

THE *SHIH CHING*: ITS GENERIC SIGNIFICANCE IN CHINESE LITERARY HISTORY AND POETICS

BY SHIH-HSIANG CHEN

陳 世 驤

It is inevitable that the searchlight for the beginnings of Chinese poetry should focus on the *Shih Ching*, or *Book of Songs*. And since poetry marks the beginning of the creative literature of any nation, it is the concern of literary history to seek in the *Songs* such embryonic features as may typify much of later Chinese literary genres, in so far as they can be said to have a "national character". If one pauses to ask the question, in very general terms, of readers who are conscious of other literatures as well, what would be the most striking quality of Chinese literature in their impression, one of the possible answers might be that it is the combination or fusion of technical niceties, high sophistication and refinement of sensibilities with keen, direct, simple and perhaps sometimes naive observations of man and nature in this temporal world. This quality should become evident in our discussion of the *Songs*, a quality that foreshadowed much in later Chinese literature, from the Han *Yüeh-fu* to the *Wu-yen shih*, from the T'ang *Shih*, especially the *Chüeh-chü*, to the Sung *T'zu* and from the drama to the novel. We know well the processes of the development of each of these later genres, which in every case could be traced from folk origins to the polish and refinement of courtly circles or the intelligentsia, and which would suggest a cause of the quality we have noted. Consequently, in the whole body of works of any great writer, from Ch'ü Yüan¹ to Ts'ao Chih and thence to Li Po, Su Shih and Huang T'ing Ch'ien, not to mention the dramatists and novelists, we find the blending of folk motifs and the distinctive

1. The tradition that the "Nine Songs" were derived from folk religion and remolded into brilliant poetry by an individual genius can hardly be refuted. Here we regard them as part of the whole body of Ch'ü Yüan's work because of their close relationship to the *Li Sao* in stylistic features, not to mention the natural, religious and erotic symbolism. There seems to be no more satisfactory reason to doubt that they were by Ch'ü Yüan than that they were not by him. In any case, our interest here is in the composite character of the bodies of works of the major genres representative of each literary period rather than in personalities.

creation of individual genius.

In the light of this estimation our present study is attempted to reveal the process of the formation of the corpus of the *Songs*, its artistic achievement, and furthermore its contribution to traditional criteria of Chinese criticism. We want, in stricter terms of *literary* history, to confirm and justify the acclaim that, in Professor Karlgren's words: "Throughout the history of Chinese literature there is no document which in importance and influence over later ages can compete with the *Shi*."²

The three hundred and five surviving Songs, gathered and reverently preserved in one Book, with the pious title *Shih-Ching* formulated to honor it since the Sung dynasty,³ may seem too diversified to be called a genre off-hand, if by genre is meant such perfect metrical or thematic unity as would be applicable to each of the many times removed subdivisions of later fissiparous kinds of literary forms. But genre, as a term or concept applied to ancient literature, despite the legion of conflicting theories about its definition and function, whether prescriptive or descriptive, has hardly ever meant such neat apparent unity. It is remarkable that Plato should first give hint to literary genre distinctions only in such general terms as "narration" and "mimesis", referring the former to the narrative part of the epic and the latter to the dramatic. These two great categories, for Plato, were so all-embracing that a third type was merely called "mixed", or "union of the two".⁴ Aristotle's *Poetics* is known to be the remains of fragments. There we see him continue these two notions and elaborate on epic and drama as if they were the only two recognized archetypal genres. A third notion, about "melic" poetry, was cursory, hardly formed. Two modes of reproduction of the object seemed to be the concern, one by the artist's imitating and personifying, therefore, again in Plato's terms, "assimilating himself" into the object; the other by the artist as an impersonal bystander depicting the object in "simple narrative".⁵ Thus in the ancient Greek classification as some Western literary historians even today still complain, "no room was left" for a third great category, "for the genre of self-expression or the lyric, in which the poet expresses directly his own feelings and thoughts".⁶ We know [that lyrical

2. Bernhard Karlgren: "Glosses on the Kuo Feng Odes," BMFEA, No. 14, p. 71.

3. The term *Shih-Ching* as a formal label of the book started in Southern Sung, traceable to 廖剛 (1070-1143): 詩經講義 as the earliest instance. Cf. Professor: 屈萬里: 詩經釋義 "Introductory Chapter," 論詩, Taipei, 1952.

