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# PEARL *from the* DRAGON'S MOUTH

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*Evocation of Feeling and Scene  
in Chinese Poetry*



*Cecile Chu-chin Sun*

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*Evocation of Scene and Feeling in  
Chinese Poetry*

**Cecile Chu-chin Sun**



CENTER FOR CHINESE STUDIES  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
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TO MY PARENTS

Sun Kang-tseng 孫亢曾

and

Lu Wei-ju 陸蔚如



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## *Chinese Historical Periods*

SHANG (YIN)商 (殷)	1751–1112 B.C.
CHOU 周	1111–256 B.C.
Ch'un-chiu (Spring and Autumn) period 春秋	722–481 B.C.
Chan-kuo (Warring States) period 戰國	403–221 B.C.
CH'IN 秦	221– 207 B.C.
HAN 漢	206 B.C.–A.D. 220
Former Han 前漢	206 B.C.–A.D. 8
Hsin (Wang Mang) 新 (王莽)	8–22
Latter Han 後漢	25–220
THREE KINGDOMS 三國	220–280
Wei 魏	220–265
Shu Han 蜀漢	221–264
Wu* 吳	222–280
CHIN 晉	265–419
Western Chin 西晉	265–316
Eastern Chin* 東晉	316–419
SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN DYNASTIES 南北朝	420–589
Sung* 宋	420–478
Ch'i* 齊	479–501
Liang* 梁	502–556
Ch'en* 陳	557–589

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\* Of the Six Dynasties

SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN DYNASTIES, *continued*

Northern Wei 北魏	386–534
Northern Ch'i 北齊	550–557
Northern Chou 北周	557–580
SUI 隋	589–618
T'ANG 唐	618–907
FIVE DYNASTIES 五代	907–959
SUNG 宋	960–1279
YÜAN (MONGOL) 元 (蒙古)	1280–1368
MING 明	1368–1644
CH'ING (MANCHU) 清 (滿)	1644–1911
REPUBLIC 民國	1911–



## *Preface*

This book is written to provide readers with a better grasp of what goes on at the heart of Chinese poetry and poetics. Specifically, it is about what Chinese poets and critics themselves have perceived poetry to be throughout the entire Chinese critical tradition.

Virtually all poets and critics, for over two millennia, have agreed that the intrinsic nature of Chinese poetry lies in two distinct but inseparable elements. One of these refers to the poets' thoughts and feelings, to their memory as well as their imagination, expressed in the poetic medium. The other refers to the physical context depicted in a poem, including not only what the poet captures in his immediate reality, but the landscape and locale that the poet remembers and imagines. These two elements have been generally known as *ch'ing* 情 (feeling) and *ching* 景 (scene) since the mid-thirteenth century. The integration of "feeling" and "scene" is fundamental to the subtlety and, more importantly, to what I would describe as the living sensuousness of Chinese poetry. A well-prepared scene usually fulfills two functions: it expresses the feeling by providing a concrete correlative to the abstract sentiments; it also evokes such sentiments by setting them astir not only in the poetic medium but beyond it in the mind of the reader. Fundamentally speaking, the importance that traditional Chinese poets and critics have attached to

these two elements derives from the recognition that poetry is meant to express one's elusive thoughts and feelings through concrete and tangible reality in the physical world.

What these traditional poets and critics have grasped is something close to what I would call a poetic axiom, applicable, perhaps, to many other traditions. Virtually all poetry, whether it be Chinese or Western, involves a search for vivid and palpable means to articulate what is felt within. Outer reality—tangible, easily identifiable and inexhaustible—has since antiquity been regarded in China as the source and inspiration for the poet's expression. In the West, the employment of figures of speech, such as imagery, simile, metaphor, and symbol, is dictated by a similar quest. Its purpose is mainly to express in concrete terms the otherwise inexpressible thoughts and sentiments of the poet.

While this quest to anchor the elusive is as old and universal as poetry itself, it is at the same time intensely personal and culture-specific. One might want to ask how, for example, this quest is executed by an individual poet at a given moment of lyrical inspiration. More particularly, how does each tradition precondition the way poets perceive their relationships with reality? As one might expect, the answers vary from person to person, from tradition to tradition.

In the Chinese tradition, the common practice of expressing "feeling" through "scene" is ultimately premised on an inner rapport between man and nature. While "scene" is not to be simplistically equated with "nature," there is no denying the fact that the notion of "scene" in Chinese poetry does entail a large number of elements from nature. From early on, this is not only borne out by the poetic works themselves where nature features prominently, but is also evidenced by the repeated critical discussions of the important role of nature in the writing of poetry. This phenomenon ranges from the stirring of the *ch'i* (vital breath in the cosmos) that accompanies the seasonal changes, to the various sights and sounds in the physical world. The ease and sophistication with which "scene" relates to

“feeling,” and vice versa, in so many Chinese poems demonstrate that they are connected in some unspoken and mysterious union deeply rooted in Chinese thinking. It is this intimate relationship between “feeling” and “scene” that is at the heart of Chinese poetry and gives it a special quality distinct from other traditions of poetry. To understand the soul of Chinese poetry, one must be attuned to what is inspired and evoked in their secret and spontaneous interchange.

This book seeks to find out how the critical perception of this essential phenomenon has evolved throughout the Chinese tradition. Despite its central importance in Chinese criticism, this evolution has never been systematically treated. Naturally it is not possible to document all that is involved in this long, complex process. What I propose to do is to locate its most crucial phases, that is, to identify and discuss those key stages that have made an important difference in the knowledge of this issue. In this way, we can learn how Chinese poets and critics themselves have come to a comprehensive and profound understanding of the inner collaborations of “feeling” and “scene.” Such an exploration has ramifications both for poetry and beyond it, in the broader context of man’s relationship with external reality; and it is in this broader context that the interchange on the poetic level acquires its full significance.

In order to give a historical framework to this evolution, I shall present my material chronologically, beginning with the second century B.C. Han commentators’ interpretation of the *Book of Songs* (*Shih-ching*) anthology, and continuing up to the discussion of this issue by the last of the traditional critics in the early twentieth century. This approach reveals that for more than two thousand years Chinese poets and critics have pondered this phenomenon.

During this long period, the perception of the critics evolved from a rather crude and misleading view to an increasingly sophisticated comprehension of the issue’s entire spectrum as well as its transpoetic implications. Aside from the poetic trends, instrumental in the evolution of this critical perception was the interweaving of various strands of metaphysical thinking into poetry criticism, in-

cluding Confucianism, Taoism, Ch'an Buddhism, and the *Book of Changes (I-ching)*.

As we try to understand Chinese poetry from within—both in its intrinsic makeup and with respect to the traditional Chinese view of it—it is especially worth noting that many of the critics discussed here were also respectable poets in their own right. Precisely because they were not mere outsiders looking in, as it were, what these poet-critics have to say about poetry is seldom idle speculation; when they are at their best, they are very much on target and penetrating. Given the tendency in some literary circles to distance and even to separate critical theory from literature itself, it is refreshing to discover that the double role of poet and critic is embodied in one person and that this has been the rule rather than the exception in traditional Chinese literary criticism.

In writing this book, I have naturally relied heavily on what these traditional critics have said on the subject. The critical materials selected in the text belong to the well-known classics of Chinese poetics; the arrangement of these materials as well as my comments on them is organized primarily from the perspective of how they reflect and help shape the evolution of the critical perception under study. In addition, wherever possible, I selected pertinent poems for detailed explication. I have always believed that, in the final analysis, the best proof of a critical idea is to be found in the literary works themselves. Obviously, I am on the side of those who believe that theories exist for the sake of literature, not the other way around. The selection of poems in the book, I might add, is fairly extensive but limited to those which I consider representative; there is no intention on my part to survey the entire canon of Chinese poetry.

Since I am trying to communicate a sense of Chinese poetry and poetics in the medium of English, accuracy of translation is crucial in this book. I have done my best to give readers of English as close an idea of the original as I am capable of delivering. In cases where a choice has to be made between elegance and accuracy, I have always

opted for the latter. Unless otherwise noted, all the translations in this book are my own.

Chinese characters for all important Chinese expressions will be found in the Glossary, arranged alphabetically according to their transcription. In the body of my text, I include only characters of paramount importance. A few critical terms (e.g., *ching* 景 and *ching* 境) are identical in their English transcriptions and thus easily confused, so I distinguish them by supplying the different Chinese characters in the text whenever necessary. Chinese terms for which there are English equivalents or near equivalents will be referred to initially in both their transcribed forms and English translations; subsequently, the English translations are usually used. For those Chinese critical terms that are simply untranslatable, I will provide an initial explanation but thereafter refer to them in their transcribed form. There is also an Appendix where I give all the original texts of the poems and critical passages cited in this book. For easy cross-reference, the same numbering system (e.g., 2.7 [chapter 2, passage no. 7]) is used for both the English translations in the body of my text and the original Chinese texts that appear in the Appendix. The Wade-Giles transcription system is used throughout and Chinese personal names follow the Chinese order with the surname first, except for a few names where I follow the individual's preference.

Finally, I want to thank all those who have contributed to my research. A book of this nature owes its existence to numerous writers, both past and contemporary, who have commented on and studied this subject. Although most of my primary and secondary sources are taken from Chinese originals, among scholars in the West writing in English I should like to single out for special mention Chen Shih-hsiang, Eugene Chen Eoyang, Hans Frankel, Kao Yu-kung, Shuen-fu Lin, James J. Y. Liu, Stephen Owen, Adele A. Rickett, K'ang-i Sun Chang, Wang Ching-hsien, Wong Siu-kit, and Pauline Yü. They have rendered my present task considerably easier through their publications on Chinese poetry and poetics for Western readers. In addition to my specific references in the notes, I will simply let my

bibliography be a small indication of my indebtedness to all the scholars I have consulted.

More particularly, I want also to express my gratitude to the Wang-An Institute for a generous grant, which relieved me from my teaching responsibilities at the University of Pittsburgh during 1987–1988 in order to do much of my research. I am also very much indebted to my colleagues at the University for their support and encouragement.

On a personal note, I want to thank Hans Frankel and C. T. Hsia for their longstanding interest in my work and their confidence in me. Their helpful suggestions have enhanced the manuscript in both content and form. I am also grateful to Shuen-fu Lin and Anthony Yü for their useful comments. My colleague Andrew Miller deserves a special note of thanks for improving the text with his fine sense of style. John J. Deeney's unswerving support and common-sensical advice have always made the tedious moments of research and writing easier to endure. And special thanks go to David Rolston and his dedicated staff at the University of Michigan's Center for Chinese Studies Publications, particularly to Walter Michener and Terre Fisher, for their meticulous attention to all the details that went into the production of this book.

This book is dedicated to my father, Professor Sun Kang-tseng, whose calligraphy graces the frontispiece, and to my mother, Lu Wei-ju. They have instilled in me a deep affection and respect for Chinese poetry since early childhood by their own passion for learning. Without their loving encouragement and invaluable advice during the course of my writing, this book would not have been written.

Lastly, a word about the title. According to a Chuang Tzu fable, the pearl of the black dragon can only be obtained by plumbing the sea's depths to the dragon's lair. This fabulous pearl has since become a symbol of the much sought after qualities, or essence, of a work of literature.

## Introduction

The depiction of external reality and of nature in particular has occupied a very important position in Chinese poetry since its earliest beginnings. In the oldest anthology of Chinese poems, the *Book of Songs* or *Shih-ching* (composed between 1100 and 600 B.C.), one finds that human feelings are rarely expressed in isolation from their immediate environment. In these rural and pristinely natural surroundings, the flowers, plants, and creatures of the animal kingdom, together with the seasonal changes, help to weave a natural background against which human dramas of love, separation, war, and injustice are enacted.

Nothing seems more natural for the early poets than to express their thoughts and feelings by referring to what they see and hear immediately around them. The presence of nature so permeates these poems that one reason to study the *Book of Songs*, according to Confucius, is to learn the names of the birds, beasts, plants, and trees.<sup>1</sup>

The susceptibility of human feelings to natural surroundings is, admittedly, not unique to Chinese culture. Frederic W. Moorman, for instance, has observed that the earliest appreciation of nature in Western



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poetry is related to simple pleasure called forth by genial sunshine and refreshing showers, and to equally simple pain in the presence of chilling wind and driving snow.<sup>2</sup> For the Chinese, however, this intimate relationship with nature is reflected not only throughout the entire poetic tradition but in a qualitatively different way.

The pervasive presence of nature or of external reality in general does not mean that the majority of Chinese poems are nature poems as understood in the Western tradition. It means, rather, that description of the natural world is a habitual mode of expressing human feeling in Chinese poetry. No thorough understanding of Chinese poetry is possible without a knowledge of the subtle yet dynamic interplay between the physical world and the emotional world, despite the variations and innovations that have occurred within this central mode of expression over time. Serious discussion of Chinese poetic theory must address the relationship between these two fundamental elements.

From early on, this phenomenon caught the attention of Chinese critics and interpreters of poetry. As mentioned in the Preface, critical perception of this central issue gradually evolved from a crude and, in fact, distorted view to a comprehensive understanding of its nature and metaphysical implications. This book does not undertake the task of tracing this entire complex history, but of identifying some of its most significant and important phases and the predominant critical trends that have influenced the evolution of this quintessential phenomenon.

Generally speaking, Chinese tradition exhibits two very different attitudes toward literature. One is more practically oriented, drawing on Confucian teaching for its main intellectual and moral sustenance. It regards literature primarily as a means of transmitting the sociopolitical and socioethical principles of an ideal society. The other is more artistically oriented, taking as its main concern the intrinsic nature of literature. The metaphysical underpinning of this rival view stems mainly from Taoism and Buddhism. The *Book of Changes (I-ching)*, the transcendental classic about the interaction between the cosmic forces of *yin* and *yang*, has also exerted considerable influence on this view of literature.

Historically, the practical attitude of Confucianism was the first to dominate Chinese literary criticism, but starting in the Wei-Chin period, the pragmatic view began to lose ground as the only measure of literature in the face of the rising influence of Taoist thinking. This is not to say, however, that after the Wei-Chin period the earlier Confucian view was everywhere superseded by the more artistic view. The pragmatic approach has continued to exercise varying degrees of influence throughout the history of Chinese literary criticism.<sup>3</sup> The most glaring evidence of the persistence of the pragmatic view is found in the interpretation of the *Book of Songs* which, for almost two millennia since the Han period, has not broken free from the impact of Confucian scholarship. I am referring, in particular, to the interpretation of the well-known triad of critical terms: *fu* (straightforward presentation), *pi* (comparison), and *hsing* (evocation). Each is a different poetic method of employing physical nature to express human feeling; yet all have been considered by the pragmatic school mainly as means of conveying sociopolitical and socioethical messages. More will be said about this later.

After the Wei-Chin period, the coexistence of both the pragmatic and the artistic views was common. They coexisted not only in the same period but, in many cases, in the same person. A good example is Liu Hsieh (465–523), an eclectic scholar who is arguably the most important critic in the Chinese tradition. While his notion of literature was informed mainly by the Confucian pragmatic view, he attached a great deal of importance to the artistic dimension. For instance, in his magnum opus, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*Wen-hsin tiao-lung*), Liu insists on the necessity of giving recognition to the innate beauty of all literary forms.

Another important critic and poet, Lu Chi (261–303), likewise exhibited a double view of literature. In his influential critical treatise, *Essay on Literature* (*Wen-fu*), he alludes to the importance of classical learning as the basis of fine writing, but at the same time recognizes that poetry must express personal emotion in beautiful language. Lu's emphasis on quiet observation and on merging with the object of contemplation during the creative process testifies to the influence of Taoist teaching.<sup>4</sup>

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Both the pragmatic and artistic views of literature were frequently embodied in one person in later periods as well, for example, in the late Ming and early Ch'ing scholar and critic Wang Fu-chih (1619–1692), whose exploration of the relationship between “feeling” and “scene” will be discussed in detail in chapter 5. An erudite Confucian scholar, Wang on the one hand subscribes to the pragmatic view that poetry does and should have a sociopolitical and socioethical function to perform, as in his interpretation of the *Book of Songs*, *Broad Commentary on Shih* (*Shih kuang-chuan*). On the other hand, in his *Ginger Studio Poetical Notebook* (*Chiang-chai shih-hua*) and various other comments on poetry, he transcends the pragmatic view in his insightful discussion of the inner dynamics between “feeling” and “scene.”

The reality of the Chinese critical tradition is complex, as these examples indicate, comprehending a dualistic relationship between the pragmatic and the artistic tendencies. This book is concerned exclusively with the critical perception of the *nature* of poetry as reflected in the relationship between “feeling” and “scene,” and not with the *function* of poetry or the interpretation of its *meaning*. It will therefore focus attention on the artistically oriented strand in the critical tradition.

The reader is reminded that the terms “feeling” and “scene” are used to translate the original Chinese expressions, *ch'ing* and *ching*. This pair of terms, however, did not become established until the latter part of the thirteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Terminology used to refer to these two concepts prior to that period thus varies, depending on the context. Equivalent pairs of terms such as *hsin* (mind) and *wu* (object), *i* (meaning) and *wu* (object), or *jen-hsin* (human mind) and *wu-se* (physical world), are also employed for *ch'ing* and *ching*.

Four major phases in the evolution of the critical perception of this issue can be identified, beginning with the Han interpreters of the *Book of Songs* (around the second century B.C.) and continuing up to the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> Briefly, they can be outlined as follows:

1) The *pragmatic phase*, typified in the Confucian scholars' interpretation of the *Book of Songs*, took place during the Han dynasty. In this phase,

poetry was regarded primarily as a means of education (*shih-chiao*), an instrument to realize the Confucian notion of a properly regulated hierarchy of human relationships in an ideal society.<sup>7</sup> Unhappily, these scholars, in their effort to read morally edifying meaning into this ancient collection, distorted many of the poems. As a result, the pairing of human feeling and physical world, which is a recurrent feature of the *Book of Songs*, was often burdened with misleading socioethical or sociopolitical messages. This phase is described in chapter 1.

2) The *affective phase* can be identified in the period of the Wei-Chin and the Southern and Northern Dynasties. It was then that critics first began to probe this central relationship in poetry, particularly the affective interaction between the poet's feeling and the physical world during the creative process. Aside from the rising influence of Taoism, which directly fed into the increasing attention to the intimate relationship between man and nature, the poetic developments of the period also played a crucial role. The emergence of various subgenres, including, in particular, that of landscape poetry during the fifth century, both manifested and reinforced this new critical sensibility. The growing awareness of physical nature as an object of aesthetic appreciation and the ultimate means of expressing human emotion is one of the most prominent poetic legacies of this period. It directly contributed to the wonderful fusion of "feeling" and "scene" later on in T'ang poetry. A close analysis of these poetic developments will be the subject of chapter 2, followed by a study of the critical achievements of this affective phase in chapter 3.

3) The *aesthetic phase* refers to a critical sensibility that developed during the T'ang period, when attention began to be focused on a dimension that had not been explored before. I call it the "aesthetic" dimension because it deals with the effect that poetry ultimately exerts in the mind of the reader. The increasing consciousness of what poetry is capable of producing in the wide open space between the written text and the boundless realm of the reader's imagination was a distinct achievement of this period. It brought the critical perception of the relationship between "feeling" and "scene" to a suprasensory dimension. Chapter 4 will

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study both the poetic and the critical factors that directly contributed to this important awareness.

4) The final phase is the *comprehensive theoretical synthesis* that began during the Sung dynasty and continued into the early decades of the twentieth century. During this thousand-year period, various views of the *ch'ing-ching* relationship were synthesized and a general consensus achieved among critics, resulting in the formation of both theoretical and practical criteria for critiquing poetry. Three interrelated aspects of the relationship between "feeling" and "scene" were discussed: the arrangement of "feeling" and "scene" in the poetic medium; the language of "feeling" as opposed to that of "scene"; and the inner dynamics between "feeling" and "scene." The first half of chapter 5 will survey these discussions. The second half will concentrate on how two of China's greatest critics, Wang Fu-chih and Wang Kuo-wei (1877–1927), enhanced our understanding of this crucial issue through their profound and coherent view of poetry.

The turning point in this critical evolution came in the second phase, during the beginning of the Wei-Chin period, when a new literary sensibility emerged. It was characterized by an unprecedented consciousness of literature for what it *is* as literature rather than for what it *does* in extraliterary contexts. From this point on, the various dimensions of the relationship between "feeling" and "scene" began to receive more serious critical attention. In particular, critics began to examine their interaction during the creative process, their expression in the poetic medium, and their ultimate effect beyond the printed text. But since the Confucian interpretation of the *Book of Songs* first called attention to the relationship between human feeling and physical world (unfortunately, for the wrong reasons), my inquiry will begin with a survey of the early, pragmatic view of poetry.

## *The Pragmatic Phase*

The pragmatic attitude toward poetry in the Chinese tradition began much earlier than the Han commentators' interpretations of the *Book of Songs*. In the *Tso Commentary* (*Tso chuan*) and *Conversations of the States* (*Kuo yü*), we learn that as early as the Spring and Autumn period, poetry was regarded as an effective means of communication. Passages and sometimes even whole poems from the *Book of Songs* were often quoted to convey a special message or to indicate one's intent in delicate diplomatic situations or in polite conversations.

According to one anecdote in the *Tso Commentary*, for example, the Duke of Cheng invited seven of his ministers to a banquet for one of his potential rivals, the Duke of Chin, Chao Meng. As part of the entertainment, Chao suggested that each of the ministers chant from the *Book of Songs* to the accompaniment of music.<sup>1</sup> By this means Chao sought to discern the true political intentions of each of the other guests. The poem that Viscount Ta Shu chanted was the following:

In the wilds, there are creepers,  
Drops of dew roll round upon their leaves.  
There is a person so lovely,  
With slender brows and clear eyes,  
Whom I met by chance.  
How it pleases my heart.

In the wilds, there are creepers,  
Drops of dew lie thick upon their leaves.  
There is a person so lovely,  
With brows slender and eyes clear,  
Whom I met by chance.  
I would like to be with you.<sup>2</sup>

(1.1)

Ta Shu's poem is ostensibly a love song. Apparently, he chose it not because of its expression of romantic love, but because it contains these lines: "Whom I met by chance. / How it pleases my heart." Chao Meng's response to Ta Shu, "How kind you are, my sir," clearly signals that he understood Ta Shu's friendly intent in quoting the poem.

"Quoting out of context" (*tuan-chang ch'ü-i*), as described in the *Tso Commentary*, was an accepted way of using these ancient poems to get a point across (SSCCS 2:2000). As the Ch'ing scholar Lao Hsiao-yü (fl. 1736) noted, poetry during the Spring and Autumn period was regarded mainly as a means of communication. People felt they could use these anonymous poems freely to express themselves with little or no regard for poetry as an independent entity.<sup>3</sup>

According to the modern scholar Chu Tzu-ch'ing, those who used the *Book of Songs* in this way knew that their own purposes might or might not have anything do with the meaning of the poems themselves (CTCKT 1:250). The extension of these pragmatic attitudes to the interpretation of the poems, however, eventually resulted in an outright disregard for their obvious literal meaning. This was what happened during Confucius' time (551–479 B.C.). People continued to quote out of context, imposing their

own meanings on the texts (CTCKT 2:627–28). Confucius himself used this method with his disciples (as evidenced here and there throughout the *Analects*), often focusing attention on the poems' educative value for moral reformation.<sup>4</sup>

Confucius' idea of the *Book of Songs* was succinctly revealed in the memorable and influential observation he made in summarizing its 305 poems: "no licentious thoughts." This phrase itself was actually taken out of context from one of the poems to distill the overall meaning and message of the entire anthology.<sup>5</sup> To determine the Master's purpose in giving so simplistic an interpretation to these highly diverse poems, we have to find out what he actually meant.

According to the "Biography of Confucius" in the *Records of the Grand Historian (Shih-chi)*, written by the Han historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien (ca. 145–85 B.C.), the Master wished to bring about a social order in the image of the Western Chou, a state that antedated Confucius by five centuries. For Confucius, education was one of the most effective ways to realize this goal, specifically the mastery of the so-called *Liu-i* (Six Arts or Six Classics): the *Book of Songs*, the *Book of History (Shu)*, the *Book of Music (Yüeh)*, the *Book of Changes (I)*, the *Book of Rites (Li-chi)*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals (Ch'un-ch'iu)*.<sup>6</sup>

It was with this educative and moral purpose that Confucius appropriated the meaning of these 305 poems (CTCKT 1:210–12). He imbued the *Book of Songs* as a whole with his own morally edifying intentions, imparting enormous importance to them for over two millennia. Following the practice of the Master, later Confucian scholars, as Chu Tzu-ch'ing points out, basically used the method of "quoting out of context" to interpret the *Book of Songs* (CTCKT 2:628). But unlike the earlier readers of this ancient collection, whose purpose in quoting the poems was dictated by a specific intention or occasion, later scholars had a grander and more consistent intention, first molded by the Master himself. In fact, in a passage from *Mencius*, we learn that Confucius interpreted the *Spring and Autumn Annals* in the same didactic way.<sup>7</sup>



What this all means, according to Chu Tzu-ch'ing, is that whereas didactic meaning and function are conveyed in the *Annals* through *pao* (praise) and *p'ien* (criticism), they are achieved in the *Book of Songs* through the comparable means of *sung* (commendation) and *feng* (remonstrance) (CTCKT 1:257). The didactic function of the *Book of Songs* is realized through the events and people depicted, whose actions are considered commendable or reproachable.

One effect of this view of poetry upon later commentary was that the poetic methods of depicting human situations by reference to physical nature in the *Book of Songs* would be analyzed primarily in terms of their moral function. Consequently, as attested by almost all the interpretations of the *Book of Songs* from the Han period up to the first part of the twentieth century, this earliest natural expression of the relationship between human feeling and physical nature in Chinese poetry was largely ignored, obfuscated, or twisted in the service of an imposed didactic function.<sup>8</sup>

### The Confucian View of *Hsing*

The poetic methods first associated with the *Book of Songs* were *fu* (straight-forward presentation), *pi* (comparison), and *hsing* (evocation). As part of the six principles (*liu-i*) of writing poetry, these terms first appeared in the *Rituals of Chou* (*Chou-li*), presumably written during the Warring States period, and later in the "Great Preface" ("Ta-hsü") to the *Book of Songs* (SSCCS 1:796 and 27). No specific definition of the three terms is given in these two documents, with the possible exception of a reference to them in connection with songs in another section of the *Rituals of Chou* (SSCCS 1:797). This has given rise to speculation that each of the terms refers to a different type of song.<sup>9</sup>

It is, however, apparent from the annotations of the Han commentators to the *Book of Songs* that *fu*, *pi*, and *hsing* are all poetic methods that employ physical reality to illustrate a human situation. Of these terms, *hsing* is by far the most intriguing. Poetically speaking, *hsing* is the most revealing of the creative impulse implied in the intimate coupling of

human feeling and the natural world in so many of the poems in the *Book of Songs*. Almost all the critical explorations of the nature of the relationship between “feeling” and “scene” since the Wei-Chin period can in one way or another be construed as explorations of *hsing* (see chapters 3, 4, and 5). These critical efforts were attempts to uncover precisely what it was that had attracted Chinese writers to poetry from the earliest times, as they strove to articulate the mysterious rapport they felt with the world around them.

In the annotations by the second-century B.C. scholars Mao Heng and Mao Ch'ang to the earliest extant edition of the *Book of Songs* (hereafter referred to as the Mao text), 116 of the 305 poems are labelled as *hsing*. This annotation usually appears at the end of the second line of the first stanza, immediately *after* a reference to the natural world and *before* the description of the human world (CTCKT 1:236). The position of the label itself points to an implicit relationship, usually one of analogy, between the two worlds. The analogy was almost invariably interpreted to convey a sociopolitical or didactic message in the Confucian manner (Mao Heng was a disciple of the third century B.C. Confucian thinker Hsün Tzu).

The use of these poems as vehicles for pragmatic messages was carried still further by the influential Han scholar Cheng Hsüan (127–200) in his elaborate commentaries (*chien*) on the Mao text. Cheng's work, in fact, succeeded in establishing the Mao text as the orthodox text. Cheng defined these poetic devices, *fu*, *pi*, and *hsing*, strictly according to the sociopolitical functions they perform:

The language of *fu* is straightforward, aiming at a direct description of the good and bad in current politics and education; *pi* is an analogy directed toward criticizing the ills of society for fear that a straightforward criticism might otherwise be too audacious; *hsing* is a comparison for the purpose of praising what is good in current affairs lest a direct laudatory remark might otherwise be misunderstood as obsequiousness. (1.2. SSCCS 1:796)

Obviously, the specific pragmatic function of commendation and remonstrance (or criticism), mentioned earlier, is the basis of Cheng's definition. In the first stanza of the poem “The Vast Han” (“Han-kuang”)

from the *Book of Songs*, we note how Cheng Hsüan annotates the lines that the Mao text labels as *hsing*:

In the south is a tall tree,  
One can not shelter under it.  
Across the Han River is a lady who roams about,  
One cannot pursue her. [*hsing*]  
Oh, the Han is so vast,  
One cannot swim it.  
Oh, the river is so long,  
One cannot raft it.

(1.3. SSCCS 1:281–82)

Obviously, these lines are about a man's yearning for an unattainable woman. For the Han commentators, however, the situation is much more complicated. After calling attention to the device of *hsing*, in this case labelled at the end of the fourth line (atypically), the Mao text says that the tree in the poem is a wonderful tree in the south whose leaves are sparse on top. The lady across the Han, the Mao text continues, has no suitors. Cheng Hsüan's commentaries, as a rule, are further elaborations on the Mao annotations, particularly in relation to the role of *hsing* as labelled in the Mao text. In this poem, for instance, Cheng says that because the tree is tall and its branches and leaves are high, no one can receive shelter from it. This tree, Cheng continues, is labeled as *hsing* in the Mao text because it stands as an analogy for the lady's state: just as there is a tall tree whose shade no one can enjoy, so this noble and chaste lady is inaccessible to any suitors, despite the fact that she can be seen across the Han River (SSCCS 1:281–82).

Such is Cheng's reading of *hsing* in reference to the tall tree. The purpose of the *hsing* here is obviously to evoke an analogy between the lofty tree and the noble lady in order to *praise* the latter's exemplary and modestly feminine character. This is in accordance with Cheng's definition of *hsing*, mentioned earlier.

But Cheng is not always consistent. Elsewhere in the Mao text, where another gentleman is pursuing an unattainable lady, the plant described in the beginning of the poem is similarly labelled *hsing*. Cheng comments, however, that the purpose of the *hsing* in this poem is not *praise* but *criticism*, in this case directed against a specific person, Duke Hsiang (SSCCS 1:372). Let us first look at the poem:

Thick are the rushes,  
The white dew turns to frost. [*hsing*]  
The one who is my beloved,  
Is on yonder side of the stream.  
I go upstream to look for my beloved,  
But the way is treacherous and long.  
I go downstream to look for my beloved,  
And there in midstream—ah, the one I love.

Lush are the rushes,  
The white dew is not yet dry.  
The one who is my beloved,  
Is on the other side of the stream.  
I go upstream to look for my beloved,  
But the way is treacherous and steep.  
I go downstream to look for my beloved,  
There on a sandbar—ah, the one I love.

Abundant are the rushes,  
The white dew is not yet gone.  
The one who is my beloved,  
Is at the edge of the stream.  
I go upstream to look for my beloved,  
But the way is treacherous and twisting.  
I go downstream to look for my beloved,  
There in the shallows—ah, the one I love.

(1.4. SSCCS 1:372)

Here, as before, the Mao text places the label of *hsing* after the description of a natural scene. The Mao text explains that the thickening of the rushes and the dew turning into frost signal the end of the year. Then it insists that just as the year completes its days at the end of a cycle, so the nation will have to await the proper rites before it can become strong (SSCCS 1:372). The comparison between what happens in nature and the situation facing the nation is difficult to fathom.

Cheng Hsüan's comments about the use of *hsing* in this poem further complicate the already far-fetched analogy. Noting that the rushes among the myriad plants are lush and that they turn yellow only when the dew becomes frost, he discerns an analogy (*yü*) with the people, who become docile only through the discipline of the rites of the Chou (SSCCS 1:372).

A certain biased ingenuity is required to transform an otherwise simple description of an autumnal morning by the river where the rushes are dense and the dew has become frost. It is worth noting, however, that both for the Mao commentators and for Cheng, *hsing* clearly implies an intimate relationship between the human situation and natural phenomena. In other words, despite the commentators' silence on the intrinsic nature of *hsing*, their assumption of its sociopolitical and socioethical function is nevertheless premised on the essential nature of *hsing* as analogy.

Cheng was of course guided by a propensity to read these poems in the Confucian manner. But from what sources were such complex and often far-fetched inferences about *hsing* derived? What elements actually determined for him whether the function of *hsing* in any given poem was to praise or to criticize?

One influential source for Cheng's approach is found in the "Great Preface" to the whole *Book of Songs* and the "Small Prefaces" ("Hsiao-hsü") to individual poems. The former talks about the general nature and sociopolitical function of poetry, the latter about the specific intent of each individual poem. Both are of controversial date and authorship, but it is likely that they were written during the Latter Han period.<sup>10</sup>

It was the “Great Preface” and the “Small Prefaces,” composed at least several centuries after the *Book of Songs*, that, ironically, dictated the general drift of interpretation. Chu Tzu-ch’ing has pointed out the basic premises for the Mao-Cheng interpretation of this entire collection of poems (CTCKT 1:258). He refers to the following often-quoted passage from the “Great Preface”:

The early rulers then used [the *Book of Songs*] to regulate married couples, perfect the practice of filial piety, enhance human relationships, cultivate civilization, and improve social morals and mores. (1.5. SSCCS 1:270)

The “Small Prefaces” further specify the moralizing intent of the “Great Preface” according to the context of the individual poems. The “Small Preface” to the first poem of the Mao text, for example, says that the poems of the two geographical areas Chou Nan and Shao Nan are expressions of the fundamentals of a society cultivated by a sage king (SSCCS 1:273).<sup>11</sup> Practically all the poems from these two areas are interpreted as morally edifying in a positive way, and those of the other areas as edifying by negative example (KSP 3:388–90). Accordingly, the purpose of *hsing* in poems of Chou Nan and Shao Nan is praise, while in poems from other areas its purpose is criticism.

Similarly, the “Small Preface” to “The Vast Han” poem quoted above states that the poem is from an area in which, being influenced by the virtuous and sage King Wen of the Western Chou dynasty, the people do not trespass against the rites, and the lady cannot be attained despite pursuit (SSCCS 1:281). Guided by this premise, Cheng Hsüan’s job was not to discover what the poem says literally, but to find ingenious ways of making the poem communicate the message set forth in the “Small Preface.” First of all, therefore, the lady in the poem had to be described as chaste and moral to counteract the potentially disturbing description of her “roaming about” across the Han River, with its connotations of wantonness. Moreover, it is her chasteness that deters her suitor and keeps him at a distance. The suitor’s complaint is now twisted to mean that he did not dare to pursue the lady because she was so noble and virtuous.

In the same way, Cheng's reading of the *hsing* device in the poem of the rushes was also dictated by its "Small Preface," which tells us that the poem (which originated outside highly civilized areas) is intended to criticize Duke Hsiang for not employing the rites of the Chou dynasty to strengthen his state (SSCCS 1:372). Thus the rushes are assigned the responsibility of revealing an analogy between the natural world and the human world, however strained and implausible this may be. Finally, to make the whole poem consistent with the intended message, the unattainable person in the poem (whose gender is not specified) is also moralized, and in a manner far more drastic than that found in the poem on the Han. The result is that the object of the search becomes the sage who knows the rites of Chou, and the painstaking search itself represents the arduous effort to attain the moral perfection he embodies.

Thus, for almost two thousand years the poems in the *Book of Songs* have primarily been read not as poetry but as vehicles for political and social messages. Neither the "Great Preface" nor the individual "Small Prefaces" have much to do with what the poems themselves try to convey as literature.

Having said this, it is necessary to recognize that some poems in the collection actually were composed with a practical purpose in mind. Among the three subdivisions in the *Book of Songs*, namely, *feng* (airs), *ya* (odes), and *sung* (hymns), quite a few poems in the latter two sections were written expressly to praise or to criticize political personages or events.<sup>12</sup> Some of the forty poems in *ya* are of folk origin, but most are believed to have originated in an aristocratic milieu, reflecting its lifestyles and rituals. As for the poems in *sung*, almost all are songs of a religious and ritualistic nature, to be accompanied by dance and/or music.<sup>13</sup> Although these poems definitely served religious and/or political purposes, some overzealous commentators and authors of the "Small Prefaces" exaggerated the pragmatic interpretations sanctioned by Confucianism.

This kind of arbitrary reading becomes quite insupportable with regard to the 160 poems of the *feng* section, for they are predominantly

expressions of personal emotions. It is in these poems that the obvious lyrical intent has been most drastically and violently supplanted.<sup>14</sup> The Han commentators' pragmatic reading of the poems discussed above, both from the *feng* section, are certainly cases in point. In these examples, the poetic device of *hsing* is charged with the function of making arbitrary and abstruse connections between the natural world and the human world—connections that have little bearing on important artistic and lyric intentions. In their enthusiasm for turning the anthology into a Confucian classic (*ching*), the Han commentators saddled *hsing* with so weighty a pragmatic burden that its primary nature and role as a poetic device was suppressed and distorted.<sup>15</sup>

### *Hsing* as an Essential Lyrical Element

The Han scholars' search for moral and sociopolitical messages seems to have made them oblivious to certain elemental and spontaneous connections that poets made between the human world and the immediate physical environment at moments of intense emotional experience. It does not seem to have occurred to them that almost anything in the poet's surroundings may become connected with an emotion and eventually emerge as part of the context and expression of the experience.

As the following chapters will demonstrate, the impulse in poetic expression to find a counterpart to one's own private emotion in the outside world is the operative energy at the core of *hsing*. What typifies *hsing* is precisely this element of spontaneity. But the spontaneity has two aspects: one that is simple and direct and another that defies reason and is seemingly incomprehensible and irrelevant because it is not yet tamed and sanctioned by the intellect. In other words, the heart has a reason which reason does not know. *Hsing*, in this sense, does not seem to have entered at all into the critical consciousness of the early commentators on the *Book of Songs*, absorbed as they were in their earnest search for pragmatic Confucian messages.

The *hsing* element that characterizes so many of the poems in this ancient collection very much expresses this pristine moment of lyrical



experience when the poet is uniquely possessed by passion. Consider again the poem quoted above about the rushes (1. 4), which represents the mind and heart of the poet as full of the beloved who, alas, is tantalizingly unattainable. In each of the three stanzas, the poet begins with the rush leaves and the white dew. The marking of the *hsing* lines in the Mao text, as the modern scholar Wang Ching-hsien points out, is undoubtedly an important and insightful contribution to Chinese poetics, for it singled out a recurring and characteristic phenomenon in these poems.<sup>16</sup> Where the Mao and subsequent commentators erred was in failing to consider *hsing* in terms of what it is and does in a poetic medium.

To be sure, we can never uncover what took place during the creative process. It is, however, plausible that the rushes and the dew may just have happened to be there as the lovelorn speaker was experiencing his frustration on the river-bank that chilly morning. They constitute the scene—the very context and physical witness of that aching frustration.<sup>17</sup> As that memorable experience was being rendered into poetry, the elements of the scene naturally and spontaneously entered the story of that feeling and thus became an integral part of the poem.

Furthermore, in telling this story in poetry (traditionally chanted out loud), what was *visually there* as part of the experience is translated into its aural equivalent in the *melos* of the poetry: for example, the descriptive words that characterize the rushes and the dew at the end of the first two lines of the first stanza, *tsang* (thick) and *shiang* (frost), rhyme with other words in the stanza and euphonicly echo and reinforce the helpless longing of the poet.<sup>18</sup> This is also true of the rest of the poem, where the words describing the rushes and the dew, and the rhyme as well, vary from stanza to stanza.

In other words, the *hsing* lines participate not only visually but also audibly in conveying the emotion as an integral part of the expression of the poem. Although the setting does not really have much to do directly with the emotion of the poem, still it is the living context out of which the emotion grows and is nourished. Such is the vitality of *hsing*. Furthermore, the apparent irrelevance of the rushes and the dew incidentally

reveals the speaker's obsession with his emotion. Rather than drawing explicit, logical connections between the scene and his emotions, the speaker seems to allow whatever happens to be there to color the tone of his voice in his spontaneous search for expression.

Spontaneity, however, is not necessarily irrational. A speaker may be so overwhelmed by emotion as to be unaware of the reason of the heart, which secretly inspires the connection with the world outside. In many of the poems in the *Book of Songs*, the coupling of the physical world and the human world seems to be inspired by this kind of spontaneity.

The *hsing* lines in "The Vast Han" (1. 3) are a case in point. This poem, too, is about an unattainable lover, the lady across the Han River. Each of the stanzas (of which the first, quoted above, is representative) begins by mentioning a kind of tree whose tender twigs (in stanzas 2 and 3) are fed to the horse of the beloved. From this one may infer that the speaker might be a woodcutter, a person familiar with trees. The trees that surround him not only become a setting for his thoughts; they commingle with his thoughts. More accurately, we may say that it is his thoughts of the girl he mixes up with the trees—so much so that the tree and the girl become inseparably related to form a unity of expression.

In both "The Vast Han" and "Thick are the rushes," the connection is circumstantial and spontaneous. But in "The Vast Han" some innate correspondence seems to pull the young man and the tree together even though he may not be consciously making such a connection. One may further infer from the poem that the young man, obsessed with the girl and weary of his hopeless longing, might rest from his work on a hot summer day under a tall tree, taking shelter from the scorching sun. The tall tree, alas, gives little shade. In the coupling of what the young man thinks about the girl, seemingly aloof and unreachable, and what the tall and bare tree fails to do for him, we detect a sense of correspondence. Such a parallel might have arisen quite spontaneously.

This spontaneously intuited relationship does not always have to be one of simple correspondence. In the following poem from the *Book of*

*Songs*, for example, a woman finds thoughts of her husband, away on a protracted military expedition, hard to bear:

My husband is in service,  
I don't know for how long.  
When will he return?  
The chickens are at home in their holes.  
When the day ends,  
The sheep and cows come home.  
My husband is in service,  
How can I not miss him?

My husband is in service,  
Not a matter of days or months.  
When will we meet again?  
The chickens are at home in their coops.  
When the day ends,  
The sheep and cows come home.  
My husband is in service,  
Pray that he be not hungry or thirsty.

(1.6. SSCCS 1:331)

As in the two poems cited earlier, the speaker moves back and forth between what she thinks and feels and what she observes in her familiar surroundings. The security the chickens enjoy and the return of the animals at evening, a time for reunion, poignantly remind her of her own loneliness. Also, in the second stanza, the domestic animals that are sources of food become painful reminders of her husband's sorry state, without sufficient food or drink in a distant land.

In both "The Vast Han" and "My husband is in service," the relationship between the speaker and the physical surroundings is very much one of spontaneous and circumstantial juxtaposition. But at the same time, it seems that the speaker and the physical world are drawn together by what I would describe as an "innate pull." There is an analogy present in the pull, to be sure, but the power of connection seems to be felt first

before the reason of such a relationship can be comprehended. Whether this analogy is one of correspondence or of contrast, it seems to come to the speakers as an afterthought, a surprise, evidence that they are not deliberately seeking a concrete counterpart in the external world for the expression of personal emotion.

It is very much because of this predominantly spontaneous element that *hsing* is different from *pi*, which is characterized by a more conscious search for analogy. There are a number of important implications contained in this fundamental and recurring aspect of *hsing*. First of all, on the experiential level, the coupling of the physical world and the emotional world of the speaker indicates an intimate relationship between man and nature. More specifically, it indicates that the physical world participates in the very expression of human emotion as a living context, whether the two worlds are drawn together by an innate pull or not.

Second, the coupling of the physical world and human emotion perfectly captures the spontaneous and perpetually evocative relationship between speaker and environment during the creative process. It is largely because of this quiet and unobtrusive paralleling between the emotion of the speaker and the world outside that the poems in the *Book of Songs* are so highly suggestive.

Third, *hsing* not only is an expression of the intimate relationship between human feeling and physical environment but also reenacts, in the poetic medium, the dynamic and affective encounter between emotion and the environment. The power of *hsing* lies not so much in what is expressed through the poetic medium per se, as in what is suggested beyond the text. As such, *hsing* not only characterizes the creative impulse in much of Chinese poetry, but also directly contributes to the aesthetic effect it creates on the reader.<sup>19</sup> This calls to mind Wang Ching-hsien's study, *The Bell and the Drum*, which points out that many of the recurring or similar *hsing* lines in the *Book of Songs* are actually formulaic expressions in the oral transmission of a poem. "The references to natural objects in the *hsing* device," says Wang, "intensify the poem by association and reminiscence which the audience can be counted on to recognize."<sup>20</sup>

Very few scholars today would seriously doubt the oral origin of the poems in the *Book of Songs*. Wang's research has done much to unravel the mystery posed by the recurrence of similar or identical descriptive lines. On the other hand, the fundamental nature of *hsing* cannot be fully explained by its formulaic function. Several questions come to mind when we try to explore *hsing* beyond its formulaic dimension. First of all, how would we theoretically account for the first *hsing* before it became formulaic? Second, why is it that virtually all the *hsing* lines and phrases in the *Book of Songs* involve the coupling of a natural phenomenon and a human situation? And third, looking beyond the *Book of Songs*, why does *hsing* in this basic mode -- coupling the natural world and the human situation -- recur throughout the history of Chinese poetry? Why does it continue to be the basis of the relationship between "feeling" and "scene" long after the composition of poetry ceased to be an oral affair?

The recurrence of *hsing* in the *Book of Songs* and in most Chinese poetry, typified by the regular pairing of people and their environment, of sentiment and setting, or of personal event and geographical as well as historical context, does suggest a persistent poetic impulse. What is the nature of this creative impulse? More specifically, why is it that in the Chinese poetic tradition the participation of the physical world plays such a central role? In what way does the physical world affect the expression of emotion, and why does the emotion of the speaker gravitate toward the physical world for expression? Apparently, because of their commitment to unravelling what they deemed the hidden pragmatic messages of the *Book of Songs*, Han interpreters did not have much interest in recognizing, let alone pursuing, these central questions about the nature and impulse of poetry.

One final point I would like to make: It would be rather naive simply to assume that the physical world depicted in a poem necessarily has a basis in reality rather than being the product of the poet's imagination. What matters in a Chinese poem is that it *appears* to be real and that it has the power to evoke "feeling" with all its living and provocative appeal. This emphasis on the verisimilitude of the evocative interplay between

“scene” and “feeling” is central to the nature and the creative energy of Chinese poetry.

Before concluding this chapter, it is important to mention that the pragmatic attitude of the commentators on the *Book of Songs* is also manifested in the interpretation of another very influential anthology of poetry, the *Songs of Ch'u* (*Ch'u tz'u*), composed between the third century B.C. and the second century A.D.. This is particularly true of the longest poem in the anthology, “Encountering Sorrow” (“Li sao”), commonly attributed to the exiled poet-patriot Ch'ü Yüan (340–278 B.C.). This poem is about the frustrated life of a court minister fighting a losing battle against the corrupt lord he is anxious to serve, and against the relentless flight of time, which will soon deny him the chance to serve the state. The speaker refers to various plants and flowers as a veiled expression of his views about political figures as well as his sorry predicament. To be sure, in this poem the search for hidden political messages in apparently innocent references to the natural world is far more justified than in the *Book of Songs*. That both of these early and influential anthologies have been construed in terms of hidden messages has had an undeniable impact on the reading as well as the writing of subsequent poetry.<sup>21</sup>

To summarize, the dominance of the pragmatic view of poetry during the Han period submerged and distorted, to a very large degree, the most central and fundamental dimension of Chinese poetry, namely, the spontaneous and affective interaction between the speaker and the external world during the creative process, as well as the expression of such an interplay in the poetic medium. It was not until ideas about literature became liberated from the heavy-handed, pragmatic Confucian influence that this crucial phenomenon in Chinese poetry began to be appreciated for what it was. It was only then, as the following chapters will explain, that scholars began to study the related issues of the creative impulse, the nature of poetry, and its aesthetic dimension beyond the text.



## *The Affective Phase: Pre-T'ang Poetic Developments*

Between the Wei-Chin period and the end of the Southern dynasties, altogether a span of some three and a half centuries, an important change took place: no longer was literature primarily considered as a means of transmitting sociopolitical or socioethical messages; on the contrary, it was regarded more and more as an expression of the individual's innermost thoughts and feelings. This recognition of literature as self-expression was very much the result of what the modern scholar Li Tse-hou calls "man's awareness of selfhood."<sup>1</sup>

On the critical side, this consciousness spurred an unprecedented exploration of both the nature and the expression of literature. On the literary side, the main thrust was to find expression for the individual self. Ironically, as another modern scholar, Tsung Pai-hua, observes, this era of political instability and confusion was simultaneously the most liberated, imaginative, and artistically lively period.<sup>2</sup>



This irony, however, was born of necessity. I would argue that precisely because the times were so bad, so uncertain, so tragically tumultuous beginning with the Latter Han, people—especially those among the educated elite who thought and felt deeply—were desperately looking for an expressive outlet. Literature and the arts became the obvious means of unburdening themselves, as well as channelling their thoughts and emotions away from the mundane events and misfortunes surrounding them.

