

# UC Berkeley

## UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations

### Title

The Sound of Silence: Daqu ("big-suite") and Medieval Chinese Performance

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/03z407vn>

### Author

Sun, Xiaojing

### Publication Date

2012

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

The Sound of Silence:  
*Daqu* 大曲 (“big-suite”) and Medieval Chinese Performance

By

Xiaojing Sun

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Chinese language

in the

Graduate Division

Of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Robert Ashmore, Co-Chair

Professor Stephen H. West, Co-Chair

Professor Bonnie Wade

Fall 2012

## Abstract

The Sound of Silence: *Daqu* 大曲 (“big-suite”) and Medieval Chinese Performance

By

Xiaojing Sun

Doctor of Philosophy in East Asian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Robert Ashmore, Co-Chair

Professor Stephen H. West, Co-Chair

My dissertation investigates Chinese medieval *daqu* (“big suite”), a performance consisting of a succession of musical sections that combines song lyrics with instrumental accompaniment, and includes solo or ensemble dance movements. As one of the major components of court music, the lyrics of *daqu* provide a valuable window into the often submerged link between text and performance. My dissertation focuses on how the performance texts be taken as a linguistic matrix in which the fossilized remains of performance are preserved and revealed to memory. The first chapter examines the relationship between dance, dance lyrics and performance context. The second chapter provides a general introduction on *daqu*, from that of the Wei and Jin to the Tang and Song. The third chapter takes *daqu* compositions by Shi Hao (1106–1194) of the Southern Song as central texts, discussing several issues such as “musical words (*yueyu*),” medieval court performance, intertextualization and performance context, “roaming transcendents (*youxian*)” tradition and court performance. In the appendix is an annotated translation on Shi Hao’s seven *daqu* pieces.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Dance, dance lyrics, and performance context.....	9
I. Dance and music.....	9
II. Dance music .....	13
III. Dance lyrics .....	17
IV. The symbolic dance .....	19
V. From the “Grand Martial” ( <i>dawu</i> 大武) to “Dance of Seven Virtues” ( <i>qidewu</i> 七德舞) .....	22
VI. Dance lyrics and performance context .....	31
Chapter Two: An Introduction to <i>Daqu</i> (“big suite/piece”) .....	38
I. <i>Daqu</i> of the Wei and Jin .....	38
II. <i>Daqu</i> in the Tang .....	59
III. <i>Daqu</i> of the Song .....	88
Chapter Three: Shi Hao’s 史浩 <i>daqu</i> suites .....	102
I. “Musical words” ( <i>yueyu</i> ) .....	102
II. Shi Hao and his <i>daqu</i> composition .....	114
III. “Lotus Plucking Dance” and court performance.....	116
IV. “Sword Dance:” intertextualization and performance context .....	129
V. The “Roaming Transcendents” ( <i>youxian</i> ) tradition and court performance.....	139
Conclusion.....	157
Bibliography .....	158
Appendix: Shi Hao’s <i>Maofeng Zhenyin daqu</i> translation .....	167

## Introduction

One way of looking at the performance texts, the literary traces of lost performance traditions, is to see them as attempts to preserve in language the fleeting world of performance. In this sense, literary texts are a linguistic matrix in which the fossilized remains of performance are preserved and revealed to memory. But this raises a range of questions. Are performance texts a distinctive genre? What are the dangers in reconstructing performance context based on written remnants such as these? In trying to address these questions, we must naturally shift our focus from the text *per se* to the communicative context or situation in which the lyrics originally appeared, and this shift, I believe, will create a productive, multi-dimensional space for the reading of these texts.

I would like to start my discussion with the debate on a famous piece, *Shangyun yue* 上雲樂 (“Tune on Ascending Clouds”) composed by Zhou She 周舍 (469–524) of the Liang (502–57):

- 1 西方老胡，The Old Hu from the west,  
厥名文康。His name is Wenkang.  
遨遊六合，He wandered through the Six Enclosures<sup>1</sup>,  
傲誕三皇。Arrogant and unbridled to the Three August Ones.
- 5 西觀濛汜，To the west he observed Mengsi,  
東戲扶桑。And to the east he played at Fusang.<sup>2</sup>  
南泛大蒙之海，To the south he floated on the sea of grand haziness,  
北至無通之鄉。And to the north he reached the Land of Nopassage.<sup>3</sup>  
昔與若士為友，Once he was friend of Ruoshi,<sup>4</sup>
- 10 共弄彭祖扶床。And they together laughed at Pengzu “supported by the bed”.<sup>5</sup>  
往年暫到昆侖，In the past he went temporarily to the Mt. Kunlun,  
複值瑤池舉觴。A second time for wine drinking at the Jade Pond.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Meaning six directions of East, West, North, South, above and below, it refer to the whole universe.

<sup>2</sup> Mengsi is the legendary place to where the sun sets, while Fushang is from where the sun rises in the far east.

<sup>3</sup> The Land of Nopassage, a legendary vast marsh land out of the Nine States (*jiuzhou*).

<sup>4</sup> Literally means “like-the-person,” a character from *Huainan zi*, who wanders in the celestial realm. Therefore, later it becomes a name for the Immortal.

<sup>5</sup> An immortal who is particularly known for his longevity. “Supported by a bed” because he was learning to walk. That is, they were there when the immortal known for his longevity was just beginning to learn to walk.

<sup>6</sup> The legendary Western heavenly paradise of Xi Wangmu, the Queen Mother of the West on the Kunlun Mountain. With the appearance of the King of Zhou and the Queen Mother in the next two lines, the allusion on the wine drinking at the Jade Pond here is most likely from the account in *Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 (“Tale of King Mu”), a biography on the King Mu of Zhou with plenty of fantasy stories. It said that King Mu dreamed of being an immortal god. So he visited the Jade Pond and the Queen Mother threw a drinking banquet for him, where there were wine, gifts, and decorous exchange of poems. Many other anecdotes are also related to the feast of the Queen Mother, such as she serves her guests with peaches of

周帝迎以上席， The King of Zhou received him at the seat of honor,  
王母贈以玉漿。 The Queen Mother bestowed him jade ambrosia.

15 故乃 For this reason

壽如南山， His allotted lifespan was as enduring as the South Mountain,  
志若金剛。 And his ambition adamantine as a diamond.  
青眼眈眈， His blue eyes lost their luster,  
白髮長長。 His white hair grew long.  
蛾眉臨髭， Moth shaped eyebrows reached to his moustache,

20 高鼻垂口。 His high nose drooped over his mouth.

非直能俳， Not only was he humourous,  
又善飲酒。 He was also good at drinking.  
簫管鳴前， *Xiao*-pipes sounded out in the front,  
門徒從後。 Disciples follow behind.

25 濟濟翼翼， Numerous and reverential,

各有分部。 Each had a different section.  
鳳皇是老胡家雞， Phoenixes were the Old Hu's chickens,  
師子是老胡家狗。 Lions, the Old Hu's domestic dogs.

陛下 Your Majesty

撥亂反正， Dispelled chaos and restored peace,

30 再朗三光。 Making the Three Lusters<sup>7</sup> bright again.

澤與雨施， Your beneficent grace was granted with the rain,  
化與風翔。 Your transforming power soared along with the wind.  
覘雲候呂， Inspecting the clouds and evaluating bamboo pitch-pipes,  
志游大樑。 He set his mind to wander at the Great Liang.<sup>8</sup>

35 重駟修路， Doubled the team of four horses along the distant road,

始屆帝鄉。 Only then did he come to place of the Emperor.  
伏拜金闕， Prostrate himself to bow at the golden palace,  
仰瞻玉堂。 And looked up with reverence at the jade hall.

---

immortality, which ripen once every three thousand years.

<sup>7</sup> The Three Lusters refer to the sun, the moon and stars.

<sup>8</sup> The omission of the subject here brings the ambiguity of the context, as we will discuss soon. This part starting from “Your Majesty” could be simply a description of the performance, as Ren Bantang argues. Yet it also could be a direct speech, issued by someone costumed as old Hu, or a third party (background chorus or music section) describing a mimed performance. In the latter case, this would be translated in the 1<sup>st</sup> person: “I set my mind to wander at the Great Liang” and so on.

- 從者小子， Those following him were little fellows,  
 40 羅列成行。 All arranged in ranks.  
 悉知廉節， They all know honor and integrity,  
 皆識義方。 All understand the way of righteousness.  
 歌管愔愔， Their singing and pipe-playing was tranquil and peaceful)  
 鏗鼓鏘鏘。 Their rhythmic drums clangorous.
- 45 響震鈞天， Their clear sound shakes Balanced Heaven,  
 聲若鸞鳳。 Their voices like those of the *luan* and *huang*.  
 前卻中規矩， Stepping forward and back, they conform to the propriety,  
 進退得宮商。 Advancing and retreating, they get the modes of *gong* and *shang*.  
 舉技無不佳， Every performing skills was perfect,
- 50 胡舞最所長。 But in the barbarian dance they are most accomplished .  
 老胡寄篋中， In the Old Hu's storage box,  
 復有奇樂章。 Are even more fantastic music scores.  
 齎持數萬里， He carried them as tribute for myriads of *li*,  
 原以奉聖皇。 Desiring to present them to the saged king.
- 55 乃欲次第說， He would like to explain them all one by one,  
 老耄多所忘。 But old and senile he has forgotten most.  
 但願明陛下， He only desire that the Enlightened One,  
 壽千萬歲， Have an allotted life span of thousand and myriads of year,
- 59 歡樂未渠央。 and happy forever!<sup>9</sup>

This song enjoyed a long period of popularity in medieval China, and formed part of court ritual performances until the eighth century. In addition to Zhou She, Emperor Wu of the Liang (464–549) composed seven lyrics to the same title, all of which display a strong influence from Taoist *youxian* (“roaming transcendents”) motifs and traditions. In the Tang (618–907), the famous poet Li Bai 李白 (701–762) also wrote a similar lyric.<sup>10</sup>

Ren Bantang 任半塘 (1897–1991), the renowned scholar of early performance literature, argued strongly against earlier interpretations of this poem, focusing mainly on two issues, namely, the identities of the characters, and the function of the poem. In his view, Hu Wenkang from the West, a figure with half-human and half-immortal features, was by no means a real character (or actor) with an unusual appearance from the Western region. The emperor or “Your Majesty,” in the same vein, is not to be taken as Emperor Wu of the Liang. All the characters mentioned in this piece—including Hu Wenkang, “Your Majesty,” as well as Hu’s disciples, the phoenixes and lions, etc.—were roles played by actors. Only in this way, Ren said, can we explain the celestial happenings about the Queen Mother and the King of Zhou mentioned in the first half. Ren draws the conclusion that Zhou’s composition is more likely a descriptive verse (i.e. as he says,

<sup>9</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 51, pp. 746–747.

<sup>10</sup> Also see YFSJ, *juan* 51, p. 747.

“more a *fu* than a poem” (與其謂之詩，不如謂之賦) that only *describes* the performance of *Shangyun yue*, rather than lyrics *sung* in the performance. The embedded lines of speech—those marked with “Your Majesty”—were not actually direct speech made to the real emperor, but to the one played by an actor.<sup>11</sup>

Ren’s argument, indeed, suggests one possible interpretation of the text. But, as we read this poem again, we might have to admit that it is probably only one way of understanding it. One important question we have to deal with is: whether this poem is a description of a performance, or if it is a performance, framed by a “descriptive narrative” to set the scene? Is it possible at all to picture this whole composition, *pace* Ren Bantang, as lyrics sung by a performer or performers?

Before beginning such an attempt, I would like to divide the poem into two parts. While the first half (line 1 to 28) focuses on the Old Hu’s fantastic experience and quaint appearance, the second half, starting from “Your Majesty dispelled chaos and restored peace (陛下撥亂反正)” (line 29), is on the Old Hu’s trip to the Great Liang, as well as his performance and blessings made to the emperor.

To take the poem as sung lyrics, we must accept the first half as a sort of descriptive scene-setting. Our own experience of watching theatrical or ritual performances may provide parallels for this sort of speech. On coming onstage, an actor may well begin by announcing, “I am so-and-so,” or “Having done such-and-such, I am going to do this now,” as an introduction for the stage action proper.

Therefore, this part could be a self-introduction made by someone costumed as an Old Hu.<sup>12</sup> Or it could even be lyrics sung by someone (such as the background chorus or music section) to describe a mimed performance. Whichever the case, we may easily imagine fantastic scenes performed in accordance with the descriptive narrative carried through the lyrics.

In the first scene, the Old Hu arrives onstage. His wandering through the Six Enclosures might be carried out with the actor’s changes of position in different directions. Immortals such as Ruoshi and Pengzu might also appear as costumed actors. After that, the wine drinking at the Jade Pond, the legendary Western heavenly paradise of the Queen Mother of the West could be taken as the second scene. This is, in particular, such an exaggerated portion that is performative enough. A scene most likely drawn out from *Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 (“Tale of King Mu”), a biography on the King Mu of Zhou rich in fantastic stories, it may present to the audience many legendary characters such as the Queen Mother, the King of Zhou and his followers, as well as other immortals. In addition, numerous mystical things—wine, gifts, and immortal peaches which were said to ripen once every three thousand years and so on—could be set up as props. Then, following *gunai* 故乃 (“for this reason”), a discourse marker, comes the third scene, where the descriptions on the Old Hu’s appearance, of course, could be accompanied by the actor’s gestures, while his disciples, phoenixes, and lions arrive onstage in sequence as they are mentioned.

The second half, as we have mentioned, with another discourse marker *bixia* 陛下 (“Your Majesty”), surely sounds like a direct speech made to the emperor, and could

---

<sup>11</sup> See Ren Bantang 2004, pp. 117–120.

<sup>12</sup> I agree with Ren Bantang on this point that the Old Hu here is more likely someone played by a “made-up” Chinese actor. And his disciples, phoenixes and lions that show up later are played by actors as well.



easily place the poem in the first person narrative. In that case, we may give this part a totally different translation:

陛下 **You**, Your Majesty

- 撥亂反正，Dispelled chaos and restored peace,  
30 再朗三光。Making the Three Lusters bright again.  
澤與雨施，Your beneficent grace was granted with the rain,  
化與風翔。Your transforming power soared along with the wind.  
覘雲候呂，Inspecting the clouds and evaluating bamboo pitch-pipes,  
志游大樑。I set **my** mind to wander at the Great Liang.  
35 重駟修路，Doubled the team of four horses along the distant road,  
始屆帝鄉。Only then did **I** come to place of the Emperor.  
伏拜金闕，Prostrate **myself** to bow at the golden palace,  
仰瞻玉堂。And looked up with reverence at the jade hall.  
從者小子，Those following **me** were little fellows,  
40 羅列成行。All arranged in ranks.  
...  
老胡寄篋中，In **my**, the Old Hu's storage box,  
復有奇樂章。Are even more fantastic music scores.  
齋持數萬里，I carried them as tribute for myriads of *li*,  
原以奉聖皇。Desiring to present them to the saged king.  
55 乃欲次第說，I would like to explain them all one by one,  
老耄多所忘。But old and senile **I** have forgotten most.  
但願明陛下，I only desire that **you**, the Enlightened One,  
壽千萬歲，Have an allotted life span of thousand and myriads of years,  
59 歡樂未渠央。and happy forever!<sup>13</sup>

One question, however, still needs to be dealt with. If we take this part as direct speech, does the phrase “Your Majesty” have to be an emperor played by the actor, as Ren Bantang insists? Or it could be a real emperor among the audience? I think both are possible. As a matter of fact, if we give more consideration to the function of the performance of this kind in a medieval imperial banquet (which I will give a more detailed discussion in chapter three), we might tend to believe the possibility of the latter. In short, the wishes or blessings addressed by the actors in this kind of court performance, most likely, are something similar to what happened in the process of oracle divination or sacrifices performed by magicians or shaman, in which words uttered actually function as part of a ritual and are supposed to bring about a corresponding efficacy. In this case, it could be a sort of “summon” or “order” appealing to the longevity of the emperor and his

---

<sup>13</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 51, pp. 746–747.

eternal happiness. In fact, we may have the reason to believe that Ren Bantang here is making his argument deliberately for the sake of his own argument, trying to push back the timeline of early drama to an era before the Tang.

Therefore, to me, this *Shangyun yue* text is particularly interesting, because it problematizes the issue of how to read performance text. What I would like to do, however, is not to compare which way of reading may sound more reasonable, or may be closer to the “original” or “real” performance context, a search that is unlikely to reach a satisfying conclusion when all we have to go on is the written text. On the contrary, the different ways of reading this poem are precisely examples that suggest for us the problems involved in reading a performance text, and of understanding the relationship between text as a residual artifact and its original performance context. In fact, can the context be read out of silent words?

The ambiguity of the narrator in Zhou She’s poem and the unclear boundaries between narrative and speech complicate the practice of reconstructing the performing situation. While the part of narrative and direct speech is not clear-cut, the understanding of the voice of the speaker, to a great extent, influences our perception of the performance context. It is partially in this sense that reading a performance text becomes a unique experience different from reading other kinds of literary works.

Performance context, at the same time, is a concept that is complicated yet interesting enough: there exist various kinds of temporal and spatial elements in the “coeval” situation, the very moment of performance. It also includes many “marginal” factors related to the performance, for instance, the motivation or the initiator of the performance, the participants and audiences, the musical settings and stage effect, the atmosphere of the performance, and so on. What is more, considering some lyrics as a sort of literal composition—in the sense of a bringing together of multiple preexisting elements—a focus on performance context may also include the intertextual linkage indicating its location in terms of the performance and literary tradition.

My dissertation examines *daqu* 大曲 (“big piece/suite”), a “multimedia” performance consisting of a succession of musical sections that combine song lyrics with instrumental accompaniment, and includes solo or ensemble dance movements. The lyrics of *daqu*, as a sort of performance text, provide a valuable window into the often submerged link between text and performance. As one of the major components of court music, it also discloses situations of court performance, as well as complicated relationship between ritual performance and displays of imperial power.

At the same time, however, my discussion will not be limited to *daqu*. Dance, along with the song and music, is the essential feature of the *daqu* performance. Considering *daqu* basically as a dance performance, the first chapter examines the relationship between dance, dance lyrics and performance context. Dance I argue, as a performative supplement to sound that is capable of completing ideas, themes, images, etc., that are fragmentarily proposed through music, has deep symbolism in Confucian classics. Dance performed on sacrificial ceremonies, in particular, is taken as a ritual expression of the emperor’s political virtue. I will explore the meaning of dance from the “Grand Martial” Dance, (*dawu* 大武), a foundational dance of the Zhou, to the “Dance of Seven Virtues” (*qidewu* 七德舞), one of the three great dances of the Tang. Debates on those dances indicate the symbolic complexity of dance music, in that its self-explanatory

feature is a balanced and precise harmony that is governed by traditional aesthetic criteria.

Both the sound of music and the presence of dance are unquestionably transient. The lyrics, however, are different in that they are both transient (at their moment of performance) and permanent since they can be passed on to later generations. Read in historical context, dance lyrics, especially those of medieval court ritual performance, are particularly interesting in that they describe the dance movement *per se* as well as recount the performance context—the occasion, settings, audience and so on. For modern readers, the text of *daqu* lyrics or dance lyrics is probably the major remnant through which one envisions the original performance, considering that surviving accounts of the performance situations are patchy, and that anything like a musical score is in most cases completely lost.<sup>14</sup>

Chapter two is basically an introduction to *daqu*, in chronological order, from its beginnings during the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century, to its high point in the Tang and Song. This is to provide a general background for the reader, who might not be very familiar with *daqu* performance. While in the past, research on *daqu* has been carried out mainly by Chinese scholars, I hope this discussion on *daqu* could at least give some convenience to the English readers who would find this topic somewhat interesting.

Again, my introduction on *daqu* goes a little beyond *daqu* itself and extend to other musical types that are believed to be closely related to *daqu*, such as *xianghe* (相和 “songs with strings and bamboo winds”), *qingshang sandiao* (清商三調 “tunes in *qingshang* three keys”), and *faqu* 法曲 (“Dharma tunes”), in hoping that a comprehensive backdrop of musical performance types can be set. This chapter focuses on the development of *daqu* forms, its performance in the imperial court in different dynasties, and the accounts of it in historical records. The structure of *daqu*, which is distinctly complex as well as historically evolving, is also discussed in this part. What we can infer from general accounts in official histories, musical documents, and sporadic descriptions in literati prose accounts are a few sets of technical terms for various sections of *daqu* performance. The connotations and functions of some of these segments and terms will also be examined.

Chapter three turns to case studies. My central texts are *daqu* pieces composed by the Southern Song (1127–1279) Chancellor and writer Shi Hao 史浩 (1106–1194). Unlike *daqu* texts surviving from previous dynasties, most of which are excerpts or segments that give only partial glimpses of the overall structure of the performance, the compositions of Shi Hao are noticeably more complete and extensive. Written in a script-like format that is not very common within medieval performance texts, Shi Hao’s *daqu* suites provide us with details on almost every aspect of performance, such as notations on the presenting, speaking, and acting of performers, interactions between actors and the “bamboo-pole” guy, and descriptions of singing and dancing performance between sections.

Before the close reading of Shi Hao’s *daqu* texts, I will discuss what are known as “musical words” (*yueyu* 樂語), words that record the manner of singing and dancing.

---

<sup>14</sup> The main exception or partial exception to the loss of scores probably is the project done by Laurence Picken on Tang *yanyue*. In his work “Music from the Tang Court” there collected “Tang Music” preserved in manuscripts written between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, believed to have been borrowed by the Japanese Court during the two centuries before 841. See Picken 1981.

This is something that seems to be vitally significant for *daqu* composition, and, for modern scholars of Chinese drama such as Wu Mei 吳梅, accounts for much of the essential value of Shi Hao's work. Composition of *yueyu* by Song literati, such as Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101), is discussed by being contextualized with Song court performance practices for *daqu*, as seen particularly in the “Entertainment Bureau” (*jiaofang* 教坊)<sup>15</sup>, where the performance of *daqu* was mainly carried out.

Discussions of Shi Hao's *daqu* texts center on several issues. First, the “plucking lotus” tradition and the milieu of medieval court performance disclosed by the “Lotus Plucking Dance” (採蓮舞); second, the relationship between intertextualization and performance context revealed by the “Sword Dance” (劍舞); and third, the “roaming transcendants” (*youxian* 遊仙) convention, its presentation in court performance and in several of Shi Hao's *daqu* texts.

My focus is on how a transitory performance context is written into a stable and enduring text, and how this is revealed through the “self-explanatory” feature of *daqu* as dance lyrics. By taking this “contextual approach,” I hope to shift the emphasis from the text *per se* as a sort of reading material to its function of crystalizing a performative and communicative act in a particular cultural situation and at a particular time.

---

<sup>15</sup> Originally the *jiaofang* was a training quarter; but after the Tang it housed only the court entertainers and musicians, etc.

## Chapter One: Dance, dance lyrics, and performance context

### I. Dance and music

For a modern audience, dance is usually considered a supplement to the singing in a performance, taking a typical Broadway show as an example. When we enter the theater, our experience of watching performances prepares us with the expectation to enjoy a pleasant dancing performance with euphonious musical accompaniment and singing. In fact, we may trace this complementary relationship between dance and singing back to a proverbial passage in the “Great Preface” of the *Shijing*:

詩者。志之所之也。在心為志。發言為詩。情動於中而形於言。言之不足故嗟嘆之。嗟嘆之不足故永歌之。永歌之不足不知手之舞之足之蹈之也。

The poem is that to which what is intently on the mind (*zhi*) goes. In the mind, it is “being intent” (*zhi*); coming out in language, it is a “poem.” The affections are stirred within and take on form in words. If words alone are inadequate, we speak it out in sighs. If sighing is inadequate, we sing it. If singing is inadequate, unconsciously our hands dance it and our feet tap it.

If we admit that the “words” (*yan* 言) here are at least a precursory form of the lyric (while the lyric tends to be considered more closely related to the discourse of song/music), the relationship among lyric, singing and dancing that this passage reveals to us is a succession of stages: while singing is the supplement to the lyric, dancing completes singing. And they are all external forms to express the mind/intent (*zhi*).

Similar passages talking about the collaboration of these three elements and their stemming from the mind can be found in the *Yue ji* 樂記 (“Record of Music”), a treatise on the origin, function, and relation between music and rites:

是故君子反情以和其志，廣樂以成其教。……詩，言其志也。歌，詠其聲也。舞，動其容也。三者本於心，然後樂器從之。

It is for this purpose that the superior man returns to the (good) affections (*qing*), in order to bring his will/intent (*zhi*) into harmony, and spreads music in order to perfect his instructions.... Poetry gives expression to his thoughts/mind/intent; singing prolongs his sound; dance puts the body into action. These three things originate in the mind, and the instruments of the music accompany them.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> LJ, vol.4, *juan* 11. A similar passage, as with much of the material in *Yue ji*, also appears in the *Yue shu* 樂書 (“Document on Music”), in the *Shi ji* 史記 (“Records of the Grand Historian”) of Sima Qian:

是故君子反情以和其志，比類以成其行……詩，言其志也。歌，詠其聲也。舞，動其容也。三者本乎心，然後樂氣從之。

Because of this, gentleman returns to the affections (*qing*) in order to harmonize his mind/intent (*zhi*), and imitates those of same kind in order to complete his behavior... Poetry gives expression to his thoughts/mind/intent; singing prolongs his sound; dance puts the body into action. These three are originated from one’s mind. After this the spirit (*qi*) of music follows.

The argument here, as we can see, is very close to that in the “Great Preface” in its account on the origin and their respective roles of poetry, singing, and dance. Moreover, as Stephen Owen has noted, the *Yue ji* 樂記 (“Record of Music”) also shares with the “Great Preface” a concern for the expression of feelings through music and its normative regulation by the rites, yet at the same time gives much fuller elaboration concerning the music-related psychology on which the “Great Preface” is based.<sup>17</sup>

Different from the modern concept of music, which usually only includes vocal and instrumental sounds, the traditional understanding of music (*yue* 樂) has more general connotation, by which singing and dancing are considered the two sides of music:

凡音之起，由人心生也。人心之動，物使之然也。感於物而動，故形於聲；聲相應，故生變；變成方，謂之音；比音而樂之，及幹戚羽旄，謂之樂也。

All the modulations of the voice arise from the mind, and the various affections of the mind are produced by things (external to it). The affections thus produced are manifested in the sounds that are uttered. Changes are produced by the way in which those sounds respond to one another; and when those changes constitute patterns, they are what we call the modulations of the voice. The combination of those modulated sounds, so as to be played on musical instruments / give pleasure, with shields and axes, and the plumes and ox-tails, constitutes what we call music.<sup>18</sup>

The definition of “music” (*yue*) given by the *Yue ji* in the above explains how songs/musical sounds and dance are considered two indispensable constitutions in the traditional understanding of music. Later, in *Tong zhi* 通志 (“Comprehensive Treatise on Institutions”), an encyclopaedic work of Song, Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104–1162) follows this understanding of music when he discusses the reconciliation between music and rites, and emphasized the distinctive roles that song and dance respectively play in music:

禮樂相須以為用……舞與歌相應，歌主聲，舞主形。

Rites and music are mutually needed to function... (For the music) dance and song mutually correspond. The song is in charge of the sound, and dance in charge of appearance.<sup>19</sup>

It thus seems safe to conclude that, when talking about the traditional concept of music (*yue*), dance is considered an indispensable part of music, and plays a role as important as that of the song/singing.

Interestingly, that dance serves as a complement for the singing is also considered as the origin of dance in the account on music in classical works, such as the *Tong dian* 通典 (“Encyclopaedic History of Institutions”) by Du You 杜佑 (735–812) of the Tang:

---

<sup>17</sup> Owen 1996, p. 67.

<sup>18</sup> *Yue ji*, LJ, vol.4, *juan* 11.

<sup>19</sup> TZ, *juan* 49, p. 374–1.

樂之在耳者曰聲，在目者曰容。聲應乎耳，可以聽知，容藏於心，難以貌觀。故聖人假干戚羽旄以表其容，發揚蹈厲以見其意，聲容選和而後大樂備矣。《詩序》曰：‘詠歌之不足，不知手之舞之足之蹈之。’然樂心內發，感物而動，不覺手之自運，歡之至也。此舞之所由起也。

As for the music, that which heard by ears is called sound, and that which seen by eyes is called appearance. The sound resonates in the ear, (and thus) can be known through hearing. The appearance is hidden in one's mind, (so that) is hard to be seen by looking. Therefore, the sage manifests the appearance with shield and battleax, and feathered pennons, and displays the intention by the violent movements of the arms and fierce stamping. When sound and appearance are harmonious, the great music is then complete. The “Great Preface” of *Shijing* says: ‘If singing is inadequate, unconsciously our hands dance it and our feet tap it.’ Thereupon the mind of music generates inside, and is stirred by external things into movement. Unconsciously our hands move by themselves, and here comes the happiness—this is how dance comes into being.<sup>20</sup>

Du's perspective on music on one hand follows the singing-and-dancing account we mentioned before in previous Confucian classics, *Shijing* and *Yue ji* for instance, by affirming the mutual complementing relationship between these two subjects in music. Yet on the other it points out one significant feature of music, that is, besides the sound/tune, or the acoustic part that one may perceive directly by listening, there is also a visual part in music, which is termed “appearance” (*rong* 容) here by Du You, that may not be seen directly and has to be externalized by props and body movements, from where dance started coming into being. In terms of “knowing someone” through music, we listen to the sound he makes, as well as observe the dance that resembles and presents one's “appearance” inside (*biaoqirong* 表其容). It is in this sense of simulation and symbolization that we will later discuss dance music, a category that *daqu* belongs to.

The above passage is cited by Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 (1041–1099) in *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 (“Collection of Music Bureau poems”), at the beginning of his preface to the section of “Dance lyrics” (*wuqu geci* 舞曲歌辭). Guo follows this citation with a more detailed elaboration of the origin of the name of dance (*wu* 舞), and its categories of performance and its nature and origins as an institution:

舞亦謂之萬。《禮記外傳》曰：“武王以萬人同滅商，故謂舞為萬。”《商頌》曰：“萬舞有奕。”則殷已謂之萬矣。《魯頌》曰：“萬舞洋洋。”衛詩曰：“公庭萬舞。”然則萬亦舞之名也。《春秋》魯隱公五年：“考仲子之宮，將萬焉。公問羽數於眾仲，眾仲對曰：‘天子用八，諸侯六，大夫四，士二。夫舞，所以節八音而行八風，故自八而下。’於是初獻六羽，

---

<sup>20</sup> TD, *juan* 145, p. 758.

始用六佾也。”杜預以為六六三十六人，而沈約非之，曰：“八音克諧，然後成樂，故必以八人為列。自天子至士，降殺以兩，兩者減其二列爾。預以為一列又減二人，至士止餘四人，豈複成樂。服虔謂天子八八，諸侯六八，大夫四八，士二八，於義為允也。”

Dance is also called myriad. *Li ji waizhuan* (“Records of ritual:verged on biography”)<sup>21</sup> says: “The King Wu has ten thousand people together conquer the Shang. Therefore, dance is called myriad.” *Shang song* (Hymns of Shang)<sup>22</sup> says: “The dance of myriad is brilliant.”<sup>23</sup> Hence in Shang (dance) has already been called myriad. *Lu song* (Hymns of Lu)<sup>24</sup> says: “The dance of myriad is grand.” *Weishi* (Poem of Wei)<sup>25</sup> says: “On the court (performs) the dance of myriad.” Therefore, myriad is also the name of dance. In *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn annals), “the fifth year of Duke Yin of Lu,” it says: “(In the 9<sup>th</sup> month), to complete the building of Master Zhong’s temple, there will be performed the myriad dance. Duke Yin asks Zhong Zhong about the number of people that hold the feather. Zhong Zhong replies: ‘The emperor uses eight (rows)<sup>26</sup>, vassals six, officials four, and scholars two. Dance is that which takes rhythm with eight sounds and spreads the wind to eight directions. Therefore, it goes downward from eight.’ Thus at this time starts the presenting of six feathers and the using of six rows.”<sup>27</sup> Du Yu thinks six (rows) times six makes thirty-six people, yet Shen Yue does not agree. He says: “Eight sounds can be harmonious, whereafter music is complete. Therefore, each row must have eight people. From the emperor to the scholar, each downgrade reduces two, while this two means reducing two rows. Du Yu thought every row, moreover, reduced two people. When it comes to the scholar, there are only four people left—how could it still be music? Fu Qian says ‘the emperor has eight by eight, vassals six by eight, officials four by eight, and scholars two by eight’—this is in accordance with the rite.”<sup>28</sup>

According to Guo Maoqian, *wan* (“myriad”) is both a general reference to dance and the name of a specific dance. In either case, dance at its earliest stage is meant to be a performance with multiple participants. Moreover, despite the exact number of dancers each row comprises, the dispute over the number itself reaffirms the fact that dance first appears as a form of ritual performance—it is part of a ritual ceremony, instead of an entertainment (we will get to the distinction of these two types of dance later).

---

<sup>21</sup> According to *Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志, *Li ji waizhuan* 禮記外傳 of 4 *juan* was composed by Cheng Boyu 成伯璵 of the Tang.

<sup>22</sup> *Shi* 301 <商頌·那> .

<sup>23</sup> Different explanations were given to the *yi* 奕 here. In Mao and Zheng’s annotations, it means *xian* 閑 or *xianxi* 閑習, leisurely. Zhu Xi explains it as 有次序, orderly.

<sup>24</sup> *Shi* 300 <魯頌·闕宮> .

<sup>25</sup> *Shi* 038 <邶風·簡兮> .

<sup>26</sup> Here the number refers to the number of rows (佾). And each row contains eight persons.

<sup>27</sup> Yang Bojun 1981, p. 46.

<sup>28</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 752.



What interests me most in this passage is the citation from the *Li ji waizhuan*, which says: “The King Wu has ten thousand people together conquer the Shang. Therefore, dance is called myriad (武王以萬人同滅商，故謂舞為萬).” Whether or not this is the true reason why “myriad” becomes a designation for dance, the cause and effect relationship here, however, implies what kind of dance of King Wu must have been in many ways. We may easily picture a dance performed by numerous dancers, a dance that celebrates the King’s success and is performed as a part of certain ceremony, and, above all, a dance that simulates the King’s mighty force and glorious moments on battlefield. In other words, it must be a dance that resembles the “appearance” of military triumph.

## II. Dance music (*wuqu* 舞曲)

Dance music (*wuqu*) may be defined as music with dance performance in its broadest sense. The account on dance music, particularly on sacrificial dance, goes back to official documents of the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220), such as the *Shi ji* 史記 (“Records of the Grand Historian”) and the *Han shu* 漢書 (“Document of the Han”), with the latter much more detailed than the former. In the *Yue shu* (“Document on Music”) of *Shi ji*, dance is mostly mentioned as a form of musical performance, along with poem (*shi*) and song (*ge*), taking the passage we have quoted before as an example, or is generally brought up as part of the sacrificial ceremony in making offerings to the ancestral shrines<sup>29</sup>. *Han shu*, more specifically, records the performance of dance under various circumstances during the Han:

高(祖)廟奏武德、文始、五行之舞；孝文廟奏昭德、文始、四時、五行之舞；孝武廟奏盛德、文始、四時、五行之舞。武德舞者，高祖四年作，以象天下樂已行武以除亂也。文始舞者，曰本舜招<sup>30</sup>舞也，高祖六年更名曰文始，以示不相襲也。五行舞者，本周舞也，秦始皇二十六年更名曰五行也。四時舞者，孝文所作，以(明)示天下之安和也。蓋樂已所自作，明有制也；樂先王之樂，明有法也。……諸帝廟皆常奏文始、四時、五行舞云。……舞入無樂者，將至至尊之前不敢以樂也；出用樂者，言舞不失節，能以樂終也。大氏皆因秦舊事焉。

At the temple of the High Emperor (206-195 BC), dances of “Military Virtue

---

<sup>29</sup> For example, “然后鐘磬竽瑟以和之，干戚旄狄以舞之。此所以祭先王之廟也。After this, following with bell, chime stone, *yu* pipe, and zither, and dancing with shield and battleax, yak’s tail and pheasant feather—this is with which to offer sacrifice to the shrines of ancient lords.”

<sup>30</sup> Same as 韶 here.

(*wude*),” “Civil Foundation (*wenshi*),” and “Five Elements” are performed; at the temple of Emperor Wen (179-157 BC), dances of “Bright Virtue (*zhaode*),” “Civil Foundation,” and “Four Seasons” and “Five Elements” are performed; at the temple of Emperor Wu (140-87 BC), dances of “Grand Virtue (*shengde*),” “Civil Foundation,” “Four Seasons,” and “Five Elements” are performed. “Dance of Military Virtue” was composed at the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the High Emperor’s reign, to symbolize that the subcelestial cheer for his eliminating the chaos with military campaign. “Dance of Civil Foundation” is said to be the “Dance of Glory (*shaowu*)” of Emperor Shun originally. The name was changed to “Dance of Civil Foundation” at the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the High Emperor’s reign, to show its non-inheritance. “Dance of Five Elements” are originally dance of the Zhou, and the name was changed to “Five Elements” at the 26<sup>th</sup> year of the Emperor Qin’s reign. “Dance of Four Seasons” was composed by Emperor Wen, to manifest the peace and harmony of the world. Playing the music that is self-composed is to demonstrate the existence of (current) system, while playing the music of ancestral lord is to demonstrate the existence of (previous) regulations. ... At all imperial temples often perform dances of “Civil Foundation,” “Four Seasons,” and “Five Elements.” ... That the dance on entry into the temple is without music is because no one dares to play music when about to come to the supreme majesty. That music is played on exiting the temple is to show that the dance has not lost its proper measure and can close with music. In most of these observances they followed the precedents of the Qin.<sup>31</sup>

The recognition that the renowned Qin scholar Shusun Tong received from the High Emperor of Han, and Tong’s appointment of previous Qin musicians<sup>32</sup> at least to some extent substantiates the idea that the performance of most dances (most likely the form of performance, use of music, and so on) during imperial sacrificial ceremonies in the early Western Han would have been based on Qin precedents. In terms of the dances to be performed at various imperial temples/shrines, while there is overlapping repertoire, many are made specifically for certain emperors, for example, dance of “Military Virtue” for the High Emperor, “Bright Virtue” dance for Emperor Wen, and “Grand Virtue” dance for Emperor Wu. The emperors of the Western Han never stopped making efforts to make their own dance compositions, either from scratch or by recasting previous pieces. The juxtaposition of both self-composed and inherited dances that represent different virtues, according to the above, is to demonstrate the co-existence of “current system” and “previous regulations.” Dances being performed on offerings to imperial temples in the Western Han, therefore, are highly selective, and at the same time considered symbolic in terms of their representations and connotations—the “dance of Military Virtue,” for example, was composed by the High Emperor “to symbolize the subcelestial cheer at his eliminating chaos by a military campaign (以象天下樂已行武以

---

<sup>31</sup> HS, *juan* 22, p. 1044.

<sup>32</sup> HS, *juan* 9, “漢初又有嘉至樂，叔孫通因秦樂人制宗廟迎神之樂也。At early Western Han there is also music of “Happiness Arriving,” the deity-greeting music at imperial temples that Shusun Tong appointed Qin musicians to compose.”

除亂也),” a point to which we will return later.

The *Han shu* record on dance music is still relatively short and brief, limited to the Western Han as to period, and to sacrificial dance as to category. The earliest account that consciously depicts the large picture of dynastic transmission and variations of dance music—both on sacrifice and for entertainment—and furthermore records dance lyrics in official documents is the *yuezhi* 樂志 (“Treatise on Music”) of the *Song shu* 宋書 (“Document of the Song”) by Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513) of the Liang. Among the four chapters of Shen’s *yuezhi*, the first chapter elaborates the development of court music from the ancient time up to the Song (420–479), giving the discussion on dance—both that on sacrificial ceremonies and on entertaining occasions—at full length. The latter part of this chapter, moreover, provides explanations on the origin/creation of songs and dances, or sometimes anecdotal stories during their circulation process. The next three chapters, then, record the lyrics of various songs and dances. The account of the *Song shu* Treatise later became a major source for subsequent study of the subject, in particular for the early Tang scholars who compiled the two-chapter *yuezhi* 樂志 (“Treatise on Music”) of the *Jin shu* 晉書, the next full-scale music monograph to appear in the standard histories.

Despite the detailed discussion of dance music in Shen Yue’s work, the designation *wuqu* (“dance music”), as a specific label for certain kind of performance, does not appear until the *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書, composed by Shen Yue’s contemporary Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯 (487–537):

舞曲，皆古辭雅音，稱述功德，宴享所奏。傅玄歌辭云：“獲罪於天，北徙朔方，墳墓誰掃，超若流光。”如此十餘小曲，名為舞曲，疑非宴樂之辭。然舞曲總名起此矣。

Dance music is all ancient lyrics with elegant tones, which praises and presents merits and virtues, and is played on the banquet and entertaining. The lyric by Fu Xuan goes: “Having received punishment from the heaven, move north to the *shuofang*; who is going to sweep the grave? It is as distant as the flowing moonlight.” Tens of such little songs, though called dance music, are suspected not lyrics of banquet music. Yet the general name of “dance music” starts from here.<sup>33</sup>

The exact source of Fu Xuan’s lyric quoted in the above is, however, hard to trace. Neither in the *Song shu* or other previous documents do we find the tens of little songs labeled “dance music” Xiao mentions. Yet what we may infer from the above is that, “dance music” here is a concept relating to banquet entertainment rather than to sacrificial ceremonies. This conjecture is confirmed by later lyric compositions, including *piwu* 鞞舞 (“drumlet dance”), *duowu* 鐸舞 (“bell dance”), *baizhuwu* 白紵舞 (“white ramie dance”) and other banquet dances performed during the Southern Qi, most of which are derived from earlier Jin versions.

From the Liang on, accounts of dance lyrics appear in a variety of historical

---

<sup>33</sup> NQS, *juan* 11, p. 191.

documents, including standard histories such as the *Sui shu* 隋書, *Jiu Tang shu* 唐書, and *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書, as well as in the *Tang huiyao* 唐會要, a compendium of Tang institutions, and in many monographs on music, such as *Yuefu guti yaojie* 樂府古題要解 by Wu Jing 吳兢 (670–749), the *Jiaofang ji* 教坊記 by Cui Lingqin 崔令欽, and the *Yuefu zalu* by Duan Anjie 段安節. Most of these, however, concentrate only on the dance or musical performance of a specific historical period. The twelfth century compilation of the *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 by Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 is the first attempt at a comprehensive collection of musical poems, including dance lyrics, from ancient times up to the Tang and Five Dynasties (907–960). In his preface to the section of this work entitled “Dance Lyrics” (*wuqu geci* 舞曲歌辭) Guo distinguishes two categories of dance music:

自漢以後，樂舞浸盛。故有雅舞，有雜舞。雅舞用之郊廟朝饗，雜舞用之宴會。

From the Han (206 BC–AD 220) onward, dance music has gradually become popular. Therefore, there are “elegant dance” (*yawu*), and “miscellaneous dance” (*zawu*). The “elegant dance” is carried out in the sacrifice to heaven and earth, and offerings to ancestors, and the “miscellaneous dance” is performed on the banquet.<sup>34</sup>

This section further provides more detailed description of these two sorts of dances:

雅舞者，郊廟朝饗所奏文武二舞是也。古之王者，樂有先後，以揖讓得天下，則先奏文舞，以征伐得天下，則先奏武舞，各尚其德也。

The “elegant dance” is the civil and military dance performed in the sacrifice to the heaven and earth, and in offerings to ancestors. For ancient rulers, music has different priorities: those who won the world by observing the proprieties performed the civil dance first; those who obtained the world by military campaign performed the military dance first, each esteeming his own virtue.<sup>35</sup>

The beginning of the “elegant dance” goes back to the time of ancient worthies—the Yellow Emperor, Yao, Shun, and Yu, who legendarily ruled the world with ideal virtue. Dances of that time, namely, *yunmen* 雲門, *daxian* 大鹹, *dashao* 大韶, and *daxia* 大夏, therefore, belong to the category of perfect “civil dance.” The *Dahuo* 大濩 and *dawu* 大武, dances of Shang and Zhou, the two following dynasties whose establishment or ruling involved military campaigns, are accordingly considered “military dance.” Such a distinction, according to Guo Maoqian, was continued by the Qin (221–207 BC), Han (206 BC–AD 220) and Wei (220–280), though the specific names of their dances varied. Their specific makeup, however, for all but the Zhou *dawu* dance remained unknown from the Han onward.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 753.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 52, pp. 753–754.

The “miscellaneous dances,” on the other hand, are those performed at banquets:

雜舞者，《公莫》《巴渝》《槃舞》《鞞舞》《鐸舞》《拂舞》《白紵》之類是也。始皆出自方俗，後浸陳於殿庭。蓋自周有纓樂散樂，秦漢因之增廣，宴會所奏，率非雅舞。漢、魏已後，並以鞞、鐸、巾、拂四舞，用之宴饗。

The “miscellaneous dance” refers to dances such as *Gongmo*, *Bayu*, *panwu* (“tray dance”), *piwu* (“drumlet dance”), *duowu* (“bell dance”), *fuwu* (“cloth dance”), *baizhu* (“white ramie dance”) and so on. They originally all come from local custom, and subsequently gradually appeared at the court. Ever since the Zhou, there were *manyue* (“mixed music”) and *sanyue* (“scattered music”), on the basis of which Qin and Han added supplements and expansions. Those performed at banquets, generally speaking, were not “elegant dance.” After Han and Wei, the four dances *piwu* (“drum dance”), *duowu* (“bell dance”), *jinwu* (“cloth dance”), and *fuwu* (“whisk dance”) were performed both at banquets and in making offerings.<sup>37</sup>

To these “miscellaneous dances” were later added “miscellaneous dances of the western Cang and Qiang barbarians” (*Xi Cang Qianghu zawu* 西佗羌胡雜舞) during the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–589) as this category of performance continued to grow in popularity. It achieved its height during the Tang (618–907), when the *jiaofang* 教坊 (“Entertainment Bureau”) recruited three hundred female performers for the famous “Dance of Rainbow and Feather Clothes” (*nishang yuyi wu* 霓裳羽衣舞). Yet most of these dance performances were lost in the military campaigns and chaos at the end of the Tang.<sup>38</sup>

### III. Dance lyrics

When lyrics became an integral part of dance music is a controversial issue. One of the most influential views is that of the Song historian Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104–1162), who says in his *Tong zhi* 通志 (“Comprehensive Treatise on Institutions”):

自六代之舞至於漢魏，並不著辭也。舞之有辭，自晉始。

The dances of the Six Eras down to the Han and Wei did not include lyrics. The

---

<sup>37</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 53, p. 766.

<sup>38</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 53, pp. 766–767.

custom of including lyrics with dance music began from the Jin.<sup>39</sup>

古之樂惟歌詩則有辭，笙舞皆無辭。……大抵漢魏之世，舞詩無聞。至晉武帝泰始九年，荀勗曾典樂，更文舞曰正德，武舞曰大豫，使郭夏<sup>40</sup>宋識為其舞節，而張華為之樂章。自此以來，舞始有辭。舞而有辭，失古道矣。

In the music of antiquity, only sung poems had lyrics, while music for wind instruments or dance compositions were all without lyrics ... Generally speaking, during the period of Han and Wei, there is no mention of “dance lyrics.” When it came to the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Taishi (273), during the reign of Emperor Wu of the Jin, Xun Xu was once in charge of music. He changed the name of “civil dance” to *Zhengde*, and that of “military dance” to *Dayu*. He also had Guo Xia and Song Shi make the rhythm of dance, and Zhang Hua compose the lyrics. From then on, dance started to have lyrics. For dances to have lyrics deviates from the ancient way.<sup>41</sup>

This argument has been followed by some later scholars, Liang Qichao for example, who also asserted that dance lyrics, as well as lyrics of zither tunes before the Jin, were most likely filled in by later authors.<sup>42</sup> Yet more and more records of dance lyrics before the Jin have been brought out by contemporary scholars to challenge this assertion,<sup>43</sup> among which “the Song of Military Virtue Dance” (*wude wu ge* 武德舞歌) of the Eastern Han is the earliest one and most often cited. This lyric is said to be composed by Liu Cang 劉蒼, the lord of Dongping, of Eastern Han, and recorded in *Dong guan Han ji* 東觀漢記, which is only partly extant. Guo Maoqian also includes this lyric in his *Yuefu shiji*, as the first piece of the “elegant dance” (*yawu*) section<sup>44</sup>.

Other records include lyrics of “Dance of Ba and Yu” (*bayu wu* 巴渝舞) composed by Wang Can 王粲 (177–217) of the Wei,<sup>45</sup> and five lyrics of the “Song of drumlet dance” (*piwu ge*) by Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232).<sup>46</sup> Moreover, some scholars also state that the fact that dance lyrics started earlier than the Jin can also be proved by descriptions of dance performances in literary works.<sup>47</sup> In “Dance Rhapsody” (*wufu* 舞賦) by Fu Yi 傅毅 (?–90), when Song Yu, a character who is supposed to be a connoisseur of dance, tries to explain the exquisiteness of dance performance to the King Xiang of Chu, there is a passage of singing lyrics following Song’s description of the delicate

<sup>39</sup> TZ, *juan* 49, p. 374-3. The “Six Eras” (*liu dai* 六代) here refer to the period from the earliest legendary sage kings down to the Zhou.

<sup>40</sup> This is a mistranscription for Qiong 瓊.

<sup>41</sup> TZ, *juan* 49, pp. 374-29.

<sup>42</sup> Liang Qichao 1996, p. 33.

<sup>43</sup> For example, see Xiao Difei 1984, p.167-168; Liao Weiqing 2006, p. 60.

<sup>44</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 754.

<sup>45</sup> See JS, *juan* 12, p. 693; also see YFSJ, p. 767.

<sup>46</sup> *Song shu*, *juan* 12, p. 626 “魏陳思王鞞舞歌五篇”

<sup>47</sup> See Liao Weiqing 2006, p. 60.

appearance of female dancers, led by the introduction “singing loudly with resounding voice as the way of entertaining (亢音高歌為樂方).”<sup>48</sup> This may also be taken as evidence of dance lyrics during the Eastern Han. Therefore, although it is true that most of the accounts of dance lyrics are from the Jin and later, when Xun Xu and Zhang Hua played a significant role in shaping court musical institutions, it is quite possible that dance lyrics had already been composed and performed before that period.

#### IV. The symbolic dance

As with the persistent interest in the relation between text and music in the hermeneutics of poetry, the attention to the relationship between singing and dance has never slackened in discussions of dance performance. We have talked about how dance is considered, theoretically, appearing as a sort of extension of singing in the process of expressing one’s intent (*zhi*) outwards, and as a supplement of sound by externalizing one’s appearance of mind to complete the music, according to the account of Confucian classics. In fact, the idea that dance is something that externalizes or manifests the appearance (*biaoqirong* 表其容)—as described in the *Tong dian* cited above—and therefore is an essentially communicative or symbolic medium has informed much discussion of the history of Chinese dance, especially its early stage.

For an example we may consider one of the earliest *yawu*, or “elegant dances” mentioned in the historical record, the Han dynasty “dance of Military Virtue” (武德舞). The earliest account of this dance appears in the *Han shu*:

武德舞者，高祖四年作，以象天下樂已行武以除亂也。

“Dance of Military Virtue” was composed at the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the High Emperor’s reign, to *symbolize* the subcelestial cheer for his eliminating chaos by a military campaign.<sup>49</sup>

A similar account can also be found in the *Song shu*:

(漢高祖) 又造武德舞，舞人悉執干戚，以象天下樂已行武以除亂也。

(Gaozu of the Han) also composed the “dance of Military Virtue,” in which dancers all held shield and battleax, to *symbolize* the subcelestial cheer for his eliminating chaos by a military campaign.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> WX, *juan* 17, p. 798.

<sup>49</sup> HS, *juan* 22, p. 1044.

<sup>50</sup> *Song shu*, *juan* 19, p. 533.

Composed by Gaozu after his rise to the throne through military triumph, this “dance of Military Virtue” is most likely a highly symbolic one, considering that “dancers all held shield and battleax,” which unmistakably suggests a simulation of a battlefield scene.

A subsequent record of this dance in the *Nan Qi shu* provides us further information on the composition of this dance:

漢高造武德舞，執干戚，象天下樂已除亂。案禮云‘朱干玉戚，冕而舞大武’。是則漢放此舞而立也。

The High Emperor of Han composed “dance of Military Virtue,” in which (dancers) held shields and battleaxes to symbolize the subcelestial cheer for his eliminating the chaos. Note: the *Li* says, ‘vermillion shield and jade battleax, by putting the crown people dance the “Grand Martial.”’ Thus the Han established its version in imitation of this earlier dance.<sup>51</sup>

The context of the *Li ji* citation is the sacrifice to the Duke of Zhou in the Grand Temple by King Cheng, while the “Grand Martial” is a dance said to be composed by King Wu of Zhou:

武王作武。……武，言以功定天下也。

The King Wu composed the “(Grand) Martial” (dance). ... “(Grand) Martial,” is to indicate that (he) pacified the world with (military) achievement.<sup>52</sup>

The composition of the “dance of Military Virtue” by the High Emperor of the Han, therefore, is an imitation of King Wu’s composition of the “Grand Martial” dance, which similarly points to the king’s success on the battlefield. This imitation, in the first place, indicates a triumph of military force by the High Emperor of the Han over the Qin and other vassals, just as that of King Wu over the Shang—the shields and battleaxes that are supposed to be seen in the battlefield have been cleverly used as dancing props. Beyond this, this imitation is in a sense also a self-legitimized political gesture that symbolizes a moral inheritance of the Zhou—a period that has been always looked upon as a model of decorum—considering how less perfect military conquest is compared to civil transformation.

Whether or not there was any lyric in the performance of “dance of Military Virtue” during the reign of the High Emperor of the Han remains unknown. The earliest extant lyric of this dance was composed by Liu Cang of Eastern Han, and was recorded in Guo Maoqian’s *Yuefu shiji* as the first piece in *yawu* (“elegant dance”) section. In the preface Guo cites a paragraph that introduces the background of Cang’s composition of this dance lyric from *Dong guan Han ji* 東觀漢記<sup>53</sup>:

永平三年八月丁卯，公卿奏議世祖廟登歌八佾舞名。東平王蒼議，以為漢制舊典，宗廟各奏其樂，不皆相襲，以明功德。秦為無道，殘賊百

<sup>51</sup> NQS, *juan* 11, p. 190.

<sup>52</sup> HS, *juan* 22.

<sup>53</sup> The punctuation of Guo’s citation, however, is believed to have some mistake, in that the meaning is contradictory. See Liang Haiyan 2009, p.116.



姓，高皇帝受命誅暴，元元各得其所，萬國咸熙，作武德之舞。孝文皇帝躬行節儉，除誹謗，去肉刑，澤施四海，孝景皇帝制昭德之舞。孝武皇帝功德茂盛，威震海外，開地置郡，傳之無窮，孝宣皇帝制盛德之舞。光武帝皇帝受命中興，撥亂反正，武暢方外，震服百蠻，戎狄奉貢，宇內治平，登封告成，修建三雍，肅穆典祀，功德巍巍，比隆前代。以兵平亂，武功盛大。歌所以詠德，舞所以象功，世祖廟樂名宜曰大武之舞。……進武德舞歌詩曰：（略）。詔書曰：驃騎將軍議可。進武德之舞如故。

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Yongping Reign (60 A.D.), on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of 8<sup>th</sup> month, dukes and ministers present a memorial to the emperor discussing the name of ascending song and eight-row dance in the temple of the Emperor Guangwu (25–57). Cang, the Lord of Dongping, submitted a comment, holding the opinion that according to the previous norm of Han, each temple should play its own music, with no complete repetition, in order to signify the achievement and virtue. The Qin behaved without the Way, killing and hurting common people. The Emperor Wu received the mandate and wiped out this evil. Therefore, the common folk were all given their proper place, and all states were prosperous. Then (he) composed the “dance of Military Virtue.” The Emperor Wen personally practiced frugality, removing slander, and eliminating disfiguring punishments. His beneficence spread to the whole world. The emperor Jing made “dance of Bright Virtue” (for him). The Emperor Wu had magnificent achievement and virtue, overawing the overseas peoples, pioneering the frontiers to establish prefectures, to be passed down in perpetuity. The Emperor Xuan composed “dance of Grand Virtue” (for him). The Emperor Guangwu received the order on the resurgence of the country. He dispelled chaos and restored peace, with his valiance passing unimpededly to territories beyond. The barbarians were in dread and obedient; the Rong and Di offered their respect. All within the eaves of sky was peaceful and secured, and (then) he ascended the mount to declare the accomplishment. He built the Palace of “Three harmonies,”<sup>54</sup> where the sacrificial ceremonies were solemn and respectful. His achievement and virtue were so lofty, as grand as previous dynasties. Suppressing the chaos with warfares, his military accomplishment was grand and magnificent. The song is that which to praise one’s virtue; the dance is that which to imitate one’s achievement. The music adopted at the temple of Emperor Guangwu should be named “dance of Grand Military.”...(Cang) presented the singing song of the “dance of Military Virtue,” which goes: (omitted) ... The imperial edict stated: “The memorial of General of the Cavalry of the Alert is approved.” The “dance of Military Virtue” was presented as before.<sup>55</sup>

The music adopted in sacrificial ceremony is hence indubitably closely related to the

<sup>54</sup> The Palace of “Three Harmonies” refers to *Piyong* 辟雍, *Mingtang* 明堂 and *Lingtai* 靈臺.

<sup>55</sup> Wu Shuping 1987, *juan* 5, p. 164.

emperor's "achievement and virtue" (*gongde* 功德). The rule that "each temple plays its own music, with no complete repetition, in order to signify the achievement and virtue" would immediately remind us of what has been mentioned before in the *Han shu*:

蓋樂已所自作，明有制也；樂先王之樂，明有法也。

Playing the music that is self-composed is to demonstrate the existence of (current) norms, while playing the music of ancestral lords is to demonstrate the existence of (previous) regulations.

The similarity lies in how music, as a part of a sacrificial ceremony, is taken as a ritual symbol that indicates the emperor's political virtue in both cases. Therefore, the most significant "achievement and virtue" of the High Emperor of the Han is considered his overthrowing Qin's immoral rule through military campaigns, as indicated by the performance of the "dance of Military Virtue," and reflected in the title itself. In the same vein, the greatest accomplishment of the Emperor Wen concerns manifesting his virtue by applying renovations on censorial and punitive systems and then "spreading his beneficence to the whole world," as is implied in the dance of "Bright Virtue," while that of the Emperor Wu lies in his "overawing the overseas" and extending the territory, as is indicated by "Grand Virtue" dance.

When discussing the name of the dance to be used in the sacrificial ceremony at the temple of Emperor Guangwu, the Lord of Dongping clearly points out the criteria of selection, which is "the song is that which to praise one's virtue; the dance is that which to symbolize one's achievement (歌所以詠德，舞所以象功)." In this sense, when the "dance of Military Virtue" is performed in the offerings to the Emperor Wu by his offsprings during the Eastern Han, the selection of the dance itself signifies the recognition of the "achievement and virtue" of the Emperor Wu by his later generations. In other words, when performed in the context of sacrificial ceremony, the dance *per se* then bears another layer of connotation—as a sort of recognition of the achievement of the emperor or value symbolization—on top of the simulation of military triumph and the linkage to orthodox morality.

## V. From the "Grand Martial" (*dawu* 大武) to "Dance of Seven Virtues" (*qidewu* 七德舞)

In his introduction to the category "elegant dance" (*yawu*) in his compilation, Guo Maoqian mentions that in terms of the manner of performance of pre-Qin civil and military dances, documentation had been limited to the Zhou *dawu* 大武 ("Grand

Martial”) dance from the Han onward.<sup>56</sup> As a matter of fact, the composition of the *wude wu* (武德舞 “dance of Military Virtue”) by the High Emperor of the Han, according to the record of the *Nan Qi shu*, was a deed following the performance of the *dawu* dance to symbolize the emperor’s elimination of the chaos and the grand cheering on that by the states, as we discussed in the previous section. The composition of the *dawu* dance is usually attributed to King Wu or the Duke of Zhou, as in the following account in *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (“The Annals of Lü Buwei”):

武王即位，以六師伐殷，六師未至，以銳兵克之於牧野。歸，乃薦俘馘于京太室，乃命周公為作大武。

When King Wu ascended the throne, he attacked Yin with the Six Armies. Before the Six Armies had reached the Yin capital, he used his crack troops to vanquish the enemy at Muye. When he returned, he displayed the heads/left ears of the captives in the Great Chamber in the capital. Then he commanded the Duke of Zhou to compose the “Grand Martial.”<sup>57</sup>

An imaginative reconstruction of how this legendary dance might have been performed appears in the following the *Yueji* passage where Confucius discusses music with Binmou Jia:

夫樂者，象成者也。總干而山立，武王之事也。發揚蹈厲，太公之志也。武亂皆坐，周、召之治也。且夫武，始而北出，再成而滅商。三成而南，四成而南國是疆，五成而分周公左召公右，六成復綴以崇天子。夾振之而駟伐，盛威於中國也。分夾而進，事早濟也。久立於綴，以待諸侯之至也。

Music is that which represents accomplishment. The performers standing with their shields, each erect and firm as a hill, represents the attitude of King Wu. The violent movements of the arms and fierce stamping represent the enthusiasm of Taigong. The kneeling of all at the conclusion of the performance of the *Wu* represents the government (of peace, instituted) by (the dukes of) Zhou and Shao. Moreover, in the *Wu*, the performers in the first movement proceed towards the north (to imitate the marching of King Wu against Shang); in the second, they show the extinction of Shang; in the third, they show the return march to the south; in the fourth, they show the laying out of the Southern states; in the fifth, they show how (the dukes of) Zhou and Shao were severally put in charge of the states on the left and right; in the sixth, they again unite at the point of starting to offer their homage to the son of Heaven. Two men, one on each side of the performers, excite them with bells, and four times they stop and strike and thrust, showing the great awe with which (King Wu) inspired the Middle states. Their advancing with these men on each side shows his eagerness to complete his helpful undertaking.

<sup>56</sup> YFSJ, pp. 753–754. Also see footnote #22.

<sup>57</sup> LSCQ, “古樂,” The translation is from Knoblock 2000, p. 151.

The performers standing long together show how he waited for the arrival of the princes.<sup>58</sup>

The Master gave this speech about the *dawu* dance when Binmou Jia, the interlocutor, asked him to explain why in the performance of the *dawu* there was gradual and long-continuing action (武之遲久). Confucius's initial statement about the nature of music further attests to our earlier sense of dance as a basically symbolic or communicative medium. After that, the Master described three different modes of expression in the *dawu* performance, which quite possibly also occur according to the time sequence, and explained their respective connotations. First, the troops with arms represents the achievement of King Wu, who summoned up his people's courage to initiate the attack on the Shang, which was also known as "taking the oath at Muye 牧野." Second, the violent body movements represent the military campaigns launched by Taigong, who served as the leader in the battles. Last but not least, the kneeling of all performers at the end of the performance represents the government of peace by the duke of the Zhou and Shao, who were later put in charge of the states to help King Wu.

Besides these three performing modes, moreover, the Master explained the six movements (*cheng* 成) of *dawu*, which more completely and more specifically correspond to the whole event of King Wu's triumph over the Shang. *Cheng* 成, according to Zheng Xuan's annotation, in this sense means a self-contained section of a composition:

成，犹奏也，每奏武曲一终为一成。

*Cheng*, is like movement. In the military music, every ending of a movement is a *Cheng*.

Therefore, the first movement is about King Wu's initial march north against the Shang, probably his observing the situation at Mengjin 盟津; the second movement is on his final extinction of the Shang two years later; the third movement then refers to his return to the south after defeating the Shang; the fourth represents his laying out of the Southern states and taking them over; the fifth, again, refers to the government of peace by the duke of the Zhou and Shao; and the last depicts the reunion of the people and their homage to the son of Heaven.

While the explanation of the modes of expression gives a general idea of the process of performance, the interpretation on the six movements helps us picture the spectacular unfolding of the performance around a series of major scenes, as well as the changes of positions of dance performers, who proceed towards north first, then march to the south, separate to the left and right, and finally return to the center. The Master continues his deciphering of the *dawu* dance by focusing on changes in the dancers' formation. Two figures—one on each side of the performers, urging them on with bells—act the king and his general, as an imitation of the battle scene, according to Huang Kan's 皇侃 annotation.<sup>59</sup> They stop and strike and thrust (*fa* 伐) four times, facing four

---

<sup>58</sup> *Yue ji*, LJ, vol.4, *juan* 11.

<sup>59</sup> Huang Kan's annotation reads:

directions, in a shorthand imitation of the actions of the armies on the battlefield. After that comes the division of the dance troupe into separate advancing groups, showing the eagerness of King Wu to complete his undertaking. In the end, when the battle scene has finished, the performers stand long together to show how King Wu waited for the arrival of the princes.