4. Plato, Republic III, 392.

5. Ibid, 393.

6. G.N.G. Orsini, article on "Genre," in *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, Princeton, 1956.

poetry, by definition in modern critical terms, had fairly abounded in ancient Greece. But it was evidently not equally honored by the same critical attention, when the sense of literary kinds, or genres, first awakened. It was, at best, subsumed under miscellanea, and, as in Plato, half-mindedly noted to be among "other styles of poetry".⁷

But imagine for a moment that during the Confucian or the Great Attic Age, Chinese and Greek civilization had been fused into one, and we can be sure that a great trinity of the three primary genres would have been readily established then. It would have preempted the *genus activum*, *genus enarrativum* and *genus mixtum* of Diomedes of fourth century Europe, and not waited until the late Renaissance. The third member of this trinity would no doubt have been the "lyric."⁸ And the lyric genre would be mainly referred to the *Shih*, these *Songs*, which the Chinese treated as *their* major kind of poetry. There was, moreover, a definition in classical China of the middle Chou Age to decide for the lyric its rightful province. Juxtaposed against the Platonic declaration that "all mythology and poetry is a narration of events, either past, present, or to come,"⁹ would have been the contemporary Chinese phrase, *shih yen chih*, serving as a counter statement, that "poetry", as a generic term, "speaks the heart's desire". The *Shih* by nominalistic definition is a "song-word", hence "lyric" in the fullest sense as a working term for our modern criticism. And whenever the Chou people spoke of the *shih*, they meant the *Songs* and those works that were like them and formed with them a literary category or kind.

We well realize that it was not because lyrics were not available to the ancient Greeks that they did not recognize and treat them as a genre. For their attention to be diverted to concentrate on epic and dramatic verse in their poetics, there must have been surmisable reasons, of varied social cultural values as well as different modes of philosophical thought. Here we are not going into studies of the Greeks. Suffice it to say for the moment that the dominant position of the *Songs* in Chinese literary valuation as well as creation, in contra-

7. Plato, op. cit. 393.

8. Recognition has been given to the lyric in our modern study of Egyptian Pyramid texts (ca 2600 B.C.) as consisting of eulogies to the kings, hymns to the gods, working songs, laments and festive songs. See A. Erman: *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians* (tr. by A.M. Blackman, 1927) The Songs of the *Shih Ching* consist of almost exactly identical counterparts.

9. Plato, op. cit. 392.

distinction to that of ancient Greek epic and drama, is an ever thought-provoking phenomenon. We believe, however, that the recognition of a genre as a distinctive kind of literature, which the *Book of Songs* certainly is, has the usefulness of setting up a frame of reference whereby we can discuss coherently a common body of works of a given period in regard to its source, growth, achievements, and, finally, its aesthetics. And by a generic approach to the *Songs* as "lyric"—that is, lyric in accordance with the ideal of the term in modern critical usage as we shall be able to evince later in this study—we may hope to retain this literary, aesthetic essence in our mind throughout our discussion, which will be necessarily complicated by historical, cultural and other scientific considerations. To speak of the *Songs* as lyric is to find for our discussion of them a common language in modern criticism, as well as to distinguish them as a prototype characterizing the first accomplishment of Chinese literary creation and fathering a native tradition as truly as the ancient Greek drama and epic fathered the European.