Literature was also a mirror reflecting interior life. This was especially true in lyric poetry, which had, since the Latter Han period, replaced rhyme-prose (*fu*) as the major genre. While rhyme-prose compositions, particularly those with ornate descriptions of imperial gardens and hunting grounds, might have befitted the majestic Former Han empire, they became increasingly irrelevant as the entire country fell into turmoil with the disintegration of the empire. Poets came to believe that the most pressing need was to vent their own deeply felt frustrations in the form of impassioned lyrics.

But soon this was found to be inadequate and even futile. Poets now found a new distraction. Like many of the literati during the Wei-Chin period, they began to turn to the other-worldly metaphysics of Neo-Taoism as a way of escaping and finally transcending the ills of transient reality through contemplation of the constant, eternal laws of nature. The popularity of Neo-Taoist poetry was understandable given the chaotic circumstances of the time. Before long, the Neo-Taoist gravitation toward physical nature as the concrete manifestation of the Tao began to draw poets directly to mountains and rivers as the ultimate solace. By the end of the Southern dynasties, poets had moved towards a balanced integration of external reality and the inner world.

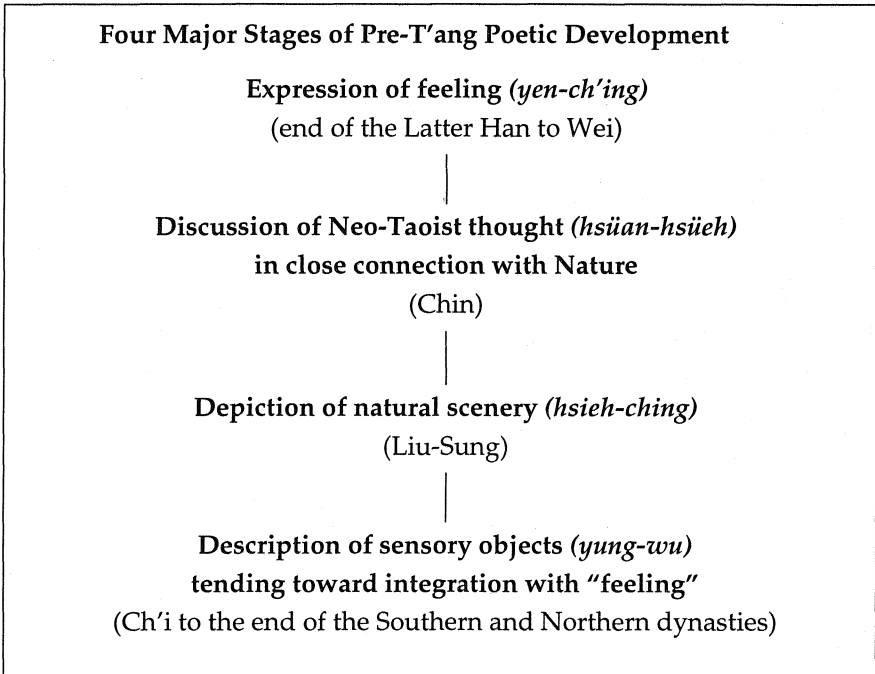
The shift of poetic focus from “feeling” to “scene” and, finally, to an integration of both was clearly reflected in the poetic medium. This movement toward “scene,” a critical phase in poetic evolution, was largely inspired by the Neo-Taoist interest in nature. The success of the Taoist influence during this period was largely due to the search by the

literati for a proper outlet for the individual. Such a conscious concern with the expression of the poet's personal thought and feeling was what characterized both poetry and criticism in this affective phase.

This long, circuitous progress toward the integration of the inner self with the outer world directly contributed to the flowering of T'ang poetry, known for its wonderful fusion of "feeling" and "scene."<sup>3</sup> In tracing the development of T'ang poetry, Chu Tzu-ch'ing calls attention to the evolution of pentasyllabic poetry during the pre-T'ang period. Between Wei-Chin times and the T'ang period, Chu says, this predominant poetic form underwent three important stages of development.

The first stage, represented by Juan Chi (210–263) of the Wei, was characterized primarily by its expression of personal feelings. The second stage, featuring such poets as T'ao Ch'ien (365–427) of the Eastern Chin and Hsieh Ling-yün (385–433) of the Liu-Sung period, is best known for the depiction of life on the farm and natural scenery intermixed with expressions of thoughts and feelings. The final stage occurred primarily during the Liang period, when palace-style poetry (*kung-t'i shih*) with its detailed description of palace ladies and objects began to flourish. In addition, the parallelism and tonal pattern observed in recent-style poetry (*chin-t'i shih*), a dominant poetic form of the T'ang period, were beginning to be consciously developed (CTCKT 2:382–83).<sup>4</sup>

In this brief sketch, Chu is also suggesting that the poetic focus during these pre-T'ang periods moved from expression of feeling toward detailed description of the external world. But Chu, like most critics, fails to give due recognition to a crucial link in the chain of these developments, namely, Neo-Taoist poetry (*hsüan-yen shih*). This subgenre was particularly instrumental in helping to create this shift. I would therefore argue that there are *four* instead of *three* major stages of development in the pre-T'ang eras. The changing foci that dictated the evolution of Chinese poetry during this important period can be roughly diagrammed.



These developments constituted a gradual evolution, each stage of which contained the seed for the one following. In the rest of this chapter I will investigate how this process was expressed in the poetic medium and the significance inherent in such a persistent and dynamic process with regard to the relationship between "feeling" and "scene." Chapter 3 will be concerned with the critical implications, particularly how this process was directly connected to the exploration of "feeling" and "physical world" in contemporary criticism.

### "Feeling" as the Major Thrust of Poetry

In China, poetry has almost always been an intimate and effective means of expressing personal sorrow. Evidence of this is found in the following simple words from the *Book of Songs*:

I made this song,  
To tell my sorrow.

(2.1. SSCCS 1:463)

The urge “to tell my sorrow” in poetry was particularly strong during the troubled times of the Latter Han and Wei periods. A survey of the poems written during this time will bear this out, whether they are the pentasyllabic ancient-style poems (*wu-ku*) or the Music Bureau (*yüeh-fu*) poems.<sup>5</sup> In the following example from Juan Chi’s well-known series of eighty-two poems, entitled *Chanting My Sorrow* (*Yung-huai*), we hear the speaker grieve in a tone of utter despair:

In the middle of the night I cannot sleep,  
I sit up to play the lute.  
The bright moon shines through the thin curtain,  
And the cool breeze blows at my lapel.  
A lone goose cries in the desolate wilds,  
A flying bird sings in the chill northern woods.  
Pacing to and fro, what do I perceive?  
Sad thoughts—ah, all alone, my heart aches.

(2.2. HCHWC 1:496)

This straightforward outpouring of personal feelings apparently was influenced by the simple, direct language of the Music Bureau poetry from which such ancient-style poetry developed.<sup>6</sup> The description of the physical world, though present, is tinged with human emotions.

While the general malaise of the time evoked much of the unrelenting pessimism among poets, it also prompted many to withdraw totally from the world through wine, drugs, or imaginary company with the legendary immortals commonly associated with Taoist attitudes or practices. Consider the following selection from the well-known “Nineteen Ancient-Style Poems,” in which the speaker, struck by what he sees at a burial site, an all-too-familiar scene in times of war, decides to escape from it all through wine and other sensuous pleasures:

I speed my carriage to the Eastern Gate,  
To gaze at the tombs past the Northern Wall;  
How the white poplars’ leaves are all a rustle,  
And pines and cypresses line the broad path.

Underneath are bodies long dead,  
 Shrouded in eternal darkness;  
 Beneath the Yellow Springs of the netherworld,  
 Even after thousands of years, they will not wake.  
 Yin and Yang rotate in diurnal turns,  
 Man's life is like the morning dew,  
 Fleeting is his transient passage.  
 One's earthly years do not last as stone or metal;  
 For thousands of generations, the living send off the dead,  
 No saints or sages can escape this fate.  
 Some took drugs to seek immortality,  
 Only to find they were deceived.  
 Better to drink good wine,  
 And wear satins and silks.

(2.3. HCHWC 1:332)

Already in this poem (presumably from the Latter Han period), the underlying thrust beneath the veil of frivolity is a negative attitude toward life, verging on escapism, which is a largely Taoist view.<sup>7</sup> By the time of the Wei-Chin period, with growing political instability and rising Taoist influence, a desire to escape the ills of the world as well as to discuss transcendental ideas began to appear more and more in poetry. Consequently, feelings of despair and frustration are often directed not so much against the chaotic situation of the world as against the ultimate meaninglessness of human existence itself. In stark contrast to the sorrowful state of earthly life, the life of the legendary Taoist immortal is often admired for its unalloyed joy, duration, and absolute freedom from human cares. In the following poem, entitled "Roaming with the Immortals" ("Yu-hsien"), by Ts'ao Chih (192–232), one of the most talented poets of the Chien-an circle,<sup>8</sup> there is a fine example of this desire:

Man's life does not reach a hundred years,  
 Grim and woeful is it with so little joy.  
 I long to soar with six-pinioned wings,<sup>9</sup>

To break through clouds and fly above the vermillion void.  
Cicada-like, I shed my mortal skin to become as Sung and Ch'iao.<sup>10</sup>  
With a flapping of the wings, I ascend Tripod Lake,<sup>11</sup>  
To glide above the Ninth Heaven.<sup>12</sup>  
I spur myself on for a far-off journey:  
To view the dazzling Hibiscus in the east,  
To look over the running Gentle Water in the west,  
To mount the Dark Heaven Isle in the north,  
To wing over the Cinnabar Hill in the south.<sup>13</sup>

(2.4. *HCHWC* 1:456)

While the literal focus of the poem is on fanciful wandering in the boundless world of the immortals, the underlying thrust comes from an intense feeling of helplessness about the inherent limitations of human life.<sup>14</sup> In the following verse from Juan Chi's *Chanting My Sorrow*, there is again an analogous lament for the transience of life accompanied by a similar desire to escape mundane existence:

The morning sunshine is bright but once,  
The white sun suddenly dims and disappears in the west.  
As fleeting as the blink of an eye a day passes,  
Who says it lasts as long as nine autumns?  
Man's life is like dust and dew,  
Only the Tao [Way] of Heaven is eternal and forever.  
When Duke Ching of Ch'i climbed to the mountain-top,  
He wept to find his life flowing like the river below.  
So lamented Confucius when he scanned the long stream  
For the fleeting life which passed just as fast.  
What has already passed is certainly beyond me,  
What is yet to come, I have no power to claim.  
I long to climb Mount T'ai-hua,  
To roam with Master Sung.  
The fisherman of old knew the sorrows of the world,  
So he drifted off in a light skiff.

(2.5. *HCHWC* 1:503)

The speaker's longing to join the Taoist masters in their habitual haunt on Mount T'ai-hua and his admiration for the eremitic fisherman in Ch'ü Yüan's poem "The Fisherman," express a desire common for many of the Wei-Chin poets. For them, the transience of human life took on an extraordinary immediacy since lives could be abruptly terminated without reason during this period of political upheaval. Thus, the Taoist way of life, whether the pursuit of the Tao, the search for the immortals, or even the taking of drugs, became a welcome escape for intellectuals and a popular subject for poems. Liu Hsieh's remark that poetry during the Wei period began to be intermixed with ideas about the Tao and about the immortals is accurate (*WHTL* 35).<sup>15</sup> While Taoist influence was increasing during the end of the Latter Han and Wei, the main focus of the poetry of these periods was still deep-seated frustration rather than meditation on Taoist thought.

Generally speaking, it was not until the Chin (particularly the Eastern Chin) period that the poetic focus began to shift gradually from expression of personal emotions to discussion of metaphysical ideas under the increasing influence of Taoist and Neo-Taoist thought (*hsüan-hsüeh*). Along with this shift, Neo-Taoist poetry began to emerge. The appearance of this new subgenre of poetry was significant. As we shall see in the following section, this development directly heralded a further change of poetic focus to the depiction of physical nature, culminating finally in the rise of landscape poetry (*shan-shui shih*) around the fifth century.

### **Neo-Taoist Thought as the Primary Theme of Poetry**

By Neo-Taoist poetry, I mean poetry that expresses Neo-Taoist thought and draws on such classical texts as the *Lao Tzu*, the *Chuang Tzu*, and the mystic Confucian classic on man's relationship with the cosmos, the *Book of Changes* (*I-ching*). These three texts, referred to as the "three mysterious learnings" (*san-hsüan*), formed the basis of Neo-Taoist study, which reached its peak during the third and fourth centuries.<sup>16</sup> This was a time when exploration of an alternate outlook on reality became popular

among intellectuals amid the breakdown of the Confucian sociopolitical order.

It is difficult to pinpoint when Neo-Taoist poetry first began to appear as a distinct type. As we have seen, poets as early as the end of the Latter Han and Wei periods had begun to incorporate Neo-Taoist thoughts in their work. Critics tend to regard the Eastern Chin as the period of Neo-Taoist poetry, for it was then, as Wang Yao points out, that it became popular for poets to discuss Neo-Taoist ideas. Very few such poems, however, are extant today.<sup>17</sup> Given its boring and often extremely esoteric content, Neo-Taoist poetry was a genre that arose to meet certain intellectual needs of the time, not necessarily those of poetry. As Wang Yao asserts, however, its impact on subsequent poetry should not be underestimated. For example, there are visible traces of its profound influence on the poetry of T'ao Ch'ien, one of the greatest poets in Chinese history. But Neo-Taoism's most important contribution is the direct effect it had on the rise of landscape poetry by helping to shift the poetic focus from the expression of feeling to the depiction of physical nature.

This shift of emphasis occurred gradually and it was preceded by a general decline of emotional intensity in the poems of the Western Chin period. For example, in "On My Way to Lo-yang," Lu Chi, one of the leading literary figures of the period and known for his influential *Essay on Literature*, writes:

I traveled far to cross over mountains and rivers,  
Mountains and rivers that were both vast and meandering.  
Brandishing the whip, I mounted the high hills,  
Drawing the reins, I rode along level lands.  
At night, I slept with only my shadow to embrace,  
In the morning, I took up my journey heavy with thoughts  
of home.  
Checking my horse by the steep cliff,  
I cocked my ear to listen to the mournful wind.  
The dew lay glistening with crystal clarity,  
How bright was the moon shining above.



I held my pillow as I lay awake,  
 Straightening my robe, I lost myself in thought, alone.

(2.6. *HCHWC* 1:684)

In this poem about his long journey to the Chin capital, Lo-yang, to serve at court, the speaker, presumably Lu Chi himself, is full of conflicting thoughts, having left his home in the south for good.<sup>18</sup> Very much like Juan Chi's poem about the sleepless night, this poem depicts a lone soul brooding over his plight on a disturbingly bright, moonlit night. Yet while Juan Chi's poem is simple and direct in its expression of emotion, in this poem there is far more attention placed on the manner in which emotion is conveyed. The neatly juxtaposed parallel couplets in lines 3–4 and 5–6 give the impression that the poet is preoccupied not so much with the power of the emotion itself as with how it is to be expressed. This emphasis is even more obvious in Lu Chi's many less successful poems, which suffer from a lack of emotional strength.<sup>19</sup>

This lack of emotional intensity is a characteristic shared by many of the poems written by Lu Chi's contemporaries. The outpouring of deeply felt emotion typical of so many earlier poems now gradually gave way to a highly stylized depiction of outward phenomena. Consider "Miscellaneous Poems" by Chang Hsieh (?–307), a poet highly praised by Chung Hung (fl. 483–513) for his skillful description of physical reality (*SPCS*, 38):

Red haze of dawn welcomes the white sun,  
 Cinnabar vapor hovers over the Valley of the Sun.<sup>20</sup>  
 With dark shadows, thick clouds cover the sky,  
 In a fine drizzle, rain scatters down from above.  
 A gentle wind brushes against the tough grass,  
 The frozen frost startles the tall trees.  
 Dense foliage becomes sparser by the day,  
 Bare forest trees stand erect like bundled logs.  
 Once I sighed for the slow moving of time,  
 Now as I grow old, I grieve for the years hurrying by.  
 At the end of the year, my heart is filled with sundry sorrows,  
 I shall retire as Chi-chu to become a fortune-teller.<sup>21</sup>

(2.7. *HCHWC* 1:746)

Although the poem concerns life's transience and the decision to become a hermit (as revealed in the last four lines), much of it is devoted to the depiction of vivid natural scenes in parallel couplets. The use of the sunrise, the overcast sky, and the desolate wintry forest, are indirect ways of describing the various phases of human life.

In "Summoning the Recluse," by Tso Ssu (250?–305?), a poet known for his moving language, the depiction of the physical world is again carefully attended to:

I lean against my staff and summon the recluse,  
The desolate path lies untrodden since long ago.  
No human structures are seen around the mountain caves,  
Yet amidst the valley, someone is playing the lute.  
White clouds hover over the shady ridge,  
Red flowers brighten the sunny woods.  
Waterfall splashes against the jade-like rocks,  
Tiny-scaled fish swim up and down.  
No need for string or bamboo instruments,  
There is cool music in the mountains and rivers.  
Why bother to chant out loud?  
The shrubs themselves are able to chant notes of sadness.  
Autumn chrysanthemums garnish my food,  
Valley orchids decorate my lapel.  
My feet are tired with so much walking around,  
I would like to discard my hat-pin and let my hair down.  
(2.8. HCHWC 1:734–35)

Quite a few Chin poets wrote their lyrics under the common title "Summoning the Recluse" ("Chao-yin"), inspired by a poem of that title by Huai-nan Hsiao Shan (ca. 179–122 B.C.), in the *Songs of Ch'u*, urging a gentleman (probably Ch'ü Yüan) to come out of seclusion and serve the government.<sup>22</sup> The original intent of Tso Ssu's poem, as suggested by the title, is the same. This is clearly shown in the first four lines where the speaker searches for the hermit in the mountain. But as the poem

progresses, and wild and uninhabitable nature gradually gives way to an increasingly attractive series of sights and sounds, the speaker changes his mind. Instead of summoning the recluse to return to the world, he is finally persuaded by the idyllic setting and carefree lifestyle to forsake the world and become a hermit himself.

The subjects of the poems of the Western Chin, as the above examples demonstrate, were gradually moving away from inner emotions. This change was accompanied by increasing attention to external physical reality as well as to the language describing it. In a typically cogent comment on this style, Liu Hsieh calls its language more colorful than the poetry of the Cheng-shih era of Wei (240–246), but its emotional intensity less powerful than the poetry of the Chien-an era of the Han (WHTL, 35).<sup>23</sup>

By the Eastern Chin period, poetry suffered an even further decline in emotional intensity when discourse on Neo-Taoist thought became the primary concern of poets. Liu Hsieh aptly describes the literary style of the Eastern Chin as calm and serene and its poetry as full of allusions to the *Lao Tzu* and the *Chuang Tzu* (WHTL, 285). In his "Preface" to *Classification of Poetry (Shih-pin)*, Chung Hung criticizes this poetry as dry and boring and asserts that the powerful style of the Chien-an era had by then completely disappeared. In the following passage from a later imitation by Chiang Yen (444–505) of a poem by a leading Neo-Taoist poet, Sun Cho (301–380), we may get an even more accurate notion of a *bona fide* Neo-Taoist poem:

Once the Primal Chaos differentiated,  
It blew ten thousand ways, gave rise to forms.  
Believing substance has a Final cause,  
We style "short-lived" an infant that has died.  
The Way's been lost for a thousand years and more  
Who is there to know the bridge and ford?

(2.9. HCHWC 2:1576)<sup>24</sup>

Containing so many allusions to the *Chuang Tzu* and other metaphysical texts, as is typical of this type of verse, this passage hardly deserves the

name of poetry at all. It is simply Neo-Taoist discourse rendered in pentasyllabic lines.

It was in the hands of Kuo P'u (276–324), generally regarded as the most accomplished poet of this subgenre, that Neo-Taoist poetry began to move away from pure metaphysical discourse. Not only is the content of his poems usually rich, but, as the modern scholar Fan Wen-lan comments, there is genuine emotion in his renunciation of the world. Moreover, his language is both vivid and colorful in its description of the bucolic world of Taoist recluses and immortals.<sup>25</sup> This departure from the norm of Neo-Taoist poetry injected a new life and spirit into this otherwise very flat and monotonous style, and it was precisely this kind of change, typified by Kuo P'u and others who came after him, that helped to shift the focus of Neo-Taoist poetry from a purely discursive treatment of transcendental ideas toward a depiction of the physical world.

Running through Kuo P'u's fourteen critically acclaimed Neo-Taoist poems under the general title "Roaming with the Immortals," for example, is a strong sense of reality in his description of the immortals' habitat. The comment by the Ch'ing critic Ho Cho (1661–1722) on the first poem from this series is particularly cogent. He says that for Kuo the immortals were actually hermits, who thus lived not in far-off imaginary places but in real mountains and forests.<sup>26</sup> This tendency toward a realistic description of the physical world is even more obvious in the other poems in the series, for example,

Kingfishers play among orchards and trifolia,  
How they set each other off in colors and appearance!  
Green vines weave atop the tall trees,  
Covering the whole hill with their verdure.  
There, a lone meditative gentleman  
Chants quietly as he strums clear notes from the lute.  
He lets his feelings wander beyond the clouds,  
He chews the buds and cups the water from the flying spring for  
drink.  
Up above him, Master Red Pine roams,<sup>27</sup>

Riding a huge bird upon purple mist.  
To his right, he touches Master Floating Hill by the sleeve;  
To his left, he pats the shoulder of Master Tall Cliff.  
May I ask you ephemerals—  
How could you fathom the age of the long-living turtle or crane?  
(2.10. HCHWC 2:865)

Unlike most poems on this subject, the focus here is on the hermit and his world, not on the search for the distant immortals.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, this world, vividly set off by beautiful birds, plants, and trees, is located quite close to the world of the immortals, peopled by such legendary figures as Masters Floating Hill and Tall Cliff.

Here the distinction between the natural world of the mortal hermits and the supernatural realm of the Taoist immortals is blurred. This is significant, for it directly anticipates the increasing tendency to regard the natural world not simply as the haunt of the Taoist masters, but as the very physical expression of the Tao itself. It was this ultimate significance inherent in the natural world that pulled the Neo-Taoist poets toward the depiction of mountains and rivers.

That the Tao resides in nature itself is most lucidly illustrated in the following lines from Sun Cho's "Rhyme-Prose of My Roamings on Mount T'ien-t'ai":

The Great Emptiness is open and vast, without a name or  
shape,  
It wields the miraculous Being of nature,  
When it [the Tao] dissolves, it becomes rivers and streams,  
When it congeals, it becomes slopes and mountains.  
(2.11. WH 1:209)

The nameless and shapeless Great Emptiness is simply another term for the all-encompassing Tao. According to the *Lao Tzu* (chapter 42), inherent in the notion of the Tao is the ability to beget myriad creatures, including rivers, streams, slopes, and mountains (*LTCK*, 96).

Aside from this recognition of the metaphysical dimension of the physical world, there was another important impetus for the increasing

interest in nature in Neo-Taoist poetry. After the collapse of the Eastern Chin, tens of thousands of Chinese—including many literati and members of eminent families—fled to the South, that is, to the lower Yangtze valley, where the imperial court reestablished itself in Nanking (then called Chien-k'ang). The exquisite beauty of the southern scenery held a novel attraction for the newly arrived northerners. Appreciation of natural scenery became a favorite pastime for many scholarly gentlemen, as it proved to be both thought-provoking and aesthetically pleasing.<sup>29</sup> There was thus an increasing tendency among Neo-Taoist poets to turn directly to mountains and rivers and the pleasing sights and sounds of nature for a comprehension of the Tao. Two types of occasion that frequently found their way into Neo-Taoist poetry are particularly worth mentioning in this connection. One was the purification ritual on the third day of the third month, a springtime custom dating back to the early Chou dynasty. The second included scenic excursions and mountain climbing, which were popular during the spring and autumn.

The celebration of spring rituals that took place in 353 was undoubtedly the most memorable of the period. The eminent calligrapher Wang Hsi-chih (321–379) gathered forty prominent people under the scenic Orchid Pavilion (Lan-t'ing) in K'uei-chi (in modern Chekiang province) to drink wine and write poems in celebration of the occasion. From the following often-quoted passage in his renowned "Preface to the 'Orchid Pavilion Gathering,'" we again get a succinct account of how the literati during the Eastern Chin period had harmoniously incorporated a comprehension of Neo-Taoist metaphysics into their appreciation of nature:

On that day, the sky was bright and the air clear. The gentle breeze was soft and soothing. Up above, I viewed the infinity of the universe and down below, I observed the profuse variety of objects. I therefore let my gaze wander and my feelings roam in order that I might enjoy the sights and sounds to the utmost. What pleasure it was indeed!<sup>30</sup> (2.12)

The same attitude toward nature is expressed in the following lines from Wang Hsi-chih's "Orchid Pavilion Gathering":

In the season of spring, everything opens up,  
It is a perfect time to express my thoughts.

Up above, I see the sky's blue rim,  
Down below, I view the emerald water.  
Vast and clear is the boundless expanse of scenery,  
Whatever meets my eyes displays nature's law.  
Grand indeed are the workings of the universe.  
While all things are different, none of them are unequal.  
Nature's diverse beings, however varied,  
Are all my intimates once we meet.

(2.13. HCHWC 2:895)

The general tenor of these poems, as well as those on similar occasions bearing the common title "On the Third Day of the Third Month," is to find spiritual solace by observing and comprehending the ways in which nature displays its innate laws. The beauty of nature in spring and the quiet liveliness of the atmosphere unquestionably enhance the pleasure of such an experience. It is thus not surprising to find certain poets completely absorbed in the various scenes that nature had to offer without even bothering to discuss the Tao inherent in them. Among the invited guests at Wang Hsi-chih's celebrated gathering was Hsieh Wan (fl. 353–371), whose love of nature is shown by the following poem:

To the edge of the high hill, I let my gaze wander;  
Tall trees are what I see.  
Green creepers mesh the mountain,  
Slender bamboos sway atop the slopes.  
The water in the valley gurgles,  
Tender twigs touch and echo the sound.  
The deep, dark cliff gushes water pearls.  
Misty fog creates cool shade.

(2.14. HCHWC 2:906–7)

Here nature, clearly the main focus, is presented in its pristine state, generating its own quiet, living energy with its pleasant and life-nurturing sights and sounds.

This gravitation toward nature in poetry was inspired as well by another common occasion popular since the Eastern Chin, scenic excursions to mountains and rivers that were taken during spring and autumn. In the common type of Neo-Taoist poetry celebrating such events, known as climbing and roaming poetry (*teng-yu shih*), the vivid and extensive descriptions of scenery directly anticipated the full-scale landscape poetry that was to flourish during the Liu-Sung dynasty around the fifth century. Consider the following poem by Chan Fang-sheng (fl. 386), "Sailing Back to the Capital":

The high mountain, soaring a hundred thousand feet tall,  
The long lake, a limpid flow for a thousand leagues.  
White sands clean all year around,  
Forest pines ever green in summer or winter.  
Water flows on, never to stop for a moment,  
Trees stand firm and erect for a thousand years.  
In writing a new poem such as this,  
I suddenly forget the sorrow of a wanderer.

(2.15. HCHWC 2:944)

To be sure, the main thrust of the poem is a sense of constancy in nature as a backdrop against which the speaker's feelings as a transient wanderer disappear. Yet this metaphysical dimension is kept behind the scene, and the apparent literal focus is the description of scenery. This is similar to the typical structure of landscape poetry in which Neo-Taoist musings are usually reserved for the very end, following copious description of mountains and rivers. In the amount of space devoted to scenic descriptions, these poems are but a short step away from subsequent landscape poetry.

To sum up, poetic developments during the Chin period were characterized by a continuing tendency toward description of the natural world. The Neo-Taoist poets' affirmation of nature as the manifestation of the Tao elevated nature to a central place in the poetic medium. The exceptionally pleasing scenery in the south encouraged further recognition of the aesthetic dimension of nature. Such an appreciation directly



heralded the rise of landscape poetry in which the beauty of nature became the main focus for poets.

### **Natural Scenery as the Literal Focus of Poetry**

#### *T'ao Ch'ien's Poetry*

Critics in general agree that T'ao Ch'ien's poetry is outstanding for its genuine feeling and wisdom, expressed in an utterly calm, natural, and even bland manner. The Sung poet Su Shih (1037–1101) describes T'ao Ch'ien's poetry as apparently simple and lean but actually rich in substance.<sup>31</sup> Much of the quality of this tone is to be explained by the fact that while human emotions are vividly portrayed in his poetry, very often they are ultimately transcended by the infinitely larger context of the cosmos. A representative expression of this transcendental attitude can be found in the "Spirit" section of "Substance, Shadow, and Spirit":

The Three August Ones were great saints  
But where are they living today?  
Though P'eng-tsu lasted a long time  
He still had to go before he was ready.  
Die old or die young, the death is the same,  
Wise or stupid, there is no difference.  
Drunk every day you may forget,  
But won't it shorten your life span?  
Doing good is always a joyous thing,  
But no one has to praise you for it.  
Too much thinking harms my life;  
Just surrender to the cycle of things,  
Give yourself to the waves of the Great Change  
Neither happy nor yet afraid.  
And when it is time to go, then simply go  
Without any unnecessary fuss.<sup>32</sup>

(2.16)

In this poem, three views of life, represented by “Substance,” “Shadow,” and “Spirit,” debate. Both “Substance” (representing the will of the body to overcome its mortality through wine) and “Shadow” (representing a rather Confucian idea of cultivating fame to outlive the body) are being challenged by “Spirit.” What “Spirit” advocates—“Just surrender to the cycle of things, / Give yourself to the waves of the Great Change”—is basically a Taoist idea of following the natural process of change (the “Great Change”), of which man is a part and against which it is impossible to strive.

The poem reveals the legacy of Neo-Taoist poetry both in what “Spirit” has to say and in the purely propositional language in which the three views are expressed. In most of T'ao's other poems, Neo-Taoist metaphysics and his deepest feelings about the human condition are seldom dealt with in the abstract. Rather, he blends them with his description of life on the farm or in the garden. In the following well-known poem from his series of twenty poems, “Drinking Wine,” a profound truth is conveyed in the wordless communion between the speaker and the scenes around him:

I built my hut amidst the human world,  
Yet hear no noise of carts and carriages.  
You ask how this is possible?  
With the mind detached, one's place becomes remote.  
Picking chrysanthemums by the eastern hedge,  
Leisurely, I catch sight of the south hill.  
The mountain air is lovely at end of day,  
The flying birds are returning home wing to wing.  
In all this there is true significance;  
I would explain but have forgotten the words.

(2.17. TYMS, 110–11)<sup>33</sup>

What is celebrated here is the quiet and leisurely mood that allows the speaker to be in tune with the natural rhythm of the world around him. The sight of the south hill (ll. 5–6) would not be so inspiring for him were

he not open and responsive to the profound significance of such an encounter. Among the many comments on these two lines of poetry, Su Shih's is one of the most cogent: what is recorded here is a sudden and spontaneous rapport between scenery and meaning (TYMS, 110).

Although we are not told specifically what the true significance is, we do know from what is hinted at the end of the poem that this experience is more than just the simple joy in nature's beauty. The lines immediately following suggest that something approaching a sacred communion between the speaker and nature has taken place. What he senses in this moment of heightened consciousness is ultimately inexpressible—for what language can express the secret communication between man and nature?

In addition, the picking of chrysanthemums might suggest T'ao Ch'ien's intention to use them as a tonic against growing old as he makes explicit in another poem, "The Double Ninth, in Retirement" (TYMS, 46–47). The south hill might refer to a possible site for the poet's own grave, as is mentioned in No. 7 of his "Untitled Poems" (TYMS, 147). If these meanings were intended, they would certainly enhance the significance of the rapport between the speaker and nature in the poem: death is still in sight even as one picks the chrysanthemums for long life. Such a reading of these lines is plausible, for in T'ao Ch'ien's mind, to judge from "Substance, Shadow, Spirit" (2.16), death is as inevitable as it is natural. There is nothing sad about it. In fact, it could even be lovely and joyful—like the mountain air at day's end and the birds returning to the trees to rest, symbols of life's end and one's final repose.

Like the south hill that comes into view and catches the speaker unawares, the scenes in most of T'ao Ch'ien's poems, usually inspired by his everyday life on the farm and in the garden, are a natural and integral part of his deepest thoughts and feelings. It was in this quiet fusion of thought, feeling, and physical surroundings that the tendency toward nature in Neo-Taoist poetry found a new voice. Like most great poets, T'ao Ch'ien was of his time as well as ahead of it. In his transcendental view of the human condition and, particularly, in his tendency to regard outer reality as the common, ultimate repository of the true significance of

life, he was very much of his time. In his subtle fusion of the inner life with outer surroundings—something contemporary landscape poetry had not completely achieved—he directly anticipated T'ang poetry.

### *Landscape Poetry*

The outward tendency toward nature rather modestly demonstrated in T'ao Ch'ien's poetry found its most spectacular expression in landscape poetry. The emergence of this subgenre of poetry in the Liu-Sung period clearly marked a new poetic sensibility through which depiction of natural scenery became, for the first time, the primary concern of the poet. The impact of this emphasis on subsequent poetry and, in particular, on the critical perception of the role of the physical world in the poetic medium, cannot be overestimated. This development was first noticed by Liu Hsieh:

In the beginning of the Liu-Sung, the literary style, while continuing with the previous trend, also made new strides. Discussion of the *Chuang Tzu* and the *Lao Tzu* receded into the background and depiction of mountains and rivers began to flourish. . . . In content, every effort is made to depict the appearance of the object in the utmost detail; in the use of language, every effort is made to attain novelty. This has been the trend that writers of recent times have been striving to follow. (2.18. *WHTL*, 35)

As Liu Hsieh indicates, not only was there a shift of poetic focus, but it was accompanied by a new kind of poetic language that was predominantly descriptive, inspired by a new aesthetic consciousness of the natural world. The importance of the *Lao Tzu* and the *Chuang Tzu* or Neo-Taoist metaphysics in landscape poetry gradually diminished. Moreover, in later landscape poetry there was a tendency to blend personal emotions with scenery in an increasingly integrated manner. To trace the emergence of mountains and rivers as the primary objects of aesthetic consideration, in addition to being a means of metaphysical comprehension and the expression of personal joy and sorrow, we will examine a few representative works by the leading landscape poets of the Liu-Sung and Ch'i periods.

We will first turn to Hsieh Ling-yün, whose extensive descriptions of natural scenery signalled the appearance of a distinct aesthetic sensibility. Consider "Written on My Way to the Lake from the Studio at Stone Cliff":

From dawn to dusk the weather changes,  
 Mountains and waters emanate clear luminance.  
 Such clear luminance pleases people,  
 And makes this wanderer gladly forget to return home.  
 When I left the valley, the day was still young,  
 After I boarded the boat, the sun's light had already dimmed.  
 In forest and valley, the dusk grows darker,  
 Rays of sun show through the clouds, their glow  
     against the horizon fades.  
 Water-chestnuts and lotus-plants play in each other's reflection,  
 Cattails and rushes lean against one another in mutual support.  
 I pushed them apart to hasten southward,  
 How glad I was to return to the east to rest.  
 When the heart is cleansed, mundane affairs can be taken lightly,  
 When the mind is at peace, the laws of nature will not be  
     trespassed.  
 Allow me to remind those who believe in the philosophy of  
     nurturing life,  
 To infer the consequences from the truth given here.  
(2.19. HCHWC 2:1165)

From the beginning the speaker directs our attention to the scenic beauty of the area. In the first three couplets, the speaker tells us about the pleasing sights of Stone Cliff, which have delayed his return to the boat. Then we are given a vivid account of what he sees in the valley, in the sky, in the water, and along the shore on his journey. Finally, he tells what he intuits from this cathartic excursion into nature: that the way to nurture life (*she-sheng*)—a notion originating in the *Chuang Tzu's* advocacy of harmony with nature—is through peace of mind.<sup>34</sup> This inner tranquility

that he attains through the journey, as the final lines indicate, enables him to infer this truth inherent in nature without any impediments.

This poem, like most of Hsieh's landscape poems, is about his travels. Structurally, it follows a particular pattern found in much of the climbing and roaming poetry in the Neo-Taoist tradition: an initial statement about travel, then a description of the scenery on the way, and finally, by way of conclusion, the expression of a certain truth or insight gained from the experience.<sup>35</sup>

Obviously, Hsieh's landscape poetry bears a close resemblance to its predecessors in the Neo-Taoist tradition. What makes his poems different, however, is that the physical world now occupies a position not simply of prominence, but of centrality. It has become a phenomenon to be *enjoyed* first and foremost for all its sensory details, before it can be *comprehended* on the metaphysical level. And it is mainly by this route that the mind becomes attuned to the metaphysical truth inherent in nature. As in many of Hsieh's poems, this insight comes directly from a deeply felt rapport between the poet and what is present in physical nature. The following lines from his "Journey to the Southern Pavilion" are also typical:

Marsh orchids gradually cover the path,  
The lotuses just emerge from the pond.  
Before I have had my fill of the green spring,  
The red hue of summer is already moving near.  
Sadly I sigh for what nature has touched in me,  
Here and there a white hair droops on my head.  
Just as I stop enjoying music and food,  
Old age and sickness come upon me.  
I shall wait for the autumn water,  
To let its waves carry my body and shade to the foot  
of the old hill I once knew.

(2.20. HCHWC 2:1161–62)

Here, again, the understanding of the Taoist notion of allowing one's life to take its natural course comes from a compassionate identification with the fleeting life of the orchids and lotuses.

We also note that this emphasis is achieved by highlighting the presence of natural scenery in parallel couplets. The Neo-Taoist poets, as shown earlier, also use such parallelism in their description of scenery, but none surpasses Hsieh's mastery of the device in capturing the symmetries of nature.

The parallel couplets in his poetry frequently depict a similar formal relationship between mountains and rivers in nature.<sup>36</sup> In "Written on My Way" (2.19), for example, mountain (*shan*) and water (*shui*) are mentioned at the very beginning of the poem to indicate the focus. The middle part of the poem, which concerns the trip to the lake, consists of alternating descriptions of mountain and water. Line 4 is about the valley (mountain); line 5 is about the trip on the boat (water); line 7 is about the scene in the valley and forest; lines 8 and 9 are about the scenes in the water. As noted by Lin Wen-yüeh, this juxtaposition of mountain and water subsequently became a common mode of describing natural scenery in Chinese poetry.<sup>37</sup>

Unlike the evocative yet spare description of nature in the *Book of Songs*, or the colorful and lengthy display of various plants and scenery in Ch'ü Yüan's "Encountering Sorrow" (where the main purpose is to render the intent of the frustrated poet allegorically through nature), physical landscape in Hsieh Ling-yün's poetry reigns supreme. Natural scenery is not simply a vehicle for metaphysical vision but a sight to behold for the sake of its own beauty.

The unprecedented interest in natural scenery manifested in the work of Hsieh and others marks an important turning point in Chinese poetry. This change has attracted a great deal of critical attention. The comment of the Ch'ing critic Shen Te-ch'ien (1673–1769) on this is representative:

By the Liu-Sung period, poetry had undergone a change in which the expression of feeling and sentiment was gradually on the decline, and an

abundance of sounds and colors began to be introduced into poetry. (2.21. *Shuo-shih tsui-yü* in *CSH* 2:532)<sup>38</sup>

Here, sounds and colors refer primarily to the depiction of the sensory details of the physical world. While in landscape poetry such description was on the rise, the transcendental thought that originally channelled the pent-up emotions of the frustrated individual in Neo-Taoist poetry had now receded literally behind the scenes. The natural world dominates the foreground as the primary focus of the poetic medium. There was, in other words, *a reversal of role between thought and landscape as Neo-Taoist poetry was gradually transformed into landscape poetry*. But at the same time, the persistence of thought in landscape poetry was one of the most important legacies of Neo-Taoist poetry. From this point on, the use of nature in poetry began to take on a profound and often transcendental significance: poets began to use nature for the ultimate expression of their innermost thoughts and feelings. The tendency toward this integration of poet and nature became stronger in later landscape poetry.

In the landscape poems of Pao Chao (414?–466), for example, feelings of frustration are often integrated with nature as a unified expression. This is in part due to the fact that many of his poems were written on trips away from home on official tours of duty, when he was most prone to depict his personal feelings in the context of the scenery he encountered. Take “Setting out from Hou-chu,” for example:

Cold weather comes early to the river.  
In mid-autumn, frost and snow have already arrived.  
Joining the army means little food and clothing,  
So I delayed leaving home till winter came on.  
Gloomy and depressed is my mood as I bid farewell,  
Sad and lonely when I set out from the clear sandbars.  
Cold dust swirls dimly over the lowlands,  
Spray from the waves obscures the tall trees.  
One lone gleam of light flickers,  
Elusive mist rises and then goes out of sight.  
The road meandering through the mountains ahead is long,



My thoughts, retreating to the clouds behind me, are a tangled skein.

Great ambitions of mine break down in the fleeting years,  
My youthful face is startled at the abrupt change of season.  
I push away the lute, get up, and sigh thrice,  
No more music for you will be heard from me.

(2.23. HCHWC 2:1293)

What the speaker describes in this poem as he sets out on that chilly wintry morning—dust, water spray, a solitary light, and misty air—reveals more of the beholder than of the landscape itself. In the ensuing couplets, mood and scenery are even more intermingled: the road refers not simply to the physical journey ahead but to his own unpredictable future (*ch'ien-t'u*, literally, the road ahead, a metaphor for the future); his thoughts are all snarled, revealing his feelings about the home he just left. The final outpouring of emotion does not come as a surprise, having been anticipated by his description of the scenery.

The circumstances under which Pao Chao wrote were very different from those of the aristocratic Hsieh Ling-yün, whose landscape poems were usually records of leisurely pleasure-outings to scenic spots.<sup>39</sup> There might have been too much pent-up emotion inside Pao Chao for him to refrain from pouring his feelings into the scenes that he encountered: "My thoughts intermingle completely with the singing billows, my sadness fills up the deep valley," he wrote to his sister upon his arrival at Ta-lei Riverbank in Anhwei Province (WCNP 2:526). Such is Pao's heartfelt relationship with scenery. His most powerful emotional expression, however, was reserved for his Music Bureau poetry, a form for which he achieved his greatest fame.

In Hsieh T'iao (464–499), the integration of personal feeling with landscape was not simply propelled by emotions, it was also greatly assisted by his incorporation of both feeling and landscape in a tight poetic structure that varies in length from a single couplet to a compact verse-form of eight or ten lines. In the beginning of a poem written on his way back to the capital, we have probably the best example of this

integration through a parallel between the endlessly flowing Yangtze river and the wanderer's endless sorrow:

The great river flows on day and night,  
A wanderer's heart knows no end of grief.

(2.24. HCHWC 2:1426)

In "Looking at the Morning Rain," the opening couplet again displays an affective interplay between scenery and feeling:

The northern wind blows the flying rain,  
Desolation rises from the river.

(2.25. HCHWC 2:1432)

Such a fusion between landscape and emotion is almost never found in Hsieh Ling-yün's landscape poems. Hsieh Ling-yün remains very much a spectator, outside the scenery he depicts, even as he enjoys it and gleans some truth from it.

Not only does Hsieh T'iao excel in capturing in a couplet form a highly charged emotional encounter between man and nature, he is also known for his technical mastery in integrating landscape and emotion in a tightly knit poetic form. Consider "An Outing to East Field," for example:

Sad and sorrowful and there is hardly any joy,  
Hand in hand let's go out and have fun.  
To chase after the clouds we climb the storied tower,  
To view the lovely pavilion we follow the mountain.  
Distant trees look fuzzy but flourishing,  
Rising mist appears here and there.  
Fish playing and the young lotuses astir,  
Birds flying off and the remaining petals a-falling.  
I no longer eye the fragrant spring wine,  
But gaze at where the blue mountains are.

(2.26. HCHWC 2:1425)

The focus of this landscape poem is, typically, on the scenery described in the middle, which is preceded by the speaker's reason for the outing and followed by what he has sensed from nature. Although he has not specifically told us what has taken place, apparently he has had a change of heart inspired by the natural scenery. The energy of the fish amid the lotuses, as well as the birds flying from the trees, is an amusing distraction, if not an effective antidote, for the speaker's despondent mood. The interest that he shows at the end in the mountains rather than the spring wine implies his deep gratitude to nature.

Unlike the early landscape poetry in which the speaker explicitly, and often at length, indicates what he has learned from the day's outing, here the speaker's emotion and his communion with nature are subtly and effectively conveyed through a few finely depicted scenes of nature. Almost half of Hsieh T'iao's landscape poems were written in an even more tightly constructed octave form, anticipating regulated verse (*lü-shih*). This close integration of the scenic and the metaphysical shows that a new aesthetic was developing within landscape poetry, directly anticipating the subtle fusion of man and nature in T'ang poetry.

### Sensory Objects as the Main Concern of Poetry

The gravitation toward an emphasis on natural scenery that is found both in T'ao Ch'ien's poetry and in landscape poetry is essentially an *outward* process. The fact that landscape poetry in the hands of Pao Chao and Hsieh T'iao began to move gradually toward an integration of scenery with thoughts and feelings does not mean that this outward movement began to taper off around the Ch'i period when Hsieh T'iao was active. On the contrary, during the latter part of the Southern dynasties, particularly during the Ch'i and the Liang, poetic focus moved almost completely away from the inner sphere toward the outer world of sensory objects.

It was not until near the end of the Southern dynasties that a counter process began to set in, a yearning, as it were, to unite the world of physical reality with the hitherto separated sphere of thought and feeling.

Hsieh T'iao began his poetic career writing on sensory objects, almost exclusively those in a palace setting. His shift of focus from pure description of the outer world of the senses to the presentation of man and external reality as an integrated whole anticipated what took place toward the end of the Southern dynasties. This collective tendency to revert back to the expression of human emotion after a gravitation toward the outer world of the senses seems to have been dictated by a kind of innate law of poetry in the Chinese tradition: no poetic trend is long sustained on the strength of pure description of outward phenomena without deriving nourishment from the real substance of poetry, human thought and emotion. Next, I shall discuss how the poetic process which integrated inner feeling and outer reality took place.

Beginning with the Ch'i dynasty, poets concentrated not so much on the natural landscape or scenes on the farm or in the garden, but on objects that were part of the smaller confines of the palace. This was especially true in the case of those poets associated with Prince Ching-ling (Hsiao Tzu-liang, 460–494, son of Emperor Wu of the Ch'i), who was especially fond of gathering poets around him to compose poetry at his imperial residence. There poets were expected to turn out verses extemporaneously on a chosen object or setting, usually picked from the immediate surroundings. The writing of these poems on objects (*wu*), a subgenre known as object-poetry (*yung-wu shih*), was essentially a literary game, popular at social gatherings. Hsieh T'iao was the most talented member of the Ching-ling group. Much of the fine and subtle description of natural scenes and objects in Hsieh T'iao's later landscape poetry can be traced to this early training. The titles of Hsieh T'iao's poems in this category reveal the kinds of objects chosen for this genre: "On the Rose," "On the Rush Plant," "On the Mirror," "On the Lamp," "On the Candle," "Let Us All Write on Musical Instruments" (each of the participating poets wrote on one instrument of his choice), and "On the Mat" (*HCHWC* 2:1451–54).

Given the circumstances in which such poems were written and the usual absence of intimate rapport with the chosen object, communication

of personal emotions through a description of the object was not the main concern. Poetic energy was primarily invested in an elaborate description of the physical attributes of the object. This was also true of the later palace-style poetry (*kung-t'i shih*) that flourished during the Liang period, in which the protagonist was a palace lady. It was in these emotionally anemic poems that the developing interest in physical reality peaked. An example is "The Bamboo Flute," by Shen Yüeh (441–513):

The South is where the flutes and pipes are heard,  
 Their lovely sounds are emitted from the spring branch.  
 Warmth is transmitted through the jade-like fingers,  
 Full of affection, the sound rises and then falls.  
 The resonance encircles the engraved beams twice and thrice;  
 It moves the light dust four or five times.  
 There is deep meaning in my music,  
 Are you aware of my genuine sincerity?

(2.27. HCHWC 2:1650–51)

As is typical of this genre, the focus is entirely on the object in question personified as a lady. The jade-like fingers in line 3 are those of the lady playing the instrument. Allusions are often used to elaborate on the object. Line 5, for example, refers to a woman mentioned in the *Lieh Tzu* whose singing lingered on for three days around the beams of the gate where she traded her song for a meal.<sup>40</sup> Line 6 refers to Master Yü of early Han, whose singing was said to have stirred the dust on the beams.<sup>41</sup> Structurally, the poem is written in four couplets, and the two lines in the third couplet, as in many regulated verses, observe a neat parallelism. In fact, along with allusion and elaborate description, the parallel couplet is one of the common formal features of this type of poetry. Hsieh T'iao's "On the Candle" is typical:

Under the apricot beam, the guests have not yet gone,  
 In the osmanthus palace, the lights burn low.  
 Behind the light curtain, the colors are dim,

On the precious lute, the low light shines.  
To and fro flickers the shadow of her cloudlike coiffeur,  
Shining and shimmering are her gold ornaments so delicately  
engraved.

I regret that you, on this night of bright autumn moon,  
Will leave me in the darkness of the chamber.

(2.28. HCHWC 2:1453)<sup>42</sup>

The first six lines are in parallel couplets. As in Shen Yüeh's poem, the literal focus here is entirely on the object, the candle. The speaker gives a series of elaborate descriptions of the effects of the flickering light of the candle in the palace. It first appears on the screen, then on the lute, and finally it casts a shadow from the lute player's hair while catching the brightness of her gold ornaments. The candle here is the speaker of the poem, who is apparently happy to provide all kinds of humble services. What it fears most, however, is to be snuffed out in a corner of the chamber when the bright moon renders these services unnecessary.