The *dawu* dance of Zhou, therefore, becomes a significant ritual performance because of its symbolic links to the dynastic founding. According to the *Liji*, during the Zhou this dance would be performed at the Great Temple in the 6<sup>th</sup> month every year as part of the sacrifice to the Duke of Zhou:

季夏六月，以禘禮祀周公於大廟，牲用白牡；尊用犧象山罍；郁尊用黃目；灌用玉瓚大圭；薦用玉豆雕篚；爵用玉琖，仍雕，加以璧散璧角；俎用梲巖；升歌清廟，下管象，朱干玉戚，冕而舞大武；皮弁素積，裼而舞大夏。”

In the last month of summer, the sixth month, the ceremonies of the great sacrifice was performed in sacrificing to the duke of Zhou in the Great Temple, employing for the victim to him a white bull. The cups were those with the figure of a victim bull, of an elephant, and of hills and clouds; that for the fragrant spirits was the one with gilt eyes on it. For libations they used the cup of jade with the handle made of a long rank-symbol. The dishes with the offerings were on stands of wood, adorned with jade and carved. The cups for the personator were of jade carved in the same way. There were also the plain cups and those of horn, adorned with round pieces of jade; and for the meat-stands, they used those with four feet and the cross-binders. (The singers) went up to the hall (or stage) , and sang the *Qingmiao*; (in the court) below, (the performers) performed the *Xiang* dance, to the accompaniment of the wind instruments. With their red shields and jade-adorned axes, and in their caps with pendants, they danced to the music of the *dawu*; in their skin caps, and large white skirts gathered at the waist, and jacket of silk, they danced the *daxia*.<sup>60</sup>

The highly select sacrificial victim and utensils employed in this rite clearly indicate its importance. It is also not difficult for us to imagine from such descriptions how spectacular the *dawu* performance would be. This is probably why when Ji Zha, the famous Spring and Autumn-era music connoisseur from Wu, watched the *dawu* dance, he could not help eulogizing its splendor:

見舞象箛南籥者，曰，美哉，猶有憾。見舞大武者，曰，美哉，周之盛

---

武王伐紂之時，王與大將親自執鐸以夾軍眾。今作武樂之時，令二人振鐸夾舞者，象武王與大將伐紂之時矣。

When king Wu was attacking (the Shang tyrant) Zhou, the king and his general were holding bells in person, on each side of the army. Nowadays when performing the *wu* music, two men, one on each side of the performers, excite them with bells, to imitate the time that king Wu and his general attacked Zhou.

<sup>60</sup> LJ, vol.5, *juan* 14.

也，其若此乎。

When (Ji Zha) saw the *xiangshuo* and *nanyue* dances, he said: “Splendid! Yet there is still some regret.” When he saw the *dawu* dance, he said: “Splendid! The prosperity of Zhou was probably like this!”<sup>61</sup>

The *xiangshuo* and *nanyue* dances are said to be dances of King Wen of the Zhou. One was a martial dance, and the other a civil dance. According to the annotations by Kong Yingda, Ji Zha’s exclamation for the dances could be actually taken as a representation of his judgement of the virtue of the kings:

季札觀舞，皆知其德者，聖人之作樂也，各象當時之事。時事見于舞，故觀之可以知也。...則知諸樂之舞，皆象時王功德也。聖王功德，見于舉動之容，故觀其舞容，各知其德也。

When Ji Zha watches the dances, in all cases he recognizes the virtues (of the kings). This is because the music composition of the sages respectively symbolizes the events of their time. Current events being displayed in the dances, when one watches them, the virtues may be recognized... Therefore, dances of every kind of music all signify the achievements and virtues of the kings of the time. The achievements and virtues of the sage kings are displayed in the appearance of the movement. Thus when (Ji Zha) watches the movement of the dances, he knows their individual virtue.<sup>62</sup>

Again, Kong here premises his argument with the symbolism of dance, just as other traditional commentators did, as we have seen in the last section. For him, dance music composed by the sage kings is a representation of specific events, which in turn reveal the achievements and virtues of the sage kings. Therefore, the King Wen’s lack of final success in the task of attacking Yin results in the imperfection and regret of the *xiangshuo* and *nanyue* dances, while the military triumph over the Shang, the uniting of the Middle States, and the government of peace of King Wu, on the contrary, lead to the perfect splendiddness of the *dawu* dance, through which the prosperity of Zhou could be successfully conveyed to the perceptions of the audience.

Although the Zhou was generally treated in later tradition as a supreme model that later rulers could only hope to emulate, the status of the Zhou, and of King Wu in particular, was not perfectly undisputable. When compared with Shun 舜, the legendary sage king of high antiquity, the military campaigns that King Wu of the Zhou initiated in conquering the Shang prove to be open to some critique:

3.25 子謂韶，盡美矣，又盡善也。謂武，盡美矣，未盡善也。

The Master said of the *Shao* that it was perfectly beautiful and also perfectly good. He said of the *Wu* that it was perfectly beautiful but not perfectly good.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Zuozhuan 左傳·襄公二十九年.

<sup>62</sup> ZZZY, *juan* 39.

<sup>63</sup> LY 3.25 論語·八佾.

*Analects* commentary offers copious explanations of the implications of this statement. One of the most detailed accounts comes from Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200):

韶，舜乐。武，武王乐。美者，声容之盛。善者，美之实也。舜绍尧致治，武王伐纣救民，其功一也，故其乐皆尽美。然舜之德，性之也，又以揖逊而有天下；武王之德，反之也，又以征诛而得天下，故其实有不同者。

*Shao* is the music of Shun. *Wu* is the music of King Wu. “Beautiful” refers to the brilliancy of the sound and appearance. “Good” is the essence of beauty. Shun continued on Yao’s legacy to achieve peace, and King Wu rescued his people by attacking the Zhou—their achievements were the same, therefore both of their musics were perfectly beautiful. Nevertheless, Shun’s virtue was a matter of inborn nature, and he possessed the world with humility and modesty; while King Wu’s virtue was a matter of resisting and returning [to the good], and he obtained rule of the world through military campaigns and killing. Thus their essences were different.<sup>64</sup>

According to the historical account, Yao 堯, the sage ruler prior to Shun, abdicated and handed over the crown to Shun because of the latter’s perfect virtue. That was probably why the music of Shun was called *Shao* 韶, which shares the pronunciation with *Shao* 紹, meaning “to follow”, indicating that the virtue of Shun followed that of Yao. The peaceful and modest method by which Shun inherited the throne ensured the perfect goodness of his music on top of its perfect beautifulness, because the music, according to the traditional commentators, is a performance symbolizing the virtue of the composer. *Wu* 武, the music of King Wu of the Zhou, on the other hand, was a demonstration of the martial power and military triumph of King Wu. This has made the dance music fall out of the traditional Confucian standard of criticism and inevitably affected its perfect moral value. Therefore, even though the achievement of King Wu of the Zhou has gained him tremendous support by all his people and his government afterwards has been highly valued, the righteousness of his military campaigns was still an issue not completely unimpeachable in the eyes of Confucius.

This kind of debate over the relationship between one’s achievement and ways to achieve it, and the balance between civil and peaceful succession and violent military campaign continued to be a constant concern in later generations for both rulers and ministers, both composers and commentators. An interesting example is the *qi de* dance (七德舞, “Dance of Seven Virtues”), one of the three major dances of the Tang:

七德舞者，本名秦王破陣樂。太宗為秦王，破劉武周，軍中相與作秦王破陣樂曲。及即位，宴會必奏之。謂侍臣曰：“雖發揚蹈厲，異乎文容，然功業由之，被于樂章，示不忘本也。”右僕射封德彝曰：“陛下以聖武戡難，陳樂象德，文容豈足道哉！”帝矍然曰：“朕雖以武功興，終以文

---

<sup>64</sup> SSZJ, p. 197-25.

德綏海內，謂文容不如蹈厲，斯過矣。”

“Dance of Seven Virtues,” originally was called “The Tune of Prince of Qin Defeating the Troops.” When Emperor Taizong (599–649), known as the Prince of Qin, defeated Liu Wuzhou, the armies, together, made “The Tune of Prince of Qin Defeating the Troops.” After (the emperor) ascended to the throne, on every banquet this composition would surely be performed. (The emperor) said to his ministers: “Although the violent movements of the arms and fierce stamping diverge from the comportment of civil virtue, it [i.e. military action] is where our achievements come from. To adapt this to music is to show that we do not forget our origins.” Feng Deyi, the Right Vice Director (of the Department of State Affairs) said: “Your Majesty quelled the rebellions with imperial military power. (Now we) display it in the music to symbolize the virtue—how could civil comportment be enough!” The emperor was stunned, and said hurriedly: “Although I began from military action, eventually I pacified the whole country with civil virtue. To say that civil rite is not as good as fierce stamping—that is immoderate!”

乃制舞圖，左圓右方，先偏後伍，交錯屈伸，以象魚麗、鵝鶴。命呂才以圖教樂工百二十八人，被銀甲執戟而舞，凡三變，每變為四陣，象擊刺往來，歌者和曰：“秦王破陣樂”。後令魏征與員外散騎常侍褚亮、員外散騎常侍虞世南、太子右庶子李百藥更制歌辭，名曰七德舞。

Thereupon (he) made a diagram of the dance, round on the left and square on the right, with carriages in the front and armies in the back,<sup>65</sup> moving crossingly back and forth, bending and stretching, in order to imitate the battle formations “entrapping the fish” and “geese and cranes.”<sup>66</sup> (The emperor) ordered Lü Cai, according to the picture, to teach one hundred and twenty-eight musicians to dance wearing silver armor and holding halberds. There are altogether three changes (of formations), each being composed of four formations of troops, to imitate the attacking and striking back and forth. The singers made the chorus: “The Tune of Prince of Qin Defeating the Troops.” Later, (the emperor) ordered Wei Zheng, together with Chu Liang, the Supernumerary Policy Adviser, Yu Shinan, the Supernumerary Policy Adviser, and Li Baiyao, the Prince’s Right Mentor, to recompose the lyric, and named it “Dance of Seven Virtues.”

舞初成，觀者皆扼腕踴躍，諸將上壽，群臣稱萬歲，蠻夷在庭者請相率以舞。太常卿蕭瑀曰：“樂所以美盛德，形容而有所未盡，陛下破劉武周、薛舉、竇建德、王世充，願圖其狀以識。”帝曰：“方四海未定，攻伐以平禍亂，制樂陣其梗概而已。若備寫禽獲，今將相有嘗為其臣者，

<sup>65</sup> See *Zuozhuan*, the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Duke Huan. In the battle, twenty-five carriages are called *bian*, which are in the front and followed by *wu*, composed of five soldiers, which fill the gaps between the carriages and prevent the escape. (《左傳·桓公五年》：“為魚麗之陣。”晉杜預注：“《司馬法》：‘車戰二十五乘為偏。’以車居前，以伍次之，承偏之隙而彌縫闕漏也。五人為伍，此蓋魚麗陣法。”)

<sup>66</sup> Both *yuli* 魚麗 (“entrapping the fish”) and *eguan* 鵝鶴 (“geese and cranes”) are the names of battle formations.



觀之有所不忍，我不為也。”

When the dance was first finished, the spectators all wrung their wrists in enthusiasm, the generals offered congratulations, the ministers praised His Majesty, and barbarians in the court requested to dance following each other. Xiao Yu, the Chief Minister of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices, said: “The music is that which to praise the grand virtue, yet its expression has something incomplete. Your Majesty defeated Liu Wuzhou, Xue Ju, Dou Jiande and Wang Shichong, whose forms I wish to depict as a memorial.” The emperor said: “At the time when the four seas are not yet pacified, the attack is (only) to pacify the disasters and chaos. In making music one ought only to display these things in outline. If completely depict those we captured, there are generals and ministers among us who once served as their subjects, and will find this sight hard to bear. Therefore I will not do it.”

自是元日、冬至朝會慶賀，與九功舞同奏。舞人更以進賢冠，虎文袴，騰蛇帶，烏皮鞞，二人執旌居前。其後更號神功破陣樂。

From then on, on the imperial celebrations and banquets of New Year’s Day and the Winter Solstice, it (i.e., the “Dance of Seven Virtues”) is performed with the “Dance of Nine Achievements.” The dancers wear Cap of Advancing the Worthy<sup>67</sup>, tiger pattern pants, winged snake belt, and black leather boots. Two people holding the flags are in the front. Later on, its name is changed to “The Tune of Magic Achievement Defeating the Troops.”<sup>68</sup>

According to the *Xin Tang shu*, the *qi de* dance is one of three major dance compositions composed during the Tang, along with the *jiu gong* dance (九功舞, “Dance of Nine Achievements”) and the *shangyuan* dance (上元舞, “Dance of Superior Heaven”). Originally named the “Tune of Prince of Qin Defeating the Troops,” the *qi de* dance was composed by Emperor Taizong of the Tang, Li Shimin, who, as we know, helped his father Li Yuan 李淵 (later Emperor Gaozu) rise against the rule of Sui and subsequently defeated several of his most important rivals, and was ceremonially regarded as a co-founder of the dynasty along with Emperor Gaozu.

This dance music was originally composed after Li Shimin, the Prince of Qin at the time, defeated Liu Wuzhou, who launched a major offensive against the Tang in spring of 619. According to the historical account, at first, Liu crushed Tang’s forces, captured Taiyuan and took over nearly all of the area corresponding to modern Shanxi within a very short time, to the shock and dismay of Emperor Gaozu, who considered abandoning the region altogether. Li Shimin, however, opposed doing so. He then lead the army across the Yellow River and eventually dealt Liu a major defeat in spring 620, at which point all of Dingyang territory fell into Tang hands. It was to celebrate this critical triumph that the “Tune of Prince of Qin Defeating the Troops” was composed and circulated in the army.

After the enthronement of Emperor Taizong, this tune was performed at every banquet. What is interesting here is that the debate involving this dance music actually

<sup>67</sup> *Jinxian guan* (“Cap of Advancing the Worthy”) is a kind of cap people wear when they meet with the emperor.

<sup>68</sup> XTS, *juan* 21, pp. 467–468.

was carried out at two different levels—first between martial embodiment and civil rite, and later over the balance of visual imitation and symbolization of the dance movements.

The story of the first debate clearly follows the same key terms as Confucius' comment on the music of *shao* and *wu* discussed above, recasting Confucius's judgment of Shun and King Wu in terms of Taizong's career and image.<sup>69</sup> Emperor Taizong was obviously aware of the moral hierarchy between the legal succession by peaceful civil rites and rise to power via military force when he told his ministers that making violent movements adapted to the music was only to show that they were not forgetting their origin since it was where their achievements came from. Moreover, after Feng Deyi, one of his officials made the audacious speech, the emperor was stunned and immediately refuted what Feng said by reemphasizing how he eventually pacified the whole country with civil virtue, despite the military campaigns he involved in at the beginning stage.

Similar to the *dawu* dance of King Wu of the Zhou, the dance of Emperor Taizong was indubitably a martial dance that simulates the battle scenes. On the picture of the dance made by the emperor, rounded on the left and squared off on the right, carriages in the front and armies in the back are exactly the imitation of *yuli* ("entrapping the fish") and *eguan* ("geese and cranes"), two kinds of battle formations. Dancers who wore silver armor and held halberds numbered one hundred and twenty eight, a spectacle of magnificent scale. In addition, as in the *dawu* dance, there were also changes of formation in this one, each composed of four groups of troops, "to imitate the attacking and striking back and forth (象擊刺往來)." All these descriptions of the movements, together with the chorus that were supposed to be full of power and grandeur, therefore, readily evokes a large-sized martial dance performance for us readers.

The second debate on this dance music concerns the balance of visual imitation of dance movements, or the appropriate boundary of the symbolization of dances. Before the starting of the real debate between Emperor Gaozong and his minister, what was noticeable was the change of name on this dance music conducted by the emperor.

The new name of the dance, *qi de* (七德, "Seven Virtues") comes from *Zuozhuan*, and it refers to the seven virtues of military:

夫武，禁暴、戢兵、保大、定功、安民、和眾、豐財者也。

As for military, is to prohibit the violence, stop the arms, secure the high position, establish the achievement, pacify the people, harmonize the crowd, and enrich the wealth.<sup>70</sup>

It is not difficult for us to see that the word *wu* 武 here is of high value, reaching far beyond actual martial strength. In fact, except for the first two things, we would hardly relate the remaining five deeds with or solely with the category of the "military." Therefore, the change of name on this dance music, we might say, was a behavior that successfully discouraged the audience from a direct association of this dance with military force and thus was a clever gesture of self-legitimization. And at the same time, this name of *qi de* ("Seven Virtues") almost perfectly accords with the achievements of

<sup>69</sup> On Taizong's sophistication in adapting traditional authorities into his persona as emperor, see Jack Chen 2011.

<sup>70</sup> *Zuozhuan*, the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Duke Xuan, 左传·宣公十二年.

Emperor Taizong—or to be more exactly, the image through which the Emperor himself preferred to be pictured—a ruler who ushers in a golden age of Chinese history, and brought about an era of both economic and political power.

The cause of the second debate was an argument made by Xiao Yu, the Chief Minister of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices. According to Xiao, since music is something to “praise the grand virtue,” thus when it comes to the expression of the emperor’s virtue in the dance, the picturing of the battle scenes via dance movements should rather be detailed, elaborate, and complete. Therefore, he suggested to add to the dance what may thoroughly depict the scenarios of Emperor Taizong’s defeating his many rivals, such as Liu Wuzhou, Xue Ju, Dou Jiande, and Wang Shichong.

Xiao’s suggestion was, in a sense, quite reasonable, considering how magnificent this dance music must have been as a ceremonial routine performed at every banquet, and how extraordinary the military triumph and achievements of Emperor Gaozong could seem in the eyes of his advocates. The emperor, however, clearly aware of where the balance point between elaborate imitation and appropriate symbolization of dance movements should be, declined Xiao’s suggestion. In his response, the emperor, as before in his speech to the ministers, reemphasizes the imperfection of military force and his reluctance to use military power, which, to him, was only a means to pacify the disasters and chaos during the initial period when the world had not yet been pacified. Music, as a symbolic representation of accomplishments, instead of depicting violent scenes of battles in detail, should be only a sketch displaying the outline of events. If, as Xiao suggested, the dance music fully described the scenes of capture, it would inevitably remind former servants of Taizong’s rivals who had subsequently joined his court of the ferocity of those actual battles, and the sorrows of their actual experiences of defeat.

The symbolization of dance music, therefore, is complicated. Dance music, on one hand, is a performance through which the virtues of the sages or composers are embodied because of the self-explanatory feature of dance movements. Yet on the other hand, dance music, as a symbolic imitation of real events represents those real events in a form that shows their broad outlines while removing the small-level details that might prove ambiguous or painful.

## **VI. Dance lyrics and performance context**

Many modern scholars tend to consider drama as a literary speech act, and research in drama is thus often informed by both performance theory and linguistic approaches. In his analysis of theatre, Ross Chambers, a distinguished scholar on French studies, draws a distinction between two different levels of theatrical text, based on standard linguistic theory:

Like any discourse, the theatrical text can be thought of as “énoncé” and as “énonciation.” In the first case, it is considered, one might say, “grammatically,” in its components and how they work together. In the second, it appears in the context of a communication situation, as an act destined to produce an effect on one or several spectators.<sup>71</sup>

This distinction is particularly useful in our study of *daqu* lyrics or dance lyrics in medieval China, since this will focus both on lyrics texts *per se* and on the performance contexts they reveals, and on the relationships between these two dimensions.

For us the texts of *daqu* lyrics or dance lyrics are the primary remaining medium available to us as we attempt to envision historical performance. As one component of a, “multimedia” performance genre, along with instrumental accompaniment, singing (both solo and chorus), dancing (both solo and ensemble), and recitation, these lyrics once contributed to and drew on the effects of other media and expressive forms. The lyrics are in a sense a unique component of this assemblage, in that they participate, as sound, in the musical and aural aspect of the performance, while also shaping, through linguistic description and dramatic presentation, the structure of visual and corporeal aspects of the performance as a totality.

As has emerged in the preceding sections, the most inclusive single source for the study of dance lyrics is Guo Maoqian’s 郭茂倩 (1041–1099) *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 (“Collection of Music Bureau Poems”). When we browse through the section of “Dance lyrics” (*wuqu geci* 舞曲歌辭) in this compilation, lines such as the following constantly catch our attention:

歌之不足，舞以禮成

When singing is inadequate, we dance to complete the ritual.<sup>72</sup>

功由舞見，德以歌彰

The achievement is to be revealed by dancing; the virtue is to be manifested by singing.<sup>73</sup>

聲以依詠，舞以象功

The sound is that upon which singing relies, and dance is that which gives image to achievement.<sup>74</sup>

象容則舞，歌德言詩

To simulate the appearance, one dances; to sing of virtue, one recites poetry.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Quoted from Carlson 2004, p. 70. Original: Ross Chambers, “*Le Masque et le miroir: Vers une théorie relationnelle du théâtre*,” *Études littéraires*, vol. 13, 1980, p. 398.

<sup>72</sup> From “The Song of Military Dance (*Wuwu ci* 武舞辭)” of Northern Qi. YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 763.

<sup>73</sup> From “The Song of Civil Dance (*Wenwu ge* 文舞歌)” of Sui. YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 764.

<sup>74</sup> From “The Song of the Dance of Zhengde (*Zhengdewu ge* 正德舞歌)” of Jin. YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 756.

<sup>75</sup> From “The Lyric of Steps in the Civil Dance (*Wenwu jiebu ci* 文舞階步辭)” of Northern Qi. YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 762.

金石在縣，萬舞在庭。象容表慶，協律被聲。

Metals and stones are hanging; dance is in the court. (The dance is) to imitate the manner and indicate the blessings, and (metals and stones are) to harmonize the tunes and be adapted to the sound.<sup>76</sup>

While the first two lines talk about the relationship of mutual complementation between singing and dance, the next three lines all indicate that in the context of performance as ritual event, dance movement is meant to be something symbolic, as noted above. The key word “*xiang* 象,” as in *xianggong* 象功 (to simulate the achievement), and *xiangrong* 象容 (to imitate the appearance), appears frequently in conjunction with *wu* 舞 (dance) in these texts, reminding us once again of the basic representational function or purpose of dance—the ritual representation of a significant past event. The dance lyrics then, accordingly, help the audience envision that great scenario, while the dance movements serve to reconstruct that moment with its mimetic feature.

Read in historical context, dance lyrics, especially those of medieval court ritual performance, are particularly interesting in connection with this representational function. In many cases, the lyrics describe the dance movement *per se* as well as recounting the performance context—the occasion, settings, audience and so on. An example of this is the “Song of the Dance of Bright Virtue of Jin” (*Zhaodewu ge* 昭德舞歌)<sup>77</sup> of the Later Jin dynasty (936–47):

聖代修文德，This sacred age cultivates the civil virtue;  
明庭舉舊章。At the Brilliant Court are performed the former songs.  
兩階陳羽籥，On steps of both sides are arrayed feathers and flutes;  
萬舞合宮商。The (myriad) dance<sup>78</sup> matches *gong* and *shang* modes.  
劍佩森鸞鴛，Swords and pendants make solemn the Mandarin Duck tiles;  
簫韶下鳳凰。The tune “Beautiful Flute”<sup>79</sup> draws the phoenix to descend.  
我朝青史上，Our dynasty, on the annals of history,  
千古有輝光。For thousands of years will be brilliant.

In the first stanza, both lines are a disclosure of what we called “performance context,” the temporal and spatial elements of the very moment of performing. The first line sets the backdrop against which the performance is carried out, with the implication that as a civil dance (*wenwu* 文舞), this performance is meant to be the praise of the emperor’s virtue. The second line indicates the location where the music is played. The “Brilliant

---

<sup>76</sup> From “The Song of the Dance of Zhengde (*Zhengdewu ge* 正德舞歌)” of Jin. YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 757.

<sup>77</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 765.

<sup>78</sup> Dance is also referred as *wan* (“myriad”). See YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 752: “舞亦謂之萬。”

<sup>79</sup> *Xiaoshao* (“Beautiful Flute”) is the name of music composed by the Emperor *Shun*. 《虞書·益稷》  
“簫韶九成，鳳皇來儀。”

Court” (*mingting* 明庭) is the Ganquan Palace 甘泉宮 in the region corresponding to modern-day Shaanxi, where ancient kings offered sacrifice to the spirits. Yet it may also refer “functionally” to the sacred imperial court. The latter sense would have applied here, considering the situation of performance at the Later Jin court.

Moreover, the usage of “previous songs” (*jiuzhang* 舊章) reminds us of the fact that this dance performance was, in fact, a restoration of the existent ones instead of a newly composition. According to the preface that Guo Maoqian puts before the lyrics, the above is one of the two lyrics of the “Song of the Dance of Bright Virtue of Jin,” which was considered as civil dance (*wenwu* 文舞), performed during the Later Jin period:

《唐餘錄》曰：“晉天福五年，詔有司復修正至朝會二舞之制，以文舞為《昭德》之舞，武舞為《成功》之舞。十一月冬至，遂奏之。於時二舞久廢，眾喜於復興，而樂工舞員，雜取教坊以滿之。聲節靡曼，綴兆合節，而無遠促遲速之累。及明年正旦再奏，而蹈厲進退無列，議者非之。”

The *Tangyu lu* says, “In the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the Tianfu reign of Later Jin (940), (the emperor) bestowed the imperial edict to have the officials revise the format of the two dances performed at court gatherings on New Year’s Day and the Solstice, implementing the *zhaode* dance as the civil dance, and the *chenggong* dance as the military dance. On the Winter Solstice in the 11<sup>th</sup> month, (the two dances) then were performed. At that time, these two dances had long been in disuse. People all felt happy for their restoration. The musicians and dancers were fulfilled by mixing those from the “Entertainment Bureau” (*jiaofang* 教坊). The sound and rhythm was tender and fine, and the positions and movement of the dancers conformed to the rhythm, without being hindered by the longness or briefness, slowness or rapidness. (However), when it was performed again on the New Year’s Day of the next year, the dancing movement and format lost its order, and it was reproached by commentators.<sup>80</sup>

First composed by the Emperor Jing of the Han, the *zhaode* dance was originally performed at the temple of the Emperor Wen of the Han, according to the *Song shu* record. When it comes to the Five Dynasties (907–960), the Later Liang (907–923) and Later Tang (923–936) also performed *zhaode* dance on their sacrifices to the ancestors, the lyrics of which have also been collected in the *Yuefu shiji*, under the category of “lyrics for suburban shrines (*jiaomiao geci*).”<sup>81</sup> While the link between *zhaode* dance of the Five Dynasties and that of the Emperor Wen of the Han is unclear, the dance of Later Jin that we mentioned above was quite likely the restoration of the previous two dynasties.

The second stanza turns out to be descriptions of the performance *per se*. Pheasant feathers and short flutes, as we know, are things that dancers hold in the performance of “civil dances” (*wenwu* 文舞). Actually, in the preface of this song we also find a more

---

<sup>80</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 764.

<sup>81</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 12, pp. 173–175.

detailed record of the civil dances:

《五代史·樂志》曰：“文舞六十四人，左手執籥，右手執翟。冠進賢冠，服黃紗袍，白紗中單，阜領襖，白練■褶，白布大口袴，革帶，烏皮履，白布襪。武舞六十四人，左手執干，右手執戚。”

The “Document of Music” of *History of Five Dynasties* says: “In the civil dance, there are sixty-four people, holding short flutes in their left hands and pheasant feathers in their right hands. (Dancers) wear the “Advanced Worthy” caps, yellow gauze gowns, white gauze inner clothes with black collars and trims, white silk jackets, white cotton wide-opened pants, leather belt, black leather shoes, and white cotton socks. In the military dance, there are sixty-four people, holding shields in their left hands and axes in their right hands...”<sup>82</sup>

The display of pheasant feathers and short flutes on the both sides of steps, as said by the lyrics, therefore, was believed to be exactly the description of the actual scene of this dance performance. What is interesting is that in the following “Songs of the Dance of success” (*Chenggong wu ge* 成功舞歌), the military dances of the Later Jin, we also see the account on the shields and axes, as was mentioned in the passage above:

朱干將玉戚， Red shields and jade-adorned axes,  
全象武功揚。 All simulate the display of military achievement.<sup>83</sup>

Or, take similar lines from the previous lyrics, “Song of Military Dance of the Sui (*Sui Wuwu ge* 隋武舞歌)” as another example:

鐘鼓既奮， Bells and drums are already stirred to motion,  
干戚攸陳。 Shields and axe are quickly displayed.<sup>84</sup>

The strived bells and drums, and the displayed shields and axe are both symbolic in imitating the battle scene, and are realistic in the sense of being musical instruments and props of performance. Being read today, these lines help us envision how grand and gorgeous the performances might be back to thousands of years ago at the court of the Later Jin or Sui, while being sung out, loudly or gently, by the imperial musicians, these lyrics must have brought to their audiences either memories or imaginations of an ever happened drastic military scene.

There are also many other lines we see in this section of dance lyrics describing the settings of performance, just to name a few here:

庭列宮縣， In the court display the hanging instruments,

---

<sup>82</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 52, pp. 764–765.

<sup>83</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 765.

<sup>84</sup> 武舞歌, YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 764.

陞羅瑟琴。On the steps arrange the *se* and *qin* zithers.<sup>85</sup>

鏘鏘金石，*Clang! clang!* sound the metals and stones,  
列列匏絲。Numerous the gourd and string instruments.<sup>86</sup>

All these lines may be considered “self-explanatory” because of their depiction of the scenery of performance. Or we may view them as representations that fossilize the floating performance context by being integrated into the performance itself and then being passed on as written lyrics.

If we say we may roughly figure out how the performance was like from the descriptions of the second stanza, the third one then provides us a broader picture of the audience, the surroundings and the circumstances in which the performance was carried out. The metonymic expression “swords and pendants” signals to us the identities of the audience, that is, military generals and civil ministers. Moreover, the mention of Mandarin Duck (*yuanyang* 鴛鴦) tiles implies the location where this performance might have taken place. At the same time, it also reminds us of the famous Mandarin Duck Palace, one of the eight palaces of the Emperor Wu of the Han, and subsequently continued to serve as a place for grand performances. The Southern dynasties author Xu Ling 徐陵 (507–583), in his preface to the “New Songs from a Jade Terrace (*Yutai xinyong* 玉台新詠)” mentions:

陪遊馭娑，騁纖腰於結風；長樂鴛鴦，奏新聲于度曲。

To accompany the room at Sasuo Palace<sup>87</sup>, slim waists are set free in the song of “Knotting the wind”;

In the Long Happiness Palace and Mandarin Duck Palace, new sounds are played while composing the tunes.

The last stanza voices praise to the emperor and calls down blessings from the deities. But much beyond that, it is something that would be realized through the dance performance at the very moment of performing, and would obtain continuity with later performances and readings via the text of its lyrics.

Both the sound of music and the presence of dance are unquestionably transient. The lyrics, however, are different in that they are both transient in the moment of performance and enduring as texts. The lyrics in the performance text, as a sort of textual remnant of performance, are an attempt to preserve the transient moment of performance, as recorded in the lyrics of the “Song to the Grand Spectacle Dance” (*daguanwu ge* 大觀舞歌):

如日有恆，As constant as the sun,  
與天無竟，As endless as the heaven.

---

<sup>85</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 758.

<sup>86</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 762.

<sup>87</sup> Sasuo Palace is a palace of the Han.



載陳金石，Recorded and displayed by metals and stones,  
式流舞詠。Circulated with dance and chanting.<sup>88</sup>

Dance lyrics, when performed, are a concurrent happening with other performing modes, serving as a hint of content or a description of situation for the audience. And much beyond that, they are a remnant that, after the oblivion of all the other dimensions of the performance, helps the readers envision the previous performance context.

---

<sup>88</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 52, p. 762.

## Chapter Two: An introduction to *daqu* 大曲 (“big suite/piece”)

The *daqu* 大曲 (“big suite/piece”) is one of the major components of medieval court music. It consists of a set of musical sections that combines song lyrics with instrumental accompaniment, and which includes solo or ensemble dance movements. As a sort of “multimedia” performance, *daqu* first came into being around the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century, during the Wei (220–265) and Jin (266–420)<sup>89</sup>, and became more influential later in the Tang and Song dynasties, though the form also saw a gradual decline over the course of the Song.

In this chapter I will provide a chronologically arranged introduction to the *daqu*. I hope this may provide a general background for the reader, especially those who are not very familiar with *daqu* performance. The research on *daqu*, in the past, has been carried out mainly by Chinese scholars. Therefore, this discussion on *daqu* may serve those English readers who would potentially find it interesting enough.

My introduction to *daqu* will extend somewhat beyond *daqu* to consider other musical types that are believed to be closely related to *daqu*, such as *xianghe* (相和 “songs with strings and bamboo winds”), *qingshang sandiao* (清商三調 “tunes in *qingshang* three keys”), and *faqu* 法曲 (“Dharma tunes”), in hoping that a comprehensive backdrop is to be set. On *daqu* itself, the discussion will focus on the development of its forms, performance in the imperial court in different dynasties, and on historical accounts of the form. An account will also be provided of the structure of *daqu*, which is both distinctly complex and which underwent significant changes over time.

### I. *Daqu* of the Wei and Jin

The term *daqu* first appears in the *Admonition to Women* (*Nüxun* 女訓) of Cai Yong 蔡邕 (132–192):

凡鼓小曲，五終則止；大曲，三終則止。

In playing the “small song,” one ends after five times through; as for the “big song,” one ends after three times through.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> In spite of the fact that the fifteen *daqu* pieces in the section of “Treatise on Music” (*yuezhi*) of *Song shu* are the earliest extant ones, just when *daqu* started to take shape and became popular is a matter of dispute. See Wang Kunwu 王昆吾, 1996, pp.135. Declaring that it happened during the Wei and Jin period, Wang argues against the previous dating of Qiu Qiongsun and Lu Qinli respectively. The former attributes the fifteen *daqu* lyrics to the Han dynasty, while the latter postdates them to Jin (265–316) and Song (420–479) period. Here I follow Wang’s argument.

<sup>90</sup> See TPYL, vol.3, *juan* 577, p. 2606.

However, the “big song” here does not convey any sense of “multimedia” performance of the later *daqu*, and only refers to large zither songs.

The earliest surviving documents of *daqu* are fifteen *daqu* lyrics in the “Treatise on Music” (*yuezhi*) in the *Song shu*. As a category juxtaposed with other two musical performance modes—*xianghe* (相和 “songs with strings and bamboo winds”) and *qingshang sandiao* (清商三調 “tunes in *qingshang* three keys”), *daqu* is believed to be closely related to these two kinds of songs in terms of its origin, according to the researchers. Yet how exactly these relations to be defined, so much as the connotations of these two categories *per se*, have always been an issue of disputation.

### -- *Xianghe ge* 相和歌 (“songs with strings and bamboo winds”)

*Xianghe* songs are inevitably mentioned in discussions of the formation of *daqu*, especially when the dance dimension of *daqu* is set aside and the focus is exclusively on the interaction between singing and instrumental accompaniment in the form. Yang Yinliu 楊蔭瀏, a scholar of classical Chinese music, views *daqu*, a performance of singing and dancing, as a sort of culminating expression of the *xianghe* song form (“相和歌的最高形式為歌舞大曲”).<sup>91</sup> Having been one of the most important components of *yuefu* 樂府 repertoire of the Han, *xianghe* songs exerted a strong influence upon medieval Chinese performance. The category of *xianghe* songs, encompassing a total of eighteen *juan*, forms one of the two largest divisions of musical lyrics assembled in the *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集.<sup>92</sup> In fact this repertoire category, filiated to the “popular songs of the streets and lanes of Han” (並漢世街陌謠謳),<sup>93</sup> is a disparate mixture consisting of various musical forms that prevailed during the Han (202 BC–AD 220) and Wei (220–265).

Many accounts of *xianghe* songs appear in the Southern dynasties texts. Among the most important are *Yuanjia zhengsheng jilu* 元嘉正聲技錄 by Zhang Yong 張永 of the Song (420–479), *Daming sannian yanyue jilu* 大明三年宴樂技錄 by Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 of the Qi (479–502), the “Treatise on Music” of the *Song shu* by Shen Yue 沈約 of the Liang (502–557), and *Gujin yuelu* 古今樂錄 by Shi Zhijiang 釋智匠 of the Chen (557–589). As the only work in this list that is still extant the *Song shu* monograph has become one of the most important resources for modern research. The other three works have long been long lost, with only fragmentary citations preserved in the *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 a few later works.

A most oft-cited explanation of the *xianghe* song category appears in the *Song shu* treatise:

---

<sup>91</sup> Yang Yinliu 1980, p. 114.

<sup>92</sup> The category of *zaju* lyrics 雜曲歌辭 (“lyrics of miscellaneous songs”) in YFSJ also includes eighteen *juan*. Yet containing most lyrics of unknown origins, this category is hard to be taken as one single form of performance.

<sup>93</sup> *Song shu*, *juan* 19, p. 549.

相和，漢舊歌也。絲竹更相和，執節者歌。

*Xianghe* are old songs from the Han. With silk strings and bamboo winds (*sizhu*) alternately joining, the person who holds the *jie* sings.<sup>94</sup>

*Jie* is also called *jiegu* 節鼓, a percussion instrument that supplies rhythm or tempo to the music. A typical form of performance of *xianghe* songs, therefore, is when the singer plays a drum-like instrument over singing, string instruments (*si* 絲) (such as *qin*-zither 琴, *se* 瑟, *pipa* 琵琶, and *zheng* 箏) and pipe instruments (*zhu* 竹) (such as *xiao*-pipe 簫 and *di*-flute 笛) alternately join it.<sup>95</sup>

Yet before the joining of instrumental accompanies, *xianghe* songs actually underwent different phases, according to the *Song shu* treatise:

……凡此諸曲，始皆徒歌，既而被之弦管。又有因弦管金石，造歌以被之，魏世三調歌辭之類是也。

...All these tunes originally were unaccompanied songs, and later on were put to the music of strings and pipes (*xianguan*). There were also cases in which songs were composed to go with music of strings and pipes, or bells and chimes—the lyrics for tunes in three (*qingshang*) keys of the Wei era belong to this type.<sup>96</sup>

Originally as a sort of *tuge* 徒歌 (“unaccompanied songs”)—performance that only consisted of human voice—*xianghe* songs were put to the music of strings and pipes (*xianguan* 弦管) later, which is different from the case of tunes in *qingshang* three keys of the Wei. Earlier in the same chapter of the *Song shu* treatise, Shen Yue mentioned that *tuge* may also be defined as “ballad” or “folk songs” (*yao* 謠) in *Er ya* 爾雅:

《爾雅》曰：徒歌曰謠。

*Er ya* says, unaccompanied songs are also called folk songs.<sup>97</sup>

This argument, as a matter of fact, corresponds with another account of the origin of *xianghe* songs from the *Song shu* treatise:

凡樂章古詞，今之存者，並漢世街陌謠謳，《江南可採蓮》、《烏生十五子》、《白頭吟》之屬是也。

As for the musical pieces and ancient lyrics that are extant nowadays, they are all popular songs of the streets and lanes of Han, such as *Jiangnan ke cailian* (“Plucking lotus in *jiangnan*”), *Wusheng shiwuzi* (“The crow has

<sup>94</sup> *Song shu*, *juan* 21, p. 603.

<sup>95</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 26. Quotation from *Gujin yuelu* says: “凡相和，其器有笙、笛、節歌、琴、瑟、琵琶、箏七種。”

<sup>96</sup> *Song shu*, *juan* 19, p. 550.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 549.

fifteen babies”), *Baitou yin* (“Chant on white hair”) and so on.<sup>98</sup>

Similar accounts appear elsewhere in the *Song shu* treatise, and are cited by Guo Maoqian in his notes to the *xianghe* category in *Yuefu shiji*. If *tuge* 徒歌, a sort of folk songs that consists of single voice, is a initial stage of *xianghe* song, then *dange* 但歌, a singing performance that is joined by backup singers, could be taken as the next step during the development of the form:

但歌四曲，出自漢世。無弦節，作伎，最先一人倡，三人和。魏武帝尤好之。

The four tunes of the *dange* (“pure voicing”) originally came from the Han. There was no string or rhythmic accompaniment. In performance, one person first sings, and three others respond. The Emperor Wu of the Wei (i.e. Cao Cao 曹操, 155–220) particularly liked this form.<sup>99</sup>

This kind of interaction between a lead vocalist and chorus singers is generally believed to be a preliminary form of performance prior to the addition of instrumental accompaniment in the later definitive type of the *xianghe* song. The expression of “one person sings, three others join him” inevitably reminds us of the music of *Qingmiao* described in the *Yueji* 樂記 (“Record of Music”):

清廟之瑟，朱弦而疏越，一倡而三歎，有遺音者矣。

In the lute's for the Qing Miao the strings were of red silk, and the holes were wide apart; one person began, and three others joined it; there was much melody not brought out.<sup>100</sup>

According to the explanation of *Zhengyi* 正義 and the annotations by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, the correspondence here is more likely what happens between the singers, instead of the lutes.<sup>101</sup> This form of performance, in which the backup singers provide vocal harmony with the main vocalist, actually has left many accounts in historical records since the Spring and Autumn (770 BC–476 BC) period, and proved to be very popular especially in the region of the state of Chu. A good example may be the well-known passage about the guest who sang at *Yingzhong* 郢中 in Song Yu's essay *Dui Chu wang wen* 對楚王問 (“In responding the question by the King of Chu”).<sup>102</sup> Songs mentioned in this anecdote,

---

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, *juan* 21, p. 603.

<sup>100</sup> *Yueji*, in *LJ*, vol.4, *juan* 11

<sup>101</sup> *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義：“一唱，謂一人始唱歌；三歎，謂三人讚歎也。”（*LJZY*, *juan* 37, p.1528）鄭玄：“唱，發歌句者。三歎，三人從而歎之。”（*Lu Ji* 陸機 *Wen fu* 文賦，李善注引，*WX*, *juan* 17, p.770）

<sup>102</sup> *WX*, *juan* 45, p. 1999:

客有歌於郢中者，其始曰《下裏》、《巴人》，國中屬而和者數千人。其為《陽阿》、《薤露》，國中屬而和者數百人。其為《陽春》、《白雪》，國中屬而和者

such as *xiali* 下裏, *yang'e* 陽阿, *xielu* 薤露, *baixue* 白雪, were indeed performance popular in the Chu area. *Xianghe* songs, therefore, as part of the *yuefu* 樂府 (“Music Bureau”) repertoire of the Han, have been greatly influenced by the tunes from the state of Chu in this sense.

One thing we should keep in mind, however, is that though originally stemming from “popular songs of the streets and lanes of Han,” *xianghe* songs later were recomposed by musicians by putting them to the music of strings and pipes (“被之弦管”):

相和，漢舊歌也。……本一部，魏明帝分為二，更遞夜宿。本十七曲，朱生、宋識、列和等複合之為十三曲。

*Xianghe* are old songs from the Han. ... Originally there was only one group. The Emperor Ming of Wei (204–239) divided them into two, and they played alternately at night. Originally there were seventeen tunes. Zhu Sheng, Song Shi, Lie He and others combined them into thirteen tunes.<sup>103</sup>

And after this brief introduction to *xianghe* songs, Shen Yue lists fifteen lyrics under thirteen tune titles in the *Song shu* treatise, forming the earliest collection of *xianghe* lyrics. In fact, before the Emperor Ming of Wei “played them alternately at night,” as part of the *yuefu* repertoire, *xianghe* songs were believed to be played by *huangmen guchui shu* 黃門鼓吹署 (“Offices of Palace bandsman,” lit. “drummers and pipers of the yellow gates”), institution in charge of palace entertainment in the Eastern Han (25–220).<sup>104</sup> It is also in this sense of court recreational performance that *daqu* will be discussed later.

## -- *Qingshang sandiao* 清商三調 (“tunes in *qingshang* three keys”)

Although in *xianghe* songs one finds the addition of strings and pipes (*sizhu* 絲竹) to the singing, a simultaneously concordant cooperation between the vocal and instrumental accompaniment did not appear until later in the *qingshang sandiao* 清商三調 (“tunes in *qingshang* three keys”). In terms of the origin of *daqu*, one of the prerequisites,

---

不過數十人。引商刻羽，雜以流徵，國中屬而和者不過數人而已。是其曲彌高，其和彌寡。

There was a guest who sang at *Yingzhong*. When he at first sang songs of *xiali* and *baren*, in the state people who gathered and joined him numbered several thousand. When he sang *yang'e* and *xielu*, in the state people who gathered and joined him numbered several hundred. When he sang *yangchun* and *baixue*, in the state people who gathered and joined him numbered only several dozen. When he sang that with prolonged *shang* key and urgent *yu* key, mixed with flowing *zhi* key, in the state people who gathered and joined him numbered only a few. Therefore, the more elegant the tune is, the less is the joining voice.

<sup>103</sup> *Song shu*, *juan* 21, p. 603.

<sup>104</sup> HHS, *juan* 95, p. 3130. “黃門鼓吹，天子所以宴樂群臣。”

according to Wang Xiaodun 王小盾, an expert of medieval Chinese music, is the differentiation of the *qingshang sandiao* from the *xianghe* songs. In other words, it is the appearance in the *qingshang sandiao* of what is termed *gexian* 歌弦 (“song and strings”), indicating a new degree of harmonious correspondence between singing and instrumental accompaniment, that made the formation of *daqu* possible.<sup>105</sup>

*Qingshang sandiao* 清商三調 (“tunes in *qingshang* three keys”), namely *pingdiao* 平調, *qingdiao* 清調, and *sediao* 瑟調, were believed to be a legacy of the Zhou:

平調、清調、瑟調，皆周房中曲之遺聲，漢世謂之三調。

*Pingdiao*, *qingdiao*, and *sediao*, are all legacy of the “inner-chamber” tunes of the Zhou. In the Han, they were called “tunes in the three keys.”<sup>106</sup>

The term *fangzhong qu* 房中曲 (lit. “tunes of the inner chamber”) refers to court entertainment music during the Zhou, and such repertoire was performed on both sacrificial and banqueting occasions.<sup>107</sup> Tunes in the *ping*, *qing*, and *se* keys, as music performed in such occasions, were passed down to the Han later and referred generally as *sandiao* 三調 (“tunes in the three keys”). About the musical connotations of tunes in these three keys, the earliest explanation is found in “Treatise on Music” in the *Wei Shu* 魏書:

又依琴五調調聲之法，以均樂器。其瑟調以宮為主，清調以商為主，平調以角為主。五調各以一聲為主，然後錯采眾聲以文飾之。

And moreover they observed the tuning method for the five keys of the *qin*-zither in adjusting their musical instruments. The *se* mode is based on the tone *gong*, the *qing* mode based on the tone *shang*, and the *ping* mode on the tone *jiao*. As for all five modes, each gives primacy to one timbre, and then mixes the many timbres to embellish it.<sup>108</sup>

*Diao* 調 is a term referring to the Chinese musical scales for performance. Generically there were often seven scale-notes since the Eastern Han. Mode is “a musicological subject that are only subtly distinguished from ‘scales,’ and were used theoretically to transform the basic DO-RE-MI of scales into a matrix of harmonic and transpositional ‘keys’.”<sup>109</sup> Generally speaking, tunes in *ping*, *qing* and *se* keys, as mentioned above, “each gives priority to one mode”—a name for a scale around which a melody cohered—and “synthesizes various modes to embellish it (錯采眾聲以文飾之).” The name of *qingshang* 清商, therefore, comes from the fact that the *shang* mode is taken as the “major scale” of the tunes in the *qing* key, according to the tuning method on the five keys of *qin*-zither.

<sup>105</sup> Wang Kunwu 1996, pp. 131-135.

<sup>106</sup> JTS, *juan* 29, p. 1063.

<sup>107</sup> See Xiao Difei 1984, p. 34-35.

<sup>108</sup> WS, *juan* 109, pp. 2835-2836.

<sup>109</sup> Goodman 2010, p. 218.

When it comes to *Qingshang sandiao* 清商三調, or *qingshang sandiao geshi* 清商三調歌詩 (“lyrics for tunes in *qingshang* three keys”), however, the connotation has turned from a notion indicating certain scales to a term that deputizes a music category, namely, tunes in the three keys *ping*, *qing*, and *se*. In the *Song shu* treatise, Shen Yue gives a short note on *qingshang sandiao geshi* followed by a collection of their lyrics:

清商三調歌詩，荀勗撰舊詞施用者。

Lyrics for tunes in the three *qingshang* keys are those which Xun Xu adapted from previous lyrics and had performed.<sup>110</sup>

Later in the *Yuefu shiji*, Guo Maoqian has almost the same account on this issue in his notes on *xianghe* category:

其後晉荀勗又采舊辭施用於世，謂之清商三調歌詩，即沈約所謂“因弦管金石造歌以被之”者也。

Thereafter, Xun Xu of the (Western) Jin (265–316) adapted previous lyrics and had them performed—these are called lyrics for tunes in the three *qingshang* keys, and are also what was mentioned by Shen Yue as “creating songs based on the tunes of strings and pipes, or bells and chimes.”<sup>111</sup>

The argument made by Shen Yue here in Guo’s account appeared above in the discussion of *xianghe* songs:

……又有因弦管金石，造歌以被之，魏世三調歌辭之類是也。

There were also cases that basing on tunes of strings and pipes, bells and chimes (*xianguan jinshi*) to create songs—lyrics for tunes in three (*qingshang*) keys during the Wei were things belonged to this.<sup>112</sup>

Different from *xianghe* songs, in which pure vocal songs (or singing lyrics) were put to music with instrumental accompaniment later, lyrics for tunes in *qingshang* three keys were cases in which inherited tunes were “filled” with lyrics later in the period of Wei.

Xun Xu 荀勗 (?–289), as we have seen, was a music expert who implemented reforms of ritual music in the Western Jin. One of his most important contributions to the court music of Jin and later was his research on metrological Jin standard-rule *chi* 尺. Along with this, Xun Xu used his new Zhou length for the *chi* “... to cast new pitch-pipe regulators 鑄新律.” Moreover, he developed a *di* 笛 system, “a construction guide for the locations of finger-holes that will result in correctly tuned scales.”<sup>113</sup> Besides all these, as mentioned above, he adapted the “old lyrics” (*jiuci* 舊辭) and had them performed with tunes in the three *qingshang* keys.

<sup>110</sup> *Song shu*, *juan* 21, p. 608.

<sup>111</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 26, p. 376.

<sup>112</sup> *Song shu*, *juan* 19, p. 550.

<sup>113</sup> About the biography of Xun Xu and his contribution on court lyrics, music, metrology, and pitch systems, see Goodman 2010.



The “old lyrics” that Xun Xu adapted, according to those recorded in the *Song shu* treatise, are mostly lyrics composed by the three kings of the Wei (220–265) and that of *xianghe* songs of the Han (which was addressed as *guci* 古詞 in the *Song shu*). Specifically, of the nineteen pieces in the *Song shu* treatise, eight are by Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220), the Emperor Wu of Wei, six by Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226), the Emperor Wen of Wei, three by Cao Rui 曹叡 (204–239), the Emperor Ming of Wei, and the remaining two are “ancient lyrics” from the Han. This is why Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 asserted that the tunes in *qingshang* keys were actually from the Wei:

今之清商，實由銅雀，魏氏三祖，風流可懷，京洛相高，江左彌重。  
The *qingshang* of nowadays are actually from the “Bronze Sparrow” (Terrace). The three ancestors of the Wei, their talents are memorable. The capital Luoyang thinks highly of them, and the south of the lower reaches of the Yangzi esteems them even more.<sup>114</sup>

That being said, however, the legacy that *qingshang sandiao* inherited from *xianghe* songs of the Han is rather obvious. Popular subjects or motifs in *xianghe* songs—such as *Dongmen* 東門 (“the Eastern Gate”), *Moshang sang* 陌上桑 (“Mulberry on path between fields”) and so on—also composed important topics in *qingshang sandiao*. Moreover, there is also considerable overlap in the instrumental accompaniment used in these two categories, according to the account in *Gujin yuelu* 古今樂錄:

凡相和，其器有笙、笛、節歌、琴、瑟、琵琶、箏七種。  
As for *xianghe* songs, their instruments are seven: *sheng*, *di*, *jiege*, *qin*, *se*, *pipa*, and *zheng*.<sup>115</sup>

(平調曲) 其器有笙、笛、築、瑟、琴、箏、琵琶七種。  
(tunes in the *ping* key) their instruments are seven: *sheng*, *di*, *zhu*, *se*, *qin*, *zheng*, and *pipa*.<sup>116</sup>

(清調曲) 其器有笙、笛 (下聲弄、高弄、遊弄)、篪、節、琴、瑟、琵琶八種。  
(tunes in the *qing* key) their instruments are eight: *sheng*, *di* (low pitch *nong*, high pitch *nong*, wandering *nong*), *chi*, *jie*, *qin*, *se*, and *pipa*.<sup>117</sup>

(瑟調曲) 其器有笙、笛、節、琴、瑟、箏、琵琶。  
(tunes in the *se* key) their instruments are *sheng*, *di*, *jie*, *qin*, *se*, *zheng*, and

<sup>114</sup> *Song shu*, *juan* 19, p. 553. This argument by Wang Sengqian, though recorded in both *Song shu* and *Nan Qi shu*, has slightly different accounts in these two works. The narration in *Song shu*, which I follow here, is likely to be more accurate, according to some modern researchers. See Su Jinren 1982, pp. 86–88.

<sup>115</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 26, p. 377.

<sup>116</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 30, p. 441.

<sup>117</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 33, p. 495.

*pipa*.<sup>118</sup>

It is readily apparent that string and wind instruments (or “silk and bamboo,” *sizhu*) were the main accompaniment for tunes in the three *qingshang* keys as was the case for the *xianghe* songs. Tunes in the *se* key, in particular, use exactly the same instruments as *xianghe* songs.

The similarity in instrumentation between these two kinds of music suggests the possibility of other similarities in their modes of performance. The interaction between lead vocalist and chorus, as well as that between singing and instrumental accompaniment (“silk strings and bamboo winds”) in *xianghe* songs also composes the major feature of presentation in tunes of the three *qingshang* keys. The latter, furthermore, complicate the interaction between *yin* 引 (“lead-in”) and *he* 和 (“response”) in the former with not only more complex structure of performance but also more concerted harmony between vocal and instrumental accompaniment.

The most authoritative accounts of performance in the three *qingshang* keys are those of the *Yuanjia zhengsheng jilu* 元嘉正聲技錄 by Zhang Yong 張永, cited by Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 in the *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集:

(平調曲) 歌弦六部。張永《錄》曰：“未歌之前，有八部弦，四器俱作，在高下游弄之後。凡三調，歌弦一部竟，輒作送歌弦，今用器。”

(tunes in the *ping* key) Six groups of song and strings. The *Yuanjia zhengsheng jilu* by Zhang Yong says: “Before singing, there are eight pieces of ‘silk strings.’ All four (string) instruments are played after the high pitch *nong*, low pitch *nong*, and wandering *nong*. In all tunes in the three keys, when one piece of *gexian* is done, then “send-off chorded singing” is performed, which uses (only) instruments nowadays.”<sup>119</sup>

(清調曲) 歌弦四部。張永《錄》云：“未歌之前，有五部弦，又在弄後。晉、宋、齊止四器也。”

(tunes in the *qing* key) Four groups of song and strings. The *Yuanjia zhengsheng jilu* by Zhang Yong says: “Before singing, there are five pieces of ‘silk strings,’ played after the *nong*. In Jin, Song, and Qi there were only four (string) instruments.”<sup>120</sup>

(瑟調曲) 歌弦六部。張永《錄》云：“未歌之前，有七部弦，又在弄後。晉、宋、齊止四器也。”

(tunes in the *se* key) Six groups of song and strings. The *Yuanjia zhengsheng jilu* by Zhang Yong says: “Before singing, there are seven pieces of ‘silk strings,’ played after the *nong*. In Jin, Song and Qi there were

<sup>118</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 36, p. 535.

<sup>119</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 30, p. 441.

<sup>120</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 33, p. 495.

only four (string) instruments.”<sup>121</sup>

Tunes in the three *qingshang* keys, which are actually suites, therefore, have more complicated programs of performance than the *xianghe* songs. Previous researches suggests several sections in the performance of tunes in the three *qingshang* keys:<sup>122</sup>

1) *Nong* 弄, an opening section for the tunes in *qingshang* three keys, is a prelude performed with *di* 笛 flute. According to some modern scholars, the three kind of *nong*—*gao nong* 高弄 (“high pitch *nong*”), *xiasheng nong* 下聲弄 (“low pitch *nong*”), and *you nong* 遊弄 (“wandering *nong*”)—are probably “same tune recurrently played in high, low and middle pitches with *di*-flute.”<sup>123</sup>

2) *Xian* 弦, which follows the *nong*, is also part of the overture or introduction to the performance. Different from the *nong*, *xian* is played by string instruments, usually *qin* 琴, *se* 瑟, *pipa* 琵琶, and *zheng* 箏 four kinds (“四器俱作”). There are multiple pieces of *xian*: eight in tunes in the *ping* key (“八部弦”), five in tunes in the *qing* key (“五部弦”), and seven in those in the *se* key (“七部弦”).

3) *Gexian* 歌弦 (“song and strings,” or “chorded singing”) is the central part of the performance, with lyrics and vocal singing. In the *gexian* part, instrumental accompaniment cooperates simultaneously and harmoniously with vocal singing, as noted at the beginning of this section. There are different numbers of *gexian* sections in each tune type: six in tunes of *ping* key, four in tunes of *qing* key, and six in tunes of *se* key. Moreover, at the end of each *gexian* section, there is a *song gexian* 送歌弦 (“send-off chorded singing”), which originally was likely to have included singing (or lyrics) as well, but later was only performed by instruments (“今用器”).

Besides the correspondence between vocal and instrumental accompaniment in the *gexian* section, the coordination between the first two introductory sections—*nong* and *xian*—is also likely to be an inheritance of *xianghe* songs. The *Song shu* provides an account of *xianghe* performance:

(荀勗)令郝生鼓箏，宋同吹笛，以為雜引相和諸曲。

(Xun Xu) ordered Hao Sheng to play *zheng*, and Song Tong to blow the *di*-flute for the various songs in (the style of) *zayin* (zither tunes) and *xianghe*.<sup>124</sup>

This happened when Xun Xu, the Inspector of the Palace Writers (*zhongshu jian* 中書監), regulated the *di* system in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Taishi (274). The ensemble of *zheng*-zither and *di*-flute in *xianghe* songs is, therefore, just what Shen Yue called “silk and bamboo in mutual response” (*sizhu geng xianghe* 絲竹更相和) discussed above. This is, at the same

<sup>121</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 36, p. 535.

<sup>122</sup> Discussion on the program of tunes in *qingshang* three keys can be found in many works of contemporary scholars, for example, Yang Yinliu 1980, Wang Kunwu 1996, Qian Zhixi 2009, etc.

<sup>123</sup> Liu Minglan 1999, “指的是用笛吹弄同一曲調，使其在高、低、中三個不同音區反復再現”。

<sup>124</sup> *Song shu*, *juan* 11, p. 214.

time, similar to the interaction between *nong* and *xian*, introductory pieces of wind and string instruments in tunes of the three *qingshang* keys.

Moreover, if we take the *nong* and *xian* as *yin* 引 (“lead-in” or “prelude”), and *gexian* sections as *he* 和 (“response”), the correspondence between them may also be regarded as an extension of the form of performance of *xianghe* songs. In fact, accounts on the *yin* 引 in the performance of tunes of the three *qingshang* keys appear in many medieval Chinese literary works. Fu Xuan 傅玄 (217–278), for example, in his “Rhapsody on the *pipa*” (*pipa fu* 琵琶賦), mentions that:

啟飛龍之秘引兮，逞奇妙于清商。

Starting the secret elongation/prelude “Flying Dragon,” displaying wondrous delicacy in *qingshang* tunes.<sup>125</sup>

Apparently, “Flying Dragon,” a familiar zither piece, is played here by string instruments (probably *qin* and *pipa*) as a prelude (most likely in the *xian* section) to *qingshang* tunes. Another example would be the poem “Chanting on Kuaiji” (*kuai yin xing* 會吟行) by Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433):

六引緩清唱，The Six Elongations draw out clear voicing;

三調佇繁音。The three (*qingshang*) tunes prolong complex playing.<sup>126</sup>

## -- *Daqu* 大曲 (“big suite”) in the *Song shu* Treatise

The classification of *daqu*, especially *daqu* of early medieval China, has long been disputed. In the *Song shu* treatise, where fifteen *daqu* lyrics were first recorded, *daqu* appears as an individual category after *xianghe* songs, tunes in the three *qingshang* keys, and followed by tunes in the *chu* key. Later in *Yuefu shiji*, however, Guo Maoqian attributed *daqu* lyrics to various tunes in the three *qingshang* keys (mainly tunes in the *se* key), all under the category of *xianghe* songs. At the close of his notes to the *xianghe* category, Guo specifically mentions the reasons for this categorization, noting that it follows Zhang Yong’s 張永 *Yuanjia zhengsheng jilu* 元嘉正聲技錄:

又大曲十五曲，沈約並列於瑟調。今依張永《元嘉正聲技錄》分於諸調，又別敘大曲於其後。唯《滿歌行》一曲，諸調不載，故附見於大曲之下。其曲調先後，亦准《技錄》為次云。

<sup>125</sup> QJW, vol. 1, p. 460.

<sup>126</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 64, p. 935.

There are also fifteen *daqu* lyrics. Shen Yue classes all these among the *se* tunes. Here, following Zhang Yong's 張永 *Yuanjia zhengsheng jilu*, I assign them each to their respective tunes, and after that give a general account of *daqu*. Only the tune of *Mange xing* was not mentioned in the various tunes. Therefore, I place it as an addendum following the *daqu*. This ordering of tunes is also based on the *Jilu*.<sup>127</sup>

Guo Maoqian's system of categorization in the *Yuefu shiji* has become a favorite target of criticism in modern scholarship, but the question whether *daqu* belongs to the three *qingshang* keys still a legitimately open one. However, any attempt to provide a "yes" or "no" answer seems to some degree a simplification of the issues involved. The difference in classification between Shen and Guo actually suggests different aspects of the inquiry into performance texts. In other words, when taking into consideration the key or scale of tunes in *daqu* performance, the categorization of *Yuefu shiji* is, in a sense, unimpeachable. Yet if we try to take the lyrics as a remnant or representation of a once "multimedia" performance—a performance consisting not only of singing and instrumental accompaniment, but also of dance and other elements—Shen Yue's way of contrasting *daqu* with tunes in the three *qingshang* keys might be more revealing, in that it accounts for the structural sophistication of *daqu* performance in comparison with the tunes in the three *qingshang* keys.

*Daqu* performance has been the subject of numerous scholarly studies. A detailed chart of its structure has been put together by Wang Xiaodun in his *Sui Tang Wudai yanyue zayan geci yanjiu* 隋唐五代燕樂雜言歌辭研究, a work of vital importance to the study of entertainment music in medieval China. This chart summarizes nearly all the available information for the fifteen *daqu* lyrics in the *Song shu* treatise, according to the records in *Song shu* and *Yuefu shiji*. Here I would like to quote Wang's chart, leaving out, however, his remarks on whether they are in uneven lines (*zayan* 雜言), since that point relates only to his specific research agenda.

---

<sup>127</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 26, p. 377.

曲調名 128	歌辭名	歌辭 總解 數	豔	曲	趨	亂	辭作者	原屬曲種 和演奏時 代	附注
東門行	東門	4		4解			古詞	相和歌， 瑟調曲， 晉樂所奏	王僧虔《技錄》云： “《東門行》歌古 《東門》一篇，今不 歌。”
折楊柳 行	西山	4		4解			文帝(曹 丕)詞	瑟調曲， 魏晉樂所 奏	《技錄》云：“《折 楊柳行》歌文帝《西 山》、古《默默》二 篇，今不歌。”
豔歌羅 敷行	羅敷	3	有豔 無詞	3解	有趨 無詞		古詞	相和歌， 瑟調曲， 魏晉樂所 奏	曲詞又名《陌上桑》
西門行	西門	6		6解			古詞	瑟調曲， 晉樂所奏	《技錄》云：“《西 門行》歌古《西門》 一篇，今不傳。” 《樂府正義》云： “此古詩十九首之一 也，稍變其辭以合節 奏。”
折楊柳 行	默默	4		4解			古詞	瑟調曲， 魏晉樂所 奏	參《折楊柳行·西 山》
煌煌京 洛行	園桃	5		5解			文帝詞	瑟調曲， 晉樂所奏	
豔歌何 嘗行	白鷓	4	有豔 無詞	4解	詞 1 解		古詞	瑟調曲， 晉樂所奏	一題《飛鷓行》。 《技錄》云：“《豔 歌何嘗行》歌文帝 《何嘗》、古《白 鷓》二篇。”《南 史·戴顓傳》：“顓 合《何嘗》、《白 鷓》二聲以為一調， 號為清曠。”
步出夏 門行	碣石	4	詞 1 解	4解， 分別 題為 《觀 滄海》 、 《冬			武帝(曹 操)詞	瑟調曲， 魏晉樂所 奏	一題《隴西行》。 《技錄》云：“《隴 西行》歌武帝《碣 石》、文帝《夏門》 二篇。”

<sup>128</sup> Wang Kunwu 1996, pp. 127–128. In his work, Wang mentioned that this chart was based on the previous work by Qiu Qionsun 邱瓊蓀 in “Han *daqu* guankui” 漢大曲管窺 (《中華文史論叢》第一輯), upon which he made some supplement and revision according to *Song shu* Treatise and YFSJ.