The Chinese word for poetry, *shih*, made its first appearance, as far as we can ascertain in extant documents, in the *Book of Songs* itself. It is found in neither the earlier bronze nor the oracle bone inscriptions. In demonstrably ancient sections of another timehonored tome of the Confucian Canon, the *Book of Historical Documents* or *Shang Shu*, it is notable that the word *shih* appears in the chapter "Gold-bound Coffin", *Chin T'eng*, where the word has reference to a quotation of one of the *Songs*, No. 155.¹⁰ In the *Songs* themselves, the word was employed only three times, significantly all in the *Ya* or "Elegantiae" Sections (nos. 200, 252, 259), where, as we shall discuss in detail later, a greater consciousness of the art of poetry-making, of polish and refinement of style, becomes evident. The production of at least two (nos. 252, 259) of these three important *Songs* can be firmly dated by material evidence, internal as well as circumstantial, to be of the late 9th century B.C., during the heyday of Early Chou civilization, and no sufficient argument has been advanced to disprove the well established tradition that the third 巷伯 (no. 200) belongs to the same era.¹¹ Considering the context and the burden of meaning¹² in which the Chinese word for poetry, *shih*, made its debut at such an early date, we may fairly say that a

10. References to numbers for the *Songs* henceforth are according to the Harvard-Yenching *Concordance to Shih Ching* and Karlgren's translations of the *Book of Odes*.

11. See my article, 詩字原始觀念試論 BIHP Academia Sinica, Ext. vol. 4, 1961.

12. Ibid.

general conception of poetry as a *literary* art, definable by name and nature, had already begun to develop at a certain high stage of Chinese civilization in antiquity.

To say that there is no Chinese word for poetry¹³ means as much or little as to say there is no word for *shih* in Greek, or indeed any non-Chinese language. It is almost too obvious a fact to state that no word so pregnant with meaning as "poetry" can be identical in semantic range throughout all its implications and applications in any two languages: *Poësie* and *Dichtung*, after all, are not exactly identical either. But *shih* for the ancient Chinese just as amply stood for the general concept of the art of words, as "song-words" but with emphasis on "words", as *ποιήσις* did for Aristotle, defined by him as that "art which imitates with language alone, but.....has hitherto been without a name".¹⁴ Not much later the fact that the Chinese word *shih* like the English word poetry, was used as a general term for poetic compositions whether accompanied by music or not, and not just for one type of verse, was evidenced in the early *Ch'u Elegies* themselves.¹⁴ And in still later and wider usage, *shih*, like "poetry", clearly indicated an essence or abstract quality transcending the boundaries of all arts, as in *shih chung yu hua*, *hua chung yu shih*, "there is painting in poetry (*shih*), and poetry in painting",¹⁵ a current Chinese saying in art criticism of about the 11th century.

But *shih* and "poetry" are widely different in their etymological meaning. We suggest that *ποιήσις*, which Aristotle derived for an "art hitherto without a name" as late as the 4th century B.C.,¹⁵ holding to the basic idea of "making", indicated more of the master critic's consciousness of the aspects of poetry as craft. Hence his *Poetics* expresses many analytical, finely differentiated technical considerations of the art of poetry and sets forth a systematic tradition for western literary criticism. The term for "poetry" in Aristotle, basically conceived as a rather unpredicated abstract notion of "making", could therefore accommodate either of the two major Greek genres, epic and drama, which with their ponderous scope and complexity drew the Greek attention to abstract prin-

13. Arthur Waley: "The Forms of Chinese Poetry," in *Temple and Other Poems*, 1923, p. 137.

14. As in *Nine Songs*: "展詩兮會舞", where *shih* of course was accompanied by music; but in *Chiu Chang*, 悲同風: "窈賦詩之所明", the intent of the word-meaning is emphasized, hence the least reference to music. In either case there is evidence that the same word *shih* as a general term is used for different kinds of verse as early as Late Chou.

15. 蘇軾's (1036-1101) tribute to 王維, in 蘇's Collected Works: "題王維藍關煙雨圖"

16. The *Poetics* is known to have been composed between 335 and 322 B.C.

ciples of construction, of design and plot. But the Chinese term *shih* signified an essence, a representation of the property and nature of an art, evidenced by the dominant, if not the sole, genre that was then current in ancient Chinese creative literature, the *Songs*. There the term *shih* was a natural-born entity, not constructed for the purpose of critical terminology but put forth as a manifestation of the early creative consciousness of the poetic art, with a keen sense of its origin, character and content as lyric.