Here the candle, like many things featured in object-poetry, seems to assume a female persona in a palace setting. Object-poetry as such was but a short step away from the subsequent palace-style poetry, in which the palace lady—treated, ironically, more as an object than as a real person—was the main focus of description. The outward process reached its extreme in these poems, with elaborate descriptions of trivial and even ribald matters.

While both object-poetry and palace-style poetry were traditionally criticized for their flowery language and lack of substance, they are not totally without merit. The practice of humanizing a lifeless object through personification in object-poetry contributed much to the art of projecting and expressing the most subtle human emotions through objects in subsequent poetry. Furthermore, the use of parallel couplets and the conscious experimentation with newly formulated tonal pattern had a substantial impact on the development of the recent-style poetry (*chin-t'i shih*) of the T'ang period.<sup>43</sup>

Yet in and of themselves such formal aspects do not take on much significance until they are matched by content and fully integrated with real feelings and emotions—the soul of the lyric. Such a counter-movement toward inner feeling began even as the outward process still continued. In landscape poetry there was an increasing tendency for the later poets to merge personal feelings with the landscape. This development was further assisted by the concise verse forms. Hsieh T'iao's experiment with these forms, including both the octave and the quatrain, an increasingly popular verse form since the Ch'i and Liang periods was, as K'ang-i Sun Chang suggests, "a significant step toward finding a satisfactory method of correlating content and form, and of molding them into a minimal structure."<sup>44</sup> Take Hsieh's "Jade Step Plaint," for example:

Palace at dusk, the pearl blind is lowered,  
 The fireflies flit around and finally come to rest;  
 All through the long night I sew a fine silk jacket,  
 Thinking of you—when will it ever end?

(2.29. HCHWC 2:1420)

The fireflies that have been flitting back and forth finally come to rest, but not the speaker's thoughts about her beloved. There is an implicit parallel as well as a contrast between the restlessness of the fireflies and the mood of the speaker who, unlike the fireflies, cannot for a moment rest from her thoughts of longing. Here the setting and the mood are truly engaged in a mutually illuminating interplay. These hauntingly beautiful lines could pass for a T'ang quatrain in their rich resonance.<sup>45</sup>

In other later poets as well a new aesthetic sensibility was developing, characterized by a coalescing of the inner world of feeling and the outer world of the senses in an increasingly concise verse form that anticipated the poetry of the T'ang. "Farewell," by Ho Hsün (?–518?), whom Tu Fu (712–770) admired greatly, also resembles a T'ang quatrain in its succinctness and in the lingering reverberations of the natural harmony between mood and scenery:

A hundred thoughts already swell up in a wanderer's heart,  
A lonely thousand-mile journey still awaits him ahead.  
The river darkens as the rain is about to pour,  
The waves turn white when the wind first rises.

(2.31. HCHWC 2:1710)

The storm that threatens to break on the river is a fitting backdrop for this occasion: there seems to be a sense of foreboding as this scene mirrors the stormy world that awaits the lone traveller as he embarks on a long journey. In other words, the stormy scene is not simply what he witnesses now but what he anticipates in the world ahead.

Aside from these individual poets, the increasing interaction between Southern and Northern poetry at the end of the Southern dynasties also contributed much to the inward progression toward feeling. Generally speaking, while Northern poetry took on some of the stylistic sophistication of Southern poetry in terms of form and the use of parallelism, the Southern poets were able to appreciate the Northern poets' simple, straightforward expression of genuine feeling. This helped to inject much-needed energy into the overly ornate and inert object-poetry or palace-style poetry of the South.

The impact of the North on the South was often most directly felt by the individual Southern poets exiled in the North. The painful frustration of exile, the desolate landscape, and the simple, poetic language of Northern poetry combined to inspire the exiles to create some of the most poignant poems of the period. Perhaps no poet of the time can better illustrate this phenomenon than Yü Hsin (513–581), undoubtedly the most outstanding poet of the Liang dynasty and one held in great esteem by Tu Fu.

Virtually all of Yü Hsin's best poems were written after his exile to the North. During his first exile, he produced the series of twenty-seven poems, "In Imitation of *Yung-huai*," to express his deep grief for both himself and his crumbling country.<sup>46</sup> These poems, which describe the innermost feelings of his heart, as the title *Yung-huai* suggests, would never have been written had he continued to stay at the Liang court.



These *Yung-huai* poems demonstrate a radical departure from Yü Hsin's earlier devotion to external sensory objects (*wu*) in his palace-style poetry. At the same time, however, this change of poetic focus from "object" to "heart" did not lead him to completely discard his former training. What happened was a fusion between the two. Consider the following poem from the series:

Musing over being the lord of ten thousand households,  
Around midnight, I was suddenly struck by sorrow.  
Music from the sound of the lute fills up the room,  
Volumes of books are scattered on my bed.  
As for the dream of the butterfly,  
I am definitely not Chuang Tzu.  
The waning moon yonder resembles the new moon,  
This autumn is just like last autumn.  
Drops of dew weep strings of pearls,  
Fireflies flit about in a flow of broken flame.  
To be carefree is to comprehend fate,  
But when can I stop worrying?

(2.30. HCHWC 3:2369)

In the first six lines of the poem, the sorrow of a scholar-gentleman, frustrated at being unable to serve his country, reminds us of Juan Chi and many others, with their acute midnight-anxiety attacks.<sup>47</sup> But then the speaker tells us that, although he is acquainted with Taoism (as indicated by the allusion to the story of Chuang Tzu's butterfly dream), he is definitely not a Taoist master, someone who is able to transcend the fretful realities of life.<sup>48</sup>

So far, the poem has been concentrating on the inner world of the speaker, whose impassioned outburst about himself is certainly a far cry from the emotionally impoverished object-poetry or palace-style poetry that were still in vogue. However, in the middle of the poem, where the focus changes from the "heart" to the external world, Yü Hsin's training

in depicting the sensory world as a court poet does come through in his sensitive description of the moon, the dew, and the fireflies.

Yet these sensory details are not given here for their own sake. Rather, they are expressions of frustration. The references to the moon and the autumn, for example, imply that month after month, year after year, the speaker finds himself in the same general situation. Similarly, in the tearlike drops of dew and in the restless fireflies we visualize his sorrow and anxiety. What allows Yü Hsin to transcend mere court poetry is precisely his ability to establish such an intimate correspondence between the world of the senses and that of human emotions. Moreover, the neat parallelism and the fine description of the subtle details of the autumn night also suggest that in Yü Hsin the ornate language of palace-style poetry has finally found a soul—the feeling—to justify its existence.

In the following poem by Yü Hsin, the genuine, subtle feelings of the speaker, when combined with simple, direct, and powerful language befitting the barren and desolate landscape of the North, suggest that there is a *fusion* on a grand scale at work—the fusion of the best of the South and the North:

Ten thousand miles along the Yang Pass,  
Not one single person is seen to return.  
Only the geese by the river  
Fly south when autumn comes.

(2.32. HCHWC 3:2402)

This type of poetry signals a new poetic trend toward the end of the Southern dynasties, that anticipates the fusion of “human feeling” and “physical world” in T'ang poetry.

To sum up, the poetic evolution of this time was characterized by a steadily increasing attention to physical nature, first set in motion by the “scenic tendency” in Neo-Taoist poetry, followed by the rise of landscape poetry. The continuous shift of focus can be regarded as an ongoing search for an ideal integration of the inner world of thought and feeling with the outer world of the senses. From this time on, physical nature

increasingly became an object both of aesthetic appreciation and of meta-physical musing, in addition to its customary role as an evocative background calling forth human emotion. This enriched dimension of physical nature is the important legacy of both Neo-Taoist poetry and landscape poetry.

Object-poetry and palace-style poetry, also made important contributions in both language and form to the flowering of T'ang poetry. In fact, the legacy of landscape poetry and the subsequent object-poetry and palace-style poetry included a heightening and refining of subsequent poets' sensitivity to the importance of the role of the sensory world as an eloquent and suggestive means of expressing the suprasensory world of human thoughts and feelings.

During this process of poetic evolution, the *creative impulse* of Neo-Taoist poetry and landscape poetry to channel human emotions toward mountains and rivers, in the sense of *chi ch'ing shan shui* (literally, "to entrust feelings to mountains and rivers"), gradually evolved into a *poetic method* of expressing human sentiment through natural scenery or sensory objects in the sense of *yü ch'ing yü ching* (literally, "to contain 'feeling' in 'scene'").

The outward tendency toward physical reality was the predominant feature of the poetic evolution of this period. But the primal cause of the entire poetic process was the insistent desire of human beings to find a suitable psychoemotional outlet in poetry for the extraordinary pain and suffering incurred during this very turbulent era of Chinese history. Such a persistent search for relief—whether it be in the straightforward expression of innermost feelings, or in the transcendental serenity of Neo-Taoist metaphysics, or in pleasing and inspiring mountains and rivers—attests to a unprecedented conscious awareness of both the self and the needs of the self, apart from those imposed from outside by society. The rising influence of Taoist thought, which encouraged both freedom from the shackles of society and intimacy with nature as the ultimate anchor of the soul, was an integral part of the entire poetic process of the period.

During this period critics seriously examined the central relationship between "feeling" and "scene" in poetry for the first time. In chapter 3, I will examine how they explored this issue and the ways in which poetic developments, the rising influence of Taoist teaching, and a heightened critical consciousness were combined in that exploration.



## *The Affective Phase: Pre-T'ang Critical Explorations*

The Wei-Chin era and the ensuing Northern and Southern dynasties were marked by the first real awakening of critical consciousness due to a profound change in the concept of literature. The pragmatic function of literature was no longer the only concern of critics, as it had been during the Han dynasty. At the beginning of the first chapter of *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, for example, Liu Hsieh declares that literature is of supreme importance in itself and its place in the universe is comparable to that of the design of heaven and earth. Like many critics of this period, he was able to transcend the purely pragmatic view of literature, and began to recognize literature as innately meaningful and beautiful apart from its sociopolitical function.

Such a consciousness was present not only in the study of literature, but in the evaluation of the arts in general. Not only past literature but contemporary works became the subject of critical inquiry.<sup>1</sup> This revealed an unprecedented liberation in the thinking of the literati. One crucial

factor in this profound change was the rising influence of Taoist thinking among intellectuals, a result of growing indifference to Confucianism which, as a state ideology, began to lose its appeal for the educated class with the decline of the Han empire. The Taoist advocacy of liberation from the shackles of conventional norms through contemplation of the eternal Tao as manifested in nature became a welcome alternative and escape for frustrated literati in an increasingly chaotic and uncertain world. Many people, disillusioned with the crumbling Confucian hierarchical society, turned inward, away from the affairs of the state and became more reclusive and introspective.

The critical exploration of the intrinsic nature of literature was a product of this introspection, and poetry, the predominant literary form of the period, was the central subject. Practically all important aspects of the nature of poetry, including its creative impulse and process, its expression, and its ultimate effect were consciously and closely examined. It was in this kind of atmosphere that "feeling" and "physical world," essential elements in poetry, began to be seriously studied. Two factors were instrumental: first, the Taoist view of man's relationship with nature as one of quiet and spontaneous communion contributed a great deal to the study of the interaction of these two elements in poetry. Second, the evolution from the expression of "feeling" to the depiction of "physical nature" heightened the critical consciousness of their roles in poetic composition.

Most of the critical discussions centered on three issues. The first concerned "feeling" as a primary lyrical impulse and the ensuing affective interaction between "feeling" and "object" (*wu*) or the "physical world." Critics for the first time explored in great detail how "feeling" was called forth by the affective evocation of "object" during the creative process. The second issue is the role of "object" as a focus of description. The rise of landscape poetry and the increasing interest in depicting physical reality (as featured in object-poetry and palace-style poetry) heightened critical sensitivity to the physical world as well as to the language describing that world. The third issue concerns the aesthetic

dimension of the affective interaction between "feeling" and "object." It was during the latter part of the Southern dynasties that this particular dimension of poetry was first consciously recognized as a critical issue, largely due to a negative reaction to the excessive, if not exclusive, concern with the depiction of the sensory world for its own sake.

Among these issues, that regarding affective interaction between "feeling" and "object" during the creative process was at the center of this critical exploration; it was by far the most discussed idea among the critics of the time. I term this second stage in the critical understanding of the relationship between "feeling" and "scene" the *affective* phase, and will discuss this issue at greater length than the other two.

A few words about some key terms are in order before further discussion. The inner world of thoughts and feelings was commonly referred to as "feeling" (*ch'ing*) or its variants, such as "mind" (*hsin*) or "meaning" (*i*). The physical world of external reality was generally called "object" (*wu*), a word that refers to the myriad objects in the universe. Sometimes the word *hsiang*, meaning outward phenomenon, was used in place of *wu*.<sup>2</sup> The well-known combination "feeling" and "scene" did not become an established pair of critical terms until after the Southern Sung dynasty (see Introduction, n. 7). Prior to the mid-T'ang period, the word *ching* for "scene" meant primarily "light," or the shadow cast by the light, rather than "scene" or "scenery."<sup>3</sup>

### The Emotive Origin of Poetry

The role of "feeling" in poetry was, in general, emphasized far more during this period than it had ever been before. It was considered not only to be the origin of poetry, but the *raison d'être* as well as the very measure of poetical writing. This heightened consciousness of the importance of "feeling" was due, in part, to the recognition of poetry as an expression of personal feelings first rather than as a means of transmitting extrapoetical messages in the Confucian vein. The other reason was that so many poems, particularly those emotionally charged poems of the late Han and



Wei periods, emphatically demonstrated the power of "feeling" as the motivating force for the writing of poetry.

In his *Essay on Literature (Wen-fu)*, Lu Chi made one of the most important statements with regard to the role of "feeling" when he declared that "Poetry born of pure feeling is exquisite in its expression" (WCNP 1:260). This comment is certainly indicative of the consciousness of and emphasis on the indispensable role of "feeling" in poetry. To be sure, this was not the first time that "feeling" was considered the genesis of artistic creation. Both the *Record of Music (Yüeh-chi)*, a section in the *Book of Rites* composed during the Warring States period, and the "Great Preface" to the *Book of Songs* made references to the emotive origin of artistic creation. In the *Record of Music*, the stirring of inner feeling is regarded as the first condition of the utterance of sound before music is composed. But at the same time, the *Record of Music* also says that human feeling should be properly channeled and controlled in order to harmonize with the moral and rational intent of a Confucian gentleman (*fan ch'ing i ho ch'i chih*), which is, after all, the real function of music (SSCCS 2:1536).<sup>4</sup> The "Great Preface," which was composed later (presumably in the first century A.D.) and may very possibly have been based on the *Record of Music*, expresses a similar view:

When feeling stirs inside, one expresses it in words; finding this insufficient, one sighs over it; not satisfied with it, one sings it in poetry. (3.1. SSCCS 1:270)

The recognition of the emotive origin of poetry is directed at understanding not so much the nature of poetry itself as its powerful moral impact on the readers:

Hence to correct the wrong, to move heaven and earth, and to touch spirits and gods, nothing can compare with poetry. The previous kings used it to regulate the marital relationship, perfect filial piety, enhance human relations, achieve moral transformation, and to improve upon morals and mores. (3.2. SSCCS 1:270)

Obviously, "feeling"—while admittedly the origin of artistic creation—is meant to be channeled through art for some useful function in society. As Chu Tzu-ch'ing has observed, in the Confucian tradition, the

notion of *chih* (intent) as expressed in the time-honored notion that "poetry expresses the intent of the heart" (*shih yen chih*) refers not simply to the private "intent" of the artist but to the edifying sociopolitical and socioethical intent of society as well.<sup>5</sup> The Confucian notion of "intent" includes private feeling as well as public edification. For, in an ideal Confucian society where human relationships are conducted in accordance with the codes of ethics recorded in the *Book of Rites*, what the ideal gentleman thinks and feels and what he intends to do and express are in perfect harmony with what is right for society.

By Lu Chi's time, the notion of the Confucian "intent" was no longer regarded as the only *raison d'être* of poetry, nor was it deemed inseparable from private feeling. The expression of personal feeling was now recognized as the primary motivation of poetry. What Lu Chi had in mind when he talked about the emotive origin of poetry was essentially those pentasyllabic poems of the end of the Latter Han and Wei periods, which are intensely personal and expressive of subjective feelings and thoughts.<sup>6</sup> They include such moving poems as the "Nineteen Ancient-Style Poems," of which Lu Chi wrote many imitations, and Juan Chi's work of eighty-two poems, *Chanting My Sorrow*. The fact that Lu Chi himself was not considered a poet of intense emotion does not affect his critical awareness of the power of emotion in poetic creation. Lu Chi's perception of poetry, his emphasis on emotion, actually signalled the dawning of a new critical consciousness. Lu Chi's brother, Lu Yün (262–303), held that, since antiquity, literature had been an expression of emotion and that it was exclusively as such that literature should be measured.<sup>7</sup>

Liu Hsieh, born some two centuries later than Lu Chi, attached a similar importance to emotion and was able to transcend the purely pragmatic view of literature. Like Lu Chi, he believed that literature, aside from being useful as a means of expressing Confucian "intent," should also be a vehicle of "feeling." There are more than one hundred places where the word *ch'ing* (feeling) appears in *The Literary Mind*.<sup>8</sup> In his chapter on "Feeling and Expression" ("Ch'ing-ts'ai"), Liu distinguishes between poetry in which expression is motivated by genuine feeling (*wei*

*ch'ing tsao wen*) and that in which feeling is fabricated for the sake of poetic expression (*wei wen tsao ch'ing*). Only the first kind is fine poetry. "Feeling" is, for Liu, the primary moving force in poetry; without it poetry would be insipid no matter how flowery its language. His emphasis on "feeling" over expression was very much a reaction to the emotionally empty and overly ornate poetry of his time.

Liu Hsieh's contemporary, Chung Hung (fl. 483–513), elevated "feeling" to a position of unprecedented importance. Poetry, for him, is not simply the expression of joyful feelings, but, more importantly, one of the most natural ways of relieving pent-up misery and frustrated human emotions:

In happy gatherings, one writes poetry to enhance feeling; when isolated from friends, one expresses complaints through poetry. Events such as the banishment of the Ch'ü minister [Ch'ü Yüan], the forced exile of the Han palace lady,<sup>9</sup> the sight of bones lying in the desolate northern fields or that of the wandering spirit drifting like tumbleweed, the soldiers fighting in foreign expeditions whose bravery is felt far beyond the border, the shivering exiled wanderer, the tearful wife in her lone chamber, the resignation from office of some gentleman whose departure is final and forever, a certain beautiful lady's winning the favor of the Emperor with a bewitching smile that threatens to topple the country<sup>10</sup>—all these events have greatly moved and touched the heart and soul of people. How could one display their full significance except through poetry? How could one let one's emotion have free rein [with regard to these events] except by chanting it out loud in songs? Hence, it is said "poetry can be used to congregate people, to give expression to grievances (*yüan*)."<sup>11</sup> There is nothing better than poetry to enable the poor and lowly to feel at peace and the lonely to live without boredom. (3.3. SPCS, 10–11)

Apparently, for Chung Hung, the expression of "feeling," particularly venting one's personal misery and frustration, was poetry's main purpose.<sup>12</sup> As Li Tse-hou suggests, this complaint-oriented notion of poetry was very much influenced by the poems of the late Han and Wei periods. As such, the notion of "grievance-venting," though taken directly out of the Confucian *Analects*, really lacks the sociopolitical orientation that makes poetry a means of remonstrating with those above against

the causes of such misery. Rather, for Chung Hung the purpose of such grievances was to express the deep emotions of the poet for personal relief.<sup>13</sup> Compared with the Confucian critics of the Han period, Chung Hung's perception of poetry clearly stemmed from his concern with the inner force of poetry rather than with the effect it exerted on the outside world. Such an inner force was expressed centuries earlier in the *Book of Songs*: "I made this song, / To tell my sorrow" (see 2.1).

The role of "feeling" was ascendant during this period. This does not mean that the Confucian notion of "intent" was no longer regarded as a valid reason for writing poetry. Most critics were still deeply convinced that poetry should convey the poet's "intent." Both Lu Chi and Liu Hsieh, for example, shared this view of poetry. In fact, for many critics the publicly oriented Confucian "intent" was not in conflict with the private "feeling." But this unprecedented interest in the emotions of the poet signalled an important shift of critical perspective: poetry was no longer simply perceived in terms of the public effect it produced on the reader but, instead, began to be viewed from the angle of the private inner psyche of the poet.

This shift of critical perspective was a product of the increasing tendency among intellectuals to realign their interest in public society with issues related to the private self. And with this change in critical orientation, critics began to study poetry from the perspective of its inherent nature, independent of its extrapoetical functions. Hence, a series of questions relating to the nature, the creative process, and the ultimate artistic effect of poetry were explored for the first time during this period.

### **The Affective Interaction between "Feeling" and "Object"**

One of the first questions critics began to investigate in relation to the emotive origin of poetry was how "feeling" was initially aroused during the creative process. Here again, the evocative impact of the external

world on the artistic mind was recognized long before the Wei-Chin period, as is indicated in the following passage from the *Record of Music*:

The stirrings of the human heart are caused by objects. They are then given form in voice. (3.4. SSCCS 2:1527)

Further on in the text are these words: "The ways in which objects in the universe can affect people are infinite" (3.5. SSCCS 2:1529). But the poet's response to the stimulus of "objects" (*wu-kan*) was not mentioned as part of an exploration of the nature of artistic creation. Rather, it was alluded to in passing to indicate that the feelings thus expressed were genuine and as such should be closely observed so as to discover the mood of the people who uttered them. It was not until the Wei-Chin period that the role of external reality, interacting with the poet's inner psyche, became a subject of critical inquiry. Such an inquiry was certainly a product of the highly introspective tendency among the critics of the period; more specifically, it reflects both the contemporary poetic sensibility and the influence of Taoist thought on criticism.

Wei and Chin poets were particularly sensitive to the affective power of the physical world because of their pessimistic outlook on life during this extraordinarily turbulent period. To be sure, since antiquity Chinese poets had been responsive to outer phenomena, as the *Book of Songs* and the *Songs of Ch'u* abundantly attest. But none of these earlier poems so frequently, explicitly, and self-consciously express how external reality directly affected the poet's inner psyche. The original term "objects" (*wu*), serves as shorthand for whatever associations of beauty or poignancy external reality might have held for the poet. For example:

To gaze afar makes me sad,  
The spring breeze moves my heart.

Juan Chi, *Chanting My Sorrow*, No. 2  
(3.6. HCHWC 1:498)

Moved by objects [*kan-wu*] my pent-up sorrow becomes even  
heavier.

Chang Hua (232–300), "Miscellaneous Poems," No. 3  
(3.7. HCHWC 1:621)

The despondent person is easily moved to sadness,  
His woe increases when encountering external objects.

Chang Tsai (ca. 289), "Seven Lamentations," No. 2  
(3.8. HCHWC 1:741)

Moved by objects [*kan-wu*], my heart is filled with nostalgia.

Chang Hsieh (?-307), "Miscellaneous Poems," No. 1  
(3.9. HCHWC 1:745)

Moved by objects [*kan-wu*], my heart is flooded with feelings.

Chang Hsieh, "Miscellaneous Poems," No. 6  
(3.10. HCHWC 1:746)

The idea that physical nature could have this kind of impact on the poet was repeatedly echoed in criticism. In his *Essay on Literature*, for example, Lu Chi gives a detailed description of how nature can evoke different feelings:

He laments for what's past by observing the ever-revolving  
seasons,  
His thoughts grow profuse as he looks at the myriad things,  
He grieves for the fallen leaves in the severity of autumn,  
His heart delights in seeing the tender twigs of fragrant spring,  
In thinking of the frost, his heart shudders.  
While gazing at the clouds far and high above, his mind soars.

(3.11. WFCS, 14)

Lu Chi is not simply theorizing here. What he says may very well come from his own experience as a poet who was particularly keen in his observations and depictions of nature. For the first time the affective impact that nature had on the feelings and emotions of the poet was being fully and consciously recognized as an important phenomenon. Major critics of the ensuing eras made similar and sometimes even more elaborate and penetrating statements in this regard.

Liu Hsieh, for example, devoted a whole chapter of *The Literary Mind* to "The Physical World." The first paragraph is about how the various

seasonal changes and the accompanying changes in the *yin* and the *yang* have a direct and pervasive impact on the human psyche from which no one can escape. This natural force is what inspires the poet:

The year has its objects and every object has its appearance; human feeling changes according to the object, and literary expression is triggered by the feeling so evoked. A single leaf might be in perfect rapport with the mind. Similarly, the sound of the insects might touch the heart. How much more so would it be when the night is blessed with both clear wind and a bright moon or when the morning is adorned with both the white sun and spring trees! (3.12. *WHTL*, 294)

Chung Hung delved even deeper in locating the prime mover of the creative process. In his "Preface" to *Classification of Poetry*, he locates it directly in the *ch'i* or "vital breath" of the cosmos rather than in a secondary agent, the "object":

The vital breath stirs objects and objects move people; hence, one's feelings become agitated and are embodied in the form of dancing and singing. (3.13. *SPCS*, 2)

*Ch'i* is among the most mysterious notions in traditional Chinese thinking. One of the earliest references to this notion is found in the *Tso Commentary* (*SSCCS* 2:2025 and 2107), which says that *t'ien* (literally, heaven or sky, but also a collective term for nature) encompasses six different kinds of *ch'i*: *yin*, *yang*, wind, rain, cloudiness, and brightness. Nothing in the cosmos remains unaffected by the ever-changing *ch'i* that floats around. It is the primordial force that rotates the four seasons and controls the life cycle of the myriad objects in the cosmos.<sup>14</sup> Chung Hung's notion of *ch'i* seems to correspond very closely to this primordial force.

To be sure, Chung Hung was not the first to recognize the effect of *ch'i* in poetry. The poets themselves had long before felt its impact. This is apparent in the following lines from "Chiu pien" (variously understood as "Nine Changes" or "Nine Times," meaning to be sung nine times), a poem attributed to Sung Yü (ca. 290–223 B.C.), collected in *Songs of Ch'u*:

Alas for the *ch'i* of autumn!  
The leaves of plants and trees, drear and withered, flutter, fall,  
and decay.

Sad and forlorn at such leave-taking—as if going toward a  
destination, distant and unknown,  
Or, from a hilltop looking down upon the water, one bids  
farewell to a homeward-bound friend.<sup>15</sup>

(3.14)

These lines of a desolate autumn scene are well-known for depicting the equally desolate mood of the exiled poet, Ch'ü Yüan.

To associate *ch'i* or its secondary agent, "object," with aesthetic creation is to regard poetry and the arts in general as the product of the affective and spontaneous interaction between man and the cosmos. It is precisely from this grand cosmic context that the relationship between "feeling" and "object" (or in the later and more popular formulation, between "feeling" and "scene") in Chinese poetry acquires its full significance. Subsequent critics' association of poetry with the Tao (e.g., the ninth-century Ssu-k'ung T'u) or with *yin* and *yang* (e.g., the seventeenth-century Wang Fu-chih) were prompted by a similar cosmic view of poetry.

That poetry originates from man's interaction with cosmic phenomena is a notion deeply imbedded in the Chinese tradition. Although the Confucian *Record of Music* and the "Great Preface" do talk about the powerful impact of the "object" on the artist, the nature of this interaction never seems to have been addressed by poets, much less by critics, until the period I associate with the "affective phase" of criticism. The rising influence of Taoist teaching during this period, specifically its view of man's relationship with nature, served not only as an important catalyst but as the very intellectual basis for the critical study of this issue. It was most likely from this point on that Taoist thinking began to exert a more profound influence on poetry criticism.

Lu Chi was the first critic to look into the issue of literary creation. In *Essay on Literature*, he talks about how the poet's emotions respond sensitively to various changes in physical nature. At the beginning of the *Essay*, Lu Chi discusses how the poet should relate to the "object" as a way of preparing the mind for the creative moment:



Standing in the Central Realm the poet observes and penetrates into the expanse of the whole universe. (3.15. WFCS, 14)

This kind of observation and penetration into the object of contemplation, in the sense of *hsüan-lan*, is taken directly from the *Lao Tzu*.<sup>16</sup> It is a Taoist way of perceiving and comprehending the essence of things (WFCS, 23–24).<sup>17</sup> To achieve this, Lu Chi states that one's first responsibility is to clear the mind of any irrelevant thoughts in order for one's imagination to roam freely:

In the beginning,  
All external vision and sound are suspended,  
Perpetual thought itself gropes in time and space;  
Then, the spirit at full gallop reaches the eight limits of the  
cosmos,  
And the mind, self-buoyant, will ever soar to new  
insurmountable heights.

(3.16. WFCS, 25)<sup>18</sup>

To keep out external sight and sound is, for Lu Chi, a necessary precondition for the free and spontaneous play of the mind. For only by emptying one's mind, as he says in "Linked Pearls" ("Yen lien-chü"), can the mind become most free to respond to the external world (*hsü-chi ying-wu*) (WH 2:1025). This notion of emptying one's mind (*hsü*) so as to enter into the object of contemplation is basically Taoist. According to the *Chuang Tzu* chapter "Tsai-yu" ("Laissez-faire"), one must paradoxically "see nothing and hear nothing (*wu-shih wu-t'ing*) and quietly hold one's spirit" in order to really penetrate to the essence of things, namely, the Tao (CTIC, 190).

In two memorable lines that immediately follow the above passage, Lu Chi talks about how this process of interplay between "mind" and "object" takes place:

When the search succeeds,  
Feeling, like the sun about to rise, gathers luminosity;

Objects, also bright and clear, vie to enter into the mind.

(3.17. WFCS, 25)

The above lines vividly describe (probably for the first time in Chinese poetics) the dynamic interaction between “feeling” and “object” during the creative process. “Feeling,” which is elusive and hides in the dark, inner folds of the mind, is now about to emerge with ever-increasing luminosity as it finds concrete expression among the objects vying for entrance into the poet’s mind. This is not simply the inspired response of the mind to the evocation of the external world (*kan-hsing*), but the dynamic fusion (*chiao-jung*) of the inspired mind with the evocative object. It is the long-awaited moment during the act of literary creation when the mind, buoyant with the illuminating fusion, becomes most inspired to write:

Hence,

Arduously sought expressions, hitherto evasive, hidden,  
Will be like stray fishes out of the ocean bottom to emerge on the  
angler’s hook;

And quick-winged metaphors, fleeting, far-fetched  
Feathered tribes, while sky-faring, are brought down from the  
curl-clouds by the fowler’s bow.

Thus the poet will have mustered what for a hundred generations  
awaited his pen,

To be uttered in rimes for a thousand ages unheard.

(3.18. WFCS, 25)<sup>19</sup>

Lu Chi was the first critic in the Chinese tradition to probe the whole process of literary creation from the “felt response” to the object on the part of the poet to the inspired fusion between “mind” and “object” that ensues. What he says about mental purgation as a precondition for artistic creation and the subsequent dynamic and affective interaction between “mind” and “object” is echoed by Liu Hsieh in greater detail.

In *The Literary Mind*, Liu Hsieh devotes a whole chapter, entitled “Imaginative Thinking” (“Shen-ssu”), to this issue of literary creation.

Here again, the affective interaction between “mind” and “object” is at the center of the creative process. By imaginative thinking, Liu Hsieh means a kind of thinking that enables one’s mind or spirit to roam in total freedom without any restraints in time or space. Hence, says Liu Hsieh, what happened a thousand years ago or ten thousand miles away can all be perceived through this kind of thinking. Lu Chi says something similar when he describes how the mind is able to “gallop” to the “eight limits of the cosmos” or “soar to new insurmountable heights” (3.16). What both Lu Chi and Liu Hsieh have in mind is the liberation of the mind from the prison of reality so as to be totally free to think its own thoughts and feel its own feelings without restraints.

For both Lu Chi and Liu Hsieh, this kind of leap of imagination is not a jump into an empty space. No human thought or feeling is possible in a complete vacuum. It always takes place in connection with something concrete, namely, the “object.” Hence, this imaginative thinking, once given full play, is free to roam with “objects” (*shen yü wu yü*) as Liu Hsieh says. To achieve this important phase of the creative process in which the mind becomes totally merged with the objects of contemplation, Liu Hsieh says, as did Lu Chi before him, that the mind must be free of irrelevancies:

Hence, the key to the preparation of literary creation is [a mind which is] empty and still, the cleansing of the five viscera and the purification of the spirit. (3.19. *WHTL*, 195)

Liu Hsieh’s notion of cleansing and purifying one’s body and soul to attain the spiritual state of emptiness (*hsü*) and stillness (*ching*), again like Lu Chi’s notion, is borrowed from Taoist thinking. Liu took his ideas directly from one of the chapters in the *Chuang Tzu*, “Chih pei-yu,” where Lao Tzu is described as responding to Confucius’ query about how to achieve the Tao:

You should fast and practice asceticism, cleansing your mind and purifying your spirit, and dispense with [mere] knowledge. (3.20. *CTIC*, 416)

“Emptiness” and “stillness” have both been repeatedly singled out in Taoist teaching as necessary conditions for reaching the constant Tao.

“Emptiness,” for example, is illustrated in a passage from chapter 16 of the *Lao Tzu*.

I do my utmost to attain emptiness;  
I hold firmly to stillness.  
The myriad creatures all rise together  
And I watch [observe] their return.  
The teeming creatures  
All return to their separate [respective] roots.  
Returning to one's roots is known as stillness.  
This is what is meant by returning to one's destiny.  
Returning to one's destiny is known as the constant.  
Knowledge of the constant is known as discernment.  
Woe to him who willfully innovates  
While ignorant of the constant,  
But should one act from knowledge of the constant  
One's action will lead to impartiality,  
Impartiality to Kingliness,  
Kingliness to heaven,  
Heaven to the way [Tao],  
The way [Tao] to perpetuity [eternity],  
And to the end of one's days one will meet with no danger.  
(3.21. *LTCK*, 38–40)<sup>20</sup>

“T'ien-tao,” one of the disputed chapters of the *Chuang Tzu*, says that for the sage:

Nothing in the myriad creatures can disturb the mind [and this] is called “stillness.” . . . When the water is still, it is transparent and clear, all the more so is the human spirit. The mind of the sage is still. It can reflect heaven and earth and it is the mirror of the myriad creatures. (3.22. *CTIC*, 237)

“Emptiness” and “stillness” seem to be complementary concepts whose ultimate purpose is to receive and reflect the phenomenal world in its original, radical state—in other words, the Tao—without the interference of the subjective mind, which “willfully innovates” and thus deviates from the Tao.

In his chapter on "The Physical World" ("Wu-se"), Liu Hsieh mentions another, complementary concept, *hsien*. By *hsien*, Liu means a care-free state of mind whereby the poet becomes most open to evocations from the external world, a state that is essential for artistic creation:

The four seasons repeat their cycle with various changes, but to enter into *hsing*, one must be in a mood free of care (*hsien*). (3.23. *WHTL*, 295)

What is worth noting here is that *hsing* is not so much regarded as a poetic device as an ideal state of mind for the creative process. For Liu Hsieh, emptiness, stillness, and a carefree state of mind are all conditions necessary for the poet to enter into that mood of creativity that he calls *hsing*.

Apparently, like Lu Chi, Liu Hsieh is appropriating the Taoist notion of attaining the Tao through a kind of mental purgation and applying it to the poet's way of preparing the mind during the creative process. For both critics, therefore, artistic creation is very much to be regarded as a Taoist-like experience in which the mind is free from all disturbances of the world so that it may become open, perceptive, and spontaneously responsive to the evocative promptings of the external world in all its fullness.

Lu Chi's description, quoted earlier, of the mutually illuminating relationship between "feeling" and "object" applies precisely to such an experience. It is the magic moment of *hsing*, of inspiring rapport between the creative mind and the object of contemplation. In *The Literary Mind*, Liu Hsieh gives a much more detailed and penetrating analysis of this most important moment in the creative process. Not only does he further elaborate on the give-and-take of this rapport, but he repeatedly emphasizes the powerful impact the "mind" exerts on the "object." This point is particularly important when we consider how, in traditional Chinese criticism, the emphasis had always been on the poet's *passive* response to the impact of the external world. To be sure, the feelings of the poet, Liu Hsieh says, are inspired by the "object" in the sense of *ch'ing i wu hsing* (*WHTL*, 51).

But at the same time Liu Hsieh asserts that an object in the physical world must be viewed with the poet's feeling in the sense of *wu i ch'ing*

*kuan*, for it is this active role of the mind that gives life to the otherwise insentient object and turns it into poetry (WHTL, 51). This emphasis on the mind is central to Liu's perception of literature. In the first chapter of *The Literary Mind*, he states that what makes literature important is that it is an expression of the mind, which for him is the very heart and soul of the cosmos (*jen shih t'ien ti chih hsin*) (WHTL, 1). For him, it is through the mind of the poet that the intricacies and subtleties of the cosmos can be perceived, penetrated, and, most importantly, vivified.

In the following passage from "The Physical World" Liu Hsieh tells us what actually happens in the interaction between the poet's mind and the object during the creative process. The mind is playing an active role to turn what it observes to poetry:

The poet's felt response to the object generates endless associations. He wanders about amidst the myriad phenomena in the universe; he savors and is in turn absorbed by what he hears and sees. On the one hand, he follows in minute detail and perfect harmony with the air and appearance of the object in his description; on the other hand, his mind also ponders back and forth when committing his observations to the sounds and diction of language. (3.24. WHTL, 294)

In the closing poem of the same chapter, Liu Hsieh succinctly maps out the creative process from the initial, rather passive "felt response" of the mind to the object (ll. 1-4), to the subsequent active role of the mind vis-à-vis the external world (ll. 7-8):

Mountains rise one behind another, and waters meander and  
circle;

Trees tangle and clouds mingle.

As the eyes set themselves upon such sights,

The mind is stirred to express itself.

"Spring days lengthen languidly."

And autumn winds "sough mournfully."

While emotion extends itself as a gift,

Inspiration (*hsing*) returns [to the poet] as a response.

(3.25. WHTL, 295)<sup>21</sup>

In this interplay between “mind” and “object,” it is the inspired “mind,” as it first responds to the stirring impact of the “object,” that turns the object into poetry. The poetic process may be diagrammed as follows:

**object 1 → mind → inspired mind → object 2 → poetry**

While object 1 is in the physical world, object 2 is object 1-inspired or animated by the “gift” of the poet’s feelings. Object 2 thus exists not purely in the physical world but in the mind of the poet as well, becoming indistinguishable from the poet’s feelings. In the following lines from the chapter “Imaginative Thinking” (which should be read in conjunction with “The Physical World” for a better grasp of Liu Hsieh’s notion of the interaction between the creative mind and external reality), Liu Hsieh talks about how the poet’s feelings penetrate the object of contemplation:

When he climbs the mountains, his feelings will spread  
over the mountains;  
When he observes the seas, the seas will brim over  
with his thoughts.

(3.26. *WHTL*, 195)

Liu is here referring to an important phase of the creative experience in which the external world is filtered through and thereby tinged with the poet’s feelings. In the course of this process, the external world is changed and becomes poetry. In the closing poem of the chapter “Imaginative Thinking,” he is again talking about the power of imaginative thinking on the object of contemplation:

Once imagination is applied, the phenomenal world can then  
be penetrated,  
And feeling changes what the heart harbors.  
The object appeals through its appearance,  
The mind responds from within with its reason.

(3.27. *WHTL*, 196)

By thus emphasizing the active role of the poet's mind in its affective interaction with the object, Liu Hsieh is singling out a key phenomenon in the relationship between "mind" and "object." For without the active participation of the mind, the object in the external world will not be changed into poetry, no matter how powerful its impact on the mind of the poet may be. The power of imaginative thinking endows the external object with a suprasensory dimension by fusing it with the mind. Thus endowed, the "object" exists primarily in the mind of the poet, "object 2" in the above diagram. To identify it, Liu Hsieh has coined the term *i-hsiang*, or phenomenon in the poet's mind. The poet's task, as Liu Hsieh says in "Imaginative Thinking," is to peer into this phenomenon in the mind and to capture it in the poetic medium (*WHTL*, 195).

Indeed, the knowledge of the relationship between "mind" and "object" during this affective phase was both comprehensive and profound. It went beyond the earlier notion of the poet's felt response to the external world (*wu-kan*). Critics penetrated much more deeply into the nature and process of this most central relationship in Chinese poetry; their insights left an indelible mark on subsequent discussions.

The cluster of such Taoist notions as "empty," "still," "carefree," and "quiet and penetrating observation," for example, was frequently alluded to by later critics as a desirable precondition for the creative process. When the mind is still, says the late T'ang critic, the monk Chiao-jan (720–799?), creative inspiration is usually at its highest (*i-ching shen-wang*).<sup>22</sup> The Sung poet Su Shih's advice may serve as an explanation of why this is so:

If you want to write wonderful poetry,  
Do not ever tire of emptiness and stillness.  
Stillness is what makes you perceive the changes in things,  
Emptiness allows you to be receptive to all situations.<sup>23</sup>

(3.28)

For the Ming critic Wu K'uan (1435–1504), the poetry of the T'ang poet Wang Wei (699–759) was wonderful precisely because it was generated by a mind so still and empty.



Yu-ch'eng's [Wang Wei's style name] mind is free and uncluttered, without any impediments, crystal clear like a jar of ice and still like deep and mirrorlike water.<sup>24</sup> (3.29)

Similarly, the unprecedented importance that Liu Hsieh attached to the active role of the mind in its interaction with the external world also became common among later critics. In *Styles of Poetry (Shih-ko)*, attributed to the T'ang poet Wang Ch'ang-ling (690?-756), the poet is required not only to observe the object with the naked eye, but, more importantly, to penetrate the object with the mind.<sup>25</sup> When the Ch'ing critic Wang Fuchih said that good poetry results when the *spirit* of the poet is at one with the *essence* of the object of contemplation, he was, as we shall discuss in chapter 5, referring to the interpenetration of mind and object during the creative process.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, two lines of poetry from T'ao Ch'ien's "Drinking Wine," quoted in chapter 2 (2.17), can perhaps best illustrate all that is entailed in the affective interaction of "mind" and "object" that we have been talking about in this section:

Picking chrysanthemums by the eastern hedge,  
Leisurely [*yu-jan*], I catch sight of the south hill.

The poem celebrates the speaker's quiet, unexpected joy in seeing the south hill. It is a moment of extraordinary communion between the mind and the object perceived when the mind is least self-conscious and hence most open and responsive to the outside world. This mood of perfect leisure allows nature to come to the speaker in all its fullness and vividness. This openness to nature, as reflected in the lines immediately following, enables the mind now to experience an inspiring rapport with what is around him, the meaning of which is beyond words:

The mountain air is lovely at end of the day,  
The flying birds are returning home wing to wing.  
In all this there is true significance;  
I would explain but have forgotten the words.

### The Role of "Object"

The emphasis on the interaction between "mind" and "object" is primarily a product of Taoist philosophy, which has always placed far more importance on the activities of the mind than has the Confucian tradition, with its interest in social behavior. This can be seen in the *Chuang Tzu* chapter "T'ien Tzu-fang": "Gentlemen in China are knowledgeable about the rites and proper conduct but ignorant of the human psyche" (CTIC, 389).

Although the Taoist perspective was adopted to explain the interaction between "mind" and "object" during the creative process, not all Taoist notions could be applied to poetry. "Object" and "language," for example, are denounced in Taoist teaching as obstacles in the pursuit of the genuine Tao, while in poetry they are regarded as the necessary means of expression. Without the "object," there is no way of concretely representing the otherwise elusive thoughts and feelings of the poet. Aside from this basic concern with "object" or its variant, "phenomenon" (*hsiang*), critics of this affective phase began to take far more interest in the role of "object" than had previous critics.

Another important factor that directly contributed to the acute awareness of "object" and the language used to describe it was the outward process in poetry, which began in the Western Chin period. The emergence of landscape poetry around the fifth century further heightened this emphasis. Liu Hsieh, born after the rise of landscape poetry and at a time when depiction of "object," as in object-poetry, had reached its peak, was particularly sensitive to the latter's presence in poetry. In his chapter "The Physical World" in *The Literary Mind* he traces the evocative and expressive role of the physical world through the long tradition of Chinese poetry; further, he even claims that it is the very source of literary imagination:

Mountain glens and river banks are, indeed, the ultimate storehouses of literary inspiration. (3.30. *WHTL*, 295)

At the end of this chapter, Liu asks:

Was it not true that the great poet Ch'ü Yüan was inspired by the rivers and mountains so that he was able to write poetry of great moving force? (3.31. *WHTL*, 295)

"Object" is mentioned forty-eight times in *The Literary Mind* and that does not include the numerous instances in which it appears with other critical terms as part of a compound phrase.<sup>27</sup>

This unprecedented emphasis on the physical world also called attention to descriptive language in poetry. For example, in a passage from *The Literary Mind* quoted earlier (2.18), Liu talks about how poets have painstakingly striven for inventive ways to describe objects. He further elaborates on the effect that this new consciousness of "object" has upon the descriptive language of poetry:

Since recent times, faithful resemblance (*hsing-ssu*) [to the original object described] has been prized in literature. Poets carefully peer into the landscape and study the shapes and forms of trees and plants. In singing out the innermost soul, depth and resonance are the ultimate goal. As for the description of the physical object, success lies in close adherence (*mi-fu*) [to the object in question]. Hence, the ingenious ways in which an object is described can be compared to ink paste for imprinting a seal, which can reproduce the original seal in its finest detail without any further carving and cutting. Likewise, we can read the words [in a poem] and be able to visualize the object in question and know the season in which it is described. (3.32. *WHTL*, 294–95)

Chung Hung largely shared Liu Hsieh's view of the role of "object" in poetry and placed similar emphasis on the importance of both vividness and fidelity in the descriptive language of "object." Chung was the first critic to emphasize "immediacy" as a means of achieving vividness. In the "Preface" to *Classification of Poetry*, he says that fine poetry is not loaded with bookish allusions but instead depicts what meets one's eye (*chi-mu*) and is in one's immediate reality (*chih-hsün*) (*SPCS*, 17–18). As we shall see in chapter 5, this emphasis on the fresh immediacy of the object depicted directly anticipates the view of subsequent critics that the ideal language for depicting "scene" is that which makes it appear as if it were "right in front of one's eye" (*ju tsai mu ch'ien*).

In *Classification of Poetry*, Chung Hung critiques the pentasyllabic poetry from the late Han to his own time (the Liang period) and regards detailed and skillful depiction of the physical object as an important measure of poetic ability. This can be seen especially in his comments on the poets who have written since the Western Chin period, when there was a rising interest in presenting the external world in poetry. In his comments on the Western Chin poet Chang Hsieh, classified as a poet of the first rank, he says that Chang's poetry is characterized by an artful and faithful presentation of the external world (*ch'iao-kou hsing-ssu*) (SPCS, 38). The poetry of both Hsieh Ling-yün and Yen Yen-chih (384–456) is also praised for a similar quality, which Chung Hung terms "artful resemblance" (*ch'iao-ssu*) (SPCS, 41 and 61). Pao Chao's poetry is complimented for its fine description of the manner and form of objects (*san chih hsing chuang hsieh wu chih tz'u*) (SPCS, 65). All these terms are synonymous, not only with one another, but also with Liu Hsieh's notions of faithful resemblance and close adherence.

This emphasis on the depiction of objects is a direct reflection of the poetic trend of the time, not only in landscape poetry, but also in later, highly ornate object-poetry and palace-style poetry. But at the same time, this concern with depiction of "object" in its physical aspect also prompted critics to look beyond it for the ultimate expression of poetry. This search for supraphysical expression finally brings us to the aesthetic dimension of poetry.

### Early Intimations of the Aesthetic Dimension

Lu Chi, Chung Hung, and Liu Hsieh were aware that finite language could never capture all that was intended by the poet. In the prefatory note to his *Essay on Literature*, Lu Chi says that one of the things he fears most in writing is that "the tangible content might not correspond to the meaning intended (*i pu ch'en wu*), and the language employed would fail to convey the meaning in question (*wen pu tai i*)."<sup>28</sup> For him, the essence of artistry is:

Guided by a force which even the Master Wheelwright  
Pien could not express in words;  
Therefore its secret lies beyond the smoothest speech.

(3.33. *WFCS*, 150)<sup>29</sup>

Lu Chi's concern, however, is prompted not so much by an interest in the subtle and inexpressible nature of literature itself as by the utter inadequacy of the prescribable methods of writing.

Chung Hung's concern with the ineffable quality of fine poetry goes beyond that of Lu Chi. In his *Classification of Poetry*, he repeatedly emphasizes this particular quality over artful resemblance. Chung Hung praises Chang Hsieh for his artful and faithful depiction. But the ultimate merit of Chang Hsieh's poetry, says Chung, lies in the rich "flavor" generated by its colorful language and resonant musical rhythm (*SPCS*, 38). Similarly Chung Hung compliments Yen Yen-chih mainly for the profound feeling of his poetry over his ability to achieve artful resemblance (*SPCS*, 61). Also, in his praise for the anonymous "Nineteen Ancient-Style Poems," which he ranks highest among pentasyllabic poetry, he twice uses the word "far-reaching" (*yüan*) to indicate their infinitely suggestive and profound quality (*SPCS*, 26).

