seem summoned up,  
but guests more salivate to sense  
a rich preferment in the sound.

And then, at length and leisurely,  
a saddled horse arrives, from whence  
a haughty personage steps down  
to his mattressed silk affair.  
The cotton from the willow catkins  
is wind-blown white across the ground,  
as bluebird with a red-cloth message  
briefly flits across the air.  
As heat burns hands, so too much power  
is ruinous to sound relations.  
Be wise, do not approach this first  
of minister's most threatening stare.

#### Comment

Shangsi is the third month, third day festival referred to, and dates back to the Zhou dynasty. Since the Chinese New Year commonly occurs in February, the festival is already well into spring.

The language is more pointed than normal with Du Fu, probably because the poem is an angry satire on the minister Yang Guozhong, written on the occasion of a visit to Twisting River Park of the emperor accompanied by his favourite Lady Yang (Yang guifei), and her two sisters, the Duchesses of Guo and Qin. Chang'an was the most splendid city of its time, but Du Fu, attending in only lowly official capacity, is clearly not impressed by this superfluity and material luxury.

Pepper Chambered is a reference to the imperial harem. Bluebirds traditionally carry messages, and there is a strong hint of sexual impropriety. I have added the 'letter' only implied in the text, and been obliged to use five rhyme words where Du Fu employs only three.

Du Fu had only limited access to the imperial throne, and his advice would not have been welcome. But it was the emperor's infatuation with Yang Guifei, and the latter's dalliance with the treacherous general An Lushan that directly led to the great rebellion destroying the earlier Tang, a disaster from which the empire never fully recovered.

The rebellion tried to replace the Tang with the Yan dynasty, and, though unsuccessful, the bloodshed and property loss were horrific. Eventually, helped by 4,000 mercenaries from Abbasid territories and the Uyghur Khaganate, the Tang regained control, but two thirds of the population had been displaced or killed, and the western territories were permanently lost. Worse, the rebels had to be pardoned and effectively left in power, the Uyghur Turks paid off with annual indemnities, and a much less confident and splendid government left to totter on.

Du Fu could not have seen the scale of these disasters, but always emphasized the Confucian duties to responsible government: ethical lapses led to social problems and then disharmony.

Drafts:

The third day, third month, with the weather fine,  
and the Chang'an beauties by the river side  
are voluptuous in walking with a distant air  
their flesh, bone and muscles have supplied:  
from silvery unicorns on thin gauze skirts  
to embroidered peacocks in a golden pride.

On heads are blue-green adornments that reach on down  
to the lips in leaf-like fashion such forms dictate.  
On backs are waistbands, but so packed with pearls  
that their formal appearances scarce bear the weight,

yet already in tented pavilions the Guo and Qin,  
allied to the famous, sit enthroned in state.

Purple humps of camel in jade-green ewers,  
crystal platters on which fish scales fall:  
rhino-horn chopsticks and phoenix knives  
lie scattered, abandoned as appetites pall.

From imperial kitchens, reigns flying, raise no dust,  
though eight new delicacies are offered, as all around  
the guests salivate to odours, as ancestral ghosts  
are beguiled by the panpipes and drumming sound.

A high one, unnoticed in the jostling crowd,  
steps down from his horse to silk sedan.  
The cotton of willows spreads white on the ground  
as bluebird with a red cloth letter links clan to clan.

Hands can be severed or burned in that haughty stare  
of our imperial minister, stand back; beware.

Or:

The third day, third month, with the weather fine,  
and the Chang'an beauties by the waterside  
walk virtuous and distant, with such veiled intent  
as smooth flesh, bone and muscles have implied.  
The silvery unicorns, gliding on thin gauze skirts,  
join the golden peacocks in patchwork pride.

On heads are blue-green adornments that reach on down  
to the lips in leaf-like fashion such forms dictate.  
On backs are waistbands, but so packed with pearls  
that their formal appearances scarce bear the weight,  
yet already in tented pavilions the Guo and Qin,  
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The cotton of willows spreads white on the ground  
as bluebird with a red cloth letter links clan to clan.

Hands can be severed or burned in that haughty stare  
of our imperial minister, stand back; beware.

Better verse but inappropriate to Unregulated Shi poetry is:

It is the third month festival at Chang'an  
and the beauties by the river in the fresh spring air  
walk virtuous, walk regally, on this third day show  
the delectable entitlements fine bodies wear.  
With silvered unicorns embroidering the thin gauze skirts,  
each shimmering peacock walks in a golden flare.

On their heads? Ringlets, with green-blue shapes  
of glittering adornments in their elaborate hair.  
And on their backs? Waistbands with pearls  
10. more thickly embroidered than slim backs bear,  
and more screened and elevated are the Qin and Guo,  
the kin of the favourite all wait on there.

In jade-green ewers a rich juice boils:  
purple hump of camel, white fish from the pan.

From crystal plates have the horn chopsticks dropped,  
but appetites exceed what stomachs can.

From the royal kitchens, though they raise no dust,  
come eight precious foods, more continuous than  
the rallying of panpipes, or the haunting drums:  
20. so the spirits our ancestors first began.

A high one, unnoticed in the jostling crowd,  
steps from horse to carpet to silk sedan.  
The cotton of willows spreads white on the ground  
as bluebirds bear a red cloth clan to clan.

Illicit and severing is that furious stare:

#### Comment

Shangsi is the third month, third day festival referred to, and dates back to the Zhou dynasty. Since the Chinese New Year commonly occurs in February, the festival is already well into spring.

Du Fu had only limited access to the imperial throne, and his advice would not have been welcome. But it was the emperor's infatuation with Yang Guifei, and the latter's dalliance with the treacherous general An Lushan that directly led to the great rebellion that destroyed the earlier Tang, and from which the empire never fully recovered.

The rebellion tried to replace the Tang with the Yan dynasty, and though unsuccessful, the bloodshed and property loss was horrific. Eventually, helped by 4,000 mercenaries from Abbasid territories and the Uyghur Khaganate, the Tang regained control, but the western territories were permanently lost, the rebels pardoned, non-Chinese parties paid off with large indemnities, and a much less centralised central government ensued.