				十月》 、 《河朔寒》 、 《神龜雖壽》					
豔歌何嘗行	何嘗	5	有豔無詞	5解	詞1解		古詞	瑟調曲，晉樂所奏	參《豔歌何嘗行·白鶴》
野田黃雀行	置酒	4		4解			東阿王(曹植)詞	瑟調曲，晉樂所奏	《文選》二七載此辭，題《箜篌引》。《門有車馬客行》亦歌此辭。《技錄》云：“今不歌。”
滿歌行	為樂	4		4解	詞1解		古詞	《通志》列入相和歌，晉樂所奏	
步出夏門行	夏門	2	詞1解	2解	詞1解		原題“明帝(曹睿)詞”，實雜集多種作品	瑟調曲，魏晉樂所奏	一名《隴西行》。參《步出夏門行·碣石》
棹歌行	王者布大化	5		5解	詞1解		明帝詞	瑟調曲，晉樂所奏	《技錄》云：“《棹歌行》歌明帝《王者布大化》一篇。或云左延年作。今不歌。”
雁門太守行	洛陽令	8		8解			古詞	瑟調曲，晉樂所奏	
白頭吟行	白頭吟(“皚如山上雪”)	5	一本有“紫羅咄咄奈何”六字，疑是豔詞	5解		詞1解	古詞	瑟調曲，楚調曲，晉樂所奏	《技錄》云：“《白頭吟行》歌古‘皚如山上雪’篇。”《樂府詩集》云：“按王僧虔《技錄》，《棹歌行》在瑟調，《白頭吟》在楚調。而沈約云同調，未知孰是。”

These fifteen lyrics provide copious information on medieval *daqu* performance:

1) Before each lyric there are two titles. One is the title of the song (*geci ming* 歌辭名), and the other the title of the tune (*qudiao ming* 曲調名). In some cases these titles are the same, for example, #1 *Dongmen* 東門 (“East Gate”) and *Dongmen xing* 東門行 (“East Gate”), or #15 *Baitou yin* 白頭吟 (“Chanting on White Hair”) and *Baitou yin xing* 白頭吟行 (“Chanting on White Hair”). In many other cases the title of the song is not the same as that of the tune, for example, #2 the song title is *Xishan* 西山 (“Western Mountain”), and the tune title is *Zhe yangliu xing* 折楊柳行 (“Breaking the branches of poplar and willow”). In the meanwhile, there are also cases in which two songs share the same tune title. For example, #7 *Baihu* 白鵠 (“White Swan”) and #9 *Hechang* 何嘗 (“Never”) share the same tune title *Yange hechang xing* 豔歌何嘗行 (“Song of Never (with introduction)”); #8 *Jieshi* 碣石 (“Towering Rock”) and #12 *Xiamen* 夏門 (“Summer Gate”) share the same tune title *Buchu xiamen xing* 步出夏門行 (“Walking Out of the Summer Gate”).

In fact, this is also true to the *xianghe* songs recorded in *Song shu* treatise. This kind of complex and sometimes uncertain relation between the two titles seems to suggest a flexibility of correspondence between the song and the tune. In other words, for *daqu* suites (and *xianghe* songs as well), a song and its tune do not have to be the same; one song may be accompanied by different tunes, and at the same time, one tune may also be used for different songs.

2) Besides the two titles, there is also a notation indicating the total number of *jie* 解 before each *daqu* lyric. Moreover, after each section in *daqu* suites, notes as “the first *jie* (一解),” “the second *jie* (二解)” and so on are provided, as with the lyrics of tunes in *qingshang* three keys.

About *jie*, Guo Maoqian has an explanation in his notes for *xianghe* category in *Yuefu shiji*:

凡諸調歌詞，並以一章為一解。《古今樂錄》曰：“儻歌以一句為一解，中國以一章為一解。”王僧虔啟云：“古曰章，今曰解，解有多少。當時先詩而後聲，詩敘事，聲成文，必使志盡於詩，音盡於曲。是以作詩有豐約，制解有多少，猶詩《君子陽陽》兩解，《南山有臺》五解之類也。”

All lyrics of *zhudiao* (“tunes in various keys”) take one *zhang* (“movement”) as one *jie* (“solution”). *Gujin yuelu* says: “‘Vulgarian songs’ take one sentence as one *jie*; in the central states, one *zhang* is taken as one *jie*.” Wang Sengqian’s memorial states: “In the past it was called *zhang*, and nowadays it is called *jie*. There are more and less in the number of *Jie*. At that time poetry came first and then the sound. Poetry is to tell the story, and sound is to form the music. The intent (*zhi*) has to be displayed thoroughly in poetry, and sound has to be completed in tunes. Therefore, as for the



composed poetry, there are variations of abundant and concise; as for the constituted *jie*, there is variety of more and fewer. This is like the situation in the Odes, where there are two *jie* in *Junzi yangyang* (“My husband looks full of satisfaction”), and five *jie* in *Nanshan youtai* (“On the hills of the south is the *tai* plant”).<sup>129</sup>

To him, *jie* signifies the divisions in the song. To “take one *zhang* 章 (‘movement’) as one *jie* 解 (‘solution’),” *jie* is another name for the musical movement, a self-contained section of a composition.

Yet this explanation has been challenged by modern scholars. Yang Yinliu, for example, in his pioneering work, has a discussion on what the term *jie* 解 actually stands for.<sup>130</sup> To him, *jie* cannot be simply taken as a subsection of the song or its lyrics. Instead, *jie* is more likely to be a sort of interlude, a short piece of instrumental performance with or without dancing, and is inserted between the partssections of a *daqu* composition, which is, noticeably, a “multimedia” performance including not only singing but also musical accompaniment and dancing. Therefore, those “1<sup>st</sup> *jie*,” “2<sup>nd</sup> *jie*” and so on do not simply mark the separations of different sections in *daqu* lyrics; they are, more profoundly, a textual subsidence which actually represents a session of performance between different singing sections, possessing specific functional connotations.

Yang’s argument is mainly based on the following two accounts. One is an anecdote recorded in *Jiegu lu* 羯鼓录 of Tang. During the Guangde 廣德 Reign (763–764) of Tang, one night when Li Wan 李琬, a music connoisseur and former prefect of Shuangliu, heard a beautiful tune played by *jie*-drum, he traced the sound to a small residence and saw the musician. Wan then asked the drummer how come this tune of *Yeposoji* 耶婆娑雞 was so delicate yet with no ending (“雖至精能而無尾，何也?”). The musician told him that his grandfather was accomplished in playing this tune. Yet after his father passed away, he now could not find the ending in extant scores. Wan, consequently, proposed to him the solution of using a *jie*:

琬曰：“……夫曲有不盡者，須以他曲解之，方可盡其聲也。夫耶婆色雞，當用樞柘急遍解之。”工如所教，果相諧協，聲意皆盡。

[Li] Wan said: “... where among the tunes, there are incomplete ones, one must be other tunes to ‘relieve’ (*jie*) it in order to make the sound complete. In the tune *yeposoji*, one needs to use the rapid piece *quzhe* to ‘relieve’ it.” The musician did what he was taught, and [two tunes] were indeed in perfect harmony. Both the sound and meaning were complete.<sup>131</sup>

The other record based on which Yang makes his argument is the *jiequ* 解曲 entry in the *yue shu* 樂書 (“Book on Music”) by Chen Yang 陳暘 (1064–1128):

---

<sup>129</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 26, p. 377.

<sup>130</sup> Yang Yinliu 1980, pp. 115–118.

<sup>131</sup> JYB, p. 9.

凡樂，以聲徐者為本聲，聲疾者為解。自古奏樂，曲終更無他變。隋煬帝以法曲雅淡，每曲終多有解曲。

As for music, that with gentle sound is the “principal sound,” and that with rapid sound is *jie*. Since ancient times, in playing music there has been no deviation from this. The Emperor Yang of Sui thought the “religious songs” elegant yet simple. [Therefore,] at the end of each tune, there is for the most part a *jie* piece.<sup>132</sup>

Therefore, *jie* is the music played at the end of a tune, with the function to “relieve” it, or to make it “complete.” Comparing to the major body of the tune, which, in most cases, tend to be music with “gentle sound,” tunes used as *jie* are more likely to be rapid. Moreover, *jie* may be performed several times in a suite in which there are multiple sections of singing lyrics, at the end of each repetition of the tune.

3) The structure of *daqu* is more complicated than tunes in the three *qingshang* keys. On this, Guo Maoqian also makes some notes in his preface to the *xianghe* category, following that on the *jie*:

又諸調曲皆有辭、有聲，而大曲又有豔，有趨、有亂。辭者其歌詩也，聲者若羊吾夷伊那何之類也，豔在曲之前，趨與亂在曲之後，亦猶吳聲西曲前有和，後有送也。

“Tunes in various keys” all have lyrics and sounds; *daqu*, moreover, has introduction (*yan*), shuffle (*qu*), and coda (*luan*). Lyrics are words to be sung; sounds are things like “*iang-u-i*,” “*i-na-he*” and so on. *Yan* is before the song, *qu* and *luan* after the song—it is like in Songs of Wu and Western Tunes, there is “response”(*he*) at the beginning, and “sending-off” (*song*) at the end.<sup>133</sup>

Later at the end of *xianghe* category, in his notes to *daqu*, Guo in addition mentions specifically the pieces with *yan*, *qu*, and *luan*:

其《羅敷》、《何嘗》、《夏門》三曲，前有豔，後有趨；《碣石》一篇有豔；《白鵠》、《為樂》、《王者布大化》三曲有趨。《白頭吟》一曲有亂。

In “*Luofu*,” “*Hechang* (‘Never’),” and “*Xiamen* (‘Summer Gate’)” three tunes, there is *yan* at the beginning, and *qu* at the end. In the “*Jieshi* (‘Towering Rock’)” piece there is *yan*. In “*Baihu* (‘White Swan’),” “*Weile* (‘Merry-Making’),” and “*Wangzhe bu dahua* (‘The King Spreads Great Transformation’)” three tunes there is *qu*. In “*Baitou yin* (‘Chanting on White Hair’)” piece there is *luan*.<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> YS, *juan* 164, p. 211-755.

<sup>133</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 26, p. 377.

<sup>134</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 43, p. 635.

Guo's remarks on the *yan* 豔, *qu* 趨, and *luan* 亂 have become a cornerstone of discussions of the structure of Wei and Jin *daqu*. Yet his brief exposition does not offer much more information beyond the positions of these sections relative to the *qu* 曲, the major part in a *daqu* suite. Later, as with the issue of *jie*, there have been many modern attempts to explain various features of these sections, such as their historical origins, performance styles, musical components, individual functions and so on.<sup>135</sup>

The *yan* 豔 is a short composition performed before the *qu* 曲,<sup>136</sup> just like a prelude. Five of the fifteen *daqu* lyrics in *Song shu* treatise have *yan*, among which, moreover, two pieces—"Jieshi 碣石" and "Xiamen 夏門"—are with lyrics. From this, we may infer that *yan* can be either a singing song (with lyrics) or simply a musical session played by instruments. According to Yang Yinliu, *yan* is a lyrical part that is "flowery and winding" ("華麗而宛轉的抒情部分").<sup>137</sup>

*Qu* 趨 and *luan* 亂 are both performed after the song, yet they do not appear in the same *daqu* suite. Six of the fifteen *daqu* lyrics have *qu*, and five have lyrics. According to *Shiming* 釋名 ("Explanation of Names"), an early Chinese dictionary that employed phonological glosses, *qu* means "to walk speedily" ("疾行曰趨"). Therefore, the *qu* in *daqu* is believed to be "urgent and rapid" ("緊張的快速的").<sup>138</sup> Moreover, *qu* is very likely to include a dancing part, according to what was mentioned in *Huainan zi* 淮南子 ("The Masters/Philosophers of Huainan"), a philosophical classic from the Han dynasty:

足蹠陽阿之舞，而手會綠水之趨。

Feet stamp the dance of Yang'e; and hands picture the rhythm (*qu*) of Lushui.<sup>139</sup>

In the fifteen *daqu* lyrics, *luan* 亂 only appears in the last piece *Baitou yin* 白頭吟 ("Chanting on White Hair"). Yang Yinliu has assembled an exhaustive discussion of the connotations of the term *luan*, tracing it back to ancient classics such as *Lun yu* 論語

<sup>135</sup> Discourse on the structure of *daqu* during the period of Wei and Jin can be found in many works. Wang Guowei 王國維, in his *Tangsong daqu kao* 唐宋大曲考, has a brief discussion on it. A more systematic research on this issue was made by Yang Yinliu 楊蔭瀏, in both his *Zhongguo gudai yinyueshi gao* 中國古代音樂史稿 and an article co-authored with Wu Zhao 吳釗 "Shuo 'luan' ji qita (說 '亂' 及其他)" (orig. *Renmin yinyue* 人民音樂, Jun., 1963. Collected in Yang Yinliu 1986). Later Wang Kunwu 1996 also has discussion on their origins.

<sup>136</sup> *Yan* may occasionally be in the middle of the *daqu* suite. A case of that is #12 *Xiamen* 夏門 ("Western Gate") piece in fifteen *daqu* lyrics. According to Wang Xiaodun, in the notes of *Xiamen* "朝遊" 上此為豔," the word "上" should be "止" instead. Therefore, the *yan* in *Xiamen* piece refers to the eight words sentence "朝遊清冷，日莫嗟歸," which occurs in the middle of the suite, after the second *jie*. See Wang Kunwu 1996, p. 129.

<sup>137</sup> Yang Yinliu 1980, p. 115.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> HNZ, *juan* 2, p. 72.

(“The Analects”), *Yue ji* 樂記 (“Record of Music”), and *Chu ci* 楚辭. Because *luan* and *qu* both appear at the end of *daqu* suite, yet do not show up at the same time, Yang declares that *luan* is probably another name for *qu* 趨—*luan* is used to talk about the singing music, and *qu* 趨 for the dancing music.<sup>140</sup>

As in the *Chu ci*, the concluding *luan* in the *daqu* suite is believed to summarize the previous musical chapters and end the song:

亂者，蓋樂之將終，眾音畢會。而詩歌之節，亦與相赴。繁音促節，交錯紛亂，故有是名耳。

As for *luan* (lit. “disorder”), it is when the music is about to end, various sounds all gather together. The rhythm of poetry is also in accord with it. Numerous sounds and rapid rhythm mix together disorderly—this is why it has this name (*luan*).<sup>141</sup>

Not only is *luan* closely related to the music in the State of Chu, but also many scholars have pointed out that *yan* and *qu* may also be traced back to the performance in the south—*yan* originally comes from the State of Chu, and *qu* from the Wu area.<sup>142</sup> Xie Lingyun 謝靈運, in his poem “Pengcheng gongzhong zhigan suimu 彭城宮中直感歲暮,” mentions the different emotions arisen from these two kinds of music:

楚豔起行戚，The *yan* of Chu starts the sorrow of traveling;  
吳趨絕歸歡。The *qu* of Wu ends the delight of returning.

The description above, therefore, might be a confirmation of our previous conclusion upon the styles of these two performance: *yan*, performed at the beginning of the suite, tends to be elegant and sentimental; *qu*, on the other hand, is a music session used to end the performance, and is usually brisk and rapid.

4) Among the fifteen *daqu* lyrics, nine are marked as *guci* 古詞, and the remaining six from the lords of Wei.<sup>143</sup> As with the tunes in the three *qingshang* keys, especially in terms of the motifs or topics, the fifteen *daqu* lyrics inherit much from *xianghe* songs, which originally came from “popular songs of the streets and lanes of Han.”

Moreover, similar to the tunes in *qingshang* three keys, *daqu* is also something

<sup>140</sup> Yang Yinliu 楊蔭瀏 and Wu Zhao 吳釗 “Shuo ‘luan’ ji qita (說‘亂’及其他),” see Yang Yinliu 1986, p. 349.

<sup>141</sup> Jiang Ji 1984, p. 192.

<sup>142</sup> In “Wudu fu 吳都賦 (“Rhapsody on Capital of Wu”) by Zuo Si 左思, there is a phrase of “荆豔楚舞” (“*yan* of Jing and dance of Chu”). According to Li Shan’s 李善 annotation, *yan* is the song from Chu (“豔，楚歌也”). Cui Bao 崔豹 says in *Gujin zhu* 古今注 that *qu* is the music with which people in Wu praise their territory (“吳趨曲，吳人以歌其地也”).

<sup>143</sup> Among the rest six *daqu* lyrics, one is authored by the Emperor Wu of Wei (Cao Cao 曹操), two by the Emperor Wen of Wei (Cao Pi 曹丕), one by the Lord of Dong’e (Cao Zhi 曹植), and two by the Emperor Ming of Wei (Cao Rui 曹睿).

“based on tunes of strings and pipes, bells and chimes to create songs” (“因弦管金石造歌以被之”). Therefore, it gives more priority to the tunes than to the lyrics, as it also takes the way of adapting poems to existing tunes. One example would be #4 “Ximen 西门 (‘Western Gate’),” which demonstrates how lines in previous poems were broken down and recomposed, presumably for the purpose of accommodating the music:

出西門，步念之。今日不作樂，當待何時。一解

Out of Western gate, think of it on every step. Not making merry today,  
when would you wait for? (1<sup>st</sup> jie)

夫為樂，為樂當及時。何能坐愁怫鬱，當復來茲。二解

As for merry-making, merry-making while you may. How can you feel  
somber and wait for another day? (2<sup>nd</sup> jie)

飲醇酒，炙肥牛。請呼心所歡，可用解愁憂。三解

Drinking pure wine, roasting fleshy beef. Please call whom your heart is  
fond of, to dispel the sadness. (3<sup>rd</sup> jie)

人生不滿百，常懷千歲憂。晝短而夜長，何不秉燭遊。四解

Life is scarce a hundred years, one always holding millenniums of fears.  
Daytime is brief, and night is long. Why not loiter holding the candle?  
(4<sup>th</sup> jie)

自非仙人王子喬，計會壽命難與期。五解

Not myself being the immortal Wang Ziqiao, I reckon it will be hard for my  
life span to be of equal term with his.

(5<sup>th</sup> jie)

人壽非金石，年命安可期；貪財愛惜費，但為後世嗤。六解。

Man is not made of metal or stone, how could the life span be expected?  
Being greedy and treasuring up one's stock, will only be mocked by after-  
generations. (6<sup>th</sup> jie)

Lyrics of this *daqu* piece inevitably remind us of the No.15 of *gushi shijiu shou* 古詩十九首 (“Nineteen Old Poems”), “Shengnian buman bai 生年不滿百 (‘Life Is Shorter Than a Hundred Years’):”

生年不滿百，Life is shorter than a hundred years,

常懷千歲憂。Always holding millenniums of fears.

晝短苦夜長，Daytime brief, and night long,

何不秉燭遊。Why not hold the candle and wander around?

為樂當及時，Merry-making should be in time,

何能待來茲？How can you wait for another day?

愚者愛惜費，Fools treasure their belongings,

但為後世嗤。Only to be mocked by later generations.

仙人王子喬，The immortal Wang Ziqiao,

難可與等期。Is hard to be emulated.<sup>144</sup>

Close examination on these two works might provide us with a clear idea how this breaking-down and recomposition was carried out:

- a. The 2<sup>nd</sup> *jie* in the *daqu* suite actually comes from the third stanza of the *gushi* poem. During this process of paraphrase, a two pentasyllabic lines (“為樂當及時，何能待來茲”) were changed into two lines of mixed and irregular length by adding a few words (“夫為樂，為樂當及時。何能坐愁怫鬱，當復來茲”).
- b. The 4<sup>th</sup> *jie* in the *daqu* are, however, composed of four pentasyllabic lines. It is almost a copy of the first two stanzas of the *gushi* poem, with only two words changed.
- c. The 5<sup>th</sup> *jie* in the *daqu* is a re-writing of the last two lines of the *gushi* poem, from two pentasyllabic lines (“仙人王子喬，難可與等期”) to two heptasyllabic lines (“自非仙人王子喬，計會壽命難與期”).
- d. Similar to the 4<sup>th</sup> *jie*, the 6<sup>th</sup> *jie* in the *daqu* also consists of four pentasyllabic lines. While the last two lines of the 6<sup>th</sup> *jie* copy the fourth stanza of the *gushi* poem, the 1<sup>st</sup> line (“人壽非金石”) actually comes from the line in No.11 of *Nineteen Old Poems*, which reads as “人生非金石.”

---

<sup>144</sup> It says that Wang was the son of a King of the Zhou. He attained immortality after making twenty years of effort, and ultimately flew away from this world riding on the back of a crane.

## II. *daqu* in the Tang

### -- The number of Tang *daqu*

How many *daqu* pieces were produced in the Tang Dynasty? Or, given that very few *daqu* lyrics survive, perhaps we should ask, how many Tang *daqu* titles may we uncover from textual investigation? Researchers have been making great efforts in attempting to give an answer to this question, yet I think there is still some space left for further discussion.

Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877–1927), one of the most renowned scholars of modern China, in his landmark work on Chinese theatrical performance studies, *Song Yuan xiqu kao* 宋元戲曲考 (“A Study of Song and Yuan Drama,” or *Song Yuan xiqu shi* 宋元戲曲史, “A History of Song and Yuan Drama”), briefly mentioned *daqu* as a performance form combining singing and dancing (“兼歌舞之伎”) when he discussed songs of the Song:

至唐而雅樂、清樂、燕樂、西涼、龜茲、安國、天竺、疏勒、高昌樂中均有大曲（見《大唐六典》卷十四《協律郎》條注）。然傳於後世者，唯胡樂大曲耳。其名悉載於《教坊記》，而其詞尚略存於《樂府詩集·近代曲辭》中。

When it came to the Tang, in the “elegant music” (*yayue*), “clear-tone music” (*qingyue*), music of *Xiliang*, Kucha, Bokhara, India, Kashgar, Turfan, there were all *daqu* suites (see “Six Institutions of the Tang,” chapter 14, notes on “Chief Musician” entry). However, that which had been passed down to later generations were only *daqu* of the *Hu* music. The titles (of *daqu*) were all recorded in the “Records of the Training Quarter.” A smattering of their lyrics are preserved in the *Yuefu shiji*.<sup>145</sup>

This argument was later challenged by Ren Bantang 任半塘. In his *Jiaofang ji jian ding* 教坊記箋訂, an exhaustive study of the *Jiaofang ji* 教坊記 (“Records of the Entertainment Bureau”) by Cui Lingqin 崔令欽, Ren Bantang pointed out that it is incorrect for Wang to assign all 46 *daqu* recorded in the *Jiaofang ji* to the *Hu* music. Instead, Ren Bantang identifies eleven tunes that he holds do not belong to the category of *Hu* music as *qing* 清 (“clear-tone”), such as *Liangzhou* 涼州, *Caisang* 采桑, and *Nishang* 霓裳. Ren Bantang furthermore questioned Wang’s conclusion that “the titles (of *daqu*) were all recorded in the ‘Records of the Training Quarter’ (其名悉載於《教坊記》),” arguing that the number of Tang *daqu* is far more than the 46 recorded in Cui’s work. He made a brief calculation, therefore, of the *daqu* titles detectable in historical records, and declared that there are altogether at least 150 *daqu* titles, including eleven surviving *daqu* suites whose lyrics survive, forty-seven tunes from the *dayue* 大樂

---

<sup>145</sup> Wang Guowei 1964, p. 41.

(“grand music”) of previous dynasties, fifty-three tunes without lyrics from the *Jiaofang ji*, eight titles mentioned in the *Yuefu zalu* 樂府雜錄, fourteen titles that may be deduced from the word “*da* 大” or “*zi* 子” in the title, and four from *faqu* 法曲. In addition, Ren Bantang notes that this number does not include tunes he suspected to be *daqu* yet could not verify.<sup>146</sup>

Ren Bantang’s research on Tang *daqu* (and also on the performance culture of the Tang) is irreplaceable, and his critique of Wang Guowei’s claims in the *Song Yuan xiqu kao* seem plausible. However, on further examination, we may find that it is a bit unjust to Wang on this issue, because it seems that when criticizing Wang’s conclusion above, Ren Bantang somehow chooses to leave out Wang’s more specific argument on *daqu* of the Tang in another work, *Tang Song daqu kao* 唐宋大曲考, a monograph on *daqu* of the Tang and Song dynasties. In that work, Wang obviously has modified his judgement on *daqu* of the Tang in previous *Song Yuan xiqu kao*, where he only gave *daqu* limited space. In the *Tang Song daqu kao* 唐宋大曲考, Wang makes it clear that during the Tang, there were *daqu* suites in both *yayue* 雅樂 (“elegant music”) and *suyue* 俗樂 (“popular music”), yet little specific information on *daqu* in *yayue* can be found in historical records (“雅樂大曲，史無明文”). As for *daqu* in *qingyue* 清樂 (“clear-tone music”) and *yanyue* 燕樂 (“banquet music”), they are likely about the same with those recorded in *Songshu* and *Weishu* treatises. After mentioning the forty-six *daqu* titles in *Jiaofang ji* and classified them all as *daqu* of *yanyue*, Wang specifically notes, “however, there were surely Tang *daqu* not recorded by Cui Lingqin (然唐之大曲，固有未盡於令欽所記者).” To support this declaration, Wang furthermore provides examples, for instance, the *Pozhen yue* 破陣樂 (“Music of Smashing the Ranks”), *Qingshan yue* 慶善樂 (“Music of Celebrating the Good”) and *Shangyuan wu* 上元舞 (“Dance of Superior Heaven”) in *libu ji* 立部伎 (“Music of standing sections”) have fifty-two, seven, and twenty-nine movements respectively, and can obviously be considered *daqu*, while songs like *Shuidiao ge* 水調歌 (“Song of Water Tune”) and *Luzhou ge* 陸州歌 (“Song of Luzhou”) recorded in YFSJ, which consist of as many movements as *Yizhou* 伊州 and *Liangzhou* 涼州, should be taken as *daqu* as well.<sup>147</sup>

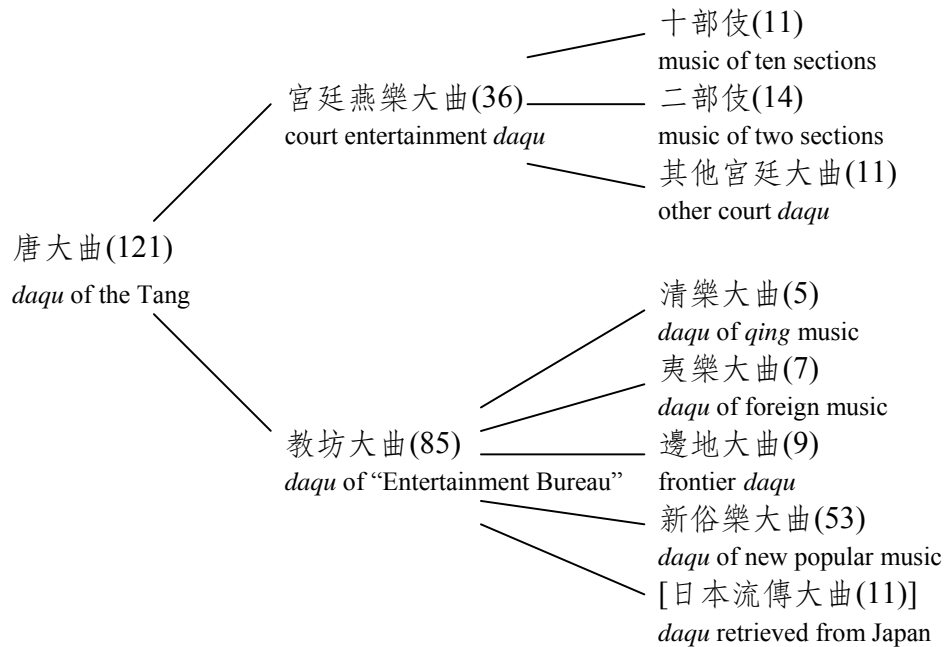
The most elaborate investigation to date of *daqu* in the Tang has been carried out by Wang Xiaodun 王小盾 (or Wang Kunwu 王昆吾), a student of Ren Bantang, in his work *Sui Tang Wudai yanyue zayan geci yanjiu* 隋唐五代燕樂雜言歌辭研究, a project attempting to supplement his advisor’s research on Tang “sung poetry” (*shengshi* 聲詩) in uniform line lengths (*qiyán* 齊言). In his chapter on *daqu*, Wang provides a full discussion of Tang *daqu*, as well those of the Wei and Jin. One of Wang’s most important contributions in his research, to my mind, is his further elaboration of Ren’s rather unclear language about “forty-seven *daqu* suites from the *dayue* 大樂 (“grand music”) of previous dynasties” and his full discussion of each *daqu* title. In this work, Wang counts up to 121 *daqu* songs in the Tang (not including *daqu* of the “elegant music”), including

<sup>146</sup> Ren Bantang 1962, p. 148.

<sup>147</sup> Wang Guowei 1964, pp. 152-153.



thirty-six court entertainment *daqu* and eighty-five *daqu* of the *Jiaofang* 教坊 (“Entertainment Bureau”), which he classifies into several categories:



In his discussion, Wang talks about each *daqu* song in a comprehensive way that all important aspects—such as sources of *daqu* songs, tunes included, musical instruments that were played, numbers of musicians, and so on—have been collectively provided. In his effort to provide a comprehensive list of Tang *daqu*, Wang may perhaps have gone too far. For example he counts tunes in the “music of nine sections (*jiubu ji* 九部伎)” and “music of ten sections (*shibu ji* 十部伎)”<sup>148</sup> as *daqu* suites of the Tang court (on which we will make further discussion later), and lists their names as *daqu* titles. According to historical accounts, it is true that in each music section there is/are *daqu* suites, yet no record shows that the title of each music section is at the same time the name of *daqu*. As a matter of fact, Yin Falu 陰法魯 has already pointed out that “unfortunately the names (of *daqu* in the ‘music of ten sections’) are all absent, which is regrettable” (惜曲名俱付缺如，是為憾耳).<sup>149</sup> Apart from this point, however, Wang’s research on the *daqu* is greatly informative and valuable.

<sup>148</sup> Here the 11 tunes include 10 from “music of ten sections” and 1 from previous “music of nine sections.”

<sup>149</sup> Yin Falu 1948, p. 21.

然據《唐六典注》卷十四“協律郎”條所載，十部伎中燕樂、西涼、龜茲、安國、疏勒、高昌諸部，各有大曲，惜曲名俱付缺如，是為憾耳。

Yet according to “Six Institutions of the Tang,” chapter 14, “Chief Musician” entry, in the “music of ten sections -- *yanyue* (“banquet music”), music of *Xiliang*, Kucha, Bokhara, Kashgar, Turfan— all have *daqu*. Unfortunately, the names are all in absence, which is so regretful.

## -- Court Entertainment *daqu*

Historical records of the Tang in which the term *daqu* 大曲 appears are mainly two from the period of High Tang: *Tang Liu dian* 唐六典 (“Six Institutions of the Tang”) and *Jiaofang ji* 教坊記 (“Records of the Entertainment Bureau”). Composed upon the decree of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang (685–762), the former focuses on the bureaucratic system from the beginning of the Tang up to the Kaiyuan Reign (713–741). The term *daqu* was mentioned under *xielülang* 協律郎 (“Chief Musician”) entry:

太樂署教樂：雅樂大曲三十日成；小曲二十日。清樂大曲六十日；文曲三十日；小曲十日。燕樂、西涼、龜茲、疏勒、安國、天竺、高昌大曲各三十日；次曲各二十日；小曲各十日。

The Imperial Music Office takes charge of (the following) music: in terms of the “elegant music” (*yayue*), the “big suite” (*daqu*) takes thirty days, and the “small song” (*xiaoqu*) takes twenty days. As for the “clear-tone music” (*qingyue*), the “big suite” takes sixty days, the “civil song” (*wenqu*) thirty days, and the “small song” ten days. In terms of the “banquet music” (*yanyue*), music of *Xiliang*, Kucha, Kashgar, Bokhara, India, Turfan, each “big suite” takes thirty days, the “secondary song” (*ciqu*) twenty days, and the “small song” ten days.<sup>150</sup>

As a major unit of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices 太常寺, the Imperial Music Office 太樂署 was responsible for providing music and dancing for state sacrifices and other ceremonies during the Tang. According to the record of the *Jiu tangshu* 舊唐書, the recreational performance system of the early Tang court basically continued to use that of the Sui:

高祖登極之後，享宴因隋舊制，用九部之樂，其後分為立坐二部。

After Emperor Gaozu ascended the throne, (performance of) banquet inherited the previous system of Sui, which took the music of nine sections. Later it was divided into two sections: the standing section and the sitting section.<sup>151</sup>

Created during the Daye Reign of Emperor Yang of the Sui (605–618), the “music of nine sections” (*jiubu yue* 九部樂 or *jiubu ji* 九部伎) was a development of the “music of seven sections” (*qibu yue* 七部樂) that originated at the beginning of the Sui Dynasty (581–600), as an outcome of the re-organization of the miscellaneous music that the Sui inherited from the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589). The “music of nine

---

<sup>150</sup> TLD, *juan* 14, p. 399.

<sup>151</sup> JTS, *juan* 29, p. 1059.

sections” (*jiubu ji* 九部伎) was later reformed into the “music of ten sections” (*shibu ji* 十部伎) during the reign of Emperor Taizong of the Tang by taking out the music of *libi* 禮畢樂 (“End of Rites”) and adding *yanyue* 燕樂 (“Banquet Music”) and the music of Turfan (高昌樂), and was first performed in the 16<sup>th</sup> year of Zhenguan 貞觀 Reign (642). All kinds of music mentioned above in the *Tang Liu dian* 唐六典 entry, except the “elegant music” (*yayue*), are categories belonging to the “music of ten sections,” which, according to the *Tong dian* 通典 (“Encyclopaedic History of Institutions”), were intended for performance at large banquets:

凡大燕會，設十部之伎於庭，以備華夷：一曰燕樂伎，有景雲之舞，慶善樂之舞，破陣樂之舞，承天樂之舞；二曰清樂伎；三曰西涼伎；四曰天竺伎；五曰高麗伎；六曰龜茲伎；七曰安國伎；八曰疏勒伎；九曰高昌伎；十曰康國伎。……每先奏樂三日，太樂令宿設懸於庭。其日，率工人入居次。協律郎舉麾，樂作；仆麾，樂止。文舞退，武舞進。

When it comes to large-scale banquets, the “music of ten sections” are set in the court to be prepared for (guests of) central state of China and minorities. The first one is called “Banquet Music (*yanyue*),” which includes “Dance of Auspicious Clouds,” “Dance of Celebrating the Good,” “Dance of Defeating the Troops,” and “Dance of Receiving from Heaven.” The second one is called “Clear-tone Music (*qingyue*).” The third one is called “Music of *Xiliang*.” The fourth one is called “Music of India (*Tianzhu*).” The fifth one is called “Music of Korea (*Gaoli*).” The sixth is called “Music of Kucha.” The seventh is called “Music of Bokhara.” The eighth is called “Music of Kashgar.” The ninth is called “Music of Turfan.” The tenth is called “Music of Samarkand.” ... Three days in advance of each performance, the Director of the Imperial Music Office sets up the suspended musical instruments in the court yard during the night. On the day itself, (the Director) leads the musicians in to take up their places. When the Chief Musician raises the banner, the music is played; when the banner is put down, the music stops. After the civil dances withdraw, the martial dances are presented.<sup>152</sup>

The “music of ten sections,” as we see, embraced music inherited from previous dynasties that embodied the traditional musical aesthetics of central state of China (such as *qingyue* 清樂), the music imported from border areas which represented some kind of exotic interest (for example, the music of *Tianzhu* 天竺伎 and Kucha 龜茲伎) that became particularly popular during the Tang, as well as the mixture of these two (*yanyue* 燕樂<sup>153</sup> and the music of *Xiliang* 西涼伎<sup>154</sup> are of this kind). The account of the “music

<sup>152</sup> TD, *juan* 144, p. 755.

<sup>153</sup> The term *yanyue* 燕樂, in broad sense, refers to the entertaining music. Here, however, *yanyue* is used in its narrow sense, referring to the music created by Zhang Wenshou 張文收 in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Zhenguan Reign (640), and was performed as the first section of the music of ten sections.

of nine sections” in the “Treatise on Music” of the *Sui shu* 隋書 (“Documents of the Sui”) has provided us with a general idea on the format of performance of each kind. According to the *Sui shu* Treatise, most categories consist of song (*gequ* 歌曲) and dance (*wuqu* 舞曲), and some have a resolution (*jie* 解曲) in between.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, each section is actually a performance combining parts of singing and dancing.

In terms of the size of performance, according to *Tang liu dian*, *daqu* supervised by *Taiyue shu* 太樂署 (“Imperial Music Office”) were large-scale performances requiring thirty days for the most part, and some even sixty days (*daqu* of the *qingyue*, for instance) to prepare. As for other three kinds of music—*wenqu* 文曲, *ciqu* 次曲, and *xiaoku* 小曲—even though detailed information on their performance remains uncertain, one may infer from the record that, as Wang Xiaodun has pointed out in his research, both *wenqu* and *ciqu* might be considered *daqu* as well, given the fact that *wenqu* in the *qingyue* division, like *daqu* in *yayue*, took thirty days to prepare, while *ciqu* in *yanyue* and other music sections were also large scale performances combining singing and dancing.<sup>156</sup>

During the reign of Emperor Xuanzong in the mid Tang, the “musicians of the ten sections” (*shibu ji* 十部伎) was differentiated into two categories—musicians of the standing section (*libu ji* 立部伎) and the musicians of the sitting section (*zuobu ji* 坐部伎). According to the *Xin Tang shu* “Treatise on Rites and Music”, performers in these two sections were hierarchically distinct as well:

(玄宗)又分樂為二部：堂下立奏，謂之立部伎；堂上坐奏，謂之坐部伎。太常閱坐部，不可教者隸立部，又不可教者，乃習雅樂。

(The Emperor Xuanzong) moreover divided musicians into two categories: those who performed while standing below the hall were called musicians of the standing section; those who performed while sitting in the hall were called musicians of the sitting section. The Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*taichang*) inspected the sitting section, in which those could not be taught were sent to the standing section; those could not be taught (in the standing section) were then sent to practise the elegant music (*yayue*).<sup>157</sup>

Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846) wrote a poem on the subject, developing the possibilities for cultural critique in this institutional evolution:

---

<sup>154</sup> According to the *Suishu* and *Jiu Tangshu* treatises, the music of *Xiliang* 西涼伎 was once called *Guoji* 國伎 (the “music of the state”) during the Northern Wei (386–557). It is a mixture of traditional Han music and music from Central Asia (西域): a) The titles of the song 歌曲 (《永世樂》) and resolution 解曲 (《萬世豐》) are Han names, yet the title of the dancing tune 舞曲 (《于闐(Khotan)佛曲》) is a name from Central Asia; b) The instruments used for the music of *Xiliang* also include both those of the Han and the western ones (“其樂具有鐘磬，蓋涼人所傳中國舊樂，而雜以羌胡之聲也。”《舊唐書音樂志》)

<sup>155</sup> *Sui shu*, *juan* 15, pp. 377–380.

<sup>156</sup> Wang Kunwu 1996, p. 140.

<sup>157</sup> XTS, *juan* 22, p. 475.

太常部伎有等級， The performers of Court of Imperial Sacrifices have classes.  
堂上者坐堂下立。 Those in the hall are sitting; those off the hall standing.  
堂上坐部笙歌清， In the hall, playing and singing performed by the sitting one is pure;  
堂下立部鼓笛鳴。 Off the hall, drums and flutes performed by the standing one is loud.  
.....

立部賤，坐部貴， The standing section is humble; the sitting section noble.  
坐部退為立部伎， Demoted from the sitting section to the standing one,  
擊鼓吹笙和雜戲。 One plays drums and *sheng*-pipe and performs juggleries.  
.....

立部又退何所任， Demoted from the standing section, where does one go?  
始就樂懸操雅音。 Starts to play elegant music on suspended musical instruments.<sup>158</sup>

The account in the *Xin Tang shu* and that in Bai's poem, therefore, corresponded to each other, indicating that the music of sitting section was put in the highest rank in the mid Tang court performance, and so were its musicians. The music of the standing section was next to it. The elegant music (*yayue*), unfortunately, has become the least popular by that time, and only court musicians of least skill were sent to practise it.

According to the record of the *Xin Tang shu*, eight tunes were performed by the music of standing section, and six by the sitting one:

立部伎八：一《安樂》，二《太平樂》，三《破陣樂》，四《慶善樂》，五《大定樂》，六《上元樂》，七《聖壽樂》，八《光聖樂》。

The music of standing section has eight tunes: 1)“Music of Peace,” 2)“Pacific Music,” 3)“Music of Smashing the Ranks,” 4)“Music of Celebrating the Good,” 5)“Music of Great Tranquility,” 6)“Music of Superior Heaven,” 7)“Music of Imperial Longevity,” 8) “Music of Bright Emperor.”

坐部伎六：一《燕樂》，二《長壽樂》，三《天授樂》，四《鳥歌萬歲樂》，五《龍池樂》，六《小破陣樂》。

The music of sitting section has six tunes: 1)“Banquet music,” 2) “Music of Longevity,” 3) “Music of Heavenly Bestowal,” 4) “Music of Birds Singing Longevity,” 5) “Music of Dragon Pond,” 6) “Small Music of Smashing the Ranks.”<sup>159</sup>

Different from the “music of nine sections” or “music of ten sections,” as we can see, the repertoire items here are no longer named according to their regions of origin, which in a sense indicates a further fusion of Chinese and foreign music by the mid Tang. The music

<sup>158</sup> Bai Juyi 白居易, *Libu ji* 立部伎 (“The Music of Standing Section”).

<sup>159</sup> XTS, *juan* 22, p. 475.

of the nine (or ten) sections, moreover, according to the *Tong dian*, intended to be performed from beginning to end during the banquet, while in the case of the music of the two sections, the scale of the repertoire was such that songs were only performed selectively:

若常享會，先一日具坐、立部樂名封上，請所奏禦注而下。及會，先奏坐部伎，次奏立部伎，次奏蹀馬，次奏散樂而畢矣。

As for usual gatherings and banquets, on the previous day, (the Court of Imperial Sacrifices) prepared the music titles of sitting and standing sections, presented them to the emperor, asked for the imperial remarks and then withdrew. When it came to the gathering, they first performed the music of the sitting section, next the music of the standing section, and next came the dancing horses, and then the juggleries at the end.<sup>160</sup>

According to historical records, there were usually a hundred or so dancers in each performance of the music of standing section,<sup>161</sup> which made them performances of much larger size than the “music of ten sections.” Therefore, only those songs selected by the emperor were able to be performed at the banquet. Meanwhile, the sequence of performance—starting from the music of sitting section onward to the juggleries (*sanyue*) at the end—also implies the hierarchy among musical categories.

All fourteen tunes in the “music of two sections,” like those in the “music of ten sections,” included dance. Accounts of many details, such as titles of dance music, musical instruments adopted, and numbers of musicians and dancers, appear in official historical records such as the *Jiu Tang shu* treatise. Modern research has also been devoted to the dance performance in each section, most notably in the pioneering work *Tangdai wudao* 唐代舞蹈, edited by Ouyang Yuqian 歐陽予倩 in the 1960s. To put it in a simple way, performances of the standing section were usually of large scale, and many of them consisted of various changes of dancing formations. Music of the sitting section, in contrast, has less performers, yet was more delicate and elegant, and of “more artistic quality.”<sup>162</sup>

In the “*Daqu*” chapter of *Sui Tang Wudai yanyue zayan geci yanjiu* 隋唐五代燕樂雜言歌辭研究, Wang Xiaodun counts up to 121 *daqu* songs (not including *daqu* of *yayue*) in the Tang period, among which 11 *daqu* songs are from the “music of ten sections,” and 14 from the music of two sections.<sup>163</sup> Whether or not the title of each music section could be taken as the title of *daqu* suite merits further exploration, as we have mentioned, the arrangement of the “music of nine sections” is, however, indeed in accordance with the *daqu* format. According to the record of the *Sui shu* Treatise, as we

<sup>160</sup> JTS, *juan* 29, p. 1081.

<sup>161</sup> According to *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, the number of dancers was from 64 in *Qingshan yue* 慶善樂 (“Music of Celebrating the Good”) to 140 in *Taiping yue* 太平樂 (“Pacific Music”), *Dading Yue* 大定樂 (“Music of Great Tranquility”) and *Shengshou yue* 聖壽樂 (“Music of Imperial Longevity”).

<sup>162</sup> Ouyang Yuqian 1980, p. 85.

<sup>163</sup> The 11 *daqu* songs include 10 from the “music of ten sections,” and one *Libi* 禮畢 (“End of Rites”) from the previous “music of nine sections.”

have mentioned, in each section usually one song (*gequ* 歌曲), one resolution *jie* 解 (some are missing this part), and one dance (*wuqu* 舞曲) (some may have more than one) are listed, which makes each section a unit of singing and dancing performance, i.e. a *daqu* suite. The only exception is *yanyue* 宴樂 (or 燕樂), which is a union of four different *daqu* suites. According to the *Jiu Tang shu* treatise:

(貞觀)十四年，有景雲見，河水清。張文收采古《殊雁》、《天馬》之義，制《景雲河清歌》，名曰宴樂，奏之管弦，為諸樂之首，元會第一奏者是也。

In the 14<sup>th</sup> year (of the Zhenguan Reign, i.e. 640), auspicious clouds appeared, and the water of the Yellow River became clear. Zhang Wenshou followed the reason of ancient “Vermilion Wild Goose” and “Heavenly Horse,”<sup>164</sup> to make the “Song of Auspicious Clouds and Clear River.” He named it “Banquet Music” and played it on pipes and strings. It has become the first one of various music sections, and the first music to be played at the New Year Gathering.<sup>165</sup>

Distinct from *yanyue* 燕樂 in its broad sense, in which it refers to entertainment music in general,<sup>166</sup> the term *yanyue* 宴樂 (or 燕樂 “banquet music”) here is used in its narrow sense, referring to the music composed by Zhang Wenshou 張文收, who had a good command of music as the Chief Musician (*xielülang* 協律郎) during the Zhenguan Reign. It was not included in the “music of nine sections” and was added later to the “music of ten sections” by Emperor Taizong. According to the *Tong dian* account quoted earlier, *yanyue* appeared as the first section in the “music of ten sections,” and three more dances were added besides the “Dance of Auspicious Clouds.” Including four dances and twenty dancers, *yanyue* was considered the largest performance among the “music of ten sections,” as has been mentioned here that “the first one of various music sections, and the first music to play in the New Year Gathering” (為諸樂之首，元會第一奏者是也).

Later, when Emperor Xuanzong reformed the “music of ten sections” into the “music of two sections,” *yanyue* was successfully carried on to the “music of sitting section” and further developed. The *Jiu Tang shu* treatise provides more details on the

---

<sup>164</sup> The “Vermilion Wild Goose” and “Heavenly Horse,” music of the Western Han, were said to have been composed upon the Emperor Wu of Han’s obtaining of vermilion wild goose and Ferghana horses.

<sup>165</sup> JTS, *juan* 28, p. 1046.

<sup>166</sup> *Yanyue* 燕樂 (“banquet music”), in its broad sense, generally refers to the imperial entertaining music performed on court banquet. It is a notion usually juxtaposed with *yayue* (“elegant music”), which is performed mainly during sacrifices. What was mentioned by Shen Kuo 沈括 in his *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談 is often taken as a usual definition on *yanyue*:

“先王之樂為雅樂，前世新聲為清樂，合胡部為燕樂。”

The music of ancient kings is the “elegant music” (*yayue*); The new sound of previous dynasties is “clear-tone music” (*qingyue*), which mixed with the Hu music is the “banquet music” (*yanyue*).

Therefore, *yanyue* includes the music from both Central China and remote regions as well as that from foreign areas. *Daqu* is one of the most important musical categories of *yanyue*.

performance of *yanyue* in the “music of sitting section:”

《宴樂》，張文收所造也。工人緋綾袍，絲布袴。舞二十人，分為四部：《景雲樂》，舞八人，花錦袍，五色綾袴，雲冠烏皮靴；《慶善樂》，舞四人，紫綾袍，大袖，絲布袴，假髻。《破陣樂》，舞四人，緋綾袍，錦衿襖，緋綾褲。《承天樂》，舞四人，紫袍，進德冠，並銅帶。

The “Banquet Music” is that which composed by Zhang Wenshou. Musicians wear red silk gown and silk fabric pants. It has twenty dancers, and includes four sections. In the “Music of Auspicious Clouds” dancers are eight, with brocade gown, five-colored silk pants, cloud hat and black fur boots. In the “Music of Celebrating the Good” dancers are four, wearing purple silk gown with large sleeves, silk fabric pants, and artificial chignon. In the “Music of Smashing the Ranks” dancers are four, wearing purple silk gown with brocade collar and sleeve edges, and red silk pants. In the “Music of Receiving from Heaven” dancers are four, wearing purple gown, Advance-Merit hat, and bronze belt.<sup>167</sup>

Besides this, it adopted a variety of musical instruments such as *qing* 磬 (chime stone), *fangxiang* 方響, *konghou* 箜篌, *pipa* 琵琶, *sheng* 笙, *di* 笛, *bili* 篳篥, *tongba* 銅拔 and so on, numbering twenty-eight in total.<sup>168</sup> *Yanyue*, therefore, was also the largest performance in the “music of the sitting section.”

What is noticeable is that among the three major dances of the Tang as defined by the *Xin Tang shu*,<sup>169</sup> two are included in *yanyue*, that is, *pozhen yue* 破陣樂 (later named *qide wu* 七德舞, “Dance of Seven Virtues”) and *qingshan yue* 慶善樂 (later named *Jiugong wu* 九功舞, “Dance of Nine Achievements”). *Pozhen yue* 破陣樂 (“Music of Smashing the Ranks”), moreover, as one of the most significant “national” pieces of the Tang, was not only one of the four dances in *yanyue* of the “music of ten sections” or the “music of sitting section,” it was also one of the tunes in the “music of standing section,” as well as was performed individually as *xiao pozhen yue* 小破陣樂 (“Small Music of Smashing the Ranks”) in the “music of sitting section.”

According to the *Jiu Tang shu* treatise, dancers of the *pozhen yue* in the “music of standing section” numbered one hundred and twenty:

《破陣樂》，太宗所造也。……百二十人披甲持戟，甲以銀飾之。發

<sup>167</sup> JTS, *juan* 29, p. 1061.

<sup>168</sup> *Jiu Tang shu* recorded 22 kinds of instruments, while *Xin Tang shu* and *Tong dian* had 28. Here I take the latter.

<sup>169</sup> XTS, *juan* 21, p. 467.

唐之自製樂凡三大舞：一曰《七德舞》，二曰《九功舞》，三曰《上元舞》。

Music composed in the Tang are three major dances: the first one is “Dance of Seven Virtues;” the second one is “Dance of Nine Achievements;” the third one is “Dance of Superior Heaven.”



揚蹈厲，聲韻慷慨。享宴奏之，天子避位，坐宴者皆興。

“Music of Smashing the Ranks” is created by Emperor Taizong. ... One hundred and twenty performers wear armors and hold halberds, with armors decorated by silver. The movements of the arms are violent and feet stampings are fierce, while the music sound is vehement. When it is performed at the banquet, the emperor leaves his throne, and the guests at the banquet all rise from their seats.<sup>170</sup>

Composed under the auspices of Emperor Taizong, “Music of Smashing the Ranks” was a reminder of the triumphs of that illustrious figure. Performed by the “music of standing section,” this grand dance performance involved various transformations of dancing formations, which in particular resemble the transformations of troops in battle. According to this account, when it was performed at the banquet, the emperor would step aside from his throne in a show of humility, and the audience would rise in response to the “violent movements of arms and fierce stamping.”

The grandeur of this performance, what is more, probably culminated with two thousand participants and even horses in the case of banquets bestowed in thanks to the armies, according to the record in *Yuefu zalu* 樂府雜錄 by Duan Anjie 段安節:

破陣樂亦屬此部（龜茲部），秦王所制。舞用二千人，皆衣畫甲，執旗旆。外藩鎮春冬犒軍亦舞此曲。兼馬軍引入場，尤甚壯觀也。

The “Music of Smashing the Ranks,” composed by the Lord of the Qin, also belongs to this section (i.e. the music of Kucha). The dance takes two thousand people, all wearing painted armors and holding banners. When the exterior border states rewarded the armies in spring and winter, this music was also performed. The horse army was also lead into the stage, which created a particularly magnificent spectacle.<sup>171</sup>

Later, a much smaller version of “Music of Smashing the Ranks” was recomposed by Emperor Xuanzong, as the last performance of “music of sitting section:”

《破陣樂》，玄宗所造也。生於立部伎《破陣樂》。舞四人，金甲胄。

“Music of Smashing the Ranks” is created by Emperor Xuanzong. It is based on the “Music of Smashing the Ranks” in the “music of standing section.” Dancers are four, wearing golden armors and helmets.<sup>172</sup>

Both belonging to the “music of sitting section,” this smaller version of “Music of Smashing the Ranks” and that in the *yanyue* division both had only four dancers, yet different costumes were worn. Though recomposed based on the “Music of Smashing the Ranks” in the “music of stading section,” this smaller version adopted different music

---

<sup>170</sup> JTS, *juan* 29, p. 1059.

<sup>171</sup> JYB, p. 25.

<sup>172</sup> JTS, *juan* 29, p. 1062.

and musical instruments—while the previous one belongs to *faqu* 法曲 (“religious music”), this one takes the music of Kucha, according to the *Jiu Tang shu* account that “all performances ever since the ‘Music of Longevity’ played the music of Kucha, and dancers wore boots (自《長壽樂》已下皆用龜茲樂，舞人皆著靴).”<sup>173</sup>

If *pozhen yue* 破陣樂 (“Music of Smashing the Ranks”) is to be considered as the representative of the military music of the Tang, then *qingshan yue* 慶善樂 (“Music of Celebrating the Good”) might be taken as its counterpart in the civil music of the Tang. *Qingshan yue* 慶善樂 (“Music of Celebrating the Good”), like *pozhen yue* 破陣樂, was also a product of Emperor Taizong’s court:

(貞觀)六年，太宗行幸慶善宮，宴從臣于渭水之濱，賦詩十韻。其宮即太宗降誕之所。車駕臨幸，每特感慶，賞賜閭裏，有同漢之宛、沛焉。於是起居郎呂才以禦制詩等於樂府，被之管弦，名為《功成慶善樂》之曲。

In the 6<sup>th</sup> year (of Zhenguan), Emperor Taizong paid a visit to Qingshan Palace. Throwing a banquet to the following officials at the bank of Wei River, he composed a poem of ten couplets. That palace was where Taizong was born. Every time he visited (there), particularly affected and rejoiced, he granted a reward to the people of his home town, just like the Wan and Pei of the Han. At that time, Lü Cai, the Imperial Diarist, took the imperial poetry as *yuefu*, put it to the music of stings and pipes, and named it “Music of Celebrating the Good After Achievement Completed.”<sup>174</sup>

Thereafter, it was performed on the banquet for Winter Solstice and other grand national celebrations, together with *qide wu* 七德舞 (“Dance of Seven Virtues”), the subsequent variant of *pozhen yue*.

Similar to the *pozhen yue*, the *qingshan yue* 慶善樂 in the *yanyue* of the “music of ten sections” also found its way into the repertoire of the later “standing section.” As the most important “civil dance” (*wenwu* 文舞) of the Tang, it differed from all other performances in the “music of standing section” and is significantly gentle and elegant:

《慶善樂》，太宗所造也。……舞者六十四人。衣紫大袖裾襦，漆髻皮履。舞蹈安徐，以象文德洽而天下安樂也。

“Music of Celebrating the Good” is created by Emperor Taizong. ... Dancers are sixty-four, wearing purple gowns, with loose sleeves and tailed jacket, black chignon and fur boots. The dance is peaceful and gentle, which symbolizes the harmony of civil virtues and the ease of the world.<sup>175</sup>

What is more, both *pozhen yue* 破陣樂 (“Music of Smashing the Ranks”) and *qingshan*

---

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> JTS, *juan* 28, p. 1046.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

*yue* 慶善樂 (“Music of Celebrating the Good”) were recomposed as *yayue* 雅樂 (“elegant music”), with a much shorter length of performance. According to the *Jiu Tang shu* Treatise, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yifeng (677), Wei Wandan 韋萬石, the Junior Chief Minister of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (*Taichang shaoqing* 太常少卿) presented a memorial to the Emperor that:

立部伎內《破陣樂》五十二遍，修入雅樂，只有兩遍，名曰《七德》。立部伎內《慶善樂》七遍，修入雅樂，只有一遍，名曰《九功》。《上元舞》二十九遍，今入雅樂，一无所減。

The “Music of Smashing the Ranks” in the “music of standing sections” has fifty-two movements. When it was recomposed into the elegant music, it only has two movements, and was named “Dance of Seven Virtues.” The “Music of Celebrating the Good” in the “music of standing sections” has seven movements. When it was recomposed into the elegant music, it only has one movement, and was named “Dance of Nine Achievements.” The “Dance of Superior Heaven” has twenty-nine movements. Yet when it was recomposed into the elegant music, nothing at all was omitted.<sup>176</sup>

This account, as Wang Guowei pointed out, is evidence for the presence of *daqu* pieces among the “elegant music” repertoire, a category that seemed to fall from favor over the course of the Tang.

An exhaustive research on the lyrics, tunes, dances, development and other aspects of *pozhen yue* 破陣樂 has been made by Ren Bantang in his work *Tang shengshi* 唐聲詩 (“Sung Poems of the Tang”), in which three pieces of lyrics with different format—a pentasyllabic quatrain, a hexasyllabic eight-line verse, and a heptasyllabic quatrain—are collected.<sup>177</sup> Among them, the pentasyllabic quatrain was believed to be the “previous lyric” (*jiuci* 舊辭) that was performed by the Ritual Office at the Court of Imperial Sacrifices 太常禮院 in the third year of the Wenzong Reign (829). Ren suspected that this was one of the original twelve or seven movements of the entire piece.<sup>178</sup> The quatrain reads as follows:

受律辭元首， Upon the decree, we take leave from the sovereign;  
將相討叛臣。 Generals and ministers send forces to suppress the rebelled officials.  
咸歌破陣樂， All sing the “Music of Smashing the Ranks;”  
共賞太平人。 Together to be enjoyed by the people in peaceful time.  
秦王破陣樂（和聲） (refrain) “the Prince of Qin’s ‘Music of Smashing the Ranks’”

---

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1049.

<sup>177</sup> Among the three lyrics, the first two are obviously related to the “Music of Smashing the Ranks.” The heptasyllabic quatrain, however, as Ren Bantang has pointed out, does not have much to do with the military campaign and might not have been performed as the actual lyric of this song, therefore, is not included in our discussion here.

<sup>178</sup> Ren Bantang 1982, vol. 2, p. 2.

While the first two lines indicate that this is a martial song relating experience on a military campaign, the next two lines directly allude to the song as performance evoking a grand spectacle involving large numbers of performers, and attended by a large audience. The refrain, which simply cries out the title of the music, suggests the moment in which performers and audience are spontaneously amalgamated and harmonized by joining their voices together. Given the “self-explanatory” feature of dance lyrics discussed in the previous chapter, we can easily imagine this performance as part of the ceremony for sending off the armies or for the return of victorious ones. In fact, when Guo Maoqian introduces this lyric under his rubric “Tang *kaiyue geci* 唐凱樂歌辭 (‘lyric of victorious music of the Tang’)” in the *Yuefu shiji*, he notes the occasions on which this music was performed, citing the *Jiu Tang shu* treatise:

唐制，凡命將出征，有大功獻俘馘，其凱樂用鐃吹二部，樂器有笛箏  
篋簫笳鐃鼓歌七種，迭奏《破陣樂》等四曲：一《破陣樂》，二《應  
聖期》，三《賀聖歡》，四《君臣同慶樂》。

According to the system of the Tang, every time generals were sent out for a battle on command, or those with great achievements presented the captives, the celebration music would use cymbals and pipe instruments. The instruments were seven: *di*-flute, *bili*, *xiao*, *ji*, cymbal, drum, and song. The “Music of Smashing the Ranks” and three other three songs were performed in turn: “Music of Smashing the Ranks,” “Meeting the Imperial Expectation,” “Celebrating the Imperial Pleasure,” and “Music of Mutual Celebration of Rulers and Officials.”<sup>179</sup>

The hexasyllabic eight-line verse composed by Zhang Yue 張說 (667–730), on the other hand, was believed to be the lyric for the small version of “Music of Smashing the Ranks,” the last tune of “music of sitting section” created by Emperor Xuanzong:

漢兵出頓金微，The Han army sets out to encamp at Jinwei Mountain;  
照日明光鐵衣。Reflecting the sun, the bright iron armor.  
百里火燔焰焰，Across a hundred *li* the brilliant banners blaze;  
千行雲騎駢駢。In a thousand lines extend cloud-banks of cavalry.  
蹙踏遼河自竭，Trampled underfoot, the Liao River drains itself;  
鼓譟燕山可飛。Amid the uproar, the Yan Mountain can be flown over.  
正屬四方朝賀，As the four directions (foreign dignitaries) pay due respect and honor;  
端知萬歲皇威。We thereby know the imperial might of Your Majesty.

Bearing in mind that this is a lyric embedded in a small yet essential imperial court performance with “four dancers wearing golden armors and helmets,” as having been mentioned previously, we can then surely find it an experience different from the

<sup>179</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 20, p. 301.

traditional “poetic” reading, which tends to give more priority to the author’s biographic adventure and psychological intent than to the context within which it was uttered. The first three couplets here, indeed, serve as a guideline of dance movement, as well as that of the perception of the audience, as they depict the scene of armies setting out for the battle. Everything of the performance—the costumes, props, formation, music (of Kucha), etc.—echoes with what was sung through the lyric, for instance, “iron armor” (*tieyi* 鐵衣), “brilliant banners” (*huofan* 火燐), “cloud-banks of cavalry” (*yunji* 雲騎), and “making an uproar” (*guzao* 鼓譟). The last couplet, moreover, is a typical utterance in performance text as it points out the occasions (including the audiences) in which this lyric was performed, with a direct praise to the emperor (or sometimes to the nation).

When we read these two lyrics side by side, it makes much sense that the pentasyllabic quatrain, as opposed to the hexasyllabic eight-lined verse, sounds metrically much simpler and more straightforward, thus more suitable, as one of the several movements, for a large performance which usually favors momentum or formations. The latter, focused more on the description of detailed scenes, accords more with a small yet elegant performance, as performances in the “music of sitting section” were reputed to be.

The variance in lyrics to the “Music of Smashing the Ranks” (and those of “Music of Celebrating the Good” as well) might thus be a good starting point for our exploration of lyrical performance contexts. We take into consideration not only the literary meaning of the verse—the “poetic” meaning—but also the comprehensive expressive context within which the song was once part of a multimedia performance. That is, we read the poem both as “énoncé” and as “énonciation.”

## -- *Daqu* of *Jiaofang* 教坊 (“Entertainment Bureau”)

*Jiaofang ji* 教坊記 (“Records of the Entertainment Bureau”), a book by Cui Lingqin 崔令欽 of the Tang, is, apart from the *Tang Liu dian* 唐六典 (“Six Institutions of the Tang”), the most important historical document of Tang *daqu*, recording forty-six items of *daqu* repertoire. Cui says he composed this text based on what he heard from *jiaofang* officials during his service as the Left Lord of the Imperial Insignia (*zuo jinwu* 左金吾) in the mid eighth century. The extant text includes: 1) the institutions of *jiaofang* and anecdotes on *jiaofang* musicians; 2) 278 names of tunes and forty-six *daqu* titles; 3) factual sources on five tunes; and 4) a postface. This text has understandably become a vital source for our understanding of eighth-century music.

The *jiaofang* 教坊, or “Entertainment Bureau” (first designated the *neijiao fang* 內教坊, or “inner/court” entertainment bureau) was created in the 620s under the auspices of the Ministry of Imperial Ceremony (*Taichang si* 太常寺), and soon thereafter became an independent administrative unit. Its name was changed to *Yunshao fu* 雲韶府 (“Bureau of Shao music of the clouds”) during the reign of Empress Consort Wu (武后),

and was later changed back on 705 by Emperor Zhongzong. It specialized in the training of court musicians (including clowns, jugglers, etc.) for the Emperor's private entertainment. *Jiaofang* performers were classified into different ranks according to their skills: the most skilled female musicians were called *neiren* 內人 (“Inner women”) or *qiantou ren* 前頭人 (“Front women”), while others were called *guanren* 官人 (“Officials”). Distinct from the *Taiyue shu* 太樂署, or “Imperial Music Office,” that was responsible both for providing *yayue* (“elegant music”) for state sacrifices and other ceremonies, and for musical and dance entertainment at state banquets, the *jiaofang* was primarily responsible for popular entertainments centering on folk or popular music (*suyue* 俗樂).

The most exhaustive study of the *Jiaofang ji* to date is Ren Bantang's *Jiaofang ji jian ding*. In this work Ren carefully examines the forty-six *daqu* titles listed in Cui Lingqin's text, and presents his own overall assessment of Tang *daqu*, centered on his thesis that Tang *daqu* have more in common with earlier Southern dynasties forms than with subsequent versions current in the Song.<sup>180</sup> Besides those inherited from the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–589), Tang *daqu* also include pieces newly composed during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong (712–755). As for the music of Tang *daqu*, apart from a small number on the boundary between “elegant” and banquet music, Ren finds that most Tang *daqu* belong to the category of *yanyue*, or entertainment music. Those in which *qingshang* music forms the larger proportion are designated *faqu* 法曲 (“Dharma tunes”), which Ren views as a category of indigenous Chinese music, distinct from the foreign musical forms growing popular during the era.<sup>181</sup>

As we have mentioned, Wang Xiaodun, following upon Ren Bantang's research, provides an elaborate discussion on the *daqu* in *Jiaofang ji* in his work *Sui Tang Wudai yanyue zayan geci yanjiu* 隋唐五代燕樂雜言歌辭研究, where he further classifies *daqu* of *Jiaofang* into four categories according to their origins, i.e. *qingyue daqu* 清樂大曲 (“*daqu* of clear-tone music”), *yi yue daqu* 夷樂大曲 (“*daqu* of foreign music”), *biandi daqu* 邊地大曲 (“frontier *daqu*”), and *xin suyue daqu* 新俗樂大曲 (“*daqu* of new popular music”):

1) *Qingyue daqu* 清樂大曲 (“*daqu* of clear-tone music”) refers to *daqu* in *qingshang* 清商 music, that is, music Sui and Tang Dynasties inherited from the Six Dynasties. Among the 46 *daqu* mentioned in *Jiaofang ji*, according to Wang's count, *daqu* in *qingshang* music numbers five, namely: *caisang* 采桑, *sihui zi* 四會子, *xiangfulian* 想夫憐, *yushu houting hua* 玉樹後庭花, and *fan longzhou* 泛龍舟.