Chung Hung places emphasis on the aesthetic dimension of poetry in his comments on pentasyllabic poetry in the "Preface" to *Classification of Poetry*. He describes this poetry as:

...the most "flavorful" among all types of literary writings and, hence, the most popular. Isn't this so because it is the most comprehensive and precise in its expression of event and feeling, and in its description of tangible phenomena and objects? (3.34. *SPCS*, 8-9)

Chung continues to expound upon what makes poetry generate "flavor" beyond the confines of the written word. In the following quotation, by using the word "hence," he indicates that his comments on pentasyllabic poems and the "flavor" they evoke beyond the text are applicable to poetry in general:

Hence, poetry has three principles: the first is called *hsing* (evocation), the second is called *pi* (comparison), and the third is called *fu* (straightforward

presentation). When the words are over but the meaning still lingers on, it is *hsing*; using object as a comparison to express the poet's intent is *pi*; directly presenting the fact, describing an object with meaning entrusted in it is *fu*. Apply these three principles with appropriate proportion, infuse the poem with emotional energy, and decorate it with colorful language in order to make those who read it savor its infinitely lingering flavor, and those who hear it be touched to the heart. This is the ultimate of poetry. (3.35. *SPCS*, 9–10)

For Chung, the evocative power of *hsing* is no longer confined to the creative process or the poetic medium, but transcends the finite assemblage of words in a poem and resonates in the mind of the reader long after the words are read. By expanding the power of *hsing* and by putting it before the other two principles of poetry, Chung Hung calls attention to the effect poetry ultimately produces. And for him, this effect lies in the complex and affecting “flavor” evoked by the text. Colorful language in and of itself would not go very far in moving people, nor would it generate a lingering effect beyond language, unless it were backed up by powerful emotional energy. In fact, such a view of poetry was an indirect criticism of contemporary poetry, which was overly attentive to the description of “objects” but impoverished in its emotional content.

Yet in his comments on “flavor,” the “far-reaching” quality of poems, or the evocative *hsing*, Chung Hung seldom talks about how this particular dimension is created. He ranks Juan Chi as a first-rate poet and says that the language of his poetry is not only “within the ear and eye,” that is, immediately accessible -- but also “its feeling goes beyond the eight limits of the cosmos” (*SPCS*, 34). This latter quality refers to the aesthetic dimension of Juan Chi's poetry. But whether Chung Hung means that there is a direct correlation between the immediacy of his descriptions of sensory details and the endless resonance of the feelings evoked in his poetry is not clear. Nor does he specify in what way they might be related.

It is only in Liu Hsieh's work that we discover a heightened consciousness of how this effect could be created in poetry through the controlled presentation of sensory details. At the end of his chapter

"The Physical World," for example, Liu Hsieh states that only those who really understand how to rise above literary convention and how to innovate will be able to write poetry so that the feelings expressed will linger beyond the exhaustive depiction of the world of physical reality (WHTL, 295). He suggests that this effect can be achieved by employing terse and pithy language, despite the fact that the physical world is never spent in its variety. For only by doing so can "the flavor of the poem lingers delicately after the words" and "the feelings implied become more vivid and appealing" (WHTL, 295).<sup>30</sup>

Obviously, to "rise beyond literary convention" means to transcend the ornate descriptions of "objects" which were then so much in vogue. Implied in this statement is not only his consistent belief in the suggestive power of language per se, but, more significantly, a deep understanding of the inner dynamics between the concrete physical world and the intangible feeling or meaning evoked in the aesthetic dimension. Liu coined a compound phrase, *yin-hsiu*, to describe these inner dynamics between the intangible and the concrete aspects in poetry. *Yin* refers to "the elusive and subtle meaning beyond the text"; *hsiu* represents vivid and outstanding words within the text (WHTL, 259). And such words very often are employed to describe the concrete outward phenomena in the text. Although much of the chapter "Yin-hsu" was lost in the Ming dynasty, it has still been possible to infer Liu's general idea from the extant portion.<sup>31</sup>

In describing the dynamics between the intangible and concrete aspects of poetry in terms of *yin* and *hsiu*, Liu Hsieh touches upon three interrelated features of the ultimate aesthetic dimension of poetry. First, in describing the "meaning beyond the text" as *yin*, Liu is conscious of that dimension's indescribable nature. Second, in linking *yin* and *hsiu* together, he suggests that this ineffable quality of poetry is effected through *hsiu*, that is, through vivid description of the concrete, sensory world. Third, he says that to evoke this effect, the language of the intangible feeling and meaning will have to be subtle and suggestive. At the same time, the tangible elements in poetry will have to be vivid, clear, and prominent in order to capture the attention of the reader. Much of the

discussion on the dynamics between “feeling” and “scene” in subsequent periods is simply a further elaboration of what Liu Hsieh has implied in the pairing of *yin* and *hsiu*.

The comprehension of the aesthetic dimension of the interaction between “feeling” and “object” at this stage was rather crude. It was not until the T'ang dynasty that this dimension of poetry became the focus of extensive critical exploration. But the awareness of this important dimension certainly suggests that, already during the affective phase, the entire scope of the relationship between “feeling” and “object” was under critical examination.

The impact of such study on Chinese criticism is significant. It opened a new perspective from which subsequent critics could look at poetry as an artistic entity in its own terms apart from its sociopolitical function. “Feeling” and “object” were for the first time established as the fundamental basis for discussing the creative process, nature, and aesthetic effect of poetry. Critics began to see that the notion of *hsing*, for example, was central to the nature of poetry, not simply a poetic device associated with the extrapoetical function of “praise,” established by Cheng Hsüan, the Han commentator of the *Book of Songs*. This subtle but significant shift of perspective was indicative of a gradual liberation from the Han Confucian view of poetry.

Liu Hsieh's idea that the poet becomes most *inspired* to write poetry (*ju-hsing*, literally, entering into *hsing*) when his mind is most relaxed in its interaction with the external world is premised on the Taoist notion of the ideal mental condition for comprehending the Tao in nature. Chung Hung's idea of *hsing* as the lingering flavor evoked by the poetic text, as we shall see in the following chapter, anticipates the T'ang critical exploration of the aesthetic dimension of poetry from a primarily Taoist and Buddhist point of view. The rising influence of Taoist thinking exerted a considerable force on the critical perspective of this period, orienting it toward the intrinsic nature and makeup of poetry. And thanks to this new perspective, poetry criticism finally came into its own. While interest in the sociopolitical function of poetry continued in some circles, the introspective attitude contributed significantly to thinking about the relationship between “feeling” and “object” in Chinese poetry.





## *The Aesthetic Phase*

In both poetry and poetry criticism, the T'ang dynasty represented almost everything that the Six Dynasties had been preparing for but did not quite accomplish. In poetry, two of its many achievements stood out as particularly important. One was the development into full maturity of recent-style poetry (*chin-t'i shih*), which includes the quatrain (*chüeh-chü*), the regulated verse (*lü-shih*) of eight lines, and the series of regulated couplets (*p'ai-lü*) of ten lines or more. The other was what later critics often described as an extraordinary interfusion of "feeling" and "scene" seldom achieved in any other era. These developments directly contributed to the combination of compactness in expression and richness in feeling and flavor for which T'ang poetry is most famous. What T'ang poetry achieved, in fact, was the full realization of Liu Hsieh's praise of the *Book of Songs* as "using little to encompass a great deal" (*i shao tsung to*) (WHTL, 294). Succinctness of expression was no longer confined merely to literal expression in the poetic medium; it was formalized in the poetic medium itself, particularly the more popular verse forms in recent-style poetry, quatrain and the eight-line regulated verse. No longer did poems consist

of exhaustive descriptions or extended narrations. Rather, they required a highly concentrated distillation of a memorable experience, caught in a moment of extraordinary consciousness, delivered in language that was hauntingly evocative of a world of meaning beyond that experience. To be sure, not every T'ang poem fits that description exactly. But all fine T'ang poems, whatever their thematic concern or lyrical impulse, achieve the art of supreme economy.

This remarkable coalescence of form and expression in T'ang poetry was the result of a long and circuitous evolution that had been taking place since the late Han. The rules governing recent-style poetry and, in particular, the regulated verse that is prosodically the most complex, began to be consciously applied around the fifth century in the *Yung-ming* style poetry of the Ch'i dynasty.<sup>1</sup> It was not until the latter part of the seventh century that the various prosodic rules of recent-style poetry were finally perfected. Although the rules concerning tonal patterns, rhyme scheme, and parallelism were all part of this complicated development, formally speaking, what is most relevant to the evocative quality of T'ang poetry is the compact verse forms found in the quatrain and regulated verse. Experimentation with shorter verse forms, from the quatrain to the eight-to-ten-line forms, toward the latter part of the Southern Dynasties became increasingly popular and attested to the persistent effort of many poets to find a succinct form for expression. Concurrently, poets of the Southern Dynasties also began to integrate "feeling" with the "physical world," whose elaborate depiction at the expense of the emotional content was, for a long time, the prime concern of poetry.

It was not until the High T'ang era (roughly the reign of Hsüan-tsung, 712–756) that such an integration found its full realization.<sup>2</sup> Kao Yu-kung, for example, notes that what T'ang poetry fundamentally achieves is an integration of the expressive mode typified in Juan Chi's *Chanting My Sorrow*, with the descriptive mode typified in landscape poetry.<sup>3</sup>

To these two streams of influence was added Neo-Taoist contemplation of the human condition. Both the expressive and the descriptive

poets of the pre-T'ang eras were deeply concerned with this ultimate question. In other words, the concepts both of "feeling" and of "physical world" took on a far greater significance in T'ang poetry. Not only was "feeling" now expanded to include the deepest concerns about the human situation, but physical nature was also inextricably intertwined with such metaphysical musing. Moreover, "physical world" here does not refer simply to mountains and rivers or imagined locales and things, but comprises the minutest particulars of physical reality. T'ang poets had also learned from the object poets of the previous era how to incorporate the seemingly most insignificant objects into the poetic medium. They did so, however, not for the sake of an empty display of those objects' physical attributes; rather, they infused these attributes with their own thoughts and feelings.

Because of this enriched implication of "feeling" and "scene," the world of T'ang poetry is characterized by a depth and subtlety almost unmatched by the poetry of any other era in the Chinese tradition. At the same time, the marvel of T'ang poetry, particularly the quatrain and regulated verse forms, is that such immensely rich, subtle, and profound lyrical concerns are expressed in such concise poetic forms.

The T'ang dynasty also saw significant strides in poetry criticism. In the central critical issue concerning the relationship between "feeling" and "scene," the contribution of the T'ang attests to a far more profound and comprehensive understanding of the nature of poetry than was achieved previously. By the latter part of the Southern Dynasties, all aspects of the issue had been dealt with, from the affective interaction of "mind" and "object" during the creative process to the ultimate poetic effect beyond the written text. This included how the interaction was expressed in the poetic medium. But clearly, critical attention at the time was chiefly focused on the affective-responsive element of the creative process. Poetry was primarily viewed from the perspective of the poet and the poet's interaction with the surrounding physical environment at the moment of lyrical inspiration.

Both Liu Hsieh and Chung Hung were very much aware that poetry is distinguished by its ability to suggest something beyond what is written in the text. Chung Hung called this quality "flavor"; Liu Hsieh identified it as both "flavor" and "subtlety." But they hardly dealt with the nature of this "flavor" and how it was to be effected in the poetic medium. It was during the T'ang period that these issues began to be studied.

For the T'ang critics poetry was no longer discussed merely from the perspective of how and what was written. For the first time, it began to be viewed consciously from the perspective of the readers in terms of what was evoked by the written text. It is a case in which part of the "load of creation," to use E. H. Gombrich's phrase, was being shifted to the reader.<sup>4</sup> This reader-oriented—or aesthetically oriented—perspective reaches the ultimate frontier of poetry. The T'ang critics' interest in this dimension of poetry is evidence that they understood that its ultimate power and potential lie not in what is stated in words but in what is evoked in the space between the text and the reader.

The notion of evocation or *hsing* was thus expanded from its earlier affective dimension (how the physical world stimulates the creative impulse in the poet), to its final teleological implication of how the poem as a whole evokes a response from the reader. The whole poem was now regarded as an agent of *hsing*. Although T'ang critics themselves did not uniformly refer to the total effect of poetry in terms of *hsing*, they were exploring its aesthetic dimension.

Two other factors directly contributed to this aesthetically oriented view of poetry during the T'ang dynasty. One was the extraordinarily evocative poetry of the period, which inspired critics to explore the nature and effect of the response elicited by the poem. The second factor was the intellectual milieu of the time, which brought the increasingly powerful impact of Taoist and Buddhist thought—particularly their transcendental outlook on reality—to bear on poets and critics.

The issue of how these two thought systems penetrated the creative and critical tradition is complicated, especially in the case of Buddhism, whose impact on Chinese literature had been increasing since the end of

the Six Dynasties. More study is needed on the way translation of Buddhist sutras for mass consumption influenced popular literature such as drama and storytelling.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, great gains could be made by exploring Buddhism's impact on poetry, including innovations in poetic subject matter, critical orientation, and poetic forms.<sup>6</sup>

It is not within the scope of this chapter to survey or assess these influences. What will be discussed is the way in which Buddhist and Taoist thinking contributed to the critical perception of the relationship between "feeling" and "scene." The Taoist and the Buddhist pursuit of a reality transcending the sensory world had a significant impact on the contemporary view of poetry's aesthetic dimension. Briefly, for Taoism, ultimate reality resides in the infinite and all-encompassing Tao; for Buddhism, it is the supreme, sacred "realm" (*ching*) or "Buddha realm" (*Fo-ching*, the realm of Buddha in his transcendental form) that is boundless and beyond all the senses. Inspired by such ideas, T'ang critics began to see a close affinity between the transcendental nature of ultimate reality and the aesthetic dimension of poetry. Consequently, they drew much of their intellectual sustenance as well as their vocabulary for exploring poetry from Buddhist and Taoist teachings. The aesthetic dimension of poetry was perceived to be almost as elusive and ineffable as the Tao or the notion of "realm" in Buddhism.

Having briefly introduced the poetic developments and critical orientation of the T'ang period, we turn to the chief focus of our present chapter, which is how T'ang critics explored this dimension of poetry. In order to understand the poetic milieu to which they were responding and, in particular, to understand how this fundamentally elusive and evocative dimension of poetry is effected, we will first sample a few of the T'ang poems most admired for their rich resonance.

### **T'ang Poetry: Fusion of "Feeling" and "Scene"**

The main purport of the following selections is not to suggest a poetic canon for this period, but to illustrate how certain poetic trends during the T'ang influenced critical orientation with regard to "feeling" and "scene."

If there is one distinct characteristic common to fine T'ang poetry, in addition to its rich variety in subject matter and personal style, it is the art of supreme economy. Among the poetic styles popular during the T'ang period, the quatrain and the regulated verse display this characteristic most clearly. While the ancient-style poems, especially the *ko-hsing t'i* and the *hsin yüeh-fu*, are arguably just as expressive of the richness of T'ang poetry, their intent is mainly narrative. Even though there are many lyric poems in the ancient style, the strength of this type of poetry as a whole lies primarily in the ability to accommodate and to display this narrative intent, plot and all, within the poetic medium.

In contradistinction to ancient-style poetry, the focus of the quatrain and the regulated verse is primarily on the emotion of the speaker rather than on the event that generated the emotion. The very brevity of these poetic forms demands that emotional experience be rendered at its most significant moment. The omission of an experience's sequential unfolding clearly marks these new poetic forms as lyrical compared with the narrative-oriented ancient-style poetry.

What is achieved in T'ang lyric poetry is thus a rare feat in which extreme economy of expression is coupled with evocative richness in emotion and meaning. And this is achieved not by a full display of the fusion between "feeling" and "scene" in the poetic medium, but by stimulating readers to mine the hidden potential of such a fusion in their imaginations. It is primarily this distinct quality of T'ang lyric poetry that inspired contemporary critics to ponder the nature and effect of what is evoked beyond the written text. Its impact on the critical exploration of the aesthetic dimension of poetry is thus far more crucial than that of the narrative-oriented ancient-style poetry. My selection of poems in this chapter is thus confined to the quatrain and the regulated verse forms.

Almost invariably the rich resonance of T'ang poetry is effected through a spontaneous and happy meeting between the speaker's inner world and his physical surroundings. This kind of encounter, which we often find in T'ang poetry and, for that matter, in all fine Chinese poetry, may or may not have occurred in reality. But that does not matter. What matters in the Chinese tradition is the poet's ability to capture human

emotion in all its concrete vividness through both the apparent genuineness of the emotion and the convincing “scene” that surrounds the experience.

As a result, not only does human emotion find its most expressive embodiment in the physical world, but the physical world itself comes alive through its association with emotion. In this mutually enriching interchange the two otherwise unrelated worlds become fused into one. Rather than spelling out in exhaustive terms what takes place in this dynamic interplay, T’ang poets worked skillfully within the compact verse forms to couple a particular feeling and the physical world in a way that is richly suggestive of their eventual fusion in the mind of the reader.

The way in which the interplay between human emotion and the physical world is evoked naturally varies from poem to poem, depending on the varying degrees of explicitness and subtlety with which these two worlds are related to one another. For example, the following poem by Meng Hao-jan (689–740), “Passing the Night on the Chien-te River,” where the mood of the speaker is set off in a subtle, quiet way by the natural scenery:

I moored the boat by an islet clad in misty smoke.  
The sun sets, a wanderer’s sorrow rises anew.  
Wilds so vast, the sky hangs low upon the trees.  
The river so clear, how close seems the moon to man.

(4.1. CTS 3:1668)

At first glance, there is nothing extraordinary about the poem. That a lonely wanderer should pass the night by an islet at the end of a day’s journey is a rather common occurrence. Nothing really happens; yet something indescribably poignant about the mood of a lone traveller is evoked by what he tells us about the scenery he sees on that night and by what he reveals about himself in the process. Against the misty islet, the sight of the setting sun is a painful reminder that his sorrow, unlike the sun, knows no rest and is just beginning to gnaw at him as the end of the day is near and home is far away. The smoke that rises by the islet at dusk—an otherwise rather homey sight as people prepare supper for



their families' return—also adds to his loneliness in a strange place where he is totally uncared for and unknown.

In the third line, where a critical turn is usually introduced in a quatrain, the speaker diverts our attention to the scene far away. For a moment, against the vastness of nature, his personal sorrow seems diminished, insignificant. Yet at the same time, the desolate scene seems to be a fitting context for his mood and, as such, becomes merged with it. But this brief diversion of attention from himself to the scenery also seems to have elicited a change of feeling in him as time passes. For, in the next line, instead of the setting sun (line 2), which aroused his sorrow earlier, we find the gentle moon whose reflection in the limpid water not only appears near, but is his one and only companion on this lonely night.

In the interval between the mooring of the boat and the appearance of the moon in the river, the complex and changing mood of the lonely wanderer is revealed. This is done with few direct statements about the speaker's feelings. So much of what is revealed is suggested by the ways in which the natural scenes are depicted. It is the speaker's particular mood as a lone wanderer that dictates what he sees around him and how he sees it. In other words, the misty islet, the setting sun, and the clear moon are fused with the speaker's mood and in the process, become indistinguishable from it. This is truly a poem in which, as Liu Yung-chi comments, "the feeling is in the scene."<sup>7</sup> It is precisely through these vividly painted scenes that we are led into the inner world of the speaker. The words "a wanderer's sorrow" (*k'o-ch'ou*) provide the only clue that enables the reader to spell out what is otherwise left unsaid in the quiet interplay between "mood" and "scene." Precisely because so little is explicitly told about his feelings, the reader is given a wide area in which to imagine what the speaker might have felt thousands of evenings ago by the Chien-te River when the moon was near but home was far away.

Modern anthologists generally classify this poem as a landscape poem.<sup>8</sup> But like many landscape poems of the T'ang period, it differs from its predecessors of the Six Dynasties in one important respect: the poet no longer deems it necessary or desirable to fill the poem with descriptive details of natural scenery. Instead, the scenes in T'ang landscape poetry,

as in Meng Hao-jan's poem, are selectively described with the specific purpose of evoking or expressing mood. Mountains and rivers are no longer presented merely as something to be appreciated as purely objective entities. They are now depicted as engaged in a kind of mutually reflecting interaction with the viewer of the scene.

In the following poem by Wang Ch'ang-ling, "Campaign Song," the familiar sentiment of homesickness is again featured, this time as felt by one stationed on the frontier. As in Meng Hao-jan's poem, the rich resonance lingers long after the words are gone. Yet the way in which the external world and, in particular, the moon at the end relate to the dominant feeling of the poem is very different:

With each different dance, the *p'i-p'a* changes to a new melody;  
Still, its burden is mountain passes and the same old refrain  
of separation.

My frontier sorrow is stirred again and again with each mournful  
note.

High above, the autumn moon shines upon the Great Wall.

(4.2. CTS 4:1444)

Wang Ch'ang-ling was a master of the quatrain form, particularly songs on frontier subjects. Unlike Meng Hao-jan's poem, however, this poem is not sparing in its expression of feeling. Homesickness is an integral part of life on the frontier. This is reflected in the melody the *p'i-p'a* plays: even when a new dance is introduced, it still emits the same old tune of separation and estrangement in a land far away. The hope for temporary diversion from this melancholy through music is consequently dashed.

The final line is a *tour de force*. The quiet, cool moon high above seems to add to the desolation of the scene in two very different ways. On the one hand, the moon is *part* of the melancholy and thus elevates the speaker's sublunary grief to a cosmic level. On the other hand, the moon high above is *apart* from human suffering and thus makes the speaker feel all the more lonely. To end the poem with a "scene" (*i ching chieh chü*), instead of a direct expression of thought and feeling, is a common practice

in Chinese poetry.<sup>9</sup> The effect is often that of an admission that the situation described in the poem is too complex for words. The silence of the scene is particularly evocative, challenging the reader to imagine the implications of what is only suggested.

In "Crossing the Ching-men Mountains to Bid Farewell" by Li Po, the scenes depicted at the end are much more explicitly related to the emotional tenor of the poem:

From far beyond the Ching-men mountains,  
 I come here to the land of Ch'u.  
 Mountains meander to where the plains begin;  
 The river rolls into boundless wilds and flows on.  
 The moon descends, celestial mirror a-flying;  
 The clouds rise, miraged towers a-forming.  
 But still I love the river waters from my homeland,  
 Following my skiff for ten thousand miles to bid me farewell.

(4.3. CTS 3:1786)

The Ching-men mountains are in Ch'u (present-day Hupei province). Apparently the speaker, very possibly Li Po himself, entered Ch'u from the west, most likely from his home in Shu (present-day Szechuan province). The mountains in Szechuan continue into Hupei to the Ching-men mountain area; the Yangtze River flows from west of Szechuan and through Hupei. Lines 3, 4, 7, and 8 refer precisely to this. Li Po has transformed these mere geographical facts into poetry.

The meandering Yangtze is not simply part of the scene, but the vehicle through which Li Po reveals his deep feelings for his home. In contrast to the mountains, which stop before the land of Ch'u, the river flows on. Unlike the fantastic scenes of the flying celestial moon and the colorful rising clouds, which are both remote and changeable, the river faithfully follows him—never deserting him in spite of the ever-changing scenes—however far he travels from home. Hence, he still cherishes his homeland river, despite all the wonders that nature displays along his journey.

The apparent focus throughout the poem is the river, and it is the river that, as the title tells us, crosses the Ching-men mountains to bid him farewell. Again, nature in this poem is not something apart from man, as we often find in earlier landscape poems, but something that partakes of, merges with, and finally becomes indistinguishable from the feelings of the speaker. As such, the ever-flowing Yangtze River not only embodies never-ending thoughts of home, but most vividly evokes them in the mind of the reader.

Powerful and evocative as the technique of the scenic closing may be, it is certainly not the only way to end a poem. In the following poem by Tu Fu, "A Tired Night," the final couplet is what makes the whole poem cohere and lends meaning to the preceding lines of scenic description:

Bamboo chill creeps into the bed chamber,  
The rustic moon floods the courtyard corner.  
Heavy dew trickles down in tiny drops,  
The sparse stars flicker in and out.  
The fireflies are alight and flit about in the dark,  
The waterbirds call out to one another.  
Everything, alas, is tangled up in war,  
Gone is the cool night which I sigh for in vain.

(4.4. CTS 4:2464–65)

The first three couplets of this pentasyllabic regulated verse are all scenes of an autumnal night. As night wears on, the chill mentioned in the first couplet congeals the moisture in the air and forms dripping dew drops. Furthermore, the clear moon that earlier was shining over the courtyard rises higher and further dims the sparse stars. In the third couplet, a new scene is introduced: the fireflies flitting and the waterbirds calling to one another suggest that various forms of life in nature are beginning to stir as the night gives way to a new day.

So far, the poem appears to be nothing but a sketch of various disconnected scenes drawn from an autumnal night just before dawn. Without the final couplet, we would have no idea why these scenes are

there. The seemingly unrelated and even abrupt statement in the closing couplet is what ties everything together and gives it meaning and poignancy: his depression over the war keeps the speaker awake on such a night. We now realize that everything he sees and hears on that night is inseparable from this concern. For him, the bamboo, the moon, the stars, the fireflies, and the waterbirds are all seen and filtered through the shadow of war. They are thus fused with his sorrow and his frustration.

In this poem, we have another illustration of “feeling” in “scene” where, in this autumnal setting, we can perceive the dejected insomniac who is not only physically tired, but is weary of everything—another day has dawned, but the war still goes on. The steady progression from night to day, the harmonious calls among the waterbirds, and the moonlit tranquility of an autumn night, all indicate that nature is apart from and indifferent to man and the wars of men. Unlike what took place in the previous poems, this interplay between the speaker’s inner self and the outer world is not based on an implicit correspondence. Rather, it is the contrast between the speaker’s thoughts of war and the peaceful atmosphere around him that gives the poem its special poignancy and richness.

In the examples chosen so far, the interaction between “feeling” and “scene” is brought about by a verbal emphasis on either “feeling” or “scene.” In Tu Fu’s “Climbing the Heights,” the speaker and the world around him are engaged as equal partners in their mutually enriching interplay:

Raging wind, high sky, gibbons shriek mournfully;  
 Clear river, white sand, bird circling above.  
 Whistling winds, sighing leaves, endlessly rustling down;  
 Waves rolling upon waves, the Long River surges on forevermore.  
 Ten thousand miles, grieving over autumn, always a wanderer;  
 A hundred years, stricken with sickness, alone I climb the heights.  
 Hardships and bitter regrets, I hate the thick frost on my temples;  
 Despondent and frail, I have just quit my cup of coarse wine.

(4.5. CTS 4:2467–68)

Like so many of Tu Fu's regulated verses, this poem is a fine example of his technical mastery. Unlike most regulated verses, which require that the two middle couplets observe parallelism, this poem is composed of four parallel couplets. The most outstanding feature of this poem is the presentation of "scene" in the first four lines and of "feeling" in the second four lines. In this way Tu Fu vividly depicts a lyrical world where "scene" and "feeling" are seen engaged in an equal and dramatic confrontation with one another. A subtle parallel is set up between the world of the speaker in the autumn of his life and that of the autumnal season with all its desolation and bleakness.

In the first two lines, autumn appears in segments, each of which is clearly viewed from the heights, as the title of the poem suggests. Whether raging wind, mournful gibbons, or circling bird, each of these scenes at the beginning sets the tone for the entire poem. In the next two lines, with a cinematic sweep, the speaker extends his vision to include the entire world of autumn. The expansive sights and sounds of autumn are too powerfully contagious and poignantly evocative for the speaker to remain a quiet observer of nature. The long pent-up sorrow of the wanderer breaks loose in an outpouring as powerful as the surging waves of the Long River (the Yangtze), which keep swelling toward him. From this point on, the speaker, instead of describing what he sees and hears around him, is telling us what he thinks and feels as he grieves for autumn.

The focus of the poem, in other words, has by the third couplet shifted from the physical reality of autumn to the psychological state of the poet. In the true spirit of "grieving over autumn," which has a long tradition in Chinese literature, the speaker tells us about his melancholy, his sickness, his white hair, and his utter dependency.<sup>10</sup> These sad circumstances become even more unbearable as he quits his one remaining solace—coarse wine. The poem thus ends on a note of self-imposed restraint.

The presentation of autumn in the first half of the poem enables the "scene" to function as an evocative agent in bringing forth naturally the

emotional focus in the second half. But beyond this sequential connection of evocation and response between the two halves of the poem, there is something more. The identical caesura pattern between individual couplets in each half of the poem further suggests an implicit but at the same time highly illuminating correspondence between the couplets.

The mournful shrieks of the gibbons (line 1) may well evoke the inner grief of the homeless wanderer (line 5) and, at the same time, expresses something of the deep sadness he feels. Analogously, the circling bird flying over the river and the sands (line 2) seems to prefigure the sick and bewildered poet climbing the heights alone, musing over his melancholy existence (line 6). His solitude is reinforced even more if we interpret the line as referring to a lone bird. In Chinese, there is usually no distinction between singular and plural in nouns; hence, I have opted to translate the word *niao*—which can mean “bird” or “birds”—in the singular. Indeed, the circling motion seems to suggest that it might be a single bird searching for its flock or its home or its mate. The analogy between yellow leaves in autumn (line 3) and white hair (line 7) is a very common one in Chinese poetry.<sup>11</sup> And, finally, the endlessly surging waves (line 4) powerfully externalize the deep frustration and sorrow that are churning within the speaker. Again, the comparison of human sorrow to eternally flowing water is quite common among Chinese poets.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of the poem, however, a contrast seems to be implied between “scene” and “feeling.” Unlike the surging waves that roll so freely without restraint, the speaker’s abstention from wine seems to prevent him from releasing his sorrow. The human act of deciding to cease drowning one’s sorrows in drink is something the surging waves, lacking freedom of choice, are unable to perform. There is thus an interesting mixture of correspondence and contrast between the fourth line and the last line.

The relationship between the scenic description in the first half of the poem and the emotional expression in the second half is a highly suggestive one. The absence of any explicit connection between the two worlds is paradoxically what enables them to engage in a free, dynamic, and mutu-

ally illuminating interplay. There is a two-way movement going on between “scene” and “feeling”: the movement from “scene” to “feeling” is mainly *evocative*, in that the “scene” is depicted in order to trigger the “feeling” of the poet; that from “feeling” to “scene” is mainly one of *correspondence*, in that the “scene” seems to be the external counterpart of the internal “feeling.”

The above may seem a case of overreading. I believe, however, it is justified when we consider Tu Fu’s technical mastery of regulated verse, particularly the heptasyllabic verse, where nothing is left to chance. As the Ch’ing critic Shih Pu-hua (1835–1890) pointed out, such a juxtaposition of “scene” and “feeling” was a rather common practice with Tu Fu:

That the first half [of a poem] is for the description of the immediate scene and the second half for that of thoughts and feelings is quite common among Shao-ling’s [Tu Fu] heptasyllabic poems. And the scene always contains the thoughts and feelings. (4.6. *Hsien-yung shuo-shih*, CSH 2:991)

Shih Pu-hua’s observation is also true of many of Tu Fu’s highly acclaimed pentasyllabic regulated verses as well, such as “Thoughts Written while Travelling at Night” (“Lü-yeh shu-huai”); “Climbing the Yueh-yang Tower” (“Teng Yüeh-yang lou”); and “Thinking of My Brother on a Moonlit Night” (“Yüeh-yeh i she-ti”). In many cases where such neat division is employed, Tu Fu begins the first half of the poem with “feeling,” and then proceeds to “scene” in the second half. This kind of arrangement between “scene” and “feeling” often enables the poem to embody the dramatic interplay between the two outwardly separate worlds of man and the surrounding environment.

In all the poems quoted above, the inner world of the speaker is, in varying degrees, revealed and fused with the outer world. In “Magnolia Grove,” by Wang Wei, the speaker is reticent about himself:

There on the tips of the twigs, the hibiscus  
Bud forth red calyxes on the mountain.  
By the hut next to the brook, quiet with no one around,  
They bloom profusely and fall here and there.

(4.7. CTS 2:1302)



In this quatrain, the speaker paints a lovely scene in the magnolia grove where the flowers quietly follow their natural cycle of budding, blooming, and falling. Instead of spelling out his thoughts on what is significant in nature, Wang Wei is apparently more interested in letting nature express itself, generating its own suprasensory meaning in the mind of the reader. Thus, given such latitude for interpretation, readers are free to interact with the poem according to their individual sensitivities.

To some readers, the hibiscus flowers hidden in the mountain may suggest how, in the human world, many extraordinarily beautiful or talented individuals live and die without ever being noticed or appreciated for what they are. To others, the scene may suggest a self-contained world of nature apart from human interference, where life goes on in its own rhythms and cycles. The poem in its quiet way may also be a reflection of the speaker's own mood. We are reminded of the notion of the Sung art critic Kuo Hsi (b. ca. 1020) that the landscape one paints reflects one's own mood or, if you will, one's mindscape.<sup>13</sup> For implicit in the way the landscape is perceived is the person who perceives it. But what exactly the speaker perceived in this scene will always remain a mystery. As such, it will always tease the reader's imagination, to ponder what happens in that brief encounter between speaker and magnolia grove.

In all the poems discussed above, unlike earlier landscape poetry, natural scenery is harmoniously and dynamically merged with the thoughts and feelings of the speaker. This fusion, whether effected through the subtle but explicit presence of the speaker or through his implicit presence, evokes reverberations in the mind of the reader and thus imparts a living energy to an otherwise finite and static assemblage of words. These poems represent but a few of the myriad ways in which this fusion is achieved in T'ang poetry. But they are a sufficient indication of the ease, subtlety, sophistication, and—above all—the economy with which this is brought about. Although poems from before or after the T'ang sometimes achieve this fusion, very few have surpassed T'ang poetry in this respect.

By selecting poems in the quatrain and the regulated verse forms, I do not mean to suggest that the longer ancient-style poems or the regulated couplets are inferior or only worthy of lesser poets. This certainly is not the case. Li Po, for one, is most famous for his ancient-style poems. Some of Tu Fu's and Po Chü-i's best poems are written in *p'ai-lü* couplets. But unquestionably, as discussed earlier, the brevity of the quatrain and regulated verse brings out most effectively the rich overtones typically associated with T'ang poetry. The resonance derives not from a full display of the fusion between "feeling" and "scene," but from the hidden potential for such a fusion. In short, its power lies not in what it affirms within the poetic medium, but in what it suggests beyond a text whose possibilities approach the infinite.

### Critical Explorations

The poems just cited are very different from those of the previous eras in both form and expression. There is a sharpening of poetic focus and a concentration of energy in relatively short poetic forms. A comprehensive display of either the speaker's inner world or the world outside is not only impossible in such compact forms, but no longer even desirable. Instead, there is a strong penchant among T'ang poets for using language sparingly and evocatively. Critical attention has tended to focus on one central question, namely, how the T'ang poets succeeded in generating such richly haunting reverberations. Once again, at the core of this inquiry is the relationship between "feeling" and "scene." A fusion of these two elements (*ch'ing-ching chiao-jung*) gives vitality to an otherwise lifeless group of words. As Kao Yu-kung points out, this fusion defines the underlying aesthetic of T'ang poetry.<sup>14</sup> Questions pertaining to the nature of the "fusion," the means by which it can be brought about, its ultimate effect, and extrapoetical implications in the context of traditional Chinese thinking, come up often in post-T'ang critical discussions.

Despite the fact that they did not specifically refer to the integration of "feeling" and "scene" as "fusion," T'ang critics and anthologists were quite aware of this evocative quality in contemporary poetry. For ex-

ample, both Yin Fan (fl. 750s) and Kao Chung-wu (fl. 780s), in their anthologies of High T'ang poetry and mid-T'ang poetry, repeatedly singled out the ability to *evoke profound meaning* as a most desirable quality.<sup>15</sup> Their interest in what poetry evokes beyond the verbal medium was not only shared but explored in greater depth by many other T'ang critics and poets. Never before in the history of Chinese criticism was such concentrated attention given to this elusive dimension of poetry. This was largely because the T'ang critics' view of poetry, aside from being inspired by what they read in contemporary poetry, was also influenced by the Taoist and Buddhist transcendental outlook on reality.

Specifically, three interrelated aspects of the Tao and the ultimate realm Buddhism pursues, the "Buddha realm," were perceived to be particularly relevant to the aesthetic dimension of poetry. First, just like the Tao and the Buddha realm, the aesthetic dimension of poetry—that is, the elusive domain of poetry evoked by the text—is fundamentally *beyond language*. Second, precisely because the Tao and the Buddha realm are in the domain of the elusive, there was an unprecedented emphasis on using the mind to intuit this aesthetic dimension of poetry in the sense of *i-ming* (literally, comprehend through the mind), or its equivalent notion of *shen-i* (literally, understanding with the spirit).<sup>16</sup> Third, this elusive dimension of poetry was deemed to be boundless. Just as in Taoism and Buddhism where infinity paradoxically resides in "nothingness" (*wu*) and "emptiness" (*k'ung*), in poetry the richest meaning lies beyond the text where *nothing* is said. In the following pages, we will see how some of the most important T'ang critics, inspired by contemporary poetry and the transcendently oriented intellectual milieu of the time, explored this aesthetic dimension.

These critics include Yin Fan, the anthologist of High T'ang poetry; the author of *Discourse on Literature* (*Lun wen-i*) and *Styles of Poetry* (*Shih-ko*), traditionally identified as the T'ang poet Wang Ch'ang-ling; Chiao-jan and Ssu-k'ung T'u (837–908).<sup>17</sup> Their discussions centered primarily around two issues in relation to this aesthetic dimension in poetry. The first, and more speculative, deals with the nature of this particular dimen-

sion; the second, and more practical, discusses ways to create evocative qualities in poetry.

Already in the 750s, toward the end of the High T'ang period, Yin Fan was fully aware of the superior qualities that distinguished the poetry of this period from that of earlier times. In the preface to his *Anthology of Great Poets of Our Rivers and Mountains* (*Ho-yüeh ying-ling chi*, hereafter abbreviated *HYYL*), a collection of contemporary poetry completed in 753, Yin says that poets from the year 727 on began to show considerable proficiency in both "form" and "substance." By "form" he means the tonal patterns and other rules of prosody governing recent-style poetry. By "substance" he means a kind of poetic energy that recalls the emotionally charged poems of the earlier Chien-an period of the Han, when Ts'ao Ts'ao and his circle were active in writing poetry. But what is most relevant to our concern is that Yin Fan also notes something else about these T'ang poems, which he recognizes as unique but which cannot be adequately described in terms of "form" and "substance." He calls this quality *hsing-hsiang*, referring to the poets' ability to "evoke phenomena" in their creative writing. Although Yin Fan does not specify what he means by this newly coined term, from the various contexts in which it appears and the attributes associated with it, it is clear that the term is aesthetically oriented.

For example, when comparing the poetry of his time with that of earlier eras, Yin Fan alludes to the ability of High T'ang writers to "evoke phenomena" in their poetry, achieved through simple language and emotional substance and vitality. He says that while this quality is quite common among such T'ang poets as T'ao Han (fl. 730) (*HYYL*, 22b), Meng Hao-jan (*HYYL*, 47a), and Ch'ang Chien (fl. 749) (*HYYL*, 1a), it is uniformly lacking in the poetry of the Ch'i and Liang dynasties. This, he says, is because those pre-T'ang poets were too ornate in style and weak in emotional vitality. His remark on Ch'ang Chien is most revealing in this respect:

His meaning (*chih*) is far-reaching (*yüan*); what he evokes is uncommon. Good lines are frequent, but he only talks about what is on the surface. (4.8. *HYYL*, 1a)

The first sentence is about the poem's meaning or substance; the second is about its language. It is clear here that Ch'ang Chien is praised not so much for what he says in the text of the poem as for what he evokes beyond the text. For Yin Fan, the notion of "far-reaching" is apparently very important, for he repeatedly refers to it in his comments on the T'ang poets, using such terms as *hsing-yüan* (far-reaching in what it evokes) (HYYL, 15a) and *ch'ü-yüan* (far-reaching in its flavor) (HYYL, 51a). These terms seem to refer to the creation of overtones that linger after the reading of a poem and, as such, they are synonymous with the notion of "evoking phenomena."

Although Yin Fan did not explicitly discuss how this effect of rich resonance beyond the text was to be brought about, he did stress, as is shown in his observations of Ch'ang Chien, that it was desirable for the poet to concentrate on what was on the surface. The notion of "surface" is not to be equated with "superficial." Rather, it is very similar to Chung Hung's idea of "immediate to the eye," depicting what is close by to achieve the desirable effect of vivid immediacy. In fact, this was what Chung advocated as an antidote to the ornate and convoluted mode of description then in vogue (SPCS, 17-18). Yin Fan's emphasis on surface description, however, seems to have been prompted by more than just a preference for simplicity. Although Yin does not discuss the relation between being far-reaching in meaning (or the ability to evoke a "phenomenon") and "surface," the manner in which he links them, however elliptical, does imply that he was aware of a connection. Yin Fan's insight into this connection proves to be important for much subsequent discussion of the aesthetic effects of poetry, as we shall see in chapter 5. This discussion pivoted around the dynamic between the evocative reach of a poem and the "nearness," or immediacy, of its language and sensory detail.

These comments signalled a new critical orientation toward the aesthetic dimension of poetry in the T'ang period. The notion of *hsing* as expressed in "evoking phenomena" does not refer to the evocation of the poetic impulse during the creative process. Nor does it mean a poetic

device, as the term is habitually understood in association with the *Book of Songs* and, for that matter, the *Songs of Ch'u*. Instead, the definition of *hsing* is *extended* to include the far-reaching effect that poetry exerts upon the reader. Although Chung Hung was probably the first critic to ascribe such an aesthetic dimension to *hsing* in his "Preface" to *Classification of Poetry*, Yin Fan's notion of "evoking phenomena" indicates a clearer grasp of the aesthetic dimension of *hsing*. For Yin Fan, what a poem evokes is not simply lingering meaning but also a distinct "phenomenon" brought about through the profound implications and vivid impressions of the depicted sensory world.<sup>18</sup>

What is the nature of this phenomenon evoked by poetry, aside from its being far-reaching? How is it brought about during the creative process? What specific relationship does it bear to what is described in the poem? What are its metaphysical implications? Although Yin Fan did not probe these problems as did some later critics, he made a conscious effort to identify this elusive thing—an effort not only prompted by the poetry of his time but indicative of the beginnings of a distinct critical orientation. Later critics carried on this effort with greater clarity and intensity. They coined special terms, such as "realm" (*ching* 境), "phenomenon beyond phenomenon" (*hsiang wai chih hsiang*), "scene beyond scene" (*ching wai chih ching*), and so on. The very need to create new critical terms clearly indicates that the T'ang critics were aware that they were entering a relatively untrodden domain.

Among these terms, I will first say a few words about "realm," which has traditionally been regarded as the single most distinct and representative contribution of the T'ang period to the vocabulary as well as to the concepts of poetic criticism. The root meaning of *ching* (realm) is "border," the confines of a geographical area, a meaning still in use today. In the *Chuang Tzu* the word had a more abstract significance, indicating something that approaches the notion of a state of being.<sup>19</sup> Later, the word was used in Buddhist terminology with two opposite meanings. In the first definition, the term referred to the *suprasensory* realm that represents the ultimate, purely spiritual goal of Buddhism; in the second, it referred to

the *sense* realm in which man operates. According to Buddhism, there are six such sense realms: what the eye sees, what the ear hears, what the nose smells, what the tongue tastes, what the body touches, and what the will intends. These sense realms, existing outside of man, are related to him only when his mind allows them to come into him; thus they represent a fusion of the mind with the external object. To reach the suprasensory Buddha "realm," man must try to disengage from the sense realms in the physical world. The term *ching* gained wide currency during the T'ang due to the increasing popularity of Buddhism. In poetry criticism, "realm" may refer to the ultimate aesthetic dimension of poetry beyond the verbal text, comparable to the suprasensory realm in Buddhism. It may also refer to the sensory details depicted, comparable to the Buddhist notion of the different sense realms in external reality. In this latter case, "realm" is then interchangeable with the collective term for sensory details depicted in poetry, namely, "scene" (*ching*).<sup>20</sup> In Buddhism, of course, the ultimate goal is to reach the pure spiritual realm by freeing oneself from the sense realms. In poetry, however, the sensory details are the necessary means by which the suprasensory realm is evoked.

Among the T'ang critics, the putative author of *Styles of Poetry and Discourse on Literature* and Chiao-jan were the first to make extensive references to the idea of "realm."<sup>21</sup> Their main concern was the process of composing poetry, that is, they were primarily interested in how the poetic medium was able to capture the sensory "realm." For them, sensory details were not culled purely from the external world but instead were already fused with the poet's perception. In the following passage from *Styles of Poetry*, the poetic "realm" is divided into three types:

Poetry has three realms. The first is called the realm of objects. When one wishes to write a landscape poem, one should then display a realm of the utmost beauty and subtlety with regard to streams and rocks, clouds and peaks. Then one should intuit their essence in the mind, put oneself in their realm as if holding them—crystal clear—in one's palm. Afterwards, one uses one's mind to comprehend the entire realm, appearance and all, and thereby attains the form and spirit (*hsing-ssu*) of the objects. The second is the realm of feelings. Joy, happiness, sorrow, and plaint should be displayed in terms of their meaning; then one should enter into those feelings. Afterwards, one

quickly wields one's thought, and thereby the depth of the feeling is attained. The third is called the realm of thoughts. This too one should display in one's thinking processes and contemplate in one's mind in order to obtain its truth.<sup>22</sup> (4.9)

The above passage is meant to teach the aspiring poet how to write fine poetry by getting at the "utmost beauty and subtlety" of physical nature, the "depth" of feeling, and the "truth" of thought. For the author, the most efficient way is to identify with the object of contemplation so as to penetrate its essence, whether it be a rock, a stream, a feeling of joy, or a particular thought. The essence so obtained is the "realm" of the object, which is what fine poetry tries to portray. Here, the notion of "realm" as a sensory experience filtered through the perception of the mind is clearly similar to that of the sense realm in Buddhism. The author may be drawing a parallel between Buddhism and poetry: just as there are six sense realms in Buddhism, so there are three such realms in poetry. While in Buddhism the sense realms in which the mind operates are to be rejected because they block perception of the ultimate realm, in poetry the sensory details are not only necessary but are most desirable.

Compared to the notion of "object," that of "realm" in its sensory dimension indicates a much more profound understanding of the interaction between "mind" and "object" during the creative process. T'ang critics not only continued to discuss how the poet is moved to poetry by the external world and how the creative mind acts upon the depicted object, but they increasingly argued that the depicted "object" in a poem is always a perceived object and as such always contains the perception of the poet. The notion of "realm" thus denotes a fusion of the poet's perception and the object of contemplation. The recognition of this extra-sensory dimension of the depicted object in terms of "realm" is a distinct contribution of the T'ang period.<sup>23</sup>

In the following passage from *Discourse on Literature* we are told not only how to attain this "realm" during the creative process, but what the ultimate suprasensory "realm" is like.<sup>24</sup>

When one sets out to write poetry, one should concentrate with one's mind and observe the object (*wu*) with one's eyes. And then afterwards, one should



observe the object with one's mind in order to deeply penetrate its realm (*ching*). The realm one perceives this way is very much like the myriad phenomena one views down below as one climbs high mountains and peaks. When one sees the phenomena this way, one comprehends them in the mind and they are ready to be used [for writing]. When everything is ready, then rules and rhymes are to be determined and applied before committing words to paper. In accordance with the title, mountains and trees, the sun, the moon, and the scenery are depicted in all their vividness to be chanted in words. *It is like seeing the sun and the moon in the water—the composition [poetry] is the light, objects and colors are the substance. When one looks through it [the composition or poetry], its phenomena can be seen clearly.* (4.10. Italics mine.)

Here again the function of the mind is crucial to the attainment of “realm” in poetry: while the *eyes* can observe external objects, it takes the *mind* to penetrate the “realm” of the objects. Furthermore, the original text says that poetry is light. Judging by the context here, it is clear that the word for “light,” *ching* 景 in the Chinese text, still retains the meaning popular during the Six Dynasties, namely, either “light” or “shadow cast by light.” As such it is interchangeable with the word *ying* 影.<sup>25</sup> This passage points out the relationship between the *sensory details* (objects and colors) depicted in the poem and the poem as a whole: the former is the very substance of the latter; and the latter, the total effect of poetry, is all light reflecting its own substance the way water reflects the sun and the moon. Such a comprehension of the total effect of poetry was shared by many subsequent critics. Both the Sung critic Yen Yü (1180–1235) and the Ming critic Hu Ying-lin (1551–1602), for example, used similar imagery to indicate what they believed to be the highest ideal of poetry:

The marvel of their [the High T'ang poets'] poetry is its crystal luminosity, which cannot be pinned down; it is like a sound in the air, or color, the moon in water, or an image in a mirror. (4.11. *LTSH* 2:688)

The phenomenon evoked by the High T'ang quatrain is crystal-clear, its meaning is profound and subtle but with no trace of artifice whatsoever.<sup>26</sup> (4.12)

The image of crystal-clear translucency conveys the idea that fine poetry not only faithfully reflects the sensory details but is, at the same time, free from them as the mirror or the water is free from what it reflects. What

does this “freedom” mean in real poetic terms? How can this translucency that poetry seeks to achieve be cultivated in the poetic medium? The author of *Discourse on Literature* did not say.

Chiao-jan was probably the first critic to look into these questions. In his *Laws of Poetry (Shih-shih)*, which studies the intrinsic laws and nature of poetry, Chiao-jan repeatedly discusses the notion of “realm” from the perspective of both the creative process and its ultimate aesthetic implications. He, like the author of *Discourse on Literature*, recognizes that to attain the suprasensory realm in poetry, the poet should be attentive to sensory details.