The fact that the *Songs* gave rise to, and was in ancient times identified with, the generic name *shih* affords a revelation of the *Songs*' early roots, their process of development, and fundamental traits for aesthetic appreciation. We can say without doubt that the *Songs*, now three hundred and five in their extant form, attained during Confucius' lifetime in the 6th century B. C. a scope similar to their present one.¹⁷ Later transmissions occasioned textual variations and corruptions, with perhaps greatest impairment done to the last section, the *Sung* or "Eulogia".¹⁸ But to a very large extent, the *Songs* as we see them today have retained the original shape in which they were popular and familiar to every one of the educated class and ruling circles of the Confucian age. We have overwhelming evidence, according to ancient records such as the *Kuo Yu* 國語 and the *Tso Chuan* 左傳, of their popularity in high society at courtly or diplomatic gatherings during that age. To quote from the *Songs*, often out of context, to suit an occasion of diplomatic negotiation among the states, or to put across a point in some court intrigue was a common practice. There was a cultural aura about them, so much so that Confucius admonished his son that "Without studying the *Songs*, one would not know how to speak".¹⁹ And he asserted that the cultivation of one's character should be "inspired by the *Songs*, established according to Ritual, and accomplished through music".²⁰ The other great and socially most influential philosophic school of the 5th century B.C., the Moists, said of their Confucian contemporaries that "They recite the three hundred *Songs*, play the three hundred on stings,

17. The *Tso Chuan* record, never successfully refuted, of 季扎觀樂 in 544 B.C., shows the same scope and number of categories. A large majority recorded in *Tso Chuan* and *Kuo Yu* as having been quoted through 7th to 6th century are identifiable in our present Mao texts. Song No. 153 may be the latest of the *Songs*, referring to events of about 520-514 B.C., perhaps incorporated into the corpus after the scope had been established.

18. See 傅孟真先生集 Vol. II, 詩經講義稿: "周頌說"

19. The *Analects*, X VI, 13.

20. Ibid., VIII, 8. About "inspired" 興, we shall soon have much more to say. We believe Confucius was using this word here in the vernacular sense of his day.

sing the three hundred and dance to the three hundred".²¹ All these assertions that we learn from late Chou records since the sixth century B.C., including Confucius' own frequent references to the "three hundred *Songs*", point to one fact: a whole, fairly standardized and integrated collection existed at that time, circulated among the upper classes, and was spoken of by the leading philosophic minds, as if with a uniform sense of value, despite the *Songs*' great internal prosodic and thematic diversity. They were all called *shih*, connoting a unified impression of a great category. We ask, is there a common denominator shared among them, other than their common social status which was established by the middle Chou period for both political and educational purposes? By that time, as we shall see, the long refining process of the versions had been completed. In their now polished, well adapted and regulated form, we are told that they were not only all "recited, played on strings and sung", but "danced to". This description would not only satisfy the definition of the *Shih* as lyric, but would allude to something more. The fact that the *Songs* in their final forms in courtly possession were *all* sung to musical accompaniments has been fairly well established.²² We must, however, examine more carefully than the rest the last part of the Moist assertion, that all the three hundred *Shih* or *Songs* were danced to by the Confucian scholars. Even though this Moist statement, made in antipathy to the Confucian valuation of the arts, may be an exaggeration of the tradition, still the fact that when the *Shih* was spoken of, recital, music and dance were all mentioned in one breath suggests a notion from which we may trace back to the primordial origination of the *Shih* and find a rudimentary factor that had given the *Songs* a common basis, prior to the many fissiparous developments of high culture, down to the sixth century B.C. This will be important both for our historical study of the *Songs*' development from a pristine generic form and for our appreciation of their aesthetics.

We have only two slender clues to follow: first, the true implication of the word *shih*, by which the *Songs* have come to be called, traced to its primary etymon; and, second, an old term in the critical nomenclature of the *Songs*, long remembered and talked of, but much the worse for wear and tarnished in meaning. This second term is *hsing*, 興, of which we feel the best workable translation for our latter day purpose of aesthetic appreciation is "motif"; it is

21. *Mo-tzu*: "K'ung Meng Chapter 公孟篇."