Concerning the designation “*qingshang* music” 清商樂 and its connotations in any given period there is a wide range of sometimes contradictory evidence. Guo Maoqian's overview in his preface to the “*qingshang* lyrics” division in the *Yuefu shiji*

<sup>180</sup> In his own words, “Tang *daqu* show a preponderance of similarities with *daqu* of the [Southern dynasties] Liu Song (420–479), but a preponderance of divergences from *daqu* of the Zhao Song dynasty (960–1279).” Ren Bantang 1962, p. 146.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

integrates the accounts appearing in the music treatises of the *Wei shu*, *Sui shu* as well as the *Tong dian*:

清商樂，一曰清樂。清樂者，九代之遺聲。其始即相和三調是也，並漢魏已來舊曲。其辭皆古調及魏三祖所作。……後魏孝文討淮漢，宣武定壽春，收其聲伎，得江左所傳中原舊曲，《明君》《聖主》《公莫》《白鳩》之屬，及江南吳歌、荆楚西聲，總謂之清商樂。至於殿庭饗宴，則兼奏之。遭梁、陳亡亂，存者蓋寡。及隋平陳得之，文帝善其節奏，曰：“此華夏正聲也。”乃微更損益，去其哀怨、考而補之，以新定律呂，更造樂器。因於太常置清商署以管之，謂之“清樂”。

*Qingshang* music, also called *qing* music (“clear-tone music”). The “clear-tone music” is the sound left behind by the nine dynasties. At the beginning, it referred to three tunes of *xianghe*, which were all old tunes from the Han and Wei. The lyrics were all those of old tunes and compositions of three Emperors of the Wei. ... Later, Emperor Xiaowen of Wei (471–499) suppressed Huai and Han River areas, and Emperor Xuanwu pacified Shouchun. They retrieved musicians there, and obtained previous tunes of central plains circulated in south of the lower reaches of the Changjiang River, such as “Mingjun,” “Shengzhu,” “Gongmo,” and “Baijiu,” plus Wu songs of *jiangnan* and western sound of Jingchu—altogether called *Qingshang* music. When it came to the court banquet, then (the *qingshang* music) would be played together. Due to the calamities of subjugation and chaos of the Liang and Chen, what survived of this music was scanty. When the Sui obtained it after conquering the Chen, Emperor Wen (581–604) liked its rhythm, saying “this is the orthodox sound of Hua Xia.” Therefore, he slightly edited it with some increase and decrease, taking out the plaintiveness, supplementing it through textual research, and remaking the instruments with newly established regulators. Thereupon he established a *qingshang* office within the Taichang ministry to take charge of it, and called it “pure music” (*qing yue*).<sup>182</sup>

Simply put, *qingshang* music in the Sui and Tang Dynasties includes all the surviving *xianghe* songs, tunes of the three *qingshang* keys, songs from the Wu region, and Western tunes of Jingchu (荆楚西聲) inherited from previous dynasties. According to *Tong dian*, although there were still sixty-three tunes during the reign of Empress Consort Wu (武后), by Du You’s time, only forty-four tunes remained. The reason for this may have had something to do with shifts of the emperors’ interest, the loss of court musicians, and the language features of *qingshang* songs as well, as mentioned in *Tong dian*:

自長安以後，朝廷不重古曲，工伎轉缺，能合於管絃者，唯明君、楊

---

<sup>182</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 44, p. 638.

叛、驍壺、春歌、秋歌、白雪、堂堂、春江花月夜等八曲。舊樂章多或數百言，武太后時明君尚能四十言，今所傳二十六言，就之訛失，與吳音轉遠。

Ever since the Chang'an Reign (701–704), the court did not think highly of classical songs, and the musicians became deficient. Those can be harmoniously performed on pipes and strings were only *Mingjun*, *Yangpan*, *Xiaohu*, *Chunge*, *Qiuge*, *Baixue*, *Tangtang*, and *Chunjiang huayue ye* eight songs. Many old tunes may have had several hundred characters. During the reign of Empress Consort Wu, *Mingjun* still had forty characters; the one circulated now has only twenty-six characters. To search for (the reason of) its change and missing, (it is because that) it has become farther from the Wu sound.<sup>183</sup>

Sung in Wu dialect, *qingshang* songs proved difficult to preserve and disseminate. It was said that during the Kaiyuan Reign (713–741), Li Langzi 李郎子, a singer from the north, learned singing from Yu Caisheng 俞才生 of Jiangdu (now in Jiangsu province). After Li died, *qingshang* music was gone forever (“自郎子亡後，清樂之歌闕焉”).<sup>184</sup> Though this sort of legendary account is liable to exaggeration, as Wang Xiaodun has pointed out, it is true that lyrics of many *qingshang* songs have been lost. In addition, that dance music takes a considerably large proportion in *daqu* of *qingshang* music also has something to do with the fact that it was performed in Wu dialect.

2) *Yiyue daqu* 夷樂大曲 (“*daqu* of foreign music”) are *daqu* imported from foreign peoples. Among the “music of ten sections,” seven are of this type. As court music, they were brought to the central plain as either a trophy or tribute. Those imported by means other than that, according to Wang, were supervised by the *Jiaofang*. There are seven “*daqu* of foreign music” among the forty-six *daqu* listed in the *Jiaofang ji*, namely *guizi yue* 龜茲樂 (“Music of Kucha”), *zui huntuo* 醉渾脫, *sumozhe* 蘇莫遮, *suhexiang* 蘇合香, *damozhi* 達摩支, *shengming yue* 聖明樂, and *muhu* 穆護.

3) *Biandi daqu* 邊地大曲 (“frontier *daqu*”) are *daqu* transported from northern border areas, with music referred as *Hu yin* 胡音 or *Hu yinsheng* 胡音聲 (“*Hu* music”). Many records note the popularity of this music during the Tang, as here in Du You's *Tong dian*:

又有新聲自河西至者，號胡音聲，與龜茲樂、散樂俱為時重，諸樂咸為之少寢。

There were also new sounds coming from Hexi (now Gansu province), which were called Hu music. These, along with the music of Kucha and juggleries, found great favor in the era, causing a certain slackening in interest in any other musical form.<sup>185</sup>

<sup>183</sup> TD, *juan* 146, p. 761.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> TD, *juan* 146, p.763. A similar account also appears in the *Xin Tang shu*: XTS, *juan* 22, p. 479.



Hu music was particularly favored by Tang emperors, and was performed at court during Xuanzong's reign (712–755):

開元二十四年，升胡部於堂上。而天寶樂曲，皆以邊地名，若《涼州》、《伊州》、《甘州》之類。後又詔道調、法曲與胡部新聲合作。

In the 24<sup>th</sup> year of Kaiyuan Reign (736), (Emperor Xuanzong) promoted the Hu music onto the hall. The music of Tianbao (742–755) were all named after border areas, such as *liangzhou*, *yizhou*, *ganzhou* and so on. Later, imperial edict was given that Taoist tunes, Dharma tunes and new sound of Hu music to be performed together.<sup>186</sup>

The “new sound” coming from the border areas, according to Wang Xiaodun, usually featured *dabian* 大遍 (“large movement”) and *xiaobian* 小遍 (“small movement”), such as the *daqu* of *Liangzhou* 涼州. There are nine frontier *daqu* in the *Jiaofang ji* record, which includes the famous *Liangzhou* 涼州, *Yizhou* 伊州, *Ganzhou* 甘州, *Nishang* 霓裳, *Zhezhi* 柘枝 and others. Among *daqu* of the Tang, the frontier *daqu* are the most popular ones.

4) *Xin suyue daqu* 新俗樂大曲 (“*daqu* of new popular music”) are *daqu* newly composed since the Northern Dynasties (386–534) on the basis of Han folk music incorporating elements of foreign and Hu musical forms. Forming the greater part of the *daqu* repertoire maintained by the *jiaofang*, fifty-three *daqu* of this type appear in *Jiaofang ji*, including *lüyao* 綠腰, *jianqi* 劍器, *chunyingzhuan* 春鶯囀, *bomei* 薄媚 and so on.

Besides the four categories mentioned above, Wang in addition lists eleven *daqu* that were transmitted to Japan and preserved there, primarily in the 教訓抄 (Kyôkunshô), 體源抄 (Taigenshō), and 續教訓抄 (Zoku Kyôkunshō) of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. According to Wang, whether or not dancing was included in the performance is a critical criterion when deciding whether or not a tune is *daqu*. Therefore, of the thirteen *daqu* titles Ren Bantang proposes in his *Jiaofang ji jian ding*, Wang eliminates six as *daqu* because of the lack of any record of dance elements in their performance.

This kind of classification, however, as Wang himself has pointed out, is not that strict. There inevitably exist correlations between court and *jiaofang daqu*, and between elegant music (*yayue*) and entertainment music (*yanyue*). Same *daqu* titles, as we have mentioned, might appear in different categories. One typical example is the *pozhen yue* 破陣樂, one of the four dances in *yanyue* 宴樂 of “music of ten sections,” but also appearing among the tunes listed in the repertoires of both the “standing section” and “sitting section.” Moreover, it was reworked as a composition in the “elegant music” (*yayue*) category. The title, moreover, appears among the tune names listed in the

---

<sup>186</sup> XTS, *juan* 22, p. 476.

*Jiaofang ji*, indicating that it is also a small tune or big suite in the *jiaofang* repertoire.

## -- The structure of Tang *daqu*

Tang *daqu* were structurally complex. Accounts in official histories, musical documents, and occasional descriptions in belletristic literature provide us with a few sets of technical terms for various sections of *daqu* performance—such as *sanxu* 散序 (“loose-prelude”), *zhongxu* 中序 (“mid-prelude”), and *po* 破 (“breakdown”). The connotations and functions of some of these segments and terms merit further attention.

The *Yuefu shiji* remains one of the most important sources for understanding the Tang *daqu*'s structure. Among the ten sets of extant Tang *daqu* lyrics, five appear in the *Yuefu shiji* in the category “*Jindai quci*” 近代曲辭 (“Song lyrics of recent years”), a section, according to Guo Maoqian, dedicated to “miscellaneous songs” (*zaqu* 雜曲) of the Sui and Tang period.<sup>187</sup> These five suites are *Shuidiao* 水調, *Liangzhou* 涼州, *Dahe* 大和, *Yizhou* 伊州, and *Luzhou* 陸州. What is most noticeable is that each *daqu* suite consists of several small pieces, referred to as *bian* 遍 or *die* 疊 (“movement”), and marked with section headings such as “song No.1” (*ge diyi* 歌第一), “breakdown No.1” (*rupo diyi* 入破第一), and the like.

In his *Tang Song daqu kao* 唐宋大曲考, Wang Guowei provides an etymological explanation of the term *bian* 遍 both in terms of the word itself and in terms of some of the classical documents on ancient performance examined in the previous chapter:

大曲各疊名之曰遍。遍者，變也。古樂一成為變。……舞亦有變。馬端臨曰：舞者，每步一進，則兩兩以戈盾相嚮，一擊一刺，為一伐，為一成。成，謂之變。（文獻通考卷一百四十五）……或云變，或云遍，知此兩字因音同而互用也。大曲皆舞曲，樂變而舞亦變，故以遍名各疊，非偶然也。

Each movement of a *daqu* suite is called *bian* 遍 (“time”). *Bian* 遍 means “change” (*bian* 變). For ancient music, each completion (*cheng* 成) takes a change. ... Dance also changes. Ma Duanlin says: as for dance, every step moving forward, then (dancers) would point each other with daggers and shields, one attacking and one striking, which is one *fa* 伐, and which makes one completion (*cheng* 成). *Cheng* 成 means “change” (*Wenxian tongkao*,

<sup>187</sup> YFSJ, p. 1107:

近代曲者，亦雜曲也，以其出於隋唐之世，故曰近代曲也。

Songs of recent years are also miscellaneous songs. Because they were originated from the time of Sui and Tang, they are called songs of recent years.

chap.145). ... Some say *bian* 變, while others say *bian* 遍. Therefore we know these two words are interchangeable because of the same pronunciations. All *daqu* suites are dancing music. When the music changes, dance also changes. Therefore, naming each movement *bian* 遍 is not random.<sup>188</sup>

Wang argues that *bian* 遍 is interchangeable with its homophone *bian* 變. As a musical term, the word *bian* 變 (“change”) is traceable to the *Zhou li* 周禮 (“Rites of Zhou”). According to *Zhou li*, there are music of six changes, eight changes and nine changes, among which the music of nine changes is considered the most appropriate musical form in sacrifices to both Gods and ancestors (“若樂九變，則人鬼可得而禮矣”). The annotation by Zheng Xuan points out that *bian* 變 means to change. Once a piece of music is completed, then it changes to another one (“變，猶更也。樂成則更奏也”).<sup>189</sup> The character *bian* 變 in this sense was written as *bian* 徧 or *bian* 遍 in later documents, expressing the same meaning with *cheng* 成 or *die* 疊, and referring to a self-contained section of a musical composition, which is similar to the notion of “movement” in Western music.<sup>190</sup>

Each “movement” in a *daqu*, therefore, involves a change in music, as well as a transformation in dancing. Wang also gives examples for *daqu* suites with considerable numbers of movements, for instance, according to the *Jiu Tang shu*, there are fifty-two movements in *Pozhen yue* 破陣樂 (“Music of Smashing the Ranks”), seven in *Qingyuan yue* 慶善樂 (“Music of Celebrating the Good”), and twenty-nine in *Shangyuan wu* 上元舞 (“Dance of Superior Heaven”). Song is an essential part of Tang *daqu*, and the number of dance sections is roughly equal to that of the sections of lyric. The *Shuidiao* 水調 lyric recorded in *Yuefu shiji* has eleven movements, likely the longest among extant Tang *daqu* lyrics.<sup>191</sup>

The structure of *daqu* lyrics recorded in *Yuefu shiji* is relatively straightforward. What we can sort out from the five *daqu* suite lyrics is a set of terms, namely: *ge* 歌 (“song”), *paibian* 排遍 (“parallel-movements”), *rupo* 入破 (“breakdown”), and *che* 徹 (“completion”), of which there are only two or three in a single *daqu* suite. Guo Maoqian comments on the composition of the *Shuidiao* 水調 (“Water Tune”) *daqu* suite:

按唐曲凡十一疊，前五疊為歌，後六疊為入破。其歌，第五疊五言調，聲最為怨切。故白居易詩云：“五言一遍最殷勤，調少情多似有因。不會當時翻曲意，此聲腸斷為何人！”

The (*Shuidiao*) tune in the Tang has a total of eleven movements, the first

<sup>188</sup> Wang Guowei 1964, pp. 188-189.

<sup>189</sup> ZL, vol. 6 (周禮·春官·大司樂).

<sup>190</sup> Yin Falu 1948, p. 31.

<sup>191</sup> In *Jiaofang ji jiangding*, Ren Bantang argues that the longest *daqu* lyric consists of 12 movements, yet as far as I can see, *Shuidiao*, which consists of 11 movements, is the longest one.

five being “song,” latter six “breakdown.” As for the “song,” the fifth movement, a lyric in pentasyllabic lines, is the one that sounds the most sorrowful. Therefore, Bai Juyi says in his poem: “The pentasyllabic movement is of the deepest affection. / That tones are few yet affections are plenty seems to have reason. / Not knowing the intention of composition at that time / For whom so sorrowful this sound was!”<sup>192</sup>

The first five movements that are marked as *ge* 歌 (“song”) are usually considered functioning as *xu* 序 (“prelude”) or *zhongxu* 中序 (“mid-prelude”), which is also called *paibian* 排遍 (“parallel-movements”), according to Wang Guowei.<sup>193</sup> Among them, the first four movements are heptasyllabic, and only the fifth is pentasyllabic, which sounds the most sorrowful, as the poet Bai Juyi pointed out.<sup>194</sup> The next six movements are marked as *rupo* 入破 (“breakdown”), which, interestingly, take the similar format with that of the *ge* 歌, that is, the first five movements are heptasyllabic, and the sixth one, which is called *che* 徹 (“completion”),<sup>195</sup> is pentasyllabic.

*Po* 破 or *rupo* 入破 (“breakdown”) is, in a sense, the most essential composition of *daqu* suite. The use and senses of this term, including its possible inauspicious connotations, were commented on by many Song dynasty writers. For example:

天寶中，樂章多以邊地為名，若《涼州》、《甘州》、《伊州》之類是焉。其曲遍繁聲為「破」。後其地盡為西蕃所沒；破，其兆矣。

During the Reign of Tianbao (742–755), many musical pieces were named after frontier areas, such as *Liangzhou*, *Ganzhou*, *Yizhou* and so on. The musical movements with numerous/busy sounds were called “breakdown” (*po*). Later, those areas were taken by western barbarians; “breakdown” was the sign of it.<sup>196</sup>

天寶後，曲遍繁聲，皆曰「入破」，破者，破碎之義。

Since the Reign of Tianbao (742–755), the musical movements with numerous/busy sounds were all called “Breakdown” (*rupo*). *Po* means broken.<sup>197</sup>

In short, *po* 破 or *rupo* 入破 (“breakdown”) refers to a part in *daqu* suite that features

<sup>192</sup> YFSJ, pp. 1114-1115.

<sup>193</sup> Wang Guowei 1964: “中序一名拍序，即排遍(The ‘Mid-prelude’ is also called ‘Beating-prelude,’ which is ‘Parallel-movement’),” p. 189.

<sup>194</sup> It would be interesting to think about the “reason” that Bai Juyi mentioned for the notion that “tones are few yet affections are plenty” (*diaoshao qingduo* 調少情多). I personally would like to relate it with the Daoism *dayin xisheng* 大音希聲 (“great is the sound, scarce is the word”), and hope more concretely discussion on it could be made in terms of musical practice.

<sup>195</sup> Wang Guowei 1964: “徹即入破之末一遍也(‘Completion’ is the last movement of ‘breakdown’),” p. 189.

<sup>196</sup> TYL, *juan* 5, P. 176.

<sup>197</sup> GEJ, P. 11.

rapid, energetic rhythm.<sup>198</sup> Proceeding after the *zhongxu* 中序 or *paibian* 排遍, *po* or *rupo* is usually taken as the climax of *daqu* suite. Considering that dancing is an indispensable part of *daqu*, this kind of accelerando on the music also brings along the speedup of the dancing of performers. Chen Yang 陳暘 (1064–1128), a music connoisseur of the Song, has mentioned the difference on the dancing performance when the *daqu* reaches the *rupo* section in his *Yue shu* 樂書 (“Book on Music”):

至於優伶常舞大曲，惟一工獨進，但以手袖為容，躡足為節，其妙串者，雖風旋鳥騫不踰其速矣。然大曲前緩疊不舞，至入破則羯鼓震鼓大鼓與絲竹合作，句拍益急，舞者入場，投節制容，故有催拍歇拍之異，姿制俯仰，百態橫出。

As for the *daqu* commonly performed by entertainers, only one dancer steps forward alone, simply tugging on their sleeves as gesture, tapping their feet as rhythm. Those who are marvelous performers—even a whirlwind or a starting bird cannot beat her speed. Yet the first part of *daqu* is composed of slow movements without dancing. When it gets to the “breakdown,” then the Tibetan drum, the tremulous drum, and big drum play together with stringed and woodwind instruments, and the beats grow ever faster. The dancers enter the stage, stamping (along with) the rhythm and making gestures. Therefore there is the difference between “urging-the-clappers” and “resting-the-clappers.” In their postures and gestures they look up and bend down, and a hundred different forms come out at once.<sup>199</sup>

A description on *daqu* performance of the Song, this passage still presents to us a vivid depiction of the extraordinary dance performance of *daqu* suite. Compared to the previous slow movements, the “breakdown” brings the *daqu* suite to a section with more joined musical instruments, faster beats and rhythm, as well as accelerated dance gestures.. The “breakdown” section, therefore, would be performed independently in the banquet and other occasions during the Tang and especially in the Song, under the name

<sup>198</sup> When *po* is used as verb or adverb talking about musical performance, it also bears the meaning of “busy” and “rapid,” as has been pointed out by Yin Falu 陰法魯. In his *Tang Song daqu zhi lai yuan jiqi zuzhi*, Yin gives some examples on *po* used in Tang poems (p. 34):

“忽覺管弦偷破拍，急翻羅袖不教知。”（王建《宮詞》）

“Suddenly noticing the stringed and woodwind instruments secretly switching to the breaking rhythm / (The dancer) hurriedly turned over gauze sleeves to not let it be known.” (Wang Jian, “Palace poetry”)

“破撥聲繁恨已長，低鬟斂黛更摧藏。”（羊士諤《夜聽琵琶》）

“With sound of breaking plucks numerous/busy, the regret is already long / Lower the hair-bun and frown the eyebrows to make more strong press (of the *pipa*).” (Yang Shi’e, “Listen to the *pipa* in the night”)

“低鬟緩視抱明月，纖指破撥生胡風。”（劉禹錫《泰娘歌》）

“Lower the hair-bun, slowly glance, and hold the bright-moon (i.e. *pipa*) / Slim fingers pluck rapidly to arouse the *Hu* wind.” (Liu Yuxi, “Song on Lady Tai”)

<sup>199</sup> YS, *juan* 185, p. 211-831.

of *qupo* 曲破 (“breakdown tune”).<sup>200</sup> The *Song shi* 宋史 (“History of the Song”) record shows that the Emperor Taizong is expert in composing *daqu* and *qupo*:

太宗洞曉音律，前後親製大小曲及因舊曲創新聲者，總三百九十。凡製大曲十八……曲破二十九。

The Emperor Taizong has a clear knowledge of musical temperament. The big and small tunes, as well as re-composed new tunes based on the old ones that he composed in person, altogether numbered 390. In all he created eighteen big suites, ...and twenty nine breakdown tunes.<sup>201</sup>

The account on *qupo* playing is by no means lacking in the literary works of Tang and Song. For example, Yuan Zhen 元稹 (courtesy name Weizhi 微之, 779–831), in his poem *Pipa ge* 琵琶歌 (“Song of *pipa*”), has mentioned the *pipa* playing of *qupo* by a performer Li Guan'er:

月寒一聲深殿磬，In the cold moonlight, one sound is the chime from deep palace.  
驟彈曲破音繁並。Suddenly playing the breakdown, tunes are busy at once.  
百萬金鈴旋玉盤，[As if] millions of golden bells spin on the jade plate,  
醉客滿船皆暫醒。Drunk guests on the boat all become momentarily sober.<sup>202</sup>

A renowned poet and writer of the middle Tang Dynasty, Yuan Zhen is also known as a connoisseur of musical performance and a close friend of another great poet, Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), whose poem *Nichang yuyi ge he Weizhi* 霓裳羽衣歌和微之 (“Song of Rainbow Skirts and Feather Robes—to respond Weizhi”) is, besides the *Yuefu shiji* we just talked, another one of the most important documents in terms of the dance performance of *daqu*.

Often related with the romance of Emperor Xuanzong and Consort Yang Yuhuan, the song *Nishang yuyi qu* 霓裳羽衣曲 (“Tune of Rainbow Skirts and Feather Robes”) is believed to be one of the most famous *faqu* 法曲 (“Dharma tunes”) songs during the Tang Dynasty.<sup>203</sup> It is familiar to both its audience in the Tang (such as the poets Yuan Zhen

---

<sup>200</sup> In Southern Drama (*nanxi* 南戲) of the Song and Yuan, there is also *qupo* 曲破 section, in which, however, there is no dancing but only tunes are performed.

<sup>201</sup> *Song shi* 宋史, *juan* 142, P. 3351.

<sup>202</sup> Yuan Zhen 元稹, *Pipa ge* 琵琶歌 (“Song of *pipa*”).

<sup>203</sup> About the composition of the Rainbow Skirts Song, different stories have been given in historical account. According to *Yang Taizhen Waizhuan* 楊太真外傳, an anecdotal work on Consort Yang Yuhuan, the song is said to be composed by the Emperor Xuanzong, after his return from a trip ascending *sanxiang yi* 三鄉驛 post and gazing at the *Nüji* Mountain 女幾山, a legendary residence for the immortals. *Tang Huiyao* 唐會要, however, mentions that this song was renamed from a foreign tune—*Poluomen* 婆羅門 (“Brahman”) during the Tianbao Reign. In the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279), Wang Zhuo 王灼, in his *Biji manzhi* 碧雞漫志, cited the *Jinyangmen shizhu* 津陽門詩注 by Zheng Yu 鄭嵎 of the Tang and told a legendary story in terms of the origin of this song which mixed those two accounts together. It said

and Bai Juyi, both of whom have served as remonstrance officials in the Tang court) and later readers, largely because of the Bai's poem.

As having been pointed out in the title, Bai's poem was composed upon his receiving of the score of the Rainbow Skirts Song sent by his friend Yuan Zhen. In the poem, Bai Juyi recalled his watching of the performance of this song in the court when he served Emperor Xianzong during the Yuanhe Reign (806–820):

我昔元和侍憲皇， In the past, during the Yuanhe Reign, I served the Emperor Xianzong;  
曾陪內宴宴昭陽。 I once attended inner banquets thrown at Zhaoyang Palace.  
千歌百舞不可數， Thousands of songs and hundreds of dances, beyond counting;  
就中最愛霓裳舞。 Among them, my favorite was “Dance of Rainbow skirts.”  
舞時寒食春風天， When dancing, it was the springtime “cold food” festival;  
玉鉤欄下香案前。 Beneath the railing of jade hook, in front of the incense burner table.  
案前舞者顏如玉， In front of the table were dancers with jade-like countenance;  
不著人家俗衣服。 Not wearing common clothes of regular people.  
虹裳霞帔步搖冠， With rainbow skirt and rosy cape, they swayed their hats as they walk;  
鈿璫累累佩珊珊。 Ornaments of golden flowers were numerous, jade pendants clinking.  
娉婷似不任羅綺， So graceful as if they cannot bear the silk gauze;  
顧聽樂懸行複止。 Turning around, listening to the suspended instruments, they walked  
and then stop.  
磬簫箏笛遞相攙， Chime stones, *xiao*-flute, zither, and *di*-flute successively mingled  
together;  
擊擗彈吹聲颺逸。 To beat, to press, to pluck, and to blow, the tunes were flowing.  
[凡法曲之初，眾樂不齊，唯金石絲竹次第發聲，霓裳序初亦複如此。]  
[At the beginning of Dharma tunes, various musical instruments are not concerted.  
Metals and stones, stringed and woodwind instruments are played one after another—the  
beginning of the prelude of “Rainbow Skirt” song is also like this.]  
散序六奏未動衣， With six movements of loose-prelude, (dancers) did not yet stir their  
clothing;  
陽臺宿雲慵不飛。 On the sunny terrace, the night clouds were dull and not flying.  
[散序六遍無拍，故不舞也。]  
[The six movements of loose-prelude are played without beat. Thus there is no dance.]  
中序擘騷初入拍， Cracking was the mid-prelude played, when it first started the beat;  
秋竹竿裂春冰拆。 (As if) bamboos of the autumn cracked, and the ice in the spring split.  
[中序始有拍，亦名拍序。]

---

that the Emperor Xuanzong composed half of the tune with *di*-flute after returning from his trip to the Moon Palace. Coincidentally Yang Jingshu, the Commander-in-chief of *Xiliang*, presented the “Brahman” tune to the Emperor Xuanzong. Feeling that it harmonized perfectly with his own composition, the Emperor thus made his experience in the Moon Palace as “loose-prelude” (*sanxu*), the tune Yang presented as the second half, and then created the Rainbow Skirts Song. Discussion on this can be found in Yang Yinliu's article “*Nishang yuyi qu kao* 《霓裳羽衣曲》考,” collected in Yang Yinliu 1986, p. 325.

[From the mid-prelude there starts to have beat. (The mid-prelude) is also named beat-prelude.]

飄然轉旋回雪輕， Swift was the turning and spin, light as the whirling snow;  
嫣然縱送游龍驚。 Beautiful was the jumping and reaching, wandering dragon startled.  
小垂手後柳無力， After “small drooping hands,” willows had no energy;  
斜曳裾時雲欲生。 When slantingly swaying the skirts, clouds were about to arise.

[四句皆霓裳舞之初態。]

[These four lines are all form of the beginning of Rainbow Skirts dance.]

煙蛾斂略不勝態， Dark eyebrows slightly frowned, the countenance was delicate;  
風袖低昂如有情。 Fluttering sleeves rose and fell, as if having affections.  
上元點鬟招萼綠， Madame Shangyuan appointed maid and summoned E Lü;  
王母揮袂別飛瓊。 Queen Mother waved her sleeves to part with Feiqiong.

[許飛瓊、萼綠華，皆女仙也。]

[Xu Feiqiong and E Lühua are both goddesses.]

繁音急節十二遍， Busy sounds and rapid rhythm were twelve movements;  
跳珠撼玉何鏗錚。 Jumping beads and shaking jade, how clanging and clattering it was.

[霓裳曲凡十二遍而終。]

[The Song of Rainbow Skirts is done after altogether twelve movements.]

翔鸞舞了卻收翅， Flying simurgh finished dancing, stepping back to fold its wings;  
啞鶴曲終長引聲。 Singing crane ended the song, prolonging the voice for a long time.

[凡曲將畢，皆聲拍促速，唯霓裳之末，長引一聲也。]

[When tunes are about to end, their sounds and rhythm are rapid. Only at the end of Rainbow Skirts Song, there is a prolonged voice.]<sup>204</sup>

A description that recorded the visual memory of the scene on watching the performance of the “Tune of Rainbow Skirts,” Bai’s poem provided us abundant “first-hand” information on its performance in the middle Tang court, from the perspective of an audience as well as a music expert. What we can see includes details such as: 1) the occasion of performance (a banquet on the occasion of the “cold food” festival); 2) the location of the dance (in front of the incense burner table); 3) the costumes worn by the dancers (rainbow skirt and rosy cape, with numerous ornaments); 4) musical instruments that were played (chime stones, *xiao*-flute, zither, and *di*-flute played successively).<sup>205</sup>

In the notes, the poet mentioned the feature of instrumental performance of *faqu* 法曲 (“Relegious tune”). Commonly considered an elegant section of *yanyue* 燕樂 (“banquet music”) repertoire in which *qingshang* music takes large proportion, *faqu* 法曲

<sup>204</sup> Bai Juyi 白居易，《霓裳羽衣歌和微之》 (“Song of Rainbow Skirts and Feather Robes—to respond Weizhi”). BCJ, *juan* 51. Research on this poem can be referred to Yin Falu 1948, p.32–35, Yang Yinliu 1986, p. 325, etc.

<sup>205</sup> The number of dancers, however, is uncertain. Yang Yinliu, in his “*Nishang yuyi qu kao*,” suggested that it is likely to be a duet, a dance for two, because in the poem the names of goddesses (Feiqiong and E Lü) and of pupils (Li Juan and Zhang Tai) were both mentioned in pairs. Considering the effect of antithesis in the poetry, however, this conjecture is not quite convincing.



(“Dharma tunes”) gained its name by being performed by the *fabu* 法部 (“Religious section”) of *Liyuan* 梨園 (“Pear Garden”).<sup>206</sup> According to the *Xin Tang shu*:

初，隋有法曲，其音清而近雅。其器有鐃、鈸、鐘、磬、幢簫、琵琶。……其聲金、石、絲、竹以次作。隋煬帝厭其聲澹，曲終復加解音。玄宗既知音律，又酷愛法曲，選坐部伎子弟三百教於梨園，聲有誤者，帝必覺而正之，號皇帝梨園弟子。宮女數百，亦為梨園弟子，居宜春北院。梨園法部，更置小部音聲三十餘人。

In the past, there was Dharma tunes in the Sui, the sound of which was clear and elegant. The instruments of it include cymbals, bell, chime stone, vertical bamboo flute (or *xiao*-flute), and *pipa*. ... To play the sound, metals and stones, stringed and woodwind instruments were performed one after another. The Emperor Yang of the Sui detest its sound to be plain, so as to add resolution tune at the end of the song. Emperor Xuanzong not only knew musical temperament, but also loved the Dharma tunes. He selected three hundred disciples from “Sitting section” to be taught at the “Pear Garden.” Whenever the sound was performed wrongly, the Emperor would surely detect it and have it corrected. (Thus they were) called “Emperor’s disciples of the Pear Garden.” There were several hundred female attendants, who were also disciples of the “Pear Garden,” living in the Northern yard of Yichun. The Religious section of the Pear Garden, moreover, set small band for over thirty performers.<sup>207</sup>

Also a performance combining singing and dancing, *faqu* has a quite noticeable overlap with *daqu* suite. The Tune of Rainbow Skirts, for instance, is also listed under *daqu* category in Cui’s *Jiaofang ji*. In fact, according to *Ciyuan* 詞源 (“Origin of the *ci*”) by Zhang Yan 張炎 (1248–1320?) of the Song, *faqu* shares a similar form with *daqu*.<sup>208</sup> The major difference between these two performances probably is the musical instruments they use: while *faqu* uses more traditional instruments to make more elegant sound, in *daqu* there are more imported instruments so that the sound of *daqu* is more straightforward.<sup>209</sup>

<sup>206</sup> The role and influence of *qingshang* music in the Tang has been a controversial issue. Scholars have different opinions on the question that to what extent the imported Hu music has overwhelmed the indigenous *qingshang* music during the Tang Dynasty. See Sun Kaidi 1957, Qiu Qionsun 1974, Yin Falu 1948, and Ren Bantang 1962.

<sup>207</sup> XTS, *juan* 22, p. 476.

<sup>208</sup> CY, p. 256.

“法曲有散序、歌頭，音聲近古；大曲有所不及，……片數與法曲相上下。”

The Religious tune has loose-prelude and head-of-the-song. The sound (of *faqu*) is closed to that of the ancient; *daqu* cannot be compared to it. ... (Yet) the number of its movements is similar to that of the Religious tune.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*,

“若曰法曲則以倍四頭管（即篳篥也）品之，其聲清越；大曲則以倍六頭管品之，其聲流美。”

In terms of *faqu*, it is blown with double-four pipes (i.e. *bili*), the sound of which is high and

The next a few stanzas starting from “散序六奏未動衣” (“With six movements of loose-prelude, (dancers) did not yet stir their clothing”) are not only impressively gorgeous description on the scene of performance of this famous song, but also an essential aid to the study of the Tang *daqu* because of the connoisseur’s recounting of the entire process it provides, incorporating abundant elucidating comments on technical terms.<sup>210</sup> In summary, there are three sections in the Tune of Rainbow Skirts, namely, *sanxu* 散序 (“loose-prelude”), *zhongxu* 中序 (“mid-prelude”), and *po* 破 (“breakdown”).

According to the poet, the six movements of *sanxu* 散序 (“loose-prelude”) are played without beat. Thus there is no dance in this section. From the *zhongxu* 中序 (“mid-prelude”) there starts the beat. Therefore, the mid-prelude is also called “beat-prelude.” The next two stanzas, then, focus on the dancing forms of the mid-prelude, which seems to be slow and elegant suggested by the wordings such as *wuli* 無力 (“weak”), *busheng* 不勝 (“delicate”), and the alike.<sup>211</sup> When the mid-prelude is done, there comes the twelve movements of breakdown that culminates the entire performance, in which not only “busy sounds and rapid rhythm” sounds like “jumping beads and shaking jade,” but also accelerated dance is brought along by the music, as we can imagine. Finally, the Tune of Rainbow Skirts ends with a prolonged voice, which is different from other *daqu* suites.<sup>212</sup>

Mainly based on the record in the above two documents—*Yuefu shiji* and Bai’s poem—therefore, Ren Bantang, in his *Jiaofangji jiating*, gives a conclusion on the structure of *daqu* of the Tang:

唐大曲之結構、分為無拍、慢拍、快拍三段。無拍有散序，慢拍有歌與排遍，快拍有破與徹。較之趙宋大曲簡單明了。

The structure of *daqu* of the Tang consists of three sections: no-beat, slow-beat, and fast-beat. No-beat section refers to the “loose-prelude.” Slow-beats section includes “song” and “parallel-movements.” In the fast-beats section there are “breakdown” and “completion.” Compared to *daqu* of the Zhao Song Dynasty, it is simple and straightforward.<sup>213</sup>

---

clear; *daqu* is blown with double-six pipes, the sound of which is flowing and euphonious.

<sup>210</sup> This poem has understandably attracted the attention of numerous scholars of Tang music, such as Yin Falu, Yang Yinliu and Wang Guowei.

<sup>211</sup> Whether the dance starts from the mid-prelude, as suggested in Bo’s poem, or from the breakdown, as mentioned in Chen Yang’s *Yue shu* (which has been quoted previously in this section), might be taken as the difference between the performance of *daqu* in the Tang and Song, as Yin Falu has suggested in Yin Falu 1948, p. 34.

<sup>212</sup> The later performance of this tune, after the era of Bo Juyi, was mentioned sporadically in some literati prose fictions. For example, in *Tang Yulin* 唐語林 by Wang Dang 王讜 of the Song, Wang mentioned that in the time of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang, the Tune of Rainbow Skirts was performed by hundreds of performers, “all holding banners and wearing feather robes, floating as soaring clouds and flying cranes (率皆執幡節，被羽服，飄然有翔雲飛鶴之勢).” (TYL, *juan* 7) In *Qidong yeyu* 齊東野語, Zhou Mi 周密 (about 1232–1308) recalled what he heard from Yang Zuan, a famous zither player of the Southern Song, on Yang’s experience of hearing the Tune of Rainbow Skirts sung by thirty singers in a banquet, which seems to be only a musical performance without dancing. (QDYY, *juan* 10) See Yang Yinliu 1986.

<sup>213</sup> Ren Bantang 1962, p. 147-148.

Wang Xiaodun agrees that the structure of *daqu* of the Tang can be summarized as a three-stage format:

散拍器樂曲或歌曲—緩拍歌曲和舞曲—促拍舞曲  
Free-beats instrumental music or songs — slow-beats songs and dancing music — fast-beats dancing music<sup>214</sup>

Wang, moreover, attempts to relate the structure of Tang *daqu* back to the *daqu* of the Wei and Jin:

若以唐代的法曲型大曲作比，则艳相当于序，是一段悠扬的器乐合奏，间插歌唱；曲相当于中序或排遍，是沉着婉转的多段歌曲，节奏鲜明；趋相当于入破，节拍急促，宜于舞蹈；乱相当于歇拍和杀袞，众音毕会，繁声乱节。从这种体制的类似上，也可以看到魏晋大曲同唐大曲的源流关系。

If (*daqu* of the Wei and Jin) is compared to the *daqu* of “Dharma tunes” of the Tang, then *yan* song is equivalent to the prelude, which is a melodious instrumental ensemble with intervened singing; the “song” (*qu*) is equivalent to the “mid-prelude” or “parallel movements,” which is a calm and euphonious multi-section song, with lively rhythm; the *qu* is equivalent to the “breakdown,” with rapid beat and is appropriate for dancing; the “shuffle” (*luan*) is equivalent to the “resting-the-clappers” and “end-of-torrent,” where numerous sounds fully gather to make complicated sound and mixed rhythm. From the similarity of the systems we can also see the origins of the relationship between *daqu* of the Wei and Jin and *daqu* of the Tang.<sup>215</sup>

---

<sup>214</sup> Wang Kunwu 1996, p. 178.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.* p. 135.

### III. *Daqu* of the Song

In the Song, the performance of *daqu* was again carried out by members of the “Entertainment Bureau” (*jiaofang* 教坊), which inherited some old tunes from the Tang. But as we know, the court music restored after the An Lushan rebellion of 756 seemed not have returned to its former wonder and extravagance. The frequency and dimension of *daqu* performance in Song was reduced. A detailed account of this situation appears in a Northern Song music document, the *Yue shu* 樂書 (“Book on Music”), composed by Chen Yang 陳暘(1064–1128):

#### 教坊部

聖朝循用唐制，分教坊為四部，取荆南得工三十二人，破蜀得工一百三十九人，平江南得工十六人，始廢坐部，定河東得工十九人，藩臣所獻八十三人，及太宗在藩邸有七千餘員，皆籍而內之，繇是精工能手大集矣。其器有琵琶、五弦、箏、箜篌、笙、簫、麝篥、笛、方響、杖鼓、羯鼓、大鼓、拍板、并歌十四種焉。自合四部以為一，故樂工不能徧習。第以大曲四十為限，以應奉遊幸二燕，非如唐分部奏曲也。唐全盛時，內外教坊近及二千員，梨園三百員，宜春雲韶諸院及掖庭之伎不關其數，太常樂工動萬餘戶。聖朝教坊裁二百員，并雲韶鈞容東西班不及千人，有以見祖宗勤勞庶政，罔淫于樂之深意也。

#### Training Quarter

Our imperial dynasty followed the system of the Tang, which divides the Training Quarter into four sections.<sup>216</sup> On defeating the southern Jin, we obtained musicians numbering thirty-two; on conquering Chu, we obtained musicians numbering one hundred and thirty-nine; on pacifying the region south of the Yangzi, we obtained musicians numbering sixteen. At this point the “Sitting Section” was abolished. On settling the east of Yellow River, we obtained musicians numbering nineteen; those presented by the lords of vassal states numbered eighty-three; and those Emperor Taizong had in his fief’s mansion were more than seven thousand. All were registered and placed on service within the palace, a great accumulation of master hands. The instruments include *pipa*, five-strings, *zheng* zither, *konghou* harp, reed pipe, vertical flute, Tartar pipe, flute, *fangxiang*, beating drum, Tibetan drum, big drum, clapper, together with songs, altogether fourteen kinds. Ever since the four sections were combined into one, the musicians could not practice all, but only to take forty *daqu* as the limit in order to deal with the imperial visit to the two Yan, not playing music by sections as the Tang

---

<sup>216</sup> Three of the four sections are “Religious Songs” (*faqu* 法曲), “Music of Kucha” (*guizi* 龜茲), and “Drum and Flute” (*gudi* 鼓笛), according to the *Song Shu* record. Scholars have different opinions on the fourth section, however. Possibilities include “big suite” (*daqu* 大曲, supported by Yang Yinliu and others), “sitting section” (坐部, according to Yin Falu), *yunshao* 雲韶 (by Kishibe Shigeo and others), and “Drumming and Blowing instruments” (*guchui* 鼓吹, by Wang Xiaodun).

did. When the Tang was in its full bloom, musicians of the Training Quarter (inside and outside) numbered almost two thousand, those in the Pear Garden numbered three hundred, performers in *yichun*, *yunshao* and other side quarters numerous, and musicians in Court of Imperial Sacrifices usually beyond ten thousand. Our imperial dynasty has only two hundred (musicians). Altogether with *yunshao*, *junrong*, and east and west teams there are less than a thousand. This shows our ancestor's deep intention in being diligent in governing, without being indulgent in the music.<sup>217</sup>

Chen's declaration on the number of *daqu* of the Song is, generally, in accordance with the *Song Shu* record, which claims that

宋初循旧制，置教坊，凡四部。……所奏凡十八調四十大曲。

The early Song followed the former system, establishing an "entertainment bureau" including four sections. ... What were performed included forty *daqu* in eighteen tunes.<sup>218</sup>

Whether or not the number of *daqu* of the Song was, as claimed, as few as forty, on which many later scholars have argued,<sup>219</sup> it is with no doubt that the performance of *daqu* in this era could no longer be compared to its once prosperity during the Tang. The reduction of the number of musicians at the "Training Quarter," plus the combining of four sections into one, as having been pointed out in the passage above, became two factors that significantly limited the practice of *daqu* during the Song, considering the outstanding length and large scale of performance that *daqu* suite usually requires.

The account on *daqu* performance during the Song is, accordingly, often found to be embedded in the record on the performance of large imperial banquets, where a set of complex program with great variety would be grandly presented. Here is a passage from *Song Shi* in which *daqu* performance was mentioned:

每春秋聖節三大宴：其第一、皇帝升坐，宰相進酒，庭中吹鬻粟，以眾樂和之；賜群臣酒，皆就坐，宰相飲，作《傾杯樂》；百官飲，作《三台》。第二、皇帝再舉酒，群臣立于席後，樂以歌起。第三、皇帝舉酒，如第二之制，以次進食。第四、百戲皆作。第五、皇帝舉酒，如第二之制。第六、樂工致辭，繼以詩一章，謂之“口號”，皆述德美及中外蹈詠之情。初致辭，群臣皆起，聽辭畢，再拜。第七、合奏大曲。第八、皇帝舉酒，殿上獨彈琵琶。第九、小兒隊舞，亦致辭

<sup>217</sup> YS, *juan* 188, p. 211-849.

<sup>218</sup> *Song Shi*, *juan* 142, p. 3347. The original record of "fourty-six" *daqu* in *Song Shi* has been corrected by Wang Guowei, who suggested that it was a literal error of "forty." See Wang Guowei 1964, p. 154.

<sup>219</sup> Despite the forty *daqu* recorded here in Chen Yang's work and in *Song Shi*, later scholars during the Southern Song and Yuan had different arguments over the number of *daqu* of the Song, such as Chen Zhensun 陳振孫, Zhang Yan 張炎, and Zhou Mi 周密, as having been pointed out in Wang Guowei 1964, p. 154. Modern scholars such as Yin Falu and Liu Hongdu also have discussions on it. See Yin Falu 1948, pp. 23-24, Liu Yongji 1957, pp. 13-14.

以述德美。第十、雜劇。罷，皇帝起更衣。第十一、皇帝再坐，舉酒，殿上獨吹笙。第十二、蹴鞠。第十三、皇帝舉酒，殿上獨彈箏。第十四、女弟子隊舞，亦致辭如小隊。第十五、雜劇。第十六、皇帝舉酒，如第二之制。第十七、奏鼓吹曲，或用法曲，或用《龜茲》。第十八、皇帝舉酒，如第二之制，食罷。第十九、用角牴，宴畢。

When it comes to the three grand banquets on the “Imperial Festival” in the spring and autumn, first, the emperor ascends the throne, and prime ministers present the wine. (Musicians) in the yard play Tartar pipes, echoed by various musical instruments. (The emperor) bestows wine to the officials, and all sit down. When the prime ministers drink, “Joy of Pouring the Goblet” is played; when all officials drink, “Three Terraces” is played. Secondly, the emperor raises the wine again. All officials stand behind the mats. Music starts with songs. Thirdly, the emperor raises the wine, as the format of the second round. (People) take meals in order. Fourthly, varied-performance are all played. Fifthly, the emperor raises the wine, as the format of the second round. Sixthly, the musician presents the greeting words, followed by a piece of poem, which is called “chant.” Both are praises on beautiful virtue, as well as on domestic and foreign situations of dancing and chanting. When he first makes the greeting words, all officials stand up. When it is done, they bow once more. Seventhly, (musicians) play “big suite” ensemble. Eighthly, the emperor raises the wine. A *pipa* solo is played on the hall. Ninthly, the “troupe of children” dances, which also presents the greeting words to praise the beautiful virtue. Tenthly, varied-performance. When it is done, the emperor gets up to change his clothes. Eleventhly, the emperor sits down again and raises the wine. A reed pipe solo is played on the hall. Twelfthly, playing soccer. Thirteenthly, the emperor raises the wine. A *zheng* zither solo is played on the hall. Fourteenthly, “troupe of female pupils” dances, which, like the “troupe of children,” also presents the greeting words. Fifteenthly, varied-performance. Sixteenthly, the emperor raises the wine, as the format of the second round. Seventeenthly, tunes of drumming and blowing instruments are played, some using the “religious songs,” some using the music of Kucha. Eighteenthly, the emperor raises the wine, as the format of the second round. The meal is done. Nineteenthly, wrestling is played. The banquet ends.<sup>220</sup>

This complicated program is designed for the three grand banquets on the “Imperial Festival,” one of the most important festivals of the Song that celebrates the birthdays of the emperor, empress, and empress dowager. The performance of *daqu* suite is brought up in the seventh round, after the musician presents the greeting words and the “chant” that intend to praise the great virtues of the ruler. Although no much more detail is provided here, the fact that *daqu* performance serves as merely one of the performing sessions on a one-day celebration ceremony, still, may imply the considerably reduced length of performance compared to the situation recorded in *Tang Liu dian* 唐六典, in

---

<sup>220</sup> *Song Shi*, *juan* 142, p. 3348.

which *daqu* performance usually lasts for more than ten days.

Similar yet more detailed account can be found in *Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄 (“The Eastern Capital: A Dream of Splendors Past”), a work that recounts urban life in Bianliang between 1102 and 1125.<sup>221</sup> As a matter of fact, in the case of *daqu* performance of the Song, several “capital journals”—to borrow Prof. Stephen H. West’s terminology—are of particular importance given the fact that they exist outside of the rigorous editing of official histories. *Dongjing menghua lu* is the pioneer one in this category. In this work, the celebration on the “Heavenly-peace Festival” (*tianning jie* 天寧節),<sup>222</sup> the birthday of the Emperor Huizong of the Song (1082–1135), is recorded. A big banquet is held on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month, two days after the Emperor’s birthday, when all the prime ministers, royal highnesses, imperial clansmen, and officials of all ranks together come into the palace to make the celebration (“宰執親王宗室百官入內上壽”).

In the banquet, there are nine rounds of drinks,<sup>223</sup> each including “emperor’s drink (*yujiu* 禦酒),” “ministers’ drinks (*zaichen jiu* 宰臣酒),” and “all officials” drinks (*baiguan jiu* 百官酒),” yet with different ceremonial format.<sup>224</sup> For instance, in terms of food and drinks, on the first two rounds, nothing but drinks (*tujiu* 徒酒) is provided, as in all imperial banquets, only starting from the third round there come dishes that go with drinks (*xiajiu cai* 下酒菜).

Although the *daqu* performance is not mentioned until in the fourth round, a small size of singing and dancing performance that seems to be related to *daqu* suite has already been shown on the very first round, after the emperor, ministers and officials of all ranks finish their drinks over different music and performance:

舞曲破擷前一遍，舞者入場，至歇拍，續一人入場，對舞數拍。前舞者退，獨後舞者終其曲，謂之“舞末”。

To dance the “breakdown” and “jerkiness,” for the first round, the dancer enters the stage, and dances till “resting-the-clappers.” Following that, another dancer enters the stage and dances with him/her for several beats. The previous dancer withdraws, and only the latter one finishes the tune, which is called “end-of-the-dance.”<sup>225</sup>

---

<sup>221</sup> An account similar to that of the *Dongjing menghua lu* can also be seen in Wu Zimu 吳自牧 *Meng Liang lu* 夢梁錄 (“Record of the Splendors of the Capital City”), a work following the writings of the Meng Yuanlao to record the life in Lin’an of the Southern Song. The celebration is on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month, the banquet for the birthday of the empress dowager. See *juan* 3, p. 137.

<sup>222</sup> See *Song Shi*, *juan* 19. After the Emperor Huizong of the Song inherited the throne, his birthday, the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month was set to be the “Heavenly-peace Festival” (*tianning jie* 天寧節).

<sup>223</sup> The overall program recorded in *Dongjing menghua lu* is similar to that in the *Song Shi*. What is different is that *Song Shi* account takes every kind of performance as separate round, yet in *Dongjing menghua lu*, the “emperor’s drink” is taken as the criteria for naming the round.

<sup>224</sup> A detailed review can be found in Weng Minhua 1997.

<sup>225</sup> DJM, p. 59.

As we will discuss shortly, the technical terms mentioned here—“breakdown,” “jerkiness (*dian*),” and “resting-the-clappers (*xiapai*)”—are all typical *daqu* terms during the Song. The sections from “jerkiness” to “resting-the-clappers,” moreover, are normally where dances of slow or rapid are presented, following the musical performance of the prelude. This small piece of singing and dancing performance in the first round, therefore, is quite likely an excerpt or a selection from a complete *daqu* suite.

After the varied-performance enter (*baixi ruchang* 百戲入場) in the third round, *daqu* performance appears in the fourth, after a singing and dancing performance over the drinks from the emperor to all officials:

參軍色執竹竿拂子，念致語口號，諸雜劇色打和，再作語，勾合大曲舞。

The role of *canjun* holds the bamboo-pole and recites the greeting words and the chant. All roles of the varied-performance make echoes. Then (the *canjun*) makes speech (or prologue), and calls (the troupe)<sup>226</sup> to perform the dance of *daqu*.<sup>227</sup>

The role of *canjun* is a noticeably new element to the *daqu* performance of the Song, compared with that of the previous time. In some other accounts, this role is also called “bamboo-pole” guy (*zhuganzi* 竹竿子), because of the fact that he usually holds a whisk made of bamboo-pole (*zhugan fuzi* 竹竿拂子).

The fifteenth century Korean music book *Yuxue guifan* 樂學軌範 (“Rules of Music”) preserves an image (see next page) and detailed descriptions of the bamboo-pole:

柄以竹為之，朱漆，以片籐纏結下端，鐵染鐵粧。雕木頭冒於上端，又用細竹一百箇插於木頭上，并朱漆，以紅絲束之，每竹端一寸許，裹以金箔紙，貫水晶珠。

The handle is made with bamboo, red-painted. The bottom part is bound with a piece of cane. Solder stains the metal stake. Carved wood is riveted at the upper part, with a hundred pieces of thin bamboo slips stuck on the wood, which are also painted red, and bound with red silk. Each bamboo, at the place one *cun* from the tip, is wrapped with golden foil and strung with crystal beads.<sup>228</sup>

---

<sup>226</sup> Here “*Gou* 勾” or “*goudui* 勾隊” means to call the dancers come up to the stage. The opposite is “*fang* 放” or “*fangdui* 放隊,” which is to ask them to get off the stage.

<sup>227</sup> DJM, p. 60.

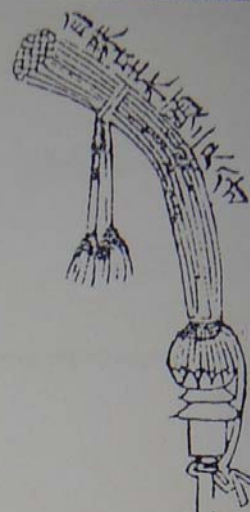
<sup>228</sup> Liao Ben 2000, p. 142.



樂學軌範卷之八

唐樂呈才儀物圖說

竹竿子二



自木頭至下端七尺七寸

也同

柄以竹為之朱漆以片藤纏結下端鑱漆鐵粧凡儀物雕木頭  
冒於上端又用細竹一百箇插於木頭上並朱漆以紅絲束之  
每竹端一寸許裏以金箔紙貫水晶珠

引入仗二



通長八尺三寸



“朝鮮柳子光樂學軌範插圖竹竿子”, Liao Ben 廖奔, Zhongguo xiju tushi 中國戲劇圖史, 2-255, p. 142.

Wang Guowei 王國維, in his *Song Yuan xiqu kao* (宋元戲曲考), compares the role of *canjun* with the “Chief Musician” (*xielülang* 協律郎) of the Tang, in that both act as the commander of the band or troupe, and relates the bamboo-pole with the banner held by the “Chief Musician:”

宋代演劇時，參軍色手執竹竿子以句(勾)之（見《東京夢華錄》卷九），亦如唐代協律郎之舉麾樂作，偃麾樂止相似，故參軍亦謂之竹竿子。

In the theatrical performance of the Song, the role of *canjun* holds the bamboo pole to command the troupe (see *Dongjing menghua lu*, *juan* 9). It is as that in Tang, when the “Chief Musician” raises the banner, the music is played; and when he lowers the banner, the music stops. Therefore, *canjun* is also called “bamboo-pole” guy (*zhuganzi*).<sup>229</sup>

Ren Bantang, in his *Tang xinong* 唐戲弄, even traces the bamboo-pole back to the “yak’s tail flag” (*mao* 旄) mentioned in *Zhou li* 周禮.<sup>230</sup> Nevertheless, what exactly the origin of the bamboo-pole was, or whether or not the use of “bamboo-pole” here has something to do with the ancient Chinese “bamboo-worship”—as argued by some other modern researchers<sup>231</sup>—are issues worthy of further discussion yet might be left out for now. What we can see here is that the “bamboo-pole” guy or the role of *canjun* serves as the “director of dance” in Song court musical performance, with a function close to that of the modern master of ceremonies. His role is to present the greeting words or prologue at the beginning of the performance (usually dance performance) and give commands to dancers or the dancing troupe.

In the rest five rounds of wines there is no more explicit mention on the *daqu* performance, yet in the fifth and seventh round there present two ensemble dances respectively carried out by the “troupe of children” (*xiao'er dui* 小兒隊) and the “troupe of girls” (*nütong dui* 女童隊), which share a similar performing format to the *daqu* performance in the fourth round, and in which the role of *canjun* shows up again.

On the fifth round of drinks, the role of *canjun*, again, holds the bamboo-pole and recites the greeting words (*zuoyu* 作語), and calls on the “troupe of children” (*xiao'er dui* 小兒隊) to enter and dance (參軍色執竹竿子作語，勾小兒隊舞), the format of which is similar to yet much simpler than that of the “troupe of girls” (*nütong dui* 女童隊) performed on the seventh round of drinks:

參軍色作語，勾女童隊入場。女童皆選兩軍妙齡容豔過人者四百餘人……莫不一時新粧，曲盡其妙。杖子頭四人……皆都城角者……亦每名四人簇擁，多作仙童丫髻，仙裳執花，舞步進前成列。或舞採蓮，則殿前皆列蓮花。檻曲亦進隊名。參軍色作語問隊，杖子頭者進

<sup>229</sup> Wang Guowei 1964, p. 66.

<sup>230</sup> Ren Bantang 1984, p. 996.

<sup>231</sup> Weng Minhua 1997.

口號，且舞且唱。樂部斷送採蓮訖，曲終復羣舞。唱中腔畢，女童進致語，勾雜戲入場，亦一場兩段訖，參軍色作語，放女童隊，又羣唱曲子，舞步出場。比之小兒節次增多矣。

The role of *canjun* recites the greeting words and calls on the “troupe of girls” to enter. All the girls are selected from the two teams, young and unparalleled beautiful, numbering more than four hundred.... All of them are in the most stylish dress and extremely gorgeous. There are four leaders holding batons (*zhangzitou*), ...who are all famous actresses in the capital. ... Each of them are surrounded by four people, most of them are as celestial boys and maids and hold flowers. They dance forward and line up. At the time when dance of “Plucking Lotus” is performed, in front of the palace, lotus are set all around. ... Also presented the name of troupe. The role of *canjun* makes the speech and asks the troupe. The leaders holding batons present the chant, dancing while singing. When the music section finishes the tune of “Plucking Lotus,” there are, again, ensemble dance. After singing the “middle tune” (*zhongqiang*), the girls present the greeting words and calls on the varied-performance to enter, which also has two sections. The role of *canjun* makes speech and dismisses the “troupe of girls.” Again, all sing, and exit with dancing. Their sections of performance are more than that of the “troupe of children.”<sup>232</sup>

Both the dancing performance of the “troupe of children” and the “troupe of girls” may have *daqu* performance involved more or less, given some features mentioned above, for instance, the dance of “Plucking Lotus,” and the singing of “middle-tune” (*zhongqiang*). In fact, according to the *Song Shi*, there were ten individual “troupe of children” and ten “troupe of girls” in the early Song, each with a specific name indicating the content of their performance.<sup>233</sup> At least nine of the twenty troupe names, such as “troupe of Cudrania Branches” (*zhezhi dui* 柘枝隊), “troupe of Sword” (*jianqi dui* 劍器隊), “troupe of Brahman” (*poluomen dui* 婆羅門隊), and “troupe of Plucking Lotus” (*cailian dui* 採蓮

---

<sup>232</sup> DJM, p. 61.

<sup>233</sup> See *Song Shi*, *juan* 142. There were 72 people in the ten “troupes of children,” which included: “troupe of Cudrania Branches” (*zhezhi dui* 柘枝隊), “troupe of Sword” (*jianqi dui* 劍器隊), “troupe of Brahman” (*poluomen dui* 婆羅門隊), “troupe of Drunk Hu Jumping” (*zuihuteng dui* 醉胡騰隊), “troupe of Joking Subject Pleasing Your Majesty” (*hunchen wansui le dui* 諱臣萬歲樂隊), “troupe of Children Appreciate Imperial Favor” (*ertong gan sheng'en dui* 兒童感聖恩隊), “troupe of Jade Rabbit Mongolian Hat” (*yutu huntuo dui* 玉兔渾脫隊), “troupe of Foreigners Paying Visit to the Emperor” (*yiyu chaotian dui* 異域朝天隊), “troupe of Child Xie Hong” (*ertong Xie Hong dui* 兒童解紅隊), “troupe of Uighur Shooting the Eagle” (*Shediao huihu dui* 射雕回鶻隊). The “troupe of girls” totally numbered 153 people, which included: “troupe of Buddha” (*pusa man dui* 菩薩蠻隊), “troupe of Reforming” (*ganhuayue dui* 感化樂隊), “troupe of Tossing Balls” (*paoqiuyue dui* 拋球樂隊), “troupe of Beauties Cutting Peony” (*jiaren jian mudan dui* 佳人剪牡丹隊), “troupe of Rainbow Robes” (*funishang dui* 拂霓裳隊), “troupe of Plucking Lotus” (*cailian dui* 採蓮隊), “troupe of Phoenix Greeting Music” (*fengyinyue dui* 鳳迎樂隊), “troupe of Buddhist Presenting Fragrant Flowers” (*pusa xian xianghua dui* 菩薩獻香花隊), “troupe of Goddess on Colorful Clouds” (*caiyunxian dui* 彩雲仙隊), “troupe of Playing Ball” (*daqiuyue dui* 打球樂隊).

隊) certainly imply a link between their performance and *daqu*.

Besides, two more things are noticeable. One is that the role of *canjun*, on top of providing directions to the dancing troupe, also has interactions with the troupe through a question and answer section, which makes him virtually part of the dancing performance instead of simply being an outsider. The other thing is that the performance of the leaders holding batons (*zhangzitou*) actually encompasses both singing and dancing. The syncretism of different roles in performance (i.e. singer and dancer) might also be taken as a result of the reduction of the dimension of *daqu* performance during the Song. We shall, however, leave a more detailed discussion on the performance of *daqu* to the next chapter, where “Plucking Lotus”—a *daqu* text composed in the Song—will be read side by side with this account on the performing situation.

## -- The structure of Song *daqu*

The structure of *daqu* of the Song is fairly complicated. Two accounts in particular have attracted the attention of scholars of the topic. One is the statement made by Wang Zhuo 王灼 (1081–?), a Southern Song literati, in his *Biji manzhi* 碧雞漫志 (“Random Jottings from the Green Rooster Quarter”), a critical notes on lyric poetry and tunes:

凡大曲有散序、鞞、排遍、擷、正擷、入破、虛催、實催、袞遍、歇拍、殺袞，始成一曲，謂之大遍。

In terms of *daqu*, when there are “loose-prelude,” “*sa*,” “parallel-movements,” “jerkiness,” “central-jerkiness,” “entering-breakdown,” “false-urge,” “real-urge,” “rolling-movements,” “resting-the-clappers,” and “end-of-the-rolling,” then it becomes a suite, called “big piece/round.”<sup>234</sup>

The other was made several decades earlier by Shen Kuo 沈括 (1031–1095) in his *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談 (“Jottings from the Mengxi”):

所謂大遍者，有序、引、歌、歛、催、擷、袞、破、行、中腔、踏歌之類，凡數十解。每解有數疊者，裁截用之，謂之『摘遍』。今之大曲，皆是裁用，非大遍也。

The so-called “big piece/round” include: “prelude,” “introduction,” “song,” *xi*, *sui*, “whistle,” “urge,” “jerkiness,” “rolling,” “breakdown,” *xing*, “middle-tune,” “tramping-song” and so on, altogether more than ten movements. Each movement has several pieces. To use by cutting them down is called “selected piece/round.” The *daqu* of today are all cut ones,

---

<sup>234</sup> JYB, *juan* 3, p. 77.

not “big piece/round.”<sup>235</sup>

Many later *daqu* researchers have tried to compare these two statements, provide various explanations on those technical terms, and attribute them to “appropriate” positions. Most of them give preferences to Wang’s assertion. A general exploration and review on the terms, for example, is given by Liu Hongdu in the preface of his work *Songdai gewujuqu luyao* 宋代歌舞劇曲錄要, in which he provides explanations to each technical term based upon philological and semasiological practices.<sup>236</sup> Here I would like to cite a few annotations, other than “loose-prelude,” “parallel-movements,” and “entering-breakdown” that we have seen before, to draw a cursory picture of the structure of Song *daqu*:

擷者，排遍之末一遍名，……因此遍畢即入破，故於相近一遍，增多拍數，使其音節漸繁，方不見其變太突。然則擷亦形容拍多音繁，聲調擷動的意思。

“Jerkiness” is the last movement of “parallel movements.” ...Because when this movement ends, [the tune] goes to “entering-breakdown.” Therefore, beats are increased at the closest movement (to the “entering-breakdown”), to make the rhythm become busy and numerous gradually, so that the change would not be too abrupt. “Jerkiness” is also to describe that the beats and tones are numerous, so that the tunes are jolty and jerky.<sup>237</sup>

按虛催、實催，皆以催名遍，當是曲拍至此漸急，故有催促之意。虛實的分別，則是催亦有緩急的不同。

“False-urge” and “real-urge” both take “urge” to name the movement. It should be the case that when the tune comes to this point it gradually becomes rapid, so that it bears the meaning of “urging.” The difference between “false” and “real” is the difference on the tempo of “urge.”<sup>238</sup>

按袞指拍言是也。或是滾之省體，名為滾者，以水流比曲聲之流轉。……合上三曲觀之，入破以後，名袞的遍有三，張炎詞源卷下論拍眼云：“前袞、中袞，六字一拍，要停聲待拍，取氣輕巧。煞袞則三字一拍，蓋其曲將終，至曲尾數句，使聲字悠揚，有不忍絕句之意，以余音繞梁為佳。”據此知虛催後乃前袞，實催後乃中袞，其與煞袞異者，拍之緩急不同而已。

“Rolling” refers to the beat. It is possibly the simple form of *gun* 滾. To name it “rolling” is to liken the flow of music sound to the sound of flowing water. ... From the above three tunes we see that after the “entering-

<sup>235</sup> Shen Kuo 沈括, *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談, *juan* 5. See Hu Daojing 1987, p. 222.