In Buddhism, the condition of being trapped by concerns of the senses (*ch'ü-ching*) must be avoided if the ultimate “realm” is to be attained.<sup>27</sup> But Chiao-jan turns the negative to a positive. He adopts the idea of “acquiring” (*ch'ü*) to suggest how the poet should best grasp the sensory “realm” so as to attain the highest poetic achievement:

When the poet engages in “acquiring ‘realm’” (*ch'ü-ching*), he must go to the most difficult and challenging places before he will be able to find fantastic lines of poetry. When the poem is finished, he should look at it in its entirety for tone and appearance. Where its composition appears to have been totally effortless, this is the mark of genius. (4.13. SSCC, 30)

The idea of “acquiring ‘realm’” here refers to the whole creative process during which the poet is intensely engaged with the sensory world in order to penetrate the object of contemplation. For Chiao-jan, truly remarkable poetry is totally natural, revealing not a trace of painstaking effort, nor the slightest demarcation between the poet and the world depicted. He cites, for example, one line from Hsieh Ling-yün’s “Climbing the Tower by the Pond” (SSCC, 115). I quote the relevant passage as follows:

I cock my ears to listen to the lapping waters;  
I lift my eyes to survey the steep mountains.  
The early spring light dissolves the last remains of the wintry  
wind;  
The new sun chases away the old cold.

By the pond spring grass grows;  
In the garden willows different birds come to sing.

(4.14. HCHWC 2:1161)

The charm of the penultimate line here, Chiao-jan says, lies not so much in what it depicts explicitly about the scene but in the feeling that is implied. He terms this effect the “feeling outside of the language” (*ch'ing tsai yen wai*). That is to say, one could infer from such a description the happy mood of the poet as he was inspired by the lively sight of the verdant grass growing by the pond on a fine spring day. Similarly, he singles out “The bright moon shines upon the piled snow” from the following poem by Hsieh Ling-yün, “The Year's End,” as another example of the imperceptible blending of the poet's meaning (*chih*) and the natural scenery:

Too much worry hinders me from sleeping,  
I fear that the night will never end.  
The bright moon shines upon the piled snow,  
The northern wind gusts and groans.  
Time moves on and nothing remains constant—  
It hurries on and my life is all but gone.

(4.15. HCHWC 2:1181)

According to the general tenor of the poem, this line suggests that the bright moon above is chilled by the piled snow down below and this in turn reflects the equally chilly mood of the poet. Just as in the line about the spring grass, no explicit mention of the feelings or the meaning of the poet is made. Rather, in Chiao-jan's words, it is “concealed in the line” (*chih ming chü chung*) (SSCC, 115).

Good poetry, for Chiao-jan, does not directly display the poet's feeling or intention. Instead, the poem holds that intention within itself, so that it is completely merged with the scene and cannot be specifically pinned down. Through suggestion, the poem is freed from the expression of a particular meaning. Precisely because the feelings or the intentions are so well concealed, the scene itself becomes most suggestive of what is hidden. This, for Chiao-jan, is the essence and ultimate effect of poetry.

Chung Hung, in *Classification of Poetry*, also praises Hsieh Ling-yün for these two lines. The focus of Chung Hung's appreciation is primarily on their vivid simplicity—a refreshing contrast to those ornate and erudite poems of the Southern Dynasties—rather than on their evocative appeal.<sup>28</sup> This difference in outlook between Chung Hung and Chiao-jan once again corroborates the general shift of critical orientation toward the aesthetic dimension of poetry during the T'ang period. Chiao-jan was probably the first critic to be so consciously aware of the correlation between the restrained expression of feeling within the poem and the open-ended effect that is created beyond the text.

Furthermore, for Chiao-jan, this effect is always suprasensory in nature. In describing the quietude and remoteness conveyed through poetry, he emphatically points out their suprasensory quality:

Quietude in the mind does not mean the stillness of the pine trees nor the silence of the animals in the forest. Remoteness in mind does not mean looking at the water or the mountain from a distance. (4.16. SSCC, 54)

To be sure, poets for thousands of years have realized that what they convey in their poetry is something beyond the mere description of the sensory world. But this suprasensory domain does not seem to have been consciously recognized and discussed in China until the T'ang period.

The critics we have so far studied all talk with varying degrees of clarity and emphasis about the evocative nature of this elusive "realm" and how it can be created. But it is the late T'ang critic Ssu-k'ung T'u who comes to grips with these two essential questions concerning "realm" most consistently and metaphysically by approaching them from a predominantly Taoist perspective. His comments left an indelible imprint on subsequent criticism.

In an often-quoted letter to Chi P'u (fl. 890s), Ssu-k'ung T'u wrote:

Tai Jung-chou [732–789] said that "The scene described by a poet is like the warm sun lighting up the Lan-t'ien field of fine jade, giving rise to smoke; it can be discerned from afar but does not reveal itself on close inspection." This phenomenon beyond the phenomenon, or scene beyond the scene, is not something that can be easily described.<sup>29</sup> (4.17)

Here the “scene” of a poem, elusive as smoke rising from jade smouldering in the sun, certainly refers to the poem’s ineffable effect, rather than what is presented in it.

In the phrases “phenomenon beyond the phenomenon” and “scene beyond the scene,” the first element in each phrase refers to the elusive, intangible “realm” elicited by the second element, the concrete physical world presented in the poem. Ssu-k’ung T’u was very much aware that the first phenomenon, while evoked by the tangible properties of the physical scene, goes far beyond them and defies definition. “The scene described by a poet . . . can be discerned from afar” means that such a scene cannot be pinned down literally but can only be sensed by the reader.

For the first time we have a vivid description of the intimate relationship between what is concretely described in the poem and what is evoked beyond it: while the latter aesthetic dimension is *inseparable* from the former, inasmuch as it has to be evoked by the former, it is at the same time *distinct* in that it transcends the concrete properties of a poem and dwells in the realm of the elusive. In the often-quoted “Letter to Master Li,” Ssu-k’ung T’u again alludes to this indescribable quality of poetry, comparing it with those rich and exquisite flavors that cannot be identified by our ordinary sense of taste. He refers to such extraordinary flavors as those which go “beyond the simply sour or the salty taste,” a turn of phrase analogous to “phenomenon beyond phenomenon” and “scene beyond scene”:

Writing prose is difficult, yet the difficulty of writing poetry is even greater. From ancient times, there have been numerous comparisons to illustrate this point. But I believe that only when one knows how to distinguish among flavors can one be qualified to discuss poetry. South of the Yangtze and the mountains [in the barbarian regions of China], among edible foodstuffs, there are those which taste like vinegar. They have no other flavor except that sour taste. There are also those which taste like salt. They have no other flavor except that salty taste. Hence, the Chinese [as opposed to the southern barbarians] will only take this kind of food when really hungry and will stop eating once their hunger is satisfied. This is because they know that such

foods lack those rich flavors [which they are used to] beyond the simply sour or the salty taste.<sup>30</sup> (4.18)

What he means is simply that, for him, flavors that can be identified as either salty or sour are not worth savoring. Truly wonderful flavors cannot be so identified. Analogously, the essence of fine poetry cannot be specifically identified as inhering in one or more lines, nor in this or that particular expression of feeling or description of scene. It lies beyond that, in the fusion evoked by all that is described in the poem, just as a rich flavor is the fusion of many ingredients.

Furthermore, Ssu-k'ung T'u cogently remarks in the same letter that the ineffable resonance evoked by poetry is only possible when one's writing is both "near" (*chin*) but not superficial and, at the same time, "far-reaching" (*yüan*) yet inexhaustible. His view of these terms is largely in agreement with earlier critics such as Chung Hung, Liu Hsieh, and Yin Fan. For Ssu-k'ung T'u, "near" refers to the vivid immediacy of the sensory details described in the poem, and "far-reaching" points to the elusive nature of the "realm" evoked by what is tangibly presented. But he goes further to emphasize that immediacy is not to be gained at the expense of depth, and that a far-reaching quality is not effective unless it is sustained by something inexhaustible.

In what ways can the "near" have depth and the "far-reaching" be inexhaustible? What is the relationship between these opposites in poetry? And how can their seemingly contrary demands be realized? In his major critical treatise, *Twenty-Four Types of Poetry* (*Erh-shih-ssu shih-p'in*), Ssu-k'ung T'u further probes these problems. As the modern editor of this treatise, Hsü Yin-fang, says, there are two important concerns running through this work: the nature of the ultimate "realm" and the means by which it is evoked.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the fact that Ssu-k'ung T'u makes very few literal references to "realm," it is at the very center of his poetic criticism. His work on twenty-four types of poetry depicted through various scenes draws most of the scenes from nature and some from particular human situations. In

either case, he approaches his central concern from the perspective of the "realm" that each of these types of poetry evokes.

This collection is itself a perfect illustration of what Ssu-k'ung T'u believes to be the very nature and the eternal paradox of poetry: just as these otherwise inexpressible types of poetic realms can be approached only through concrete scenes, so poetry has to resort to the finite, tangible properties found in external reality to convey the far-reaching and the infinite. In order to understand the paradoxical relation between the physical reality in the poem and the ultimate "realm" that it evokes, we have to first understand the perspective from which Ssu-k'ung T'u views poetry. For him, the ultimate context of poetry is Tao. In this sense, what poetry evokes is not simply rich overtones, but overtones that must, in the final analysis, be related to the infinite and all-encompassing Tao.

In *Twenty-Four Types of Poetry*, poetry is repeatedly associated with the great (*ta*, poem no. 1); the masculine (*hsiung*, 1 and 8); the eternally moving (*chien*, 1 and 8); the empty (*hsü*, 1 and 5); the undifferentiated whole (*hun*, 1); the true being (*chen-t'i*, 1) or the true (*chen*, 5, 7, 8, 10, 19) or the true master (*chen-tsai*, 1); the hollow of the circle (*huan-chung*, 1); the absolute pure (*su*, 2, 5, 7, 8, 20); the divine spirit (*shen*, 8, 9); the heavenly wheel (*t'ien-chüin*, 10) or the heavenly axis (*t'ien-shu*, 24); and dim non-being (*ming-wu*, 24). These arcane terms, most derived from Taoism and some from the *Book of Changes*, actually refer to the many facets of what is most deeply imbedded in the Chinese notion of the cosmos, namely the Tao, which Ssu-k'ung T'u also mentions specifically in the treatise (10, 12, 17, 18, etc.).<sup>32</sup> No critic before Ssu-k'ung T'u had so consistently discussed poetry within the context of the Tao.

Among the poems in the treatise, the first and last are probably the most explicit in revealing his views on the ultimate nature of poetry. Although the two poems are ostensibly about two distinct types of poetry, "The Masculine and the Grand" ("Hsiung-hun") and "The Flowing and the Moving" ("Liu-tung"), they are almost identical in attributing the very source of poetry to the Tao.<sup>33</sup>

“The Masculine and the Grand”

Great exercise makes firm the outward flesh,  
True being gives inward fullness;  
Returned to the Empty, to the Undifferentiated Whole,  
Grandeur comes of strength amassed;  
Embracing myriad objects,  
It spans infinitude,  
Where surge the darkling clouds  
And never-ceasing blow the rushing winds.  
Transcend the outward phenomenon  
To grasp what lies in the hollow of this circle;  
Useless to strain for mastery,  
Once yours it is a never-failing spring.

(4.19. SPCC 3; cf. Yang, 65)

“The Flowing and the Moving”

Whirling like water-wheels,  
Rolling like beads;  
Who can express  
The animation of insensate form?  
Immense, the axis of the earth,  
Ever-turning, the pivot of heaven;  
Let us grasp their clue  
And blend with them into one,  
Transcending the mind,  
Returning again to dim non-being  
An orbit of a thousand years,  
This is the key to my theme!

(4.20. SPCC, 42–43; cf. Yang, 77)

The grandeur evoked by the first poem originates in the “Great,” and the “True being”; it resides in the “hollow of this circle” and returns to “the Empty,” or “the Undifferentiated Whole.” The energy described in the second poem is massive and mysterious; it is identified with “axis of



the earth" and the "pivot of heaven" before it finally returns to "dim non-being." In short, Ssu-k'ung T'u suggests by these cryptic forms different aspects of the Tao with which poetry is closely identified—both its origin and its ends are inseparable from Tao.

A few passages from D. C. Lau's translation of the *Lao Tzu* will illustrate how closely Ssu-k'ung T'u associates poetry with the Tao. From chapter 21 of the *Lao Tzu* (*LTCK*, 52–53), we have this description of the Tao (words in square brackets are my preferences):

As a thing, the Way [Tao] is  
Shadowy, indistinct.  
Indistinct and shadowy,  
Yet within it is an image [likeness];  
Shadowy and indistinct,  
Yet within it is a substance.  
Dim and dark,  
Yet within it is an essence.

(4.21. Lau, 31–33)

From chapter 25 (*LTCK*, 59–61), there is another description of the Tao:

There is a thing confusedly formed.  
Born before heaven and earth.  
Silent and void . . .  
It is capable of being the mother of the world. . . .  
I give it the makeshift name of "the great."

(4.22. Lau, 37)

In chapter 40 (*LTCK*, 92), the cosmos is regarded as originating from "Nothing":

The myriad creatures [objects] in the world are born from  
Something, and Something from Nothing.

(4.23. Lau, 61)

Clearly, for Ssu-k'ung T'u, what poetry originates from and ultimately points to is closely associated with the Tao. The Ch'ing scholar Sun Lien-k'uei (fl. 1850s) infers that Ssu-k'ung T'u's frequent references to heaven and earth in *Twenty-Four Types of Poetry* are meant to give people a glimpse of an infinite heaven and earth through the finite craft of poetry (SPCC, 71-72). This may be so but, poetically speaking, I would suggest reversing Sun's observation by saying that what Ssu-k'ung T'u succeeds in doing in this treatise is to help readers catch a glimpse of the boundless realm of poetry whose "infinity" is intimately related to that of heaven and earth.

In the context of poetry then, what do all these cryptic associations with Tao really mean? Perhaps Ssu-k'ung T'u's special fondness for the poetry of Wang Wei and Wei Ying-wu (737-?) may serve as a clue. In his letters to Wang Chia and Master Li, Ssu-K'ung repeatedly praises their poetry for its crystal clarity, rich flavor, and quiet inner strength.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, these words pinpoint important characteristics of their poems in that they do often lead the reader's imagination far beyond what is said in the text, through vividly described scenes on the one hand and reserved expression of the poet's own thoughts and feelings on the other.

Wang Wei's "The Magnolia Grove," quoted earlier (4.7), is a case in point. Its reserve regarding the explicit mention of a particular thought or feeling makes this poem special. The speaker's complete silence on the meaning of the blooming and falling of the hibiscus flowers enables readers to enter into the scene and read their own meanings into it without being constrained by explicit direction from the poet. When translated into Taoist terms, such lack of meaning is comparable to the infinite "Empty" or to the condition of being "in the hollow of the circle" which, according to the second chapter of the *Chuang Tzu* ("Ch'i-wu lun"), is a most flexible position, one from which everything is possible in an infinite world (CTIC, 31).

To be sure, maintaining a "silence on meaning" is not the only way to generate what Ssu-k'ung T'u calls the "far-reaching" and the "inexhaustible" in poetry. How poetry evokes such rich resonance is another

central concern in the *Twenty-Four Types of Poetry*. Two poems are particularly relevant in this respect, “The Natural” (“Tzu-jan”) and “Pregnant with Implications” (“Han-hsü”).

In “The Natural,” the primary concern is with what constitutes a type of poetry that is natural, genuine, and not a product of artifice:

Stoop and it is yours for the taking,  
 No boon to ask of neighbors;  
 Just follow the Tao  
 And one touch of your hand brings spring,  
 Simple as finding a flower in bloom  
 Or watching the new year in!  
 The true can [not] be snatched away,  
 What is seized is easily lost.  
 Like a recluse in the lonely hills  
 Gathering duckweed after rain,  
 May you become aware  
 Of the infinite and eternal heavenly wheel!

(4.24. SPCC, 19–20; cf. Yang, 70)

The key to this “natural” quality, then, is that one does not need to look for one’s material beyond the immediate environment (*pu ch’ü-chu ling* [line 2]). There is no need to ask of one’s neighbors, for such material is available whenever one bends down (*fu shih chi shih* [line 1]). The Tao gives poetry its ultimate significance and is not only present everywhere and eternal (line 7), but can never be forced (line 8) because it is the most natural—as natural as the blossoming of flowers (line 5) or the passage of time (line 6). Hence, the truly great poet who follows the Tao (*chü tao shih wang* [line 3]) will make whatever he touches blossom into full spring (*tso shou cheng ch’un* [line 4]). At the end of the poem, he reaffirms that in this immediate reality, something of the “infinite and eternal heavenly wheel” (*yu-yu t’ien-chün* [line 12], another term for the all-encompassing Tao) can thus be intuited.

That the Tao inheres in physical reality, whatever it may be and wherever it may be found, corresponds to the notion in the *Chuang Tzu* chapter "T'ien Tzu-fang" that Tao is wherever the eye lands (*mu chi tao ts'un*) (CTIC 389). Precisely because the Tao is everywhere, poetry, whose ultimate realm lies with the infinite Tao, does not need to concern itself with material that is out of the ordinary or beyond normal reach to express the extraordinary or the "far-reaching." To be "natural" is to find something "near." And it is the inherent Tao that makes the "near" not "superficial," a quality which Ssu-k'ung T'u emphasizes as being desirable.

While "The Natural" is primarily concerned with the material of poetry, the complementary "Pregnant with Implications" is mainly about how to evoke the far-reaching and infinite in the poetic medium. Again, the issue is approached from the Taoist view that language is inadequate vis-à-vis the inexpressible and all-encompassing Tao. This is clear from the very beginning of the *Lao Tzu*, which says that the Tao that can be expressed is not the constant Tao. Chapter 41 of the *Lao Tzu* reiterates this idea when it states that a great musical note is without sound (*ta yin hsi sheng*), a great phenomenon is without shape (*ta hsiang wu hsing*), for the Tao conceals itself and is without a name (*tao yin wu ming*) (LTCK, 95–96).

Similarly, if poetry is to express the infinite, it cannot do so by conventional language, for language is restrictive and incapable of expressing the infinite. But if language has to be used, less is better than more. The less said, the less restrictive what is said will be and, consequently, the more suggestive it can be of the inexpressible infinite. This is the basic premise behind the famous *Han-hsiü* poem, which James J. Y. Liu refers to as the "most radical as well as most elegant expression" of what he calls the "Poetics of Paradox":<sup>35</sup>

"Pregnant with Implications"

Not a word [on the subject],  
 Yet the whole beauty revealed;  
 No mention of self,  
 Yet passion too deep to be borne;

This has its true master  
 With which it floats up and down;  
 Like wine bubbling over the strainer,  
 Or the abrupt return of autumn in blossom-time;  
 Dust whirling through space,  
 Or foam flung up by the sea,  
 The motley pageant converges only to scatter,  
 Till a myriad shapes are resolved at last in one.

(4.25. SPCC, 21; cf. Yang, 70)

Here, the poet is urged to hold back and rely on suggestion rather than conventional, explicit expression; thus, he can avoid being trapped by a fixed and finite meaning. For Ssu-k'ung T'u, this kind of reserve is justified and meaningful only when it is dictated by something powerful and infinite like the Tao or the "true master" referred to in the poem (line 5). The "true master" (*chen-tsai*), a Taoist term originating in chapter 2 of the *Chuang Tzu* ("Ch'i-wu lun"), refers to the master of myriad things in the cosmos, that is, the Tao (CTIC, 26). Paradoxically, since the Tao can never be exhausted, expression of meaning has to be sparing. By using a minimalist approach, the poet is able to maximize a poem's implications.

For Ssu-k'ung T'u, this is done by resisting the urge to make something explicit precisely at the point when direct expression seems most promising, just as the full unfolding of a flower may be suddenly halted by the arrival of autumn (*hua shih fan ch'iu* [line 8]). The implied significance of well-chosen words, like unopened flowers, is always most tantalizing for the imagination and thus most "far-reaching." "Pregnant with Implications," therefore, expresses the "far-reaching" which is, ultimately, the infinite Tao.

Of the twenty-four poems in this treatise, the qualities singled out in "The Natural" and "Pregnant with Implications" have become part of the standard critical vocabulary for describing classical Chinese poetry—synonymous with "near" and "far-reaching"—for describing fine lyrics as being natural in their language and use of material and, at the same time, quietly rich in overtones.

The notions “near” and “far-reaching,” or their variants, were in circulation long before Ssu-k’ung T’u. But no critics before him had approached these intimately related ideas from such a consistently Taoist perspective or had gone so far to deepen and expand their critical significance.

Beyond these two central issues, Ssu-k’ung T’u, like the critics before him, was very much concerned with the poet’s interaction with external reality. In his discussion with Wang Chia, Ssu-k’ung T’u succinctly described this interaction as one in which the poet’s “thought is in complete harmony with the external world” (*ssu yü ching hsieh*), an idea that is further explored in the *Twenty-Four Types of Poetry*.<sup>36</sup> It is approached from a predominantly Taoist perspective—the poet’s pure or original nature (*su*) is engaged in the contemplation of the external world during the creative process.<sup>37</sup> *Su* is a Taoist term that refers to the human mind or human nature in its purest state, free from worldly contamination. For Ssu-k’ung T’u it is critical that the poet be in an absolutely pure state of mind in order to intuit the soul, as it were, of the world outside. Three poems from his critical treatise discuss the issue. One is “Description” (“Hsing-jung”):

Only the pure of heart  
May recapture the Truth,  
For this is seeking shadows on water  
Or painting the glory of spring.  
The changing shapes of the wind-swept clouds,  
The vividness of herb and flower,  
The roaring waves of the ocean,  
The rugged crags of mountains,  
All these make up the great Truth  
In one subtle medley of dust.  
He who abandons the form to catch the spirit  
Is true master of his craft.

(4.26. SPCC, 36; cf. Yang, 75)

At the beginning of this poem, Ssu-k'ung T'u says that only the poet who is pure of heart can capture some of the true essence of objects in the external world. At the end of the poem, he says that this essence of external reality lies beyond its tangible physical form, and can only be captured in the elusive and intangible sphere of the spirit (*li-hsing te-ssu* [line 11]). Such absolute purity of mind is emphasized again in the beginning of "Calm and Subtle" ("Ch'ung-tan"):

The poet dwells in quiet, in purity,  
 Intuition is subtle, fugitive;  
 He drinks from the fountain of Great Harmony, and  
 Flies with the solitary stork above;

(4.27. SPCC, 5-6; cf. Yang, 65-66)<sup>38</sup>

As in the previous poem, the poet is advised to cultivate quietude as a state of mind in order to intuit the very subtlety (*wei*) of nature, which would otherwise be imperceptible. At the end of "Lofty and Ancient" ("Kao-ku"), the same mental preparation for the poet is also emphasized:

Stand then apart in purity of heart,  
 Break through the confines of mortality,  
 Aloof as the Yellow Emperor and Yao,  
 Alone at the source of Great Mystery.

(4.28. SPCC, 11; cf. Yang, 67)

Only by cleansing his mind and soul of worldly cares, Ssu-k'ung T'u says, can the poet be really outside and above the confines of this world and become one with the "Great Mystery." This is a necessary state for writing poetry if one wishes to transcend the mundane and the ordinary. Note that the emphasis has repeatedly been placed on the spirit, the subtlety, and the inexpressibility of the physical world as the very focus of the poet's contemplation.

Lu Chi and Liu Hsieh also had emphasized the notions of emptiness and stillness as a necessary state of mind during the creative process. Their interest, however, was primarily in preparing the mind for an

unimpeded reception of stimuli from the external world. For Ssu-k'ung T'u, however, there is an active search for the subtle and elusive dimension of the phenomenal world through a rapport between mind and the world, particularly the suprasensory dimension of the world. The ultimate purpose of this rapport is for the poet to penetrate the essence of the phenomenal world.

From this perspective, Ssu-k'ung T'u's notion about the poet's thought being "in complete harmony with the external world" is a total identification of the poet's thought with external reality, namely, the cosmic Tao. In "The Natural" (4.24) the poet is described as capable of making whatever he touches blossom into full spring. This is because his thought is with the Tao and his artistically productive hands and those of nature are thus one and the same. Only through such a rapport can the poem reflect as well as evoke the infinite.

These poems in Ssu-k'ung T'u's treatise are about specific poetic types but, more importantly, they also reveal his thoughts on poetry in general and his consistent view of poetry in the context of man's relationship with the cosmic Tao.

From Yin Fan's rather vague consciousness of poetry's power to "evoke phenomena" to Ssu-k'ung T'u's profound recognition of the fundamentally infinite and inexpressible phenomenon that poetry evokes, the T'ang critics demonstrated an increasing interest in the effect poetry has on the reader, a concern unprecedented in the history of Chinese criticism. Implicit in this comprehension of poetry is the understanding of *hsing* as operative not only in the creative process but in the aesthetic dimension of poetry as well. T'ang critics realized that poetry is capable of evoking far more than it can explicitly state, and that what is evoked lies in the realm of the infinite. They also realized that in the final analysis, the ultimate measure of fine poetry is its ability to evoke inexhaustible overtones in the finite space of the medium.

More than any other period in the history of Chinese criticism, the T'ang produced critics who realized that every activity that takes place in the creative process between poet and environment is directed toward



this final effect of poetry. It is with this conscious awareness of what poetry is capable of producing in the space between the written text and the imagination of the reader that the relationship between “feeling” and “scene” began to take on a suprasensory dimension. The recognition of this space—comparable to the negative space in Chinese painting—in terms of “realm,” “phenomenon beyond phenomenon,” and “scene beyond scene” was a distinct contribution of the T’ang critics.

Indeed, by the end of the T’ang period, the entire spectrum of the relationship between “feeling” and “scene,” ranging from their initial interaction in the creative process, through the expression of this interplay in the poetic medium, to its effect beyond the printed words, had been dealt with. What happened in post-T’ang periods was not so much the discovery of new dimensions of this issue as a fine-tuning and synthesis of all its important aspects. In the following chapter, we will see how poets and critics further explored this issue, not only by drawing on what they had learned from their predecessors but, more importantly, by relying on their own particular insights.

## *The Synthesis Phase*

The T'ang dynasty was a period of splendid lyric expression in the form of *shih* poetry. No other period in the Chinese tradition could claim as many poetic talents and extraordinary achievements. This was particularly true of the High T'ang period (in the reign of Emperor Hsüan-tsung) when, as Stephen Owen aptly notes, "cultural efflorescence and literary genius happily coincided."<sup>1</sup> During this period a dozen or so of the greatest poets of Chinese literature, including Meng Hao-jan, Wang Wei, Wang Ch'ang-ling, Li Po, and Tu Fu, expressed with incomparable brilliance their insights into the human condition and the world around them for posterity to ponder and admire.

This achievement has elicited both awe and nostalgia from post-T'ang critics and poets up to the present century. Unfortunately, it has also invited more slavish imitation than innovative competition. As Ch'ien Chung-shu points out, post-T'ang poets, being too preoccupied with imitating past poetry, especially T'ang poetry, introduced very few innovations.<sup>2</sup>

This does not mean that there were no great poets after the T'ang. In the Sung period alone, poets like Wang An-shih (1021–1086), Su Shih (1037–1101), Yang Wan-li (1124–1206), and Lu Yu (1125–1210), to name a few, certainly left their mark in the history of Chinese poetry. Nor does it mean that no new genres of poetry were developed after the T'ang. The new *tz'u* and *ch'ü* lyrics vied with *shih* poetry to become major genres of poetical writing. But unlike developments in the Six dynasties and the T'ang, post-T'ang poetry made no important contributions to an enhanced critical understanding of the “feeling” / “scene” relationship. Still, this relationship continued to be regarded as crucial in critical writings on the new poetic forms. *Tz'u* poems are a good example.

Unlike the unitary form of *shih* poetry, the *tz'u* is usually binary, that is, divisible into two sections whose coherence depends on dynamic complementarity. It was a common practice among *tz'u* poets to take full advantage of this binary structure, by devoting the first section of the poem to either “feeling” or “scene” and the second section to the other.<sup>3</sup> But this structural consideration did not in any significant way alter the fundamental makeup or nature of the relationship between “feeling” and “scene.” A perusal of the well-known critics' writings on *tz'u* reveals that their understanding of this relationship is virtually the same as that of the *shih* critics': for example, Chang Yen's (1243–1320) *Origins of Tz'u* (*Tz'u yüan*); Ho Ch'ang's (fl. 1681) *Talks on Tz'u Poetry from the Rippled Water Studio* (*Tsou-shui-hsüan tz'u-hua*); Li Yü's (1611–1680) *A Peek at Tz'u Poetry* (*K'uei-tz'u kuan-chien*); and Ch'en T'ing-cho's (1853–1892) *Talks on Tz'u Poetry from the White Rain Studio* (*Pai-yü-chai tz'u-hua*). In short, unlike developments in the Six Dynasties and the T'ang, there was nothing in post-T'ang poetry that contributed to an enhanced critical understanding of the central relationship between “scene” and “feeling.”

Hence, rather than exploring how poetic developments affected the critical discussion of poetry as I have done in the past few chapters, in this chapter I will focus on the contributions of post-T'ang critics to our knowledge of the “feeling” and “scene” relationship. In the millennium-long period leading into the twentieth century, poetry criticism flour-

ished. The Ch'ing dynasty is considered the most illustrious period for Chinese criticism; its greatest writers exhibited an extraordinary interest in synthesizing and evaluating the ideas of the past.<sup>4</sup>

What links the bulk of critical writings on poetry from the T'ang through the Ch'ing is a shared focus on the rich legacy of past poetry, particularly that of the T'ang. Much critical activity took place in a type of informal writing, known as *shih-hua* (poetical notebooks), that began to flourish during the Sung period. Consisting of casual jottings about poems and poets, interspersed with anecdotes and other various matters, this kind of writing became an increasingly popular form for critiques of *shih* poetry. Later, this form of critique was written for *tz'u* poetry as well and was called *tz'u-hua*.<sup>5</sup> Modern critics, especially those who are used to Western critical discourse, tend to find these notebooks impressionistic, subjective, and without much sustained and systematic theoretical discussion. These strictures are not altogether fair, because they often presume that the only valid model for critical writing is that of the West, which is more oriented toward speculative theory. Chinese critical writings, on the other hand, are differently focused. Originating in the tradition of "casual jottings" (*pi-chi*), these poetical notebooks were never meant to be more than personal reflections on poems, poets, and other miscellanea shared for fun and knowledge among poets and critics.<sup>6</sup> Thanks to these sources, which were written until the twentieth century, we can learn how earlier connoisseurs of poetry understood Tu Fu, Li Po, Wang Wei, and numerous others. The notebooks reveal the taste and temperament of many writers on literature and also reflect their critical concerns.

It is no surprise that an issue as central to Chinese poetry as the relationship between feeling and the physical world continued to be an important concern for many of these authors. One clear indication that the concern had become even more widely acknowledged and further ingrained in the critical consciousness is the appearance of a common vocabulary to talk about it. The pairing of the terms *ch'ing* (feeling) and *ching* (scene), for example, had since the Sung period become the standard

way of referring to the intimate relationship between these two essential elements. The phrase *ch'ing-ching chiao-jung*, meaning "harmonious interfusion between feeling and scene," also gained wide currency among critics as the mark of good poetry.<sup>7</sup>

In this chapter, we will first survey how this central subject was viewed during the past ten centuries. Then we will single out two of the most outstanding critics, Wang Fu-chih and Wang Kuo-wei, and elaborate on how they approached the issue. For it is with them that the subject of our inquiry found its most cogent, insightful, and comprehensive study.

### Post-T'ang Critical Views on "Feeling" and "Scene"

In surveying the tenth to the twentieth centuries, I have discovered that most of the discussions on "feeling" and "scene" deal with three general issues: (1) the arrangement of "feeling" and "scene" in a given poem, (2) the language of "feeling" as opposed to that of "scene," and (3) the inner dynamics between "feeling" and "scene." These aspects had all been discussed by earlier critics to varying degrees, but after the T'ang dynasty there was a much wider interest in them. Discussions became more specific and, at the same time, more comprehensive, as critics were able to draw on the rich reservoir of past poetry, especially that of the T'ang.

#### *Arrangement*

Critical study of the arrangement of "feeling" and "scene" in a poem began during the T'ang period. One of the earlier, if not the earliest, examples is found in the critical treatise *Styles of Poetry*. The author (presumably the T'ang poet Wang Ch'ang-ling) divides poetry into seventeen different styles, primarily on the basis of the different positions in which description of external reality is placed relative to the emotional tenor of the poem.<sup>8</sup> Many of his classifications are crude and arbitrary. But what bears noting is the author's acute awareness not only of the function of external reality (frequently referred to as *wu*) in relation to the meaning

(i) of the poem, but also that different effects or styles of poetry can be achieved through different arrangements of these two elements.

As the relationship between “feeling” and “scene” became more consciously recognized, the outward form of its expression in the poem also began to attract an increasing amount of attention among poets and critics. According to the Japanese scholar Aoki Masaru, Chiao-jan was probably the first critic to use the term *hsü*, meaning “abstract,” and *shih*, meaning “substantive,” to describe the arrangement of “feeling” and “scene” in a poem.<sup>9</sup> Many books on the rules for writing poetry (*shih-fa*) were composed after the Sung period, quite a few of them dealing in great detail with the positioning of “feeling” and “scene” lines. Not unlike the neo-classicists of eighteenth-century Europe, these Sung critics often set out their views on the “correct” writing of poetry in manuals. One such work, *T'ang-hsien chüeh-chü san-t'i shih-fa* by the Sung critic Chou Pi (fl. 1228), contains one of the most extensive and systematic analyses of this kind, drawing exclusively on the recent-style poems of the T'ang.<sup>10</sup> He calls lines of scenic description “substantive” (*shih*) lines, because they are about concrete reality as opposed to lines about thoughts and feelings, which he terms “abstract” (*hsü*). The general purpose of most of these books is to show young aspiring poets that the ineffable quality of poetry can actually be emulated by studying the outwardly discernible and hence learnable patterns in which “feeling” relates to “scene.”

Unlike the authors of treatises on the rules of poetry, those who wrote poetical notebooks often singled out memorable “feeling” and “scene” lines for critical appreciation rather than with any prescriptive intent. The genius of Tu Fu's regulated verse, a constant source of amazement among both poets and critics, is frequently the subject of such discussion.

In the well-known notebook *Nighttime Dialogues (Tui-ch'uang yeh-yü)*, by the Sung critic Fan Hsi-wen (fl. 1279), for example, the author cites line after line from Tu Fu's poems to demonstrate the variety of ways in which the master sets “feeling” against “scene.” Fan observes that sometimes one couplet of “feeling” in a poem is preceded by one couplet of “scene,” and sometimes the reverse. There are also cases, Fan says, in

which one line of "scene" is followed by one line of "feeling" and vice versa.

Anticipating many critics who came after him, Fan was already fully cognizant that the relationship between "feeling" and "scene" runs much deeper than what ordinarily meets the eye in the written word. He points out that behind all these different ways in which "feeling" or "scene" appear in relation to each other, there is a dynamic interaction between them whereby they are integrated into a unified expression. Fan found that many of Tu Fu's regulated verse poems were perfect examples of such a fusion. He observes that even in cases where six of the eight lines are about "scene," they are not in any way less expressive of "feeling" than those in which expression of feeling dominates (*LTSHHP* 1:417).

To be sure, Tu Fu's dexterity in arranging "feeling" and "scene" is not confined to regulated verse. Commenting on his ancient-style poems of much greater length, the Ch'ing critic Chu T'ing-chen (1841–1903) says that often, "just as the feeling is being described at its moment of climax, [Tu Fu] suddenly turns to the description of scene; and just as the description of scene is about to be examined from a different point of view, he picks up a feeling he had moved from earlier."<sup>11</sup> Chu describes Tu Fu's utterly unpredictable style as resembling a divine dragon slipping in and out of the clouds—now you see it and now you don't. What is implied here is that despite their apparent disconnectedness, "feeling" and "scene" are so fully integrated that the two are like the undulating and coordinated movement of a divine dragon in flight.

Analysis of this kind abounds in many poetical notebooks. Most critics would have agreed that no rules can be abstracted from past poetry which govern the arrangement of and proportion between lines of "feeling" and those of "scene." But many of them continued to look into individual lines or a particular poet's usual pattern in this regard simply to marvel at or to try to unravel the secret magic hidden therein.

### Language

Another issue that often comes up in the poetical notebooks is the kind of language best suited for the expression of “feeling” and how it differs from that used to convey “scene.” In general, there is a consensus among the critics that the language of “scene” has to be natural, vivid, and immediate to the senses, while that of “feeling” has to be reserved, subtle, and at the same time, capable of evoking the infinite. One of the most representative remarks in this regard is the often-quoted observation by the Sung poet Mei Yao-ch’en (1002–1060):

To just follow the dictates of one’s mind in writing poetry is already difficult for the poet. If the idea [in a poem] is new and the language is fine and expressive of what has never been expressed before, then the poet can be called good. *Only when a poet can describe the indescribable scene as if it were right in front of one’s eyes and can make the endless meaningslinger beyond the language of the poem, can he be said to have reached the ultimate.* (5.1. Italics mine)<sup>12</sup>

Judging by the wide acceptance of Mei’s remark (the portion italicized), as evidenced in its numerous appearances in the poetical notebooks over a long period of time, one would have to agree with the Ch’ing critic Hsüeh Hsüeh (1681–1770) that what Mei says here holds one of the key principles of good poetry (CSH 2:701). Mei was not the first, however, to make this observation.

The Sung critic Chang Chieh (fl. 1135), for instance, pointed out that Mei Yao-ch’en’s remark is, in essence, akin to Liu Hsieh’s idea that poetry must be *hsiu* (vivid and outstanding) and *yin* (subtle and elusive) (LTSHHP 1:456), a point that I have discussed in chapter 3. *Hsiu* refers to the vivid and prominent description in the poem; *yin* refers to the important and subtle meaning evoked beyond the text.

As discussed in earlier chapters, there was increased critical emphasis on the evocative nature of poetry from the latter part of the Southern Dynasties. By the Sung period, poetry was very much judged by what it evoked beyond the text. This demand for expressing the “far-reaching and intangible” was not only present in poetry; a similar tendency was present in painting as well. For example, the art critic Kuo Hsi, in his own



theory of *yüan*, indicates that this notion had, by the Sung period, become ingrained in the common aesthetic consciousness.<sup>13</sup> Such a consciousness represents a sophisticated recognition not only of the intrinsic finiteness in the formal medium of art but of an innate and powerful urge on the part of art to break free from such limitations in a quest for the infinite. A perusal of some of the critical comments from the Sung poetical notebooks will testify to this recognition. The first is from Chiang K'uei (ca. 1155–1221):

The most important thing about poetry is that it is rich in implications. Tung-p'o [style name of the Sung poet Su Shih] says, "Those poems are best whose meanings are endless though their words are finite." (5.2. *LTSH* 2:681)

The next comment is from Fan Hsi-wen:

The essence of poetry is to evoke far-reaching meanings, and it does not really matter whether the poem is long or short. Since the K'ai-yüan period (713–741) pentasyllabic poetry, which was developed from ancient-style poetry, does not suffer by comparison with poetry of far greater length. For although it [pentasyllabic poetry] is limited to a fixed number of words, it can express infinite meanings just as effectively. (5.3. *LTSHHP* 1:420)

The final excerpt is from Yen Yü:

The High T'ang poets rely solely on evoked inspirations (*hsing-ch'ü*), like the antelope that hangs by its horns, leaving no footprints. Therefore, the marvel of their poetry is in its crystal luminosity, which cannot be pinned down; it is like a sound in the air, or color, the moon in water, or an image in a mirror. Although the words in their poetry are finite, the meanings therein are endless. (5.4. *LTSH*, 2:688)

All these statements, as well as Mei Yao-ch'en's remark quoted earlier, emphasize the ability of poetry to convey the infinite and ineffable. Ironically, the more the artist wants to break free from the medium to realize the infinite, the more he becomes aware that he can only do so in and through the finite properties of the very medium which limits him. In fact, as Ch'ien Chung-shu points out, Mei Yao-ch'en's remark about "making the endless meanings linger beyond the language of the poem" refers not to the language of "feeling" but to the language of "scene."<sup>14</sup>

The last statement by Yen Yü, famous for its colorful and cryptic analogies, exemplifies a tendency prevalent among the Sung poets and critics to discuss poetry in Buddhist terms. These critics and poets believed that there was a similarity between poetry and the Ch'an Buddhist concept of reality. Ch'an is a Buddhist sect that originated in China in the sixth century with the arrival of Bodhidharma. Its adherents believe that the essence of reality can only be intuited in and through the concrete world. But this can happen only when people are cleared of the subjective blocks that prevent them from entering into a direct rapport with reality. Analogously, the ineffable meaning of poetry, according to Yen Yü, can be conveyed only in and through language. But this happens only when poets can make the language a pure medium, a clear mirror, capable of reflecting what they mean to convey.

In actuality, of course, poetry can never be a perfectly clear mirror of objective reality. The best poets can do is to concentrate on depicting the their understanding of reality on its own terms, and as much as possible, let that reality come into direct contact with the reader and suggest its own meaning. As the modern critic Hsü Yin-fang suggests, Yen Yü very possibly had poets like Wang Wei and Meng Hao-jan in mind when he talked about the marvelous achievement of High T'ang poetry.<sup>15</sup> For in their poetry the main focus is often the concrete world, which is presented with very little intrusion by the poet. The following poem by Wang Wei, "The Deer Enclosure," may serve as an example of how poetry evokes the "far-reaching" by simple but vivid depiction of the scene alone:

In the empty mountains, no one is seen,  
But voices of people are heard.  
The sun's reflection enters into the deep woods,  
And then shines upon the green moss.

(5.5. CTS 2:1300)

Here, the overheard voices and the reflected sunlight suggest a place of true seclusion. The speaker-viewer—and for that matter, the reader-viewer—caught by a vision of nature in its quiet activity in the deep

woods, is left to ponder its significance. The Ming critic Li Tung-yang (1447–1516) says that the last two lines of the poem are all the richer because of their blandness, all the more “far-reaching” because they are so “near” (LTSHHP 3:1370).

The purpose of converting poetic language into a pure mirror-like medium, as is indicated at the end of Yen Yü’s remark, is to evoke far-reaching effects. While the seemingly paradoxical demand for a poem to be both “near” and “far-reaching” had become increasingly a measure of fine poetry after the T’ang and Sung periods, the means recommended to achieve the latter effect differed considerably. Some poets and critics preferred poetry in which the sense of the “far-reaching” was achieved primarily through the depiction of scene with little or no overt expression of the author’s intent. Wang Wei’s poem cited above is a case in point. Ssu-k’ung T’u’s notion of “pregnant with implications,” which he described as the whole beauty revealed without a word on the putative subject, was one early expression of such a preference. Subsequently, Yen Yü’s sense of “crystal luminosity” and Wang Shih-chen’s (1634–1711) idea of the “clear and far-reaching” (*ch’ing-yüan*), referring to poems with a delicate depiction of scenery capable of evoking endless associations, expressed a similar view.<sup>16</sup>

But certainly not all the poems attain “far-reaching” effects through this bland presentation of external reality. In fact, the great majority of Chinese poems achieve richness of implication through a partial revelation of meaning. This is often done by means of a vividly described scene or a situation which hints of emotion. “Song of Ch’ang-kan,” by the T’ang poet Ts’ui Hao (704?–754), is one such example where the speaker is, most likely, a girl:

“Where, my lord, is your home?  
 You know, I live in Heng-t’ang.”  
 Let me stop my boat and ask—  
 For, perhaps, we have come from the same town.

(5.6. CTS 2:1330)

Poems bearing this familiar title, one used in Music Bureau poetry, are usually about life and love on the Yangtze River. In this simple poem, very little is revealed of the girl from Heng-t'ang. Yet from the few words she speaks and the little we know of what she thinks, she captivates our imagination. In commenting on the evocative quality of the pentasyllabic quatrain, Wang Fu-chih cites this poem as an example of the High T'ang period when this shortest form of recent-style poetry had reached its zenith. He says that the power of the pen reaches everywhere in the poem and beyond and that the meaning is present even in spaces where there are no words (CCSH 2:42).<sup>17</sup>

The intimate correlation between the vividness of "scene" and the suggestiveness of "feeling" is a rather common subject for discussion in many of the poetical notebooks. By the Ch'ing period, it had already become common knowledge among critics that the success of a poem, as Li Ch'ung-hua (fl. 1736) notes, depends primarily on the depiction of scene:

In a totally unpremeditated manner the poet talks about birds, animals, grass, and trees; yet somehow by his doing so, the season, the climate, the particular locale, and the human situation are all revealed in the poem without his being explicit about them at all (*Chen-i-chai shih-shou*). (5.7. CSB 2:932)

But why is it that some aspect of a situation or, in particular, a scene from physical nature can be so described that a certain thought or feeling will be evoked? What links "scene" and "feeling" so closely that the depiction of the former evokes the latter? Furthermore, when critics talk about the immediacy of "scene," what do they really mean? Does it simply refer to the physical appearance or closeness of "scene," or to something that goes much deeper than that? These questions lead us to ponder the inner relationship between "scene" and "feeling" beyond language and the outward arrangement of the poem.

*Inner Dynamics*

The inner dynamics between “feeling” and “scene” is another issue that pre-modern critics discussed a great deal in their poetical notebooks. Essentially it involves how “feeling” and “scene” relate to each other below the surface of their outward expression. This includes their interaction during the creative process and beyond. To be sure, questions concerning this inner relationship had been explored since the very inception of Chinese criticism. But it was from the discussions in the increasingly popular poetical notebooks, beginning with the Sung period, that a comprehensive synthesis gradually took place. In the following pages, I will briefly discuss some representative views of this subject by post-T'ang critics.

Concerning the roles of “scene” and “feeling,” the general consensus is that “scene” is a means of expressing “feeling” and, as such, is always subordinate to “feeling.” Various analogies are used to illustrate this point. A good one is offered by the Ch'ing critics Wu Ch'iao (c. 1660) and Li Yü. For them, “scene” is the guest and “feeling” the host of poetry, since while guests may constitute the party, the host is the principal, the one who makes things happen.<sup>18</sup> Familiar expressions in Chinese critical writings such as *chi ch'ing yü ching* (to entrust “feeling” to “scene”) and *yü ch'ing yü ching* (contain “feeling” in “scene”) are simply different ways of saying that “scene” is subordina eto “feeling.”

As for the ways in which “scene” interacts with “feeling,” critics focus on three key ideas: how they encounter one another; how they give life to one another; and how they merge in one harmonious whole. The notion of “encounter” is often expressed in such familiar words as *hsiang-yü* (literally, to meet one another) or *hsiang-ch'u* (literally, to touch one another). In the words of Hsieh Chen, “When ‘feeling’ and ‘scene’ touch one another, there is poetry” (*LTSHHP* 3:1224). The spontaneity emphasized here is generally considered to be the very nature of such an encounter. In commenting on the extraordinary beauty of Hsieh Ling-yün's celebrated lines, “By the pond spring grass grows; / In the garden willows different birds come to sing” (cf. 4.14), the Sung critic Yeh Meng-

te (1077–1148) focuses precisely on the spontaneous nature of the encounter between “feeling” and “scene”:

People in general do not understand what makes these lines wonderful; they often try to interpret them as containing something out of the ordinary. In fact, what makes them wonderful is precisely that *they are not written with any specific intention*. Rather, they are the result of a *sudden encounter with the scene when the mind is least self-conscious*. What is thus written does not rely on any hard and fast rules. Hence, it cannot be attained by any ordinary means or manner. The wonderful creations of the poets are probably all achieved in this way; those who have to think hard and find it difficult to express themselves are often unable to comprehend this. (5.8. *LTSH* 1:426. Italics mine.)

This notion of a spontaneous encounter between “feeling” and “scene” is, as Yeh Meng-te reminds us later in the passage, related to Chung Hung’s insistence in the “Preface” to *Classification of Poetry* that poetic writing should make use of what is “immediate to the eye” and “immediately available in one’s environment.”

At the center of this process is the time-honored notion of *hsing*, the nature of which was discussed in some detail in chapter 1. The essence of *hsing* is that a certain feeling is evoked as a response to a stimulus in the environment. I agree with Ch’ien Chung-shu that among the many definitions of *hsing*, the one given by the Sung critic Li Chung-meng (1020–1069) is the most cogent.<sup>19</sup> His comparison of *fu* (straightforward presentation), *pi* (comparison), and *hsing* in terms of differing relationships between “feeling” and “object” sets off *hsing* as the most natural and spontaneous of the three:

To describe objects as a means of expressing feelings is *fu*; both objects and feelings are thus fully implicated in one another. To search for objects in order to entrust them with feelings is *pi*; feelings are thus attached to objects. To encounter objects such that feelings are aroused is *hsing*; feelings are thus set astir by the objects. (5.9. *LTSHHP* 2:882)

The distinctive characteristics of *hsing*, so defined, are that the emotion aroused is genuine, the process is spontaneous, and the physical reality that triggers the emotion is in the immediate environment of the

poet. It is precisely these characteristics that typify what is generally considered good poetry. The importance that traditional critics attached to this chance encounter between “feeling” and “scene” is another way of emphasizing the central role of *hsing* as the catalyst of poetry.