A reasonably close translation, rhymed on even lines only and emphasizing the luxury and superfluity that would soon undo the Tang court in the An Lushan rebellion. I am not sure of line 24: I read it as something illicit, possibly a letter between hidden parties. Red was the colour of success and prosperity, while the bluebird signified the messenger, and, later, women who stood outside their traditional roles in Chinese families. Other translations are unhelpful here, and I have simply replaced a more literal ending with *Illicit and severing is that furious*

*stare, / so do not approach him, but watch, and beware* with the more explanatory couplet above.

Stephen Owen's more literal version:

#### 2.43. Fair Ladies: A Ballad

On the third day of the third month, the weather is fresh,  
by the waters of Chang'an are many lovely ladies.  
Appearance voluptuous, their mood remote, pure and true,  
their skin's texture, delicate and glossy, flesh and bones well-matched.

Embroidered gossamer gowns shine in the end of spring,  
peacocks done in gold appliqué, unicorns of silver.  
And what do they have on their heads?—  
kingfisher-feather fine leaf tiaras dangling in tresses to lips.

And at their backs what do we see?—  
pearls encumbering waist aprons, fitted perfectly to the body.  
Among them are the cloud-like tents, the kin of the Peppered  
Chambers,  
those granted title to great states, to Guo and to Qin.

The purple hump of a camel comes forth from an azure cauldron,  
and on a platter of crystal pale-white scales go.  
From surfeit the rhino-horn chopsticks long have not been plied,  
16 the threadlike slices of phoenix knives are a-flurry in vain.

The Yellow Gate's flying bridles do not stir the dust,  
in continuous streams the Royal Kitchen sends along eight precious  
foods.  
The mournful droning of pan-pipes and drums stirs the spirits and  
gods,  
attendant guests throng around—this is truly the gate to power.

A saddled horse comes later—how leisurely it advances!<sup>1</sup>  
at the great carriage he gets off the horse and goes in on the brocade  
mat.  
Willow flowers fall like snow covering white water-clover.  
a bluebird flies away, a red kerchief in its beak.  
Heat that can burn the hands, power beyond all measure—  
take care not to come close before the Minister's angry glare!

For Owen, the poems is a satire of the minister Yang Guozhong on the occasion of a visit to Twisting River Park, with the emperor accompanied by his favorite Lady Yang, Yang Yuhuan (Yang Guifei), and her two sisters, the Duchesses of

Guo and Qin. He adds that the “Peppered Chambers,” were called so because pepper was mixed in with the plaster: the reference is to Han harem, and by extension to the Tang. ‘Willow (yang) flowers,’ plays on the family name of the Yangs. The cryptic line may suggest incest between the minister Yang Guozhong and Yang the Noble Consort.

Others are possible. This is close to Du Fu’s rhyme scheme but is rather free:

The third day, third month, with the weather fine,  
and the Chang’an beauties by the waterside  
walk virtuous and distant, with such veiled intent  
as smooth flesh, bone and muscles have implied.  
The silvery unicorns, gliding on thin gauze skirts,  
join the golden peacocks in patchwork pride.

On heads are blue-green adornments that reach on down  
to the lips in leaf-like fashion such forms dictate.  
On backs are waistbands, but so packed with pearls  
that their formal appearances scarce bear the weight,  
yet already in tented pavilions the Guo and Qin,  
allied to the famous, sit enthroned in state.

Purple humps of camel in jade-green ewers,  
crystal platters on which fish scales fall:  
rhino-horn chopsticks and phoenix knives  
lie scattered, abandoned as appetites pall.

From imperial kitchens, reigns flying, raise no dust,  
though eight new delicacies are offered, as all around  
the guests salivate to odours, as ancestral ghosts  
are beguiled by the panpipes and drumming sound.

A high one, unnoticed in the jostling crowd,  
steps down from his horse to silk sedan.  
The cotton of willows spreads white on the ground  
as bluebird with a red cloth letter links clan to clan.

Hands can be severed or burned in that haughty stare  
of our imperial minister, stand back; beware.

Or:

It is the third month festival at Chang’an  
and the beauties by the river in the warm spring air  
walk virtuous, walk regally, and in gestures share  
what their tight-knit bodies breathe aloud.

Woven unicorns and peacocks strut on proud  
as gauze beneath will flaunt the courtesan.  
On their heads? Ringlets, glittering shapes:  
as a kingfisher flares each feathered cloud.  
And on their backs? Waistbands with pearls  
more thickly embroidered than slim backs bear:  
and prouder than these, than the preening swan,  
are the kith of the favourite all wait upon.

From jade-green ewers the juice escapes:  
purple hump of camel, white fish from the pan.  
From crystal plates have the horn chopsticks dropped:  
ornaments lie scattered, stomachs bowed.  
But still from kitchens comes the same rich fare  
despatched by horses and an elaborate care  
extends to the panpipes: their hauntings bear  
an urgency here as only hunger can.

A minister, unnoticed in the jostling crowd,  
steps from horse to carpet to silk sedan.  
The catkins of the willow are white on the ground  
as a bluebird with a letter links clan to clan.  
Power is restless, but the hot words vowed  
burn deeper than the minister's unbridled stare.

A version in rhyming couplets is simply obtained, but is too formal for  
Unregulated Shi:

In Chang'an's Winding River Park the air  
has spring in prospect and the beauties there  
are virtuous and regal, demure and proud:  
voluptuous the bodies, veiled and loud.

As golden peacocks they flare in gauzy drapes,  
or are legendary unicorns in silvery shapes:  
the sheen and ornament of each plumed head  
outdazzles the kingfisher's jades and red.

On each slim back a waistband presses  
satiated with pearls and with heavy dresses.  
The high-awned favourite has brought her kin,  
the favoured dynasties of Guo and Qin.