<sup>236</sup> Liu Yongji 1957, p. 1–32.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

breakdown” there are three movements named “rolling.” In the last *juan* of Zhang Yan’s *Origins of Words*, “Discussion of the ‘eyes’ of the beat,” it says: “ ‘first-rolling’ and ‘middle-rolling,’ one beat to six words, music ceases to wait for beat—it must be light and agile; ‘final-rolling’ three words, one beat. Just as the song is about to finish, cause the words and music to linger and flow, so there will be a reluctance to hear it end, as the lingering melody circles the rafters in its beauty.” According to this we know that after the “false-urge” there is “first-rolling,” and after the “real-urge” there is “middle-rolling.” The difference between them (i.e. the “first-rolling” and “middle-rolling”) and the “final-rolling” is only the tempo of beat.<sup>239</sup>

To put it simple, *dian* 擻 (“jerkiness”) or sometimes *dianbian* 擻徧 (“jerky movement”) serves as a bridge from the “parallel movements” (*paibian* 排遍) to “entering-breakdown” (*rupo* 入破), in which beat increases. *Cui* 催 (“urge”) indicates quick or agitated sound. It is the point when the tune gradually becomes rapid. The tempo of the “real-urge” section might be even faster than that of the “false-urge” section. *Gun* 袞 (“rolling”), cognate to *gun* 滾, refers to the sound of flowing water. This is the part when a mellifluous sound and lingering melody is produced. And *Shagun* 煞袞 (“final-rolling”) is a point by which the song is about to finish.<sup>240</sup>

In practice, *daqu* suites of the Song often omit the *sanxu* 散序 (“loose-prelude”) and begin directly with the *paibian* 排遍 (“parallel-movements”), where the beats start. One of the texts we may refer to is a *daqu* suite composed by Shi Hao 史浩 (1106–1194) of the Southern Song, whose works will be discussed in more details in the next chapter. This *daqu* suite entitled “Plucking Lotus: The Longevity Realm Lyrics (採蓮•壽鄉詞)” employs a structure marked as *yanbian* 延徧 (“prolonged-movement”)—*dianbian* 擻徧 (“jerky-movement”)—*rupo* 入破 (“entering-breakdown”)—*gunbian* 袞徧 (“rolling-movement”)—*shicui* 實催 (“real-urge”)—*gunbian* 袞徧 (“rolling-movement”)—*xiepai* 歇拍 (“resting-the-clappers”)—*shagun* 煞袞 (“final-rolling”), which serves as a good verification to what Wang Zhuo mentioned in *Biji manzhi*.<sup>241</sup>

I will omit further discussion of technical terms, for Song *daqu* since every

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>240</sup> Professor Stephen H. West also talked about the *daqu* structure of the Song in his work *Vaudeville and Narrative: Aspects of Chin Theater*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>241</sup> As for this *daqu* suite by Shi Hao, Liu Yongji suggested that the *yanbian* 延徧 (“prolonged-movement”) is probably a name for one of the movements in *paibian* 排遍 (“parallel-movements”); the *gunbian* 袞徧 (“rolling-movement”) before and after the *shicui* 實催 (“real-urge”) here are probably respectively the *qianguan* 前袞 (“first-rolling”) and *zhonggun* 中袞 (“middle-rolling”) that Zhang Yuan mentioned in *Ci yuan*. See Liu Yongji, *Songdai gewujuqu luyao*, p. 9.

There are also other *daqu* texts share the similar structure, for example, *Daogong bomei* 道官薄媚 composed by Dong Ying 董穎. The structure is as follows: *paibian* 排遍—*dian* 擻—*rupo* 入破—*xucui* 虛催—*gunbian* 袞徧—*cuipei* 催拍—*gun* 袞—*xiepai* 歇拍—*shagun* 煞袞.

explanation is ultimately a conjecture without further evidence. It seems viable to accept the three-section model proposed by Wang Guowei in his *Tang Song daqu kao* 唐宋大曲考:

顧大曲虽多至数十遍，亦只分三段：散序為一段，排遍、攔、正攔為一段，入破以下至煞袞為一段。

However, even though *daqu* suite has more than ten movements, it still only contains three sections: “loose-prelude” as one section, “parallel-movements,” “jerkiness,” and “central-jerkiness” as one section, from “entering-breakdown” onward till “end-of-the-rolling” as one section.<sup>242</sup>

This assertion is quite similar to the case with Tang *daqu* discussed in the last section, in which *daqu* is described as primarily consisting of three parts: “beat-free instrumental music or songs,” “slow-beat songs and dance music,” and “fast-beat dance music.” I tend to accept this division not because of its simplicity, but rather because it accentuates a link between *daqu* of the Song and its predecessors in previous dynasties, that is, *daqu* of the Wei-Jin period, and of the Tang as well.

As Shen Kuo has pointed out, when it came to the Song, the “selected piece/round” (*zhaibian* 摘遍) replaced the lengthy, time-consuming “big piece/round” (*dabian* 大遍) and became a common practice in terms of both *daqu* composition and performance, due to various limitations that we have discussed before. The “breakdown” (*qupo* 曲破), as the essential and most varied part of *daqu*, was the most welcome section. Besides the *Song Shi* record on the composing of twenty-nine *daqu* “breakdown” by the Emperor Taizong of the Song that we mentioned in the last section, there are also many other accounts we can find in which the “breakdown” was composed, presented, and performed, especially on imperial banquets. *Wulin jiushi* 武林舊事, for example, one of the “capital journals” composed after the *Dongjing menghua lu*, recounts the urban life and culture of Lin’an (present Hangzhou), the capital of the Southern Song. In this work it mentions the performance of the “breakdown” frequently when it comes to the national festivals and imperial banquets. For instance, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Chunxi Reign (1176) celebration of *Tianshen* 天申 festival (the birthday of the Emperor Gaozong of the Southern Song),

教坊大使申正德進新制《萬歲興龍曲》樂破對舞。

Shen Zhengde, the Commissioner of the “Training Quarter” presents the newly composed “Tune of My Majesty Rising Dragon” breakdown duet dance.<sup>243</sup>

On celebrating the empress’ birthday on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month in the same year,

第七盞,小劉婉容進自製《十色菊》、《千秋歲》曲破,內人瓊瓊、柔柔

<sup>242</sup> Wang Guowei 1964, p. 191.

<sup>243</sup> Zhou Mi 周密, *Wulin jiushi* 武林舊事, in DJM, p. 424.

對舞。

The 7<sup>th</sup> round of drink, little Liu Wanrong presents the self-composed “Ten-color Chrysanthemum” and “A Thousand Years”<sup>244</sup> breakdown. The “inner women” Qionggong and Rourou perform a duet dance.<sup>245</sup>

On the imperial banquet held on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Chunxi Reign (1179),

至第三盞，都管使臣劉景長供進新制《泛蘭舟》曲破，吳興佑舞。

When it comes to the third round of drink, Liu Jingchang, the Minister of Administration, presents the newly composed “Rowing Orchid Boat” breakdown. Wu Xingyou dances.<sup>246</sup>

To list a few cases in which the “breakdown” was newly composed and presented by the musicians of the “Training Quarter” at imperial banquets during the Southern Song, we can see how the “breakdown,” as a section that employs both singing and dancing, was greatly preferred when it came to *daqu* performance.

What seems to be paradoxical for *daqu* of the Song is that while a virtual “big piece/round” would include over ten different segments, which, compared to that of the Tang, tends to be even more elaborate and detailed, there were, however, very few chances that a “big piece/round” might be completely presented or performed during the Song dynasty. These two seemingly contradictory facts about *daqu* of the Song, however, tend to be consistent if we give it a second thought. My understanding (which needs further support from documentations though) is that the further elaboration on Song *daqu* format is actually contingent on the reduction of the dimension of *daqu* performance during the Song, in that the subdivision on various performing sections would functionally facilitate the process of selection, restructuring, and reorganization in the actual *daqu* composition and performance. In other words, with more specific subdivisions in different sections, *daqu* of the Song actually obtains more flexibility in fitting into a tailored size decided by various limitations on performance context.

One issue we might also face in studying the structure of *daqu* is the existence of several systems of technical terms in addressing various parts of *daqu* that scholars have sorted out from different sources, such as Bai Juyi’s “Song of Rainbow Skirts,” *daqu* lyrics recorded in *Yuefu shiji*, Wang Zhuo’s statement in *Biji manzhi*, and so on. In trying to reconcile those different groups of words, Wang Xiaodun’s work on it is probably helpful. In his *Sui Tang Wudai yanyue zayan geci yanjiu*, Wang provides a chart (see next page) in which he tries to attribute those technical terms to different musical registers focusing on different perspectives, and illustrates the correspondence between each other. The terms mentioned by Wang Zhuo, for example, are labelled as “rhythmic terms,” and those from *Yuefu shiji* are marked as “lyric terms.”

---

<sup>244</sup> It is also an honorific expression to address one’s birthday.

<sup>245</sup> Zhou Mi 周密, *Wulin jiushi* 武林舊事, in DJM, p. 425.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 426.



	引 <sup>247</sup>	序	中序	破	急	引
樂曲術語	行曲		歌曲	解曲	舞曲	解曲
管樂術語	調子、 遊聲	荒序、亂 序、嗔序、 音取調子	轉、颯踏	破	急	調子、引
節奏樂術語	散序	鞞	排遍	擷、 正擷	入破	虛催、衰遍 (前衰), 實催, 衰遍(中衰)
歌辭術語		歌	排遍	入破	徹	殺衰、歇拍
舞蹈術語	道行	序舞	緩舞	急舞	急舞	道行

Our introduction to *daqu* in this chapter is intended only to provide a backdrop against which specific *daqu* lyrics will be read and discussed in next chapters. One thing to keep in mind is that as a musical performance, from its original phase, *daqu* gives priority to tunes and dance over lyrics, as Wang Guowei pointed out in his *Song Yuan xiqu shi*:

即其所用者，亦以聲與舞為主，而不以詞為主，故多有聲無詞者。

Even when it comes to those selected [sections of *daqu*], they also give priority to the tunes and dances, instead of to the lyrics. Therefore most [*daqu*] are only with sound and without lyrics.<sup>248</sup>

Therefore, our reading of *daqu* lyrics is restricted by the limited available resources that is determined by this feature of *daqu* as a musical genre. Yet on the other hand, as a specific component of this “multimedia” performance, *daqu* lyrics turn out to be extremely resourceful texts that are fully packed with information on performance context, which makes our reading an exciting journey.

<sup>247</sup> Wang Kunwu 1996, p.178-179

<sup>248</sup> Wang Guowei 1964, p. 41.

### Chapter 3: Shi Hao's 史浩 *daqu* suites

Having discussed the general relationship between dance lyrics and performance context, and depicted a sketch of *daqu* development as a genre of performance in the previous two chapters, I would like to turn to a close reading of several *daqu* pieces composed by the Southern Song (1127–1279) Chancellor and writer Shi Hao 史浩(1106–1194) in this chapter.

Unlike *daqu* texts surviving from the Tang, most of which are excerpts or segments thus only reveal the performance partially, the compositions of Shi Hao are noticeably more complete and extensive. Written in a script-like format that is not very common within medieval performance texts, the *daqu* suites preserved in Shi Hao's collected works have drawn the attention of researchers with details on almost every aspect of performance, including notations on the presenting, speaking, and acting of performers, interactions between them and the “bamboo-pole” guy, and descriptions of singing and dancing performance between sections. Therefore, before the close reading on Shi Hao's *daqu* texts, I will talk about the “musical words” (*yueyu* 樂語), words that record the manner of singing and dancing. Even though no specific historical record on the actual performance of Shi Hao's *daqu* pieces was found so far, Shi's intact and “performance-ready” compositions, as a precious component of Song *daqu* repertoire, still provide a valuable window into the often submerged link between text and performance.

My focus will be on how a transitory performance context is written into a stable and enduring text, and how this is revealed through the “self-explanatory” feature of *daqu* as dance lyrics. By taking this contextual approach, I hope to shift the emphasis from the text *per se* as a sort of reading material to its function of preserving a performative and communicative act in a particular cultural situation.

#### I. “Musical words” (*yueyu* 樂語)

Wu Mei 吳梅, a modern scholar of Chinese drama, mentioned in his postscript to *Maofeng Zhenyin daqu* 鄭峰真隱大曲:

第宋代作者，如六一、東坡，往往僅作勾放樂語而不制歌詞；鄭僅、董穎之徒，則又止有歌詞，而無樂語，二者鮮有兼備焉。《鄭峰大曲》二卷，有歌詞，有樂語，且諸曲之下，各載歌演之狀，尤為歐、蘇、鄭、董諸子所未及，宋人大曲之詳，無有過於此者矣。

However, as for writers of the Song, for example, Ouyang Xiu (1007–1073) and Su Shi (1037–1101), they usually only wrote the “musical words” directing

dancing troupe, without composing the lyrics; those writers such as Zheng Jin and Dong Ying only wrote the lyrics but without the “musical words”—these two parts were rarely found together. The two *juan* of *Maofeng daqu* have both the lyrics and “musical words.” In addition, in each suite it records the manner of singing and dancing, which is particularly not reached by Ouyang Xiu, Su Shi, Zheng Jin and Dong Ying. Among *daqu* suites composed in the Song, none is more detailed than that.<sup>249</sup>

To some extent, therefore, the feature of having “both the lyrics and ‘musical words’ (有歌詞，有樂語),” as well as that of recording “the manner of singing and dancing (各載歌演之狀),” to some modern *daqu* researchers, is the most valuable aspect of Shi Hao’s *daqu* compositions, rather than any literary merit. This is particularly true if we consider Shi’s *daqu* pieces as, not merely literary work, but a sort of performance text, which could have participated or completed the organic performance as an indispensable component, as well as facilitates the reconstruction of performance context in the research wise.

To Wu Mei, the “musical words” (*yueyu* 樂語) seems to be something considerably significant for *daqu* composition. In terms of the “musical words,” Xu Shizeng 徐師曾 (1517–1580), a scholar of the Ming, has provided a definition in his *Wenti mingbian xushuo* 文體明辨·序說 (“Preface to *Distinguishing Literary Forms*”):

按樂語者，優伶獻伎之詞，亦名致語……宋制，正旦、春秋、興龍、坤成諸節，皆設大宴，仍用聲伎，於是命詞臣撰致語以畀教坊，習而誦之，而吏民宴會，雖無雜戲，亦有首章，皆謂之樂語。

The “musical words” are the words musicians used to present performance, which are also called “greeting words.” ... According to the custom of the Song, grand banquets were all held on festivals such as the “New Year,” “Spring-Autumn,” “Dragon-rising” (*Xinglong*), and “*Kun*-completion” (*Kuncheng*),<sup>250</sup> on which musical performances were carried out as before. At that time (the Emperor) ordered the literary ministers to compose greeting words and give to the Entertainment Bureau. Musicians there practiced and recited them. As for the banquets of officials and civilians, though no varied-performance, there were still initial sections, which were also called “musical words.”<sup>251</sup>

Xu’s description of the “musical words” as “the words musicians used to present performance (優伶獻伎之詞)” is, in general, acceptable. According to the *Song shi* account on the performance of imperial festivals that we have discussed in previous chapter, the musician would present introductions on the fourth round of drinking, before the performance of *daqu*:

---

<sup>249</sup> Wu Mei 1983, p. 470.

<sup>250</sup> The *Xinglong* Festival was the birthday of Emperor Zhezong (1076–1100); the *Kuncheng* Festival was the birthday of empress dowager Xiang, Emperor Zhezong’s legal mother.

<sup>251</sup> Xu Shizeng 1998, pp. 169-170.

第六、樂工致辭，繼以詩一章，謂之“口號”，皆述德美及中外蹈詠之情。初致辭，群臣皆起，聽辭畢，再拜。第七、合奏大曲。

Sixth, the musician presents the greeting words, followed by a piece of poem, which is called “chant.” Both are praises on beautiful virtue, as well as on domestic and foreign situations of dancing and chanting. When he first makes the greeting words, all officials stand up. When it is done, they bow once more. Seventh, (musicians) play “big suite” ensemble.<sup>252</sup>

The “greeting words” here is usually called *zhiyu* 致語. Presented before the performance, both the “greeting words” (*zhiyu* 致語) and the “chant” (*kouhao* 口號) are “praises on beautiful virtue as well as on domestic and foreign situations of dancing and chanting.”

However, Xu’s equivalence of the “musical words” (*yueyu*) and the “greeting words” (*zhiyu*) is problematic. In the *Dongjing menghua lu* record on the banquet held for “Heavenly-peace Festival (*tianning jie* 天寧節)” that we have seen before, a typical process of the *canjun*’s activity was mentioned as follows:

參軍色執竹竿拂子，念致語口號，諸雜劇色打和，再作語，勾合大曲舞。

The role of *canjun* holds the bamboo-pole and recites the greeting words and the chant. All roles of the varied-performance make echoes. Then (the *canjun*) makes speech (or prologue), and calls (the troupe) to perform the dance of *daqu*.<sup>253</sup>

Here it is clear that the “musical words” (*yueyu*) is something more than just the “greeting words” (*zhiyu*) and the “chant” (*kouhao*). It also includes other parts such as the subsequent making speech (*zuoyu* 作語) by the role of *canjun*, which is probably to introduce the performance and performers, his summoning of the troupe to the stage—*goudui* 勾隊 (“calling the troupe”)—and so on.

After the *daqu* performance on the fourth round of drinking, on the fifth and seventh round, the “musical words” were presented in a more complicated way respectively during the performance by the “troupe of children” and the “troupe of girls,” which we have mentioned before and will talk more later. Taking these parts into account, the so-called “musical words” actually refer to a whole set of ceremonial and practical register adopted in court performance, which is used to present the performance, introduce the troupes or performers, provide interactions between the *canjun* role and the troupes, lead in and set off the troupe(s) and so on. Besides the role of *canjun*, the “musical words” could also be presented by the head or leader(s) of the performing troupes.

---

<sup>252</sup> *Song Shi*, *juan* 142, p. 3348.

<sup>253</sup> DJM, *juan* 9, p. 60.

## --Literati and the “musical words”

As Xu Shizeng has pointed out, the emperors of the Song would “order the literary ministers to compose greeting words and give to the Entertainment Bureau,” where the words were practiced and recited by the musicians. Some well-known writers of the Song, such as Su Shi 蘇軾 and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, who have been mentioned in Wu Mei’s comment on Shi Hao’s *daqu* work, have received the command and participated into the composition of the “musical words.”

The *Dongpo quanji* 東坡全集 (“Complete Collection of Su Shi”), in fact, has devoted an entire *juan* to the “musical words,” where sixteen pieces of “musical words” compositions appear.<sup>254</sup> Among these pieces, there are *tiezi ci* 帖子詞 (“poster lyrics”) for posters hung in imperial residences during specific festivals, greeting words recited by ordinary officials on Winter Solstice and other festivals, *jiaofang ci* 教坊詞 (“Entertainment Bureau lyrics”) presented on imperial banquets, and *zhiyu kouhao* 致語口號 (“greeting words” and “chant”) for various other occasions, such as fast day, completion of construction of Yellow Tower (in nowadays Xuzhou), Ms Wang (Su’s wife)’s birthday, and so on. Except for the last five *zhiyu kouhao*, all other eleven pieces were associated with imperial or court activities, and many were specifically noted with time, some even with places, of presentation.

From being appointed as Director of Ministry of Rites (禮部郎中), Secretariat Drafter (中書舍人), and Hanlin Academician (翰林學士) in the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Yuanyou (1086), to his leaving for Hangzhou as Dragon Diagram Hall Academician (龍圖閣學士) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of 4<sup>th</sup> year of Yuanyou (1089), Su Shi held the imperial position in the capital Bianjing for almost two and half years during the reign of Emperor Zhezong (1085–1100). This experience indubitably offered him many opportunities getting involved in court performances, including their preparations. As a matter of fact, we may also infer that almost all eleven pieces of “musical words” adopted for imperial performances were composed during this period.

What interests me most in these sixteen pieces are six sets of *jiaofang ci* 教坊詞 (“Entertainment Bureau lyrics”), namely “Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for *Kuncheng* Festival at *Jiying* Hall (15<sup>th</sup> day in 7<sup>th</sup> month of 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yuanyou)” (坤成節集英殿教坊詞 (元祐二年七月十五日)), “Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for Spring Banquet at *Jiying* Hall” (集英殿春宴教坊詞), “Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for Autumn Banquet at *Jiying* Hall” (集英殿秋宴教坊詞), “Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for *Xinglong* Festival Banquet at *Jiying* Hall (2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yuanyou)” (興龍節集英殿宴教坊詞 (元祐二年)), “Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for the New Year at *Zichen* Hall (4<sup>th</sup> year of Yuanyou)” (紫宸殿正旦教坊詞 (元祐四年)), and “Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for *Xinglong* Festival Banquet at *Jiying* Hall” (興龍節集英殿宴教坊詞).

The titles themselves are productive. Conveying abundant information on the time, place, occasion, as well as carriers of the performance, these titles provide all

---

<sup>254</sup> See DPQJ, *juan* 115 “Musical words 16 pieces” (樂語十六章).

indispensable components of the performance context that we would like to consider when reading performance texts. To be more specific:

1) These lyrics were exactly what were composed upon imperial order to be practiced and recited by musicians in the Entertainment Bureau, and later be presented on the court performance during the period of 1087–1089, when Su Shi was holding the imperial position in the capital. Three of them were marked with time of performance, three were not. For those without time notes, later scholars have also tried to assign them the correct time frame.<sup>255</sup>

2) In terms of location, the performances were carried out exclusively at two places: the *Jiyong* Hall and the *Zichen* Hall, which served as the major locations in the Northern Song palace for imperial banquets. The *Jiyong* Hall, especially, functioned as the “banquet hall” (*yandian* 宴殿) of the Northern Song, according to the historical account.<sup>256</sup>

3) The occasions of imperial banquets were varied, yet mainly of two kinds: seasonal celebrations on major solar periods (*jieqi* 節氣), and celebrations on the birthday of the emperor, empress, and empress dowager.

Each “Entertainment Bureau lyrics,” moreover, except for “Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for the New Year at *Zichen* Hall” (紫宸殿正旦教坊詞), are composed of fifteen sections, namely: “greeting words by Training Quarter (教坊致語),” “chant (口號),” “calling ensemble tunes (勾合曲),” “calling on ‘troupe of children’ (勾小兒隊),” “name of troupe (隊名),” “asking ‘troupe of children’ (問小兒隊),” “greeting words by child (小兒致語),” “calling on varied-performance (勾雜劇),” “dismissing ‘troupe of children’ (放小兒隊),” “calling on ‘troupe of girls’ (勾女童隊),” “name of troupe (隊名),” “asking ‘troupe of girls’ (問女童隊),” “greeting words by girls (女童致語),” “calling on varied-performance (勾雜劇),” and “dismissing ‘troupe of girls’ (放女童隊)” (or in short “dismissing the troupe” 放隊).<sup>257</sup>

Reading these lyrics side by side with the record on court performance in official histories such as *Song shi*, or in unofficial journals such as *Dongjing menghua lu*<sup>258</sup> (both of which we have mentioned before), we see that the structure of Su’s lyrics is interestingly in exact accordance with the program recorded in those historical accounts:

1) While the “chant” (*kouhao*), as mentioned in *Song shi*, is composed of a poetic composition (“詩一章”), the “greeting words” (*zhiyu*) in Su’s “Entertainment Bureau

<sup>255</sup> See SSBZ, *juan* 46, SKQS *jibu* No.50.

<sup>256</sup> *Song shi* 宋史, “geography treatise,” *juan* 85.

<sup>257</sup> The “Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for the New Year at *Zichen* Hall” (紫宸殿正旦教坊詞), somehow, is missing the last six sections after “dismissing the ‘troupe of children’.”

<sup>258</sup> The account on imperial banquet in *Meng Liang Lu* 夢梁錄 (*juan* 3) is similar to that in *Song shi* and *Dongjing menghua lu*, except that the performance of “troupe of children” and “troupe of girls” was canceled in the Southern Song.

Lyrics” is a passage of rhymed prose. The content of these two sections, as mentioned in *Song shi*, is indeed “praises beautiful virtue as well as domestic and foreign situations of dancing and chanting” (“皆述德美及中外蹈詠之情”). The “greeting words” typically ended with a set of patterned lines, such as:

仰奉威顏，敢進口號。

Looking up respectfully the mighty countenance, we dare to present the “chant.”<sup>259</sup>

下采民言，上陳口號。

Downward we collect words of people; upward we present the “chant.”<sup>260</sup>

Rather than simply claiming it something “cliché” or formula, we see this a sort of marker of performance text, that is, something differentiates texts for performance and those merely for reading. Putting it back into the environment of “real-time” banquet performance, we will find these introductory lines particularly effective in reminding the audience of the transition of sections, i.e. leading the performance from “greeting words” to the next section—“chant.” An experienced audience then, at this point, would expect the end of the rhymed prose and the start of the utterance of a poem, the boundary between which might not be so distinct orally and acoustically as they were in written form.

2) The third section “calling ensemble tunes (*gou hequ* 勾合曲)” refers exactly to the calling on *daqu* performance by the *canjun* role, which is recorded in *Dongjing menghua lu* as “then (the *canjun*) makes speech (or prologue), and calls (the troupe) to perform the dance of *daqu* (再作語，勾合大曲舞).”<sup>261</sup> To cite two pieces of Su’s lyrics as examples:

秋風協應，生殿閣之微涼；廣樂具陳，韻金絲而間作。欲觀鳥獸之率舞，愿聞笙磬之同音。上奉宸顏，教坊合曲。

The autumn wind harmoniously responds, breeding slight coolness to imperial palaces; numerous musical instruments are provided and displayed, rhyming with metals and strings and alternately played. Longing to watch birds and beasts dancing together, we wish to hear the collaborative sound of *sheng*-pipe and chime stone. Upward presenting to the imperial prestige, the Entertainment Bureau play ensemble tunes.<sup>262</sup>

祝堯之壽，既罄于歡謠；象舜之功，愿觀于備樂。羽旄在列，管磬同

<sup>259</sup> See 集英殿秋宴教坊詞 (“Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for Autumn Banquet at *Jiying* Hall”).

<sup>260</sup> See 興龍節集英殿宴教坊詞 (元祐二年) (“Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for *Xinglong* Festival Banquet at *Jiying* Hall: 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yuanyou”).

<sup>261</sup> DJM, *juan* 9, p. 60.

<sup>262</sup> See 坤成節集英殿教坊詞 (元祐二年七月十五日) (“Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for *Kuncheng* Festival at *Jiying* Hall: 15<sup>th</sup> day in 7<sup>th</sup> month of 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yuanyou”).

音。上奉宸嚴，教坊合曲。

Celebration for the longevity of Yao has already been exhausted in happy ballads; imitation of the achievement of Shun is wished to be seen in complete music. The plumes and ox-tails are in line; pipes and chime stones collaboratively played. Upward presenting to the imperial prestige, the Entertainment Bureau play ensemble tunes.<sup>263</sup>

Again, as a part of performance text, the lyrics of “calling ensemble tunes” (*gou hequ*) section ends with an introductory line reminding of the upcoming *daqu* performance—“upward presenting to the imperial prestige, the Entertainment Bureau play ensemble tunes (上奉宸顏，教坊合曲)” or similar expressions—as that in the “greeting words” (*zhiyu*) we just mentioned.

Some other elements in the above two passages would also segregate the lyrics from purely written materials by accentuating their status as real performance texts. The first piece, for instance, as we know was performed on the banquet of the *Kuncheng* Festival, a celebration for empress dowager Xiang, Emperor Zhezong’s legal mother. The “autumn wind” and “slight coolness” in the first line, therefore, deftly imply the time of performance must be on the transition of summer and autumn, which matches perfectly with what was noted in the title, the 15<sup>th</sup> day in the 7<sup>th</sup> month of 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yuanyou.

The second line, switching to the description of the settings of performance, depicts a grand scene in which “numerous musical instruments are provided and displayed.” This then, certainly, echoes with the account on various instruments adopted in *daqu* performance in *Song shi*:

樂用琵琶、箜篌、五弦琴、箏、笙、龠、笛、方響、羯鼓、杖鼓、拍板。

The musical instruments are *pipa*, *konghou* harp, five-string zither, *zheng* zither, reed pipe, Tartar pipe, flute, *fangxiang*, Tibetan drum, and clapper.<sup>264</sup>

The third line, deviating from the first two lines that illustrate the “physical” settings in which the performance was carried out, characterizes the central feature and primary function of the forthcoming performance *per se*. The correspondence between “dancing together (率舞)” and “collaborative sound (同音)” in this line (which interestingly echoes with the third line in the next piece we cited above—“羽旄在列，管磬同音”) cleverly points to a performance involved in both singing and dancing, a music category to which *daqu* belongs. Moreover, the phrase “birds and beasts dancing together (鳥獸之率舞)” inevitably reminds us of the harmonious scenarios depicted in many classics, among which the one in the *Shang Shu* might be the earliest:

《簫韶》九成，鳳皇來儀。夔曰：「於！予擊石拊石，百獸率舞，庶尹

<sup>263</sup> See 興龍節集英殿宴教坊詞（元祐二年）（“Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for *Xinglong* Festival Banquet at *Jiying* Hall: 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yuanyou”）.

<sup>264</sup> *Song Shi*, *juan* 142, p. 3349.



允諧。」

When the nine pieces of *xiaoshao* have all been performed, the male and female phoenix come to show their etiquette in the ceremony. Kui said: “Oh! When I smite the (sounding-) stone, or gently strike it, the various animals lead on one another to dance, and all the official chiefs become truly harmonious.”<sup>265</sup>

One of the six legendary tunes of “elegant music,” the *xiaoshao* or *shao* is believed to be the music of the ancient ruler Shun 舜, and one of the ideal models of “dance music.”<sup>266</sup> The phrase “the various animals lead on one another to dance (百獸率舞),” whether or not referring to an actual scene in the dance itself, as some scholars have argued, has been used frequently later for the magic efficacy brought by harmonious music, which, at the same time, often indicates a perfect politics or government. The expectation of this upcoming magnificent picture, therefore, generates a eulogy of the current ruling as well as sets the performance in a political authorized context.

This kind of self-legitimization is also revealed in the first couplet of the second piece cited above (“祝堯之壽，既罄于歡謠；象舜之功，愿觀于備樂”), in which Yao 堯 and Shun 舜, both sage rulers, are mentioned as the subjects of bliss and praise. A reprise of the idea of symbolization of dance music discussed in the first chapter, this couplet is actually an attempt to place the current ruler into the orthodox lineage through the tradition of music, given the fact that this being part of a performance celebrating the birthday of Emperor Zhezong.

3) The remaining twelve sections in the “Entertainment Bureau lyrics” can actually be divided into two parts: the one for the “troupe of children” performance (in the fifth round of drinking) and the one for the “troupe of girls” performance (in the seventh round of drinking). Each includes six sections. Those related to the performance by the “troupe of children” are: “calling on ‘troupe of children’ (勾小兒隊),” “name of troupe (隊名),” “asking ‘troupe of children’ (問小兒隊),” “greeting words by child (小兒致語),” “calling on varied-performance (勾雜劇),” and “dismissing ‘troupe of children’ (放小兒隊).” The sections belonging to the performance of the “troupe of girls” are about the same, only replacing the troupe name with the “troupe of girls.”

Let us take a look at the performance by the “troupe of children” mentioned in *Dongjing menghua lu*:

參軍色執竹竿子作語，勾小兒隊舞。小兒各選年十二三者二百餘人，列四行，每行隊頭一名，四人簇擁，……先有四人裹卷腳襪頭、紫衫者，擎一彩殿子，內金帖字牌，搥鼓而進，謂之“隊名牌”，上有一聯，謂如“九韶翔彩鳳，八佾舞青鸞”之句。樂部舉樂，小兒舞步進前，直叩

<sup>265</sup> *Shang Shu* 尚書·益稷(Yi and Ji).

<sup>266</sup> For instance, it says “Dancing big *Shao* to sacrifice the four directions (舞《大韶》，以祀四望)” in *Zhou Li* 周禮.

殿陛。參軍色作語，問小兒班首近前，進口號，雜劇人皆打和。畢，樂作，群舞合唱，且舞且唱，又唱破子畢，小兒班首入進致語，勾雜劇入場，一場兩段。……雜戲畢，參軍色作語，放小兒隊。

The role of *canjun* holding the bamboo-pole recites the greeting words and calls on the “troupe of children” to enter and dance. All the children are selected twelve to thirteen years old, altogether numbering more than two hundred. There are four lines, each having one “head of the line,” who are surrounded by four people. ... First, four people who are wrapped with roll-up-corner coifs and wear in purple hold a colorful plate with golden characters, coming forward on beating drum. This is called the “plate of troupe name.” There is a couplet on it, such as “nine pieces of *shao* fly the colorful phoenix; eight dancing lines dance the blue simurgh.” The music section plays the music. The troupe of children dances forward and bows directly at the steps of the palace. The role of *canjun* makes the speech, and asks the head of the children’s troupe to come forward and present the “chant.” All roles of the varied-performance make echoes. When it is done, the music is played. All dancers sing together, singing while dancing. When the singing of “little-breakdown” is finished, the head of the children’s troupe enters to present the greeting words, and calls on the varied-performance to enter. Two sections in one performance. ... When the varied-performance is done, the role of *canjun* makes the speech to dismiss the troupe of children.<sup>267</sup>

As we can see, the Su’s lyrics and the account in *Dongjing menghua lu* have been perfectly complementary to each other in presenting the picture of court performance in the Northern Song. Juxtaposing these two texts, we find several points worth noting.

The “calling on ‘troupe of children’ (勾小兒隊),” which was issued by the role of *canjun*, always ends with a formulaic expression summoning the “troupe of children:”

上侑皇歡，教坊小兒入隊。

Upward assisting the imperial happiness, the children of Training Quarter line up.<sup>268</sup>

仰奉宸慈，教坊小兒入隊。

Upward receiving the imperial benevolence, the children of Training Quarter line up.<sup>269</sup>

This kind of ending, like that used at the end of the “greeting words” (*zhiyu*) or “calling ensemble tunes” (*gou hequ*) discussed earlier, clearly serves as a stage direction which evokes a sense of real performance, and facilitates a re-imagination or re-creation of the past real event through the media of text.

---

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> See 坤成節集英殿教坊詞（元祐二年七月十五日）（“Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for *Kuncheng* Festival at *Jiying* Hall: 15<sup>th</sup> day in 7<sup>th</sup> month of 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yuanyou”）.

<sup>269</sup> See 集英殿春宴教坊詞（“Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for Spring Banquet at *Jiying* Hall”）.

There is one more detail to which we might want to pay attention. While the members in the “troupe of children” belonged to the Entertainment Bureau, the dancers in the “troupe of girls” were selected from other sources. The endings of “calling on ‘troupe of girls’ (勾女童隊),” in comparison, often take an expression that “the girls of two teams line up (兩軍女童入隊),” which confirms the account in *Dongjing menghua lu*:

女童皆選兩軍妙齡容豔過人者四百餘人。

All the girls are selected from the two squads, young and surpassingly beautiful, numbering more than four hundred.<sup>270</sup>

Here the “two squads” (*liangjun* 兩軍) refer to the two different wards in the city—street and market:

所謂左右軍，乃京師坊市兩廂也，非諸軍之軍。

The so-called “left and right squads” are the two wards of the capital, not actual armies.<sup>271</sup>

Later, when talking about the four leaders holding batons (*zhangzitou* 杖子頭) in the “troupe of girls”, *Dongjing menghua lu* also mentioned that they are “all famous actresses in the capital (皆都城角者),” which may also support our inference.

More importantly, the nuance in addressing the troupes, or more specifically, the registration of troupes, again, subtly points to the originally practical feature of the text.

Differen from all other sections, the “name of troupe (隊名)” is the only part that was not for reciting, but presented on “a colorful plate with golden characters” held by four people. The same is the case with the “troupe of girls.”<sup>272</sup>

After the “name of troupe” was presented, the music section played the music. The “troupe of children” danced forward and made a bow in front of the palace steps. The next section “asking ‘troupe of children’ (問小兒隊)” was issued by the role of *canjun*, who “asked the head of the children’s troupe to come forward and present the ‘chant’.” On his doing that, “all roles of the varied-performance made echoes (雜劇人皆打和).”

When the role of *canjun* uttered the command, which often ended with expression such as “thoroughly speak your intention (悉言汝志)” or “thoroughly express your purpose in coming (悉陳來意),” interestingly, the head of the troupe did not come to provide response right away. Instead, the music was played and there started the performance of the “troupe of children”—“all dancers sing together, singing while dancing (群舞合唱，且舞且唱).” As we have mentioned before, the combining of

---

<sup>270</sup> DJM, *juan* 9, p. 61.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>272</sup> In the case of the “troupe of girls,” record shows “there are four leaders holding batons (*zhangzitou*), ... Each of them are surrounded by four people, ... Also presented the name of troupe (杖子頭四人.....亦每名四人簇擁.....亦進隊名).” See DJM, *juan* 9, p. 61.

singer and dancer was decided by the considerable reduction of the *daqu* performance scale in the Song.

When the singing of “little-breakdown” (*pozi*) was finished, the head of the children’s troupe then entered to present the “greeting words,” and called on the varied-performance to enter. The “greeting words” here, as that was issued by the role of *canjun* before, was also a piece of rhymed prose, with a patterned ending line such as:

未敢自專，伏取進止。

We prostrate ourselves and wait for instructions.<sup>273</sup>

At this moment, one would then expect that there was an affirmation or response, verbal or otherwise, coming from the role of *canjun* or some other official attending the banquet.

The next part “calling on varied-performance (勾雜劇),” however, is a turning point which lead the performance into another direction, an entertaining and humorous session. And this turning on the entire atmosphere of banqueting was explained explicitly in the utterance by the head of the troupes:

金奏鏗純，既度九韶之曲；霓衣合散，又陳八佾之儀。舞綴暫停，伶優間作。再調絲竹，雜劇來歟？

The sound of metals was clangorous and pure, having already played the tunes of nine pieces of *shao*; Rainbow skirts gathered and scattered, moreover displaying the manner of eight rows. Dance stops temporarily, [to have] actors and actresses perform for a moment. Now play the silk strings and bamboo winds again, will the varied-performance come?<sup>274</sup>

鸞旗日轉，雉扇云開。暫回綴兆之文，少進俳諧之技。來陳善戲，以佐歡聲。上樂天顏，雜劇來歟？

Simurgh banners whirl in the sunshine; pheasant umbrellas unfold under cloud. For a moment we evade decorated writings, and slightly present humorous feats. We come to display skillful performance, in order to assist happy sound. Upward to please the heavenly countenance, will the varied-performance come?<sup>275</sup>

The “nine pieces of *shao*” (九韶之曲) and the “manner of eight rows” (八佾之儀), apparently, are descriptions of the “multi-media” performance of the “troupe of children” (or “troupe of girls”), which, as we have mentioned before, might have something to do with *daqu* performance. Following are the next two couplets which clearly call on the start of the varied-performance. This transition of program is also indicated in the second couplet of the next piece cited above—“for a moment we evade decorated writings, and

<sup>273</sup> See 坤成節集英殿教坊詞 (元祐二年七月十五日) (“Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for *Kuncheng* Festival at *Jiyong* Hall: 15<sup>th</sup> day in 7<sup>th</sup> month of 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yuanyou”).

<sup>274</sup> See 興龍節集英殿宴教坊詞 (元祐二年) (“Entertainment Bureau Lyrics for *Xinglong* Festival Banquet at *Jiyong* Hall (2<sup>nd</sup> year of Yuanyou”).

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

slightly present humorous feats (暫回綴兆之文，少進俳諧之技).” While the “decorated writings” refers to the usually elegant lyrics of dance performance, the “humorous feats” illustrates the essential feature of the varied-performance.

The varied-performance, then, at this point, entered, “two sections in one performance (一場兩段).” From the passage in *Dongjing menghua lu* that was cited before, we may infer that the “troupe of children” or the “troupe of girls” did not exit during the time the varied-performance was carried out. In fact, sometimes they even participated in the performance if needed.<sup>276</sup> They were not dismissed until the varied-performance was done and the role of *canjun* made the speech with the order “bowing again toward the heavenly steps, let us rise and leave together (再拜天階/墀，相將好去).”

The court performance of imperial banquets during the 11<sup>th</sup> century was, to some extent, formulated. The “musical words” (*yueyu*) composed by some other literati during this period actually follow the exactly same pattern as that in Su Shi’s “Entertainment Bureau lyrics.” For example, Wang Gui 王珪 (1019–1085), the Grand Councilor during the Xining Reign (1068–1077) of Emperor Shenzong had three pieces of “Entertainment Bureau musical words (教坊樂語)” in his work collection *Huayang ji* 華陽集 (“Collection of Huayang”), each consisting of fifteen identical sections, from the “Entertainment Bureau greeting words” to “Dismissing the ‘troupe of girls’.”<sup>277</sup> Su Song 蘇頌 (1020–1101), another Grand Councilor of Emperor Shenzong during the Yuanfeng Reign (1078–1085), also had three “Entertainment Bureau Lyrics (教坊詞)” collected in his *Su Weigong wenji* 蘇魏公文集 (“Collected Works of Su Weigong”),<sup>278</sup> which followed the same format.

When it came to the Southern Song, the Entertainment Bureau was abolished by the emperors.<sup>279</sup> From the Qiandao years (1165–1173) during the reign of Emperor Xiaozong (1162–1189), performers for imperial banquets were instead recruited from street/market performers (*shiren* 市人), according to the *Song shi* account:

乾道後，北使每歲兩至，亦用樂，但呼市人使之，不置教坊，止令修樂司先兩旬教習。... 命罷小兒及女童隊，餘用之。

After the Qiandao years (1165–1173), northern envoys came twice every year, when musical performance was also carried out. However, only market performers were used (for the performance). The Entertainment Bureau was

---

<sup>276</sup> See DJM, p. 60:

內殿雜戲，為有使人預宴，不敢深作諧謔，惟用群隊裝其似像，市語謂之“拽串”。

As for the inner-palace varied-performance, because there were envoys attending the banquet, (performers) did not dare to joke excessively. Thus they only had the troupe to mimic its likeness, market language called it “dragging out to play.”

<sup>277</sup> HYJ, *juan* 17.

<sup>278</sup> SWW, *juan* 28.

<sup>279</sup> It was only restored for a short period during the Shaoxing years, the reign of Emperor Gaozong.

not set. [The emperor] only asked the Imperial Music Office to teach them twenty days ahead. ... The “troupe of children” and the “troupe of girls” were dismissed. Others were still used.<sup>280</sup>

The court performance during the Southern Song, therefore, was administered by the Music Instruction Section of the Imperial Music Office (修樂司教樂所). This fact could be testified by the account in *Meng Liang lu* 夢梁錄 (“Record of the Splendors of the Capital City”), a record of the life in Lin’an, the capital of the Southern Song. When it came to the celebration for the birthday of the empress dowager on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month, the performance on the banquet was said to be carried out by the “members of Music Instruction Section (教樂所人員).” Moreover, no account on the performance by the “troupe of children” or the “troupe of girls” was mentioned.<sup>281</sup>

## II. Shi Hao 史浩 and his *daqu* composition

Shi Hao 史浩 (1106–1194), cognomen Zhiweng 直翁, was from Yin 鄞 county of Ming prefecture 明州 (now Ningbo of Zhejiang province). He advanced to *Jinshi* (Metropolitan Graduate) when he was forty. It is said that he helped Zhao Shen 趙昚, who later reigned as Emperor Xiaozong (r.1163–1189), be selected as the crown prince when he served as Shen’s mentor. During Xiaozong’s reign, he was offered official titles ranging from Secretariat Drafter (中書舍人), Hanlin Academician (翰林學士), up to Right Chancellor (右丞相).

What made Shi Hao’s official career slightly unusual was that he was appointed the Right Chancellor twice, and resigned from it twice. The first abandonment, triggered by political conflict within the court, occurred four months after he had been designated for the position. During the first a few years after the Song was forced to retreat to the south, in fact, the debate over plans to retake northern China never ceased. A group of Southern Song officials represented by Zhang Jun 張浚, the Military Affairs Commissioner, insisted on taking military campaigns against the Jurchens immediately. Shi Hao, however, argued that the time was not yet ripe. Wang Shipeng 王十朋, the Censor, thus impeached Shi Hao for “deceiving the ruler and harming the country.” Emperor Xiaozong eventually decided to start the campaign, and approved Shi’s resignation request. This attempt, however, ended in failure, and with a new treaty between the Southern Song and the Jin.

After this, Shi Hao was not appointed to any position for almost ten years. In the

---

<sup>280</sup> *Song Shi*, *juan* 142, p. 3359.

<sup>281</sup> Wu Zimu 吳自牧, *Meng Liang lu* 夢梁錄, *juan* 3, in DJM, p. 137.

5<sup>th</sup> year of Chunxi (1178), probably feeling sorry for his previous decision, the Emperor Xiaozong promoted Shi Hao to Right Chancellor again. Shi subsequently recommended many talented people such as Zhu Xi 朱熹(1130–1200), Yang Jian 楊簡 (1141–1226), and Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139–1193) to the Emperor. Shi's second resignation resulted from his disagreement with the Emperor's decision in the case of Lu Qingtong 陸慶童, a civilian arrested in a fight opposing the deprivation of property by the army. Shi insisted that the common people should not be punished as severely as soldiers and that Lu therefore should not be sentenced to death in this case. His protest being rejected, Shi Hao thus left the position again shortly. According to Shi Hao biography in *Song shi*, the Emperor Xiaozong felt deeply regretful when he mentioned this case later.

After relinquishing this position for the second time, Shi Hao enjoyed a leisure life at his hometown, visiting friends and writing poems. He died in 1194 at the age of 89. The imperial court held a grand memorial ceremony upon his death. He was conferred the honorary rank of “Lord of Kuaiji” and Grand Tutor (太師), and posthumously titled Wenhui (文惠). His son, Shi Miyuan 史彌遠, and grandson, Shi Songzhi 史嵩之, both later became Chancellors of the Southern Song.

Therefore, as we can see, despite two resignations from the chancellor position, Shi Hao was still highly regarded by Emperor Xiaozong, and enjoyed an affluent life in his late years. His social status granted him plenty of opportunities to attend imperial banquets and become familiar with *daqu* performance. As the Chancellor and a writer at the same time, Shi Hao composed *daqu* suites for the imperial court both to fulfill his duties and for his personal pleasure.

Shi Hao's collected works are entitled *Maofeng Zhenyin manlu* 鄭峰真隱漫錄 (“Random Records from the Zhenyin of Maofeng,” hereafter MFZM), edited by his students. Maofeng 鄭峰 is the place Shi Hao in his youth used to live in seclusion and study. It is located at Ashoka Mountain 阿育王山 of Yin County, a place known for its many Buddhist temples. Deeply influenced by Buddhist tradition, especially the Zen school, the young Shi Hao chose the cognomen *Zhenyin jushi* 真隱居士 (Real Hidden Layman) for himself. Furthermore, he had close contacts with Taoists in Siming Mountain and Taoist lodges of other places, as disclosed by the many poems he composed for them. These circumstances may partly explain the strong emphasis on *youxian* 遊仙 (“roaming transcendent”) themes we see in his *daqu* composition. Yet beyond all these, as we know, Shi Hao was first an adherent of Confucianism, and as many scholars of the Southern Song, he advocated the “fusion” of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism three religions. One of his most famous arguments was his critique to Emperor Xiaozong's viewpoint that the Emperor brought up in *Yuan Dao bian* 原道辨 in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Chunxi (1178):

陛下末章，乃欲以佛修心，以道養身，以儒治世，是本欲融會而自生分別也。……蓋大學之道，……可以修心，可以養身，可以治世，無所處而不當矣，又何假釋老之說耶？

The last *juan* of Your Majesty's work was trying to argue that taking Buddhism to culture one's heart, taking Taoism to cultivate one's body, and

taking Confucianism to govern the society—this is originally trying to fuse them yet automatically making the distinction. ... Because the way of Confucianism... is able to culture one's heart, to cultivate one's body, and to govern the society. It won't be inappropriate at anywhere. Why do we have to borrow the Buddhism and Taoism?<sup>282</sup>

The MFZM altogether has 50 *juan*, including poems, miscillanious proeses, *ci* lyrics and *daqu* suites.<sup>283</sup> The seven pieces of *daqu* suites are: *Cailian* 采蓮·壽鄉辭 (“Lotus Plucking: Lyrics of the Realm of Longevity”), *Cailian wu* 采蓮舞 (“Lotus Plucking Dance”), *Taiqing wu* 太清舞 (“Dance of Extreme Clarity”), *Zhezhi wu* 柘枝舞 (“Dance of Cudrania Branches”), *Hua wu* 花舞 (“Dance of Flowers”), *Jian wu* 劍舞 (“Sword Dance”), and *Yufu wu* 漁父舞 (“Dance of Fisherman”).

### III. “Lotus Plucking Dance” (*cailian wu*) 採蓮舞 and court performance

The “Lotus Plucking Dance (*cailian wu* 採蓮舞)” is the second item in the seven-piece ensemble of Shi Hao's *daqu* collection. The first one, “Lotus Plucking: Lyrics of the Realm of Longevity (採蓮·壽鄉詞),” purely composed of singing lyrics without any instructional “musical words” (*yueyu*), is slightly different from other six pieces in terms of the format. Yet on the other hand, with a set of performing sections marked as *yanbian* 延徧 (“prolonged-movement”)—*dianbian* 擷徧 (“jerky-movement”)—*rupo* 入破 (“entering-breakdown”)—*gunbian* 袞徧 (“rolling-movement”)—*shicui* 實催 (“real-urge”)—*gunbian* 袞徧 (“rolling-movement”)—*xiepai* 歇拍 (“resting-the-clappers”)—*shagun* 煞袞 (“final-rolling”), this is a *daqu* composition with more typical Song *daqu* structure than the others.

The “Lyrics of the Realm of Longevity” in the title has already indicated an undertone of birthday celebration as its performing situation. The lyrics, which turn out to be a retrospective account of the emperor's prior incarnation in the celestial world, therefore, become a perfect match of this performing situation.

While the actual relationship between the “Lyrics of the Realm of Longevity” and the “Lotus Plucking Dance” remains uncertain in a way, it is clear that the former is purely singing lyrics, while the latter, with both lyrics and the so-called “musical words

<sup>282</sup> Shi Hao, “*Huizhou xuanshi yuzhi ‘Yuan Dao bian’*” (回奏宣示禦制原道辨), MFZM, *juan* 10.

<sup>283</sup> The *ci* lyrics and *daqu* suites, respectively 2 *juan*, were also collected in Zhu Xiaozang 朱孝臧 (1857-1931) *Qiangcun congshu* 彊村叢書, and were later collected in the *Quan songci* 全宋詞 (“Complete Song Ci Lyrics”). As for *Maofeng Zhenyin manlu* 鄧峰真隱漫錄, besides the *SKQS* 四庫全書 edition, a version we commonly see is in *Songji Zhenben congkan* 宋集珍本叢刊, Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2004.



(*yueyu*),” represents an integral dance performance, and therefore deserves our particular attention.

The composition starts with an explanation of the stage settings:

五人一字對廳立。竹竿子勾，念：

Five people stand in a line facing the hall. The “bamboo-pole” guy summons (them) and recites:

At the beginning of the performance, five dancers stand in a line facing the hall, where the audiences of the banquet are supposed to be seated. Compared to the Northern Song records on court performance, this apparently is a performance of a much smaller size. The “bamboo-pole” guy (*zhuganzi* 竹竿子) beckons the performers to enter the performing area and recites a prologue, which is also known as “greeting words” (*zhiyu* 致語):

伏以濃陰緩轡，化國之日舒以長。清奏當筵，治世之音安以樂。霞舒絳彩，玉照鉛華。玲瓏環佩之聲，綽約神仙之伍。朝回金闕，宴集瑤池。將陳倚棹之歌，式侑回風之舞。宜邀勝伴，用合仙音。女伴相將，採蓮入隊。

I humbly submit that: slacking the bridle amid lush shadows—the days of a cultivated state are leisurely and long. Fresh musical performances are at the mat—the tones of a well-ordered age are peaceful and joyous<sup>284</sup>. Rosy clouds spread crimson colors, jade shines upon white lead faces. The tinkling sound of jade ornaments; the graceful group of immortals. In the morning (they) return to the golden pylons, gathering for a banquet at the Jade Pond. (They) are about to present songs of “leaning on the oar,” to assist the “dance of whirling wind.” It is suitable to invite such wonderful companions, to match the transcendent’s sounds. Ladies together now, get into the troupe of plucking lotus.

As we have mentioned before, the “bamboo-pole” guy 竹竿子 is the “director of dance” in Song court musical performance, with a function close to that of the modern master of ceremonies. Holding a whisk made of bamboo-pole (竹竿拂子), the “bamboo-pole” guy presents the “greetings words” at the beginning of the performance and later gives commands to dancers or the dancing troupe.

What is particularly interesting in this ornate, parallel-prose opening issued by the “bamboo-pole” guy is that it makes a “self-revealing” sort of introduction to the performance context—the settings, audiences, occasions, performers, and so on. And by doing so it frames the performance within a context in which political harmony authorizes the leisure activities of banqueting and performance. While the appearance of dancers of otherworldly beauty are something we would expect to see as descriptions of female entertainers—the phrases are used to describe actresses, dancers, and even

---

<sup>284</sup> This line is from the “Great Preface” to the *Classic of Poetry*.

prostitutes in the Song—the “bamboo-pole” guy, deliberately fuses the transcendental atmosphere of the banquet with the authority of political rule, thereby blurring celestial and human scenes. There is an ambiguous moment concealed here. Both the descriptions of the dancers in cliché terms used for performance women and the “bamboo-pole” guy’s command to them, at this moment, masks their real transcendence, which appears only later as they explain how they have come to the dusty realm from their transcendent’s paradise. Structurally, this form of an introduction to authorize the performance that follows is typical of performing literature of this early era, occurring in *Zhugongdiao* 諸宮調, southern drama 南戲, and early Yuan *chuanqi* 傳奇. It is related, in its elemental use to the *yazuo wen* 押座文 of *bianwen* 變文 performance, to the *ruchang* 入場 of southern drama, and to the demi-stories of later performance fiction.

When the “bamboo-pole” guy finishes reciting, the musicians in the back line play the “Dual-head Lotus Tune (*shuangtou lian ling* 雙頭蓮令).” In the music, the dancers enter and separate in five directions:

勾念了，後行吹雙頭蓮令，舞上，分作五方。竹竿子又勾，念：

When beckon and recitation is finished, the back line plays the “Dual-head Lotus Tune.”<sup>285</sup> The dancers come onto the stage and separate to five directions. The “bamboo-pole” guy, again, beckons them and recites:

伏以波涵碧玉，搖萬頃之寒光。風動青蘋，聽數聲之幽韻。芝華雜遝，羽幟飄飄。疑紫府之羣英，集綺筵之雅宴。更憑樂部，齊迓來音。

I humbly submit that: the waves embrace green jade—vibrating chilly rays of ten-thousand *qing*. The wind swings the green duckweed—listen to the gentle rhythms of numerous sounds. Magic fungi and flowers are mixed and numerous, feathered and woven curtains toss and fly. It must be the hoard of blossoms from the “Purple-Residence”<sup>286</sup> gathering at this elegant banquet on exquisite mats. Let us now rely on the musical section to greet together the coming tones.

The scene of lotus pond and the ruffling of duckweed in the wind here, on one hand, is a description of an imagined secluded and refined landscape where gather the transcendent guests from the “Purple-Residence,” the protagonists of this performance. On the other hand, it could also be a sketching of the circumstances within which the performance was carried out.

*Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄, in a discussion of the performance of the “troupe of girls,” mentions a detail that “when the dance of ‘Lotus Plucking’ is performed,

<sup>285</sup> “Dual-head Lotus Tune” 雙頭蓮令: Dual-head (*shuang tou*), also known as “dual-dragging-head”

(*shuang ye tou* 雙曳頭) is a technical term of Song *ci* lyrics. In Song *ci* lyrics composed of three stanzas, when the first two stanzas are of the same syntactic pattern, they are treated as “dual-head” of the third stanza. A not-very-common form, it is seen in a few specific Song *ci* lyrics, such as “Dual-head Lotus (*Shuang tou lian* 雙頭蓮),” “Chant of Auspicious Dragon (*Rui long yin* 瑞龍吟),” etc.

<sup>286</sup> The “Purple-Residence” refers to the place that immortals live.

in front of the palace, lotus are set all around (或舞採蓮。則殿前皆列蓮花)。”<sup>287</sup> As a matter of fact, during the Song (or at least in the Northern Song), “Plucking Lotus” was one of the most popular court performances, and was specifically carried out by one of the “troupes of girls” with specific costumes and settings, according to *Song Shi*:

女弟子队一百五十三人：……六曰采莲队，衣红罗生色绰子，系晕裙，戴云鬟髻，乘彩船，执莲花。

The “troupe of girls” numbers person one hundred and fifty-three. ... The sixth is called “troupe of Plucking Lotus.” [Performers] dress with red gauzes and bright-colored vests, tying halo skirts, wearing cloud buns. They ride on colorful boats and hold lotus.<sup>288</sup>

In Chen Yang’s *Yue shu*, there is also similar account of the performance of “Lotus Plucking:”

採蓮之舞，衣紅繪短袖暈裙，雲鬟髻，乘綵船，持花。唐和凝採蓮曲曰：波上人如潘玉儿，掌中花似赵飞燕是也。今教坊雙調有焉。

As for the dance of “Lotus Plucking,” [performers] dress red embroidered short-sleeve [vests] and halo skirts, wearing cloud buns, riding on colorful boats and holding lotus. The “Tune of Plucking Lotus” by He Ning (898-955) of the Tang that says: “On the wave, girls are like Pan Yu’er; In the palm, flowers are like Zhao Feiyan<sup>289</sup>” is talking about this. Nowadays in the *shuang* tune of Training Quarter there is this song.<sup>290</sup>

From here we could easily imagine how vivid the circumstance of performance it must have been. While riding on colorful boats, holding lotus, and arranging of lotus plants are one way, for staging, to place the performance in a lotus pond, the lyrics recited by the “bamboo-pole” guy here that describe the lotus pond are, indubitably, meant to help the audience envision the scenery, in a way of embedding the performance context into the text.

At the end of this passage there is a typical stage instruction given by the “bamboo-pole” guy: “Let us now rely on the musical section to greet together the coming tones (更憑樂部，齊迓來音).” The back line, where the music section is, then “plays the ‘Lotus Plucking Tune’.” The dancers line up in a straight line and in unison sing the “Lotus Plucking Tune:”

練光浮，煙斂澄波渺。燕脂濕、靚妝初了。綠雲織上露滾滾，的皜真珠小。籠嬌媚、輕盈佇眺。無言不見，仙娥凝望蓬島。玉闕匆匆，鎮鎖

<sup>287</sup> DJM, p. 61.

<sup>288</sup> *Song Shi*, *juan* 142, p. 3350.

<sup>289</sup> Both Pan Yu’er and Zhao Feiyan are well-known beauties in Chinese history. They were respectively favored by Emperor Shao of Qi and Emperor Cheng of Han.

<sup>290</sup> YS, *juan* 185, p. 211-832.

佳麗春難老。銀潢急、星槎飛到。暫離金砌，為愛此、極目香紅繞。倚蘭棹。清歌縹緲。隔花初見，楚楚風流年少。

White light floating, the mist disperses and the clear waves are vast. The rouge moist, the beautiful makeup is just finished. On the green-cloud umbrella rolls the dew, as bright and small as the pearl. Frowning the fine eyebrows, gracefully we stand and look far into the distance. Without a word, one does not see the goddesses gazing at the Penglai Island. Time is fleeting by the Jade Tower, which locks in the beauties and the spring cannot grow old. The Silver Water is rapid, and the star raft<sup>291</sup> flies over here. For the time being we leave the golden bricks, for loving this—to exhaust one’s eyesight, fragrant flowers surround. Leaning on the orchid oar, the pure song is dim. Separated by flowers, at the first time we see the lovely and admirable young man.

This is the moment when those transcendent goddesses decide to leave their celestial residence out of their longing for this beautiful lotus pond in the dusty world. While they “fly” over here riding the “star raft,” the dancers, accordingly, line up in a straight line, a movement in dance performance that can be easily associated with relocation. It is, therefore, most intriguing to see in this performance text, how the lyrics function as the complement of the stage settings and facilitate the re-construction of the performance context.

The last line, “separated by flowers, at the first time we see the lovely and admirable young man (隔花初見，楚楚風流年少),” furthermore, complicates the situation by bringing up an admirable young man, usually a virtual object of romantic love, into this banquet entertaining scene. This is obviously ambiguous when we try to figure out whom this young man is, simply an imagined one who only serves as literary topos, or someone actually there among the audience, for instance, the emperor?

Here is a situation similar to the one in Zhou She’s *Shangyun yue* poem that we have talked about. There is likely no certain answer. What I would like to suggest is that different ways of treating these lyrics—as a literary composition simply for reading, or as a textual remnant being part of the actual performance—in some way would direct our choice between these two answers. And the latter one, to me, seems to be more tempting as it increases the ambiguity of the context by blurring the boundary of performance and reality, as the lyrics always do since the very beginning.

When the singing is done, the music section, again, plays the “Tune of Lotus Plucking,” while the dancers, again, separate to five directions. Hereafter comes another recitation of the “bamboo-pole” guy:

唱了，後行吹採蓮令，舞分作五方。竹竿子勾，念：

When the singing is finished, the back line plays the “Tune of Lotus Plucking.” The dancers separate to five directions. The “bamboo-pole” guy calls and recites:

---

<sup>291</sup> 星槎(*xingcha*, “Star raft”) is said to be a raft one rides from the sea to the Milky Way. Zhang Hua 張華, in his *Bowu zhi* 博物志, has an anecdote saying that a person who lived on an islet in the sea once took the star raft to the Milky Way and came across the ox shepherd and the weaving girl.

仗以遏雲妙響，初容與於波間；回雪奇容，乍婆娑於澤畔。愛芙蕖<sup>292</sup>之豔冶，有蘭芷之芳馨。躑躅凌波，洛浦未饒於獨步。雍容解佩，漢皋諒得以齊驅。宜到堦前，分明祇對。

I humbly submit that: the wonderful sound that obstructs the clouds, first lingers in the wave. The marvelous appearance as the whirling snow, suddenly starts dancing at the marsh bank. I love the coquettishness of the lotus, which possesses the fragrance of the orchid and angelica. As for their wavering paces above the waves, the Goddess of Luo does not excel them at exceptionalness. When they take off the jade pendants gracefully, (girls at) Hangao<sup>293</sup> are supposed to be the rival. It is suitable that they come in front of the steps to respond clearly.

In describing the beauty of coming transcendent guests, two allusions are employed here. Interestingly enough, as we have known, both the story about the Goddess of Luo and the anecdote on Zheng Jiaofu's mythical experience by the River of the Han are involved with a sort of romantic love between the goddess(es) and human being. This being considered, the lyrics here may indeed imply a tension/interaction between the mystical characters and the audience, and therefore indicate the current performance context.

The “bamboo-pole” guy asks them to “come to front of the steps to respond clearly (宜到堦前，分明祇對).” The “flower-heart” (*huaxin* 花心), a role roughly equivalent to the leading dancer of modern performance, comes forward for a recitation, explaining that they have been serving in the celestial world for a long time, but have come to the dusty world to share the happiness of this brilliant era and present their tunes to praise the peace of its rule:

花心出，念：

The flower-heart stands out and recites:

但兒等玉京侍席，久陟仙堦。雲路馳驂，乍遊塵世。喜聖明之際會，臻夷夏之清寧。聊尋澤國之芳，雅寄丹臺之曲。不慚鄙俚，少頌昇平。未敢自專，伏候處分。

Serving in the jade capital, we have ascended to the celestial steps for a long time. Riding the carriages through cloudy way, we first wander in the dusty world. We are happy about the opportunity of the brilliant, which reaches the pureness and peace of Yi and Xia. For the time being we search the fragrance of marsh land, and respectfully present the tunes of the Red Terrace (celestial realm). Not being ashamed of our vulgarity, for a short while we praise the peace. Not daring to act on our own initiative, we prostrate ourselves and wait for instructions.

---

<sup>292</sup> Liu Yongji's version has 芙蓉.

<sup>293</sup> Hangao 漢皋: It is said that when Zheng Jiaofu 鄭交甫 of Zhou met two goddesses at the Hangao Terrace, they took off their jade ornaments to present to Zheng. See *Wenxuan*.

Here again, as in the first “greeting words” by the “bamboo-pole” guy, we see a deliberate fusion of the transcendental atmosphere of the banquet with the political authorization, which, furthermore, blurs the celestial and human scenes.

竹竿子問，念：

The “bamboo-pole” guy asks and recites:

既有清歌妙舞，何不獻呈。

“Since you have delicate song and exquisite dance, why not present them?”

花心答，問：

The flower-heart answers by asking:

舊樂何在。

“Where is the previous music?”

竹竿子再問，念：

The “bamboo-pole” guy asks again, reciting:

一部儼然。

“Here is one set, intact.”

花心答，念：

The flower-heart answers, reciting:

再韻前來。

“We bring it forward with a second rhyme.”

This conversation between the “bamboo-pole” guy and the “flower-heart” or the dancer(s), though not seen in the “Entertainment Bureau Lyrics” by Su Shi or other Northern Song literati, appears as a fixed pattern in four of Shi Hao’s seven *daqu* compositions.<sup>294</sup> Structurally it leads to the “breakdown” (*rupo* 入破) of *daqu*, the real start of the dance performance:

念了，後行吹採蓮曲破，五人眾舞，到入破，先兩人舞出，舞到裊上住，當立處訖。又二人舞，又住，當立處，然後花心舞徹。

When they have finished the recitation, the back line plays the “breakdown” of the “Plucking Lotus Tune.” Five dancers perform ensemble. When it comes to “entering-the-breakdown,” first, two people dance out of the line, and stop only when they dance to the mat, at the spot they stood before. Another two dance, again, stop at the spot they stood before. Then the flower-heart finishes the dance<sup>295</sup>.