For such an encounter to become poetry, there must also be an inner dynamism. The traditional term *ch'ing-ching hsiang-sheng* (literally, “feeling” and “scene” give life to one another) vividly captures the very nature of this inner dynamism as it emphasizes the lively interplay between “feeling” and “scene.”<sup>20</sup> In “Song of the I River,” the power of the lyric comes precisely from such an interchange between mood and setting:

The wind is sighing and the I River is cold;  
Once he leaves, the warrior will never return.

(5.10. *HCHWC* 1:25)

This song was presumably sung by Ching K'ō at a farewell by the I just before leaving on his failed mission to assassinate the King of Ch'in, who later became the First Emperor of China, Shih Huang-ti (d. 210 B.C.). There is illuminating interplay between the visual details in the scene and the tragic gloom of the hero. Everything in the chilling autumnal scene evokes as well as prefigures the impending tragedy: the hero, like the river, will never return to his friends once he has left the farewell gathering. Not only does the scene point to the mood, but the mood also embraces the scene creating an unspoken but poignant correspondence. What is captured in such an interchange is a moment of potential significance where “scene” and “feeling” are caught in a perpetually tantalizing dance. The dynamism between mood and scene is predicated on suggestion. The rich implications in Chinese poetry come precisely from the suggested fusion that takes place in the act of reading. Critics are well aware of the infinite potential for evoking meaning between “feeling” and “scene”; in the words of Hsieh Chen, when these two

conjoin to become poetry, ten thousand forms can be summed up with only a few words. Running through them is an indivisible vital force without limits. (5.11. *LTSHHP* 3:1180)

And, in the words of critic Li Ch'ung-hua:

One should know that there is "feeling" in "scene" and "scene" in "feeling," and that when these two begin to give life to each other, the possibilities are infinite. (5.12. CSH 2:931)

In Hsieh Chen's expression, "When 'feeling' and 'scene' conjoin to become poetry," the word "conjoin" (*ho*) refers to the way they are related to each other in the poetic medium as well as to the fusion that is to take place in the mind of the reader. The expression may even refer to their encounter on the experiential level when something in external reality strikes a chord in the heart of the poet. In the expression "give life to each other," it is not clear *when* this dynamic process between "feeling" and "scene" takes place. Chinese critics like Hsieh Chen and Li Ch'ung-hua do not, in general, make such distinctions among the various phases of interaction between "feeling" and "scene." This may seem disturbing at first, but what it actually suggests is that these phases of interaction are viewed as an integrated whole. In other words, in the dynamic encounter between "feeling" and "scene," the seed of interaction and ultimate fusion in the act of reading is already sown.

The inner mechanism between "feeling" and "scene" attracted a fair amount of critical attention in the poetical notebooks. But most of these discussions were elliptical, repetitive, and sometimes even superficial. Unfortunately, many important aspects of this question were not explored when critics talked about the spontaneous encounter between "feeling" and "scene." For example, did they mean that it is a gratuitous affair prompted by something like divine inspiration? What is the ultimate driving force that perpetually moves "feeling" and "scene" toward a unified expression? Can such a unified expression or fusion take place when "feeling" and "scene" relate to each other on the basis of contrast rather than correspondence? These purely speculative questions were usually not of much interest to the writers of the poetical notebooks, whose concern was more often with specific poets or poems than with the general nature of poetry.



### Wang Fu-chih

Having discussed some of the most representative views on “feeling” and “scene,” we will now turn to the two major critics, Wang Fu-chih and Wang Kuo-wei. We shall discover how they approached this central issue in Chinese poetry and what light they shed on some of the questions we have raised. We will begin with Wang Fu-chih.

The depth and breadth of Wang Fu-chih's views on poetry, particularly on the relationship between “feeling” and “scene,” came not only from the poet in him but, more importantly, from the fact that he was a formidable critical thinker and scholar. The *Complete Works of Wang Fu-chih* (in sixteen volumes) attests to the range of his learning in many different spheres of knowledge. Aside from the *Ginger Studio Poetical Notebook*, he also wrote voluminous annotations on poetry, from the *Book of Songs* to poetry of the Ming period.<sup>21</sup> His *Complete Works* includes hermeneutical commentaries on all thirteen Confucian classics, reinterpretations of history, exegetical writings on the *Lao Tzu* and the *Chuang Tzu*, a gloss of Buddhist terms, as well as a collection of his own writings (including poetry). To understand how he viewed the relationship between “feeling” and “scene,” we must first understand how he viewed the relationship between man and nature.

Wang was first and foremost a Confucian scholar whose concept of the universe, as well as of man's relationship with the universe, was deeply grounded in the *Book of Changes*. This work also profoundly influenced his view of the relationship between “feeling” and “scene.” Briefly, the major premise of this classic is that the universe is in a constant process of change. This is a gradual and continuous transformation (*hua*) brought about by the interaction between the two opposite but mutually complementary vital forces in the universe, *yin* and *yang*. These two elements are constantly changing from one to the other, forming and affecting everything, including man. Unlike most of the Neo-Confucianists, who believed that there was a transcendental principle governing this process of transformation, Wang held that the principle and the process are one and inseparable, as the former can be manifested only through the latter.<sup>22</sup> Man, like everything else in the universe, participates

in this grand process of transformation, *ts'an-hua*. It is in this sense that man and the physical world are intimately related.

This primordial and intimate communication (*t'ung*) between man and nature brought about by the interaction of the cosmic forces of *yin* and *yang* is, for Wang Fu-chih, at the very root of the relationship between "feeling" and "scene." According to Wang, "feeling" is not something that comes purely from within or from the outside.<sup>23</sup> Rather, it is born out of the dynamic interchange between man and the universe. In his commentary on a poem from the *Book of Songs*, "I Went to the Eastern Hills," for example, he specifically describes the nature of this interchange and how it is vital to the very genesis of poetry:

There are times when the sentient human mind can *intuit the object (wu)* by applying what it knows to the latter; there are times when an unexpected object *happens to match what is in the mind* so much that it seems to be born from the mind. Only when one is cognizant of these two [kinds of situations] can one be told what *feeling* is. (5.13. SKC 2:3. Italics mine.)

In essence, Wang Fu-chih agrees with most of the traditional critics that the genesis of poetry is based on the poet's felt response to the evocation of the physical world, in the sense of *wu-kan* discussed earlier (see chapters 2 and 3). The intimate relationship between man and the physical world is most succinctly expressed in the following passage:

Feeling is the activity between *yin* and *yang*, object (*wu*) is what grows between heaven and earth. When the activity between *yin* and *yang* moves the mind, what grows between heaven and earth will respond from the outside. Therefore, for any object, there may be a corresponding feeling; for any feeling, there must be a corresponding object. (5.14. SKC 1:7)

As we shall see, Wang qualifies this traditional notion of *wu-kan* in one very important way. Indeed, as the modern critic Hsiao Ch'ih points out, the notion of *wu-kan* seems to suggest that the felt response of the human mind is more a passive reaction to the stimulus of the physical world than an active interaction with it.<sup>24</sup>

Wang Fu-chih, on the other hand, sees poetry as the natural result of the *interaction* between mind and object. This notion of interaction, at the center of Wang's concept of poetry, was discussed by him from a variety

of perspectives. How does the interaction take place? What happens during the process? What is genuine poetry and what are its implications? And, in particular, what does the traditional idea of harmony between “feeling” and “scene”—the very essence of genuine poetry—mean in view of this dynamic process of interaction? Finally, what are the aesthetic implications of the interaction? Wang Fu-chih’s insights into these questions will be the focus of the following discussion.

In speaking of the encounter between “feeling” and “scene,” traditional critics usually talk rather facetiously or even naively about its spontaneity. Wang Fu-chih, however, emphasizes the preparedness of the mind as a necessary condition for welcoming (*ying*) and responding to the stimuli of the external world:

“By the pond spring grass grows,” “Butterflies fly in the south garden,” “The bright moon shines upon the piled snow,” are all lines resulting from the total and harmonious integration between what is seen and what is felt and thought. Hence when these lines emerge, they are all perfect like round pearls and lustrous jade. *Much still depends on what one harbors in the heart to meet and welcome the scene.* (5.15. CCSH 2:4. Italics mine.)<sup>25</sup>

In other words, if the poet’s mind is not in a mood to actively welcome the scene, the scene will then be wasted on the poet and no poetry will ensue from the encounter.

References to this kind of active interaction between mind and object recur frequently in Wang’s critical remarks on poetry. One which warrants special attention is the following passage because it tells us what actually happens in the inspired moment of lyrical experience:

[As for lines such as] “Green, green, the grass along the river bank, / Longingly, my thoughts wander to the distant road,” why are they mutually dependent on one another and why is there a mutual give-and-take between them? This is because the spirit [of feeling] and the living essence or the very principle [of the object] are united in harmony (*shen-li ts’ou-ho*); they are naturally a perfect fit. (5.16. CCSH 2:11)

For Wang Fu-chih, these two lines from a Music Bureau poem perfectly illustrate an ideal rapport between “scene” and “feeling.” The verdant scene of the grass (a symbol of separation in Chinese literature), growing

in the lusty season of spring, already foreshadows the feeling in the second line.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, the endless longing triggered by the scene of the grass mingles finally with the equally endless road. Why, Wang asks, is there such a rapport, such an intimate, mutually sustaining, and illuminating relationship between these lines? He locates it in the fact that the poet has captured both the “spirit” (*shen*) of feeling and the “innate principles or workings” (*li*) of the physical world. “Spirit” refers to the very essence or soul of a given feeling. The “innate principle” is the counterpart of “spirit” in the physical world. To capture the very life force innate in a given physical object is to grasp the “innate principles of things” (*wu-li*). This, Wang emphasizes, is to be distinguished from a mere depiction of the superficial appearance of an object (*wu-t'ai*) (CCSH 1:8).

In other words, when he talks about the conjoining of “feeling” and “scene,” he is not talking about a mere coupling of what the poet feels and sees at any given moment. He is referring to what the poet intuitively grasps as an almost miraculous correlation between the very essence and living vitality of a given feeling and a given object in a moment of poetic inspiration. It is only when such a spirited union takes place in what Wang calls *shen-li ts'ou-ho* (literally, spirit [of feelings] and principles [of objects] united in harmony) that there can be a genuine, dynamic relationship between “feeling” and “scene.”

In the following passage, Wang Fu-chih goes further to speak about the ultimate context that inspires genuine poetry:

When one has feeling and can express it, when one encounters a scene and can be moved by it, when one depicts an object and can capture its spirit, then one will naturally be able to produce inspired poetry which penetrates into and partakes of the miraculous beauty of the grand cosmos. (5.17. CCSH 2:27)

Indeed, for Wang Fu-chih it is in the broad context of the poet interacting with the cosmos that the relationship between “feeling” and “scene” in poetry acquires its full meaning and draws its inexhaustible energy. And it is only through such an interchange that genuine poetry comes into being. The implications of this concept of poetry are twofold.

First, anything that is irrelevant to that interchange is irrelevant to poetry and is regarded as unnatural. Wong Siu-kit is quite right in pointing out that this passage crystallizes Wang Fu-chih's consistent view of poetry as a natural process.<sup>27</sup> Hence, attention to the mere technical arrangement of "feeling" and "scene" in the poetic medium—an important consideration for many poets—for Wang is not only petty but ultimately meaningless. Second, no genuine poetry can be the result of the poet's mechanical manipulation of that living interchange.

Wang's reaction to the famous anecdote about a line by the late T'ang poet Chia Tao (779–843), "The monk knocks on the door under the moonlight," is a case in point. According to the story, Chia found great difficulty in deciding between the word "to push open" (*t'ui*) and the word "to knock on" (*ch'iao*), and only after much painstaking deliberation did he choose the latter. Most traditional critics were amused by the story and, just like Chia Tao, pondered which was a better word for the poem. Wang Fu-chih, on the other hand, reacted differently. In emphatically refuting the usefulness of such considerations, Wang also reveals his view of what constitutes genuine poetry:

If the line is the result of the meeting between the actual scene and the mind, then surely the monk could either "push open" or "knock on" the door. To write according to the actual "scene" and "feeling" is sure to produce poetry which is natural and wonderful; what else is there to be bothered about? (5.18. CSSH 2:5)

To be sure, any work of art admits certain degrees of manipulation on the part of the artist. But what Wang Fu-chih wants to emphasize, as the modern scholar Tai Hung-sen observes, is that "fine poetry must result from and hence be a reflection of that wonderful communion between man and nature."<sup>28</sup> The first-hand experience of the mind and the eye of the poet, as Wang Fu-chih affirms elsewhere, cannot be overlooked in writing poetry (CCSH 2:7). Only when poets write from what they feel, think, and see can there be poetry with real energy and a touch of the divine (CCSH 2:27).

This emphasis on being true to what one experiences certainly allows for the fact that the physical world is not always in agreement with

how the poet feels at any given moment. Hence, although Wang insists that an intimate relationship exists between feeling and object, he realizes that the cosmos does not cater to one feeling exclusively:

When I am sad, there are still things which can make others happy; when I am happy, there also are things that can make others sad. A narrow-minded person who insists on seeing things his way is not capable of comprehending this. (5.19. SKC 3:8)

Such an attitude is not only sensible but, poetically speaking, advantageous. For Wang holds that the feeling of joy or sorrow will be doubled by contrast if the poet communicates it through a scene which arouses an opposite sort of emotion. He cites the following passage (poem no. 167) from the *Book of Songs* as precisely such an example:

When I went away, long ago,  
The willows were swaying gently;  
Now that I return,  
The snowflakes fly helter skelter.

(5.20. CCSH 1:4)

Here Wang apparently assumes, as most Chinese poets would, that the scene of willows in spring is one of joy and that of the snowflakes one of sadness. Whether the willows are associated with joy and the snowflakes with sadness through mere convention, or inherently so, is not a distinction that Wang is concerned about. For him, the emphasis is on capturing the interaction between mind and object in all its liveliness. When that happens, there will *naturally* be poetry. The contrast between personal mood and external scene, which Wang believes to be an effective way of expressing feeling, is a bonus. Everything is possible in such a moment of genuine encounter:

Between feeling and external reality, joy and sorrow are both possible. Such possibilities are inexhaustible; the flow between them never stagnates. This is not something comprehensible to those who are mentally limited or stodgy. (5.21. CCSH 1:16)

He then cites examples to demonstrate this infinitely fluid and dynamic interchange between “feeling” and “external reality”:

Upon first reading the lines [from Tu Fu’s “Climbing the Yüeh-yang Tower”] “The lake cleaves the lands of Ch’u and Wu to the South and East; / Heaven and earth float on the water day and night,” one feels that the scenes are majestically vast. Yet they are in perfect harmony with the lines that follow: “From friends and relatives, not a word; / Old and sick, alone in a solitary boat.” One should henceforth come to understand why the same line (from the *Book of Songs*), “How bright and vast is the Milky Way yonder!” can both add to the luster of the man the poet praises [in poem no. 238] and, at the same time, threaten even hotter weather for those in fear of the impending drought [in poem no. 258]. [This is because] there is no fixed compatibility between feeling and external reality]. . . . How can one separate feeling and external reality? (5.22. *CCSH* 1:16)

For Wang, because there is no fixed counterpart for “human emotion” and “external reality” when they relate to one another, what matters is whether they can merge into a mutually illuminating and indivisible whole. The poignancy of Tu Fu’s lines comes precisely from such a relationship between the immense Tung-t’ing River that flows below the Yüeh-yang Tower and the lonely, sick, and old man. Wang is probably the first critic to point out that harmony between “feeling” and “scene” does not necessarily mean correspondence between them. Rather, it refers to their dynamic fusion, which can take place only in an inspired moment of lyrical experience.

Furthermore, the dynamic process does not end with the poet’s completion of a poem. In Wang’s consideration of the reader’s encounter with poetry, we come to the aesthetic implications of his idea of poetry: as one who firmly believes that everything in the universe, including poetry, is subject to change, he accords a very active role to the reader. The meaning of a poem changes very much according to the individual’s response to it. For Wang, the measure of poetry depends precisely on its latitude for interpretation.

In his reinterpretation of the four functions of poetry as given by Confucius in the *Analects*, Wang repeatedly calls our attention to the active part the reader plays. Confucius says, “Poetry can be used to evoke

emotions (*hsing*), to observe social mores (*kuan*), to congregate people (*ch'ün*) and to give expression to grievances (*yüan*).<sup>29</sup> While traditional critics are interested in what Confucius means by these four functions (my translation represents a generally accepted interpretation), Wang focuses on their aesthetic dimension in poetry.

To evoke, to observe, to congregate, and to grieve is what poetry is all about. But when the classical exegetes [of the *Book of Songs*] interpret "Lu-ming" and "Chia-yü" as poems for congregating people, and "Po-chou" and "Hsiao-p'an" as poems for expressing grievances, they do so according to the joy and sorrow of their own small-minded mentality. How can they be qualified to talk about poetry? The so-called [Confucian notion of] "can be used" implies wide open possibilities, depending on whatever use or function happens to be called for in a poem. After the *Book of Songs*, only the "Nineteen Ancient-Style Poems" can be so [openly] interpreted. The poems of Li Po and Tu Fu seem to have something similar, but only a handful of their poems can really be open to the reader's interpretation, whatever that may happen to be. (5.23. CSSH 2:1)

What makes poetry so valuable is precisely the fact that "every reader can meet it and encounter it according to his own feeling" (CCSH 1:2). But this freedom is not totally unchecked or undirected. Wang says that the meaning of a poem usually hides behind or lies beyond the outward phenomenon, and this makes it very difficult for the reader to grasp it. The meaning or feeling is so elusive that he compares it to the seemingly directionless flight of a butterfly. But the reader's own emotional response to the poem will have to be guided by the feeling in the poem, however elusive it may be, through continuous reading.<sup>30</sup>

For Wang Fu-chih, then, poetry is a continuous process premised on the central concept of interaction. Not only does poetry come into being as a result of the interaction between the poet's feeling and the world outside, but its interpretation also relies on the interaction between the feeling in the poem and that in the reader. It is through the latter interaction that the poem continues to exist and to meet its discoverer every time it is read. Although what Wang says about the reader's role is nothing out of the ordinary when we consider such highly sophisticated modern theories as reader-response criticism, he was, nevertheless, at least three



centuries ahead of his time. His concept of the reader's role, deriving from a totally different epistemological tradition, might even provide new perspectives for some modern theorists. Wang Fu-chih's emphasis on the reader's role in realizing the aesthetic potential of a poem further attests to the consistency and full implications of his notion of poetry as a continuous and dynamic process, as both a reenactment and a reflection of the grand process that constitutes the universe.

To summarize, then, Wang Fu-chih's view of poetry is thoroughly rooted in the Chinese tradition, particularly in the concept of change through continuous interaction between different forces as expressed in the *Book of Changes*. This perspective lends a consistency and thoroughness to his discussion of the relationship between "feeling" and "scene" rarely encountered in traditional Chinese criticism. For him, the arrangement of "feeling" and "scene" and their expression in poetry must be true to, and hence dictated by, their inner dynamics at the moment of poetic inspiration. This is the single most important generative force in poetry. Wang's unique critical contribution lies in his focus on this generative force, his discussion of its various implications, and most importantly, in his locating it in the cosmic interaction between *yin* and *yang*.

### Wang Kuo-wei

A great deal was written about Chinese poetry in the traditional poetical notebooks form during the Ch'ing dynasty. However, none of the critical works can compare with Wang Kuo-wei's slim volume *Talks on Tz'u in the Human World* (*Jen-chien tz'u-hua*, hereafter *JCTH*) for its profound insights, not to mention its continuous popularity among scholars and readers of poetry in general. Wang was both a poet and a scholar; he read voluminously, not only classical Chinese texts, but many works on Western aesthetics.

Wang's knowledge of Western philosophers, specifically Kant, Schiller, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, helped him to look at Chinese poetry and literature from a new perspective. But because of his thorough background in classical Chinese literature, his application of Western

theories did not distort Chinese literature. Rather, these theories helped him to elucidate some critical issues that had often been either ignored, taken for granted, or approached in a manner that was too impressionistic to stand up to analytical scrutiny.

Of particular interest is his insight into “feeling” and “scene” in terms of what he calls *ching-chieh* 境界, variously translated as “world” or “realm” or “universe” in English.<sup>31</sup> Of the three renderings, I believe the first two come closest to the original Chinese. Here, I opt for “world” instead of “realm,” because the latter seems more appropriate for the notion of *ching* 境. Actually, *ching-chieh* (world) and *ching* (realm) are similar in many ways, as they both connote the suprasensory dimension of poetry.

For Wang the notion of “world” is the ultimate measure of all genres of literature including, of course, poetry.<sup>32</sup> In this sense, it becomes the focus of practically all his comments on *shih* and *tz’u* poems in *JCTH*. Several important questions arise. What does he mean by this term? How does his concept of “world” help to draw attention to certain important aspects of “feeling” and “scene” that had not been sufficiently discussed in traditional criticism? What is the contribution of German aesthetics to his analysis of “feeling” and “scene” and their mutual relationship? These interrelated questions will be the focus of the following discussion.

*JCTH* is written in the vein of traditional poetical notebooks, with separate entries on different aspects of poetry, and in a style that is pithy and graceful. It has a deceptively “uni-cultural” look about it. Perhaps it is for this reason that few Chinese readers pay serious attention to the Western dimension of Wang’s approach to Chinese poetry, hence missing his unique insights.<sup>33</sup> It is true that during the years between 1906 and 1908, when he was writing *JCTH*, he gradually became disillusioned with much of Western aesthetics, about which he had been enthusiastic during the previous ten years or so.<sup>34</sup> But traces of Western influence were still very much present. In analyzing this influence, however, we have to bear in mind that it represents Wang’s *interpretation* of Western poetics rather

than the theories of the original authors, especially since he read most of these works in English and Japanese translations.<sup>35</sup>

Numerous articles and books have been written about *JCTH* since its publication, particularly on Wang's critical ideas concerning the notion of "world" and their manifold implications. Many publications trace the etymological origins of key words presumably related to this expression as a way of illuminating its meaning.<sup>36</sup> But no explication can really make us understand what Wang meant by the term other than the fact that his idea of "world" represents a physical area with suggestions of a suprasensory dimension, almost equivalent to the notion of "realm." For the meaning of this term as used in *JCTH*,<sup>37</sup> we have to go back to Wang's own definition in the text:

"Scene" does not refer simply to physical scene and object. Joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness are also a kind of "world" in one's mind. Therefore, only those poems which can depict true (*chen*) scene and object, true (*chen*) feelings can be said to possess "world." Otherwise, they may be said to lack "world." (5.24. *JCTH* 1:3)

The focal point of this statement and of Wang's concept of poetry and literature in general lies in the word *chen* or "true." In the following often-quoted passage, Wang again talks about the expression of the "true" as a basis and measure of great literature:

When the great masters express feelings, they penetrate the inner core of one's being. When they describe scenery, they open up one's eyes and ears. Their words just come out naturally without any affectation or artificiality. This is because what they have perceived is *true* and what they have comprehended is profound. This applies to both *shih* poetry and *tz'u* poetry. One will not go far wrong by measuring the works of both the present and the past by this standard. (5.25. *JCTH* 1:38. Italics mine.)

Later, in his *History of Sung and Yüan Drama (Sung Yüan hsi-ch'ü shih)*, Wang again applies the notion of the "true" as a criterion for judging the drama of the Sung and Yüan periods. He concludes that only those works that can achieve this expression of the "true" in scene, feeling, and language can be said to possess "meaning and realm" (*i-ching*), a term interchangeable with *ching-chieh* in Wang's vocabulary.<sup>38</sup>

In the passage just quoted, it is obvious that Wang's concept of the "true" is intimately related to that of "world." It is also clear that the perception of the "true" is the basis of the expression of the "true." To understand what Wang means by "world," one must first know more about what he means by the "true." Among traditional Chinese critics on poetry, Wang Kuo-wei seems to have been the first to have thought deeply, broadly, and consistently about this notion in literature.

There are three interrelated issues in Wang's discussion of the "true." First, what does the term really refer to in relation to a physical scene and a given human feeling? Second, how does the poet *perceive* what is true in the "scene" and the "feeling" during the creative process? Third, how does the poet *express* this in literature?

By the "true" in a physical scene or object, Wang means the "idea of reason" (*li-nien*) or the "ideal" (*li-hsiang*) in it. In *JCTH* Wang says that what the poet depicts in reality must correspond to the ideal state of the object. At the same time, what the poet constructs from his imagination must be taken from nature and follow the "laws of nature" (*tzu-jan chih fa-liü*) (*JCTH* 1:3). What Wang means by the "ideal" and the "laws of nature" here, seems very close to the Platonic concept of an idea innate in physical reality. This idea in a given object can only be achieved when the poet can single out the object in nature in all its uniqueness and free it from all that either is connected with it or that confines it (*JCTH* 1:3).

Schopenhauer's concept of knowing an object "outside and independent of all relations" so as to attain its idea (which is eternal and the true content of its phenomenon), seems very much present in Wang's view of the "ideal."<sup>39</sup> Thus, the "true" for Wang refers to the inner essence of an object, which is unique and constant and can only be perceived by the poet whose whole being enters into the object of contemplation, free from any interference by the world.

While Wang may have borrowed from the West to define more succinctly the concept of the "true," it is not really alien to Chinese aesthetics. Ssu-k'ung T'u, for example, in his *Twenty-Four Types of Poetry*, identifies it repeatedly with the ultimate Tao. Similarly, Wang Fu-chih

identifies it with the innate principle or workings of a physical object, in the sense of *shen-li* or *wu-li*, which is distinguished from its mere appearance (*wu-t'ai*). In commenting on a description of lotus plants by the Northern Sung *tz'u* poet Chou Pang-yen (1056–1121), Wang Kuo-wei says that Chou has truly revealed their innate principle (*shen-li*), the identical term used by Wang Fu-chih, in the following lines:

The morning sun shines away yesternight's rain from the leaves,  
Above the water, fresh and round are they now,  
The lotus blossoms sway in the gentle breeze, one after another.

(5.26. JCTH 1:22)

In all his comments on the “truth” or the “spirit” of the scene depicted, Wang’s emphasis—as is the case with virtually all traditional Chinese critics—is always on the inner life and vitality that shine through. Take, for example, Wang’s comments on the following lines by Sung Ch’i (998–1061) and Chang Hsien (990–1078) respectively:

“On the tips of the red apricot branches, spring is boisterous”—with the single word “boisterous” (*nao*), the “world” comes out completely. “As the moon breaks through the clouds, the flowers play with their shadows”—with the single word “play” (*nung*), the “world” comes out completely as well. (5.27. JCTH 1:3)

Here, apparently, “world” refers to the very soul and vitality captured in the scene. I agree with the modern critic Fo Ch’u that for Wang Kuo-wei the Chinese notion of spirit (*shen*) and soul (*hun*) is almost identical with the Western meaning of “idea.”<sup>40</sup> They all refer to the “truth” and, hence, to the special “world” of a given scene or object. There is some overlap, to be sure, between Chinese concepts of “spirit” and “soul” and Western concepts of “truth” and “idea” in reference to any given scene or object. But strictly speaking, when Chinese critics talk about the “spirit” or the “soul” of a physical scene or object, they usually refer to its very essence and life force, particularly the latter, which is innate in and typical of it.

Whether such an essence exists a priori as a pure “idea” in the scene or object itself does not really enter into the consciousness of Chinese

artists or, for that matter, Chinese critics. The identification of these terms in Wang's critical vocabulary clearly represents his synthesis of Western and traditional Chinese aesthetics. This kind of synthesis can be problematic, and Wang's gradual renunciation of Western ideas around the time *JCTH* was written might indicate that he was aware of this. Yet, more than most modern scholars, Wang's application of Western critical ideas does help to clarify certain issues that have not been clearly treated in the Chinese tradition.

For instance, in Wang's case, what is "true" in human feeling refers not simply to deeply felt emotions but to feelings that can transcend the personal and the temporal at the same time. Thus, the most moving poetry laments life itself (*yu-sheng*) and the world at large (*yu-shih*) (*JCTH* 1:25). For Wang, the poet Li Yü (937–978) had really captured the "truth" of human feelings. Wang uses Nietzsche's words to describe Li's poetry: it was written "with his blood" and the suffering in his poetry was like that of Buddha and Jesus—for the sins of mankind (*JCTH* 1:9–10).

From the very beginnings of the Chinese poetic tradition, it was a matter of common knowledge among poets and critics alike that truth and sincerity of feeling were essential for good poetry. Furthermore, one of the basic criteria by which poems of the past are to be considered truly great is that they must have been continuously read, appreciated, and commented upon. The very fact that they have been read over a long period of time by many different people suggests that what is written in these poems must go beyond the personal and the topical.

In most of these traditional comments, however, the emphasis has been on how genuinely the poet in question must have felt about the particular event in the poem; how faithfully the poet has rendered the feelings in the poem; and, finally, how deeply the critic, as a reader, has been moved by what is described. In other words, few critics have gone beyond individual poems to probe the general characteristics that are common to all great poetry.

In talking about "lamenting life itself" and "lamenting the world at large," or the suffering of Buddha and Jesus, Wang Kuo-wei expands the

traditional critical vision beyond its habitual focus on individual poems. The following comment on the distinction between a poet and a politician is a case in point. Again, the focus is on the common and the universal:

The eyes of a politician are confined to the individual person, the individual event. The eyes of a poet, on the other hand, are on eternity, cutting across the barrier between the past and the present. When a *tz'u* poet observes the things in the world, he should use the eyes of a poet, never the eyes of a politician. (5.28. *JCTH* 2:64)

Whether Wang's statement is influenced by Aristotle's well-known distinction between the historian (whose focus is on real occurrences—what has happened) and the poet (whose focus is on probability—what could happen), is difficult to tell. But Wang and Aristotle are obviously similar in believing that the poet penetrates beyond the particulars of things. This tendency to move away from discussing what is perceived in individual poems or poets toward the formation of a concept of poetry and its distinct characteristics distinguishes Wang from traditional critics.

The second issue concerning the notion of the "true" relates to the poet's perception of it in feeling and scene. To reach this level of perception, Wang says, the poet first has to know how to observe (*kuan*) the object of contemplation. Traditional critics talked about the poet's having to empty and still his mind as a precondition for entering into the object of contemplation without interference or blockage by irrelevant thoughts. Wang Fu-chih also discussed the active participation (*ts'an*) of the mind in the physical world so as to penetrate and commingle with the latter completely (*t'ung*).

In these traditional views, critics seem to be rather vague about what takes place in the act of emptying the mind and the mind's participation in the larger cosmos. How, for instance, do these different modes of relating to the observed object result in poetry? Does the object exist only in the physical world external to the poet? As a rule, traditional critics are not concerned with these issues. Wang Kuo-wei, however, addresses all of these questions in his discussion of observation.

For Wang Kuo-wei, the ability to observe the object of contemplation is one crucial prerequisite for making a poem possess the "world" (*JCTH*, Suppl., 88). The object of contemplation could be either something outside the poet or the poet's own feelings. The former is a case of "observing the object" (*kuan-wu*); the latter is a case of "observing of the self" (*kuan-wo*). In other words, the poet is an observing subject capable of "observing" anything that he writes about, including his own feelings. To my knowledge, the idea that the poet's feelings are something "outside" him and as such can be "observed" in the same way he would observe an object or a scene, is not typical of traditional Chinese criticism. While readers may recall that in *Discourse on Literature and Styles of Poetry*, thought and feeling are regarded as objects of contemplation (see chapter 3), this is rare. And, in fact, the emphasis there was on how to attain the three "realms" of poetry rather than on what is involved in the act of observation. According to Wang Kuo-wei, however, a poet, as observing subject, should ideally stand outside the object of contemplation to fully grasp its idea without being affected by subjective prejudices.

Although from the earliest times Chinese poets have been, if only unconsciously, observing their own feelings as objects of contemplation outside themselves, critics have seldom made this idea an issue for explicit discussion. In this, Wang Kuo-wei seems to have been heavily influenced by Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*, a book he read and reread and from which he often borrowed ideas.<sup>41</sup> In this book, Schopenhauer says that the artist in the moment of aesthetic contemplation is a "pure, will-less subject of knowledge" whose sole aim is to acquire "knowledge of the object, not as individual thing, but as Platonic idea."<sup>42</sup>

This Platonic idea, Schopenhauer reminds us, is the "enduring form of this whole species of things."<sup>43</sup> For Schopenhauer, man's subjective will, which is his desire, is the source of suffering, and the only way that he can be delivered from such suffering is to be delivered "from subjectivity, from the slavery of the will" by being raised to "the state of pure knowing."<sup>44</sup> Nature and art, because of the sheer attraction of their beauty,



have the power to take us out of our subjectivity to that pure, will-less state of knowledge because we can be totally absorbed by them as objects of contemplation.<sup>45</sup> These ideas struck a familiar chord in Wang Kuo-wei, who had thought deeply about human suffering. Traces of such ideas are still visible in *JCTH* in Wang's discussion of observation.

The act of observation involves the relationship between the observing poet and what is observed. Repeatedly, Wang says that poets should be completely faithful to everything that comes within their scope of observation, from human events to every single plant in nature (*JCTH* 2:67). This kind of faithful observation also involves a kind of "play," although of a serious sort, in which no practical purpose whatsoever is intended.<sup>46</sup> Schiller's notion of "art as play" and Kant's idea of art as "purposeless purposiveness" are obviously present here.

The ultimate purpose of this kind of faithfulness and play vis-à-vis the object of contemplation is to get at the idea of the object through the observing poet. As such, the object thus observed is a blend of both itself and the observing consciousness. For Wang, the best poetry demonstrates a "complete synthesis of idea and object" (*i yü ching hun* [*JCTH*, Suppl., 88]). Here the word *i* or "idea" refers to the subjective consciousness of the observing poet, and the word *ching* refers to the external object observed.

This kind of complete synthesis between the poet and the object of contemplation, in which one "cannot tell the demarcation between the poet and the object," is achieved in a type of poetry he describes as the "poetic world without the self" (*wu-wo chih ching*). This can only occur, according to Wang, when the poet observes and comprehends the idea of the object in quietude without letting his own subjective self slip into the object to block what Wang calls the "language" of the object. The poet uses "the eyes of the object to observe the object" and speaks "the innate language of the object which cannot speak."<sup>47</sup>

Since the synthesis is so perfect, the poet actually becomes the spokesman for that quiet communion between himself and the object of contemplation. According to Wang, T'ao Ch'ien's lines, "Picking chrysanthemums by the eastern hedge, / Leisurely, I catch sight of the south hill,"

express precisely such an experience (*JCTH* 1:3). For more than a thousand years these lines have been celebrated because T'ao recorded a rarely encountered moment of perfect rapport between nature and man. The appearance of the south hill in his vision is not only delightful and uplifting, but almost seems to be intimately communicating with the poet in a language that is beyond description. Hence, we recall that at the end of the poem T'ao says, "In all this there is true significance, / I would explain but have forgotten the words." For Wang, there is another kind of poetry in which the poet observes the object of contemplation from his own point of view, and thus lets his own thoughts and feelings color the object. The "world" attained by this type of poetry is one that includes the lyrical "self" (*yu-wo chih ching*). To illustrate this kind of poetry, he cites such lines as:

With tearful eyes, I ask the flowers but they do not speak;  
Red petals swirl past and the swing is gone.

(5.29. *JCTH* 1:1)

In these lines from a *tz'u* poem attributed to Feng Yen-ssu (903–960), the poet's feeling apparently dominates the scene and is carried over into it, unlike what happens in T'ao Ch'ien's poem. In this type of lyric, there is also a kind of synthesis between the observing poet and the object observed. Through tearful eyes, the poet looks at the swirling red petals and the place where the swing used to be; these two images merge into a lament about the disappearance of spring and love, and the joys associated with them. But synthesis in this type of lyric is different from that of the poetry achieving a "poetic world without the self." According to Wang, the former is achieved not in quietude, but as the result of some stirring tension between the poet and the object (*JCTH* 1:2).

For Wang, "poetic world without the self" is "beautiful" while poetic world that included the lyrical self is "sublime." Here again, the influence of Schopenhauer is discernible. This is especially obvious when Wang describes the "beautiful" as being without tension between the poet and the observed. As for the "sublime," it is fraught with tension

because the poet consciously struggles with his feelings and thereby imbues the object of observation with emotional power.<sup>48</sup>

One might quarrel with Wang's designation of Western notions of the "beautiful" and the "sublime" as appropriate descriptions for these two kinds of Chinese poetry. Given the predominance of the concept of innate harmony between man and nature in traditional Chinese thinking, one might also quarrel with Wang about the appropriateness of describing the relationship between the poet and the object of contemplation in terms of the absence or presence of tension. Yet Wang's distinction between these two modes of relating to the object of contemplation is all too often blurred by the traditional critical term *ch'ing-ching chiao-jung* (the fusion of "feeling" and "scene").

The term "fusion" refers to the final effect of the relationship between "feeling" and "scene" in poetry, but it does not really indicate in what manner these two elements actually come together. While Wang Fuchih's emphasis on the interaction between "feeling" and "scene" does refer to the inner dynamics involved, Wang Kuo-wei's distinction regarding the modes of observation is far more specific. He pinpoints two essentially different ways in which the poet comprehends and comes to terms with the material of his poetry.

Thus, from Wang Kuo-wei's perspective, the relationship between "feeling" and "scene" is essentially that between the poet and his material, that is to say, the relationship between the "poetic self" (*wo*) and the poetic material in the sense of the traditional notion of "object" (*wu*). As such, the scope of *wu* is broadened to include everything that the poet writes about, scenes as well as human feelings.

Important as this ability to observe (*nung kuan*) the "true" is, it is not enough. For Wang, poets have to express what they feel through the poetic medium (*nung hsieh chih*). That which can be directly sensed and intuited in the object of contemplation is the primary form of the object. This primary form will have to be delivered in what Wang calls the secondary form, or the medium of the artist's choice, before it can be communicated and appreciated.<sup>49</sup>

This secondary form refers to poetic language. It is the third issue with regard to the notion of the “true.” Traditional critics largely agreed that the language of scene should be “near” in the sense of being vivid and easily identifiable, and the language of feeling should be “far-reaching” in the sense that it is able to evoke meaning beyond the literal level. Wang Kuo-wei, however, did not make such distinctions but, in my view, transcended them. For him, poetic language, regardless of its reference to “feeling” or “scene,” should be such that it enables the reader to experience, directly and without any obstruction, what the poet has experienced. Wang calls such language *pu-ko* (literally, not blocking), meaning there is nothing between the reader and the poem. Poems that cannot be approached directly are called *ko* (literally, blocking). With the following quotes, Wang illustrates what he means by “not blocking” as it applies to the depiction of “feeling” and “scene.” The first passage addresses “feeling” and the second, “scene”:

The years of one’s lifespan do not reach one hundred,  
But the sorrow of life one harbors is a thousand years long.  
When the days are short and nights are long,  
Why not take a lamp and sally out?

(5.30. JCTH I:29)

The sky is arched like a tent,  
Spreading over the four ends of the horizon,  
So grey is the sky,  
So vast and misty the wilderness,  
Wind blows, grass bends, cows and sheep are seen.

(5.31. JCTH 1:29)

With their vivid description enabling the reader to visualize what is happening in the poem, these two passages clearly exemplify the essence of “not blocking” in that “every single word appears vividly in front of one’s eyes” (*yü yü tou tsai mu ch’ien*) (JCTH 1:27).

This simple definition of *pu-ko* seems very close to such conventional terms as “near,” or Chung Hung’s, “immediate to the eye,” all of which refer to a sense of immediacy in poetic language. Wang’s coinage of this new term, however, indicates another point of emphasis. Wang apparently attached a great deal of importance to the concept of poetic language. Not only does he comment directly and indirectly about “not blocking” and “blocking” throughout *JCTH*, but the terms are used as criteria for judging poetry in general as well as individual poems and poets. They are comparable in importance to the concepts of “world” and the “true.” What, then, does “not blocking” really mean? Does it simply refer to the language of poetry? Does it relate to his central notions of “world” and “true”?

In one of the passages cited earlier, Wang comments on how the very “soul,” “spirit,” and, in a word, “truth” of the lotus plant was captured by the Sung poet Chou Pang-yen. He also indicates that Chou’s description of the lotus is of the “not blocking” type. Furthermore, in both *JCTH* and *History of Sung and Yüan Drama*, Wang discusses, in almost identical words, certain characteristics of the great masters of literature. He speaks of their ability to penetrate the very core of man’s being through their expression of feeling, as well as their ability to make the scenery they describe appear in front of one’s eyes. In each case, he is obviously referring to this quality of “not blocking.”

Wang gives the crucial reason why all great writers share this quality: “What they perceive is true and what they comprehend profound.” Once again, “not blocking” is closely associated with the “true.” “Not blocking” is thus not simply a direct or vivid expression of scene as implied in the term “near” or other similar terms; it is the direct and vivid expression of the true and the profound in both “feeling” and “scene.”

Thus, the importance Wang attaches to “not blocking” is directly related to the importance he attaches to the “true,” which is the very essence of “world.” Hence, unlike Rickett’s understanding, I interpret the concept of “not blocking” as *integral* to Wang’s theory of “world.”<sup>50</sup>

As is typical of the poetical notebooks in which individual entries seem very much like unstrung pearls, Wang’s *JCTH* does not make an

overt effort to connect his central concepts. But any reading of *JCTH* that fails to see these concepts as interrelated can hardly do justice to Wang's theory of poetry. It is in this way, as well as in synthesizing traditional Chinese and Western critical ideas, that Wang has made his unique contribution.

Both Wang Fu-chih and Wang Kuo-wei have, in different yet complementary ways, enhanced our understanding of "feeling" and "scene" and their inner workings. While Wang Fu-chih viewed poetry as the expression of the constant interaction between the poet and the various forces in the cosmos, Wang Kuo-wei regarded it as that of the "true," namely, the genuine, the constant, and the universal in man and in the world. What makes their respective contributions particularly important when compared with those of most other traditional Chinese critics is not simply their insights into the relationship between "feeling" and "scene," but the fact that these insights are firmly and deeply grounded in a coherent and profound view of poetry.

While Wang Fu-chih's concept of poetry is primarily based on the Confucian classic, the *Book of Changes*, Wang Kuo-wei is more eclectic, bringing together traditional Chinese views and Western views. Despite their different orientations and the years that separate them, they agree that poetry is the most spontaneous and genuine communication between the soul of an individual and that of external reality. For Wang Fu-chih, that "soul" of external reality resides in the constantly changing and transforming cosmos. For Wang Kuo-wei, it is the constant and universal "truth," be it the truth of a lotus plant or the truth of man's lament for his fleeting existence.



## *Afterword*

This book has identified and explored four major phases in the evolution of the critical perception of the relationship between “feeling” and “scene” in Chinese poetry. In this final section, after recapitulating some of the main points, I will conclude with a few comments on *hsing*, the very essence of this relationship, within a larger cultural context.

“Scene,” aside from serving the utilitarian function of expressing elusive “feeling,” relates to “feeling” by a primordial bond that is deeply imbedded in traditional Chinese thinking. Critics of the Taoist persuasion understood this bond to be one between man and the Tao, which resides in nature. For instance, Ssu-k’ung T’u’s lines about good poetry, “Just follow the Tao/ And one touch of your hand brings spring” (p. 124), amply testify to this understanding. From the Confucian perspective, this bond was seen as the ultimate union between man and cosmic nature. Wang Fu-chih, the Ch’ing Confucian scholar and critic, viewed this relationship between “feeling” and “scene” as a continuous and dynamic interaction between man and the cosmic forces of *yin* and *yang*. Whatever their metaphysical tendencies, traditional critics all agreed that this central phenomenon in poetry is premised upon an innate union between man and nature.

The critical perception of this central issue shifted from one phase to another, and this evolution was very much dictated by how the critics



located and interpreted the realm of such a union between man and nature. During the early pragmatic phase, the relationship between man and physical surroundings, as expressed in poetry, was primarily interpreted as implying a sociopolitical significance. It was not until the Wei-Chin and the Northern and Southern Dynasties periods that critics began to look into the creative process, discovering that it was there that the intimate bonding between man and nature was of paramount importance. During the T'ang period, it was further discovered that this bonding not only was captured and reenacted in the poetic medium but, more significantly, remained operative beyond the confines of the medium in the boundless imagination of the reader.

The operative force that brings about the awareness of the innate relatedness between the poet's feeling and the physical world around us is *hsing*. Such an awareness happens only in a moment of heightened consciousness when the poet, stirred by emotions, perceives this relationship. But the lyrical impulse of *hsing* is not to be disposed of once the creative mind begins to assert its own will over the material of contemplation. On the contrary, it is recaptured in all its spontaneity in the coupling of "scene" and "feeling" in the poetic medium—a moment of evocative suggestiveness. The pairing of "feeling" and "scene" is a gesture toward meaning, pointing toward their eventual fusion in the mind of the reader. To understand Chinese poetry is to understand how a poet brings alive these intense moments of evocative rapport in his own particular language and manner. The power of *hsing* in Chinese poetry thus is a lyrical impulse that dictates both the poetic medium and the ultimate aesthetic effect. As such, it informs both the nature and the characteristics of the poetry.

No thorough understanding of Chinese poetry is possible without a knowledge of this subtle yet dynamic interplay, at the core of which is the catalytic force of *hsing*. Despite the fact that critics do not always make specific references to the term itself, practically all discussions of this crucial relationship in Chinese poetry center on the notion of *hsing*. This is borne out, for example, by the repeated emphasis throughout the entire

critical tradition on the affective-responsive encounter between the poet and the physical world during the creative process. It is also evidenced in the critical interest in the evocative nature of poetry, because this quality is a reenactment of *hsing* in the mind of the reader. The importance attached by so many critics to culling the material of poetry from immediate reality is yet another piece of evidence to the same effect. *Hsing* as lyric impulse is a natural and spontaneous occurrence that takes place in the poet's secret interchange with immediate reality. Much of the challenge to traditional Chinese poets has been to recapture this fleeting moment of inspiration in the poetic medium.

The phenomenon of *hsing* is thus central both to the relationship between "feeling" and "scene" in Chinese poetry and to the critical discussion of this issue. The centrality of *hsing* leads one to ponder the fundamental nature of Chinese poetry. What does the continued importance of *hsing* in criticism and poetry mean? Certainly, it indicates that the lyrical impulse comes directly from the dynamic rapport between man and nature on the primordial level. But over and above this traditional view, something else seems to be suggested by the ubiquity of *hsing*. What does its prominence tell us about Chinese lyricism in particular and, indeed, about issues larger than poetry?

This phenomenon points to two interrelated tendencies in Chinese artistic practice, namely, a reality-based tendency and a perception-dominant tendency. By reality-based tendency, I mean the strong artistic impulse to refer to concrete reality. The pervasive presence of "scene" in Chinese poetry, figuring as physical context, is certainly an expression of this. It is clearest and most poignant in poems about the remote past (*huai-ku*), where the poet's sentiment is usually triggered by an actual scene encountered when climbing the heights (*teng-kao*) or visiting a historical site. That the emotional event in most Chinese poems seems to be directly called forth by an evocative "scene" further suggests that adherence to external reality is intimately tied up with another tendency. That is, poetic creation in the Chinese tradition is essentially about what is intuitively

perceived as a result of a spontaneous response to and engagement with concrete stimuli in external reality.

These two tendencies directly dictate the fundamental nature and characteristics of Chinese poetry. Much of its spontaneity, its lifelike quality, and its suggestiveness is closely related to them. For what is captured in the poetic medium is an instance of heightened consciousness. This is the moment when the inner-relatedness of "feeling" and "scene," with all its vitality and promise of meaning, is first grasped, before it is subjected to the scrutiny of the intellect. What is celebrated most is the spontaneity of emotions evoked by the immediate environment.

This proclivity has a great deal to do with the fact that Chinese poetry is, relatively speaking, much more compact than most Western poetry. The extended comparisons we find in so many Elizabethan poems, or the intricately fashioned analogies of the metaphysical type, are seldom present and little prized in Chinese poetry. Such exhaustive displays of how the brooding consciousness of the creative mind manipulates the material of poetry run directly counter to the nature of Chinese poetry. For the same reason, contemplation of abstract concepts (love or friendship, life or death) is far less frequently entertained in China than it is in the West.

What we see in the Chinese tradition, on the contrary, is an abundance of poems on specific events set in specific locales and at specific times. Titles referring to taking a stroll on the first day of spring, seeing a friend off by the Yangtze River, and climbing heights on an autumn day are very common. T'ao Ch'ien's "Substance, Shadow, Spirit," which transcends the ordinary lament for fleeting human existence, is an exception—even among Neo-Taoist and Buddhist poems—that proves the rule. A Western poem like Petrarch's *Sonnetto* on love (*Vita* 91), which treats the subject as a pure concept in the absence of a living, specific, physical context, is almost unthinkable for a Chinese poet.

But this emphasis on what is spontaneously perceived in an intense moment of lyrical experience does not imply that Chinese poetry is

usually written in a flash of inspiration. Anecdotes about how poets labored to perfect their writing abound in the Chinese tradition. It would be equally naive to assume that what is presented in the poetic medium, including the presence of the concrete physical context, is necessarily what actually happened or was present in the poet's life. A poem is, after all, an artifact. Whatever occurs in a given poem has gone through the process of transference from raw reality to the poetic medium. What is important here is not how faithfully poetry records what happens on the experiential level, but how the poet recreates or imagines the reality of that moment for the reader.