A great hump of camel, purple, brims from the pot,  
white slivers of fish, whether they will or not  
dally with chopsticks of rhinoceros horn:

in all the appetites are overdrawn.

Continually the riders, though they lift no dust,  
post out with delicacies: in the air a just  
perceptible answering to which pipes and drum  
raise ghosts of the hungry in the crowds which come.

Quietly, high-saddled, the minister steps down  
from his horse to the carpets with a haughty frown.  
Unnoticed, the poplar's frail drift of white  
as a bluebird with red letter flits from sight.

Illicit and severing is that furious stare:  
so do not approach him, but look and beware.

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## 32. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Bai Juyi (772–846) A Flower Is Not A Flower

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
1	花非花 霧非霧 (huā fēi huā, wù fēi wù)	a	flower not-to-be flower, mist not-to-be mist
2	夜半來 天明去 (yè bàn lái, tiān míng qù)	a	night half/midnight come, daybreak go
3	來如春夢 不多時 (lái rú chūn mèng, bù duō shí)	x	come as spring, not much time
4	去似朝雲 無覓處 (qù sì zhāo yún, wú mì chù)	a	go seem morning/imperial-court cloud, not seek/find place

Not long can flower be flower, or mist as mist will stay,  
and midnight's hour of darkness fades at break of day.  
Springs, impetuous and brilliant, will not long delay,  
and clouds, from shining courts of morning, take their way.

### Comment

Bai Juyi had a long and successful career as a Tang official, eventually serving as governor of three important provinces. He is best known for the empathy the poems exhibit for the common people, an empathy that often came close to criticising the Tang administration for its indifference to those whose efforts actually made the empire function.

The poems are usually clear and to the point, but less artless than first appears. There are four elements that compose poetry as a whole, said Bai. Likened to a blossoming fruit tree, the root of poetry is in its emotions, its branches in its wording, its flowers in its rhyme and voice, and lastly its final culmination in the fruits of its meaning.

This poem, which at first appears Regulated Shi is in fact irregular, Non-Regulated Shi, as a glance at the Chinese shows, with lines of 3,3 and 4,3 characters. The text is straightforward — *flower not-to-be flower, mist not-to-be mist: night midnight come, daybreak go: come as spring, not much time: go seem morning/imperial-court cloud, not seek place* — and is simply lamenting the brevity of life. Since 朝 means both morning (zhāo) and imperial court (cháo), I have devised the phrase *shining courts of morning* to cover both meanings and bring out the imagery. The six and seven character lines I have represented as hexameters, adjusting the phrasing to give variety, and rhymed as aaaa, when the original is in fact aaxa. Those who dislike rhyme in Chinese translation should note how well it will work on occasion.

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### 33. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Bai Juyi (772-846) Planting Flowers on the Eastern Slope No. 2 Cai C11.4 [BJYJJJ 2:599–601]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	東坡種花 (dōng pō zhòng huā)		east slope grow flowers
1	東坡春向暮 (dōng pō chūn xiàng mù)	a	east slope spring towards evening
2	樹木今如何 (shù mù jīn rú hé)	x	tree wood now what way
3	漠莫花落盡 (mò mò huā luò jìn)	x	unconcerned unconcerned flower fall end
4	翳葉生初 (yì yè shēng chū)	a	screen screen leaf born at-first
5	每日領童僕 (měi rì lǐng tóng pú)	a	each day lead servant-boy
6	荷鋤乃決渠 (hè chú réng jué qú)	a	carry-on-shoulder hoe still determine ditch
7	剗土壅其本 (chǎn tǔ yōng qí běn)	x	shovel earth heap-up its roots
8	引泉溉其枯 (yǐn quán gài qí kū)	a	guide spring water its dried-up
9	小樹低數尺 (xiǎo shù dī shù chǐ)	x	small tree low number foot
10	大樹長丈餘 (dà shù cháng zhàng yú)	a	great tree long ten-feet extra
11	栽植來幾時 (zāi zhí lái jǐ shí)	x	confer plant come few time
12	高下齊扶疏 (gāo xià qí fú shū)	a	high low identical support clear/sparse
13	養樹既如此 (yǎng shù jì rú cǐ)	x	cultivate tree already in-this-way
14	養民亦何殊 (yǎng mǐn yì hé shū)	a	cultivate people also how different
15	將欲茂枝葉 (jiāng yù mào zhī yè)	x	will desire luxuriant branch leaf
16	必先救根株 (bì xiān jiù gēn zhū)	a	must first rescue root trunk
17	云可救根株 (yún hé jiù gēn zhū)	a	say how rescue root trunk
18	勸農均賦租 (quàn nóng jūn fù zū)	a	encourage farmer equal tax rent
19	云可茂枝葉 (yún hé mào zhī yè)	x	say how luxuriant branch leaf
20	省事寬刑書 (shěng shì kuān xíng shū)	a	save trouble lenient punishment document
21	移此為郡政 (yí cǐ wéi jùn zhèng)	x	change this for region government
22	庶幾細谷蘇 (shù jǐ méng sù sū)	a	maybe common-people numerous common revive

In dusk and springtime on this eastern slope  
 what do these trees and saplings have to show?  
 Casually the last of flowers have gone,  
 and dense, thick screens of leaves begun to grow.

Each day I have the weighed-down servant boy  
 come, and dig a furrow with his hoe,  
 to heap up shoveled soil about the roots  
 so guiding where the springtime rain must go.

The smallest toddlers are a few feet high,  
 and barely ten the largest in this plot:  
 but each, when nurtured through the same brief space,  
 looks similar: a thin but needy lot.

And if we're nurturing our trees like this,  
 why should we treat our own folk differently?  
 And if we want the best from branch and leaf,  
 we need attend to what supports the tree.

How do we tend to what supports the tree,  
but show equality in tax and rent?  
To breed luxuriance in branch and leaf,  
be fair, and lenient in punishment.  
If local government were that, revived,  
perhaps our people would be more content.