If we could, by any chance, see the performance, this is no doubt to be the most wonderful moment. “Breakdown,” *rupo* 入破 or *qupo* 曲破, as we have mentioned

---

<sup>294</sup> Besides “Dance of Plucking Lotus 採蓮舞,” the other three are “Dance of Supreme Clarity 太清舞,” “Dance of Cudrania Branches 柘枝舞,” and “Sword Dance 劍舞.” Actually, in the three pieces lacking this dialogue pattern, except the “Plucking Lotus (the Longevity Realm Lyrics 採蓮•壽鄉詞)” that is composed purely of lyrics, the other two —“Dance of Flowers 花舞” and “Dance of Fisherman 漁父舞”— are those in which the dancer(s) “give(s) command to themselves (*zigou ziqian* 自勾自遣).”

<sup>295</sup> *Che* 徹 is also a technical term of *daqu*, referring to the end of dancing.

before, is the section after the “mid-prelude (*zhongxu* 中序)” or “parallel movements (*paibian* 排遍),” where beats increase and dancers enter. One of the most vivid descriptions comes from Chen Yang’s *Yue shu*:

至於優伶常舞大曲，惟一工獨進，但以手袖為容，躡足為節，其妙串者，雖風旋鳥騫不踰其速矣。然大曲前緩疊不舞，至入破則羯鼓震鼓大鼓與絲竹合作，句拍益急，舞者入場，投節制容，故有催拍歇拍之異，姿制俯仰，百態橫出……

As for the *daqu* commonly performed by entertainers. Only one dancer steps forward alone, simply tugging on their sleeves as gesture, tapping their feet as rhythm. Those who are marvelous performers—even a whirlwind or a starting bird cannot beat her speed. Yet the first part of *daqu* is composed of slow movements without dancing. When it gets to the “breakdown,” then the Tibetan drum, the tremulous drum, and big drum play together with stringed and woodwind instruments, and the beats grow ever faster. The dancers enter the stage, stamping (along with) the rhythm and making gestures. Therefore there is the difference between “urging-the-clappers” and “resting-the-clappers.” In their postures and gestures they look up and bend down, and a hundred different forms come out at once.<sup>296</sup>

When the flower-heart finishes, the first round of dance ends, and all dancers return to the back of the mat, where they stood before. The “bamboo-pole” guy then presents a recitation, in which he recaptures the wonderful dancing scene:

伏以仙裾搖曳，擁雲羅霧縠之奇。紅袖翩翻，極鸞翻鳳翰之妙。再呈獻瑞，一洗凡容。已奏新詞，更留雅詠。

I humbly submit that: celestial gowns sway, possessing the wonder of cloudy gauze and misty crepe. Red sleeves fly and toss, expressing to the utmost the marvel of simurgh feather and phoenix pinion. Once again we render the presented auspicious, completely cleansing the worldly appearance. Already played are our new lyrics; all the more we linger in elegant chanting.

With these words, a new section of performance starts. In this section, the flower-heart first comes out to recite a poem, which reveals her true identity:

念了，花心念詩：

After the recitation, the flower-heart recites a poem:

我本清都侍玉皇。乘雲馭鶴到仙鄉。輕舳一葉煙波闊，嗜此秋潭萬斛香。

I was, before, at the Pure Capital<sup>297</sup> serving the Jade Emperor. Riding the clouds and driving the cranes I arrive at this celestial realm. With one light small boat,

<sup>296</sup> YS, *juan* 185, p. 211-831.

<sup>297</sup> The Pure Capital is the mythical palace that the Emperor of Heaven lives.

the misty wave is vast. I indulge myself in the fragrance of ten-thousand *hu* of this autumn pond.

Therefore, it turns out that she is the maid of the Jade Emperor (*yuhuang shiniü* 玉皇侍女). After the poem, the music section in the back line plays the tune of “Free-Spirited Fisherman (*yujia’ao* 漁家傲).” Then the flower-heart dances back onto the stage, sings the tune “after plucking a flower,” the mention of which is very likely a hint of the arrangement of flowers as stage settings, as discussed earlier:

念了，後行吹漁家傲。花心舞上，折花了，唱漁家傲：

After the recitation, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman”. The Flower-heart dances onto (the stage). After plucking the flower, she sings “Free-Spirited Fisherman.”

藥沼清冷涓滴水。迢迢煙浪三千里。微孕青房包繡綺。薰風裏。幽芳洗盡閑桃李。

羽氅飄蕭塵外侶。相呼短棹輕偎倚。一片清歌天際起。聲尤美。雙雙驚起鴛鴦睡。

The pond of buds is clear and chilly, into which tiny stream drips water. Distant misty wave is three thousand *li*. Slightly tumescent green bud wraps up the embroidered silk. In the fragrant breeze, delicate aroma is rinsed off and the peach and plum are idle.

With flying feathered cloak is the companion beyond the dusty world. Calling the short oar, they slightly lean on each other. A piece of pure song rises from the edge of sky. The sound is particularly beautiful, which startles a couple of sleeping mandarin ducks.

The images here in the second stanza, the “companion beyond the dusty world,” “slightly leaning on each other,” and the beautiful sound that “startles a couple of sleeping mandarin ducks,” all together constitute a scenery permeated with an obscure yet romantic atmosphere, which to some extent echoes with the subtle affections implicated by the fusion of transcendental and worldly scenes in the previous passages.

When the flower-heart finishes singing, the back line plays the tune of “Free-Spirited Fisherman (*yujia’ao*)” again:

唱了，後行吹漁家傲。五人舞，換坐，當花心立人念詩：

After the singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Five people dance, and switch their seats. The person standing as the flower-heart recites a poem:

Five dancers dance together and switch positions. The next girl who becomes the flower-heart then recites a poem and sings the tune, and the whole round goes again. It turns out that they are, respectively, the maid of the Jade Emperor (*yuhuang shiniü* 玉皇侍女), Goddess of the Jade Pond (*yaochi xianniü* 瑤池仙女), Goddess who Plays the Mouth Organ (*chuisheng xianniü* 吹笙仙女), Goddess of Brocade Weaving (*zhijin tiansun* 織錦



天孫),<sup>298</sup> and Goddess of The Peachblossom Spring (*taoyuan xianni* 桃源仙女).

After finishing, all five dancers switch back to their original position in the tune of “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” The “bamboo-pole” guy, again, makes a recitation:

唱了，後行吹漁家傲。五人舞，換坐如初。竹竿子勾，念：

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Five people dance, and switch to their previous seats. The “bamboo-pole” guy calls and recites:

伏以珍符滄至，朝廷之道格高深；年谷屢豐，郡邑之和薰遐邇。式均歡宴，用樂清時。感游女於仙衢，詠奇葩於水國。折來和月，露浥霞腮；舞處隨風，香盈翠袖。既徜徉於玉砌，宜宛轉于雕梁。爰有佳賓，冀聞清唱。

I humbly submit that: precious symbols continuously arriving, the way of the court sets straight that from the highest and deepest. Yearly harvest oftentimes abundant, the harmony of counties exerts far and near. Here we share in the just portioning of happy banquet, so as to celebrate delight in pure age. We are moved by the roaming ladies at celestial road, so as to chant the wonderful flowers at the water state. When breaking it down to match the moon, dew moistures the cloudy cheek. The dancing spots are along with the wind, fragrance brim over the green sleeves. (Their dance) already wandered about on the jade steps, (their song) ought to be swirling at carved roof-beam. Here are honored guests. We hope to hear the pure singing.

In which he summarizes “the way of the court (朝廷之道)” and “the harmony of the counties (郡邑之和)” are what authorize the happy banquet as well as initiate the performance by the celestial ladies.

After that, the “pure singing” is required by the “bamboo-pole” guy. The performers thus sing in unison the tune “Spring of Painted Hall (*huatang chun* 畫堂春)” and *Hechuan* 河傳, the first to express how happy they are, and the second to excuse them for being urged to return. Each song is followed by the same tune played by the music section and a troupe dance.

At the finale, the “bamboo-pole” guy releases the troupe by reciting “Now that song and dance are finally done, let us rise and leave together (歌舞既闌，相將好去),” a patterned expression we also see in Su Shi’s “Training Quarter Lyrics.” Then the back line, again, plays the “Dual-head Lotus Tune,” as they did at the beginning of the performance. The five dancers form one line and exit to the rhythm of beating drums:

念了，後行吹雙頭蓮令。五人舞轉作一行，對廳杖鼓出場。

After recitation, the back line plays the “Dual-head Lotus Tune.” Five people dance and turn into one line. Facing the hall, they exit to the rhythm of beating drums.

---

<sup>298</sup> Literally the Granddaughter of the Goddess, the Weaving Maiden Star, Vega.

Once performance is textualized it ceases to exist as a “live” event and becomes a fossilized artifact; to reconstruct its performance context is no doubt to historicize it. The lyrics, as well as the “musical words” interwoven with the lyrics, in the case of *daqu* performance, become the key point from where we start our project of re-creation.

As a “multimedia” performance, this “Lotus Plucking” *daqu* involves various forms of performance, as enumerated by the contemporary scholar Liu Yongji:

此曲有吹、有唱、有念、有舞。吹者樂調，唱者曲詞，念者勾遣隊詞及詩，舞者有花心舞、五人舞、二人舞、眾舞。又有竹竿子與花心問答之詞，有折花之姿勢。其樂調有雙頭蓮令二疊，一用之最前，一用之最末。采蓮令共二疊，采蓮曲破一疊，漁家傲共十疊，畫堂春一疊，河傳一疊。曲詞同樂調，惟雙頭蓮令無詞。其組織井井可觀，大抵取大曲入破以後稍變化之而成。竹竿子者，勾遣隊人，手執竹竿拂子，以供指揮者。舞者皆扮作仙女，……此五人各念詩一首，表明身分。念詩後，花心唱詞一首。詞語亦合其身分。每舞必有唱，唱一詞畢，則吹此詞之樂調以應之。其舞有分作五方者，有轉作一直者，有轉作一行者，有換坐者。出場時，有杖鼓。蓋太平之時，士大夫歌舞之盛會如此也。

In this song there are instrumental playing, singing, recitation, and dancing. Those played are tunes, those sung are lyrics, those recited are command on the troupe and poems, and those danced include solos by the flower-heart, dances by groups of five, by groups of two, as well as ensemble dance. There are also questions and answers between the “bamboo-pole” guy and the flower-heart, as well as mimicking of plucking flowers. As for the tunes, there are two pieces of “Dual-head Lotus Tune,” one at the beginning and one at the end. There are two pieces of “Lotus Plucking Tune,” one piece of the “breakdown” of “Lotus Plucking Tune,” ten pieces of “Free-Spirited Fisherman,” one piece of “Spring of Painted Hall,” and one piece of *hechuan*. There are lyrics matching the tunes, only except that no lyrics for “Dual-head Lotus Tune.” The structure is very organized, mostly from slight revisions of the part after the “breakdown” of *daqu*. The “bamboo-pole” guy is the one who gives command to the troupe, holding the bamboo-pole to make instructions. All dancers play as goddesses. ... Five people recite poems announcing their respective identities. After recitation, the flower-heart sings a tune, the lyric of which also matches her identity. Whenever there is a dance, there is singing. When the singing is done, [the music section] then plays its tune to correspond. As for the dance, there are cases that the dancers separate to five directions, that they turn into one row or one line, and that they switch their positions. When they exit, there are beating drums. During a peaceful time, the banquet performances of officials are mostly like this.<sup>299</sup>

Focusing on various performing modes—instrumental playing, singing, recitation, and dancing—involved in this *daqu* performance, Liu’s argument is indubitably an attempt at reconstructing the “Lotus Plucking” *daqu* as an enriched and manifold performance, a

---

<sup>299</sup> Liu Yongji 1957, p. 24.

typical banquet performance by the officials “during a peaceful time.” Yet besides this kind of restoration on the most direct and straightforward aspects of performance, there are some other things about performance context that concern us, among which the milieu of medieval court performance is of particular importance to the tradition of “Lotus Plucking”—both as literature and as performance.

The recitation of the “bamboo-pole” guy reminds us of the performance context and the dramatic frame in which the narrative unfolds. In terms of literary tradition, from the “*Jiangnan ke cailian* 江南可採蓮” (“Lotus Plucking at the South of Yangzi River”) folk song to the big court suite, from the working scene at the rural pond to the theatrical performance in the imperial palace, from the women in the countryside to the goddesses descending from the Jade Pond, the topos of “plucking lotus” has gone through a long process of transformation, in which its adoption for court literature and performance figures prominently throughout.

The first appearance of “Lotus Plucking” songs in a court repertoire dates to the reign of Emperor Wu of the Liang (464–549). According to *Yuefu shiji*, the “Lotus Plucking Tune” (採蓮曲) was one of the seven tunes of *Jiangnan nong* 江南弄 (“The Music at the South of Yangzi River”) revised from the “Western Tunes” (*xiqu* 西曲) and composed by the Emperor Wu of Liang in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of Tianjian Reign (512). The lyrics go as follows:

遊戲五湖採蓮歸，	Having wandered at five lakes, we return from plucking lotus;
發花田葉芳襲衣。	Flowers in blossom, leaves connected together, the fragrance attacks our clothes.
為君儂 <sup>300</sup> 歌世所希。	The beautiful song for my lord <sup>301</sup> is precious in the world.
世所希，有如玉。	Precious in the world, it is like jade.
江南弄，採蓮曲。	The Music at the South of Yangzi River, the “Lotus Plucking Tune.” <sup>302</sup>

Before the lyrics *Yuefu shiji* cites a short notes from *Gujin yuelu* 古今樂錄, which says:

《採蓮曲》，和云：“採蓮渚，窈窕舞佳人。”

In the “Lotus Plucking Tune,” the echo sound goes: “Plucking lotus on the islet, graceful are the dancing beauties.”<sup>303</sup>

The authorship of this composition, first of all, largely decided the way we take this text,

<sup>300</sup> According to YFSJ, in *Shiji* 詩紀 *juan* 64 and *Baisan mingjia ji* 百三名家集 the 儂 here is written as 豔, which makes sense.

<sup>301</sup> Here *jun* 君 can either be used as a second-person address in a way of direct speech during a performance, or mean “the lord/emperor.” Hence I use the translation here to reconcile these two possibilities.

<sup>302</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 50, p. 727.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*

ascribing it to a performance text associated with court entertainment. The first couplet, therefore, is rather a picture of dance performance in the palace than a description on a real working scene at the rural lotus pond. In the third line, the word *jun* 君, as noted, can both work as a second-person address in direct speech during a performance, and at the same time refer to “the lord/emperor,” who is the primary intended audience.

Moreover, if in the lyrics a certain ambiguity about the context persists, the echo sound “Plucking lotus on the islet, graceful are the dancing beauties (採蓮渚，窈窕舞佳人)” noted by the *Gujin yuelu* strengthens our conjecture on its feature of court performance by pointing out the “dancing beauties” as the objects of chanting.

As a matter of fact, this kind of subtle affection between the young man (*jun* 君) and young woman (*qie* 妾) has always been one of the major themes in the “lotus plucking” performance during this period of transformation. For instance, the Emperor Jianwen of the Liang (503–551) also has compositions for the “Lotus Plucking Tune,” in which there are lines such as:

蓮疏藕折香风起。	Lotus sparse, lotus root snapped, the fragrant breeze starts.
香风起，白日低，	Fragrant breeze starts, and the bright sun is low;
采蓮曲，使君迷。	The “Lotus Plucking Tune” bewitches my lord. <sup>304</sup>
千春誰與樂，	In thousand springs, with whom to have fun;
唯有妾隨君。	Only me and my lord. <sup>305</sup>

And only later this was substituted by the romantic love between the human lord and the celestial goddess, as implicated by the *daqu* of Shi Hao.

Reading this *daqu* “Lotus Plucking Dance” together with other relevant accounts on medieval court performance turns out to be a rewarding experience, suggesting how *daqu* suite, as a performance text, functions as a mediary for literati composition and performance. Even though no authoritative record has been found so far to recount the actual performance of Shi Hao’s *daqu* composition, the accounts we have mentioned found in official histories, “capital journals,” and music documents offer a useful complement in reading *daqu* as performance texts. This “Lotus Plucking” *daqu*, in turn, works as a perfect individual case to supplement and support our imagination in reconstructing the performance context inferred from historical records.

---

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 729.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 731.

#### IV. “Sword Dance” 劍舞: intertextualization and performance context

Among the seven *daqu* pieces in Shi Hao’s MFZM collection, “Sword Dance,” in which two celebrated stories of different era are amusingly staged together, is probably the one of most interest, due to its distinctive way of embedding inventive narrative techniques in a traditional dance performance.

At the beginning of the performance, two dancers stand opposite each other facing the hall. The “bamboo-pole” guy (竹竿子) beckons them onto the stage and recites a prologue:

伏以玳席歡濃，金樽興逸，聽歌聲之融曳，思舞態之飄飄。爰有仙童，能開寶匣。佩幹將莫邪之利器，擅龍泉秋水之嘉名。鼓三尺之瑩瑩，雲間閃電；橫七星之凜凜，掌上生風。宜到芳筵，同翻雅戲。

I humbly submit that: on the tortoiseshell-bordered mat<sup>306</sup>, happiness is rich; beside the golden goblet, the mood is free and fanciful. We listening to harmonious and lilting sounds, and long for the graceful swing of the dance. Then there come celestial boys who are able to open the treasure box. They wear the sharp implements(sword) of Ganjiang and Moye, and brandish the good fame of “dragon spring” and “autumn water.”<sup>307</sup> When they thrum the sparkling swords of three *chi*, there is lightning among the clouds; when they hold the chilly swords of seven stars, wind blows from the palms of their hands. It is suitable that they come to the fragrant banquet to make together an elegant play.

As we have mentioned before, the role of “bamboo-pole” guy is close to the host/emcee whom we would expect to see at the performance nowadays. What is interesting here is the ambiguity stemmed from a fusion of transcendental and worldly atmosphere in depicting the banquet settings: the description of the banquet, the harmonious music, and the longing for the dance, all would indubitably remind the audience of the real performance circumstance to which they currently place themselves; on the other hand, the names of precious swords, the numerous legends that these names remind us, the “celestial boys,” and the “treasure box,” constitute a sublation of the reality, and increase a hint of storytelling.

The following narration issued by the two dancers, one step further, stresses a circumstance that we are familiar in the accounts of “roaming transcendents” (*youxian* 遊仙):

伏以五行擢秀，百鍊呈功。炭熾紅爐，光噴星日；斨新雪刃，氣貫虹霓。

<sup>306</sup> “tortoiseshell-bordered mats:” the Chinese in Tang times sat on mats on the floor during banquets, where such ballets were staged. Tortoiseshell-bordered mats were very grand.

<sup>307</sup> “Ganjiang,” “Moye,” “dragon spring,” and “autumn water” are all names of precious swords with sharp edges.

鬥牛間紫霧浮游，波濤裏蒼龍締合。久因佩服，粗習徊翔。茲聞閨苑之群仙，來會瑤池之重客。輒持薄技，上侑清歡。未敢自專，伏候處分。

I humbly submit that: from the Five Phases, is extracted the fineness; of a hundred temperings is displayed the achievement. Charcoal blazes in the red furnace, whose light spurts to the stars and the sun; the whetstone renews the snow-bright edge, the air of which pierces the rainbow. Between the Big Dipper and the Ox constellations<sup>308</sup> floats the purple mist; in the great waves assemble the constellations of the Grey Dragon. Have been long wearing (the swords), we somewhat accustomed to spiraling and soaring. Now, upon hearing of assembled immortals at the fairy garden, we come to meet important guests at Jade Pond. Holding our trivial skill, above we assist the pure enjoyment. Not daring to act on our own initiative, we prostrate ourselves and wait for instructions.

The mythical procedure of sword-making described in the first part has distinctly integrated the mysterious process of alchemy or the preparation of the elixir of longevity of Taoism. When this is done, in the second part, there is a transition of location. The “performance context”—here I mean the most direct connotation of this conception: performance settings, audience, occasion, and so on—is interestingly blurred, through its being recounted in the dancers’ recitation. Here thus comes an issue of the intended audience. Are they—those who are watching this *daqu* performance—really the “important guests of Jade Pond,” to whom these two dancers are supposed to present their performance? Or, are they just worldly audience who watch those “guests of Jade Pond” watching a celestial performance? Nevertheless, to propose such questions here does not necessarily mean to seek any possible answers; what I would like to suggest is a sort of potential narrative comes along with the involvement of “performance context” into a performance text.

The following conversation between “bamboo-pole” guy and the dancers turns out to be a formula that is also seen in several other *daqu* texts by Shi Hao. The mention of “previous music” (*jiuyue*) subtly reminds the audience of its linkage to the previous *daqu* tradition:

竹竿子問

“Bamboo-pole” guy asks

既有清歌妙舞，何不獻呈。

“Since you have delicate song and exquisite dance, why not present them?”

二舞者答

Two dancers answer

舊樂何在。

“Where is the previous music?”

竹竿子再問

“Bamboo-pole” guy asks again

---

<sup>308</sup> *Douniu*: Name of two constellations. It is said that at the beginning of Jin dynasty, there were always purple clouds floating. Someone thought that was caused by the essence of precious sword. Later, *douniu* also refers to precious sword.

一部儼然。

“Here is one set, intact.”

二舞者答

Two dancers answer

再韻前來。

“We bring it forward with a second rhyme.”

Next, the music section sings the “breakdown” of the “Sword Song.”<sup>309</sup> When finishing a segment of dance, two dancers sing together the “Horn of Dawn in the Frosty Sky:”

熒熒巨闕。左右凝霜雪。且向玉階掀舞，終當有，用時節。唱徹。人盡說。寶此剛不折<sup>310</sup>。內使奸雄落膽，外須遣、豺狼滅。

Glittering and gleaming are the huge palaces. To the left and right freeze the frost and snow. For the time being dance towards the jade steps; after all there should be time to be used. Upon finishing singing, people are all pleased. To treasure this solidness that will not break (the swords), inside we make the treacherous braves all fail in courage; outside jackals and wolves have to be extinguished.

As in the “Lotus Plucking Dance,” the above conversation between the bamboo-pole guy and the dancers in procedure leads to the “breakdown,” the actual start of singing and dancing performance. The following singing lyrics of the two dancers, in particular the last sentence, “inside we make the treacherous braves all fail in courage; outside jackals and wolves have to be extinguished (內使奸雄落膽，外須遣、豺狼滅),” have been connected in recent scholarship with Southern Song politics as a justification of Shi Hao’s positions.<sup>311</sup> Whether or not such connections are warranted, the lyrics here noticeably make the performance a deviation from previous transcendental atmosphere by revealing a sort of heroic spirit and political passion, and therefore prepare well for the narration of the upcoming well-known story of the Han ruler.

The music section next sings a song, and two dancers perform a dance of the “breakdown” of the “Sword Song.” On finishing their dance, they stand at two sides separately. Another two people with Han dynasty apparel come out and sit down opposite each other. On a table are arrayed wine and fruits. There follows a recitation of the “bamboo-pole” guy.

伏以斷蛇大澤，逐鹿中原。佩赤帝之真符，接蒼姬之正統。皇威既振，天命有歸。（量）勢雖盛於重瞳，（度）德難勝於隆准<sup>312</sup>。鴻門設會，亞父

<sup>309</sup> Compared to the “Dance of Plucking Lotus,” where the “back line” only plays musical instruments, the music section in this performance seems to be playing the role of chorus as well by providing ensemble singing. The lyric of the “breakdown” of the “Sword Song” is unknown though.

<sup>310</sup> Another version has “寶此制無折.”

<sup>311</sup> See Zhao Xiaolan 1999.

<sup>312</sup> Another version has no 量 and 度.

輸謀。徒矜起舞之雄姿，厥有解紛之壯士。想當時之賈勇，激烈飛颺；宜後世之效顰，迴旋宛轉。雙鸞奏技，四坐騰歡。

I humbly submit that: to kill the snake in the great marsh; to chase the deer in the central land. Wearing the genuine tally of the Emperor Chi<sup>313</sup>, and carrying the legitimate succession of the Grey Ji<sup>314</sup>. Once the imperial power has been stirred, the heavenly mandate has a place to find itself. Although the power was greatest at the “double pupils,”<sup>315</sup> as for the virtue, it is hard to surpass the “high nose.”<sup>316</sup> At the banquet at Hongmen, Yafu [=Fan Zeng] loses on tactics. In vain he brags about the grand manner of dancing, but lacked the heroic person to solve the dispute. To think about the courage of that time, it was widely exciting and exhilarating. It is suitable that the imitation of later ages twists, twirls, turns, gyres. A pair of simurghs present their skills, guests at the four directions are joyfully excited.

While the two allusions in the first line immediately indicate the protagonist of the story, the phrases of “genuine tally” and “legitimate succession” in the second couplet, furthermore, explicitly suggest a judgement on the status of the ruler of the Han. Therefore, this episode here is obviously associated with that dramatic historical moment between the two powerful competitors of the Han that has been vividly depicted in the *Shi ji* 史記 (“Records of The Grand Historian”).

If we are to picture the scene on the stage, here then, most likely, comes the first climax of the performance—for not only is the stunning story recounted, the audience is told that “the imitation of later age (後世之效顰),” an attempt to recapture that elusive and pivotal moment of history is to be unfolded before their eyes:

樂部唱曲子。舞劍器曲破一段。一人左立者上裊舞，有欲刺右漢裝者之勢。又一人舞進前翼蔽之。舞罷，兩舞者並退，漢裝者亦退。

The music section sings the song, and (the dancers) perform one segment of the “breakdown” of the “Sword Song.” One person who was standing on the left comes onto the mat to dance, making a gesture as if desiring to stab the person on the right, who is dressed in Han apparel. One other person comes forward dancing to protect and give him a cover. When the dance is finished, both dancers withdraw together. Those dressed in Han apparel also withdraw.

As we can tell, the two people in Han dynasty apparel must be Liu Bang and Xiang Yu, the two potential rulers of the Han. The two dancers, on the other hand, must be respectively playing the roles of Xiang Zhuang and Xiang Bo, while Zhuang tries to stab Liu Bang and Bo constantly provides Liu a cover. What makes later researchers most interested probably is the presence of the two people in Han apparel here, who are in fact “actors” that fall out of the conventional categories of performers (singers, dancers, musical sections, etc.) in traditional *daqu* performance.

<sup>313</sup> Emperor Chi: also known as Emperor Yan, or *Shennong* 神農.

<sup>314</sup> Grey Ji: refers to the Zhou Dynasty. It is believed that Zhou Dynasty rises from the constellation of Grey Dragon. Ji is the surname of Zhou.

<sup>315</sup> “double pupils:” refers to Xiang Yu.

<sup>316</sup> “high nose:” refers to Liu Bang.



When both the dancers and actors withdraw, immediately following this episode comes another story that is even more interesting:

複有兩人唐裝出，對坐。桌上設筆硯紙，舞者一人換婦人裝立裊上。竹竿子勾、念

And then two people dressed in Tang apparel come out and sit opposite one another. On the table are set brush, ink stone and paper. One dancer changes to female clothing and stands on the mat. The “bamboo-pole” guy leads (the dancers) onstage and recites:

伏以雲鬢聳蒼壁，霧縠罩香肌。袖翻紫電以連軒，手握青蛇而的皜。花影下、遊龍自躍，錦裊上、蹠鳳來儀。軼態橫生，瑰姿譎起。傾此入神之技，誠為駭目之觀。巴女心驚，燕姬色沮。豈唯張長史草書大進，抑亦杜工部麗句新成。稱妙一時，流芳萬古。宜呈雅態，以洽濃歡。

I humbly submit that: on the cloudy hair rises the green jade; misty crepe covers the fragrant skin. The sleeves rolling with the “purple lightning sword,” fly and flow; the hands holding “Green Snake” are white and bright.<sup>317</sup> In the shadow of flowers, a meandering dragon leaps naturally; on the brocade mat, a hopping phoenix comes to pay court. Extraordinary postures are produced without end; magnificent gestures unexpectedly appear. Pouring out such marvellous skill, truly creates a scene to startle one’s eyes. Girls of Ba—their hearts are shocked; the beauties of the Yan—their beauty pales. Could it simply be that the Administrator Zhang’s cursive calligraphy has made great strides? Or that Minister Du’s beautiful phrases are newly composed? They were acclaimed as marvelous in their own time, and have left their fragrance behind for ten thousand antiquities. It is suitable to present these elegant gestures to perfectly match this rich pleasure.

Seeing this, nobody will have any difficulty in recalling that famous poem composed by the mid-Tang poet Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) “Watching the Sword Dance Performed by the Pupil of the Elder Sister of Gongsun (观公孙大娘弟子舞剑器行).” In the poem, not only did the poet express his admiration and missing of the wonderful skill of the Mistress Gongsun, but also the anecdote about how Zhang Xu 张旭 (675–750?), the Du’s contemporary celebrated calligrapher, who benefitted from the marvellous art of Gongsun and improved his cursive handwriting, was mentioned in the preface as verification of the efficacy of Gongsun’s performance. The settings of the stage—brush, ink stone and paper put on the table—are cleverly arranged that they may either refer to Zhang’s calligraphic handwritings, or Du’s composing of the poem.

When the recitation of the “bamboo-pole” guy is done, the music section again sings the song. Two dancers perform a dance of the “breakdown” of the “Sword Song,” with a manner “as if the dragon and snake wriggling and meandering (作龍蛇蜿蜒曼舞之勢).” Two persons with Tang apparel then stand up. Two dancers—one male and one “female”—dance facing each other. Then the “breakdown” of the “Sword Song” ends. The “bamboo-pole” guy recites at last:

<sup>317</sup> Both “purple lightning” and “green snake” are names of precious swords.

項伯有功扶帝業，大娘馳譽滿文場。合茲二妙甚奇特，堪使佳賓酌一觴。  
霍如羿射九日落，矯如群帝駢龍翔。來如雷霆收震怒，罷如江海凝清光。  
歌舞既終，相將好去。

Xiang Bo possessed the merit of supporting the imperial enterprise. The Elder Sister had her fame spread all over the literary field. It is truly marvellous to combine these two wonders, more than enough to make our honorable guests pour one more goblet. With flashes like the Archer Yi shot down the nine bright suns<sup>318</sup>, and vigour like the Genji drove the dragons on cloud-way. When rushed on, it's the thunders rolling in the fury. And when finished, it's the sea calmed down with smooth rays. Now that song and dance are done, let us rise and leave together.

The whole performance thus ends in the “bamboo-pole” guy’s recitation, which summarizes the reason why these two episodes were chosen to be presented. Performances by Xiang Bo and Elder Sister Gongsun, one military and one civil, though in different dynasties, both are about sword dances, the combining of which is truly marvellous to “make our honorable guests pour one more goblet.” The next four lines are actually borrowed from Du Fu’s poem on the Elder Sister of Gongsun. In the end, the whole performance ends in a patterned sending-off line “Now that song and dance are done, let us rise and leave together (歌舞既終，相將好去).”

Previous research on Shi Hao’s “Sword Dance,” as expected, mainly focuses on the presence of two historical episodes, attempting to associate this *daqu* genre with another contemporary literary/performance genre—drama. For example, Liu Yongji, in his *Song dai gewujuqu luyao* 宋代歌舞劇曲錄要, categorizes this performance with storytelling using a term “singing-and-dancing drama” (*gewuxi* 歌舞戲), and mentions that, Shi Hao’s ‘Sword Dance’ ... “already possesses the incipient form of drama (史浩的劍舞詠鴻門宴及公孫大娘舞劍器事，已具戲劇的雛形).”<sup>319</sup>

Ren Bantang, on the other hand, based upon two major texts of “Sword Dance” surviving from the Tang—three “Lyrics of Sword Dance” (*Jianqi ci* 劍器詞) by Yao He (姚合, ?779–?846) and three preserved in Dunhuang materials—makes an attempt to reconstruct the manner of its performance during the Tang. Providing rich evidence on the musical and dancing form of the performance, he concludes that this “Sword Dance”

---

<sup>318</sup> The four lines hereafter are from Du Fu’s poem “Watching the Sword Dance Performed by the Pupil of the Elder Sister of Gongsun(观公孙大娘弟子舞剑器行).” It is said in Chinese fairy tales that there had been ten suns in the sky and Archer yi had shot nine of them down.

<sup>319</sup> Liu Yongji 1957. p.31

Ren Bantang, in his *Dunhuang qu chutan*, also mentions that in the list of *zaju* of the Southern Song, there is one named “Bawang jianqi” (《霸王劍器》), which is likely performing the story of Hongmen banquet as well. See Ren Bantang 1954, p. 191.

of Southern Song, in terms of both music and dance, actually has nothing to do with that of the Tang, and that in the “Sword Dance” performed by the Elder Sister of Gongsun, what she held was even not a sword at all!<sup>320</sup>

These attempts, either to trace the possible influence that *daqu* may have exerted upon other genres, or to tease out the gradual changes taking place within a single genre are both of significance. What I would like to suggest, particularly in tracking down the alleged feature of “narrative,” however, is to conceive the lyric both as a performance component (historically) and as a literary genre (textually).

The lyrics in *daqu* are essentially a sort of dance lyric. As we have mentioned in the first chapter, the complicated entanglement of ritual and performance noticeably determines dance movement to be something symbolic. In other words, dance, because of its mimetic feature, turns out to be something imitating/recounting, most likely, an honorable historical moment in a case of ritual ceremony. The function of lyric in this context is to help the audience to envision that great scenario while dance recreates that moment in the present through simulation.

But both the sound of music and the presence of dancing, in terms of Chinese medieval performance, are something transient. The lyric, however, is different in that it is both transient—of the moment—yet at the same time passed on to later generations. As I have mentioned, the lyric in the performance text, as a textual remnant, can be taken as a representation that fossilizes the “performance context,” an attempt to preserve the transient moment of performance. In spite of all the difficulties in trying to give a specific definition to “performance context,” it is, however, possible to point out that it includes not only temporal and spatial elements of the very moment of performing, but also various situational factors such as the motivation and initiator, the participants and audience, the musical settings and stage effect, the atmosphere of the performance, etc. What is more, it may also include the intertextual linkage indicating its location in terms of the performance and literary tradition, as illustrated in the current case of “Sword Dance.”

When we read the accounts of the lady Gongsun in Shi Hao’s “Sword Dance” along with Du Fu’s poem “Watching the Sword Dance Performed by the Pupil of the Elder Sister of Gongsun(觀公孫大娘弟子舞劍器行),” it is interesting to see how this anecdote is presented in an unexpected frame at Shi Hao’s place. In the preface to his own poem, Du Fu explains what incited him to compose the work:

大歷二年十月十九日，夔府別駕元持宅見臨穎李十二娘舞劍器，壯其蔚跂。問其所師，曰：“余公孫大娘弟子也。”開元三載，余尚童稚，記於郾城觀公孫氏舞劍器渾脫，瀏漓頓挫，獨出冠時。自高頭宜春、梨園二伎坊內人，洎外供奉舞女，曉是舞者，聖文神武皇帝初，公孫一人而已。玉貌錦衣，況余白首，今茲弟子，亦匪盛顏。既辨其由來，知波瀾莫二。撫事慷慨，聊為《劍器行》。昔者吳人張旭，善草書書帖，數嘗於鄴縣見公孫大娘舞西河劍器，自此草書長進，豪蕩感激，即公孫可知矣。

In the tenth month, the nineteenth day, the second year of Dali period, at the

---

<sup>320</sup> Ren Bantang 1954, pp. 177–192.

home of Yuanchi, vice magistrate of Kuizhou, I saw the sword dance performed by the Twelfth Sister of Li from Linying. Being surprised at her splendid fencing, I asked her who her teacher was and she replied: “I am a pupil of the Elder Sister of Gongsun.”

In the third year of Kaiyuan period, when I was very young, I remember I saw in Yan City Mistress Gongsun performing sword dance, which was so crafty and rhythmical that none could be her superior of the day. At the beginning of Emperor Xuanzong period, of all the musicians of or outside the Fair Spring and Pear Garden, the two court schools, Gongsun was the only one mastering the dance. She was then so beautiful in her embroidered dress, and now that even I am grey-haired, her pupil must be past her blooming years too! Having made out whom she has learned from, I know the likeness between the source and the effluent. And as the vicissitude of life worries me, I write the Sword Dance Poem.

In the past, Zhang Xu of Wu County was good at cursive handwriting on scrolls. He, at Ye County, has seen several times Mistress Gongsun’s West River Sword Dance. Since then, his writing was much improved, so unrestrained and emotional, that one may recall how marvellous Gongsun’s art was.

Accounts on Mistress Gongsun’s marvellous skill can also be found in many other literary and historical works during the Tang period. Ren’s work *Dunhuang qu chutan* 敦煌曲初探, when discussing the development of “Dance of *jianqi* 劍器舞”, has provided a rather comprehensive research on that.<sup>321</sup> For instance, Zheng Yu 鄭嶠 of late Tang, in his poem “Jinyang Gate” (*Jinyang men* 津陽門), which describes the magnificent picture of imperial banquet performance on celebrating Emperor Xuanzong’s birthday, says that “Gongsun’s sword performance was marvellous (公孫劍伎方神奇),” with an annotation that “there was Sword dance performed by Mistress Gongsun that was considered imposing and crafty at that time (有公孫大娘舞劍，當時號為雄妙).”

A brief introduction about Zhang Xu is provided in *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩, where the influence he received from Mistress Gongsun’s Sword Dance performance is also mentioned:

張旭，蘇州吳人。嗜酒，善草書，每醉後號呼狂走，乃下筆，或以頭濡墨而書，既醒，自視以為神，世呼為張顛。初仕為常熟尉，自言始見公主擔夫爭道，又聞鼓吹而得筆法意，觀公孫大娘舞劍器，乃盡其神。時以李白詩歌、旭草書、及裴旻劍舞為三絕。

Zhang Xu was a person from Suzhou in Wu County. He was addicted to wine, and good at cursive handwriting. Whenever he was drunk, he ran wildly while shouting, till when he started writing. Sometimes he immersed his hair to the ink to write. After he sobered, he checked his writings and considered them marvelous. People called him “Madman Zhang.” First appointed as the

---

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*

magistrate of Changshu, he himself said that only when he saw princess and load-carrier striving for the road, and heard drumming and pipe-blowing did he realize the art of stroke manner. When he watched Mistress Gongsun performing Sword Dance, he then thoroughly got the spirit (of calligraphy). At that time, the poems of Li Bai, the cursive handwriting of Zhang Xu, and the sword performance of Pei Min were considered three consummate skills.<sup>322</sup>

In fact, the inspiration that sword performance provided to the art of calligraphy or painting was a favored in the Tang anecdotes. Pei Min 裴旻, a Tang general well-known for his sword skill, was said to have a deep influence on the painting of Wu Daozi 吳道子, a famous Tang painter, the story of which is recorded in *Minghuang zalu* 明皇雜錄.<sup>323</sup>

The narrative of the following verse in Du Fu's poem proceeds chronologically: from recalling the poet's reminiscence of watching lady Gongsun's performance, to recounting this experience of encountering her pupil, and ending in his feelings of sorrow and grief. Among them, the essential and most magnificent part that gives vivid description on the "Sword Dance" performance is the first section that reads:

昔有佳人公孫氏， In former days there was a fair lady of Gongsun family,  
一舞劍器動四方。 Her Sword dance, once played, stirred that in all directions.

觀者如山色沮喪， A mountain of audience was moved, with looks of dismay;  
天地為之久低昂。 Even heaven and earth would heave and set their breath all day.

霍如羿射九日落， With flashes like the Archer Yi shot down the nine bright  
suns<sup>324</sup>,  
矯如群帝駢龍翔。 And vigour like the emperors drove the dragons on cloud-way.

來如雷霆收震怒， She rushed on, like thunder withholding its fury,  
罷如江海凝清光。 And when finished, like the clear light on calm seas.

The last two couplets were actually re-used by Shi Hao in his *daqu* piece.

What is particularly interesting about this well-known poem, especially the preface, for me, is its distinct way of storytelling, which elaborately interweaves stories of different times with psychological/emotional levels that are created at each of those times. To some extent, the poet's watching lady Gongsun's performance at Yan City is a story in the "past tense" and only being recalled because of another performance about a half-century later. Despite the title "Watching the Sword Dance Performed by the Pupil of the Elder Sister of Gongsun," the poem (both preface and verse), devotes most of its space to the description and lament of the unparalleled performance of lady Gongsun. At

<sup>322</sup> QTS, vol.2, *juan* 117, p. 1179.

<sup>323</sup> See *Ming huang zalu* 明皇雜錄 cited by *Bai Kong liutie* 白孔六帖 *juan* 32, Ren Bantang 1954, p. 178.

<sup>324</sup> It is said in Chinese fairy tales that there had been ten suns in the sky and Archer yi had shot nine of them down.

the end of the preface, a piece of anecdote about Zhang Xu, whose writing was much improved as a result of watching Mistress Gongsun's Sword Dance, is mentioned as a supplement to prove how marvellous Gongsun's art was.

For the poet and the calligrapher, the performance of Gongsun is not just stunning but also immensely contributes to their literary and calligraphic skill. In turn, for the performer lady Gongsun, they are at once two spectators among "a mountain of audiences," whose watching and observation, back then, simply constitutes a sort of "performance context" in the most direct sense. What is more, the poet's composition of this poem later and the calligrapher's improvement in writing, which have "fossilized" lady Gongsun's marvellous art in literary and artistic history, is nothing but another level of "performance context" in an even broader sense, in terms of performance and its representation.

Therefore, in Shi Hao's *daqu* suite, when the dance is presented in front of the two persons with Tang apparel, it inevitably is connected to the poet Du Fu and the calligrapher Zhang Xu, and then becomes one more attempt to reconstruct the historical performance context. When the "bamboo-pole" guy says "Could it simply be that the Administrator Zhang's cursive calligraphy has made great strides? Or that Minister Du's beautiful phrases are newly composed? (豈唯張長史草書大進，抑亦杜工部麗句新成)," this reconstruction of performance context is realized at two levels. The account of this "performance context" in the form of performance, consequently, goes beyond a simple storytelling, and is a gesture that purports to write itself into this performance tradition. It is in this light we may understand Shi Hao's staging of this story as a way of writing "performance context" into performance text, which then helps explain the alleged "narrative" feature of Shi Hao's *daqu* composition, and makes it a particularly interesting text. Also, in this way we may do a better job when trying to locate Shi Hao's composition in the tradition of "Sword Dance" in terms of both performance and literary heritages. The suggestion of Ren Bantang, which takes this storytelling simply as "the cunning of literatus (文人之狡獪),"<sup>325</sup> due to an exclusive emphasis on the consistency of musical settings, therefore, seems to have oversimplified the issue.

Overall, the debate on the origin of Chinese drama is long and significant, yet peripheral to the current study on *daqu* suites. Locating *daqu* lyric basically in the category of dance lyric, I intend to seek what is beyond the written text in terms of performance texts, what kind of relation exists between the extant lyrics and that once magnificent but now silent world when it was originally alive in its first and subsequent presentations. "Performance context" is a productive concept here, which can not only make space to recapture the floating and intangible world of the performance but also one's envisioning of it, making

---

<sup>325</sup> Ren Bantang 1954, p. 192.

.....可知唐《劍器》之舞與曲，至南宋已皆廢。南宋之作劍舞，乃另一事。顧猶用之以表演唐《劍器舞》之故事，亦文人之狡獪，為始料所不及。

..... It can be known that both the dance and tunes of the "Sword Dance" of Tang are discarded in the Southern Song. The "Sword dance" of the Southern Song is something different. Still using it to perform the story of the "Sword Dance" of Tang is just the cunning of literatus, which is something unexpected at the beginning.

every possible reading itself a recreation.

## V. The “Roaming Transcendents” (*youxian* 遊仙) tradition and court performance

One of the most distinct features of Shi Hao’s *daqu* composition might be his obsession with descriptions of the transcendental realm and supernatural characters. As we will discuss later, this kind of fascination actually permeates all of his seven pieces of *daqu* suites. Besides what we have mentioned before that the young Shi Hao accepted Taoist influence by having close contacts with many Taoists in Siming Mountain and other places, there are some other clues that might provide us with a better understanding of his obsession. What I will talk about here is the close relationship and complex entanglement between court performance and the long lasting *youxian* 遊仙 (“roaming transcendents” or “wandering into transcendence”) convention.

The First Emperor of the Qin (Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇) might be the first emperor who brought the impact of immortals greatly into imperial activities. Obsessed with acquiring immortality, he made much effort in seeking the elixir of life, including the famous incident of sending Xu Fu with ships carrying thousands of young men and women in search of the mystical mountains in 219 B.C., two years after the Qin unification:

既已，齊人徐福等上書，言海中有三神山，名曰蓬萊、方丈、瀛洲，仙人居之。請得齋戒，與童男女求之。於是遣徐市發童男女數千人，入海求仙人。

After (the stone had been set up), a native of Qi named Xu Fu and others submitted a memorial saying that in the midst of the sea were three spirit mountains named Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou, with immortals living on them. They asked that they be allowed to fast and purify themselves and to go with a group of young boys and girls to search for them. The emperor thereupon ordered Xu Fu to gather a group of several thousand young boys and girls to set out to sea in search of the immortals.<sup>326</sup>

Even though Xu Fu and the others, after expending inestimable amounts of money, failed to bring back the herbs of everlasting life, the emperor never gave up. In the 32<sup>nd</sup> year (215 B.C.), the First Emperor “journeyed to Jieshi, where he commissioned a native of

---

<sup>326</sup> *Shiji*, *juan* 6, trans. by Burton Watson, Watson 1993, vol. 1, p. 49.

Yan named Scholar Lu to go in search of the immortals Xianmen and Gaoshi (始皇之碣石，使燕人盧生求羨門、高誓)。” At the same time, he also “dispatched Han Zhong, Lord Hou, and Master Shi to search for the immortals and their herbs of everlasting life (使韓終、侯公、石生求仙人不死之藥).”<sup>327</sup> Longing to become a “True Man,” he fell prey to Scholar Lu, and claimed that “from now on I will refer to myself as True Man and will not call myself *zhen* (吾慕真人，自謂‘真人’，不稱‘朕’).”<sup>328</sup>

That which related the immortals most closely to imperial performance was that in the 36<sup>th</sup> year (211 B.C.), terrified by the event of meteorite inscription on Dong Province,<sup>329</sup> the First Emperor ordered the academicians to compose the poem on the immortals and the True Man:

始皇不樂，使博士為仙真人詩，及行所遊天下，傳令樂人歌弦之。

The First Emperor, much disquieted, ordered the academicians to compose a poem on the immortals and on the True Man, which also described the emperor’s travels throughout the empire. It was distributed and musicians were designated to sing the poem to musical accompaniment.<sup>330</sup>

This poem “on the immortals and on the True Man (仙真人詩),” whose lyrics are not extant, might be considered the earliest composition in the category of “roaming transcendants” poetry (遊仙詩). Performed mainly upon the emperor’s travels or inspections, the content of the poem, as we may infer from related records, must be similar to the stele inscriptions the Emperor made on his inspection journeys, which focused on lauding the First Emperor’s merit and achievement, and wish for eternal life.

Emperor Wu of the Han was fond of searching for immortals as much as, if not more than, the First Emperor of the Qin. Having heard about the story of Master Anqi, an immortal who roams about Penglai, the Emperor “for the first time began to sacrifice in person to the fireplace,” and also “dispatched magicians to set out on the sea in search of Master Anqi and the immortals of Penglai, and attempted to make gold out of cinnabar sand and various kinds of medicinal ingredients (於是天子始親祠灶，遣方士入海求蓬萊安期生之屬，而事化丹沙諸藥齊為黃金矣).”<sup>331</sup> Moreover, believing that “the immortals like to live atop multistoreyed towers (仙人好樓居)”<sup>332</sup> and in order to draw on the immortals, he built palaces such as Palace of Sweet Springs and Jianzhang Palace, and “the Terrace of Cypress Beams with the Bronze Pillars, atop which the Immortals holding in their palms the Pans for Receiving Dew, and similar structures (又作柏梁、銅

---

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>329</sup> The event of meteorite inscription: in the 36<sup>th</sup> year, a meteor fell on Dong Province and turned into a stone. Someone inscribed on it: “The First Emperor will die and his land be divided.” The emperor sent the imperial secretary to investigate it but got no result. He therefore had all the persons living in the vicinity of the stone seized and put to death, and had the stone burned and pulverized. (*Shiji*, *juan 6*)

<sup>330</sup> *Shiji*, *juan 6*, trans. by Burton Watson, Watson 1993, vol. 1, p. 59.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*



柱、承露仙人掌之屬矣。”<sup>333</sup> As a matter of fact, reading the “Feng and Shan Sacrifices” in the *Shiji* makes it clear that the various sacrifices the Emperor Wu performed—whether his Feng and Shan sacrifices to the Great Unity (太一), or his sacrifice to the Earth Lord (後土) on unearthing the cauldron—actually were all suggested and directed by magicians, and closely related to the myth on the Yellow Emperor’s becoming an immortal and ascending to heaven by performing sacrifices to the obtained precious cauldron.<sup>334</sup> According to *Han jiuyi* 漢舊儀 (“The Old Rites of the Han”):

漢武帝祭天，上通天台，舞八歲童女三百人，置祠具，招仙人。

When the Emperor Wu of the Han sacrificed to the heaven, he ascended the Terrace to Heaven. Three hundred eight-year old girls danced. Sacrificing vessels were set up in order to draw on the Immortals.<sup>335</sup>

As we can see, an obsessive pursuit of communing with the Immortals, therefore, has greatly dominated the performances on sacrificial ceremonies during the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han. Accordingly, when we read the *Jiaosi ge shijiu zhang* 郊祀歌十九章 (“Nineteen Pieces of Suburban Sacrifice Songs”), the lyrics for sacrificial ceremonies, though only words of “deity” and “spirit” were mentioned and the word “immortal” never appeared, we can still easily find in the lyrics a strong sense of “roaming transcendents (*youxian*)” and a clear longing for longevity.<sup>336</sup>

The Emperor’s obsession with the immortals, to a great extent, affected the literary compositions of the Han, particularly the Han *yuefu* poetry and Han *fu* rhapsody, in both of which *youxian* proved an important motif.

In the Han *yuefu* repertoire, besides the “Nineteen Pieces of Suburban Sacrifice Songs” just mentioned, the poems that specifically describe the leisure life of the immortals, by which to invoke the blessings from the heaven and bring wishes to the emperor include *Wang Ziqiao* 王子喬, *Longxi xing* 隴西行, *Shanzai xing* 善哉行, *Changge xing* 長歌行, *Dongtao xing* 董逃行 and so on. Among them, some poems show strong tendency of imperial performance. For example, in the poem *Wangzi Qiao* 王子喬, after the first part which talks about the immortal Wangzi Qiao’s wild roaming around riding on white deer, the second part reads:

三王五帝不足令，	The three Kings and five Emperors are not worth
	commanding;
令我聖朝應太平！	Order that “Our sacred dynasty be pacified!”

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>334</sup> The Emperor Wu’s sacrifices to the Great Unity, and to the Earth Lord, see *Shiji*, *juan* 6, trans. by Burton Watson, vol. 3, pp. 28–37.

<sup>335</sup> HJY, *Han jiuyi buyi* 漢舊儀補遺, p. 28.

<sup>336</sup> A detailed analysis on the *youxian* tradition in the “Nineteen Pieces of Suburban Sacrifice Songs” (*Jiaosi ge shijiu zhang* 郊祀歌十九章) see Zhang Hong 2009, chap.8 “漢魏晉郊廟歌辭中的神仙思想和游仙歌舞,” pp. 108-138.

養民若子事父明，	“Raise people like children, who serve their father manifestly;
當究天祿永康寧！	[Your Majesty] ought to enjoy heavenly happiness, forever healthy and peaceful!”
玉女羅坐吹笛簫。	Fair ladies sit together blowing flutes and pipes;
嗟行聖人游八極。	And praise the sage roaming in eight directions.
鳴吐銜福翔殿側：	Chirping, singing, and holding the blessings, [birds] soar upon the side of palace:
聖主享萬年！	“My Majesty enjoys ten thousand years!”
悲吟皇帝延壽命！	Touchingly recite: “The Emperor prolongs his life!”

We may easily picture it being performed on imperial banquet or other activities alike. This is something similar to what happened in the process of oracle divination or sacrifices performed by magicians or shamans, in which the words uttered actually function as part of a ritual and are supposed to bring about the efficacy accordingly. To put it in a religious way, the Taoist “summons,” an action of conjuring up a spirit by incantation, was adopted in this performance in the form of “orders” (*ling*), in order to draw on the immortals and make appeals for the longevity of the emperor and the peace of ruling.

Descriptions on the celestial realm or story of the immortals have permeated the writing of Han *fu* rhapsody, on almost every aspect of imperial life, from the life of metropolises and capitals to imperial hunt, from sacrifices to sightseeing. The earliest instance of the *youxian* topic with praise of the emperor’s achievement might be the “*Fu* on The Mighty One” (*Daren fu* 大人賦) composed by Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179–127 BC). According to *Shiji*, Sima Xiangru completed this *fu* rhapsody for Emperor Wu, “observing that the emperor was fond of anything dealing with immortal spirits (見上好仙道).” Not satisfied with older legends in which famous immortals were always pictured as emaciated creatures dwelling among hills and swamps, he judged that “this was not the type of immortal that would take the emperor’s fancy (此非帝王之仙意也).” Therefore, in this *fu* rhapsody, he pictured “the Mighty One” as an immortal who roamed unrestrainedly in transcendent realm with a carefree spirit, which was in accordance with the Emperor’s supreme status and power:

世有大人兮，	In this world there is a Mighty One
在於中州。	Who dwells in the Middle Continent.
宅彌萬里兮，	Though his mansion stretches ten thousand miles,
曾不足以少留。	He is not content to remain in it for a moment.
悲世俗之迫隘兮，	But, saddened by the sordid press of the vulgar world,
揭輕舉而遠遊。	He Nimblely takes his way aloft and soars far away. <sup>337</sup>

<sup>337</sup> *Shiji*, *juan* 6, trans. by Burton Watson, Watson 1993, vol. 3, p. 296.

The “Middle Continent” obviously refers to China, the “Mighty One” is of course intended to be Emperor Wu, who would never stay for a moment even though “his mansion stretches ten thousand miles.” Unlike in previous legends ever since the *Chuci*, where the immortals used to seek seclusion in mountains as a means of surviving and escaping from the chaos or reality, the “Mighty One” here chooses to roam around, not willing to be restrained “by the sordid press of the vulgar world.” Later it again echoed that “he presses beyond the borders of the narrow universe, and, with slackened pace, emerges beyond the bounds of the north (迫區中之隘陝兮，舒節出乎北垠),” demonstrating, in both political and personal meanings, an ambitious pursuit of imperial authority, unlimited expansion of ruling boundaries, as well as longevity and eternal life.

Thus it is said that “When Sima Xiangru presented his ode in praise of the Mighty One, the emperor was overcome with delight, declaring that it made him feel as though he were already whirling away over the clouds and filled him with a longing to wander about the earth and the heavens (相如既奏大人之頌，天子大說，飄飄有凌雲之氣，似遊天地之間意).”<sup>338</sup>

Under the influence of this kind of aesthetic tendency among the upper class, the immortals and spirits, as well as the various tricks performed by the magicians, were staged in the Han entertainment performances. Both the “Rhapsody on The Lodge of Peaceful Joy” (*Pingle guan fu* 平樂觀賦) by Li You 李尤 (44–126) and the “Western Metropolis Rhapsody” (*Xijing fu* 西京賦) by Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139) mentioned the emperor’s watching of fantastic performance carried out at the Lodge of Peaceful Joy in the capital. For example, in the latter one, when the emperor visited the Lodge, he “observed the wondrous feats of competitive games (程角觝之妙戲):”

華嶽峩峩，	Hua Peak rose tall and stately,
岡巒參差。	With ridges and knolls of irregular heights.
神木靈草，	And divine trees, magic plants,
朱實離離。	Vermilion fruits hanging thickly.
總會僊倡，	They assembled a troupe of sylphine performers,
戲豹舞羆。	Made panthers frolic, brown bears dance.
白虎鼓瑟，	The white tiger plucked the zither;
蒼龍吹簫。	The azure dragon <sup>339</sup> played a flute.
女娥坐而長歌，	The Maiden and Beauty, <sup>340</sup> seated in place, sang loud and Long;
聲清暢而蜚蛇。	Their voices, pure and clear, softly echoed.
洪涯立而指麾，	Hongya <sup>341</sup> stood up and conducted the performance;
被毛羽之襪襪。	He was garbed in light, trailing plumes. <sup>342</sup>

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 299–300.

<sup>339</sup> Notes here are from the translation by David Knechtges, see Knechtges 1990. The azure dragon was the guardian spirit of the east.

<sup>340</sup> These are singers dressed as the Xiang goddesses, E Huang and Nüying.

<sup>341</sup> Hong Ya is said to be a musician from the period of the Three August Ones.

All kinds of magic places, divine plants, mythical animals, and celestial characters, along with various transformations made by magicians, therefore, were put on stage together. Though literary exaggerations might exist, we can still see how *youxian* has become a popular topic of entertaining performance during the Han Dynasty.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century, *youxian* continued to be one of the favorite themes in Wei court composition. While Cao Cao 曹操(155–220) devoted almost one third of his poetic composition to *youxian* motif poems, his son Cao Zhi 曹植(192–232) had the largest number of poems (i.e. 12 pieces) on the immortals and transcendent realm. On the one hand the writers of Cao family carried on the *youxian* convention from the Han *yuefu* that described travels far off into the heaven and visits to the immortals. Yet on the other hand, their hidden motivations for this kind of composition, political as well as rhetorical, should be distinguished carefully. For rulers like Cao Cao, who fought his way up from obscurity, the anxiety to prove a legitimate succession was the main reason for him to borrow ingredients of tradition and put them into court music repertoire. In other words, his composition of *youxian* poetry might be taken as a gesture of self-legitimization. For Cao Zhi, it is more likely that, different from previous Emperors of the Qin and Han, he only took the *youxian* motif as a way representing his desire to avoid worldly entanglements. Therefore, the pursuit of immortality is rather a cloak for escapism from the political complexness than a real yearning for longevity or belief in the efficacy of alchemical life-prolonging techniques.

Mainly inherited from the Han, sacrificial ceremonies during the Wei and Jin period were similar to their predecessor. Performance of those ceremonies, therefore, was also mixed with the quest for immortality, which represented a metaphorical relationship between transcendent realm roaming and the ruler's political ambition. Meanwhile, the *youxian* topic was also seen frequently in the dance performance of early medieval period if we read dance lyrics in *Yuefu shiji*. Many dance lyrics such as “dance of whisk” (*fuwu* 拂舞) or “dance of white ramie” (*baizhu wu* 白紵舞) had the *youxian* element embedded. As we have mentioned when talking about the “plucking lotus” tradition and court performance, this was the period in which the description of female performers was getting close to that of goddesses, thus the boundary between reality and transcendency blurred. Moreover, for the imperial audience, dance performance itself tended to be taken as means of achieving immortality. For example, among the three lyrics for “Dance of White Ramie” (*Baizhu wu geshi* 白紵舞歌詩) of the Jin (those of the Song were almost the same), the second one goes as follows:

雙袂齊舉鸞鳳翔，	Raising both sleeves, simurgh and phoenix fly;
羅裙飄飄昭儀光。	Gauze skirts waving and swirling, bright is the light on the appearance.
.....	
百年之命忽若傾，	A hundred years pass swiftly like a collapse,
早知迅速秉燭行。	Knowing this beforehand, one should soon wander

---

<sup>342</sup> Translation is from Knechtges 1990, Vol.1, pp. 227–231.

東造扶桑遊紫庭， 西至昆侖戲曾城。	around holding a candle. To the east visit Fusang and roam in the Purple Court <sup>343</sup> ; To the west arrive at Mt. Kunlun and play in Zeng Town. <sup>344</sup>
----------------------	---

This thought of *carpe diem* because life is too short, as we know, was very typical in the literary works during this period. The first piece, in addition, ended with such lines:

清歌徐舞降祇神， 四座歡樂胡可陳。	With pure songs and gentle dances, gods and deities descend; Guests seating in four directions are all happy—how could it be described? <sup>345</sup>
----------------------	---

Dance performance on the banquet, therefore, was not only considered an entertainment method, but also a means to help overcome the shortness of life, and to summon “the descent of gods and deities” (*jiang qishen* 降祇神). This inevitably reminds us of the ending of “Rhapsody on dancing” (*Wufu* 舞賦) by Fu Yi 傅毅 of the Eastern Han:

天王燕胥，樂而不佚。娛神遺老，永年之術。悠哉遊哉，聊以永日。  
The heavenly king sets up the banquet, happy yet not dissolute. To entertain the  
deity and leave behind old age, this is the art of long life. Leisurely and happily,  
we use it to lengthen the time.

The expression “to entertain the deity and leave behind old age, this the art of long life (娛神遺老，永年之術),” therefore, clearly pointed out the goal and function of this kind of banquet performance.

The *youxian* convention continued to play an important role in court composition and performance during the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589). Emperor Wu of the Liang (464–549), who was particularly obsessed with Taoism, for example, had the composition of “Tunes on Ascending Clouds” (*Shangyun yue* 上雲樂). In the seven pieces of tunes, except for the No.6 *jindan* 金丹 (“Elixir”) that talked about the efficacy of taking life-prolonging medicine, the other six—*Fengtai* 鳳台 (“Phoenix Terrace”), *Tongbo* 桐柏 (“Mt. Tongbo”), *Fangzhang* 方丈 (“Mt. Fangzhang”), *Fangzhu* 方諸 (“Mt. Fangzhu”), *Yugui* 玉龜 (“Mt. Jade Tortoise”) and *Jinling* 金陵 (“Jinling paradise”)—were all descriptions of the transcendent places where the immortals live in Taoism.<sup>346</sup> As been pointed out by scholars, the lyrics of *Shangyun yue* actually followed the style of Taoist “fairy songs” (*xiange* 仙歌), and were full of Taoist diction.<sup>347</sup> To name a few

<sup>343</sup> Both the Purple Court and Zeng Town are legendary places where the immortals live.

<sup>344</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 55, p. 798.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>346</sup> On the relation between *Shangyun yue* and the Taoism, Li Fengmao has an article discussing it in full length. See Li Fengmao 1996 (2), pp. 271–291.

<sup>347</sup> Li Fengmao 1996 (2), p. 276.

examples here:

金書發幽會， The golden books [i.e. Taoist works] issue deep understanding;  
碧簡吐玄門。 The green jade slips [i.e. Taoist works] tell the gate of  
profundity.  
(《方丈曲》 “Tune on Mt. Fangzhang”)

攢金集瑤池， Striking the metals, [the immortals] gather at Jade Pond;  
步光禮玉晨。 Stepping in the light, they pay worship to Yuchen [i.e. name of  
the immortal].  
(《方諸曲》 “Tune on Mt. Fangzhu”)

As we see, in the first couplet, both *jinshu* 金書 (“golden books”) and *bijian* 碧簡 (“green jade slips”) are names for Taoist works, while *youhui* 幽會 (“deep understanding”) and *xuanmen* 玄門 (“gate of profundity”) refer to the utmost realm of understanding in Taoism. In the second one, the *yaochi* 瑤池 (“Jade Pond”), as the residence of the Queen Mother of the West, is where the immortals always gather, and Yuchen 玉晨 actually refers to the immortal who, in Taoism, enjoys a high rank and is considered the “lord of ten thousand ways” (*wandao zhi zhu* 萬道之主).

When it came to the Tang, the Emperor Xuanzong (685–762) must be the one that has been involved most deeply in the relationship between *youxian* traditions and court performance. According to the *Xin Tang shu*,

帝方浸喜神仙之事，詔道士司馬承禎制《玄真道曲》，茅山道士李會元制《大羅天曲》，工部侍郎賀知章制《紫清上聖道曲》。太清宮成，太常卿韋縉制《景雲》、《九真》、《紫極》、《小長壽》、《承天》、《順天樂》六曲，又制商調《君臣相遇樂》曲。

The Emperor (Xuanzong) was fond of things about the immortals. He made decrees to have the Taoist Sima Chengzhen compose the “Taoist Tune of Profound Genuineness,” the Mt. Mao Taoist Li Huiyuan compose the “Tune of Grand-Gather Sky<sup>348</sup>,” the Attendant Gentleman at Headquarters Bureau He Zhizhang compose the “Taoist Tune on Sages of Purple-Purity<sup>349</sup>.” When the Palace of Supreme Clarity was built, (the Emperor ordered) the Chief Minister of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices Wei Tao to compose six tunes—“Auspicious Clouds,” “Nine Genuineness,” “Purple Extremity<sup>350</sup>,” “Little Longevity,” “Receiving from Heaven,” and “Obeying the Heaven,” along with “Music on the Matching of Lord and Minister” in the *shang* mode.<sup>351</sup>

<sup>348</sup> The “Grand-Gather Sky” is considered the highest sky in Taoism.

<sup>349</sup> In Taoism, the “Purple-Purity” refers to the celestial places where the immortals live.

<sup>350</sup> The “Purple Extremity” also refers to the celestial places where the immortals live in Taoism.

<sup>351</sup> XTS, *juan* 22, p. 476.