22. See important articles by 顧頌剛 in 古史辨 Vol. III.

evidenced prosodically in “burden”, or “refrain”, and, more importantly, in “incremental repetitions.” By unravelling these two clues and finally tying them together we may discover a common embryonic feature of the *Songs* which gives them a fundamental generic unity beneath the many overlaid strands that make them so widely disparate.

Elsewhere, by observing the primary etymon for *shih* in the archaic word **t̪iag*, graphed 𠂔 or 𠂔²³ as agreed on by impeccable modern scholarship,²⁴ I have established by detailed arguments that the root meaning of the Chinese word for poetry 詩 (詩) **śiag*, *shih*, derived from and remained closely associated with the concept of beating rhythm with the foot on the ground, as graphically represented by the archaic character 𠂔.²⁵ The beating of rhythm with the foot clearly indicates the primordial art of dance, with which both music and song were embryonically at one. Western studies of the primitive origination of the medieval ballad and carol have amply proved this and will greatly help us in our examination of the development of the *Songs* of the *Shih Ching* from their antique origin into such a rich variety of lyrics. The fact that all the *Songs* in the “Eulogia” or *Sung* 頌 section, which has been proved to have preserved the oldest datable hymns in our extant texts, were danced to in solemn ceremonies in the ancestral temples of royalty of early Chou time has been well ascertained, not only by long tradition but by modern philological identification of *sung* with *yung* 容, i.e. “formal manners” of dance.²⁶ And it goes without saying that ancient traces of song, music and dance performed in unity can often be sensed conspicuously in the lines or stanzas in both the *Elegantiae* or *Ya* 雅 and the “Airs” or *Feng* 風 sections.²⁷ But we need to keep in mind two important distinctions before we proceed further to find the true common factor in the origination of these *Songs* as lyrics. First, while there are, as we have seen, strong elements of the dance retained in the *Songs*, which are called *Shih* as if in remote reminiscence of those elements, we must distinguish between textual accounts of the dance in the contents of the songs portraying contemporary life on the one hand; and on the other the rhetorical devices evolved from

23. Oracle bone script and late bronze inscription, respectively.

24. Cf., 楊樹達：積微居小學金石論叢，Vol. I, pp. 21-22; and 聞一多：Complete Works: article “詩與歌”.

25. See my article: “In Search of the Beginnings of Chinese Literary Criticism,” in *University of California Publications in Semitic and Oriental Philology*, Vol. XI, 1951.

26. Well established by 阮元 (1764-1849) in *學經室集* Vol. I, “釋頌”; later approved by 章炳麟 and 王國維。

27. Striking examples: *Songs* Nos. 220, 136, 137, 165.

dance rhythms that affect the structure of the songs regardless of the contents. We believe that this latter device derived from a more primitive origin which the *Songs*, now as *Shih*, generally share in the texture of their compositions. Secondly, the distinction should be made between later formalized ceremonial dance-song performances, such as all the "Eulogia" had come to represent, and more primitive acts of dance accompanied by spontaneous emotional utterances, perhaps mere ejaculations at first, that gave rise to the most primordial elements of the *Songs*. Here we are faced with an apparent paradox. In our present extant texts of the *Songs*, so far as they are severally datable according to *content*, the "Eulogia of Chou" have proved to be the oldest, mostly being of the founding period of the dynasty during the 10th century B.C., with their later pretentious imitations in the "Eulogia of Shang" and of "Lu," they form one traditional category;²⁸ the "Elegantiae" are mostly of the middle era of Early Chou, identified with events of the 9th to the 8th century B.C.; and the "Airs" were joined to the corpus apparently latest, with some from as late as the 6th century B.C. But the "Airs", preserving more of the pristine folk quality, have retained most of the primordial elements of the *Songs*, despite the later evolution of their entire composition.