### Comment

Among Bai's most famous works are the long narrative poems like *Chang hen ge* (Song of Everlasting Sorrow), which tells the story of Yang Guifei, and *Pipa xing* (Song of the Pipa), but he was best known for his low-key poems in simple words, many of them with political and social criticism. They are written in a plain and direct style, so intended that way that Bai Juyi would rewrite anything that couldn't be immediately understood by his servants. The poems were popular throughout China, but Bai Juyi had them preserved for posterity by being widely copied: today they number some 2,800 poems.

The first 12 lines are the plainest possible, a simple meaning in simple words, a style that recalls Tao Qian. Then comes the social context, the comparison of treating people like gardens needing care and attention. Unfortunately, the 庶 (shù: maybe) in the last line is not too optimistic: Bai Juyi was a realist. The original is rhymed axxa aaxa xaxa xaxa aaxaxa: the translation is xaxa xbx xcx xdx xexexe.{1}

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### 34. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Zhang Ruoxu: A night of Blossom and Moonlight on the Yangtse in Springtime

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	春江花月夜 (chūn jiāng huā yuè yè)		
1	春江潮水连海平 (chūn jiāng cháo shuǐ lián hǎi píng)	a	spring river tide water connect_with sea level
2	海上明月共潮生 (hǎi shàng míng yuè gòng cháo shēng)	x	sea above bright moon together_with tide bear
3	滟滟随波千万里 (yàn yàn suí bō qiān wàn lǐ)	x	flood follow wave thousand myriad li
4	何处春江无月明 (hé chǔ chūn jiāng wú yuè míng)	a	what place spring interval is_not moon bright
5	江流宛转绕芳甸 (jiāng liú wǎn zhuǎn rào fāng diàn)	b	river flow winding round fragrant meadow
6	月照花林皆似霰 (yuè zhào huā lín jiē sì xiàn)	b	moon shine flower forest all like frozen_rain
7	空里流霜不觉飞 (kōng lǐ liú shuāng bù jué fēi)	x	empty inside hoar_frost not that float
8	汀上白沙看不见 (tīng shàng bái shā kàn bù jiàn)	b	islet surface white sand look_at not see
9	江天一色无纤尘 (jiāng tiān yī sè wú xiān chén)	c	river sky one colour be_unending dust
10	皎皎空中孤月轮 (jiǎo jiǎo kōng zhōng gū yuè lún)	x	brilliant void among lonely moon wheel
11	江畔何人初见月 (jiāng pàn hé rén chū jiàn yuè )	x	river side what man first_time see moon?
12	江月何年初照人 (jiāng yuè hé nián chū zhào rén)	c	river moon what year first_time shine man?
13	人生代代无穷已 (rén shēng dài dài wú qióng yǐ)	d	man year generation generation to_be end
14	江月年年望相似 (jiāng yuè nián nián wàng xiāng sì)	d	river moon year year full-moon miss_him resemble
15	不知江月待何人 (bù zhī jiāng yuè dài hé rén)	x	not understand river moon wait_for what man
16	但见长江送流水 (dàn jiàn cháng jiāng sòng liú shuǐ)	d	only see river_yangtse see_off flow water
17	白云一片去悠悠 (bái yún yī piàn qù yōu yōu)	e	white cloud one piece leave far_off
18	青枫浦上不胜愁 (qīng fēng pǔ shàng bù shèng chóu)	e	green maple river_bank above not bear sadness
19	谁家今夜扁舟子 (shuí jiā jīn yè piān zhōu zǐ)	x	who home today night piece boat you_sir?
20	何处相思明月楼 (hé chǔ xiāng sī míng yuè lóu)	e	what place she long_for moon building?
21	可怜楼上月徘徊 (kě lián lóu shàng yuè pái huái)	f	may curtain building above moon hesitate
22	应照离人妆镜台 (yīng zhào lí rén zhuāng jìng tái)	f	ought_to shine someone_separated dressing_table
23	玉户帘中卷不去 (yù hù lián zhōng juǎn bù qù)	x	jade window curtain among roll_up not leave
24	捣衣砧上拂还来 (dǎo yī zhēn shàng fú huán lái)	f	pound rest_on block on brush_off return come
25	此时相望不相闻 (cǐ shí xiāng wàng bù xiāng wén)	g	this time long_for gaze not long_for hear
26	愿逐月华流照君 (yuàn zhú yuè huá liú zhào jūn)	x	wish follow moon splendour shine you
27	鸿雁长飞光不度 (hóng yàn cháng fēi guāng bù dù)	x	wild_geese be_long fly light not leave
28	鱼龙潜跃水成文 (yú lóng qián yuè shuǐ chéng wén)	g	fish dragon dive leap water by_light_of ripples
29	昨夜闲潭梦落花 (zuó yè xián tán mèng luò huā)	h	yesterday night quiet pool dream fall flowers
30	可怜春半不还家 (kě lián chūn bàn bù hái jiā)	h	be_pitiable spring half_way not also house
31	江水流春去欲尽 (jiāng shuǐ liú chūn qù yù jìn)	x	river water flow spring leave want_to reach_end
32	江潭落月复西斜 (jiāng tán luò yuè fù xī xié)	x	river pool fall moon again west slant
33	斜月沉沉藏海雾 (xié yuè chén chén cáng hǎi wù)	i	slant moon sink_heavily hide sea mist
34	碣石潇湘无限路 (jié shí xiāo xiāng wú xiàn lù)	i	'standing_stone' 'xiāo xiāng' without limit road jiāng
35	不知乘月几人归 (bù zhī chéng yuè jǐ rén guī)	x	fall moon disturb feelings full river tree not understand by_light_of moon how-much man

The tide wells in, this Yangtze spring,  
 and interfingers with the sea:  
 the moonlight and the sea itself,  
 are borne together on the tide.  
 in wave on wave the waters run  
 a thousand bright long moonlit miles.  
 So is the springtime moon, which lacks  
 a habitat or place to hide.