Besides commanding his officials to compose many Taoist tunes, the Emperor made even greater contributions to Tang court music with his own compositions. A known connoisseur of music, Emperor Xuanzong left behind numerous anecdotes about his music compositions inspired by his legendary encounter with immortals or goddesses. For instance, it is said that he composed the tune of *di*-flute “Purple Cloud Return” (*Ziyun hui* 紫雲回) when he dreamed about ten goddesses, and played a *pipa* song “Tune on Walking Over Ripples” (*Lingbo qu* 凌波曲) after he composed it for the Fairy of Dragon in the dream. When those two songs were done, he bestowed them to the Yichun yard and musicians in the Pear Garden for practice.<sup>352</sup>

The most well-known tune that has been ascribed to Emperor Xuanzong’s music composition, probably, is the “Tune of Rainbow Skirts and Feather Robes” (*Nishang yuyi qu* 霓裳羽衣曲), the performance of which has been mentioned in previous chapter. About the story of this tune, *Yuefu shiji* cited the account in *Tang Yishi* 唐逸史 (“Scattered History of the Tang”):

《唐逸史》曰：“羅公遠多秘術，嘗與玄宗至月宮。初以拄杖向空擲之，化為大橋。自橋行十餘裏，精光奪目，寒氣侵人。至一大城，公遠曰：‘此月宮也。’ 仙女數百，皆素練霓衣，舞於廣庭。問其曲，曰《霓裳羽衣》。帝曉音律，因默記其音調而還。回顧橋樑，隨步而沒。明日，召樂工，依其音調，作《霓裳羽衣曲》。一說曰：開元二十九年中秋夜，帝與術士葉法善遊月宮，聽諸仙奏曲。後數日，東西兩川馳騎奏，其夕有天樂自西南來，過東北去。帝曰：‘偶遊月宮聽仙曲，遂以玉笛接之，非天樂也。’ 曲名《霓裳羽衣》，後傳于樂部。”

The “Remnant History of the Tang” says: “Luo Gongyuan had many secret techniques. He once went to the Moon Palace with Emperor Xuanzong. First he threw his cane up into the air, which turned into a big bridge. Along the bridge they walked for more than ten *li*, where bright light dazzled the eyes, and chilliness was intrusive. When they arrived at a big city, Gongyuan said: ‘this is the Moon Palace.’ Hundreds of fairies all dressed in rainbow clothes and white silk danced in the vast courtyard. Asked about the name of the tune, they said ‘Rainbow Skirts and Feather Robes.’ The Emperor understood music, thus he quietly memorized the tunes and went back. When they looked back at the bridge, it disappeared along with their steps. On the second day, (the Emperor) summoned musicians, and composed the “Tune of Rainbow Skirts and Feather Robes” according to the tunes (he memorized). One other version says that in the 29<sup>th</sup> year of Kaiyuan (741), in the night of Mid-Autumn, the Emperor visited the Moon Palace with alchemist Ye Fashan, and heard various immortals playing music. Several days later, cavalries of the East and West plains presented a memorial to the Emperor that, on that night there was heavenly music coming from southwest and going toward northeast. The Emperor said: ‘I occasionally roamed to the Moon Palace and heard the fairy tune. Thus I caught

---

<sup>352</sup> YTWZ, “二曲既成，遂賜宜春院及梨園弟子並諸王。”

it with jade flute. This was not heavenly music.’ The tune was entitled ‘Rainbow Skirts and Feather Robes.’ Later it was passed down to the Music Section.”<sup>353</sup>

In fact, besides what was mentioned above, Zhou Mi 周密, in his *Guixin zazhi* 癸辛雜識, mentioned that there were several other versions of this anecdote.<sup>354</sup> What is more, it can also be found in various historiographies and literary works, not only during the Tang, but also in the later Song and Yuan Dynasties.<sup>355</sup> Among its numerous successors, what is particularly interesting is the *Tianbao yishi zhugongdiao* 天寶遺事諸宮調 composed by Wang Bocheng 王伯成 (?-?) of the Yuan.<sup>356</sup> Focusing on the story between Emperor Xuanzong and Consort Yang Yuhuan, the *Zhugongdiao* embedded the Emperor’s wandering in the Moon Palace as an episode that in somewhat sarcastic tone pictures the Emperor as an amorous figure. Unlike previous versions in which the Emperor only heard the fairy tune in the Moon Palace and learned it, the *Zhugongdiao* made it a love story carried out between the Emperor and Chang’e, the goddess of the moon. Falling in love with the goddess, the Emperor Xuanzong was reluctant to go back to the subcelestial world:

【萬花方三台】忽然金闕門開，奏樂聲一派。素娥仙袂兩邊排，莫將舞袖輕抬，雖無百寶裝腰帶，趁《霓裳》節奏和諧。帝王默記心懷，見精神有情無奈。

[Ten Thousand Flowers on Three Terraces] Suddenly the gate of Golden Palace opened, and sound of playing music were prevalent. Goddesses in white dresses made rows on two sides, slightly raising their dancing sleeves. Although there were no hundred treasures ornamenting the belt, the tune of “Rainbow Skirts” was in harmonious rhythm. The Emperor silently memorized it. He noticed that the music’s essence was full of unbearable feelings.

【尾聲】廣寒一見神仙態，把六宮中許多恩愛，都撒在九霄雲外！

[The End] Once the Emperor saw the goddesses in the Palace of Vast Chilliness, he cast aside many loves in the Six Palaces off in the wind!<sup>357</sup>

However, not able to stay with the goddess, the Emperor could only express his affection disconsolately:

【賺煞】且寄此宵情，只從明朝害，整整的相思一載。到來歲中秋顯素

<sup>353</sup> YFSJ, *juan* 56, p. 816.

<sup>354</sup> GXZZ, p. 29. Zhou Mi mentioned four different versions of this anecdote. Besides that in *Tang yishi*, there are other versions in *Yiwen lu* 異聞錄, *Jiyi ji* 集異記, and *Youguai lu* 幽怪錄.

<sup>355</sup> This anecdote can also be found in *Minghuang zalu* 明皇雜錄 by Zheng Chuhui 鄭處晦, *Yi shi* 逸史 by Lu Zhao 盧肇, *Yang Taizhen waizhuan* 楊太真外傳 by Yue Shi 樂史, *Longcheng lu* 龍城錄 by Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元, etc.

<sup>356</sup> While the entire work of *Tianbao yishi zhugongdiao* is not extant, there were 54 sets of tunes and some single tunes remained in works such as *Yongxi yuefu* 雍熙樂府, *Jiugong dacheng pu* 九宮大成譜, *Taihe zhengyin pu* 太和正音譜, and *Beici guangzheng pu* 北詞廣正譜.

<sup>357</sup> TBYS, p. 26.



色，休等閒教霧鎖雲埋。卻早離了妝台，準備迎風戶半開，則向那初更左側，我試等待，看月明千里故人來。

[Stop] For the time being I put away the love of tonight. From tomorrow I will be missing her for a whole year. When it comes to the Mid-Autumn of the next year and the white color (of the moon) appears, do not let it (i.e. the moon) surrounded by fog and covered by clouds. Leave the vanity early, and have the door ajar against the wind. To the left side of (i.e. before) the first *jing*, I will be waiting for my old friend coming from bright moon of thousand *li*.<sup>358</sup>

As a matter of fact, a contemporary and friend of Wang Bocheng, the famous playwright Bai Pu 白樸 (1226-?), also had a *zaju* entitled *Tang Minghuang you yuegong* 唐明皇遊月宮 (“Emperor Xuanzong Wandering the Moon Palace”). Though not currently extant, this play might have also involved in romantic love story between the Emperor and the goddess of the moon, and might have had influence to Wang’s *zhugongdiao* composition.

When we turn to Shi Hao’s *daqu* text, we see how he carried on the *youxian* convention and was fond of descriptions of the Taoist transcendent realm and the immortals in his *daqu* composition as expected. Yet a little unexpectedly, we are also surprised by how excessively he has been fascinated by this kind of narration, and the great length it occupied in all his seven pieces of *daqu* suites.

As we have mentioned in previous discussion, the *daqu* suite, as one of major court performances, was usually performed in imperial banquets for situations such as festivals or birthday celebrations for imperial family members, which formed one of the constant elements of the performance context. This kind of performance context, in Shi Hao’s *daqu* text, was usually presented as an intermixture of elaborate, sumptuous worldly feast and convivial gathering of celestial guests and figures. Impressed by the harmonious government of the ruler, and yearning for the unparalleled happiness in the human world, the goddesses or celestial boys would temporarily leave their fairyland and come to present a performance to the emperor. Thus there was a deliberate blurring between the transcendent atmosphere and reality, as we have seen in *Cailian wu* 採蓮舞 (“Lotus Plucking Dance”) and *Jianwu* 劍舞 (“Sword Dance”) previously. In fact, in the “Sword Dance” there were celestial boys coming to show their skills, while in the “Lotus Plucking Dance,” *Zhezhi wu* 柘枝舞 (“Dance of Cudrania Branches”), and *Huawu* 花舞 (“Dance of Flowers”) the performers were, without exception, supposed to be goddesses from heaven. And what makes it clearer, moreover, are the “sending-off” lyrics either sung by the performers themselves or recited by the “bamboo-pole” guy.

Let us take the “Dance of Flowers” (*huawu*) as an example. At the beginning, two performers stand facing the hall, calling themselves up and reciting (自勾念):

……適當麗景，用集仙姿。玉質輕盈，共慶一時之會。金尊漱澗，式均四

---

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

坐之歡。女伴相將，折花入隊。

...It happens to be at this beautiful time, hence to gather celestial countenances. Gem qualities being light, together they celebrate the gathering of one era. Golden goblets rippling, even the happiness of seats at four directions. Ladies, together, pluck the flowers and enter the line.

The diction of “celestial countenances” (*xianzi*) and “gem qualities” (*yuzhi*) inevitably suggest the supernatural status of the coming performers. After this, dancers come up to the stage, put down the vase while facing the guests, and recite a poem of peony. Done with reciting, they sing the tune of *die lian hua* 蝶戀花 (“Butterfly Misses Flower”). Maids get up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests. Dancers then sing a song on the peony. The back line plays the tune of *santai* 三臺 (“Three Terraces”), while dancers swirl off to change the vase. All these movements above are considered one section of performance, and then there starts a chant on another flower. After altogether eleven kinds of flowers are praised, the dancers sing some lyrics revealing their celestial identities:

對芳辰，成良聚，珠服龍妝環宴俎。我禦清風，來此縱觀，還須折枝歸去。歸去藥珠繞頭，一一是東君為主。隱隱青冥怯路遙，且向臺中尋伴侶。

Towards the beautiful day, make a good gathering. Pearl clothes and dragon decorations surround the banquet. We, riding on the pure wind, come here to release our gaze, and also must pluck a branch to return. On returning, bud pearls coil around our heads; each is managed by the Eastern Lord<sup>359</sup>. Indistinct is the bluish void, being afraid that the road is distant. For the time being, towards the terrace, we look for our companions.

At the end they themselves make recitations and retire, indicating that they are going back to the celestial realm now that the banquet is finished and the performance is done:

伏以仙家日月，物外煙霞。能令四季之奇葩，會作一筵之重客。莫不香浮綺席，影覆瑤階。森然羣玉之林，宛在列真之府。……式因天上之芳容，流作人間之佳話。尚期再集，益侈遐齡。歌舞既終，相將好去。

I humbly submit that: sun and moon of the celestial realm, and misty rosy clouds outside the world, can make the splendid flowers of four seasons get together as important guests of one banquet. None of them is not with fragrance floating on the exquisite mat, and shadows covering the jade steps. Dense is the forest of jade, as if in the residence of the immortals. ... Here with the good appearances of the heaven, let them pass down to be good stories of human world. Hoping to get together again, we wish to extend longevity. Now that song and dance is done, let us rise and leave together.

---

<sup>359</sup> The Eastern Lord is the god of spring.

Similarly, we see this in the “Dance of Cudrania Branches” (*zhezhi wu*), the text of which, unfortunately, has some missing characters. A dance believed to originate from the west, this dance, in Shi Hao’s place, is performed by five dancers who are “very good at west Rong dances,” and “do not seem to be the people of the central states (雅擅西戎之舞，似非中國之人).” At the end of the performance, the “bamboo-pole” guy makes a recitation to dismiss the troupe:

眾舞了，竹竿子念遣隊：

After all the dances finish, the “bamboo-pole” guy makes a recitation to dismiss the troupe:

雅音震作，既呈儀鳳之吟；妙舞回翔，巧著飛鸞之態。已洽歡娛綺席，暫歸縹緲仙都。再拜階前，相將好去。

The elegant sound played loudly, already presents the chanting of guardian phoenix; marvellous dance twisting and twirling, wonderfully writes the manner of flying simurgh. Having already harmonized the happiness and joy on the exquisite mat, for the time being return to the misty celestial city. Once again bowing in front of the steps, let us rise and leave together.

The expression “having already harmonized the happiness and joy on the exquisite mat, for the time being return to the misty celestial city,” therefore, makes it clear that they are actually celestial performers.

If we say, in the *daqu* pieces mentioned above, the *youxian* characteristic is mainly displayed by the participation of celestial figures and the intermingling of transcendent atmosphere and the reality, the two other *daqu* suites, *Cailian: Shouxiang ci* 採蓮·壽鄉詞 (“Plucking Lotus: Lyric of Longevity Realm”) and *Taiqing wu* 太清舞 (“Dance of Supreme Clarity”) then carry a much stronger sense of Taoist fantasy comparatively.

The “Lotus Plucking: Lyrics of the Realm of Longevity (*Cailian: Shouxiang ci*),” as we have mentioned, is slightly different from the other six *daqu* pieces in terms of the format by purely consisting of singing lyrics without any instructional “musical words” (*yueyu*). Supposed to be performed for celebrating the emperor’s birthday, it focuses on the retrospection of the emperor’s pre-incarnation in the celestial world, which implicitly justifies the supreme status of the emperor and therefore forms a eulogy for his achievement.

At the very beginning of this *daqu* suite, a “longevity realm” (*shouxiang*) is pointed out as where will be described:

【延徧】霞霄上，有壽鄉廣袤無際。東極滄海，縹緲虛無，蓬萊弱水。風生屋浪，鼓楫揚舲，不許凡人得至。甚幽邃。試右望金樞外。西母樓閣，玉闕瑤池。萬頃琉璃。雙成倩巧，方朔談諧。來往徜徉，霓裳飄飄寶砌。更希奇。

[Prolonged movement] Above rosy clouds, there is longevity realm broad and boundless. To the east it reaches the chilly sea; misty and illusory are the Penglai Island and Ruo River. The wind stirs up towering waves, rowing the oar and

lifting the boat, not allowing human in the world to reach. It is extremely secluded and remote. Try gazing to the right, out of the Golden Pivot,<sup>360</sup> there are towers and pavilions of the Queen Mother of the West, the Jade Palace and Gem Pond. Glazed tiles are ten thousand *qing*. Shuangcheng<sup>361</sup> is beautiful, and Fang Shuo<sup>362</sup> is of humor. Going back and forth and wandering about are rainbow skirts flying along treasure steps. This is even more rare and astonishing.

This picture of the “longevity realm” as somewhere “misty and illusory,” as we see, follows perfectly the traditional imagination and description on the transcendent realm in many historiographies or Taoist writings ever since the Han. Penglai, the spirit mountain far in the sea, as having been mentioned, was constantly sought by the emperors of the Qin and Han as where the immortals were believed to live and elixir for everlasting life may be found. Ruo Shui, moreover, was a mysterious river mentioned in *Hainei shizhou ji* 海內十洲記 (“Record of Ten Islets in the Sea”), a collection of fantastic tales full of Taoist thought:

鳳麟洲在西海之中央，地方一千五百里，洲四面有弱水繞之，鴻毛不浮，不可越也。

The Islet of Phoenix and Kylin is at the center of the West Sea, with an area of one thousand and five hundred *li*. On the four sides of the islet there is Ruo River surrounding it, on which even feather cannot float. It is cannot be passed over.<sup>363</sup>

All these descriptions, plus the declaration that “not allowing human in the world to reach” (不許凡人得至), this transcendental realm is “extremely secluded and remote” (甚幽邃), is actually in accordance with Taoist belief on the land of the immortals. In addition, the many mythical figures mentioned in the second part of this passage—Western Madam, Dong Shuangcheng, Dongfang Shuo—are all famous characters often seen in fantastic tales or Taoist anecdotes.<sup>364</sup>

Hereafter comes a lengthy description on the miraculous features of this “longevity realm” and the admirable life the immortals enjoy there. Spatially it is infinitely vast, while temporally the sun never descends to the west. Wandering around are all immortals such as Master Anqi, Chisong, and Wangzi Qiao. Displayed on the

---

<sup>360</sup> The Golden Pivot: the first star of the Big Dipper, also refers to the place that the moon disappears.

<sup>361</sup> Shuangcheng: Dong Shuangcheng, the mythical maid of Western Madam.

<sup>362</sup> Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (BC 154– BC 93), an erudite of Western Han (BC 206–25AD), and is said to be good at *fu* rhapsody. He is particularly known for his talent and characteristic of humor, and there are a lot of accounts on his humorous responses to the Emperor Wu of Han. He is later on apotheosized to a mythical figure, an immortal who temporarily lives in the human world. The story of “Stealing peaches of the immortals” mentioned later in the text is one of the stories among numerous legends and anecdotes about him.

<sup>363</sup> HNS, p. 1042–276.

<sup>364</sup> For instance, Dong Shuangcheng, as the maid of Western Madam, was mentioned in the *Han Wudi neizhuan* 漢武帝內傳 (“Esoteric Tradition of Emperor Wu of the Han”). Stories on Dongfang Shuo can be found in the *Hanwu gushi* 漢武故事 (“Stories of Emperor Wu of the Han”), or *Bowu zhi* 博物志 by Zhang Hua 張華 (232–300).

banquet are all rare and unusual fruits and melons. In fact, all the dictions and allusions adopted here inevitably indicate a succession of or a strong influence by the fantastic tales of the Han or Jin.

When this is done, in the *xiepai* 歇拍 (“Resting-the-clappers”), it suddenly mentions that “there is denizen of grotto-heaven, who is yearning to roam the dusty world (其間有洞天侶，思遊塵世).” With all his immortal friends, they come to the Yin Mountain and Yong River, the hometown of the author himself. The identity of this mythical figure, soon, is disclosed in the last section of *shagun* 煞袞 (“Final-Rolling”):

吾皇喜。光寵無貳。玉帶金魚榮貴。或者疑之。豈識聖明，曾主斯鄉，嘗相與盡繾綣，膠漆何可相離。今日風雲合契。此實天意。吾皇聖壽無極，享晏粲千載相逢。我翁亦昌熾，永作升平上瑞。

Our emperor is happy. His favor is unparalleled, with the glory and honor of wearing jade belt with golden fish. Someone may doubt it. How could they know the Sage and Enlightened One has once resided this realm? Always being together and tenderly attached, how could they be separated? Nowadays the wind and cloud perfectly matches each other—this is truly the intention of heaven. May our emperor have boundless allotted life span, and enjoy the banquet food only occurring once in a thousand years. May our celestial beings also flourishing and brilliant, forever being the superior auspiciousness in peace and tranquility.

Consequently it makes it clear that the reason why the emperor enjoys the unparalleled favor is because he has once resided in the transcendent realm, i.e. being an immortal. Therefore the harmonious life he brings about nowadays “is truly the intention of heaven (此實天意).” The last two sentences, again, may be read as direct speech which is uttered as a prayer for longevity, happiness, peace and tranquility.

Another *daqu* suite, *Taiqing wu* 太清舞 (“Dance of Supreme Clarity”), reveals its close relationship to the Taoism directly in the title. Also meaning “the Way of Heaven,” or “the clearest air,” the word *taiqing* is more commonly known as the supremely transcendent realm where live the immortals in Taoism. It is even higher than the realms of *yuqing* 玉清 (“Jade Clarity”) and *shangqing* 上清 (“Superior Clarity”), so that only those immortals have the eligibility of entering it.

What is particularly interesting about this one is its embedment and rewriting of the story of “Peach Blossom Spring.” For Tao Qian, originally, the Peach Blossom Spring was an idyllic place, “a small farming community cut off from history and the larger state.”<sup>365</sup> Yet in Shi Hao’s place, he craftily combined this idea of “celestial realm” with the praise of the emperor and his harmonious governing. At the beginning, the “flower-heart” recites:

伏以獸鑪縹緲噴祥煙，玳席熒煌開邃幄。諦視人間之景物，何殊洞府之風

---

<sup>365</sup> Owen 1996, p. 309.

光。恭惟袞繡主人，簪纓貴客。或碧瞳漆髮，或綠鬢童顏。雄辯風生，英姿玉立。曾向蕊宮貝闕，為逍遙遊；俱膺丹篆玉書，作神仙伴。故今此會，式契前蹤。但兒等偶到塵寰，欣逢雅宴；欲陳末藝，上助清歡。未敢自專，伏候處分。

I humbly submit that: beast-shaped incense burners are hazy, whiffing auspicious smoke. Tortoiseshell-bordered mats are glittering and brilliant, unfolding the deep curtains. To scrutinize the scenery of human world—what is different from the landscape of cave-dwelling (of immortals)? Honorable are the hosts in dragon robe and noble guests with ribboned hairpin. Some are with bluish pupils and pitch-black hair, some with black temples and ruddy complexion. Eloquence is cheerful and harmonious; heroic bearing is slim and graceful. Once before, to the Bud Palace and Shell Court, (they) have ever made carefree roam. All bearing red scripts and auspicious writings, they were the companions of the immortals. Therefore, at the gathering of today, they try to match previous traces. We occasionally come to the dusty domain, and happily come upon this elegant banquet. About to display our trivial skill, above we assist the pure enjoyment. Not daring to act on our own initiative, we prostrate ourselves and wait for instructions.

As usual, this piece of *daqu* sets the performance at a banquet with elaborate arrangement. Words such as “beast-shaped incense burners (*shoulu*)” and “tortoiseshell-bordered mats (*daixi*)” seem to have already forecasted the nobleness and dignity of the hosts as well as the guests. As expected, they turn out to be those who once wandered around the transcendency as companions of the immortals, a plot which actually was often seen in many Taoist writings. This episode also, inevitably, reminds us of the descriptions in the “Plucking Lotus: Lyric of Longevity Realm,” the piece we just discussed, where the emperor was believed to have resided in the celestial realm once before. Moreover, similar to the “Sword Dance,” or “Lotus Plucking Dance,” the blurring of transcendent and realistic atmosphere successfully creates an ambiguity on the identities of the audience, which provides a productive space for the text reading and the re-construction of the performance context.

Followed is an exchange of questions and answers between the “bamboo-pole” guy and the “flower-heart,” which we saw in other Shi Hao *daqu* pieces before. After that, the story of “Peach Blossom Spring” is told in singing lyrics alternating with dance performed by five dancers and tunes played by the back line. Right after telling the story, the “flower-heart” sings:

我今來訪煙霞侶。沸華堂簫鼓。疑是奏鈞天，宴瑤池金母。 卻將桃種散階除，俾華實、須看三度。方記古人言，信有緣相遇。

We, today, come to visit the companion of rosy clouds. Loud and noisy are flutes and drums in the magnificent hall. It is suspected that the Balanced Heaven is played, to hold a banquet for the Golden Queen Mother of the Jade Pond. We are about to scatter the peach seeds on the steps. To get flowers and fruits, one has to wait for three times/years. Just then we remember the saying of the ancients, believing those who are destined to meet will meet.

The allusion of “peach seeds” here is so interesting that it craftily bridges two stories or anecdotes, one on the “Peach Blossom Spring” that was just told before, while the other on the immortal peaches that the Queen Mother used to offer on her banquet, which is also mentioned here. Therefore, the Peach Blossom Spring, that legendary place where people were supposed to live a carefree life different from that in the vulgar world, actually, turned out to be where the banquet was thrown out and performance was carried out, and, moreover, a place that even the celestial performers would gasp in admiration and be reluctant to leave.

When the singing and dancing performance is done, and the performers are about to “return to the cloudy journey (欲返雲程),” the “bamboo-pole” guy, unexpectedly, asks them to “stop the fragrant carriages a little bit, as we look forward to hearing again the elegant chanting (宜少駐于香車, 佇再聞於雅詠).” Upon request, the “flower-heart” recites:

但兒等暫離仙島，來止洞天。屬當嘉節之臨，行有清都之觀。芝華羽葆，已雜還於青冥；玉女仙童，正逢迎于黃道。既承嘉命，聊具新篇。

For the time being, we leave the celestial island and come stop by the grotto-heaven. It happens that good festival is coming. There is about to have a pilgrimage at the Capital of Clarity. Fungus covers and feathered hoods of carriages are already numerous and disorderly at the blue sky; jade maidens and celestial boys are currently greeting at the Yellow Way<sup>366</sup>. Having already accepted good command, for the moment we compose a new piece.

篇曰：仙家日月如天遠，人世光陰若電飛。絕唱已聞驚列坐，他年同步太清歸。

The writing goes: Sun and moon in celestial world are as distant as the heaven; time in the human world flies as fast as lightning. The superb singing has already been heard and startled all that in seat. In other year, pacing together, we return to the Extreme Clarity.

The ending of the poem, which expresses the wish of “returning to the Extreme Clarity” together in other year, therefore, points to the title of this dance performance, and reveals a strong Taoist purport.

Again, the praise of the emperor and the blessing for the longevity was sung out towards the end by the dancers in a short “breakdown”:

遊塵世、到仙鄉。喜君王。躋治虞唐。文德格遐荒。四裔盡來王。干戈偃息歲豐穰。三萬里農桑。歸去告穹蒼。錫聖壽無疆。

Roaming the dusty world, we arrive at the celestial land. We are happy that the emperor ascends to the administration of Yu and Tang. The civil virtue arrives at remote and desolate places; descendants of four directions all come to be ruled. Wars cease and stop, every year there is bumper harvest. Farming and mulberries

---

<sup>366</sup> The Yellow Way refers to the road the emperor goes in excursion.

are of thirty-thousand *li*. Upon returning, we are to tell the heaven to bestow Your Majesty boundless longevity.

After singing, the back line plays *buxu zi* 步虛子 (“Pacing on Void”), a Taoist tune. Four dancers dance up to the stage, and toast to the “flower-heart.” After toasting, all dancers make a straight line. The “bamboo-pole” guy recites to dismiss the troupe:

仙音縹緲，麗句清新。既歸美於皇家，復激昂於坐客。桃源歸路，鶴馭迎風。拱手階前，相將好去。

The celestial music is dim and indistinct; the beautiful lines are pure and delicate. Having already praised the royal family, again it arouses the guests in seats. On the return road from Peach Blossom Spring, riding on the crane, go against the wind. Clapping hands in front of the steps, let us rise and leave together.



## Conclusion

The study of performance texts is intrinsically demanding. The objects of analysis, unlike the works we usually confront in literary study, require complicated efforts to frame them and imagine them apart from any straightforward “reading.” Lyrics used for singing—more specifically, for our research here, lyrics sung in dance music—without doubt, are a sort of performance text. However, sometimes it is difficult or even controversial to decide what to category a given lyric text belongs. The process of deciding itself determines our approach to the text, as well as to the performance context it illustrates or discloses. One good example of this is the *Shangyun yue* composed by Zhou She (or Li Bai) discussed in the introduction. Whether it was a description of the performance written by Zhou as a spectator, or a lyric actually sung in the performance framed by “descriptive narrative,” our choice will lead us to vastly different interpretations of the performance context.

The analysis of performance context here should be distinguished from historical reconstruction. Aiming to reconstruct the passed historical performance with the help of secondary documents and accounts, a historian usually makes every effort to restore the scene he thinks closest to “what happened.” My discussion of performance context here, instead of attempting to historicize a specific moment, aim to explore the ways in which reflection on performance context might bring these texts into focus as artifacts. The ambiguity and uncertainty of the performance context, as well as the flexibility and abundant possibilities for interpretation, as we see in Shi Hao’s *daqu* works, are the essential features that make performance texts reading a particularly productive experience.

This is also a study of both literary tradition and court performance, as we see in the *daqu* of “Lotus Plucking Dance,” and *daqu* pieces with *youxian* motif. As a Chancellor and author at the same time, Shi Hao composed *daqu* suites for the imperial court both to fulfill his duties and for his personal pleasure. This consequently bestowed his *daqu* composition a pivotal significance, which became one of the reasons for this dissertation.

I would like to end with the old lyrics sung by Simon and Garfunkel many years ago, if we could, make this metaphor, taking the performance texts as someone that has been sleeping for hundreds of thousands of years:

“Because a vision softly creeping,  
Left its seeds while I was sleeping,  
And the vision that was planted in my brain  
Still remains  
Within the sound of silence.”

## Bibliography:

### I. Reference Works and Collections

BCJ Bai Juyi 白居易, *Baishi Changqing ji* 白氏長慶集 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1971)

CHCB Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 ed., *Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986)

CY Zhang Yan 張炎, *Ci yuan* 詞源 (*Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編, vol.1, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986)

DJM Meng Yuanlao 孟元老, *Dongjing menghua lu (wai si zhong)* 東京夢華錄 (外四種): [2] Naideweng 耐得翁, *Du cheng ji sheng* 都城紀勝/ [3] Xihulaoren 西湖老人, *Xihulaoren fansheng lu* 西湖老人繁勝錄/ [4] Wu Zimu 吳自牧, *Meng Liang lu* 夢梁錄/ [5] Zhou Mi 周密, *Wu lin jiu shi* 武林舊事 (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1998)

DPQJ *Su Shi* 蘇軾, *Dongpo quanji* 東坡全集, in *Yinying Wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 1107-1108 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983)

GEJ Zhang Duanyi 張端義, *Gui'er ji* 貴耳集 (Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937)

GXZZ Zhou Mi 周密, *Guixin zazhi* 癸辛雜識 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988)

HHS Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965)

HJY Wei Hong 衛宏, *Han Jiu yi* 漢舊儀, in *Han liqi zhidu* 漢禮器制度 by Shusun tong 叔孫通 / *Han guan jiuyi* 漢官舊儀 by 衛宏 / *Han jiu yi* 漢舊儀 by Wei Hong 衛宏 / *Fuhou gujin zhu* 伏侯古今注 by Fu Wuji 伏無忌 / etc. (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1939)

HNS Dongfang Shuo 東方朔, *Hainei shizhou ji* 海內十洲記 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983)

HNZ Liu An 劉安 etc., *Huainan zi* 淮南子, *Huainan Honglie jijie* 淮南鴻烈集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, (1989)1997)

- HS Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, (1962) 1992)
- HYJ Wang Gui 王珪, *Huayang ji* 華陽集, in *Yinying Wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 1093 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983)
- JS Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 etc., *Jin shu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, (1974) 1991)
- JTS Liu Xu 劉昫 etc., *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, (1975) 1991)
- JYB Duan Anjie 段安節 Wang Zhuo 王灼, *Jiegu lu Yuefu zalu Biji manzhi* 羯鼓錄 樂府雜錄 碧雞漫志 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988)
- LJ *Li ji* 禮記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju yingyin, Xinhua shudian Beijing faxingsuo faxing, 1992)
- LJZY *Liji zhengyi : fu jiao kan ji* 禮記正義：附校勘記 / 鄭玄注；孔穎達等正義；黃侃經文句讀 (Shanghai : Shanghai guji chubanshe : Xinhua shudian Shanghai faxingsuo faxing, 1990)
- LSCQ *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989)
- LY *Lun Yu* 論語, annotated by He Yan, Huang Kan, etc. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998)
- MFZY Shi Hao 史浩, *Manfeng Zhenyin manlu* 鄭峰真隱漫錄 (in *Song ji zhenben congkan* 宋集珍本叢刊, Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2004)
- NQS Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯, *Nan Qi Shu* 南齊書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, (1972) 1992)
- QDYY Zhou Mi 周密, *Qi dong yeyu* 齊東野語 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983)
- QJW Yan Kejun 嚴可均, *Quan Jin wen* 全晉文 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1999)
- QSC Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋, *Quan Song ci* 全宋詞 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965)
- QTS *Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, (1960) 1979)

- SJ Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju; [Shanghai]: Xinhua shudian Shanghai faxingsuo faxing, (1959) 1992)
- Song shu* Shen Yue 沈約, *Song shu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, (1974) 1983)
- Song shi* Tuotuo 脫脫 etc., *Song shi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977)
- SSBZ Zha Shenxing 查慎行, *Su shi buzhu* 蘇詩補注, in *Yinying Wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 1111 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983)
- SSZJ Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Si shu zhang ju ji zhu* 四書章句集注 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983)
- Sui shu* Wei Zheng 魏徵 etc., *Sui shu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, (1973) 1991)
- SWW Su Song 蘇頌, *Su Weigong wenji* 蘇魏公文集, in *Yinying Wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 1092 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983)
- TBYS Wang Bocheng 王伯成, *Tianbao yishi zhugongdiao* 天寶遺事諸宮調 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1986)
- TD Du You 杜佑, *Tong dian* 通典 (Taipei: Xinxing shuju, 1966)
- TLD Li Linfu 李林甫, *Tang liu dian* 唐六典 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, (1992) 2005)
- TPYL Li Fang 李昉, *Taiping Yulan* 太平禦覽 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962)
- TYGQ Hu Zhenheng 胡震亨, *Tang yin guiqian* 唐音癸籤 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981)
- TYL Wang Dang 王讜, *Tang Yulin* 唐語林 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978)
- TZ Zheng Qiao 鄭樵, *Tong zhi* 通志 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983)
- WS Wei Shou 魏收, *Wei shu* 魏書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974)
- WX Xiao Tong 蕭統, *Wen xuan* 文選, 6 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji

Chubanshe, 1985)

XQH Lu Qinli 陸欽立, *Xianqin Han Wei Jin Nanbei chao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983)

XTS Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975, 1991 rpnt.)

YLMC Zhao Yanwei 趙彥衛, *Yun lu man chao* 雲麓漫鈔 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996)

YFSJ Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩, comp., *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979)

YS Chen Yang 陳暘, *Yue shu* 樂書 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983)

YTWZ *Yue Shi* 樂史, *Yang Taizhen waizhuan* 楊太真外傳, in *Gushi wenfang xiaoshuo* 顧氏文房小說 (Shanghai: Hanfenlou yingyin, 1925)

ZL *Zhou Li* 周禮, 3 vols (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992)

ZZZY *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zheng yi* 春秋左傳正義, Zuoqiu Ming 左丘明 comp., Du Yu 杜預 annotated; Kong Yingda 孔穎達 *zhengyi* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999)

## II. Individual Works

Allen 1992 Joseph Roe. Allen, *In the Voice of Others: Chinese Music Bureau Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1992)

Carlson 2004 Marvin Carlson, *Performance: a critical introduction* (second edition) (New York : Routledge, 2004)

Chen, Jack 2010 Jack W. Chen, *The poetics of sovereignty: on Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty* (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 2010)

Goodman 2010 Howard. L. Goodman, *Xun Xu and the politics of precision in third-century AD China* (Netherlands: Sinica Leidensia, 2010)

- Hayashi 1955                      Hayashi, Kenzō 林謙三 (trans. by Guo Moruo 郭沫若),  
*Sui Tang yanyue diao yanjiu* 隋唐燕樂調研究 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1955)
- Hu Daojing 1987                      Hu Daojing 胡道靜, *Mengxi bitan jiaozheng* 夢溪筆談校  
證 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987)
- Jiang Ji 1984                      Jiang Ji 蔣驥, *Shandaige zhu Chuci* 山帶閣注楚辭  
(Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984)
- Jiang Lihong 1982                      Jiang Lihong 蔣禮鴻, *Dunhuang bianwen ziyi tongshi* 敦  
煌變文字義通釋 (Taipei: Muduo chubanshe, 1982)
- Kishibe 1973                      Kishibe, Shigeo 岸邊成雄 (trans. by Liang Zaiping 梁在平,  
Huang Zhijiong 黃志炯), *Tang dai yin yue shi di yan jiu* 唐代音樂史的研究 (Taipei:  
Taiwan zhonghua shuju, 1973)
- Knechtges 1990                      David R. Knechtges, trans. *Wen Xuan*, 2 vols. Taiwan  
Edition (Taipei: Nantian shuju, 1990)
- Knoblock 2000                      John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü  
Buwei: A Complete Translation and Study* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000)
- Lam 2006                      Joseph S.C. Lam, "Huizong's Dashengyue, a Musical  
Performance of Emperorship and Officialdom," in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Maggie  
Bickford ed. *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China: The Politics of Culture  
and the Culture of Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006)
- Li Fengmao 1996                      Li Fengmao 李豐懋, *Wuru yu zhejiang: Liuchao Sui Tang  
daojiao wenxue lunji* 誤入與謫降：六朝隋唐道教文學論集 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng  
shuju, 1996)
- 1996 (2)                      idem., *You yu you: Liuchao Sui Tang youxianshi  
lunji* 憂與遊：六朝隋唐遊仙詩論集 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1996)
- Liang Haiyan 2009                      Liang Haiyan 梁海燕, *Wuqu geci yanjiu* 舞曲歌辭研究  
(Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2009)
- Liang Qichao 1996                      Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo zhi meiwen ji qi lishi* 中  
國之美文及其歷史 (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1996)
- Liao Ben 2000                      Liao Ben 廖奔, *Zhongguo xiju tu shi* 中國戲劇圖史  
(Zhengzhou: daxiang chubanshe, 2000)

- Liao Weiqing 2006                      Liao Weiqing 廖蔚卿, *Zhonggu yuewu yanjiu* 中古樂舞研究 (Taipei: Liren shuju, 2006)
- Liu Minglan 1999                      Liu Minglan 劉明瀾, *Weishi sanzhu de yinyue guan yu weijin qingshangyue de yishu xingshi* 魏晉三祖的音樂觀與魏晉清商樂的藝術形式 (*Zhongguo yinyue xue* 中國音樂學, 1999, vol.4)
- Liu Yongji 1957                      Liu Yongji 劉永濟, *Songdai gewujuqu luyao* 宋代歌舞劇曲錄要 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957)
- Lu Qinli 1982                      Lu Qinli 逯欽立, *Xianghe ge qudiao kao* 相和歌曲調考 (*Wenshi* 文史, vol.14, 1982)
- Luo Genze 1996                      Luo Genze 羅根澤, *Yuefu wenxue shi* 樂府文學史 (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1996)
- Ouyang Yuqian 1980                      Ouyang Yuqian 歐陽予倩 ed., *Tangdai wudao* 唐代舞蹈 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1980)
- Owen 1996                      Stephen Owen, *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1996)
- Picken 1981                      Laurence Picken, *Music from the Tang Court: transcribed from the original, unpublished, Sino-Japanese manuscripts* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981)
- Qian Zhixi 2009                      Qian Zhixi 錢志熙, *Han Wei yuefu de yinyue yu shi* 漢魏樂府的音樂與詩 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2009)
- Qiu Qionsun 1974                      Qiu Qionsun 丘瓊蓀, *Fa qu* 法曲, in *Jingu wenxue gailun* 近古文學概論 by Xu Jiarui 徐嘉瑞, *Sui Tang yanyuediao yanjiu* 隋唐燕樂調研究 by 林謙三, *Fa qu* 法曲 by 丘瓊蓀, (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1974)
- Qiu Zhao'ao 1979                      Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲, *Dushi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳注 (Beijing:Zhonghua shuju, (1979) 1985)
- Ren Bantang 1954                      Ren Bantang 任半塘, *Dunhuang qu chutan* 敦煌曲初探 (Shanghai: Wenyi lianhe chubanshe, 1954)
- 1962                      idem., *Jiaofang ji jianing* 教坊記箋定 (Beijing:Zhonghua

shuju, 1962)

---- 1982 idem., *Tang shengshi* 唐聲詩 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982)

— 1984 idem., *Tang xinong* 唐戲弄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984)

— 1986 idem., “Nan Song zhi yinpu paiyan kao”南宋之音譜拍眼考 (Ori. *Dongfang zazhi*, chap.24, No.12) in *Cixue yanjiu lunwenji* 詞學研究論文集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986)

— 2006 idem., *Dunhuang geci zongbian* 敦煌歌辭總編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006)

Shen Dong 2000 Shen Dong 沈冬, *Tangdai yuewu xinlun* 唐代樂舞新論 (Taipei: Liren shuju, 2000)

Su Jinren 1982 Su Jinren 苏晋仁, Xiao Lianzi 萧炼子, *Song shu yuezhi jiaozhu* 宋書樂志校注 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1982)

Sun Kaidi 1957 Sun Kaidi 孫楷第, *Qingshang qu xiaoshi* 清商曲小史, in *Wenxue yanjiu* 文学研究, 1957, vol.1)

Wang Chuanfei 2009 Wang Chuanfei 王傳飛, *Xianghe geci yanjiu* 相和歌辭研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2009)

Wang Guowei 1964 Wang Guowei 王國維, *Songyuan xiqu shi* 宋元戲曲史 (Hong Kong: Taiping shuju, 1964)

— 1964 idem., *Tang Song da qu kao* 唐宋大曲考 (Hong Kong: Taiping shuju, 1964)

— 1997 idem., *Wang Guowei wenji* 王國維文集 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1997)

Wang Kefen 2004 Wang Kefen 王克芬, *Zhongguo wudao fazhan shi* 中國舞蹈發展史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2004)

— 1996 and Su Zuqian 蘇祖謙, *Zhongguo wudao shi* 中國舞蹈史 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1996)



- Wang Kunwu 1996                      Wang Kunwu 王昆吾, *Sui Tang Wudai yanyue zayan geci yanjiu* 隋唐五代燕樂雜言歌辭研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996)
- 1991                                      idem., *Han Tang yinyue wenhua lun ji* 漢唐音樂文化論集 (Taipei: Xueyi chubanshe, 1991)
- Wang Yunxi 2006                      Wang Yunxi 王運熙, *Yuefu shi lunshu* 樂府詩論述 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2006)
- Watson 1993                              Burton Watson, trans. *Records of the Grand Historian*, 3 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, revised edition, 1993)
- Weng Minhua 1997                      Weng Minhua 翁敏華, “Zhuganzi” kao “竹竿子”考, in *Yangzhou daxue xuebao* 揚州大學學報, 1997.9.30.
- West 1977                                      Stephen H. West, *Vaudeville and Narrative: Aspects of Chin Theater* (Wiesbaden : Steiner, 1977)
- Wu Guodong 1995                      Wu Guodong 伍國棟, *Zhongguo minjian yinyue* 中國民間音樂 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995)
- Wu Mei 1983                                Wu Mei 吳梅, *Wu Mei xiqu lunwenji* 吳梅戲曲論文集 (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1983)
- Wu Shuping 1987                      Wu Shuping 吳樹平, *Dongguan hanji jiaozhu* 東觀漢記校注 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1987)
- Xiao Difei 1984                      Xiao Difei 蕭滌非, *Han Wei Liuchao yuefu wenxueshi* 漢魏六朝樂府文學史 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1984)
- Xu Shizeng 1998                      Xu Shizeng 徐師曾, *Wenti mingbian xushuo* 文體明辯序說 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1998)
- Yang Bojun 1981                      Yang Bojun 楊伯駿, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981)
- Yang Jialuo 1975                      Yang Jialuo 楊家駱 ed., *Zhongguo yinyue shiliao* 中國音樂史料, vol. 1-6 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1975)
- Yang Yinliu 1953                      Yang Yinliu 楊蔭瀏, *Zhongguo yinyue shi gang* 中國音樂

- 史綱 (Shanghai: Wanye shudian, 1953)
- 1980 idem. *Zhongguo gudai yinyueshi gao* 中國古代音樂史稿 (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1980)
- 1986 idem. *Yang Yinliu yinyue lunwen xuanji* 楊蔭瀏音樂論文選集 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1986)
- 1957 Yang Yinliu 楊蔭瀏, Yin Falu 陰法魯, ed. by 中央音樂學院民族研究所, *Song Jiang Baishi chuanguo gequ yanjiu* 宋姜白石創作歌曲研究 (Beijing: Yinyue chubanshe, 1957)
- Yin Falu 1948 Yin Falu 陰法魯, *Tang Song daqu zhi lai yuan ji qi zuzhi* 唐宋大曲之來源及其組織 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1948)
- 1988 idem., *Zhongguo gudai yinyue shiliao zaji sanzhe* 中國古代音樂史料雜記三則 (*Yinyue yanjiu* 音樂研究, 1988, vol.1)
- Yuan He 2004 Yuan He 袁禾, *Zhongguo gongting wudao yishu* 中國宮廷舞蹈藝術 (Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue chubanshe, 2004)
- Zeng Zhi'an 2009 Zeng Zhi'an 曾智安, *Qingshang quci yanjiu* 清商曲辭研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2009)
- Zhang Hong 2009 Zhang Hong 張宏, *Qin Han Wei Jin youxianshi de yuanyuan liubian lun lue* 秦漢魏晉遊仙詩的淵源流變論略 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2009)
- Zhang Shuguo 2003 Zhang Shuguo 張樹國, *Yuewu yu yishi* 樂舞與儀式 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2003)
- Zhao Xiaolan 1999 Zhao Xiaolan 趙曉嵐, *Lun Shi Hao "Maofeng Zhenyin daqu" ji Tang Song gongting daqu zhibie* 論史浩《鄮峰真隱大曲》及唐宋宮廷大曲之別 (*Wenxue Yichan*, 1999.9.20)

## Appendix:

### Shi Hao Maofeng Zhenyin daqu Translation

#### 採蓮·壽鄉詞 (“Lotus Plucking: Lyrics of the Realm of Longevity”)

延徧 (“Prolonged-movement”)<sup>367</sup>

霞霄上，有壽鄉廣袤無際。東極滄海，縹緲虛無，蓬萊弱水。風生屋浪，鼓楫揚舲，不許凡人得至。甚幽邃。試右望金樞外。西母樓閣，玉闕瑤池。萬頃琉璃。雙成倩巧，方朔詼諧。來往徜徉，霓裳飄飄寶砌。更希奇。

Above rosy clouds, there is realm of longevity broad and boundless. To the east it reaches the chilly sea; misty and illusory are the Penglai Island and Ruo River. The wind stirs up towering waves, rowing the oar and lifting the boat, not allowing human in the world to reach. It is extremely secluded and remote.

Try gazing to the right, out of the Golden Pivot,<sup>368</sup> there are towers and pavilions of the Queen Mother of the West, the Jade Palace and Gem Pond. Glazed tiles are ten thousand *qing*. Shuangcheng<sup>369</sup> is beautiful, and Dongfang Shuo<sup>370</sup> is humorous. Going back and forth and wandering about are rainbow skirts flying along treasure steps. This is even more rare and astonishing.

擷徧 (“Jerky-movement”)<sup>371</sup>

南鄰幄丹宮，赤伏顯符記。朱陵耀綺繡，箕翼炯、瑞光騰起。每歲秋分老人見，表

---

<sup>367</sup> Yan 延: technical term of music. It is usually taken as “prolonged.”

延有引長義，曲調至此將近入破，故引長之。

Yan has the meaning of “to prolong.” The tune at this point is close to entering the breakdown.

Therefore it is prolonged. (Liu Yongji 1957, p. 17)

Bian 徧: technical term of music. It was also mentioned as a homophone *bian* 變 in some other musical document. Wang Guowei 王國維 tries to interpret it as saying, 徧 (“one time around”) and 變 (“to change”) indicate the same thing as both the music and dance change in each time around. (Wang Guowei 1964, p. 189)

<sup>368</sup> The Golden Pivot: the first star of the Big Dipper, also refers to the place that the moon disappears.

<sup>369</sup> Shuangcheng: Dong Shuangcheng, the mythical maid of Western Madam.

<sup>370</sup> Dong Fangshuo 東方朔 (BC 154– BC 93), an erudite of Western Han (BC 206–25AD), and is said to be good at *fu* rhapsody. He is particularly known for his talent and characteristic of humor, and there are a lot of accounts on his humorous responses to the Emperor Wu of Han. He is later on apotheosized to a mythical figure, an immortal who temporarily lives in the human world. The story of “Stealing peaches of the immortals” mentioned later in the text is one of the stories among numerous legends and anecdotes about him.

<sup>371</sup> Dian 擷: technical term of music, bridge to *rupo* 入破, beat increases.

擷者，排遍之末一遍名，此遍之拍前後十八拍又四花拍，如今之贈板。因此遍畢即入破，故於相近一遍，增多拍數，使其音節漸繁，方不見其變太突。然則擷亦形容拍多音繁，聲調擷動的意思。

*Dian* is the last piece of *paibian*. ... Therefore *dian* is to describe that the beats and tones are numerous, so that the tunes are jolty and jerky. (Liu Yongji 1957, p. 19.)

皇家、襲慶迎祺。天子當膺，無疆萬歲。北窺玄冥，魁杓擁佳氣。長拱極、終古無移。論南北東西，相直何啻千萬里。信難計。

To the south it neighbors the red-curtain palace, where the *Chifu*<sup>372</sup> manifests its tally mark. On the Red Mountain<sup>373</sup> shines the embroidered silk. Ji and Yi constellations are bright, auspicious light lifting off. Every year at the autumn equinox the Old Man star appears, to commend the royal family for succeeding the blessing and greeting the auspiciousness. The Son of Heaven is due to receive the boundless longevity. To the north it peeps the dark void, where the Kui and Biao stars<sup>374</sup> gather auspicious air. Always surrounding the Polaris, forever they do not change. To consider the south, north, east and west, how could it only be thousand or myriad *li* they face each other? It is indeed hard to calculate.

入破 (“Entering-breakdown”)

璇穹層雲上覆，光景如梭逝。惟此過隙緩征轡。垂象森列昭回。碧落卓然躔度，炳曜更騰輝。永永清光曄燁。縣四野、金璧為地。藥珠館，瓊玖室，俱高峙。千種奇葩，松椿可比。暗香幽馥，歲歲長春，陽烏何曾西委。

On the clear sky, layered clouds cover upwards. Time passes like shuttle. Only here the passing-crack (horse)<sup>375</sup> slows its rein on journey. Signs hanging down display in multitudes at stars. On the azure, distinguished are the moving degrees of the heavenly bodies, whose shining lights are even more brilliant. Forever the pure light is shining and bright. Silk floss are all around, gold and jade being the ground. Bud-and-Pearl Pavilion, Jade-and-Gem Chamber, both tower aloft. Thousand kinds of rare flowers, (the size of which) can be compared to pine and Chinese toon. Secret fragrance is deep and strong. Year after year they are always in vitality. When did the sun ever drop to the west?

袞徧 (“Rolling-movement”)<sup>376</sup>

<sup>372</sup> *Chifu* tally: a tally made at the end of Western Han, indicating that Liu Xiu is going to succeed to the throne of Han.

<sup>373</sup> Red Mountain: refers to the Cave Heaven of Red Mountain 朱陵洞天, one of the thirty-six cave heavens of Daoism, a heavenly abode that the immortals live.

<sup>374</sup> Kui and Biao stars: Kui is the four stars in the bowl of the Big Dipper, while Biao is the three stars in the handle of the Big Dipper.

<sup>375</sup> Passing-crack horse: refers to fleeting time.

<sup>376</sup> Gun 袞: technical term of music. Scholars think it refers to the beat, and is a simple form of *gun* 滾 (“roll”), which indicates the flow of the beats and sound.

按袞指拍言是也。或是滾之省體，名為滾者，以水流比曲聲之流轉。

*Gun* refers to the beat. Probably it is the simple form for *gun* 滾. To name it *gun*, is to liken the flow of music sound to the flow of water. (Liu Yongji 1957, p. 21.)

入破-虛催-前袞-實催-中袞-歇拍-後(煞)袞:

前袞、中袞，六字一拍，要停聲待拍，取氣輕巧。煞袞則三字一拍，蓋其曲將終，至曲尾數句，使聲字悠揚，有不忍絕句之意，以余音繞梁為佳。

First and middle *gun*, one beat to six words, music ceases to wait for beat—it must be light and agile; final *gun* three words, one beat. Just as the song is about to finish, cause the words and music to linger and flow, so there will be a reluctance to hear it end, as the lingering melody circles the rafters in its beauty. (CY, p.204. also see West 1977, p. 76.)

據此知虛催後乃前袞，實催後乃中袞，其與煞袞異者，拍之緩急不同而已。

According to this we know that after false *cui* is first *gun*, after real *cui* is middle *gun*. The difference

徧此境，人樂康，挾難老術，悟長生理。盡阿僧祇劫，赤松王令安期。彭錢盛矣。尚為嬰稚。鶴算龜齡，絳老休誇甲子。鮐背聳、黃髮垂髻。更童顏，長鼓腹、同遊戲。真是華胥。行有歌，坐有樂，獻笑都是神仙，時見羣翁啟齒。

All around this realm, people are happy and peaceful, holding the skill of never-growing-old, and understanding the method of living forever. Exhausting the doom of Asohgi<sup>377</sup> are Chisong, Wangzi Qiao and Master Anqi<sup>378</sup>. Peng Jian<sup>379</sup> is marvelous, yet was still an infant. As for the longevity like crane and turtle, let the old man from Jiang county<sup>380</sup> stop bragging about his years. The mackerel-backs<sup>381</sup> are straight, and the grey hair are with droopy hair bun<sup>382</sup>. Moreover, those of ruddy complexion, constantly drumming their bellies, play together. It is truly the State of Huaxu<sup>383</sup>. On walking, there is singing; on sitting, there is music. Those bearing smiles are all the immortals. From time to time one sees those old men open their mouths (smiling).

實催 (“Real Urge”)

露華霞液，雲漿椒醕，恣玉斝金罍。交酬成雅會。拚沈醉。中山千日，未為長久，今此陶陶一飲，動經萬祀。陳果蔗，皆是奇異。似瓜如鬥盡備。三千歲。一熟珍味。釘坐中，瑩似玉、爽口流涎，三偷不枉，西真指議。

The essence of dew, the liquid of rosy clouds<sup>384</sup>, the ambrosia of clouds, and the wine of pepper. Let free jade cups and golden goblets. Exchanging of toast makes elegant gathering. Let's abandon ourselves to drunkenness. Thousand days of Zhong Mountain wine<sup>385</sup> is not considered long. Today with this happy drinking, easily one passes ten thousand years. Displayed fruits and melons are all rare and unusual. As melons, or as ladles, things are complete. Precious food that only ripen every three thousand years.<sup>386</sup> Prepared among seats, they are sparkling as jade, refreshing and making one salivate. Three times of stealing is worth the scold of the Western Trueness<sup>387</sup>.

---

between them and the final *gun* is only the tempo of beat. (Liu Yongji 1957, p. 21.)

<sup>377</sup> Doom of Asohgi: an extremely long time in Buddhism.

<sup>378</sup> Wangling, I suspect it should be Wangqiao here. Chisong, Wangqiao, and Anqi are all immortals.

<sup>379</sup> Peng Jian, refers to Peng Zu, who is said to have lived up to eight hundred years old.

<sup>380</sup> Old man from Jiang County: refers to people of longevity. See *Zuo's Commentary*.

<sup>381</sup> Mackerel-backs: refer to old men whose back are with wrinkles of mackerel pattern.

<sup>382</sup> Droopy hair bun: hair style of children.

<sup>383</sup> The State of Huaxu: see *Liezi*. It was a place that the Yellow Emperor once wandered around in his daydream. Locating west to the Yanzhou, north to the Taizhou, this state was enormously vast. All people led a natural life there. When the Yellow Emperor waked, he felt happy.

<sup>384</sup> The liquid of rosy clouds: refers to the morning dew.

<sup>385</sup> Zhong Mountain wine is believed to be really good wine. The allusion here comes from *Bowu zhi* 博物志 by Zhang Hua 張華 of the Jin. It says that Liu Yuanshi once drank the thousand-day wine in a wineshop at Zhong Mountain, without being told the restraint. He went home and became unconscious for several days. Not knowing the truth, his families thought he died and thus put him into coffin and buried him. After thousand days, the wineshop owner finally remembered and went to find him. When they opened the coffin, Liu just became sober from his drunkenness.

<sup>386</sup> It is said that the peaches of the Queen Mother of the West only ripen every three thousand years. Also see the next footnote.

<sup>387</sup> The Western Trueness refers to the Queen Mother of the West. It is said that Dongfang Shuo has stolen her immortal peaches three times. Different accounts on this anecdote can be found in *Hanwu gushi* 漢武故事 (“Stories of the Emperor Wu of Han”) and Zhang Hua's 張華 *Bowu zhi* 博物志.

袞徧 (“Rolling-movement”)

有珍饌，時時饋。滑甘豐膩。紫芝煒煌，嫩菊秀媚。貯瑪瑙琥珀精器。延年益壽莫儼，人間烹飪徒費。休說龍肝鳳髓，動妙樂、仙音鼎沸。玉簫清，瑤瑟美。龍笛脆。雜遝飛鸞，花裯上、趁拍紅牙，餘韻悠颺，竟海變桑田未止。

Precious food are constantly offered. They are smooth, sweet, rich and thick. Purple magic fungus is glittering, and tender chrysanthemum is elegant and lovely. They are held in elaborate utensils of agate and amber. On prolonging life and promising longevity, nothing could be compared (to it); cooking of human world is only in vain. Not to mention the dragon liver and phoenix marrow. There is wonderful music played, celestial sounds being loud. The sound of jade flute is pure; that of gem zither beautiful; and that of the dragon flute clear and melodious. Numerous and disorderly are the flying simurghs. On the flowery mat, measuring the beat they hit red hardwood clappers. The lingered sound is melodious and mellifluous, ceaseless till the seas changing into mulberry fields.

歇拍 (“Resting-the-clappers”)

其間有洞天侶，思遊塵世。珠葆搖曳。華表真人，清江使者，相從密議。此老遨嬉。我輩應須隨侍。正舉步、忽思同類。十八公、方聳壑，宜邀致。夙駕星言，人爭圖繪。揭來鄞山甬水。因此崇成，四明里第。

There is denizen of grotto-heaven, who is yearning to roam the dusty world. Pearls and jewels swing and sway. The True Man of Ornamental Columns and envoy of Pure River follow him to have secret discussion. “This old man is roaming to romp, we ought to follow and serve.” Being about to step forward, suddenly they think about their fellows. The “Master of Eighteen” [=pine]<sup>388</sup>, who is towering in the gully, should be invited to come. So rapid and hasty (they come) that people strive to depict (this scene). From where come the Yin Mountain and Yong River? Because of this there the construction of the residences of Siming Mountain completes.

煞袞 (“Final-rolling”)

吾皇喜。光寵無貳。玉帶金魚榮貴。或者疑之。豈識聖明，曾主斯鄉，嘗相與盡續繼，膠漆何可相離。今日風雲合契。此實天意。吾皇聖壽無極，享晏粲千載相逢，我翁亦昌熾。永作升平上瑞。

Our emperor is happy. His favor is unparalleled, with the glory and honor of wearing jade belt with golden fish. Someone may doubt it. How could they know the Sage and Enlightened One has once resided this realm? Always being together and tenderly attached, how could they be separated? Nowadays the wind and cloud perfectly matches each other—this is truly the intention of heaven. May our emperor have boundless allotted life span, and enjoy the banquet food only occurring once in a thousand years. May our celestial beings also flourishing and brilliant, forever being the superior auspiciousness in peace and tranquility.

<sup>388</sup> “Master of Eighteen:” putting 十, 八, and 公 together one gets the character 松 (pine).

### 採蓮舞 (“Lotus Plucking Dance”)<sup>389</sup>

五人一字對廳立。竹竿子勾，念：

Five people stand in a line facing the hall. The “bamboo-pole” guy summons (them) and recites:  
伏以濃陰緩轡，化國之日舒以長。清奏當筵，治世之音安以樂。霞舒絳彩，玉照鉛華。玲瓏環佩之聲，綽約神仙之伍。朝回金闕，宴集瑤池。將陳倚棹之歌，式侑回風之舞。宜邀勝伴，用合仙音。女伴相將，採蓮入隊。

I humbly submit that: slacking the bridle amid lush shadows—the days of a cultivated state are leisurely and long. Fresh musical performances are at the mat—the tones of a well-ordered age are peaceful and joyous<sup>390</sup>. Rosy clouds spread crimson colors, jade shines upon white lead faces. The tinkling sound of jade ornaments; the graceful group of immortals. In the morning (they) return to the golden pylons, gathering for a banquet at the Jade Pond. (They) are about to present songs of “leaning on the oar,” to assist the “dance of whirling wind.” It is suitable to invite such wonderful companions, to match the transcendent’s sounds. Ladies together now, get into the troupe of lotus plucking.

勾念了，後行吹雙頭蓮令，舞上，分作五方。竹竿子又勾，念：

When beckon and recitation is finished, the back line plays the “Dual-head Lotus Tune.”<sup>391</sup> The dancers come onto the stage and separate to five directions. The “bamboo-pole” guy, again, beckons them and recites:

伏以波涵碧玉，搖萬頃之寒光。風動青蘋，聽數聲之幽韻。芝華雜遝，羽幟飄飄。疑紫府之羣英，集綺筵之雅宴。更憑樂部，齊迓來音。

I humbly submit that: the waves embrace green jade—vibrating chilly rays of ten-thousand *qing*. The wind swings the green duckweed—listen to the gentle rhythms of numerous sounds. Magic fungi and flowers are mixed and numerous, feathered and woven curtains toss and fly. It must be the hoard of blossoms from the “Purple-Residence”<sup>392</sup> gathering at this elegant banquet on exquisite mats. Let us now rely on the musical section to greet together the coming tones.

勾念了，後行吹採蓮令，舞轉作一直了，眾唱採蓮令：

When beckon and recitation is finished, the back line plays the “Tune of Plucking Lotus.” After the dancers twirled into one straight row, all sing the “Lotus Plucking Tune.”

練光浮，煙斂澄波渺。燕脂濕、靚妝初了。綠雲繖上露滾滾，的皪真珠小。籠嬌媚、輕盈佇眺。無言不見，仙娥凝望蓬島。玉闕匆匆，鎮鎖佳麗春難老。銀潢急、星槎飛到。暫離金砌，為愛此、極目香紅繞。倚蘭棹。清歌縹緲。隔花初見，楚楚風流年少。

White light floating, the mist disperses and the clear waves are vast. The rouge moist, the beautiful makeup is just finished. On the green-cloud umbrella rolls the dew, as bright

<sup>389</sup> The version I use here is from QSC, p.1251-1254. There is another version at Liu Yongji 1957.

<sup>390</sup> This line is from the “Great Preface” to the *Classic of Poetry*.

<sup>391</sup> “Dual-head Lotus Tune” 雙頭蓮令: Dual-head (*shuang tou*), also known as “dual-dragging-head” (*shuang ye tou* 雙曳頭) is a technical term of Song *ci* lyrics. In Song *ci* lyrics composed of three stanzas, when the first two stanzas are of the same syntactic pattern, they are treated as “dual-head” of the third stanza. A not-very-common form, it is seen in a few specific Song *ci* lyrics, such as “Dual-head Lotus (*Shuang tou lian* 雙頭蓮),” “Chant of Auspicious Dragon (*Rui long yin* 瑞龍吟),” etc.

<sup>392</sup> The “Purple-Residence” refers to the place that immortals live.

and small as the pearl. Frowning the fine eyebrows, gracefully we stand and look far into the distance. Without a word, one does not see the goddesses gazing at the Penglai Island.

Time is fleeting by the Jade Tower, which locks in the beauties and the spring cannot grow old. The Silver Water is rapid, and the star raft<sup>393</sup> flies over here. For the time being we leave the golden bricks, for loving this—to exhaust one’s eyesight, fragrant flowers surround. Leaning on the orchid oar, the pure song is dim. Separated by flowers, at the first time we see the lovely and admirable young man.

唱了，後行吹採蓮令，舞分作五方。竹竿子勾，念：

When the singing is finished, the back line plays the “Lotus Plucking Tune.” The dancers separate to five directions. The “bamboo-pole” guy calls and recites:

仗以遏雲妙響，初容與於波間；回雪奇容，乍婆娑於澤畔。愛芙蕖<sup>394</sup>之豔冶，有蘭芷之芳馨。躑躅凌波，洛浦未饒於獨步。雍容解佩，漢皋諒得以齊驅。宜到堦前，分明祇對。

I humbly submit that: the wonderful sound that obstructs the clouds, first lingers in the wave. The marvelous appearance as the whirling snow, suddenly starts dancing at the marsh bank. I love the coquettishness of the lotus, which possesses the fragrance of the orchid and angelica. As for their wavering paces above the waves, the Goddess of Luo does not excel them at exceptionalness. When they take off the jade pendants gracefully, (girls at) Hangao<sup>395</sup> are supposed to be the rival. It is suitable that they come in front of the steps to respond clearly.

花心出，念：

The flower-heart stands out and recites:

但兒等玉京侍席，久陟仙堦。雲路馳驟，乍遊塵世。喜聖明之際會，臻夷夏之清寧。聊尋澤國之芳，雅寄丹臺之曲。不慚鄙俚，少頌昇平。未敢自專，伏候處分。Serving in the jade capital, we have ascended to the celestial steps for a long time. Riding the carriages through cloudy way, we first wander in the dusty world. We are happy about the opportunity of the brilliant, which reaches the pureness and peace of Yi and Xia. For the time being we search the fragrance of marsh land, and respectfully present the tunes of the Red Terrace (celestial realm). Not being ashamed of our vulgarity, for a short while we praise the peace. Not daring to act on our own initiative, we prostrate ourselves and wait for instructions.

竹竿子問，念：

The “bamboo-pole” guy asks and recites:

既有清歌妙舞，何不獻呈。

“Since you have delicate song and exquisite dance, why not present them?”

花心答，問：

The flower-heart answers by asking:

舊樂何在。

<sup>393</sup> 星槎(*xingcha*, “Star raft”) is said to be a raft one rides from the sea to the Milky Way. Zhang Hua 張華, in his *Bowu zhi* 博物志, has an anecdote saying that a person who lived on an islet in the sea once took the star raft to the Milky Way and came across the ox shepherd and the weaving girl.

<sup>394</sup> Liu Yongji’s version has 芙蓉.

<sup>395</sup> Hangao 漢皋: It is said that when Zheng Jiaofu 鄭交甫 of Zhou met two goddesses at the Hangao Terrace, they took off their jade ornaments to present to Zheng. See *Wenxuan*.



“Where is the previous music?”

竹竿子再問，念：

The “bamboo-pole” guy asks again, reciting:

一部儼然。

“Here is one set, intact.”

花心答，念：

The flower-heart answers, reciting:

再韻前來。

“We bring it forward with a second rhyme.”