If we believe poetry is not simply the expression of the poet but also that of the culture in which it originates, then the dominant thrust of a given poetic tradition must in one way or another find expression in other spheres of that culture. In my opinion, the reality-based and perception-dominant tendencies underlying the thrust of *hsing* in Chinese poetry seem to be present in other expressions of culture as well. Evidence can be found in the emphasis of traditional literary criticism, typified by the popular poetical notebooks (i.e., *shih-hua* and *tz'u-hua*) on specific poets and poems. Very few critics have gone beyond responding to specific poems with the purpose of probing the general nature or concept of poetry. Thus, for example, in discussing Wang Kuo-wei's distinct contribution to Chinese criticism, we observed that what separates him from traditional critics is precisely his tendency to move away from what is perceived in individual poems or poets, toward something approaching the formation of a concept of poetry and its inherent characteristics.

This kind of critical mode seems to indicate that the *hsing* impulse is also active in Chinese literary criticism. The continuous presence of pragmatic criticism in the Chinese tradition seems also dictated by a similar impulse, for it perceives poetry and literature as responding directly to or triggered by an immediate situation.

Viewed in its essential makeup, *hsing* is a frame of mind that spontaneously and immediately responds to the stimulus of concrete particulars in reality at a given time and place. If we look beyond poetry and poetry

criticism, we will find that this mentality manifests itself variously in Chinese culture.

I believe that the traditional emphasis in Chinese society on concrete personal relationships (*kuan-hsi*) rather than on abstract systems and principles is an example of the expression of the *hsing* mentality. To be sure, many factors have contributed to this social phenomenon, but, undoubtedly, the preference for concrete and tangible personal relationships over abstract laws or rules is crucial.

The ramifications of this propensity for the concrete and immediate are far-reaching. On the one hand, the spontaneity and lively atmosphere one witnesses so often in Chinese society, where much of the fun is given to the moment and the momentary, is certainly an expression of *hsing*. Common phrases such as *hsing-ch'ü* (interest), *kao-hsing* (in high spirits), *hsing-fen* (excited), and *hsing-chih* (in the right mood), indicate that *hsing* is a vital element in Chinese life. On the other hand, the relative disregard for abstract law and order (e.g., ignoring traffic rules) is also a manifestation of the same mentality. On a larger scale, I believe, the collective expression of such a mentality runs fundamentally and directly counter to a mode of government in which the abstract, impersonal, and codified system geared to the sustained interest of the majority triumphs over rule by strong personalities.

In the course of this study, my attention has been focused on what has taken place within the Chinese poetic and critical tradition. This brief excursion into other spheres of Chinese culture and even Western poetic tendencies is an attempt to look at the central relationship between feeling and scene in Chinese poetry—particularly its major thrust, *hsing*—in a larger context. It is ultimately in the larger context of both Chinese culture and the genre of poetry itself that this crucial phenomenon must be further studied and evaluated. Furthermore, the study of *hsing*, being so essential to Chinese poetry, may open up new areas of understanding in Chinese culture, of which poetry has always been an integral part.

## *Appendix: Original Chinese Passages*

### 1.1

野有蔓草  
零露漙兮  
有美一人  
清揚婉兮  
邂逅相遇  
適我願兮

野有蔓草  
零露瀼瀼  
有美一人  
婉如清揚  
邂逅相遇  
與子偕臧

### 1.2

賦之言「鋪」，直鋪陳今之政教善惡者。凡言賦者，直陳君之善惡，更假外物爲喻，故云鋪陳者也云。比見今之失，不敢斥言，取比類

以言之。興見今之美，嫌於媚諛，取善事以喻勸之者。

### 1.3

南有喬木  
不可休息  
漢有游女  
不可求思  
漢之廣矣  
不可泳思  
江之永矣  
不可方思

### 1.4

蒹葭蒼蒼  
白露爲霜  
所謂伊人  
在水一方  
溯洄從之

道阻且長  
逆游從之  
宛在水中央

蒹葭淒淒  
白露未晞  
所謂伊人  
在水之湄  
溯洄從之  
道阻且躋  
逆游從之  
宛在水中坻

蒹葭采采  
白露未已  
所謂伊人  
在水之涘  
溯洄從之  
道阻且左  
逆游從之  
宛在水中沚

1.5

先王以是經夫婦。成孝敬。  
厚人倫。美教化。移風俗。

1.6

君子于役  
不知其期  
曷至哉  
雞棲於埘  
日之夕矣

羊牛下來  
君子于役  
如之何勿思

君子于役  
不日不月  
曷其有佸  
雞棲于桀  
日之夕矣  
羊牛下括  
君子于役  
苟無飢渴

2.1

君子作歌  
維以告哀

2.2

夜中不能寐  
起坐彈鳴琴  
薄帷鑒明月  
清風吹我襟  
孤鴻號外野  
翔鳥鳴北林  
徘徊將何見  
憂思獨傷心

2.3

驅車上東門  
遙望郭北墓

白楊何蕭蕭  
松栢夾廣路  
下有陳死人  
杳杳即長暮  
潛寐黃泉下  
千載永不寤  
浩浩陰陽移  
年命如朝露  
人生忽如寄  
壽無金石固  
萬歲更相送  
賢聖莫能度  
服食求神仙  
多爲葯所誤  
不如飲美酒  
被服絜與素

2.4

人生不滿百  
戚戚少歡娛  
意欲奮六翮  
排霧陵紫虛  
蟬蛻同松喬  
翻跡登鼎湖  
翱翔九天上  
騁轡遠行遊  
東觀扶桑曜  
西臨弱水流  
北極登玄渚  
南翔陟丹邱

2.5

朝陽不再盛

白日忽西幽  
去此若俯仰  
如何似九秋  
人生若塵露  
天道邈悠悠  
齊景升丘山  
涕泗紛交流  
孔聖臨長川  
惜逝忽若浮  
去者余不及  
來者吾不留  
願登太華山  
上與松子遊  
漁父知世患  
乘流泛輕舟

2.6

遠遊越山川  
山川修且廣  
振策陟崇丘  
安轡遵平莽  
夕息抱影寐  
朝徂銜思往  
頓轡倚高巖  
側聽悲風響  
清露墜素輝  
明月何一朗  
撫枕不能寐  
振衣獨長想

2.7

朝霞迎白日  
丹氣臨暘谷



翳翳結繁雲  
森森散雨足  
輕風摧勁草  
凝霜竦高木  
密葉日夜疏  
叢林森如束  
疇昔歎時遲  
晚節悲年促  
歲暮懷百憂  
將從季主卜

2.8

拄策招隱士  
荒塗橫古今  
巖穴無結構  
丘中有鳴琴  
白雪停陰岡  
丹葩曜陽林  
石泉漱瓊瑤  
纖鱗或浮沉  
非必絲與竹  
山水有清音  
何事待嘯歌  
灌木自悲吟  
秋菊兼餼糧  
幽蘭間重襟  
躊躇足力煩  
聊欲投吾簪

2.9

太素既已分  
吹萬著形兆

寂動苟有源  
因謂殤子夭  
道喪涉千載  
津梁誰能了

2.10

翡翠戲蘭苕  
容色更相鮮  
綠蘿結高林  
蒙籠蓋一山  
中有冥寂士  
靜嘯撫清絃  
放情凌霄外  
嚼蘂挹飛泉  
赤松臨上游  
駕鴻乘紫煙  
左挹浮丘袖  
右拍洪崖肩  
借問蜉蝣輩  
寧知龜鶴年

2.11

太虛遼廓而無閼  
運自然之妙有  
融而爲川瀆  
結而爲山阜

2.12

是日也，天朗氣清，惠風和暢，  
仰觀宇宙之大，俯察品類之盛，

所以遊目騁懷，亦足以極視聽之娛，  
信可樂也。

水無暫停留  
木有千載貞  
寤言賦新詩  
忽忘羈客情

2.13

三春啓群品  
寄暢在所因  
仰望碧天際  
俯磐綠水濱  
寥朗無厓觀  
寓目理自陳  
大矣造化工  
萬殊莫不均  
群籟雖參差  
適我無非親

2.16

三皇大聖人  
今復在何處  
彭祖愛永年  
欲留不得住  
老少同一死  
賢愚無復數  
日醉或能忘  
將非促齡具  
立善常所欣  
誰當爲汝譽  
甚念傷吾生  
正宜委運去  
縱浪大化中  
不喜亦不懼  
應盡便須盡  
無復獨多慮

2.14

肆眺崇阿  
寓目高林  
青蘿翳岫  
修竹冠岑  
谷流清響  
條鼓鳴音  
玄壻吐潤  
霏霧成陰

2.17

結廬在人間  
而無車馬喧  
問君何能爾  
心遠地自偏  
採菊東籬下  
悠然見南山  
山氣日夕佳

2.15

高嶽萬丈峻  
長湖千里清  
白沙窮年潔  
林松冬夏青

飛鳥相與還  
此中有真意  
欲辯已忘言

2.18

宋初文詠，體有因革，壯老告退而山水方滋。...情必極貌以寫物，辭必窮力而追新，此近世之所競也。

2.19

昏旦變氣候  
山水含清暉  
清暉能娛人  
游子憺忘歸  
山谷日尚早  
入舟陽已微  
林壑斂暝色  
雲霞收夕霏  
芰荷迭映蔚  
蒲稗相因依  
披拂趨南逕  
愉悅偃東扉  
慮澹物自輕  
意愜理無違  
寄言攝生客  
試用此道推

2.20

澤蘭漸被徑  
芙蓉始發池

未壓青春好  
已觀朱明移  
感感感物歎  
星星白髮垂  
樂餌情所止  
衰疾忽在斯  
逝將候秋水  
息景偃舊崖

2.21

詩至於宋，性情漸隱，聲色大開，詩運一轉關也。

2.22

詩至於宋，古之終而律之始也。體制一變，便覺聲色俱開。

2.23

江上氣早寒  
仲秋始霜雪  
從軍乏衣糧  
方冬與家別  
蕭條背鄉心  
悽愴清渚發  
涼埃晦平臯  
飛潮隱脩樾  
孤光獨徘徊  
空煙視昇滅  
塗隨前峰遠  
意逐後雲結  
華志分馳年

韶顏慘驚節  
推琴三起嘆  
聲爲君斷絕

雕梁再三繞  
輕塵四五移  
曲中有深意  
丹誠君詎知

2.24

大江流日夜  
客心悲未央

2.28

杏梁賓未散  
桂宮明欲沈  
曖色輕幃裡  
低光照寶琴  
徘徊雲髻影  
的爍綺疏金  
恨君秋月夜  
遺我洞房陰

2.25

朔風吹飛雨  
蕭條江上來

2.29

夕殿下珠簾  
流螢飛復息  
長夜縫羅衣  
思君此何極

2.26

戚戚若無惊  
攜手共行樂  
尋雲陟累榭  
隨山望菌閣  
遠樹暖阡阡  
生煙紛漠漠  
魚戲新荷動  
鳥散餘花落  
不對芳春酒  
還望青山郭

2.30

客心已百念  
孤遊重千里  
江暗雨欲來  
浪白風初起

2.27

江南蕭管地  
妙響發春枝  
殷勤寄玉指  
含情舉復垂

2.31

尋思萬戶候  
中夜忽然愁

琴聲遍屋裡  
書卷滿床頭  
雖言蝴蝶夢  
定自非莊周  
殘月如初月  
新秋似舊秋  
露泣連珠下  
螢飄碎火流  
樂天乃知命  
何時能忘憂

2.32

陽關萬里道  
不見一人歸  
唯有河邊雁  
秋來南向飛

3.1

情動於中。而形於言。言之不足。  
故嗟歎之。嗟歎之不足。故永歌  
之。

3.2

故正得失。動天地。感鬼神。  
莫近於詩。先王是以經夫婦。  
成孝敬。厚人倫。美教化。  
移風俗。

3.3

嘉會寄詩以親，離群托詩以怨。  
至于楚臣去境，漢妾辭官；或骨橫朔  
野，或魂逐飛蓬；或負戈外戍，殺氣  
雄邊；塞客衣單，孀閨淚盡；或士有  
解佩出朝，一去忘返；女有揚娥入  
寵，再盼傾國。凡斯種種，感盪心  
靈，非陳詩何以展其義，  
非長歌何以騁其情？故曰：「詩可以  
群，可以怨」，使窮賤易安，  
幽居靡悶，莫尚于詩矣。

3.4

人心之動。物使之然也。感於物  
而動。故形於聲。

3.5

夫物之感人無窮

3.6

遠望令人悲  
春風感我心

3.7

感物重鬱積

3.8

哀人易感傷  
觸物增悲心

3.9

感物多所懷

3.10

感物多思情

3.11

遵四時以歎逝，瞻萬物而思紛；  
悲落葉於勁秋，喜柔條於芳春；  
心懷懷以懷霜，志眇眇而臨雲。

3.12

歲有其物。物有其容。情以物遷。  
辭以情發。一葉且或迎意。蟲聲有  
足引心。況清風與明月共夜。白日  
與春林共朝哉。

3.13

氣之動物，物之感人，  
故搖蕩性情，形諸舞詠。

3.14

悲哉秋之爲氣也。蕭瑟兮。  
草木搖落而變衰。僚慄兮。  
若在遠行。登山臨水兮。送將歸。

3.15

佇中區以玄覽

3.16

其始也，皆收視反聽，耽思旁訊，精  
驚八極，心游萬仞。

3.17

其致也，情曛曠而彌鮮，物昭晰而互  
進。

3.18

於是沉辭怫悅，若游魚銜鈎而出重淵  
之深；浮藻聯翩，若翰魚纓繳而墜曾  
雲之峻。收百世之闕文，採千載之遺  
韻。

3.19

是以陶鈞文思。貴在虛靜。疏淪  
五藏。澡雪精神。

3.20

汝齋戒，疏淪爾心，澡雪爾精神，  
掇擊爾知。

3.21

致虛極。守靜篤。萬物並作。吾  
以觀復。夫物芸芸。各復歸其根。歸  
根曰靜。是謂復命。復命曰常。知常  
曰明。不知常，妄作凶；知  
常容，容乃公，公乃王，王乃天，天  
乃道，道乃久，沒身不殆。

3.22

萬物無足以擾人者，故靜也。  
...水靜猶明，而況精神！聖人之心  
靜乎！天地之鑒也，萬物之鏡也。

無厭空且靜  
靜故了群動  
空故納萬境

3.23

是以四序紛迴。而入興貴閑。

3.29

右丞胸次灑脫，中無障礙，  
如冰壺澄澈，水鏡淵淳。

3.24

是以詩人感物。聯類不窮。流連萬象  
之際。沉吟視聽之區，寫氣圖貌。  
既隨物以宛轉。屬采附聲。亦與心  
而徘徊。

3.30

若乃山林臯壤。實文思之奧府。

3.25

山香水匝。樹雜雲合。目既往還。  
心亦吐納。春日遲遲。秋風颯颯。  
情往似贈。興來如答。

3.31

然屈平所以能洞監風騷之情者。  
抑亦江山之助乎。

3.26

登山則情滿於山。觀海則意溢於海。

3.32

自近代以來。文貴形似。窺情風景  
之上。鑷貌草木之中。吟詠所發。  
志惟深遠。體物為妙。功在密附。  
故巧言形狀。如印之印泥。不加雕  
削。而曲寫毫芥。故能瞻言而見貌。  
即字而知時也。

3.27

神用象通。情變所孕。物以貌求。  
心以理應。

3.33

是蓋輪扁所不得言，亦非華說之  
所能精。

3.28

欲令詩語妙

3.34

是眾作之有滋味者也，故云會于

流俗。豈不以指事，造形，窮情，  
寫物，最爲詳切者耶？

仍憐故鄉水  
萬里送行舟

3.35

故詩有三義焉：一曰興，二曰比，  
三曰賦。文已盡而意有餘，興也；  
因物喻志，比也；直書其事，寓言寫  
物，賦也。宏斯三義，酌而用之，  
幹之以風力，潤之以丹采，使味之  
者無極，聞之者動心，是詩之至也。

4.4

竹涼侵臥內  
野月滿庭隅  
重露成涓滴  
稀星乍有無  
暗飛螢自照  
水宿鳥相呼  
萬事干戈裡  
空悲清夜徂

4.1

移舟泊煙渚  
日暮客愁新  
野曠天低樹  
江清月近人

4.5

風急天高猿嘯哀  
渚清沙白鳥飛迴  
無邊落木蕭蕭下  
不盡長江滾滾來  
萬里悲秋常作客  
百年多病獨登臺  
艱難苦恨繁霜鬢  
潦倒新停濁酒杯

4.2

琵琶起舞換新聲  
總是關山舊別情  
撩亂邊愁聽不盡  
高高秋月照長城

4.6

前半首寫光景，後半首寫感慨，  
少陵七律每有此體，然必光景中  
隱含感慨。

4.3

渡遠荆門外  
來從楚國遊  
山隨平野盡  
江入大荒流  
月下飛天鏡  
雲生結海樓

4.7

木末芙蓉花



山中發紅萼  
澗戶寂無人  
紛紛開且落

4.8

其旨遠，其興僻。  
佳句輒來，唯論意表。

4.9

詩有三境。一曰物境：欲爲山水詩，則張泉石雲峰之境極麗絕秀者，神之于心，處身于境，視境于心，瑩然掌中，然後用思，了然境象，故得形似。二曰情境：娛樂愁怨，皆張于意而處于身，然後馳思，深得其情。三曰意境：亦張之于意，而思之于心，則得其真矣。

4.10

夫置意作詩，即須凝心，目擊其物，便以心擊之，深穿其境。如登高山絕頂，下臨萬象，如在掌中。以此見象，心中了見，當此即用。如無有不有，仍律調之定，然後書之于紙。會其題目，山林，日月風景爲真，以歌詠之。是猶如水中見日月，文章是景，物色是本，照之須了見其象也。

4.11

故其妙處，透徹玲瓏，不可湊泊。

如空中之音，相中之色，水中之月，鏡中之象。

4.12

盛唐絕句，興象玲瓏，句意深婉，無工可見，無跡可尋。

4.13

取境之時，須至難至險，始見奇句。成篇之後，觀其氣貌，有似等閒不思而得，此高手也。

4.14

傾耳聆波瀾  
舉目眺嶺嶽  
初景革緒風  
新陽改故陰  
池塘生春草  
園柳變鳴禽

4.15

殷憂不能寐  
若此夜難禱  
明月照積雪  
朔風勁且哀  
運往無淹物  
年逝覺易催

4.16

靜 非如松風不動、林狖未鳴，

乃謂意中之靜。遠 非如渺渺望水、  
杳杳看山，乃謂意中之遠。

持之匪強  
來之無窮

4.17

戴容州云：詩家之景如藍田日暖，  
良玉生煙，可望而不可置於眉睫之  
前也。象外之象，景外之景，豈容  
易可談哉！

4.20

流 動  
若納水輶  
如轉丸珠  
夫豈可道  
假體如愚  
荒荒坤軸  
悠悠天樞  
載要其端  
載同其符  
超超神明  
返返冥無  
來往千載  
是之謂乎

4.18

文之難，而詩之難尤難，古今之喻  
多矣。而愚以為辨於味而後可以言詩  
也。江嶺之南，凡是資於適口者，  
若醯非不酸也，止於酸而已；若醢  
非不鹹也，止於鹹而已。華之人以充  
飢而遽輟者，知其鹹酸之外，醇美者  
有所乏耳，彼江嶺之人習之而不辨  
也，宜哉。

4.21

道之爲物，唯恍惟惚。惚兮恍兮，  
其中有象；恍兮惚兮，其中有物。  
窈兮冥兮，其中有精。

4.19

雄 渾  
大用外腓  
真體內充  
反虛入渾  
積健爲雄  
俱備萬物  
橫絕太空  
荒荒油雲  
寥寥長風  
超以象外  
得其環中

4.22

有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，  
...可以爲天下母。...強爲之名曰大。

4.23

天下萬物生於有，有生於無。

4.24

俯拾即是  
不取諸鄰  
俱道適往  
着手成春  
如逢花開  
如瞻歲新  
真與不奪  
強得易貧  
幽人空山  
過雨採蘋  
薄言情悟  
悠悠天鈞

4.25

含蓄  
不著一字  
盡得風流  
語不涉己  
若不堪憂  
是有真宰  
與之沉浮  
如淥滿酒  
花時反秋  
悠悠空塵  
忽忽海漚  
淺深聚散  
萬取一收

4.26

絕佇靈素  
少迴清真

如覓水影  
如寫陽春  
風雲變態  
花草精神  
海之波瀾  
山之嶙峋  
俱似大道  
妙契同塵  
離形得似  
庶幾斯人

4.27

素處以默  
妙機其微  
飲之太和  
獨鶴與飛

4.28

虛佇神素  
脫然畦封  
黃唐在獨  
落落元宗

5.1

詩家雖率意，而造語亦難。若意新語工，得前人所未道者，斯爲善也。必能狀難寫之景，如在目前，含不盡之意，見於言外，然後爲至矣。

5.2

語貴含蓄。東坡云：「言有盡而意無窮者，天下之至言也。」

5.3

詩在意遠，固不以詞語豐約為拘。然開元以後，五言未始不自古詩中流出，雖無窮之意，嚴有限之字，而視大篇長什，其實一也。

5.4

盛唐諸人，惟在興趣；羚羊掛角，無跡可求。故其妙處，透徹玲瓏，不可湊泊。如空中之音，相中之色，水中之月，鏡中之象，言有盡而意無窮。

5.5

空山不見人  
但聞人語響  
返景入深林  
復照青苔上

5.6

君家何處住  
妾住在橫塘  
停船暫借問  
或恐是同鄉

5.7

無端說一件鳥獸草木，不明指天時，而天時恍在其中，不顯言地境，而地境宛在其中，且不實說人事，而人事已隱約流露其中。

5.8

世多不解此語為工，蓋欲以奇求之耳。此語之工，正在無所用意，猝然與景相遇。借以成章，不假繩削，故非常情所能到。詩家妙處，當須以此為根本，而思苦言難者往往不悟。

5.9

敘物以言情謂之賦，情物盡也。  
索物以托情謂之比，情附物也。  
觸物以起情謂之興，物動情也。

5.10

風蕭蕭兮易水寒  
壯士一去兮不復還

5.11

合而為詩，以數言而統萬形，元氣渾成，其浩無涯矣。

5.12

要識景中情，情中景。二者循環相生，即變化不窮。

5.13

有識之心而推諸物者焉，有不謀之物相值而生其心者焉。知斯二者，可與言情矣。

5.14

情者陰陽之幾也，物者天地之產也。陰陽之幾動於心，天地之產應於外。故外有其物，內可有其情矣；內有其情，外必有其物矣。

5.15

「池塘生春草」，「蝴蝶飛南園」，「明月照積雪」皆心中目中與相融浹，一出語時，即得珠圓玉潤，要亦各視其所懷來而與景相迎者也。

5.16

「青青河畔草」與「綿綿思遠道」，何以相因依，相含吐？神理湊合時，自然恰得。

5.17

含情而能達，會景而生心，體物而得神，則自有靈通之句，參化工之妙。

5.18

若即景會心，則或「推」或「敲」，

必居其一，因景因情，自然靈妙，何勞擬議哉？

5.19

當吾之悲，有未嘗不可愉者焉；當吾之愉，有未嘗不可悲者焉；目營於一方者之所不見也。

5.20

昔我往矣  
楊柳依依  
今我來思  
雨雪霏霏

5.21

天情物理，可哀而可樂，用之無窮，流而不滯；窮且滯者不知爾。

5.22

「吳楚東南坼，乾坤日夜浮。」乍讀之若雄豪，然而適與「親朋無一字，老病有孤舟。」相為融浹。當知「倬彼雲漢」，頌作人者增其輝光，憂旱甚者益其尖赫，無適而無不適也。...天與物其能為爾鬪分乎？

5.23

興，觀，群，怨，詩盡於是矣。

- 經生家析「鹿鳴」，「嘉魚」爲群，「柏舟」，「小弁」爲怨，小人一往之喜怒耳，何足以言詩？「可以」云者，隨所「以」而皆「可」也。
- “詩三百篇”而下，唯“十九首”能然。李杜亦髣髴遇之，然其能俾人隨觸而皆可，亦不數數也。
- 5.24  
境非獨謂景物也。喜怒哀樂亦人心中之一境界。故能寫真景物真感情者。謂之有境界。否則謂之無境界。
- 5.25  
大家之作。其言情也必沁人心脾。其寫景也必豁人耳目。其辭脫口而出。無矯揉妝束之態。以其所見者真。所知者深也。詩詞皆然。持此以衡古今之作者。可無大誤矣。
- 5.26  
葉上初陽乾宿雨。水面清圓。一一風荷舉。
- 5.27  
紅杏枝頭春意鬧。著一鬧字而境界全出。雲破月來花弄影。著一弄字而境界全出矣。
- 5.28  
政治家之眼。域於一人一事。詩人之眼。則通古今而觀之。詞人觀物。須用詩人之眼。不可用政治家之眼。
- 5.29  
淚眼問花花不語。亂紅飛過秋千去。
- 5.30  
生年不滿百。常懷千歲憂。晝短苦夜長。何不秉燭遊。
- 5.31  
天似穹廬。籠蓋四野。天蒼蒼。野茫茫。風吹草低見牛羊。



## Glossary

Characters given in the list of Chinese historical periods, in the appendix of original Chinese passages, or in the bibliography are not repeated here. Entries are alphabetized letter-by-letter, disregarding spaces, aspiration marks, and hyphens. Homonyms are distinguished by page references in parentheses indicating the first time they appear in the text.

ch'an	禪
Chan Fang-sheng	湛方生
Ch'ang Chien	常建
Chang Hsieh	張協
Chang Hsien	張先
Chang Hua	張華
Ch'ang-kan	長干
Chang Tsai	張載
Chang-i	張掖
Chang Yen	張炎
Chao Meng	趙孟
Chao-yin	招隱
chen	真
Cheng	鄭
chen-t'i	真體



chen-tsai	真宰
Ch'en T'ing-cho	陳廷焯
ch'i	氣
Ch'i	齊
Chiang Yen	江淹
chiao-jung	交融
ch'iao-kou hsing-ssu	巧構形似
ch'iao-ssu	巧似
Chia Tao	賈島
chi ch'ing shan shui	寄情山水
chi ch'ing yü ching	寄情於景
chien (11)	箋
chien (120)	健
Ch'ien Ch'i	錢起
chien-k'ang	建康
chien su pao p'u	見素抱樸
ch'ien-t'u	前途
chih	志
chih-hsün	直尋
chih-kuo	治國
chih ming chü chung	旨冥句中
"Chih pei-yu"	知北遊
Ch'ih Sung-tzu	赤松子
chi-mu	即目
chin	近
ching (xi)	景
ching (17)	經
ching (76)	靜
ching (95)	境
Ching (Duke, 45)	景
ch'ing (xi)	情
ch'ing (224)	清
ching-chieh	境界

ch'ing-ching chiao-jung	情景交融
ch'ing-ching hsiang-sheng	情景相生
ch'ing i wu hsing	情以物興
Ching K'o	荊軻
Ching-ling	竟陵
"Ch'ing-ts'ai "	情采
ch'ing tsai yen wai	情在言外
ching wai chih ching	景外之景
ch'ing-yüan	清遠
chin-t'i	近體
chin-t'i shih	近體詩
Chi P'u	極浦
"Chiu ko"	九歌
"Chiu-min"	九愍
"Chiu pien "	九辯
"Ch'i-wu lun"	齊物論
<i>Chou-li</i>	周禮
Chou-nan	周南
Chou Pang-yen	周邦彥
<i>Chou-shui-hsüan tz'u-hua</i>	綉水軒詞話
ch'ü	曲
chuang mei	壯美
<i>Ch'uan-shan i-shu</i>	船山遺書
ch'u ch'ang-ching	出常境
chüeh-chü	絕句
ch'ün	群
"Ch'ung-tan "	沖淡
ch'ü-ssu	取思
Ch'ü Yüan	屈原
ch'ü-yüan	趣遠
fan ch'ing i ho ch'i chih	反情以和其志
feng (10)	諷
feng (16)	風

Feng Yen-ssu	馮延巳
Fo-ching	佛境
fu	賦
"Han-kuang"	漢廣
Ho Hsün	何遜
Ho Shang	賀裳
hsiang	象
Hsiang (Duke, 13)	襄
hsiang-ch'u	相觸
hsiang wai chih hsiang	象外之象
hsiang-yü	相遇
"Hsiao-hsü"	小序
Hsiao Tzu-liang	蕭子良
"Hsiao-yao yu"	逍遙遊
hsieh-ching	寫景
Hsieh Ling-yün	謝靈運
Hsieh T'iao	謝朓
Hsieh Wan	謝萬
Hsien	獻
hsien	閒
Hsi K'ang	嵇康
hsin	心
hsing	興
hsing-chih	興緻
hsing-ch'ü	興趣
hsing-fen	興奮
hsing-hsiang	興象
hsing-jung	形容
hsing-ssu	形似
hsing-yüan	興遠
hsin yüeh-fu	新樂府
<i>Hsi-t'ang yung-jih hsü-lun</i>	夕堂永日緒論
hsiu	秀

hsiung	雄
“Hsiung-hun”	雄渾
hsiu-shen	修身
hsü	虛
hsüan-hsüeh	玄學
hsüan-lan	玄覽
hsüan-yen shih	玄言詩
hsü-chi ying-wu	虛己應物
Hsü Kan	徐幹
Hsün Tzu	荀子
hua	化
huai-ku	懷古
Huai-nan Hsiao Shan	淮南小山
huan-chung	環中
Huang-fu Jan	皇甫冉
hun (120)	渾
hun (158)	魂
i (4)	意
i (9)	易
<i>I-ching</i>	易經
i ching	意境
i ching chieh chü	以景結句
i ching shen wang	意靜神王
i-hsiang	意象
i-ming	意冥
i pu ch'en wu	意不稱物
i shao tsung to	以少總多
i yü ching hun	意與境渾
jen-hsin	人心
jen shih t'ien ti chih hsin	人是天地之心
Juan Chi	阮籍
ju-hsing	入興
jung ju chih ching	榮辱之境

ju tsai mu ch'ien	如在目前
kan-hsing	感興
kao-hsing	高興
"Kao-ku"	高古
Kao Shih	高適
kao-yüan	高遠
ko	隔
k'o-ch'ou	客愁
ko-hsing t'i	歌行體
kuan	觀
"Kuan-chü"	關雎
kuan-hsi	關係
kuan-wo	觀我
kuan-wu	觀物
K'uei-chi	會稽
k'ung	空
kung-t'i shih	宮體詩
Kuo P'u	郭璞
<i>Kuo-yü</i>	國語
ku-t'i	古體
Lan-t'ien	藍田
Lan-t'ing	蘭亭
li (123)	李
li (149)	理
li (212)	里
Li Chia-yu	李嘉祐
Li Chung-meng	李仲蒙
li-hsiang	理想
li-nien	理念
Li Po	李白
"Li sao"	離騷
Liu Ch'ang-ch'ing	劉長卿
Liu-ching	六經

liu-i (9)	六藝
liu-i (10)	六義
Liu-shih	六詩
Liu Tsung-yüan	柳宗元
"Liu-tung"	流動
Liu Yung-chi	劉永濟
lun	論
"Lun wen-i"	論文意
lü-shih	律詩
"Lü-yeh shu-huai"	旅夜書懷
Lu Yu	陸游
Lu Yün	陸雲
Mao Ch'ang	毛萇
Mao Heng	毛亨
Mei Yao-ch'en	梅堯臣
Meng Hao-jan	孟浩然
mi-fu	密賦
ming-wu	冥無
mu chi tao ts'un	目極道存
<i>Nan-ch'uang man-chi</i>	南床漫濟
neng hsieh chih	能寫之
neng kuan	能觀
p'ai-lü	俳律
<i>Pai-yü-chai tz'u-hua</i>	白語齋詞話
Pan Chieh-yü	班婕妤
pao	褒
Pao Chao	鮑照
pi	比
pi-chi	筆記
pien	貶
Po Chü-i	白居易
Po-yü	伯魚
pu-ko	不隔

san-hsüan	三玄
"San-yüeh san-jih"	三月三日
shan	山
shan-chih hsing-chuang hsieh-wu chih tz'u	善制形狀寫物之辭
"Shan-kuei"	山鬼
shan-shui shih	山水詩
Shao-nan	召南
Shao Yung	邵雍
shen	神
shen-i	神詣
shen-li	神理
"Shen-ssu"	神思
shen-yün	神韻
shen yü wu yu	神與物遊
shih (131)	詩
shih (135)	實
shih che chih chih so chih yeh	詩者志之所至也
shih-chiao	詩教
shih chih chih yeh	詩之至也
shih ch'ing yüan ching fa	詩情緣境發
shih-fa	詩法
shih-hua	詩話
<i>Shih-i</i>	詩釋
<i>Shih-ko</i>	詩格
shih k'o-i yüan	詩可以怨
"Shih ta-hsü"	詩大序
shih yen chih	詩言志
<i>Shih-yen-chih pien</i>	詩言志辯
<i>Shu</i>	書
shui	水
ssu	似
Ssu-k'ung Shu	司空曙
Ssu-ma Chi-chu	司馬季主

ssu wu hsieh	思無邪
ssu yü ching hsieh	思與境偕
su	素
Sun Cho	孫焯
sung	頌
Sung Ch'i	宋祁
"Sung Ts'an-liao shi"	送參寥師
Sung Yü	宋玉
Sun Lien-k'uei	孫聯奎
ta	大
ta hsiang wu hsing	大象無形
Ta-hsü	大序
Tai Shu-lun	戴叔倫
Ta-lei	大雷
tan	丹
T'ao Han	陶翰
tao yin wu ming	道隱無名
Ta Shu	大叔
ta yin hsi sheng	大音希聲
Teng Hsien-ho	鄧顯鶴
teng-kao	登高
"Teng Yüeh-yang lou"	登岳陽樓
teng-yu shih	登游詩
t'ien	天
t'ien-tao	天道
"T'ien Tzu-fang "	田子方
ts'ai	采
"Tsai-yu"	在宥
ts'an	參
ts'an-hua	參化
Ts'ao Chih	曹植
Ts'ao Ts'ao	曹操
Tso chuan	左傳



Tso Ssu	左思
Ts'ui Hao	崔顥
tuan-chang ch'ü-i	斷章取義
Tu Fu	杜甫
t'ung	通
Tung-t'ing	洞庭
tz'u	詞
t'zu-hua	詞話
"Tzu-jan"	自然
tz'u-jan chih fa-lü	自然之法律
Tz'u yüan	詞源
Wang An-shih	王安石
Wang Ch'ang-ling	王昌齡
Wang Chao-chün	王昭君
Wang Chia	王駕
Wang Hsi-chih	王羲之
Wang I	王逸
Wang Ts'an	王粲
Wang Tzu-ch'iao	王子喬
Wang Wei	王維
wei	微
wei ch'ing tsao wen	為情造文
Wei Hung	衛宏
wei wen tsao ch'ing	為文造情
Wei Ying-wu	韋應物
wen	文
wen pu tai i	文不逮意
wo	我
wu (4)	物
wu (108)	無
Wu (Han Emperor, 211)	武
wu i ch'ing kuan	物以情觀
wu-kan	物感

wu-ku	五古
Wu K'uan	吳寬
wu-li	物理
"Wu-se"	物色
wu-shih wu-t'ing	無視無聽
wu-t'ai	物態
wu-wo chih ching	無我之境
ya	雅
yang	陽
"Yang-sheng chu"	養生主
Yang Wan-li	楊萬里
yen-ch'ing	言情
"Yen lien-chu "	演連珠
Yen Yen-chih	顏延之
yin (2)	陰
yin (88)	隱
ying (114)	影
ying (148)	迎
"Yin-hsiu"	隱秀
yü	喻
Yü	虞
yüan (68)	怨
yüan (86)	遠
"Yüan-yu"	遠遊
yü ch'ing yü ching	寓情於景
Yüeh	樂
"Yüeh-chi"	樂記
yüeh-fu	樂府
"Yüeh-yeh i she-ti"	月夜憶舍弟
"Yu-hsien"	遊仙
Yü Hsin	庾信
yu-jan	悠然
yu-mei	優美

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*Yung-huai*

Yung-huai shih

yung-wu

yung-wu shih

yu-sheng

yu-shih

yu-wo chih ching

yü yü tou tsai mu ch'ien

詠懷

詠懷詩

詠物

詠物詩

憂生

憂世

有我之境

語語都在目前

## Notes

### Notes to the Introduction

- 1 From *Lun-yü i-chu*, annotated by Yang Po-chün (rpt. Hong Kong: Chung-hua, 1984), 185. All references to the *Analects* in the body of my text are taken from the Yang edition.
- 2 See his *The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry from Beowulf to Shakespeare* (Strassburg, 1905), 4–5. Also see John T. I. Bryan's *The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry* (rpt. Folcroft, Pa.: Folcroft Library Editions, 1972).
- 3 Steven Van Zoeren's recent book, *Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in Traditional China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), offers valuable insights into the principles that have guided the interpretation of the *Book of Songs* for over two thousand years. For a study of the persistent and pervasive Confucian influence on poetry criticism, see Pauline Yü's *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). Also of relevance is Donald Holzman's "Confucius and Ancient Chinese Literary Criticism," in *Chinese Approaches to Literature from Confucius to Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, ed. Adele Rickett (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 21–41. For a study of the various critical tendencies in the Chinese tradition, see James J. Y. Liu's *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975). A useful anthology of critical texts with commentary is Stephen Owen's *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Council on East Asian Studies, 1992).
- 4 See chapter 3, 73–75, for a further discussion of this point.
- 5 According to Ts'ai Ying-chün, the first critic to use *ch'ing-ching* as a pair of critical terms was Huang Sheng, the Southern Sung critic, around the mid-thirteenth century. For further discussion on this, see Ts'ai's *Pi-hsing wu-se yü ch'ing-ching*

*chiao-jung* (Taipei: Ta-an, 1986), 1–17. For valuable studies in English on the notion of *ch'ing*, see Wong Siu-kit's "Ch'ing in Chinese Literary Criticism: A Study of the Poetry-Talk" (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1969) and "Ch'ing and Ching in the Critical Writings of Wang Fu-chih," in *Chinese Approaches to Literature from Confucius to Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, 121–50. Also of relevance is François Cheng's *Chinese Poetic Writing*, trans. Donald A. Riggs and Jerome P. Seaton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); trans. of *L'écriture poétique chinoise* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977). It treats, *inter alia*, the relationship between *ch'ing* and *ching* from a cosmological perspective. Particularly illuminating is his view that this relationship, premised on the Man-Earth-Heaven triad, not only involves the interchange between man and the cosmic breath (*ch'i*) but, as such, it must always aspire to Heaven and thus enable the interchange between man and Earth to be open. See his succinct summary of this point in "Author's Introduction to the English Language Edition," x–xiv. My study of Chung Hung (chapter 3, 68–69), Ssu-k'ung T'u (chapter 4, 117–29) and Wang Fu-chih (chapter 5, 146–54) demonstrates a similar view about this relationship.

- 6 The dates in this paragraph begin with Mao Heng (second century B.C.), the first influential annotator of the *Book of Songs*, and end with Wang Kuo-wei (1877–1927), the last of the traditional critics.
- 7 The notion *shih-chiao*, namely, using poetry as a means of education, first appeared in the *Book of Rites*. Confucius himself regarded the *Book of Songs* as a means of education as indicated in his conversations with his disciples in the *Analects*. See, for example, his words to his son, Po-yü, that poetry is essential to polite conversation as well as to the cultivation of propriety and rites (16: 13). The modern scholar Chu Tzu-ch'ing (1898–1948), succinctly remarks that it was during Confucius' time that the function of the *Book of Songs* changed from the musical to the ethical. See his *Shih-yen-chih pien* in *CTCKT*, 1:210–12. Also see a discussion of this issue in Wang Ching-hsien's *The Bell and the Drum* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 4–5.

## Notes to Chapter 1

- 1 For this entry, see *Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-chuan cheng-i* (SSCCS 2:1997). As for the ways in which the poems in the *Book of Songs* have been interpreted during the Spring and Autumn period, I have generally relied on the relevant chapters in *CTCKT*.
- 2 From *Mao-shih cheng-i* (Mao, no. 94) in SSCCS 1:346. All subsequent citations from the *Book of Songs* and its commentaries are from this text.
- 3 See his *Ch'un-ch'iu shih-hua*, ed. T'an Ying (rpt. Taipei, I-wen, 1968), *chüan* 1:1.
- 4 See, for example, *Analects*: 1:15; 2:2; 3:8 and 20; 17:9 and 10.
- 5 The phrase "no licentious thoughts" (*ssu wu hsieh*) comes from poem no. 297 and means "to concentrate without deviation [on the matter of horses]." In fact, the

- word *ssu* in the original text does not carry any substantive meaning, functioning simply as a phrase starter. Confucius' interpretation of this particular word as "thoughts" is also clearly out of context. See Yang's explanation in his edition of the *Analects* (2:2).
- 6 See *Shih-chi chin-chu*, annotated by Ma Ch'ih-ying (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1983), 4:1986-98. The term *Liu-i* used in the "Biography of Confucius" text is interchangeable with *Liu-ching* (Six Classics); see *Tz'u-hai* (Taipei: Chung-hua, 1972), 1:343-44.
  - 7 For an elucidation of this passage in *Mencius*, particularly the meaning of Confucius' words at the end, "I have appropriated the didactic principles therein," see *Meng-tzu i-chu*, annotated by Yang Po-chün (rpt. Peking: Chung-hua, 1984), 1:192-93.
  - 8 For an all-out counterargument to the traditional interpretation of the *Book of Songs* during the early twentieth century, see *KSP*, 3:309-705.
  - 9 Scholars generally hold that the *liu-i* or *liu-shih*, referring to *feng*, *ya*, *sung*, *fu*, *pi*, and *hsing*, were originally all linked with music. See a detailed discussion of this in *CTCKT* 1:193-96 and 262-69. Also see Wang Ching-hsien, 3-5.
  - 10 Scholars in general tend to accept that the "Great Preface" was probably written by Wei Hung of the first century A.D., as suggested in the *Hou-Han shu* (*History of the Latter Han*) by the Han historian Fan Yeh (389-445); see, for example, *KSP* 3:403. As for the "Small Prefaces," the authorship is even more uncertain and it might have involved several authors; see *San-pai-p'ien yen-lun*, Chiang Shan-kuo (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1976), 79-83.
  - 11 I agree with the modern scholar Li Tse-hou that the remarks placed before the first poem "Kuan-chü" actually include both the "Great Preface" and the "Small Preface," with the former cutting into the latter. The point is that the "Great Preface" should begin with the words "poetry is where the heart intends" (*shih che chih chih so chih yeh*) and end with the words "this is the ultimate of poetry" (*shih chih chih yeh*). The passages preceding the beginning of the "Great Preface" and those following its ending belong to the "Small Preface." See Li Tse-hou and Liu Chi-kang, *Chung-kuo mei-hsüeh shih* (rpt. Taipei: Ku-feng, 1987), 1:657-59.
  - 12 For a discussion in English on *feng*, *ya*, and *sung*, see James J. Y. Liu's *Chinese Theories of Literature*, 64 and 112. I have used Liu's translations for these three terms. As for the function of praise and criticism, all of the four *sung* poems from the Lu state, for example, are apparently in praise of Duke Hsi of Lu; in the *ya* section, nos. 187 and 234 are expressions of complaint and criticism. See Ch'ü Wan-li, *Shih-ching shih-i* (Taipei: Hua-kang, 1974), 4-7.
  - 13 Ch'ü Wan-li, 4-7.
  - 14 See Cheng Chen-to, "Tu Mao-shih hsü" in *KSP* 3:392-96, which lists a large number of similar poems in the *feng* section about the familiar feeling of love and

longing, to point out how their meaning is variously twisted and distorted by the Confucian commentators so as to carry the sociopolitical or socioethical purpose of either praise or criticism.

- 15 It was during the Han period that the *Book of Songs* began to be regarded as a *ching* (classic); see *CTCKT* 1:286–91 for a detailed discussion.
- 16 See Wang Ching-hsien, 103. His book *The Bell and the Drum* is a very detailed and innovative study about the function of *hsing* as a formulaic expression in the *Book of Songs*.
- 17 Although Chinese poetry is very often intensely personal and occasioned by a specific event in the poet's life, it is still appropriate to distinguish between the poetic "I," or the speaker in the poem, and the poet outside of the poem. This is especially true when the poet is assuming the voice and persona of somebody else, as often happens in Music Bureau poetry as well as in some T'ang and Sung lyrics.
- 18 The transcription for these two words, *tsang* and *shiang*, is based on Wang Li's reconstructed pronunciation for the period. See his *Shih-ching yün-tu* (Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi, 1980), 228. The modern equivalents are *ts'ang* and *shuang*.
- 19 As I mention in the Afterword (pp. 169-74), the operative force that brings about the awareness of the innate relatedness between "feeling" and "scene" is *hsing*. In treating this relationship, this book, in fact, also investigates how the notion of *hsing* evolved in Chinese criticism. *Hsing* is at the heart of Chinese poetry and its importance cannot be underestimated. At the March 1986 American Comparative Literature Association Conference (Ann Arbor, Michigan), I gave a paper "On the Notion of *Hsing* and Its Implications for Chinese-Western Comparative Poetics." I singled out *hsing* as the most significant distinction between Chinese and Anglo-American poetry. Quite independently and coincidentally, some of my views about *hsing* are similar to François Jullien's treatment in his *La Valeur allusive: Des catégories originales de l'interprétation poétique dans la tradition chinoise* (Contribution à une réflexion sur l'altérité interculturelle). Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient 144 (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1985).
- 20 See Wang Ching-hsien, 102.
- 21 For a study of this subject in English, see Pauline Yü, "Imagery in 'Encountering Sorrow,'" in *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition*, 84–117.

## Notes to Chapter 2

- 1 *Chung-kuo mei-hsüeh shih*, 2:6.
- 2 See his *I-ching* (Peking: Peking University, 1987), 126.

- 3 I agree with Kao Yu-kung's notion that the fusion of "feeling" and "scene" of T'ang poetry was very much developed from the fusion of two strands of poetry, namely, the expressive mode typified by Juan Chi's poems, *Chanting My Sorrow*, and landscape poetry. Kao's observations were made at a talk he delivered at Ts'ing Hua University (Taiwan, 1987), "Chung-kuo shu-ch'ing ssu-hsiang te yen-pien," typescript, 11-12.
- 4 See the appendix in Hans Frankel, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), for a succinct explanation of the *chin-t'i* and the *ku-t'i* as well as other poetic forms referred to throughout this book. For a more detailed discussion of the origin, development, and characteristics of various literary styles, see Ch'u Ping-chieh, *Chung-kuo ku-tai wen-t'i kai-lun* (Peking: Peking University, 1984). Of particular interest are: chapter 4 on Music Bureau poetry, 108-24; chapter 5 on ancient-style poetry, 125-54; and chapter 7 on recent-style poetry, 188-246.
- 5 Music Bureau poetry was so named because originally the anonymous folk songs of the Han period from various parts of China were collected by the Music Bureau, established around 120 B.C. by Emperor Wu of the Former Han. Later on, long after the abolition of the Music Bureau, "Music Bureau" began to refer to both the anonymous songs of the folk tradition and the imitations of such songs by men of letters written long after the abolition of the Music Bureau. For a detailed discussion on this subject, see both Hans Frankel, "The Development of Han and Wei Yüeh-fu as a High Literary Genre" in *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice: Shih Poetry from the Late Han to the T'ang*, ed. Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 255-86; and Hsiao Ti-fei's *Han Wei Liu-ch'ao yüeh-fu wen-hsüeh shih* (Peking: Jen-min, 1984). Joseph R. Allen's *In the Voice of Others* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1992) argues from an intratextual perspective that Music Bureau poetry first arose from the literary conventions of the literati, contrary to the traditional view that its roots were intertwined with music and the folk tradition.
- 6 For the evolution of pentasyllabic poetry in relation to Music Bureau poetry, see Hsiao Ti-fei, 15-24.
- 7 Scholars are not certain about the exact dates of the "Nineteen Ancient-Style Poems." These poems are generally presumed to have been written around the Latter Han period. For a brief treatment in English of this issue, see Marsha Wagner's "Ku-shih shih-chiu shou," in *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. William H. Nienhauser, Jr., et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 489-91.
- 8 Chien-an is the reign title of Emperor Hsien of the Latter Han (196-220). The Chien-an era in literature covers approximately fifty years. Poetically, it was a particularly active era with quite a number of literary talents. Aside from Ts'ao Ts'ao (155-220), Ts'ao P'i (187-226), and Ts'ao Chih, there were the famous Seven Talents including Wang Ts'an (177-214) and Hsü Kan (171-214). The poems of



the Chien-an era are typified by their powerfully expressive style of personal emotions, recalling the simple and genuine flavor of the folk tradition of the Music Bureau poems.