Throughout, the sinuous Yangtze coils  
 about the fragrant river-lands.  
 On flowering trees the moonlight falls  
 in fashionings of frozen rain.  
 The intervening air is thin  
 and veiled with hoar-frost's misty haze.  
 The scattered islets, sandy white,  
 are indistinct in mist again.

The sky above the river seems  
 but one great whole, and clear of dust,  
 10. and brilliant in the void, the moon  
 is slowly wheeling on alone.  
 What man was first to see the moon  
 from this same stretch of river bank?  
 What year was first that on mankind  
 this river's flood of light was thrown?

Our human life goes on, unending  
 generation to generation.  
 The moon but follows on a course,  
 no year will ever see it stay.  
 I do not know for whom the moon  
 is waiting or is seeing off.  
 I only find the Yangtze flow  
 brimming, silent on its way.

That white cloud, the travelling man,  
 is small and dwindles till it's gone.  
 And on the bank, the maples find  
 his sadness near unbearable.  
 On what frail craft must this one man  
 be housed tonight so far from home?

20. On what far house and woman there  
must moon exert its yearning pull?

And in that curtained window space  
the brimming moon will linger on,  
and on that separated one  
and on her dressing table stay.  
On loveliness it stamps its mark,  
nor can the curtain close it off.  
And when on fulling-block it falls  
and not for long is brushed away.

We both are gazing with the same  
togetherness that is no news.  
Would I could reach her with the light  
the brilliant moon-beams can confer:  
the wild geese fly, but never far,  
nor do they reach to moonlight's end:  
the fish and dragons dive and play  
but neither's good as messenger.

Last night and by a quiet pool  
I dreamt the springtime flowers fell,  
30. and grievously, and far from home  
when we're but half-way through the spring:  
the water swelling with the spring  
has reached its end and ebbs away,  
on Yangtze pools the low-hung moon  
continues in its westering.

How heavily the moonlight slants  
until dissolved in coastal mists.  
From north to south an endless road  
where all our journeyings must start.  
So many going home tonight  
are travelling by this self-same moon,  
which now, and settling in the trees,  
gives thoughts that must disturb the heart.

#### Comment

Zhang Ruoxu is really known for only one poem, one long, wonderful and extraordinarily influential poem: *A night of Blossom and Moonlight on the Yangtze in Springtime*. Described by the twentieth-century poet Wen Yiduo as 'the poem of all poems, the summit of all summits', the piece breaks

with Six Dynasty manner and anticipates the content and style of the high Tang. The poem has nine quatrains and three sections. The first section depicts the moonlit Yangtze River in spring. The second and third sections regret the ephemeral nature of life, commenting on the sorrow of travellers and the loved ones they leave behind. Both themes would become important in Tang and later poetry.

China's two great rivers, both the 3395 mile long Yellow River and the 3915 mile long Yangtze rise in the highlands of Tibet and flow by circuitous routes eastwards, providing rich irrigated soils for farming and settlement in their middle and lower stretches. The Yellow River was the cradle of Chinese civilizations, and still held the greater wealth of population in Tang times, especially around the capitals of Chang'an and Loyang. The south was not an empty wilderness, though, but an area of thriving settlement, with many towns on the Yangtze and in what today is Guizhou, Hunan, Jiangxi, Fujian and Guangdong being separately governed and casting their own coins.

The Yangtze crosses the mountains encircling the Sichuan basin, flows through magnificent gorges and then continues eastwards for a thousand miles, delivering an average of half a cubic mile of water daily into the Pacific Ocean. And while the Yellow River areas have rich loess soils, they are colder and drier, supporting crops like wheat and millet, the Yangtze area are wetter and warmer, ideal for rice, hemp, cotton and tea.

Note that this is not a topographic poem like those of Fang Chengda (Poem 13F) but an idealized scene of moonlight flooding the river area. In Chinese minds, the moon is associated with gentleness and brightness, expressing beautiful if vague yearnings. On the 15th day of the 8th month of the lunar calendar, the moon is full, and marks the Moon or the Mid-Autumn Festival. The round shape symbolizes family reunion, and the day is thus a chance for family members to get together and enjoy what the full moon signifies: abundance, harmony, and good luck. Many other matters are associated with the moon. The moon rabbit is fancifully seen in the dark patches of the moon. Chang'e (嫦娥) is the beautiful Chinese goddess of the moon, who is remembered for stealing an elixir of immortality from her husband, Hou Yi. As told in the Mid-Autumn Festival, Hou Yi's pursuit was prevented by the Hare, who would not let the irate husband pass until he made up with his wife.

I have used a simple xaxa xbx etc. rhyme scheme, but the original is axxa bxxb cxxc dxxd eexe fxff gxig hxxx iix.

It's generally unwise in translation to work from previous renderings, and Chinese is no exception. As Archie Barnes emphasises, matters are rarely fully spelled out in Chinese verse, and we have to employ our imaginative faculties. We should also note how simple the poem is, which affords it a quiet sincerity. It is

Shi poetry, with parallelism, but not regulated Shi: many words are repeated, particularly moon (月, yuè) and bright (明, míng). A few lines also need some explanation:

line15: see off: the custom was to accompany departing friends for some way on their journey.

line19: emphasis is on frail boat, exposed to hazards of travel.

line 23: jade is a reference to the woman, her beauty or quality. The window would be covered by cloth or bamboo slats: the image is of distant intimacy.

line 24: the reference is to a fulling block, on which women prepared clothes for the winter.

line 27: wild geese serve as free travellers in Chinese poetry, and also as messengers.

line 28: fish and dragons have their mythologies, but here simply mean water creatures. The 'ripples' are a pun on 'letter'.

line 34: between north and south the road is endless.