We postulate that the term *hsing* 興, in its archaic Chinese pronunciation **xiang*, is one of the slender and intricate clues crucial to tracing these primordial elements. We shall understand it as "motif", but we shall find it largely evolved in the extant textual materials into burdens, refrains, or "incremental repetitions"²⁹ which bear upon the structure of the Songs. The *Mao Annotations* 毛傳 to the *Songs*, as the highest traditional exegetical authority that has survived since the Han age,³⁰ may seem to have provided us with enough convenient pointers by having marked off, with apparently meticulous care, hundreds of lines and phrases (predominantly in the "Airs" and "Minor Elegantiae" sections) and called our attention to them as *hsing*. But still, so many inconsistencies and obscurities of referent were felt by later scholars in Mao's identification of *hsing* that Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200), who may be said to have established a second mile-stone after Mao in traditional Chinese *Shih Ching* scholarship, found it

28. The *Shang Eulogia* are of Duke Hsiang's reign (651-635 B.C.); the *Lu Eulogia*, of Duke Hsi's (659-627 B.C.). Cf., 傅孟真 *op cit.*

29. Term used by F. B. Gummere in *The Popular Ballad* (1104).

30. We accept 王國維's calculation ("書毛詩故訓傳後" in 觀堂別集 Vol. I) that the *Annotations* carry a pre-Han tradition transmitted by, 毛亨, but have thence been elaborated on by 毛萇 with early Han lore. We shall, however, refer the authorship of [the extant corpus generally to the latter.

necessary to readjust the scope of *hsing* as a critical exegetical term in his *Shih Chi-Chuan*, 詩集傳, or *Comprehensive Annotations to Shih Ching*. Mao's *Annotations* had marked off phrases, lines and sometimes whole stanzas in as many as 116 *Songs*, out of the total 305, as *hsing*. Now the result of Chu's new effort was to reassign a large number of Mao's *hsing* passages to two other categories in the traditional critical terminology of the *Songs* handed down along with the Mao text in the *Ta Hsü* 大序 or "Great Preface," whose authorship is still under debate.³¹ Chu therefore reinterpreted a good part of Mao's *hsing* entities as either *pi* 比, "similies," or *fu* 賦, "narrations." But while on the one hand he reduced the old *hsing* identifications somewhat, on the other he expanded the *hsing* category in new directions by placing under the *hsing* rubric many passages which Mao had not noted as such. Between Mao and Chu, of course, came Cheng Hsüan (117-200 A.D.), who composed the *Cheng Ch'ien* 鄭箋, known as the "Cheng Commentaries," which has since the second century A.D. become an inseparable addendum to the extant Mao text. The "Cheng Commentaries", by superimposing Cheng Hsüan's allegorical interpretations on the *Mao Annotations*, literally or by implication multiplied the *hsing* items to a great extent.³² If Cheng has been justly criticized for his latter day political and moralistic rationalizations and strenuous allegorical interpretations, Chu, in his not very successful attempt to free himself from these, by recasting the *hsing* category and commingling it with "similes" and "narratives" in a process of contraction and expansion, showed the bias of latter day poetics and rhetorics developed during the Six Dynasties and the T'ang' age and was thus even further removed from the original meaning of *hsing*.

We are not minimizing the contribution to Chinese poetic criticism made in terms of the latter day understanding of *hsing*. If the designation of *hsing* in the *Ta Hsü* or "Great Preface" (final version possibly by the first century A.D.) as one of the *liu yi* 六義 or "Six Principles" was a pious attempt at scriptural interpretation, it was also the beginning of an act of literary criticism that showed a sense of more general textual classification as to the contents, in terms of *feng*, *ya* and *sung*. There was as yet but a glimmering notion of compositional