念了，後行吹採蓮曲破，五人眾舞，到入破，先兩人舞出，舞到裊上住，當立處訖。又二人舞，又住，當立處，然後花心舞徹。竹竿子念：

When they have finished the recitation, the back line plays the “Breakdown” of the “Lotus Plucking Tune.” Five dancers perform ensemble. When it comes to “Entering-breakdown,” first, two people dance out of the line, and stop only when they dance to the mat, at the spots they stood before. Another two dance, and again, stop at the spots they stood before. Then the flower-heart finishes the dance<sup>396</sup>. The “bamboo-pole” guy recites:

伏以仙裾搖曳，擁雲羅霧縠之奇。紅袖翩翻，極鸞翻鳳翰之妙。再呈獻瑞，一洗凡容。已奏新詞，更留雅詠。

I humbly submit that: celestial gowns sway, possessing the wonder of cloudy gauze and misty crepe. Red sleeves fly and toss, expressing to the utmost the marvel of simurgh feather and phoenix pinion. Once again we render the presented auspicious, completely cleansing the worldly appearance. Already played are our new lyrics; all the more we linger in elegant chanting.

念了，花心念詩：

After the recitation, the flower-heart recites a poem:

我本清都侍玉皇。乘雲馭鶴到仙鄉。輕舫一葉煙波闊，嗜此秋潭萬斛香。

I was, before, at the Pure Capital<sup>397</sup> serving the Jade Emperor. Riding the clouds and driving the cranes I arrive at this celestial realm. With one light small boat, the misty wave is vast. I indulge myself in the fragrance of ten-thousand *hu* of this autumn pond.

念了，後行吹漁家傲。花心舞上，折花了，唱漁家傲：

After the recitation, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman”. The Flower-heart dances onto (the stage). After plucking the flower, she sings “Free-Spirited Fisherman.”

藥沼清冷涓滴水。迢迢煙浪三千里。微孕青房包繡綺。薰風裏。幽芳洗盡閑桃李。羽斃飄蕭塵外侶。相呼短棹輕偎倚。一片清歌天際起。聲尤美。雙雙驚起鴛鴦睡。

The pond of buds is clear and chilly, into which tiny stream drips water. Distant misty wave is three thousand *li*. Slightly tumescent green bud wraps up the embroidered silk. In the fragrant breeze, delicate aroma is rinsed off and the peach and plum are idle. With flying feathered cloak is the companion beyond the dusty world. Calling the short oar, they slightly lean on each other. A piece of pure song rises from the edge of sky. The sound is particularly beautiful, which startles a couple of sleeping mandarin ducks.

唱了，後行吹漁家傲。五人舞，換坐，當花心立人念詩：

After the singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Five people dance, and switch their seats. The person standing as the flower-heart recites a poem:

<sup>396</sup> *Che* 徹 is also a technical term of *daqu*, referring to the end of dancing.

<sup>397</sup> The Pure Capital is the mythical palace that the Emperor of Heaven lives.

我昔瑤池飽宴遊。竭來樂國已三秋。水晶宮裏尋幽伴，菡萏香中蕩小舟。

In the past I fully roamed the banquets in the Jade Pond. Already I have been in the happy country for three years. In the Crystal Palace I search for the gentle companion, (with whom,) in the fragrance of lotus, to row a small boat.

念了，後行吹漁家傲。花心舞上，折花了，唱漁家傲：

After the recitation, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” The flower-heart dances up (the stage). After plucking the flower, she sings “Free-Spirited Fisherman.”

翠蓋參差森玉柄。迎風浥露香無定。不著塵沙真體淨。蘆花徑。酒侵酥臉霞相映。掉撥木蘭煙水暝。月華如練秋空靜。一曲悠颺沙鷺聽。牽清興。香紅已滿蒹葭艇。

Green canopies are uneven, jade stems dense. Against the wind and damped by the dew, the aroma is unsettled. With no dust and sand attached, the essential body is clean. On the reed-flower path, the wine permeates the satiny face, upon which shines the rosy clouds. Turning over to poke away the lily magnolia—misty water is dusky. The moonlight is like silk, the autumn sky in silence. One melodious tune, sand egrets are listening. Pure interest being touched, fragrant redness has already permeated the reed boat.

唱了，後行吹漁家傲。五人舞，換坐，當花心立人念詩：

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Five people dance, and switch seats. The person standing as the flower-heart recites a poem:

我弄雲和萬古聲。至今江上數峯青。幽泉一曲今憑棹，楚客還應著耳聽。

I play the strings, the sound lasting for myriad generations. To this day, on the river, several peaks are green. One tune of serene spring, now, leans on the oar. The guest of Chu ought to bend his ear and listen.

念了，後行吹漁家傲。花心舞上，折花了，唱漁家傲：

After recitation, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” The flower-heart dances onto (the stage). After plucking the flower, she sings “Free-Spirited Fisherman.”

草輒沙平風掠岸。青蓑一釣煙江畔。荷葉為裯花作幔。知誰伴。醇醪只把鱸魚換。盤縷銀絲杯自暖。篷窗醉著無人喚。逗得醒來橫脆管。清歌緩。彩鸞飛去紅雲亂。

The grasses supple, the sand flat, wind brushes the shore. One green straw rain cape coat is on the bank of misty river. Lotus leaves be the mats, flowers as curtains. Who is known to be the companion? Mellow wine is only traded for perches. In the plate are wisps of silver slices; the goblet is naturally warm. By the covered window, I am drunk to sleep, with nobody arousing. After waking up, I put melodious pipe against my lips. The pure song is soft. Colored simurgh flies away, and the red clouds are disturbed.

唱了，後行吹漁家傲。五人舞，換坐，當花心立人念詩：

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Five people dance, and switch seats. The person standing as the flower-heart recites a poem:

我是天孫織錦工。龍梭一擲度晴空。蘭橈不逐仙槎去，貪擷芙蓉萬朵紅。

I am a brocade weaver of the star Vega. One toss of the dragon shuttle, it crosses the clear sky. The orchid oar does not follow the celestial raft, being fond of plucking the myriad red flowers of lotus.

念了，後行吹漁家傲。花心舞上，折花了，唱漁家傲：

After recitation, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” The flower-heart dances onto (the stage). After plucking the flower, she sings “Free-Spirited Fisherman.”

太華峯頭冰玉沼。開花十丈干雲杪。風散天香聞四表。知多少。亭亭碧葉何曾老。

試問<sup>398</sup>霏煙登鳥道。丹崖步步祥光繞。折得一枝歸月嶠。蓬萊島。霞裾侍女爭言好。

On the peak of Taihua Mountain, the Jade Pond is icy. Blossomed flowers, as high as ten *zhang*, reach the tips of clouds. Scattered by the wind, the sky is fragrant, smelt by four directions. How many upright green leaves, do you know, ever become old?

Try going against clouds and mist, I ascend the narrow hill path. Step by step, the red cliff is surrounded with auspicious light. Having broken one branch, I return to the mountain of the moon. On the Island of *Penglai*, maids in rosy-clouds gowns strive in praising it.

唱了，後行吹漁家傲。五人舞，換坐，當花心立人念詩：

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Five people dance, and switch seats. The person standing as the flower-heart recites a poem:

我入桃源避世紛。太平纔出報君恩。白龜已閱千千歲，卻把蓮巢作酒樽。

I enter the Peach Blossom Spring to escape from the chaos of the world. Only in a time of peace did I come out to repay our lord’s favor<sup>399</sup>. The white turtle has already sighted thousands and thousands of years, and now it takes the lotus nest as goblet.

念了，後行吹漁家傲。花心舞上，折花了，唱漁家傲：

After recitation, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” The flower-heart dances onto (the stage). After plucking the flower, she sings “Free-Spirited Fisherman.”

珠露漙漙清玉宇。霞標綽約消煩暑。時馭清風之帝所。尋舊侶。三千仙仗臨煙渚。舴艋飄飄來復去。漁翁問我居何處。笑把紅蕖呼鶴馭。回頭語。壺中自有朝天路。

Round are the pearly dewdrops, which purify the Jade Palace. Graceful are the red poles (i.e., the lotus), which eliminate the disturbing heat. Now and then I ride the pure wind going to the emperor’s place. Looking for the previous companion, three thousand celestial guards of honor arrive at the misty island. Small boat is drifting—it comes and goes. The fisherman asks me where I live. In a smile, I hold the red lotus and call for my crane to ride. Turning back, I say: “in the gourd there naturally is road to the sky.”

唱了，後行吹漁家傲。五人舞，換坐如初。竹竿子勾，念。

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Five people dance, and switch to their previous seats. The “bamboo-pole” guy calls and recites:

伏以珍符滂至，朝廷之道格高深；年谷屢豐，郡邑之和薰遐邇。式均歡宴，用樂清時。感游女於仙衢，詠奇葩於水國。折來和月，露浥霞腮；舞處隨風，香盈翠袖。既徜徉於玉砌，宜宛轉于雕梁。爰有佳賓，冀聞清唱。

I humbly submit that: precious symbols continuously arriving, the way of the court sets straight that from the highest and deepest. Yearly harvest oftentimes abundant, the harmony of counties exerts far and near. Here we share in the just portioning of happy banquet, so as to celebrate delight in pure age. We are moved by the roaming ladies at celestial road, so as to chant the wonderful flowers at the water state. When breaking it down to match the moon, dew moistures the cloudy cheek. The dancing spots are along with the wind, fragrance brim over the green sleeves. (Their dance) already wandered

<sup>398</sup> Liu’s version has 遡.

<sup>399</sup> Here *jun* 君 can either mean “the lord/emperor,” or be used as a second-person address in a way of direct speech during a performance. Hence I use the translation here to reconcile these two possibilities.

about on the jade steps, (their song) ought to be swirling at carved roof-beam. Here are honored guests. We hope to hear the pure singing.

念了，眾唱畫堂春：

After recitation, all sing “Spring in the Painted Hall:”

彤霞出水弄幽姿。娉婷玉面相宜。棹歌先得一枝枝。波上畫鯨飛。 向此畫堂高會，幽馥散、堪引瑤卮。幸然逢此太平時。不醉可無歸。

Rosy mist emerges from the water, displaying their cloistered demeanor, with which the graceful jade faces are fitting complements. The songs of the oar, earlier, one after one. On the wave, painted whale flies. Always at this grand banquet of painted hall, that deep fragrance scattering may draw the jade goblet. Luckily we meet this peaceful time. Without getting drunk, one may not return.

唱了，後行吹畫堂春。眾舞，舞了又唱河傳：

After singing, the back line plays “Spring in the Painted Hall.” All dance. After dancing, sing “*Hechuan*.”

藥宮閨苑。聽鈞天帝樂，知他幾徧。爭似人間，一曲採蓮新傳。柳腰輕，鶯舌囀。

逍遙煙浪誰羈絆。無奈天堦，早已催班轉。卻駕彩鸞，芙蓉斜盼。願年年，陪此宴。

At the Bud Palace and *Lang* garden, we listen to the celestial music of the emperor—how many times do we know? How can it be compared to the human world, one song of “Plucking Lotus” newly passed down. Willow waist is lithe; oriole tongue warbles.

Being carefree in the misty wave, who would restrain me? However, the celestial steps have already urged the departure and return. Ride on the colorful simurgh, with lotus slanting and looking. Wish year after year, we can accompany this banquet.

唱了，後行吹河傳，眾舞。舞了，竹竿子念遣隊：

After singing, the back line plays “*Hechuan*.” All dance. After dancing, the “bamboo-pole” guy recites to dismiss the troupe.

浣花一曲湄江城，雅合鳧鷖醉太平。楚澤清秋餘白浪，芳枝今已屬飛瓊。歌舞既闌，相將好去。

One song of “Rinsing flowers” at the bank of river city, elegantly matches the teals and gulls fascinated with peace and tranquility. The lakes of Chu, in the pure autumn, remain white wave. The fragrant twigs, nowadays, have already belonged to the flying jade. Now that song and dance are done, let us rise and leave together.

念了，後行吹雙頭蓮令。五人舞轉作一行，對廳杖鼓出場。

After recitation, the back line plays the “Double-head Lotus Tune.” Five people dance and turn into one line. Facing the hall, they exit to the rhythm of beating drums.

## 太清舞 (“Dance of Supreme Clarity”)

後行吹道引曲子，迎五人上，對廳一直立。樂住，竹竿子勾念：

The back line plays the “Leading Tune” to greet five people coming up, who stand a straight line facing the hall. The music stops. The “bamboo-pole” guy calls (them) and recites:

洞天門闕鎖煙蘿。瓊室瑤台瑞氣多。欲識仙凡光景異，歡謠須聽太平歌。

The gates of the Grotto-heaven lock the mist and vines. In the jade room and gem terrace, auspicious air is plenty. In order to tell the different spectacles between the celestial and secular world, of happy songs, one must listen to the song of peace.

花心念：

The flower-heart recites:

伏以獸鑪縹緲噴祥煙，玳席熒煌開邃幄。諦視人間之景物，何殊洞府之風光。恭惟袞繡主人，簪纓貴客。或碧瞳漆髮，或綠鬢童顏。雄辯風生，英姿玉立。曾向蕊宮貝闕，為逍遙遊；俱膺丹篆玉書，作神仙伴。故今此會，式契前蹤。但兒等偶到塵寰，欣逢雅宴；欲陳末藝，上助清歡。未敢自專，伏候處分。

I humbly submit that: beast-shaped incense burners are hazy, whiffing auspicious smoke. Tortoiseshell-bordered mats are glittering and brilliant, unfolding the deep curtains. To scrutinize the scenery of human world—what is different from the landscape of cave-dwelling (of immortals)? Honorable are the hosts in dragon robe and noble guests with ribboned hairpin. Some are with bluish pupils and pitch-black hair, some with black temples and ruddy complexion. Eloquence is cheerful and harmonious; heroic bearing is slim and graceful. Once before, to the Bud Palace and Shell Court, (they) have ever made carefree roam. All bearing red scripts and auspicious writings, they were the companions of the immortals. Therefore, at the gathering of today, they try to match previous traces. We occasionally come to the dusty domain, and happily come upon this elegant banquet. About to display our trivial skill, above we assist the pure enjoyment. Not daring to act on our own initiative, we prostrate ourselves and wait for instructions.

竹竿問，念：

“Bamboo-pole” guy asks by reciting:

既有清歌妙舞，何不獻呈。

“Since you have delicate song and exquisite dance, why not present them?”

花心答，念：

The flower-heart answers by reciting:

舊樂何在。

“Where is the previous music?”

竹竿子問，念：

The “bamboo-pole” guy asks by reciting:

一部儼然。

“Here is one set, intact.”

花心答，念：

The flower-heart answers, reciting:

再韻前來。

“We bring it forward with a second rhyme.”

念了，後行吹太清，眾舞訖，眾唱：

After reciting, the back line plays “Extreme Clarity.” After ensemble dance, all sing:  
武陵自古神仙府。有漁人迷路。洞戶迸寒泉，泛桃花容與。尋花迤邐見靈光，舍扁舟、飄然入去。注目渺紅霞，有人家無數。

*Wuling*, from the antiquity, has been the residence of the immortals. A fisherman got lost there. The entry of cave spurted chilly spring, on which floating peachblossom were lingering. Tracing the flowers, meanderingly (he) saw miraculous brightness. Abandoning the small boat, airily (he) entered (the cave). To gaze at distant rosy clouds, there were numerous houses and residences.

唱了，後行吹太清歌，眾舞，舞訖，花心唱：

After singing, the back line plays “The Song of Extreme Clarity.” All dance. After dancing, the flower-heart sings:

須臾卻有人相顧。把肴漿來聚。禮數既雍容，更衣冠淳古。漁人方問此何鄉，眾顰眉、皆能深訴。元是避嬴秦，共攜家來住。

In a moment there were people coming to look, taking dishes and drinks to make a gathering. Their etiquette was already elegant, clothes and hats were moreover simple and ancient. The fisherman then asked where it was. All frowning, everyone was able to tell deeply. Originally to escape the Qin, they together brought along families and came living here.

唱了，後行吹太清歌，眾舞，換坐，當花心一人唱：

After singing, the back line plays “The Song of Extreme Clarity.” All dance, and switch seats. The one as flower-heart sings:

當時脫得長城苦。但熙熙朝暮。上帝錫長生，任跳丸烏兔。種桃千萬已成陰，望家鄉、杳然何處。從此與凡人，隔雲霄煙雨。

At that time we escaped from the hardship of the Great Wall. Day and night, there was only happiness. The Celestial Emperor bestows longevity, letting alone the time flies<sup>400</sup>. Thousand and myriad planted peaches have already formed the shadow. To gaze at our hometown, where in distance is it? From then on, (we) and worldly people were blocked by the cloudy sky and misty rain.

唱了，後行吹太清歌，眾舞，換坐，當花心一人唱：

After singing, the back line plays “The Song of Extreme Clarity.” All dance, and switch seats. The one as flower-heart sings:

漁舟之子來何所。盡相猜相語。夜宿玉堂空，見火輪飛舞。凡心有慮尚依然，複歸指、維舟沙浦。回首已茫茫，歎愚迷不悟。

From where did the sir on the fishing boat come? They all made guesses and discussed with each other. At night when (the fisherman) slept in the empty jade hall, (he) saw flame wheel<sup>401</sup> flying. The worldly mind, having concern, was still yearning (where he came from); again he returned to the sand shore where he tied the boat. When he looked back, it was already vast and indistinct. Sigh how foolish and unawakened (he was).

唱了，後行吹太清歌，眾舞，換坐，當花心一人唱：

After singing, the back line plays “The Song of Extreme Clarity.” All dance, and switch seats. The one as flower-heart sings:

---

<sup>400</sup> *Tiaowan* or “jumping balls” refers to the fast moving of the sun and moon. *Wutu* or “Crow and Rabbit,” also refers to the sun and moon. In the myth, there is crow living in the sun and rabbit living in the moon.

<sup>401</sup> “Flame wheel” refers to the sun.

我今來訪煙霞侶。沸華堂簫鼓。疑是奏鈞天，宴瑤池金母。卻將桃種散階除，俾華實、須看三度。方記古人言，信有緣相遇。

We, today, come to visit the companion of rosy clouds. Loud and noisy are flutes and drums in the magnificent hall. It is suspected that the Balanced Heaven is played, to hold a banquet for the Golden Queen Mother of the Jade Pond. We are about to scatter the peach seeds on the steps. To get flowers and fruits, one has to wait for three times/years. Just then we remember the saying of the ancients, believing those who are destined to meet will meet.

唱了，後行吹太清歌，眾舞，換坐，當花心一人唱：

After singing, the back line plays “The Song of Extreme Clarity.” All dance, and switch seats. The one as flower-heart sings:

雲駟羽幃仙風舉。指丹霄煙霧。行作玉京朝，趁兩班鸕鷀。玲瓏環佩擁霓裳，卻自有、簫韶隨步。含笑囑芳筵，後會須來赴。

Cloudy carriages and feathered curtains are lifted by the celestial wind, pointing to the red clouds and misty fog. About to make a court in the Jade Capital, we follow two rows of *yuan* and egrets. Exquisite jade ornaments surround rainbow skirts; naturally there is flute music following the steps. Smiling, we tell the fragrant banquet: we must come for later gatherings.

唱了，後行吹太清歌，眾舞，舞訖，竹竿子念：

After singing, the back line plays “The Song of Extreme Clarity.” All dance, and switch seats. The one as flower-heart sings:

欣聽嘉音，備詳仙跡。固知玉步，欲返雲程。宜少駐于香車，佇再聞於雅詠。

Happily listening to the fine music, we entirely know the trace of the immortals. Certainly we know the jade steps are about to return to the cloudy journey. It is suitable to stop the fragrant carriages a little bit, as we look forward to hearing again the elegant chanting.

念了，花心念：

After reciting, the flower-heart recites:

但兒等暫離仙島，來止洞天。屬當嘉節之臨，行有清都之覲。芝華羽葆，已雜還於青冥；玉女仙童，正逢迎于黃道。既承嘉命，聊具新篇。

篇曰：仙家日月如天遠，人世光陰若電飛。絕唱已聞驚列坐，他年同步太清歸。

For the time being, we leave the celestial island and come stop by the grotto-heaven. It happens that good festival is coming. There is about to have a pilgrimage at the Capital of Clarity. Fungus covers and feathered hoods of carriages are already numerous and disorderly at the blue sky; jade maidens and celestial boys are currently greeting at the Yellow Way<sup>402</sup>. Having already accepted good command, for the moment we compose a new piece.

The writing goes: Sun and moon in celestial world are as distant as the heaven; time in the human world flies as fast as lightning. The superb singing has already been heard and startled all that in seat. In other year, pacing together, we return to the Extreme Clarity.

念了，眾唱破子：

After reciting, all sing short breakdown<sup>403</sup>:

<sup>402</sup> The Yellow Way refers to the road the emperor goes in excursion.

<sup>403</sup> According to *Ci pu* 詞譜, the so-called *pozi* refers to the section “entering the breakdown with its busy

遊塵世、到仙鄉。喜君王。躋治虞唐。文德格遐荒。四裔盡來王。干戈偃息歲豐穰。三萬里農桑。歸去告穹蒼。錫聖壽無疆。

Roaming the dusty world, we arrive at the celestial land. We are happy that the emperor ascends to the administration of Yu and Tang. The civil virtue arrives at remote and desolate places; descendants of four directions all come to be ruled. Wars cease and stop, every year there is bumper harvest. Farming and mulberries are of thirty-thousand *li*. Upon returning, we are to tell the heaven to bestow Your Majesty boundless life span.

唱了，後行吹步虛子，四人舞上，勸心酒，花心複勸。勸訖，眾舞列作一字行。竹竿子念遣隊：

After singing, the back line plays “Pacing on Void<sup>404</sup>.” Four people dance up to the stage, and toast to the flower-heart. The flower-heart, again, toasts. After toasting, all dancers make a straight line. The “bamboo-pole” guy recites to dismiss the troupe:

仙音縹緲，麗句清新。既歸美於皇家，複激昂於坐客。桃源歸路，鶴馭迎風。拱手階前，相將好去。

The celestial music is dim and indistinct; the beautiful lines are pure and delicate. Having already praised the royal family, again it arouses the guests in seats. On the return road from Peach Blossom Spring, we ride on the crane going against the wind. Clapping hands in front of the steps, let us rise and leave together.

念了，後行吹步虛子，出場。

After reciting, the back line plays “Pacing on Void” and exit.

---

sound (所謂破子者，以其繁聲入破也)。” Therefore, it is one kind of “entering-breakdown.” It is also believed to be performed in dance music.

<sup>404</sup> A Taoist tune, seen in *Qinding cipu* 欽定詞譜. It is also seen in the “Treaties on the music” of *Gaoli shi* 高麗史 (“History of Korea”), as a tune for dance music bestowed to Korea by the Song.



## 柘枝舞 (“Dance of Cudrania Branches”)<sup>405</sup>

五人對廳一直立，竹竿子勾念：

Five people facing the hall stand as a straight line. The “bamboo-pole” guy calls (them) and recites: 伏以瑞日重光，清風應候。金石絲竹，閒六律以皆調；傑[イ末](任?)兜離，賀四夷之率伏。請翻妙舞，來奉多歡。鼓吹連催，柘枝入隊。

I humbly submit that: the auspicious sun doubles its light.<sup>406</sup> The pure wind yields to the season. Bells and chime stones, stringed and woodwind instruments, spaced with six temperaments, have all been tuned. Jin and Ren<sup>407</sup>, music of the barbarian, celebrate the surrender of foreign states at four directions. We request to play wonderful dance, coming here to offer plentiful happiness. Drums and pipes urge continuously; cudrania branches performers enter the line.

念了，後行吹引子半段入場，連吹柘枝令，分作五方舞。舞了，竹竿子又念：

After recitation, the back line plays half segment of the prelude and enters the stage, and continuously plays the “Tune of Cudrania Branches.” (The dancers) separate into five directions to dance. After dancing, the “bamboo-pole” guy again recites:

適見金鈴錯落，錦帽踰躑。芳年玉貌之英童，翠袂紅綃之麗服。雅擅西戎之舞，似非中國之人。宜到階前，分明祇對。

Just now we saw the metal bells strewn at random, brocade gowns and hats whirling about. Handsome boys of young age with beautiful looks, and gorgeous dresses with green sleeves and red silk. Accomplished in dance of west Rong, they seem not to be the people of central state. It is suitable that they come to the front of steps, and respond clearly.

念了，花心出，念：

After recitation, the flower-heart comes out, and recites:

但兒等名參樂府，幼習舞容。當芳宴以宏開，屬雅音而合奏。敢呈末技，用讚清歌。未敢自專，伏候處分。

We, having our names join the Music Bureau, have been practicing dance from our childhood. Now the wonderful banquet is held magnificently, and the elegant music is gathered and played ensemble. We dare to present our trivial skill, in order to assist the pure singing. Not daring to act on our own initiative, we prostrate ourselves and wait for instructions.

念了，竹竿子問，念：

After recitation, the “bamboo-pole” guy asks, reciting:

既有清歌妙舞，何不獻呈。

“Since you have delicate song and exquisite dance, why not present them?”

花心答，念：

<sup>405</sup> Some characters are missing in this piece of *daqu*. A research on it may refer to Wu Wenguang 吳文光, Zhao Xiaonan 趙曉楠 article: *Guanyu daqu* ‘Zhezhi ling getou,’ ‘Zhezhi ling’ *suzi pu ji qi kaoyi* 關於大曲《柘枝令歌頭》、《柘枝令》俗字譜及其考、譯, in *Zhongguo yinyue xue* 中國音樂學, 2000, vol. 4

<sup>406</sup> Double lights: refers to the appearance of the corona of the sun, which is considered an auspicious sign.

<sup>407</sup> Jin and Ren: music of the barbarian areas. According to Cai Yong’s 蔡邕 *Duduan* 獨斷, the music from the north is called Jin, while that from the south is called Ren. (“四夷樂之別名……東方曰曠，南方曰任，西方曰侏離，北方曰傑。”)

The flower-heart answers by reciting:  
舊樂何在。

“Where is the previous music?”

竹竿問，念：

The “bamboo-pole” guy asks by reciting:  
一部儼然。

“Here is one set, intact.”

花心答，念：

The flower-heart answers, reciting:  
再韻前來。

“We bring it forward with a second rhyme.”

念了，後行吹三臺一徧，五人舞拜，起舞，後行再吹射鵬徧連歌頭。舞了，眾唱歌頭：

After recitation, the back line plays “Three Terraces” once. The five persons dance to prostrate themselves, then get up to dance. The back line then plays “Shooting Eagle” piece along with the beginning of the song. After dancing, all sing the beginning of the song.

□人奉聖□朝□□□主□□□□留伊。得荷雲戲、幸遇文明、堯階上、太平時。□□□□何不罷歲□征舞柘枝。

[.....]We are able to receive the cloudy play, and fortunately meet the civil virtue being brilliant, the peaceful era on the steps of Yao. [.....]

唱了，後行吹朵肩徧。吹了，又吹撲蝴蝶遍，又吹畫眉遍。舞轉，謝酒了，眾唱柘枝令：

After singing, the back line plays the “Ear-shoulder” piece. When it is finished, then plays the “Striking Butterfly” piece, then “Painting the Eyebrows” piece. The dancers twirl, and give thanks for the wine. When they are done, all sing the “Tune of Cudrania Branches.”

我是柘枝嬌女。□□多風措。□□□□住。深□妙學得柘枝舞。□□頭戴鳳冠□□□纖腰束素。□□徧體錦衣裝，來獻呈歌舞。

I am a delicate girl of Cudrania branches, full of graceful demeanours. [.....] I learned “Dance of Cudrania Branches.” On my head I wear phoenix hat; around my slim waist I tie plain silk. Dressed with brocade clothes all over my body, I come to present singing and dancing.

又唱：

Then sings:

回頭卻望塵寰去。喧畫堂簫鼓。整雲鬟、搖曳青綃，愛一曲柘枝舞。好趁華封盛祝笑，共指南山煙霧。蟠桃仙酒醉昇平，望鳳樓歸路。

Turning around we gaze at the human world, where flutes and drums in the painted hall are loud and noisy. Reorganizing the cloudy hair bun, swaying the green silk, we love one piece of Dance of Cudrania Branches. It is good to take the opportunity of making wish<sup>408</sup>, to hold the wishes and laughings, and together point to the mist of the South Mountain. With immortal peaches and celestial wine, we are drunk in peaceful time, only to gaze at the returning road to the Phoenix Tower<sup>409</sup>.

唱了，後行吹柘枝令，眾舞了，竹竿子念遣隊：

After singing, the back line plays the “Tune of Cudrania Branches.” After ensemble dance finishes, the “bamboo-pole” guy makes a recitation to dismiss the troupe:

<sup>408</sup> The borderman of Hua makes three good wishes to emperor Yao. See *Zhuangzi*.

<sup>409</sup> The Phoenix Tower: refers to the court.

雅音震作，既呈儀鳳之吟；妙舞回翔，巧著飛鸞之態。已洽歡娛綺席，暫歸縹緲仙都。再拜階前，相將好去。

The elegant sound played loudly, already presents the chanting of guardian phoenix; marvellous dance twisting and twirling, wonderfully writes the manner of flying simurgh. Having already harmonized the happiness and joy on the exquisite mats, for the time being we return to the misty celestial city. Once again bowing in front of the steps, let us rise and leave together.

念了，後行吹柘枝令出隊。

After recitation, the back line plays the "Tune of Cudrania Branches" and the troupe dismisses.

## 花舞 (“Dance of Flowers”)

兩人對廳立自勾，念：

Two people stand facing the hall, call themselves up and recite:

伏以騷賦九章，靈草喻如君子。詩人十詠，奇花命以佳人。因其有香，尊之為客。欲知標格，請觀一字之褒。爰藉品題，遂作群英之冠。適當麗景，用集仙姿。玉質輕盈，共慶一時之會。金尊激灩，式均四坐之歡。女伴相將，折花入隊。

I humbly submit that: the lyric of *Chu* has nine pieces, where beautiful grasses are analogies of gentlemen. The poet has ten chants, in which marvelous flowers are assigned to beauties. Because they have fragrance, one respects them as guests. Would you like to know the manner, please see the one-word praise. Additionally relying on the appraisal and inscription, (they) then become the top of various flowers. It happens to be at this beautiful time, hence to gather celestial countenances. Gem qualities being light, together they celebrate the gathering of one era. Golden goblets rippling, even the happiness of seats at four directions. Ladies, together, pluck the flowers and enter the line.

念了，後行吹折花三臺。舞，取花瓶。又舞上，對客放瓶，念牡丹花詩：

After reciting, the back line plays “Three Terraces of Plucking Flowers.” [Dancers] dance, and take the vase. Again [they] dance up to the stage, put down the vase facing the guests, and recite poem of peony.

花是牡丹推上首，天家侍宴為賓友。料應雨露久承恩，貴客之名從此有。

Among flowers, peony is the one raised to be the top. When heavenly family presents banquet, it is the guest and friend. Probably because they have accepted rain and dew and received the favor for a long time, the name of “Noble-guest” is obtained henceforward.

念了，舞，唱蝶戀花。侍女持酒果上，勸客飲酒。

After reciting, [dancers] dance, and sing “Butterfly Misses Flower.” Maids come up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests.

貴客之名從此有。多謝風流，飛馭陪樽酒。持此一卮同勸後。願花長在人長壽。

The name of “Noble-guest” is obtained henceforward. Thanks to the charming, for taking flying carriage to accompany this cup of wine. Holding this goblet and toast together, from now on, wish the flower always in blossom and the master a long life.

舞唱了，後行吹三臺。舞轉，換花瓶。又舞上，次對客放瓶，念瑞香花詩：

After dancing and singing, the back line plays “Three Terraces.” Dancers swirl off to change the vase. Then they dance up to the stage, again put down the vase facing the guests, and recite poem of daphne.

花是瑞香初擢秀。達人鼻觀通廬阜。遂令聲價滿寰區，嘉客之名從此有。

Among flowers, daphne is the one that first extracts the fineness, which reaches people’s nose and sight, and connects to the Lu Mountain. Consequently it makes its reputation all over the world. The name of “Fine-guest” is obtained henceforward.

念了，舞，唱蝶戀花，侍女持酒果上，勸客飲酒。

After reciting, [dancers] dance, and sing “Butterfly Misses Flower.” Maids come up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests.

嘉客之名從此有。多謝風流，飛馭陪樽酒。持此一卮同勸後。願花長在人長壽。

The name of “Fine-guest” is obtained henceforward. Thanks to the charming, for taking flying carriage to accompany this cup of wine. Holding this goblet and toast together, from now on, wish the flower always in blossom and the master a long life.

舞唱了，後行吹三臺。舞轉，換花瓶。又舞上，次對客放瓶，念丁香花詩：

After dancing and singing, the back line plays “Three Terraces.” Dancers twirl off to change the

vase. Then they dance up to the stage, again put down the vase facing the guests, and recite poem of lilac.  
花是丁香花未剖。青枝碧葉藏瓊玖。如居翠幄道家妝，素客之名從此有。

Among flowers, lilac is the one whose flower is not open. In green branches and leaves there hides the jade. As if living in the emerald green curtains, with Taoist dressing. The name of “Plain-guest” is obtained henceforward.

念了，舞，唱蝶戀花。侍女持酒果上，勸客飲酒。

After reciting, dance, and sing “Butterfly Misses Flower.” Maids come up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests.

素客之名從此有。多謝風流，飛馭陪樽酒。持此一卮同勸後。願花長在人長壽。

The name of “Plain-guest” is obtained henceforward. Thanks to the charming, for taking flying carriage to accompany this cup of wine. Holding this goblet and toast together, from now on, wish the flower always in blossom and the master a long life.

舞唱了，後行吹三臺，舞轉，換花瓶。又舞上，次對客放瓶，念春蘭花詩：

After dancing and singing, the back line plays “Three Terraces.” Dancers twirl off to change the vase. Then they dance up to the stage, again put down the vase facing the guests, and recite poem of spring orchid.

花是春蘭棲遠岫。竹風松露為交舊。仙家劍佩羽霓裳，幽客之名從此有。

Among flowers, spring orchid is the one dwells at remote peak. Bamboo, wind, pine and dew are old acquaintances. Bearing sword ornament of the immortals and wearing rainbow skirt, the name of “Secluded-guest” is obtained henceforward.

念了，舞，唱蝶戀花。侍女持酒果上，勸客飲酒。

After reciting, dance, and sing “Butterfly Misses Flower.” Maids come up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests.

幽客之名從此有。多謝風流，飛馭陪樽酒。持此一卮同勸後。願花長在人長壽。

The name of “Secluded-guest” is obtained henceforward. Thanks to the charming, for taking flying carriage to accompany this cup of wine. Holding this goblet and toast together, from now on, wish the flower always in blossom and the master a long life.

舞唱了，後行吹三臺，舞轉，換花瓶。又舞上，次對客放瓶，念薔薇花詩：

After dancing and singing, the back line plays “Three Terraces.” Dancers twirl off to change the vase. Then they dance up to the stage, again put down the vase facing the guests, and recite poem of rose.

花是薔薇如綺繡。春風滿架暉晴晝。為多規刺少拘攣，野客之名從此有。

Among flowers, rose is the one as embroidered silk. In the spring breeze, all over the racks, they are shining in the sunny day. Because of many forbidding thorns and few clutches, the name of “Wild-guest” is obtained henceforward.

念了，舞，唱蝶戀花。侍女持酒果上，勸客飲酒。

After reciting, dance, and sing “Butterfly Misses Flower.” Maids come up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests.

野客之名從此有。多謝風流，飛馭陪樽酒。持此一卮同勸後。願花長在人長壽。

The name of “Wild-guest” is obtained henceforward. Thanks to the charming, for taking flying carriage to accompany this cup of wine. Holding this goblet and toast together, from now on, wish the flower always in blossom and the master a long life.

舞唱了，後行吹三臺，舞轉，換花瓶。又舞上，次對客放瓶，念醅釀花詩：

After dancing and singing, the back line plays “Three Terraces.” Dancers twirl off to change the vase. Then they dance up to the stage, again put down the vase facing the guests, and recite poem of roseleaf raspberry.

花是醅釀紆翠袖。釀泉曾入真珠溜。更無塵氣到杯盤，雅客之名從此有。

Among flowers, roseleaf raspberry is the one bending green sleeves. The Fermented

Spring has ever entered, with pearls sliding. Without any dusty air reaching the goblet and plate, the name of “Elegant-guest” is obtained henceforward.

念了，舞，唱蝶戀花。侍女持酒果上，勸客飲酒。

After reciting, dance, and sing “Butterfly Misses Flower.” Maids come up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests.

雅客之名從此有。多謝風流，飛馭陪樽酒。持此一卮同勸後。願花長在人長壽。The name of “Elegant-guest” is obtained henceforward. Thanks to the charming, for taking flying carriage to accompany this cup of wine. Holding this goblet and toast together, from now on, wish the flower always in blossom and the master a long life.

舞唱了，後行吹三臺，舞轉，換花瓶。又舞上，次對客放瓶，念荷花詩：

After dancing and singing, the back line plays “Three Terraces.” Dancers twirl off to change the vase. Then they dance up to the stage, again put down the vase facing the guests, and recite poem of lotus.

花是芙蕖冰玉漱。人間暑氣何曾受。本來泥滓不相關，淨客之名從此有。

Among flowers, lotus is the one rinsed with icy jade. When has it ever endure the heat of human world? Originally from the mud, yet it has no relation to that. The name of “Clean-guest” is obtained henceforward.

念了，舞，唱蝶戀花。侍女持酒果上，勸客飲酒。

After reciting, dance, and sing “Butterfly Misses Flower.” Maids come up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests.

淨客之名從此有。多謝風流，飛馭陪樽酒。持此一卮同勸後。願花長在人長壽。

The name of “Clean-guest” is obtained henceforward. Thanks to the charming, for taking flying carriage to accompany this cup of wine. Holding this goblet and toast together, from now on, wish the flower always in blossom and the master a long life.

舞唱了，後行吹三臺，舞轉，換花瓶。又舞上，次對客放瓶，念秋香花詩：

After dancing and singing, the back line plays “Three Terraces.” Dancers twirl off to change the vase. Then they dance up to the stage, again put down the vase facing the guests, and recite poem of sweet-scented osmanthus.

花是秋香偏鬱茂。姮娥月裏親栽就。一枝平地合登瀛，仙客之名從此有。

Among flowers, sweet-scented osmanthus is the one particularly luxuriant. Chang’e in the moon plants it in person. One branch, from the ground, ought to ascend the *Ying* (i.e., the celestial realm). The name of “Celestial-guest” is obtained henceforward.

念了，舞，唱蝶戀花。侍女持酒果上，勸客飲酒。

After reciting, dance, and sing “Butterfly Misses Flower.” Maids come up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests.

仙客之名從此有。多謝風流，飛馭陪樽酒。持此一卮同勸後。願花長在人長壽。

The name of “Celestial-guest” is obtained henceforward. Thanks to the charming, for taking flying carriage to accompany this cup of wine. Holding this goblet and toast together, from now on, wish the flower always in blossom and the master a long life.

舞唱了，後行吹三臺，舞轉，換花瓶。又舞上，次對客放瓶，念菊花詩：

After dancing and singing, the back line plays “Three Terraces.” Dancers twirl off to change the vase. Then they dance up to the stage, again put down the vase facing the guests, and recite poem of chrysanthemum.

花是菊英真耐久。長年只有臨風嗅。東籬況是見南山，壽客之名從此有。

Among flowers, chrysanthemum is the one endures long time. Through the long year it can only be smelt against the wind. (The flower) by the eastern hedge, how much more,

sees the South Mountain.<sup>410</sup> The name of “Longevity-guest” is obtained henceforward.

念了，舞，唱蝶戀花。侍女持酒果上，勸客飲酒。

After reciting, dance, and sing “Butterfly Misses Flower.” Maids come up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests.

壽客之名從此有。多謝風流，飛馭陪樽酒。持此一卮同勸後。願花長在人長壽。

The name of “Longevity-guest” is obtained henceforward. Thanks to the charming, for taking flying carriage to accompany this cup of wine. Holding this goblet and toast together, from now on, wish the flower always in blossom and the master a long life.

舞唱了，後行吹三臺，舞轉，換花瓶。又舞上，次對客放瓶，念梅花詩：

After dancing and singing, the back line plays “Three Terraces.” Dancers twirl off to change the vase. Then they dance up to the stage, again put down the vase facing the guests, and recite poem of plum blossom.

花是寒梅先節候。調羹須待青如豆。為於雪底倍精神，清客之名從此有。

Among flowers, plum blossom is the one being ahead of seasons. To season the soup one has to wait till it is green as bean. Because that being beneath the snow times its essence and energy, the name of “Pure-guest” is obtained henceforward.

念了，舞，唱蝶戀花。侍女持酒果上，勸客飲酒。

After reciting, dance, and sing “Butterfly Misses Flower.” Maids come up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests.

清客之名從此有。多謝風流，飛馭陪樽酒。持此一卮同勸後。願花長在人長壽。

The name of “Pure-guest” is obtained henceforward. Thanks to the charming, for taking flying carriage to accompany this cup of wine. Holding this goblet and toast together, from now on, wish the flower always in blossom and the master a long life.

舞唱了，後行吹三臺，舞轉，換花瓶。又舞上，次對客放瓶，念芍藥花詩：

After dancing and singing, the back line plays “Three Terraces.” Dancers twirl off to change the vase. Then they dance up to the stage, again put down the vase facing the guests, and recite poem of chinese herbaceous peony.

芍藥來陪羣客後。矜其末至當居右。奇姿獨許侍花王，近客之名從此有。

When Chinese herbaceous peony comes to accompany the guests, it is prudent about its last arriving, and is proper to be at right. The astonishing manner allows it exclusively serve the queen of flowers. The name of “Close-guest” is obtained henceforward.

念了，舞，唱蝶戀花。侍女持酒果上，勸客飲酒。

After reciting, dance, and sing “Butterfly Misses Flower.” Maids come up holding wine and fruit, and toast to the guests.

近客之名從此有。多謝風流，飛馭陪樽酒。持此一卮同勸後。願花長在人長壽。

The name of “Close-guest” is obtained henceforward. Thanks to the charming, for taking flying carriage to accompany this cup of wine. Holding this goblet and toast together, from now on, wish the flower always in blossom and the master a long life.

舞唱了，後行吹三臺，舞轉，換花瓶。又舞上花裯，背花對坐，唱折花三臺：

After dancing and singing, the back line plays “Three Terraces.” Dancers twirl off to change the vase. Then they dance up to the flowery mat. With their backs to the flowers, they sit facing each other, and sing “Three Terraces of Plucking Flowers.”

算仙家，真巧數<sup>411</sup>，能使眾芳長繡組。羽翮芝葆，曾到世間，誰共凡花為伍。桃李漫誇豔陽，百卉又無香可取。歲歲年年長是春，何用芳菲分四序。

<sup>410</sup> This line, apparently, is from Tao Yuanming's poem.

<sup>411</sup> Liu Yongji 1957 has 妙數.

To consider the immortals, they are indeed ingenious, being able to make all flowers eternally gorgeous. Feathered carriages with fungus covers once having been to the world, who is together with ordinary flowers? Peaches and plums freely brag about the bright spring day; various grass have no desirable fragrance. Year and year, everlasting is the spring. Why need flowers and grass to distinguish four seasons?

又唱：

Again, sing:

對芳辰，成良聚，珠服龍妝環宴俎。我禦清風，來此縱觀，還須折枝歸去。歸去藥珠繞頭，一一是東君為主。隱隱青冥怯路遙，且向臺中尋伴侶。

Towards the beautiful day, make a good gathering. Pearl clothes and dragon decorations surround the banquet. We, riding on the pure wind, come here to release our gaze, and also must pluck a branch to return. On returning, bud pearls coil around our head; each is managed by the Eastern Lord<sup>412</sup>. Indistinct is the bluish void, being afraid that the road is distant. For the time being, towards the terrace, we look for our companions.

唱了，起舞，後行吹折花三臺，一徧。舞訖，相對坐，取盆中花插頭上，又唱：

After singing, start dancing. The back line plays “Three Terraces of Plucking Flowers” once. After dancing, [dancers] sit oppositely. Take the flowers in the vase and stick in the hair, then they sing:

歎塵寰，烏兔走，花謝花開能幾許。十分春色，一半遣愁，那堪飄零風雨。爭似此花自然，悄不待、根生下土。花既無凋春又長，好帶花枝傾壽醕。

Sigh upon the dusty world, sun and moon flee. Flowers wither and blossom—how many times can it be? Of ten parts of spring scenery, half are used up to dispel sorrow. How can it bear falling in the wind and rain? How could it be compared to the naturalness of these flowers, whose roots, without waiting, quietly grow underneath the soil. Flowers do not wither, and spring is in addition longlasting. It is good to bring the branches of flower to pour the birthday wine.

又唱：

Again, they sing:

是非場，名利海，得喪炎涼徒自苦。至樂陶陶，唯有醉鄉，誰向此間知趣。花下一杯一杯，且莫把、光陰虛度。八極神游長壽仙，螺贏螟蠕休更覩。

Field of right and wrong, sea of fame and gain, the heat and cold of gaining and losing is in vain making self suffered. The happiness of extreme pleasure is only in the land of drunkenness. Who knows the pleasure of this realm? Cup by cup beneath the flowers, do not let the time idle away. Celestially roaming in eight extremities are the long-lived immortal, at whom Eumenid, caterpillar and moth do not even take a look.

唱了，侍女持酒果置榻上，舞相對自飲。飲訖，起舞三臺一徧，自念遣隊：

After singing, maids take wine and fruit to put on the mat. Dancers themselves drink facing each other. After drinking, they start dancing “Three Terraces” once. Then they themselves recite and dismiss. 伏以仙家日月，物外煙霞。能令四季之奇葩，會作一筵之重客。莫不香浮綺席，影覆瑤階。森然羣玉之林，宛在列真之府。相逢今日，不醉何時。敢持萬斛之流霞，用介千春之眉壽。歡騰絲竹，喜溢湖山。觀者雖多，歎未曾有。更願九重萬壽，四海一家。屢臻年穀之豐登，永錫田廬之快樂。於時花驄嘶晚，絳蠟迎宵。飲散瑤池，春在烏紗帽上。醉歸藥館，香分白玉釵頭。式因天上之芳容，流作人間之佳

---

<sup>412</sup> The Eastern Lord is the god of spring.



話。尚期再集，益侈遐齡。歌舞既終，相將好去。

I humbly submit that: sun and moon of the celestial realm, and misty rosy clouds outside the world, can make the splendid flowers of four seasons get together as important guests of one banquet. None of them is not with fragrance floating on the exquisite mat, and shadows covering the jade steps. Dense is the forest of jade, as if in the residence of the immortals. Having met on this day, if we do not get drunk, then when will we? Daring to hold flowing rosy clouds of ten thousand *hu*, to assist the longevity of thousand years. The joy runs in the strings and bamboo-winds; the happiness overflows the lake and mountain. Although the audience are a lot, there is never a sigh. Moreover we wish nine layers myriad years of life span, four seas one family. Repeatedly attain good harvest of grain every year; eternally bestow happiness of fields and residences. At this time, piebald horses neigh the lateness, and crimson candles greet the night. The drinking dismisses at the Jade Pond; spring on the black-gauze cap. Drunkenly back to the Bud House; fragrance scatters at the tips of white-jade hairpin. Here with the good appearances of the heaven, let them pass down to be good stories of human world. Hoping to get together again, we wish to extend the longevity. Now that song and dance is done, let us rise and leave together.

念了，後行吹三臺出隊。

After reciting, the back line plays “Three Terraces” and the troupe exits.

## 劍舞 (“Sword Dance”)

二舞者對廳立裯上。竹竿子勾、念

Two dancers stand on the mat facing the hall. The “bamboo-pole” guy calls (them) and recites:  
伏以玳席歡濃，金樽興逸，聽歌聲之融曳，思舞態之飄飄。爰有仙童，能開寶匣。  
佩干將莫邪之利器，擅龍泉秋水之嘉名。鼓三尺之瑩瑩，雲間閃電；橫七星之凜  
凜，掌上生風。宜到芳筵，同翻雅戲。

I humbly submit that: on the tortoiseshell-bordered mat<sup>413</sup>, happiness is rich; beside the golden goblet, the mood is free and fanciful. We listening to harmonious and lilting sounds, and long for the graceful swing of the dance. Then there come celestial boys who are able to open the treasure box. They wear the sharp implements(sword) of Ganjiang and Moye, and brandish the good fame of “dragon spring” and “autumn water.”<sup>414</sup> When they thrum the sparkling swords of three *chi*, there is lightning among the clouds; when they hold the chilly swords of seven stars, wind blows from the palms of their hands. It is suitable that they come to the fragrant banquet to make together an elegant play.

二舞者自念

Two dancers themselves recite

伏以五行擢秀，百鍊呈功。炭熾紅爐，光噴星日；硯新雪刃，氣貫虹霓。鬥牛間紫霧浮游，波濤裏蒼龍締合。久因佩服，粗習徊翔。茲聞閬苑之群仙，來會瑤池之重客。輒持薄技，上侑清歡。未敢自專，伏候處分。

I humbly submit that: from the Five Phases, is extracted the fineness; of a hundred temperings is displayed the achievement. Charcoal blazes in the red furnace, whose light spurts to the stars and the sun; the whetstone renews the snow-bright edge, the air of which pierces the rainbow. Between the Big Dipper and the Ox constellations<sup>415</sup> floats the purple mist; in the great waves assemble the constellations of the Grey Dragon. Have been long wearing (the swords), we somewhat accustomed to spiraling and soaring. Now, upon hearing of assembled immortals at the fairy garden, we come to meet important guests at Jade Pond. Holding our trivial skill, above we assist the pure enjoyment. Not daring to act on our own initiative, we prostrate ourselves and wait for instructions.

竹竿子問

The “bamboo-pole” guy asks

既有清歌妙舞，何不獻呈。

“Since you have delicate song and exquisite dance, why not present them?”

二舞者答

Two dancers answer

舊樂何在。

“Where is the previous music?”

竹竿子再問

<sup>413</sup> “tortoiseshell-bordered mats:” the Chinese in Tang times sat on mats on the floor during banquets, where such ballets were staged. Tortoiseshell-bordered mats were very grand.

<sup>414</sup> “Ganjiang,” “Moye,” “dragon spring,” and “autumn water” are all names of precious swords with sharp edges.

<sup>415</sup> *Douniu*: Name of two constellations. It is said that at the beginning of Jin dynasty, there were always purple clouds floating. Someone thought that was caused by the essence of precious sword. Later, *douniu* also refers to precious sword.

The “bamboo-pole” guy asks again  
一部儼然。

“Here is one set, intact.”

二舞者答

Two dancers answer

再韻前來。

“We bring it forward with a second rhyme.”

樂部唱劍器曲破。作舞一段了，二舞者同唱霜天曉角

The music section sings the “breakdown” of the “Sword Song.” After finishing a segment of dance, two dancers sing together the “Horn of Dawn in the Frosty Sky.”

熒熒巨闕。左右凝霜雪。且向玉階掀舞，終當有，用時節。唱徹。人盡說。寶此剛不折<sup>416</sup>。內使奸雄落膽，外須遣、豺狼滅。

Glittering and gleaming are the huge palaces. To the left and right freeze the frost and snow. For the time being dance towards the jade steps; after all there should be time to be used. Upon finishing singing, people are all pleased. To treasure this solidness that will not break (the swords), inside we make the treacherous braves all fail in courage; outside jackals and wolves have to be extinguished.

樂部唱曲子。作舞劍器曲破一段。舞罷，二人分立兩邊。別兩人漢裝者出，對坐，桌上設酒果。竹竿子念

The music section sings the song. (The dancers) make a segment of dance of the “breakdown” of the “Sword Song.” Upon finishing dancing, the two persons stand at two sides separately. Another two people with Han dynasty apparel come out and sit down opposite each other. On the table sets wine and fruits. The “bamboo-pole” guy recites:

伏以斷蛇大澤，逐鹿中原。佩赤帝之真符，接蒼姬之正統。皇威既振，天命有歸。

(量)勢雖盛於重瞳，(度)德難勝於隆准<sup>417</sup>。鴻門設會，亞父輸謀。徒矜起舞之雄姿，厥有解紛之壯士。想當時之賈勇，激烈飛颺；宜後世之效顰，迴旋宛轉。雙鸞奏技，四坐騰歡。

I humbly submit that: to kill the snake in the great marsh; to chase the deer in the central land. Wearing the genuine tally of the Emperor Chi, and carrying the legitimate succession of the Grey Ji. Once the imperial power has been stirred, the heavenly mandate has a place to find itself. Although the power was greatest at the “double pupils,” as for the virtue, it is hard to surpass the “high nose.” At the banquet at Hongmen, Yafu [=Fan Zeng] loses on tactics. In vain he brags about the grand manner of dancing, but lacked the heroic person to solve the dispute. To think about the courage of that time, it was widely exciting and exhilarating. It is suitable that the imitation of later ages twists, twirls, turns, gyres. A pair of simurghs present their skills, guests at the four directions are joyfully excited.

樂部唱曲子。舞劍器曲破一段。一人左立者上裊舞，有欲刺右漢裝者之勢。又一人舞進前翼蔽之。舞罷，兩舞者並退，漢裝者亦退。複有兩人唐裝出，對坐。桌上設筆硯紙，舞者一人換婦人裝立裊上。竹竿子勾、念

The music section sings the song, and (the dancers) perform one segment of the “breakdown” of the “Sword Song.” One person who was standing on the left comes onto the mat to dance, making a gesture

<sup>416</sup> Another version has “寶此制無折。”

<sup>417</sup> Another version has no 量 and 度.

as if desiring to stab the person on the right, who is dressed in Han apparel. One other person comes forward dancing to protect and give him a cover. When the dance is finished, both dancers withdraw together. The one dressed in Han apparel also withdraws. And then two people dressed in Tang apparel come out and sit opposite one another. On the table are set brush, ink stone and paper. One dancer changes to female clothing and stands on the mat. The “bamboo-pole” guy leads (the dancers) onstage and recites:

伏以雲鬟聳蒼壁，霧縠罩香肌。袖翻紫電以連軒，手握青蛇而的爍。花影下、遊龍自躍，錦裯上、踰鳳來儀。軼態橫生，瑰姿譎起。傾此入神之技，誠為駭目之觀。巴女心驚，燕姬色沮。豈唯張長史草書大進，抑亦杜工部麗句新成。稱妙一時，流芳萬古。宜呈雅態，以洽濃歡。

I humbly submit that: on the cloudy hair rises the green jade; misty crepe covers the fragrant skin. The sleeves rolling with the “purple lightening sword,” fly and flow; the hands holding “Green Snake” are white and bright.<sup>418</sup> In the shadow of flowers, a meandering dragon leaps naturally; on the brocade mat, a hopping phoenix comes to pay court. Extraordinary postures are produced without end; magnificent gestures unexpectedly appear. Pouring out such marvellous skill, truly creates a scene to startle one’s eyes. Girls of Ba—their hearts are shocked; the beauties of the Yan—their beauty pales. Could it simply be that the Administrator Zhang’s cursive calligraphy has made great strides? Or that Minister Du’s beautiful phrases are newly composed? They were acclaimed as marvelous in their own time, and have left their fragrance behind for ten thousand antiquities. It is suitable to present these elegant gestures to perfectly match this rich pleasure.

樂部唱曲子。舞劍器曲破一段，作龍蛇蜿蜒曼舞之勢。兩人唐裝者起。二舞者、一男一女對舞。結劍器曲破徹。竹竿子念

The music section sings the song. (The dancers) perform a segment of dance of the “breakdown” of the “Sword Song,” with a manner as if the dragon and snake wriggling and meandering. Two persons with Tang apparels stand up. Two dancers—one male and one female—dance facing each other. It ends with the “breakdown” of the “Sword Song.” The “bamboo-pole” guy recites:

項伯有功扶帝業，大娘馳譽滿文場。合茲二妙甚奇特，堪使佳賓酌一觴。霍如羿射九日落，矯如群帝驂龍翔。來如雷霆收震怒，罷如江海凝清光。歌舞既終，相將好去。

Xiang Bo possessed the merit of supporting the imperial enterprise. The Elder Sister had her fame spread all over the literary field. It is truly marvellous to combine these two wonders, more than enough to make our honorable guests pour one more goblet. With flashes like the Archer Yi shot down the nine bright suns, and vigour like the Genji drove the dragons on cloud-way. When rushed on, it’s the thunders rolling in the fury. And when finished, it’s the sea calmed down with smooth rays. Now that song and dance are done, let us rise and leave together.

念了，二舞者出隊。

When he finishes reciting, two dancers go out of the troupe.

---

<sup>418</sup> Both “purple lightning” and “green snake” are names of precious swords.

## 漁父舞 (“Dance of Fisherman”)

四人分作兩行迎上，對筵立。漁父自勾，念：

Four people, as two lines, come up as receiving group, and stand facing the banquet mat. The fisherman calls himself up and recites:

鄮城中有蓬萊島，不是神仙那得到。萬頃澄波舞鏡鸞，千尋疊嶂環旌纛。光天圓玉夜長清，襯地濕紅朝不掃。賓主相逢欲盡歡，升平一曲漁家傲。

In the City of Mao, there is *Penglai* Island. If not the immortal, how could one get there? Limpid waves of ten thousand *qing* are as if dancing simurgh in the mirror; overlapping peaks, for thousand *xun*, are surrounding flags and banners. Bright sky, round jade, the night is always clear. Wet flowers setting off the ground, in the morning, are not swept. Guests and hosts get together, being about to exhaust the happiness. One song of peace is called “Free-Spirited Fisherman.”

勾念了，二人念詩：

After calling and reciting, two people recite a poem:

渺渺平湖浮碧滿，奇峯四合波光暖。綠蓑青笠鎮相隨，細雨斜風都不管。

On the vast flat lake, floating green leaves are all around. Spectacular peaks surrounding four enclosures, the light of wave is warm. Green straw raincoat and bamboo hat always following, small rain and slanting wind do not matter.

念了，齊唱漁家傲。舞，戴笠子。

After reciting, together they sing “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Dancers wear bamboo hat.

細雨斜風都不管。柔藍軟綠煙堤畔。鷗鷺忘機為主伴。無羈絆。等閒莫許金章換。 Small rain and slanting wind do not matter. Gentle blue and soft green are on the misty bank. Gulls and egrets, forgetting the craftiness, accompany the master. Being unrestrained, easily not to allow being exchanged by golden seal.

唱了，後行吹漁家傲，舞。舞了念詩。

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Dance. After dancing, they recite a poem.

喜見同陰垂市地。瓊珠簌簌隨風絮。輕絲圓影兩相宜，好景儂家披得去。

It is happy to see converged shadow drooping upon the ground. Fine pearls rustle with catkins in the wind. Light silk and round shadow match with each other. This beautiful scenery, I wear it away.

念了，齊唱漁家傲。舞，披蓑衣。

After reciting, together sing “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Dancers wear straw raincoat.

好景儂家披得去。前村雪屋雲深處。一棹清歌歸晚浦。真佳趣。知誰畫得歸縑素。 This beautiful scenery, I wear it away. The front village and snow houses are in the depths of clouds. With one oar of pure song, I return to the late shore. It is truly great pleasure. Who, do you know, can capture it on fine silk?

唱了，後行吹漁家傲，舞。舞了念詩：

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Dance. After dancing, they recite a poem.

波面初驚秋葉委。風來又覺船頭起。滔滔平地盡知津，濟涉還渠漁父子。

The wave surface is first startled; autumn leaves falling. When winds come, again one feels the bow rises. Taking the torrential as flat ground, and completely knowing the

ferries, is the fisherman guy, who crosses the river and returns<sup>419</sup>.

念了，齊唱漁家傲。舞，取楫鼓動。

After reciting, together sing “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Dancers take oars to row.

濟涉還渠漁父子。生涯只在煙波裏。練靜忽然風又起。贏得底。吹來別浦看桃李。

The fisherman guy who crosses the river and return, has his whole life only in the misty wave. Above the peaceful silk, suddenly, winds blow up. What does he gain? Blow to the bank of parting to see the peaches and plums.

唱了，後行吹漁家傲。舞，舞了念詩：

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Dance. After dancing, they recite a poem.

碧玉粼粼平似掌。山頭正吐冰輪上。水天一色印寒光，萬斛黃金迷俯仰。

Green jade is clear, as flat as palm. The top of mountain sticks right on the “icy wheel<sup>420</sup>.” Water and sky share a color, sealed with chilly light, as if gold of ten thousand *hu*, making one lose sense of up and down.

念了，齊唱漁家傲，將楫作搖舳勢。

After reciting, together sing “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” [Dancers] take oars, making gestures as if rowing the boat.

萬斛黃金迷俯仰。輕舳不礙飛雙槳。光透碧霄千萬丈。真堪賞。恰如鏡裏人來往。

Gold of ten thousand *hu*, making one lose sense of up and down. Light boat does not hinder the pair of flying oars. Light penetrates azure clouds, lasting thousand and myriad *zhang*. It is truly worth appreciating, as if people going back and forth in the mirror.

唱了，後行吹漁家傲，舞。舞了念詩：

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Dance. After dancing, they recite a poem.

手把絲綸浮短艇。碧潭清泚風初靜。未垂芳餌向滄浪，已見白魚翻翠荇。

Hands take the silk fishline, floating on the short boat. The green pond is clear and limpid; winds just cease. Having not dropped fragrant bait towards the chilly wave, already one sees white fish tossing in the green watercress.

念了，齊唱漁家傲，取釣竿作釣魚勢。

After reciting, together sing “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” [Dancers] take the fishing rod, making a gesture of fishing.

已見白魚翻翠荇。任公一擲波千頃。不是六鼈休便領。清晝永。悠揚要在神仙境。

Already one sees white fish tossing in the green watercress, letting alone the master, with one cast, stir waves of thousand *qing*. If it is not the six legendary turtles, do not take it. Pure day lasts forever. The leisure ought to be at the celestial realm.

唱了，後行吹漁家傲，舞，舞了念詩：

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Dance. After dancing, they recite a poem.

新月半鉤堪作釣。釣竿直欲干雲表。魚蝦細碎不勝多，一引修鱗吾事了。

New moon, with half hook, can be taken for fishing. The fishing rod is simply reaching to the surface of clouds. Fish and shrimps, small and tiny, cannot be more. (But) once I take the big-scale (fish)<sup>421</sup> I am done.

<sup>419</sup> *Shijing* 034 <邶風·匏有苦葉> 匏有苦葉。濟有深涉。深則厲。淺則揭。

<sup>420</sup> The “icy wheel” refers to the bright moon.

<sup>421</sup> *Xiuling* 修鱗, “big scale,” in some contexts refers to the snake. Here it means big fish.

念了，齊唱漁家傲。釣，出魚。

After reciting, together sing “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” [Dancers] go fishing, and fish comes out. 一引修鱗吾事了。棹船歸去歌聲杳。門俯清灣山更好。眠到曉。鳴榔艇子方雲擾。 Once take the big-scale (fish) I am done. The oar and boat return; the sound of singing is distant. The door overlooking clear bay; mountains are even better. Sleep till the dawn. Small boats that strike their sides can only be called disturbing.

唱了，後行吹漁家傲，舞。舞了念詩：

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Dance. After dancing, they recite a poem.

提取鱗歸竹塢。兒孫迎笑交相語。西風滿袖有餘清，試倩霜刀登<sup>422</sup>玉縷。 Holding the red-scaled fish, I return to the bamboo dock. Sons and grandsons smilingly greet and talk to each other. Western wind fills sleeves, with surplus coldness. Try borrowing frosty knife and offer the jade filaments.

念了，齊唱漁家傲，取魚在杖頭，各放魚，指酒尊。

After reciting, together sing “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” [Dancers] take the fish with tip of sticks. Respectively they put down the fish and point to the goblets. 試倩霜刀登玉縷。銀鱗不忍供盤俎。擲向清波方圍圉。休更取。小槽且聽真珠雨。 Try borrowing frosty knife and offer the jade filaments, but cannot bear the silver scales serving the plates and chopping block. Throw it to the clear wave, only then we are relieved. Do not take it again. For the time being let us take the *pipa*<sup>423</sup> and listen to the rain of pearls.

唱了，後行吹漁家傲，舞。舞了念詩：

After singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Dance. After dancing, they recite a poem.

明月滿船唯載酒。漁家樂事時時有。醉鄉日月與天長，莫惜清尊長在手。 Bright moonlight is all over the boat, which only carries the wine. The pleasure of fishermen is there now and then. The time in the land of drunkenness is as everlasting as the heaven. Do not regret the pure goblet being always at hand.

念了，齊唱漁家傲，取酒尊，斟酒對飲。

After reciting, together sing “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” [Dancers] take the goblets, pouring the wine and drinking together. 莫惜清尊長在手。聖朝化洽民康阜。說與漁家知得否。齊稽首。太平天子無疆壽。 Do not regret the pure goblet being always at hand. Our own royal court transforms and harmonizes; people are healthy and rich. To tell the fisherman, does he know it? Together we make a kotow: may the peaceful Son of Heaven boundless life span.

起，面外稽首祝聖。

[Dancers] Get up, facing outside kotow and express wishes to the emperor.

唱了，後行吹漁家傲，舞。舞了，漁父自念遺隊：

Finishing singing, the back line plays “Free-Spirited Fisherman.” Dance. After dancing, the fisherman himself recites and dismisses the troupe.

湖山佳氣靄紛紛。占得風光日滿門。賓主相陪歡意足，卻橫煙笛過前村。歌舞既終，相將好去。

<sup>422</sup> Liu Yongji 1957 has 供.

<sup>423</sup> *Xiaocao* 小槽 (“small slot): originally refers to the small slots used to mount the strings on the instrument such as *pipa*. Here it refers to *pipa* as a synecdoche way.

In the lake and mountain are auspicious air; mist is everywhere. Occupying the scenery, sunshine fills the house. Guests and host accompanying each other, their happiness is sufficient. And now put the misty flute against my lips to pass the village ahead. Now that song and dance are done, let us rise and leave together.

念了，後行吹漁家傲，舞者兩行引退，出散。

After reciting, the back line plays "Free-Spirited Fisherman." Dancers, as two lines, withdraw, go out and dismiss.