Now we must look at the structure. As we noted in Volume Two, lines are arranged in one of two ways, as subject plus predicate (sp) or as topic plus comment (tc). Where the subject is only implied and not stated I have shown the 'clause' as ns. Where the object of the verb is missing (i.e. verb is intransitive) I have shown as no. Tone arrangements don't apply because the poem is not regulated Shi, but the lines, even in this poem, which is not tightly organised, do form couplets which are either free or in parallel in theme, as we noted with Du Fu's Spring Prospect. . To assist identification I have put the active verbs in brackets and bold type. The structure is then:

tc tc sp tc level	free	spring river tide (water <b>connect_with</b> sea)
tc tc tc no tide ( <b>bear</b> )	free	sea above bright moonlight together_with
sp tc tc tc	free	(flood <b>follow</b> wave) thousand myriad li
tc tc no tc shining	free	what place spring (interval <b>is_not</b> moon)
5. no tc tc tc sp tc tc tc frozen_rain	parallel parallel	(river <b>flow</b> ) winding round fragrant meadow (moon <b>shine</b> flower) forest all like
tc tc tc no tc tc tc ns	parallel parallel	empty inside hoar_frost not that ( <b>float</b> ) islet surface white sand ( <b>look_at not see</b> )
tc tc sp tc 10. tc tc tc no tc tc tc sp tc tc tc sp	parallel parallel parallel parallel	river sky one (colour <b>be_unending</b> dust) brilliant void among lonely (moon <b>wheel</b> ) river side what man first_time <b>see</b> moon river moon what year first_time <b>shine</b> man

tc tc tc no end)	parallel	man year generation (generation <b>to_be</b>
tc tc ns no ( <b>resemble</b> )	parallel	river moon year year only ( <b>miss_him</b> )
15. ns tc no tc what man	parallel	not <b>understand</b> river moon <b>wait_for</b>
tc no tc no water	parallel	only <b>see</b> river_yangtse see_off <b>flow</b>
tc tc no tc tc tc tc sp sadness)	parallel parallel	white cloud one (piece <b>leave</b> ) far_off green maple river_bank above ( <b>not bear</b>
tc tc tc tc 20. tc sp tc tc	parallel parallel	who home today night piece boat you_sir what place (she <b>long_for</b> ) moon building
tc tc tc no <b>hesitate</b> )	free	may curtain building above (moon
ns tc tc tc dressing_table	free	<b>ought_to</b> shine someone_separated
tc tc tc no <b>leave</b> )	free	jade window curtain among roll_up (not
sp no no no ( <b>return</b> ) ( <b>come</b> )	free	(pound <b>rest_on</b> block) on ( <b>brush_off</b> )
25. tc ns ns ns ( <b>hear</b> )	free	this time ( <b>long_for</b> ) gaze not ( <b>long_for</b> )
ns ns tc ns you)	free	( <b>wish</b> ) ( <b>follow</b> moon) splendour ( <b>shine</b>
tc tc no no no no tc tcv	free free	(wild_geese be_long <b>fly</b> ) (light not <b>leave</b> ) (fish dragon <b>dive</b> ) ( <b>leap</b> ) water
by_light_of ripples		
tc tc ns ns flowers)	free	yesterday night quiet pool ( <b>dream</b> ) ( <b>fall</b>
30. ns tc ns tc house	free	(be_pitiable) spring half_way not ( <b>return</b> )
tc no no ns <b>reach_end</b> )	free	river (water <b>flow</b> ) (spring <b>leave</b> ) ( <b>want_to</b>
tc no tc tc	free	river pool ( <b>fall</b> moon) again west slant
tc no sp tc tc tc tc tc road	free free	slant moon ( <b>sink_heavily</b> ( ( <b>hide</b> sea) mist 'standing_stone' 'xiāo xiāng' without limit
35. ns tc tc ns much man <b>return</b>	parallel	not ( <b>understand</b> ) by_light_of moon how-

no ns tc tc                      parallel                      (**fall** moon) (**disturb** feelings) full river tree

If this is anything like correct, we see that poem opens with 2 free couplets, follows with 8 parallel couplets, continues with 7 free couplets, and concludes with 1 parallel couplet — i.e. it's fairly balanced and conventional in this respect.

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## 8. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY SONG DYNASTY

In that succeeding Song Dynasty (960-1279) — shrinking to the Southern Song in 1127 when the north was lost to Jurchen tribesmen — Chinese society reached its apogee of wealth and refinement. Its founder, Taizu, stressed the Confucian spirit of humane administration and the reunification of the whole country. He took power from the military governors, consolidating it at court, and delegated the supervision of military affairs to able civilians. A pragmatic civil service system was the result, with a flexible distribution of power and elaborate checks and balances.

Song China was incomparably the richest, most diversified and best governed economy of its time. Trade stretched across the world: to islands in the southeast Pacific, to India, to the Middle East and to east Africa. The ships were large, stoutly constructed and employed maps and compasses. Wealthy merchants and landowners strove to educate their sons for entry into government service, the upper echelons of which were lavishly rewarded. Industry was equally dynamic. All mining, smelting and fabrication of iron, steel, copper, lead, tin and mercury were government monopolies, though some competition was later allowed the private sector, with beneficial results. Coal replaced charcoal as the country was stripped of its forests. Steel was used for armour, swords, spears and arrowheads, but most went into agricultural implements, notably the plough. Cotton was grown in central China, tea and sugarcane plantations increased, and Suzhou became famous for its silk production.

Towns and cities saw a bustling commercial life. There were 50 theatres alone in Kaifeng, four of which could entertain audiences of several thousand each. The pleasure districts — where stunts, games, theatrical stage performances, taverns and singsong girl houses were located — were packed with food stalls that stayed open virtually all night, and there were also traders selling eagles and hawks, precious paintings, bolts of silk and cloth, jewellery of pearls, jade, rhinoceros horn, gold and silver, hair ornaments, combs, caps, scarves, and aromatic incense.