- 9 The "six-pinned wings" refers to a huge waterfowl which, according to Chinese lore, could fly a thousand *li*. Here the term describes the speaker's desire to soar above and away from the sublunary world.
- 10 "Sung" and "Ch'iao" are legendary Taoist immortals, Ch'ih Sung-tzu and Wang Tzu-ch'iao, respectively, who frequently appear in this type of poem.
- 11 "Tripod Lake" refers to a legendary body of water where the Yellow Emperor became an immortal after having made a tripod. The Lake has thus become associated with the immortals.
- 12 The "Ninth Heaven" is the highest heaven and also the heaven inhabited by Taoist monks.
- 13 The "far-off journey" that the speaker refers to in line 8 takes him in his imaginary roamings to the farthest possible corners of the universe in all four directions: the "Hibiscus" (line 9) in the east is a legendary place where the sun rises; the "Gentle Water" (line 10) is the River Jo in western China (Chang-i) with a supposed course of 3,000 *li*; the "Dark Heaven" (line 11) refers to North China in ancient times where the water in winter was black; "Cinnabar Hill" (line 12) probably refers to Mount Tan in modern Szechuan Province, famous for its red haze.
- 14 Ch'ü Yüan's "The Distant Journey" ("Yüan-yu"), as pointed out by Huang Chieh (1873–1935), was the first poetic expression of such a yearning motivated by a deep dissatisfaction with the human world. See Huang Chieh's *Ts'ao Tzu-chien shih chu* (rpt. Taipei: Ho-lo, 1975), 79. More than five centuries later, many of the poets of the late Han and Wei periods resorted to a similar kind of wishful thinking to express their own frustration.
- 15 Perhaps more to the point is the modern scholar Liu Shih-p'ei's comment that, beginning from the Chien-an era, poetry began to be not only expressive of human emotions, but gradually became tinged with Taoist thinking. See his *Chung-kuo chung-ku wen-hsüeh shih* (rpt. Taipei: Cheng-sheng, 1973), 8.
- 16 For an in-depth discussion of Neo-Taoism, see Mou Tsung-san, *Wei-Chin hsüan-hsüeh* (Taichung: Tung-hai University, 1962).
- 17 See Wang Yao, *Chung-ku wen-hsüeh-shih lun-chi* (Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi, 1982), 111–13.
- 18 See n. 1 to this poem in *WCNP* 1:248.
- 19 See the various critical comments on Lu Chi as a poet in *WCNP*, 2:278–81. Also Chung Hung's criticism of Lu Chi in *SPCS*, 36.
- 20 The Valley of the Sun is the legendary valley from which the sun rises in the morning.

- 21 "Chi-chu" refers to Ssu-ma Chi-chu, who, according to Ssu-ma Ch'ien (*Shih-chi chin-chu*, *chüan* 127, 6:3261–71), was a famous fortune-teller in the capital Ch'ang-an (modern Xian) during the early Han. He lived poorly and led a reclusive life to avoid the attention as well as the troubles of the world.
- 22 For an explanation of the origin of this type of poetry, see commentary by Wang I (ca. 89–ca. 158) in *Ch'u tz'u pu-chu* with supplementary notes by Hung Hsing-tsu (1070–1135), (rpt. Taipei: Chung-hua, 1972), 381–82.
- 23 Cheng-shih is the reign title of Emperor Ch'i of Wei (240–249); the poets active during this period were Juan Chi and Hsi K'ang (223–263).
- 24 The English translation of this passage is from J. D. Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream: The Life and Works of the Chinese Nature Poet Hsieh Ling-yün (385–433)*, Duke of K'ang-lo (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967), 1:94. The notion that various forms began to evolve once the universe was differentiated, as expressed in the first two lines, seems to come directly from the *Chuang Tzu* (CTIC 2:23). Lines 3–4 imply that once the final cause of the cosmos was defined, the notions of "short-lived" and "longevity" came into being. This notion likewise comes from the *Chuang Tzu* (CTIC 2:38). According to the *Chuang Tzu*, both the differentiation of the Primal Chaos and the knowledge of the distinction between "short-lived" and "longevity" are caused by departure from the whole undifferentiated Tao. For an interpretation of these arcane lines, see *WH* 2:595.
- 25 For a critique of Kuo P'u as a Neo-Taoist poet, see Fan Wen-lan, et al. *Chung-kuo t'ung-shih* (Peking: Jen-min, 1978), 2:520.
- 26 See his comment in *Ch'ung-k'o Chao-ming Wen hsüan Li Shan chu* (Wu-hsien: Hailu hsüan private collection, 1772), *chüan* 5, n.p.
- 27 Masters "Red Pine" (Ch'ih Sung), "Floating Hill" (Fu Ch'iu), and "Tall Cliff" (Hung Yai) are legendary Taoists featured frequently in poems during the Wei-Chin period.
- 28 Chou Chao-ming very rightly points out that in this poem, "it is the immortals who come to visit the recluse rather than the recluse who goes out to search for them." See his "Transformation of Five-Character Poetry and the Achievement of Hsieh T'iao" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1987), 30.
- 29 See chapter 2, "Conversation," in *Shih-shuo hsün-yü chiao-chien*, ed. Hsü Chen-o (Peking: Chung-hua, 1984). In this chapter alone, for example, nature features prominently either as a conversation piece or as a figure of speech in sections 23, 24, 31, 32, 55, 61, 71, 73, 83, 85, 87, 88, 91, 92, 93, 95, and 98. For an English translation of this fifth-century collection of memorable and noteworthy anecdotes, conversations, and characters who lived between the declining years of the Latter Han and the beginning of the Liu-Sung period (approx. 150–420), see Richard B. Mather's *Shih-shuo hsün-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976).

- 30 For the original text, see Fang Hsüan-ling (578–648), et al., *Chün shu*, (rpt. Peking: Chung-hua, 1982), 7:2099. This particular event became so famous that many later poets used “Orchid Pavilion” (“Lan-t’ing”), instead of the usual “On the Third Day of the Third Month” (“San-yüeh san-jih”), as the title for their poems about the annual celebration in late spring.
- 31 In comparing the two T’ang poets Liu Tsung-yüan (773–819) and Han Yü (768–824), he mentions T’ao Ch’ien’s verses as a measure of fine poetry. He says that both T’ao Ch’ien and Liu Tsung-yüan share the same superb capability of writing poetry that is rich and full of life’s sap and vitality on the inside while on the outside it appears to be dry and all shrivelled up. See *Tung-po t’i pa* (*chüan* 2, 21b–22a) in *Pai-pu ts’ung-shu chi-ch’eng* (ser. 22, vol. 48) (rpt. Taipei: I-wen, 1965).
- 32 The English translation cited here is taken from James R. Hightower, *The Poetry of T’ao Ch’ien* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 43–44. For the Chinese text, see *TYMS*, pp. 44–45. P’eng-tsu (line 11), a legendary figure in antiquity, was believed to have lived some 800 years.
- 33 The English translation here is partially based on Hightower, 130. The last two lines are Anthony Yü’s suggestion.
- 34 This notion of nurturing life is the purport of chapter 3, “Yang-sheng chu” in the *Chuang Tzu*. See *CTIC*, 52–61.
- 35 The Ch’ing critic Fang Tung-shu (1772–1851) notices that most of Hsieh Ling-yun’s poems on travel seem to follow this pattern. See *Fang Tung-shu p’ing ku-shih hsüan* (rpt. Taipei: Lien-ching, 1975), 166. The modern scholar Lin Wen-yüeh also makes a similar observation in her *Shan-shui yü ku-tien* (Taipei: Ch’un wen-hsüeh, 1976), 48–56.
- 36 See, for example, K’ang-i Sun Chang’s discussion of this descriptive mode and its relation with parallelism and Chinese cosmology, *Six Dynasties Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 57–61 and 63–67. Lin Wen-yüeh also observes (41–48) that this kind of symmetrical and alternating description of mountains and rivers is present not only in Hsieh Ling-yün, but in other poets as well, such as Pao Chao, Hsieh T’iao and later in the T’ang poets, particularly in Wang Wei (699–759) and Li Po (701–762).
- 37 Lin Wen-yüeh, 44–46.
- 38 The Ming critic Lu Shih-yung makes a similar comment: “By the Liu-Sung period, the ancient-style poetry had come to an end and regulated poetry began to emerge. With this change in style, poetry began to open itself up greatly to sounds and colors” (2.22). See his *Shih-ching tsung-lun* in *LTSHHP*, 3:1406.
- 39 See “Hsieh Ling-yun” in *Sung-shu*, *chüan* 67, Shen Yüeh, (rpt. Peking: Chung-hua, 1983), 6:1774–76.
- 40 See the *Lieh Tzu*, annotated by Chang Chan (rpt. Taipei: I-wen, 1971), *chüan* 5, 6b.

- 41 See *Ch'i-lüeh*, by Liu Hsin, collected in *Han shu i-wen chih pu-chu* (rpt. Taipei: Kuang-wen, 1969), 3.
- 42 The translation is primarily based on Chou Chao-ming, 226.
- 43 For recent discussions in English on the evolution of recent-style poetry, see two essays in *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice*: Kao Yu-kung, "The Aesthetics of Regulated Verse" (332–85) and Shuen-fu Lin, "The Nature of the Quatrain from the Late Han to the High T'ang" (296–331). Also see K'ang-i Sun Chang (128–44, 176–78) and Chou Chao-ming (205–18, 244–50). Both Chang and Chou point out that these purely descriptive subgenres of poetry (object-poetry and palace-style poetry) during the Southern Dynasties, however empty their content, did have a substantial impact on the formal development of recent-style poetry of the T'ang period in diction, tonal patterns, rhyme scheme, and the compact verse form.
- 44 See K'ang-i Sun Chang, 128.
- 45 We are reminded of the line, "Dusk palace, flitting fireflies, my thoughts are wistful," from the well-known "Song of Eternal Sorrow" by the T'ang poet Po Chü-i (772–846).
- 46 For an English translation of this series of poems, see "Yü Hsin's 'Songs of Sorrow'" by William T. Graham, Jr., and James R. Hightower in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43, no. 1 (1983): 5–55.
- 47 According to "Juan Chi" in *Chin shu (chüan 49, vol. 5: 1360)*, Juan was once ambitious about serving his country. But because of the extreme turmoil during the Wei-Chin period when many literati had been killed for no apparent rhyme or reason, Juan decided to withdraw from the world and gave himself up to drinking.
- 48 When Chuang Tzu woke he was uncertain whether it was he who dreamed of the butterfly or the butterfly that dreamed of him. The fable is generally understood to be Chuang Tzu's illustration of an ideal state where all things are equal and all differences are dispelled, including the ultimate distinction between reality and illusion (dream). See the end of the second chapter ("Ch'i-wu lun" [On equality of things]) in the *Chuang Tzu* (CTIC, 51).

### Notes to Chapter 3

- 1 The consciousness of literature as a form of writing with its own distinct nature, rules, and subgenres was expressed in various critical writings of the period. In addition to such important works of the Southern Dynasties as Liu Hsieh's *Wen-hsin tiao-lung* and Chung Hung's *Shih-p'in*, many treatises and essays on literature were written during the Wei-Chin period and the Southern Dynasties. The "Treatise on Literature" ("Lun-wen") by Ts'ao P'i (187–226), for instance, was a chapter in his *Discourses on the Classics (Tien-lun)*; unfortunately, most of the rest

of the *Tien-lun* has been lost. Nevertheless, the “Lun-wen” was the first critical essay to discuss the value of literature, the notion of literary talent and style, and the question of genres. Later, Lu Chi’s *Essay on Literature (Wen-fu)* expresses the first serious concern about the creative process in literature. The now-lost *Wen-chang liu-pieh chi* by Chih Yü (d. 311) was the first of its kind in the history of anthologies in China, setting a model for later volumes, including the influential *Wen hsüan* by Hsiao T’ung (501–531), compiled two centuries later. The extant “Discourse” (*lun*) attached to *Wen-chang liu-pieh chi*, discussing various important aspects of literature including the idea of genre and genre development, was Chih Yü’s contribution as a critic. For a general survey of the critical works written during this period, see Kuo Shao-yü, *Chung-kuo li-tai wen-lun hsüan* (Hong Kong, Chung-hua, 1979), 1:124–311.

- 2 Many subtle distinctions and translations have been offered by critics regarding the two closely related terms, *wu* and *hsiang*. For the purposes of my study, however, the more general descriptions found throughout the body of my text are sufficient. See Index under “object” (*wu*) and “phenomenon” (*hsiang*). For the etymology of the word *wu*, see Wang Yüan-hua, “Wen-hsin tiao-lung” *ch’uang-tso lun* (Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi, 1979), 78–80.
- 3 For the evolution of the meaning of the word *ching* from the Six Dynasties to the Sung dynasty, see Ogawa Tamaki, “Feng-ching te i-i,” in *Lun Chung-kuo shih*, trans. T’an Ju-ch’ien, et al. (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1986), 1–32.
- 4 For a contemporary explication of the relationship between music and the rites (*li*) and the social function of music as expressed in the *Record of Music*, see Li Tse-hou and Liu Chi-Kang, *Chung-guo mei-hsüeh shih* (Taipei: Ku-feng, 1987), 1:397–408.
- 5 See Chu, *CTCKT*, 2:194–95. This is particularly borne out in the *Analects* (5:26 and 11:26). When Confucius asks his disciples about their *chih* he is referring either to their intent concerning the “cultivation of the self” (*hsiu-shen*) or to their ambition to “rule the state” (*chih-kuo*). For a recent study of the complex history of *chih* and its association with the famous dictum *shih yen chih*, see Van Zoeren, 52–79.
- 6 For a discussion of how the expression of personal feeling (*ch’ing*) gradually supplanted that of the sociopolitically oriented *chih* as the main focus in literature during the Six Dynasties, see Chu (*CTCKT* 1:218–226). The modern scholar Chou Cheng-fu holds that the notion of *chih* actually includes feeling (*ch’ing*); see his “Shih yen chih” in *Wen-lun man-pi* (Peking: Kuang-ming jih-pao, 1984), 1–7.
- 7 Lu Yün’s view is expressed in his preface to “Chiu min,” quoted in Ch’i Hsü-pang, *Tao-chia ssu-hsiang yü Chung-kuo ku-tai wen-hsüeh li-lun* (Peking: Peking Teachers’ College, 1988), 113.
- 8 Wang Yüan-hua, 221.
- 9 The “lady” refers either to the famous Wang Chao-chün of Han who was sent to marry, and thereby pacify, the chieftain of a barbarian tribe or to another lady of

- the Han court, Pan Chieh-yü, to whom is attributed the famous and moving poem "Round Fan," expressing how she, like the fan in winter, is deserted by her master; see *SPCS*, 11.
- 10 This bewitching lady might be Lady Li, one of the favorite concubines of the Han Emperor Wu; see *SPCS*, 11.
  - 11 According to the *Analects* (17:9), poetry has four functions: to evoke emotion (*hsing*), to observe people (*kuan*), to congregate people (*ch'üin*), and to give expression to grievances (*yüan*).
  - 12 For a cogent treatment of *yüan* as an expression of literature, see Ch'ien Chung-shu, "Shih k'o-i yüan" in a recently compiled anthology of Ch'ien's works, *Ch'ien Chung-shu lun-hsüeh wen-hsüan*, ed. Shu Chan (Canton: Hua-ch'eng, 1990), 6:148-66.
  - 13 See his *Chung-kuo mei-hsüeh shih*, 2:909-17.
  - 14 For a discussion of *ch'i*, see Li Tu, *Chung hsi che-hsüeh ssu-hsiang chung te t'ien-tao yü shang-ti* (Taipei: Lien-ching, 1987), 45-49. See also Chang Ching-erh, "The Concept of *Ch'i* in Chinese Literary Criticism" (Ph.D. diss., National Taiwan University, 1976). For another cogent study of *ch'i* in relation to artistic creation, see Ch'ien Chung-lien, "Shih ch'i," in *Ku-tai wen-hsüeh li-lun yen-chiu*, ed. Ku-tai wen-hsüeh li-lun yen-chiu pien-wei-hui (Shanghai: Shanghai Ku-chi, 1981), 5:129-50.
  - 15 See *Ch'u tz'u pu-chu*, 76.
  - 16 The phrase *hsüan-lan* comes from chapter 10 in the *Lao Tzu*, (*LTCK*, 24). Also see *WCNP* 1:254. It means observing (*lan*) the myriad things with a mind that is quiet and deep (*hsüan*).
  - 17 For a detailed discussion of this Taoist notion and its ramification for the creative process, see Ch'i Hsü-pang, 36-49.
  - 18 The English translations of this passage and 3.18 from *Essay on Literature* are by Ch'en Shih-hsiang; see *Lu Chi "Wen-Fu" chiao-shih*, annotated by Yang Mu (Taipei: Hung-fan, 1985), 16 and 17, respectively.
  - 19 Anthony Yü's suggestion for improving the last line of this translation reads: "And garner (*ts'ai*) the rimes left unheard for a thousand ages."
  - 20 Except for the words in square brackets, which are my preferences, the English translation of this passage and others from the *Lao Tzu* are by D. C. Lau in his *Tao Te Ching*, rev. ed. (Hong Kong: Chinese UP, 1989), 23-25.
  - 21 "Spring days lengthen languidly" is a line from poem no. 154 in the *Book of Songs*. "Autumn winds sigh mournfully" is a variation of a line from "Mountain Spirit" ("Shan kuei") in "The Nine Songs" ("Chiu ko") attributed to Ch'ü Yüan; see *Ch'u tz'u pu-chu*, 35.

- 22 This is quoted from his *Shih shih* (see SSCC, 30). Also see Li Chuang-ying's note to this phrase in SSCC, 32.
- 23 See his poem "To Master Ts'an-liao" ("Sung Ts'an-liao shih") in *Su Shih shih chi*, ed. Wang Wen-Kao (rpt. Peking: Chung-hua, 1982), 3:906.
- 24 See Wu K'uan's postscript to Wang Wei's painting collected in *Shu-hua chien-ying*, compiled by Li Tso-hsien (rpt. Taipei: Han-hua wen-hua, 1971), 1:541.
- 25 Both *Styles of Poetry* and another essay, *Discourse on Literature (Lun wen-i)*, which we will discuss in chapter 4, have been attributed to the T'ang poet Wang Ch'ang-ling. For a brief discussion of the problematic authorship of these two critical treatises, see Lo Tsung-ch'iang, *Sui T'ang Wu-tai wen-hsüeh ssu-hsiang shih* (Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi, 1986), 177-79.
- 26 For a detailed discussion of Wang Fu-chih's notion of perfect harmony between the poet's soul and the laws of nature (*shen-li ts'ou-ho*), see chapter 5, 148-49.
- 27 See Wang Yüan-hua, 76.
- 28 I agree with Yang Mu that the word *wu* in the phrase *i pu ch'en wu* refers to "content" in this context rather than "object"; see Yang Mu, 3. For various explanations of the notion of *wu* in *i pu ch'en wu*, see *WFCS*, 4-5.
- 29 The English translation of these two lines is by Ch'en Shih-hsiang. See Yang Mu, 90. Master Wheelwright (Lun Pien) was a carpenter featured in the *Chuang Tzu* (see the chapter "T'ien-tao" *CTIC*, 254), known for his superb skill. His mind and the way his hand wielded the ax were in such perfect harmony that the master himself could not find words to describe the phenomenon.
- 30 A very helpful essay on the Chinese concept of "flavor" can be found in Eugene Chen Eoyang's "Beyond Visual and Aural Criteria: The Importance of Flavor in Chinese Literary Criticism," in *The Transparent Eye: Reflections on Translation, Chinese Literature, and Comparative Poetics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), 210-37.
- 31 For two essays treating the lost portions of this chapter and discussions about other texts with claims to authenticity, see "Wen-hsin tiao-lung 'Yin-hsiu p'ien' pu-wen chih-i" by Yang Ming-chao, and "Lun Wen-hsin tiao-lung 'Yin-hsiu p'ien' pu-wen chen-wei" by Wang Ta-ching, in *Wen-hsüeh p'ing-lun ts'ung-k'an*, 7 (Peking: Academy of Social Sciences, 1980), 189-203 and 204-11.

## Notes to Chapter 4

- 1 Yung-ming was the reign title of Emperor Wu of Ch'i. "Yung-ming style" refers to the poetic style of this period (483-493) characterized by an exaggerated observation of the strict rules of tone, rhyme, and alliteration. For a discussion in English of how the discovery and observation of these prosodic rules during the

- second half of the fifth century culminated in the development of regulated verse during the seventh century, see Kao Yu-kung's "The Aesthetics of Regulated Verse," in *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice*, 351–61.
- 2 For a brief description in English of the High T'ang as a period, see Stephen Owen's *The Great Age Of Chinese Poetry: The High T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), xi–xv.
  - 3 See my chapter 2, n. 3. Also see Kao, "Aesthetics," 345–51.
  - 4 See his "Meditations on a Hobby Horse," in *Aesthetics Today*, ed. Morris Philipson (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1961), 125.
  - 5 For a general introduction to the influence of Buddhism on Chinese literature, see Sun Ch'ang-wu, *Fo-chiao yü Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh* (Shanghai: Jen-min, 1988), particularly chapter 3, "Buddhism and Chinese Literary Writings," 222–321.
  - 6 For a study of the impact of Ch'an Buddhism on Chinese poetry of the T'ang and Sung periods, see Tu Sung-po, *Ch'an-hsüeh yü T'ang Sung shih-hsüeh* (Taipei: Li-ming, 1976). Also see Sun Ch'ang-wu, 246–59. According to Anthony Yü's suggestion to the author, the shorter verse forms developed in the Six Dynasties may not be exclusively an indigenous achievement. The *gatha*, as used at the end of every chapter of Liu Hsieh's *WHTL*, is, according to Yü, a good example of the Buddhist influence. Chapters 9 and 10 in Hu Shih's *Pai-hua wen-hsüeh shih* ([Taipei: Hu Shih chi-nien kuan, 1969], 1:133–88) discuss at length the translation of Buddhist sutras and their impact on Chinese literature. As for whether the translation of the well-known *Buddha-carita kavya Sutra* was the single most important factor in the development of the pentasyllabic line in Chinese poetry, Hu, unlike some of his contemporaries, had his reservations; see Hu Shih, 162–63.
  - 7 See *Ch'ien-shou T'ang-jen chiieh-chüi*, annotated by Fu Shou-sun and Liu Pai-shan (Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi, 1985), 1:71.
  - 8 In tracing the development of landscape poetry in the Chinese tradition, Yüan Hsing-p'ei cites this poem as a typical example of the T'ang landscape poem; see "Chung-kuo shan-shui-shih te i-shu mai-lo" in his *Chung-kuo shih-ke i-shu yen-chiu* (Peking: Peking University, 1987), 384–86. Wang Kuo-ying also treats this lyric as a landscape poem; see her *Chung-kuo shan-shui-shih yen-chiu* (Taipei: Lien-ching, 1986), 421–23.
  - 9 See my "A Sense of Scene: Depiction of Scene as Expression of Feeling in Chinese and English Poetry" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1982) for a discussion of this device of ending a poem with a "scene" (chapter 3, 33–39).
  - 10 This tradition of "grieving for autumn" probably began with Sung Yü's opening lines in "Chiu pien," quoted in chapter 3 (3.14). For a comparative study of the emotion associated with autumn in Chinese and English poetry, see Ch'en Peng-siang, *Thou Hast Thy Music Too: Autumn in Classical English and Chinese Poetry* (Taipei: Lucky Bookstore, 1981).



- 11 The Ming critic Hsieh Chen cites several variations on the analogy between old age and autumn leaves; see, for example, Wei Ying-wu's lines, "The man inside the window is aging / The tree outside the door is already autumnal"; Po Chü-i's "The trees are turning yellow / The man's hair is graying"; and Ssu-k'ung Shu's (fl. 766–779) "The yellow-leaved trees in the rain / The white-haired man under the lamp." See Hsieh's *Ssu-ming shih-hua* in *LTSHHP*, 3:1142.
- 12 Some of the well-known examples of this familiar analogy in Chinese poetry are Li Po's lines, "I draw my knife to cut the water, but the water flows on and on, / I raise my wine cup to drown the sorrow, but the sorrow becomes worse and worse," and Li Yü's (937–978) "How much sorrow can you hold? / It is just like the spring river flowing endlessly toward the east."
- 13 For a detailed discussion on this point, see Ch'ien Chung-shu, *T'an-i lu*, enlarged ed. (Taipei: Shu-lin, 1988), 52–57.
- 14 See *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice*, 384–85.
- 15 Yin Fan compiled *Ho-yüeh ying-ling chi* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an*, t'se 1369) in 753. It contains the poems of some of the best High T'ang poets including Ch'ang Chien, Li Po, Wang Wei, Kao Shih (702?–765), Meng Hao-jan, and Wang Ch'ang-ling. Both the general preface and the prefaces to the individual poets are important for they reflect how Yin Fan, as a contemporary of these High T'ang poets, evaluated the poetry. Kao Chung-wu's *Chung-hsing hsien-ch'i chi* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-kan*, ts'e 1368), following the model of *HYYL* with a general preface (missing in some editions) and prefaces to the individual poets, was compiled in the late 780s. He anthologized poets who were active during the 760s and 770s, including Ch'ien Ch'i, Tai Shu-lun, Huang-fu Jan, and Liu Ch'ang-ch'ing.
- 16 In Chiao-jan's major critical treatise, *Shih-shih*, the meaning of poetry is repeatedly described as lying beyond the written text. In the preface to *Shih-shih*, he mentions that genuine and miraculous lines of poetry are as beautiful, divine, and mysterious as great nature itself, whose meaning can only be intuited through the mind (*i-ming*). At the end of the preface, the reader is again reminded that the extraordinary meaning of the great poet must be comprehended through the spirit (*shen-i*). Both these notions (*i-ming* and *shen-i*), as the modern scholar Li Chuang-ying says, are heavily influenced by Buddhist and Neo-Taoist teaching; see preface to *SSCC*, 7–9.
- 17 See n. 25 in chapter 3 about the authorship of *Lun Wen-i* and *Shih-ko*.
- 18 The notion of *hsiang*, translated here as "phenomenon," refers to the "image," or better yet the "after-image," evoked by what is presented in the poetic medium. The late T'ang poet-critic Ssu-k'ung T'u, as I shall soon discuss in this chapter, makes a clear distinction between the "object" or "phenomenon" presented *in* the poetic medium and that which is evoked *beyond* the text in the mind of the reader. He calls the latter *hsiang wai chih hsiang* ("phenomenon beyond phenomenon").

- 19 See chapter 1 in the *Chuang Tzu* when it refers to the distinction between the state of glory and the state of shame (*jung ju chih ching*) (CTIC, 9). For the evolution of the meaning of *ching*, see the modern scholar Lo Tsung-ch'iang, 176–83. In addition, see Ch'i Hsü-pang, 115–18. Also of relevance here is Chao Yeh Chia-ying's discussion of Wang Kuo-wei's term *ching-chieh*, which is to a great degree synonymous with *ching*. See her "Jen-chien t'zu-hua chung p'i-p'ing chih li-lun yü shih-chien," in *Wen-hsüeh p'ing-lun* (Taipei: Shu-p'ing shu-mu, 1975), 204–6.
- 20 During the T'ang period the word *ching* 境 (realm) was, in some cases, interchangeable with *ching* 景 (scene), referring to the sensory details depicted in poetry. For example, when Chiao-jan says, "The feeling of poetry develops along the *ching* (realm) of a poem" (*shih ch'ing yüan ching fa*) (SSCC, 276), the word *ching* (realm) refers to the tangible properties of a poem rather than the elusive, abstract dimension evoked in the mind of the reader.
- 21 *Ching* or "realm" is used, albeit sparingly, by Yin Fan and Kao Chung-wu in their respective anthologies. In the preface to Wang Wei, Yin describes Wang's poetry as "beyond the ordinary realm" (*ch'u ch'ang-ching*). See HYYL, 11a. Kao Chung-wu describes Li Chia-yu's poetry as capable of reaching a "realm" far superior to that attained by the earlier poets. See *Chung-hsing hsien-ch'i chi*, 6b–7a.
- 22 This passage is included in *Shih-hsüeh chih-nan*, ed. Ku Lung-chen (rpt. Taipei: Kuang-wen, 1970), 85. The words *hsing-ssu* are here translated as "form and spirit" instead of "formal likeness" (cf. Pauline Yü's translation in *The Reading of Imagery*, 186). The word *ssu* here means the very *essence* and *spirit* of the object described, something that the T'ang poets are trying to capture in their poetry beyond the mere description of the tangible form or shape (*hsing*) of things. Their interest in *ssu* was a conscious effort to surpass their predecessors of the Southern Dynasties for whom depiction of the physical attributes of an object was the primary concern of poetry. Ssu-k'ung T'u's notion of *li-hsing te-ssu* (literally, discard the outward form in order to attain the spirit), expressed in "Description" in his *Twenty-Four Types of Poetry*, is another case in point where the word *hsing* is clearly distinguished from *ssu* as something undesirable in contrast to the *ssu* that the poet is advised to pursue.
- 23 See, for example, a discussion on this in Lo Tsung-ch'iang, 176–83, and Ch'i Hsü-pang, 115–18.
- 24 This passage is collected in the Japanese monk Kūkai's (774–835) *Bunkyō hifuron* (*Wen-ching mi-fu lun*), a compilation of various critical essays on poetry by Chinese poets and critics. My quotation here is based on a modern edition of this text, *Wen-ching mi-fu lun chiao-chu*, annotated by Wang Li-ch'i (Peking: Academy of Social Sciences, 1983), 285–86. Also of interest is Richard Bodman, "Poetics and Prosody in Early Medieval China: A Study and Translation of Kūkai's *Bunkyō Hifuron*." (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1978).

- 25 See chapter 3, n.3, on Ogawa Tamaki's study of the etymology of the word *ching* 景. As mentioned in n.20, it was rather common during the T'ang period for the words *ching* 景 (scene) and *ching* 境 (realm) to be interchangeable.
- 26 See Hu Ying-lin's *Shih-sou* (rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi, 1977), 114. Also, for a study of this popular analogy between poetry and the elusive (e.g., Buddhist imagery of "water in the moon" or "flowers in the mirror" as used by various poets and critics since the T'ang period), see Ch'en Kuo-ch'iu, "Lun ching-hua shui-yüeh," in his *Ching-hua shui-yüeh* (Taipei: Tung-ta, 1987), 1-12.
- 27 *Chü-ching* literally means "to acquire the sensory 'realm.'" See Li Chuang-ying's discussion of this Buddhist term in *SSCC*, 31. I agree with him that this term when used in literature is synonymous with the term *ch'ü-ssu* in *Styles of Poetry*.
- 28 In Chung Hung's "Preface" to *Classification of Poetry*, he praises the line, "The bright moon shines upon the piled snow," as vivid and straightforward; in his criticism of Hsieh Ling-yün, he singles out "By the pond spring grass grows" as a marvelous line of poetry; see *SPCS*, 64.
- 29 See *Sui T'ang Wu-tai wen-hsüeh p'i-p'ing tzu-liao hui-pien*, ed. Lo Lien-t'ien (Taipei: National Institute of Compilation and Translation, 1978), 254.
- 30 Lo Lien-t'ien, 252.
- 31 See Hsü's postscript to this treatise, in *SPCC*, 73-74. Pauline Yü also thinks that we must consider these twenty-four poems as a whole rather than treat each of them as self-contained; see her "Ssu-k'ung T'u's *Shih-p'in*" in *Studies in Chinese Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Ronald C. Miao (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, Inc., Asian Library Series No. 8, 1978), 1:84.
- 32 Copious notes are supplied with regard to the sources of these terms throughout *ESSSP*.
- 33 The translations from Ssu-k'ung T'u are based on the fine renditions by Yang Hsien-i and Gladys Yang in "Selections from the Classics," *Chinese Literature* 7 (July 1963): 63-77. Nevertheless, I have changed the titles and some expressions in practically all the poems I cite. I believe my versions bring out the Taoist dimension of the original poems more clearly. References to the Yang versions are given immediately after each poem. I have also indicated more drastic departures from the Yang renditions in nn. 35 and 38.
- 34 Lo Lien-t'ien, 252.
- 35 See *Language, Paradox, Poetics: A Chinese Perspective*, ed. Richard John Lynn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 66. Liu begins his chapter "The Poetics of Paradox" by summarizing it as "the principle of saying more by saying less, or, in its extreme form, saying all by saying nothing. In practice, this poetics manifested itself in the preference shown by many poets and critics for implicitness over explicitness, conciseness over verbosity, obliqueness over directness, and suggestion over description" (p. 56). My translation of the *Han-hsü* poem

differs from Yang's. The first line of Yang's version reads, "Not a word said outright." Yang's fifth and sixth lines read as follows: "And a true arbiter has the heart / To guide us as we drift."

- 36 Lo Lien-t'ien, 252. In the term *ssu yü ching hsieh*, the word *ching* 境 is interchangeable with the word *ching* 景.
- 37 Chapter 19 of the *Lao Tzu* (LTCK, 44) speaks of *chien su pao p'u*. *Su* literally means "the plain, the unadorned, and that which is natural and of the original nature."
- 38 I take the implicit subject of this poem to be the poet. Cf. Yang's rendition of the first two lines, from which I differ: "It dwells in quiet, in simplicity; / For inspiration is subtle, fugitive."

### Notes to Chapter 5

- 1 *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), xi.
- 2 See his *Sung shih hsiian-chu* (Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh, 1979), 13–15. The wonderfully written preface, surveying the historical background and different styles of individual poets, is particularly worth reading.
- 3 Li Yü would even go so far as to prescribe that it is better to write about "scene" in the first section and "feeling" in the second section; see his *Kuei-tz'u kuan-chien*, in *Tz'u-hua ts'ung-pien*, ed. T'ang Kuei-chang (rpt. Taipei: Kuang-wen, 1967), 2:557.
- 4 Kuo Shao-yü, for example, says that the greatest achievement of the Ch'ing critics is their ability to synthesize various views of the previous periods; see his *Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh p'i-p'ing shih* (rpt. Hong Kong: Hung-chih, n.d.), 5–6. Wu Hung-i also holds that in literary criticism the Ch'ing period enjoys a far better vantage point than any other period in the Chinese tradition; see his *Ch'ing-tai shih-hsüeh ch'u-t'an* (Taipei: Mu-t'ung, 1977), 2.
- 5 For a brief history of the development of this type of critical writing, see *Shih-hua ho tz'u-hua*, Chang Pao-ch'üan (Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi, 1983). Also see Adele Rickett's discussion on this issue in *Wang Kuo-wei's "Jen-chien tz'u-hua"* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1977), 1–10.
- 6 Chang Pao-ch'üan, 10–12.
- 7 Ts'ai Ying-chün, 2–17.
- 8 According to Wang Li-ch'i, this section on the "Seventeen Styles of Poetry" is taken from Wang Ch'ang-ling's *Styles of Poetry*. See *Wen-ching mi-fu lun chiau-chu*, 115; for the entire section on the seventeen styles of poetry, see 114–33.
- 9 See his "Chung-kuo shih hua hsü shih lun" in *Jih-pen Han-hsüeh yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, ed. and tr. Ma Tao-yüan (Taipei: Chung-hua ts'ung-shu, 1960), 241.

- 10 *T'ang-hsien chüeh-chü san-t'i shih-fa* (rpt. Taipei: Kuang-wen, 1972), was originally compiled in 1250. Chou's title refers to three different verse forms of recent-style poetry, namely, the heptasyllabic and the pentasyllabic regulated verse forms as well as the pentasyllabic quatrain. The poems collected here are mostly from the late eighth and ninth centuries. For other books on rules for poetry, see Fu Yü-li's (1304–1343) *Shih-fa yüan-liu* in *Shih-fa yüan-liu, Ming-chia shih-fa, Tso-shih t'i-yao* (rpt. Taipei: Kuang-wen, 1973).
- 11 See *Hsiao-yüan shih-hua* in *Ch'ing shih-hua hsü-pien*, comp. Kuo Shao-yü; ed. Fu Shou-sun (Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi, 1983), 4:2335.
- 12 This passage is quoted in Ou-yang Hsiu's *Liu-i shih-hua*, in *LTSH* 1:267. The italicized part of the passage is cited in many poetical notebooks. See, for example, the Sung critic Chang Chieh's (fl. 1135) *Sui-han-t'ang shih-hua* in *LTSHHP* 1:456; the Ming critic Wang Shih-chen's (1526–1590) *I-yüan chih-yen* in *LTSHHP* 2:955; and the Ch'ing critic Hsüeh Hsüeh's *I-p'iao shih-hua*, in *CSH* 2:701.
- 13 Kuo Hsi distinguishes three kinds of *yüan* with regard to the way one perceives the mountains; see his *Lin-ch'üan kao-chih*, in *Mei-shu ts'ung-shu*, ed. Huang Pin-hung, et al. (Shanghai: Shen-chou kuo-kuang she, 1947), 2nd *chi* 集, 7th *chi* 輯, 16–17. I agree with the modern critic Yeh Lang's view that Kuo's notion of *yüan* is, in fact, an expression of his view of the suprasensory dimension, namely, the "realm" of the mountains. See Yeh's *Chung-kuo mei-hsüeh shih ta-kang* (rpt. Taipei: Ts'ang-lang, 1986), 286–88. Yeh is also right in pointing out that there was an increasing tendency to move toward the supraphysical realm in both poetry and painting during the T'ang and the Five Dynasties period (247). Hsü Fu-kuan holds a similar view with regard to Kuo Hsi's notion of *yüan*, which he interprets as an expression of the spiritual and aesthetic consciousness of the infinite in the Sung period. This consciousness, according to Hsü, was fundamentally an expression of the Taoist liberation from the finite world as described in the first chapter of the *Chuang Tzu*, "Hsiao-yao yu." See Hsü's *Chung-kuo i-shu ching-shen* (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng, 1979), 342–49.
- 14 See his *Kuan-chui pien* (Hong Kong: Chung-hua, 1980), 2:722.
- 15 See Kuo Shao-yü, *Ts'ang-lang shih-hua chiao-shih* (Peking: Jen-min, 1961), 38.
- 16 Wang Shih-chen emphasizes that poetry should be expressive of the genuine nature of the poet and that the best poems are both *ch'ing* (literally, clear) and *yüan* (far-reaching). By "clear" he means pristine and quiet natural scenes; by "far-reaching" he refers to the rich resonance that a poem is capable of evoking as a result of the described scenery. Wang's famous dictum of poetry *shen-yün* (literally, spirit and tone) refers to the combined effect of both "clear" and "far-reaching." See his *Ch'ih-pei ou-t'an* (rpt. Peking: Chung-hua, 1982) 2:430. Also see Chao Yeh Chia-ying, "Jen-chien tz'u-hua ching-chieh-shuo yü Chung-kuo ch'uan-t'ung shih-shuo chih kuan-hsi," *Chung-kuo ku-tien shih-ko lun-chi* (Hong Kong: Chung-hua, 1977), 213–14.

- 17 The citations from *CCSH* here and below are taken from *Shih-i* (marked as vol. 1) and the inner part of *Hsi-t'ang yung-jih hsü-lun* (marked as vol. 2), which, according to Tai Hung-sen (p. 2), contain the essence of Wang's views on poetry. The numerical order of all the passages quoted in my book follows Tai's arrangement in his annotated edition. See also below, n. 21, for further information on the poetical notebooks.
- 18 See Wu Ch'iao, *Wei-lu shih-hua* (rpt. Taipei: Kuang-wen, 1970), 1:28; and Li Yü, *Kuei-tz'u kuan-chien* in *Tz'u-hua ts'ung-pien*, 2:553.
- 19 *Kuan-chui pien*, 1:63.
- 20 See Chou Chen-fu's discussion of this term with various examples in his *Shih-tz'u li-hua* (Peking: Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien, 1962), 122–41.
- 21 The title *Chiang-chai shih-hua* (*CCSH*) did not appear in the table of contents of Wang Fu-chih's *Complete Works* until later in the Ch'ing edition of *Ch'uan-shan i-shu* (*Posthumous[ly Published] Works of Ch'uan-san* [Ch'uan-shan is the style name of Wang Fu-chih]). The work was compiled by Teng Hsien-ho of the Tao-kuang era (1821–1850). *CCSH* includes three works: *Shih-i*, *Hsi-t'ang yung-jih hsü-lun* (in two parts), and the *Nan-ch'uang man-chi*. See *CCSH*, 1–2.
- 22 For a detailed discussion of Wang's thinking and how he differed from other neo-Confucianists, see T'ang Chün-i, "Wang Ch'uan-shan chih t'ien-tao lun," in *Yüan-chiao lun* (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng, 1984), 513–38. Also for a comprehensive discussion of Wang's philosophical orientation in English, see Alison Harley Black, *Man and Nature in the Philosophical Thought of Wang Fu-chih* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989). Of particular interest is the chapter "The Nature of Literary Expression," 242–90. Most relevant to my discussion of Wang Fu-chih's remarks on *ch'ing-ching* is Wong Siu-kit's "Ch'ing and Ching in the Critical Writings of Wang Fu-chih," in *Chinese Approaches to Literature from Confucius to Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, ed. Adele A. Rickett (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977), 121–50.
- 23 T'ang Chün-i, 576.
- 24 See Hsiao's discussion of this in *Chung-kuo shih-ko mei-hsüeh* (Peking: Peking University, 1986), 28–29.
- 25 The reader is invited to compare this translation and others in my work with Wong Siu-kit's English renditions in his *Notes on Poetry from the Ginger Studio* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1987).
- 26 See Phillip S. Y. Sun, "The Grass Motif in Chinese Poetry," *Tamkang Review* 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1970): 29–41.
- 27 See his *Notes on Poetry from the Ginger Studio*, xiv and 112–13.
- 28 This communion, Wang Fu-chih insists, must begin with what the poet sees with his eyes. See *CCSH*, 56.
- 29 See n.11 in chapter 3.

- 30 See *Ch'uan-shan ku-shih p'ing-hsüan* in *Ch'uan-shan ku chin t'i shih p'ing hsüan san chung* (Ch'angsha: Hunan kuan shu-pao chü, 1917), *chüan* 4, 9b.
- 31 James Liu translates *ching-chieh* as "world"; see *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 84. Adele Rickett, though sometimes using the English word "realm" for *ching-chieh*, feels that the term defies translation and should be left in its transcribed form; see *Wang Kuo-wei*, 25. Joseph J. Lee translates the term as "universe"; see "An Exploration of the 'Universe' in Chinese Poetry," *Literature: East and West* (Sept. 1966): 211–19.
- 32 The notion *i-ching* (literally, "meaning and realm"), synonymous with *ching-chieh*, is used as a touchstone for drama. See Wang's *Sung Yüan hsi-ch'ü Shih* (rpt. Taipei: Commercial Press, 1964), 125.
- 33 Recent publications on Wang Kuo-wei seem to pay more attention to the impact Western aesthetics had on him. Fo Ch'u's *Wang Kuo-wei shih-hsüeh yen-chiu* (Peking: Peking University, 1987), for example, traces in detail how Western aesthetics helped to shape Wang's literary theory. Also see Ch'en Yüan-hui's *Wang Kuo-wei yü Shu-Pen-hua che-hsüeh* (Peking: Academy of Social Sciences, 1981).
- 34 See Fo Ch'u, 6–7. Also see Joey Bonner, *Wang Kuo-wei: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 122–27. The book is especially useful for a detailed account of Wang's intellectual development.
- 35 Rickett, *Wang Kuo-wei*, 12.
- 36 It has become common practice among scholars to trace the genealogy of the term *ching-chieh* in discussing Wang Kuo-wei's *Jen-chien tz'u-hua*. See, for example, Chao Yeh Chia-ying, "Jen-chien tz'u-hua chung p'i-p'ing chih li-lun yü shih-chien" in *Wen-hsüeh p'ing-lun*, no. 1, 202–11. Fo Ch'u also discusses the meaning of *ching-chieh*, 149–58.
- 37 All the citations from Wang Kuo-wei's *Jen-chien tz'u-hua* (with one exception [see n.46 below]), are based on Hsü Tiao-fu's edition of *JCTH*. Hsü's edition consists of two volumes and a supplement.
- 38 Wang Kuo-wei, *Sung Yüan*, 125.
- 39 See his *The World as Will and Idea*, trans. R. B. Haldane and John Kemp (rpt. New York: Humanities Press, 1964), vol. 1, book 3, 238–53.
- 40 Fo Ch'u, 183.
- 41 Rickett, 12.
- 42 Schopenhauer, 253.
- 43 Schopenhauer, 253.
- 44 Schopenhauer, 255.
- 45 Schopenhauer, 255–56.

- 46 See no. 49 in *Jen-chien tz'u-hua shan-kao* in *Hui-feng tz'u-hua, Jen-chien tz'u-hua*, ed. Wang Yu-an (Taipei: Ho-lo, 1975), 243. This passage, together with the other forty-eight entries, was originally deleted by Wang Kuo-wei and later collected and edited by Wang Yu-an as *Jen-chien tz'u-hua shan-kao*.
- 47 Wang Kuo-wei acknowledges Schopenhauer as his source for the idea that the artist has the unusual ability to be completely objective and to speak for his object of contemplation. See Wang's "*Hung-lou meng p'ing-lun*" in *Wang Kuan-t'ang hsien-sheng ch'üan-chi* (rpt. Taipei: Wen-hua, 1968), 5:1668–69.
- 48 For an illuminating and detailed discussion on the notions of the "beautiful" (*yu-mei*) and the "sublime" (*chuang-mei*) mentioned in *JCTH*, see *Wang Kuan-t'ang hsien-sheng ch'üan-chi* (5:1634035). The fact that these two notions were borrowed directly from Schopenhauer was repeatedly acknowledged by Wang Kuo-wei himself. Wang's concept of these two kinds of poetry might also have come from the Sung philosopher, Shao Yung (1011–1077), who talks about "seeing nature with the poetic 'I' or seeing nature with the eyes of nature itself." See Lin Mei-i's discussion of this in "*Tao-tu*" in her *Jen-chien tz'u-hua* (Taipei: Chin-feng, 1987), 33–34.
- 49 Lin Mei-i, 10–11.
- 50 Cf. Rickett's interpretation of *pu-ko* in *Wang Kuo-wei*, 28.





## Bibliography

The bibliography lists works cited or mentioned in the present book, not all of those consulted in its preparation. It is in three parts: section A is a list of abbreviations for the most frequently cited Chinese works; section B lists works in Chinese; section C lists Western sources.

### A: Abbreviations for Works in Chinese

- CCSH Wang Fu-chih 王夫之. *Chiang-chai shih-hua chien-chu* 薑齋詩話箋注. Annot. Tai Hung-sen 戴鴻森. Peking: Hsin-hua, 1981.
- CSH Kuo Shao-yü 郭紹虞, ed. *Ch'ing shih-hua* 清詩話. 2 vols. Peking: Chung-hua, 1963.
- CTCKT Chu Tzu-ch'ing 朱自清. *Chu Tzu-ch'ing ku-tien wen-hsüeh lun-wen chi* 朱自清古典文學論文集. 2 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi, 1980.
- CTS P'eng Ting-ch'iu 彭定求 et al., comps. *Ch'üan T'ang shih* 全唐詩. 12 vols. Peking: Chung-hua, 1960.
- CTIC Chuang Tzu 莊子. *Chuang-tzu i-chu* 莊子譯注. Annotated by Wang Shih-shun 王世舜, et al. Tsinan: Shantung Chiao-yü, 1983.
- ESSSP Ssu-k'ung T'u 司空圖. *Erh-shih-ssu shih-p'in t'an-wei* 二十四詩品探微. Annotated by Ch'iao Li 喬力. Tsinan: Ch'i-lu, 1980.
- HCHWC Lu Ch'in-li 遼欽立, ed. *Hsien-Ch'in Han Wei Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao shih* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩. 3 vols. Peking: Chung-hua, 1983.

- HYYL Yin Fan 殷璠. *Ho-yüehying-lingchi* 河嶽英靈集. 3 vols. *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* edition.
- JTCH Wang Kuo-wei 王國維. *Chiao-chu Jen-chien tz'u-hua* 校注人間詞話. Annot. Hsü Tiao-fu 徐調孚. Taipei: K'ai-ming, 1965.
- KSP Ku Chieh-kang 顧頡剛 et al., eds. *Ku-shih pien* 古史辯. 7 vols. Rpt. Hong Kong: Tai-p'ing, 1963.
- LTCK Lao Tzu 老子. *Ch'ung-ting Lao-tzu cheng-ku* 重訂老子正話. Annot. Kao Heng 高亨. Peking: Chung-hua, 1959.
- LTSH Ho Wen-huan 何文煥, comp. *Li-tai shih-hua* 歷代詩話. 2 vols. Peking: Chung-hua, 1981.
- LTSHHP Ting Fu-pao 丁福保, ed. *Li-tai shih-hua hsü-pien* 歷代詩話續編. 3 vols. Peking: Chung-hua, 1983.
- SKC Wang Fu-chih 王夫之. *Shih kuang-chuan* 詩廣傳. Ed. Wang Hsiao-yü 王孝魚. Peking: Chung-hua, 1964.
- SPCC Ssu-k'ung T'u 司空圖. *Shih-p'in chi-chieh* 詩品集解. Ed. Kuo Shao-yü 郭紹虞. Rpt. Taipei: Ch'ing-liu, n.d.
- SPCS Chung Hung 鍾嶸. *Shih-p'in chu-shih* 詩品注釋. Annot. by Hsiang Ch'ang-ch'ing 向長清. Tsinan: Ch'i-lu, 1986.
- SSCC Chiao-jan 皎然 [Hsieh Chou 謝晝]. *Shih shih chiao-chu* 詩式校注. Annot. Li Chuang-ying 李壯鷹. Tsinan: Ch'i-lu, 1987.
- SSCCS Juan Yüan 阮元, ed. *Shih-san-ching chu-shu* 十三經注疏. 2 vols. Rpt. Peking: Chung-hua, 1980.
- TYMS T'ao Ch'ien 陶潛. *T'ao Yüan-ming shih chien-chu* 陶淵明詩箋注. Ed. Ting Fu-pao 丁福保. Rpt. Taipei: I-wen, 1964.
- WCNP Pei-ching ta-hsüeh Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh-shih chiao-yen shih 北京大學中國文學史教研室, comp. and ed. *Wei Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao wen-hsüeh-shih ts'an-k'ao tzu-liao* 魏晉南北朝文學史參考資料. 2 vols. Peking: Chung-hua, 1986.
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