31. Modern scholarship tends to accept Wei Hung, 衛宏 of Later Han as the author, but the issue is not entirely settled.

32. Cheng included many items which, though not noted by Mao, were said to be "really *hsing* with senses self-evident, hence unnoted." See *Cheng Chih* 鄭志: "Answer to Chang Yi 答張逸"

technique, as distinct from contents or subject matter, in terms of *fu*, *pi* and *hsing*, stated in that order.³³ The "Preface" expatiated at great length on the former three categories but seemed oblivious to the latter three, simply separating them and laying them aside. It is therefore most noteworthy that when what may be called truly specialized or pure literary criticism first rose to its height in China in the fifth century, the articulate voice of the great poetic critic of the age, Chung Hung 鍾嶸 (469-518) should, in bold contradistinction to the laconism of the "Great Preface", have spoken *only* of the latter three, terming them the *san yi*, 三義, the "Three Principles", and have given prominence to *hsing* by listing it ahead of *pi* and *fu*. He explicated the *hsing* as sense beyond words: "Where the letter (or *wen* 文) has ended, meaning goes on";³⁴ hence as connotative, associative power, overtones and undertones. But we can observe that he was speaking of the effects of poetry in the abstract with explicit reference to the quadrasyllabic and pentasyllabic verse known to have been practised in his own time, and with but a vague genuflexion, if any, to the *Songs*. A century later K'ung Ying-ta 孔穎達 (574-648), following Cheng Hsüan's authority, reiterated the "Six Principles"³⁵ put forth by the "Great Preface" and, with clearer formal balance, divided them into two equal sets and treated them on equal terms, the one set as "poetic corporality",³⁶ hence substance, in terms of *feng*, *ya* and *sung*; and the other as "poetic usages",³⁷ hence technique, in terms of *fu*, *pi* and *hsing*. Thus was the canonical interpretation of the "Six Principles" authoritatively established for the study of the *Songs* in the T'ang age, and has since been conveniently accepted by posterity. But K'ung's work, despite its claim to "*Rectification of the Orthodoxy in the Mao Texts of the Songs*", as its name *Mao Shih Cheng Yi* suggests, gave no more critical heed to the prominence of *hsing* which Mao had so painstakingly pointed out,

33. It should be noted that the *feng*, *fu*, *pi*, *hsiang*, *ya*, *sung*, 風·賦·比·興·雅·頌, stated in that order, had been called in *Chou li* 周禮 the *liu shih* "六詩", the instruction of which being the function of the "Grand Master" (*ta shih* 大師) of court musicians, hence understood as six ways of presenting or performing the *Songs*. The *Chou li* is consistent in warranting this sense in both citations in Vol. IV under "Grand Master" and "Lesser Master" (*hsiao shih* 小師). Especially in the "Lesser Master" section is the mention of *liu shih chih ke* "六詩之歌", clearly indicative that the six terms were originally *all* in reference to "song-tunes". To call them *liu yi*, "six principles," is a later invention in the "Great Preface" to suit a latter day canonical-literary concept in disregard of the original meaning.

34. "Preface" to *Shih p'in*, 詩品序。

35. In *Mao-shih cheng-yi* 毛詩正義。

36. *Shih chih ch'eng hsing* "詩之成形"。

37. *Shih chih so yung* "詩之所用"。

than to call it "arcane of reason" or *li yin* 理隱. K'ung's "Rectification" only reinforced the trend in Chinese literary criticism of separating technique from substance, and form from content, with the result which, when carried to extremes, became a pitfall not unique to Chinese literary thought. Henceforth the meaning of *hsing*, technically regarded, became either rarified or mystical. Chu Hsi, with his fidelity to the texts of the *Songs* themselves, saw in them more *hsing* elements even than Mao, and sometimes with flashes of fresh insight. But preoccupied with his contemporary literary taste and vogue, he made two most important statements that left unfortunate influences. For him *hsing* was either just a way of starting a poem, which has given encouragement to even some modern Chinese scholars to dismiss it as meaningless,³⁸ or it was something like an "inspiration to the poet from what he saw", that prompted his allegorical fancy.³⁹ This might be true enough of Chu's own or any other sophisticated age. But the individual poet Chu seems to propose here looks too anachronistic a figure for high antiquity. Later terms were derived from *hsing* at the final fruition of Sung poetics with such rarified and intangible senses as "*hsing chih*" 興致 and "*hsing ch'ü*" 興趣, translatable as "inspirational gusto" and "zest", which were advocated with almost mystical ecstasy by Yen Yu 嚴羽⁴⁰ (f. 1225-1264). These became immensely popular not only in later poetic criticism, but as current colloquial idioms. We have been using these phrases for centuries in works on poetic appreciation and in daily life, comfortably oblivious of the *hsing* of the *Songs*, and with typical unconsciousness of the atavism in linguistic history. So from Chung Hung to Chu Hsi and thence through the ages the interpretation and appreciation of *hsing* found accommodation with contemporary fashions of literary criticism and creation. But the most observant of all literary historians in the fifth century, the peerless researcher Liu Hsieh 劉勰 (ca. 465-522), exactly a contemporary of Chung Hung, declared with penetrating insight, "The (true) meaning of *hsing* had been lost!" or "*hsing yi hsiao wang* 興義銷亡".⁴¹ To prove his point Liu went on to cite authors from Chia Yi 賈誼 (201-169 B.C.) of Early Han to those close to his own time and complained that because "the *hsing* was forgotten", their "literary qualities became inferior to those of the Chou people", to those qualities exemplified by the *Songs*.