The government set social norms by defining crimes and their punishment; it anticipated crop failures and provided relief measures; it encouraged hygiene, public medicine and associated philanthropies; it recruited and tested public officials; it constructed and maintained roads, canals, bridges, dikes, ports, walls and palaces; it manufactured materiel and armaments; it managed state monopolies and mines and supervised trade. The numbers were large. In a population reaching 120 million in Song times, over 1 million belonged to the army and some 200-300,000 registered as civil employees (of whom 20,000 were ranked as officials). Most taxes were paid in kind, but payment by money increased throughout the dynasty, probably reaching a quarter to a third of the government's revenues. Larger transactions employed silver ingots and bolts of common silk cloth, and merchants issued notes of credit, at first privately but soon taken up the government. Factories were set up to print banknotes in the cities of Huizhou, Chengdu, Hangzhou, and Anqi, and were often large: that at

Hangzhou employed more than a thousand workers. Issues were initially for local use, and were valid only for 3-year period. That changed in late Southern Song times when the government produced a nationwide standard currency of paper money backed by gold or silver. Denominations probably ranged from one string of cash to one hundred strings (each of a thousand coins odd).

The Song was not a military state, but the army was large and well trained, generally in the latest techniques. The Song could also put to sea a formidable navy. Nonetheless, it was diplomacy that China traditionally preferred, binding surrounding powers by treaty and tribute systems. That statesmanship went sorely amiss when the Northern Song allied themselves with the Jurchen tribesmen to conquer the threatening Tibetan Liao dynasty in 1125. When the Song quarrelled over the division of spoil, the Jurchen promptly invaded northern China, and took the young emperor, his father Huizong and most of the court into captivity. Though they were never released, ending their days staring at forests and wild tribesmen, a scion of the family did evade capture to found the smaller Southern Song state. The Jurchen occupied northern China as the Jin regime, which gradually became Sinicized. The reduced Song made Hangzhou its capital, when court life regained its old splendour and sophistication. All three kingdoms — the Liao, the Jin and the Song itself — were eventually overrun by the Mongols, who founded their own Chinese dynasty, the Yuan, in 1279.

It is against this background that we must view Chinese poets. They were not visionary outcasts or Romantic rebels in the main, but ordinary men (with a few women) enjoying much the same life as their neighbours: cautious 'petit bourgeois' one writer called them, though the best were rather more. The most richly rewarded were officials, generally in employment only half of their working lives, who thus had the opportunity and education to distil their everyday thoughts on everyday occurrences. Indeed it is thanks to the Song poet Lu You (1125-1210), who wrote over 9,000 surviving poems, that we have thumbnail sketches of the great mass of Chinese society, about whom the official records are largely silent. He was one of the best half-dozen Song poets, prized for his patriotism, whose first official posting was in Sichuan. He kept a travel journal of the 160 days it took to reach Kuizhou from Hangzhou, but was for the next nine years much occupied with his official duties: repairing dykes, building bridges, preparing for the annual review of the military, supervising prefectural examinations, and the like. He retired from official duties in his sixties and settled in a small village near Shanyin, which was his family's old home in northern Zhejiang.

From here, for the last 20 years of his life, on a small and diminishing pension, he travelled around, recording his impressions in copious poems. He noted the effects of warfare and famine. He described the bustling marketplaces, the resourceful peddlers, the countless boats of merchants on the central Yangtze in what is now Wuhan, comparing them to those at Hangzhou and Nanjing. He watched crowds ten thousand strong flocking to see naval displays involving 700 vessels, and described the many town and village festivals throughout the year. It

is a picture of general contentment, where officialdom worked quietly in the background, and government's only feared impact were the sub-official tax collectors whose demands were not easily ignored. The wandering and boastful Li Bai, and the self-driven and often destitute Du Fu were exceptions: most poets lived very ordinary lives, where their small hopes and happinesses are reflected in their superficially undemanding poems.

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### 35. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: MEI YAOCHEN (1002-1060) Sitting at Night and Playing a Zither

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	次韵和永叔夜坐鼓琴有感二首 (cì yùn hè yǒng shū yè zuò gǔ qín yǒu gǎn èr shǒu)		reply-to poem compose always brother-etc. night sit drum zither have feel two (poem classifier)
1	夜坐彈玉琴 (yè zuò dàn yù qín)	x	night sit play jade zither
2	琴韻與指隨 (qín yùn yǔ zhǐ suí)	a	zither appeal together-with finger follow
3	不辭再三彈 (bù cí zài sān dàn)	x	not decline again third time
4	但恨世少知 (dàn hèn shì shǎo zhī)	a	however regret life few know
5	知公愛陶潛 (zhī gōng ài táo qián)	b	aware common like Tao Qian
6	全身衰弊時 (quán shēn shuāi bì shí)	a	whole body decline detriment time
7	有琴不安弦 (yǒu qín bù ān xián)	b	exist zither not calm/content string
8	與俗異所為 (yǔ sú yì suǒ wéi)	x	and common different actually serve-as
9	寂然得真趣 (jì rán dé zhēn qù)	x	silent correct have true interest
10	乃至無言期 (nǎi zhì wú yán qī)	a	therefore most not words phase

Tonight you sit and play your zither — well,  
your fingers traveling as the chords suggest.  
How willingly you'd play a third time too,  
regretting only that so few are blest  
to know Tao Qian as you do, all the more  
compelling now your health is not the best.

In fact, it's not the calming strings that count,  
or even skills as common folk attest;  
but silence, intuitions, things unsaid,  
when truths unhindered will disclose the rest.

#### Comment

Mei Yaochen passed the jinshi examination too late in life to have a successful government career, but he was a prolific poet, with some 3000 works still extant. His greatest friend was Ouyang Xiu, the outstanding polymath: poet, statesman, essayist, historian and epigrapher. Ouyang held high government positions, twice, in the Northern Song, and also wrote, unaided, in his spare time, the *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*.

This piece one of two poems by Mei Yaochen entitled *Seated at Night Playing the Qin*, sent in response to two poems received from Ouyang Xiu. As is evident from the poem, both enjoyed playing the Qin (lute), and, as always, the poem says a little more than the prose sense, which makes translation a matter of degree. The word-for-word rendering of the last two lines is *silent correct have true interest / therefore most not words phase*, which Jonathan Chavez wisely renders as *In silence, you get the truest essence, / And end where there are simply no words to say*. I have taken interpretation a little further: *but silence, intuitions, things unsaid, / when truths unhindered will disclose the rest*. Rhyming is as follows: original is xaxab abxxa, translation is xaxax axaxa.

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36. UNREGULATED SHI POETRY: Su Shi/ Su Dongpo (1037-1101)  
Seeing Off Canliao. Cai C15.3 [QSS 14:17.9273; SSSJ 17.905–907]

	Traditional Chinese and (Pinyin)		Word-for-Word Rendering
	送參寥詩 (sòng cān liáo shī)		See-off Can liao poem
1	上人學苦空 (shàng rén xué kǔ kōng)	x	upon person learn/study hardship empty
2	百念已灰冷 (bǎi niàn yǐ huī lěng)	a	hundred read/memory already ash cold
3	劍頭惟一缺 (jiàn tóu wéi yí xuē )	b	double-edge-sword head only one vessel/blood
4	焦穀無新穎 (jiāo gǔ wú xīn yǐng)	c	burnt grain not new husk
5	胡為逐吾輩 (hú wéi zhú wú bèi)	x	non-Han act-as pursue my generation
6	文字爭竦炳 (wén zì zhēng wèi bǐng)	c	writing strive impressive brilliant
7	新詩敢壓脣 (xīn shī gǎn yù xiè)	b	new poem as-if jade fragments
8	出語更青警 (chū yǔ biàn qīng jǐng)	c	chapter language plain clear alert
9	退之論草書 (tuì zhī lùn cǎo shū)	x	Tui zhi opinion grass script
10	萬事未嘗屏 (wàn shì wèi cháng bǐng)	c	ten-thousand matter not-yet try reject/control
11	憂愁不平氣 (yōu chóu bù píng qì)	x	worry worry-about injustice annoy
12	一寓筆所聘 (yí yù bǐ suǒ chěng)	a	one contain writing-brush actually/place hasten
13	頗習浮屠人 (pō guài fú tú rén)	x	rather strange Buddhist person
14	視身如丘井 (shì shēn rú qiū jǐng)	c	look-at body as-if grave well
15	頽然寄淡泊 (tuí rán jì dàn bó)	x	crumble correct entrust simple life
16	誰與發豪猛 (shéi yǔ fā háo měng)	a	who and-give develop grand/heroic fierce
17	細思乃不然 (xì sī nǎi bù rán)	x	delicate consider therefore not so
18	真巧非幻影 (zhēn qiǎo fēi huàn yǐng)	c	genuine as-it-happens not phantom
19	欲令語語妙 (yù lìng yǔ yǔ miào)	x	desire cause poem language wonderful
20	無礙空且靜 (wú ài kōng qiě jìng)	c	not loathe empty and-moreover calm
21	靜故了羣動 (jìng gù liǎo qún dòng)	d	calm instance achieve group movement
22	空故納萬境 (kōng gù nà wàn jìng)	c	empty instance receive ten-thousand place
23	閱世走人間 (yuè shì zǒu rén jiān)	x	inspect generation go person among
24	觀身臥雲嶺 (guān shēn wò yún líng)	c	watch body lie cloud mountain-ridge
25	鹹醃雜好 (xián suān zá zhòng hǎo)	x	salty sour mix common good
26	中有至味永 (zhōng yǒu zhì wèi yǒng)	d	in there-is most taste forever
27	詩去不相妨 (shī fǎ bù xiāng fáng)	x	poem method not mutually hinder
28	此語更當請 (cǐ yǔ gèng dāng qǐng)	c	this language more manage/act/during request

The student knows both want and emptiness,  
like ash a hundred worries seed his mind:  
the sword's sharp tip is not to heal the blood,  
nor roasted seed for sowing fields much sought.

What Han tradition does your school pursue  
with all too strikingly good writing here?  
Your latest poems seem to have bright shards of jade  
with all the phrasing novel, alert and clear.

Tuizhi thought the cursive grass-script best  
to cope with this much-troubled world of ours;  
Its cares, annoyances, injustices  
were in the capable, thick brush's powers.

But for the Buddhist monk, who tends to think  
of his own body as an empty well,  
what will elicit from that placid life  
the fire where epic force and fury dwell?

But with more delicate, reflective thought,  
originality seems not deceit.  
To find the evocative and wanted phrase  
don't shun where calmness and the empty meet.

With inbred calmness you can join each group,  
with emptiness encounter every sight;  
can mingle with the generations, see  
your clouded mass along the mountain height.

The sour and salty mix in normal taste,  
and so made whole and sound, forever blessed.  
Poetry is not opposed to contemplation,  
but ways that words might yield you, on request.

#### Comment

Su Shi was one of China's most accomplished literary figures, leaving behind a great mass of still-read letters, essays and poems, plus some paintings and calligraphy. He wrote some 2,700 poems survive today. Most are in the Shi genre, but Su Shi is best remembered for his 350 Ci genre poems. He founded the Hoofing School, which combined spontaneity, objectivity and vivid descriptions of natural phenomena, often on historical events or Buddhist themes.

The poem needs a little explanation. Lines 3-4 are emphasizing that the student/monk should clear his mind of thoughts that serve no purpose. Lines 9-16 summarize an essay by Tang monk Han Yu (788-824) who held that the good calligrapher originated in strong emotions. How could the two be reconciled? Su's answer is that the Buddhist's 'emptiness and quietude' is helpful because it allows outside matters to be absorbed in self-reflection. Such is Song poetry, less powerful than the Tang but often intellectual and personal, posing and answering philosophical issues.

The last stanza is discussing the mind in contemplation, that flavourless flavour that makes others seem partial and unbalanced. The last line is often rendered as *I submit this view to your consideration*, but as the word-for-word translation is *this language more manage/act/during request*, I have opted for a larger meaning: *but ways that words might yield you, on request.* {1}

The original is rhymed xabc xcbc xcxa xcxa xcxc dcxc xdx ; the translation runs xaxa xbx, etc.

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