38. Chu, in his 詩傳綱領, speaks of *hsing* as "starting a composition by resorting to some objects, basically without regard for meaning": 託物興辭, 初不取義.

39. Chu, in annotation to *Song* No. 23.

40. See 滄浪詩話, especially Chapter I, Section 5.

41. Liu Hsieh: 文心雕龍, Chapter 36, "比興"

We may not share Liu's idealization of a "golden past", but we do recognize the difference. In fairness to these later writers, we would rather say that the difference lies in the fact that the *Songs* as *shih* formed a genre from an antiquated origin, identifiable in the usages of the *hsing* in its primary sense, which later writings no longer shared. The "loss" was on account of the change of a generic practice as well as the change of poetic concepts.

We believe that a genre, while in its full development it signifies a complex set of recognizable literary fashions and conventions in a society at a given age, can and should be traced back to its pristine origin of nativity, however remote, as a simpler common mode of expression of emotional and imaginative life of a human community. We venture to say that the rise of an ancient primary genre in a certain culture can be successfully uncovered even with only a few fortunate clues remaining. On close examination, the "Mao Annotations" that uniformly mark off many phrases and lines as *hsing* reveal a set of conventions spreading through all parts of the texts of the *Songs*. The *hsing* elements bear up the structure of each poem where they appear, as they start or reinforce the rhythm, establish the sound pattern, and set up the mood. They do this in the form of refrains or burdens, but more often than not as subtly significant strophes, in "incremental repetitions". They are quintessential to the whole charm and success of the generic character of the *Songs* as their main technical aspect. We suggest that Mao's unfortunate inconsistencies and deficiencies, diligent as he was in noting these *hsing* elements for us, came about because he (and who knows if there were not many other hands of Han ideologues tampering with his texts?) was already too preoccupied with allegorical interpretations in accordance with current political and moral ideology, and would consequently appear to be making light of the *hsing*'s basic technical importance. His allegorical interpretations would read like second thoughts, but so elaborated, as to overshadow his primary concern with the *hsing*, each time after he cried out loudly "*hsing yeh* 興也", "this is *hsing*!" But certainly Mao knew that the *hsing* was an ancient song technique. For the *Chou Li*, prior to Mao, had explicitly called the *hsing* one of the "Six Song-tunes".⁴² Some cautious reliable scholars⁴³ believe that the "Great Preface," despite the possible late date of its final version, represented a tradition forming the basis of *Mao's Annotations*, and that the "Preface" had taken over the term *hsing* verbatim from the *Rites of Chou* text to formulate its so-called "Six Principles": *feng*, *fu*, *pi*, *hsing*, *ya*, *sung*, (See note 33). By verbal legerdemain, the "Preface" had pigeon-holed

42. For the term *liu shih chin ke* in *Chou li* Vol. IV, see p. 285 note 33.

43. Cf. 朱自清: 詩言志辨 p. 58, and footnote 16.

the *hsing*, as it were, in its rigid formulation of the "Six Principles", thus obscuring the original vital link of *hsing* with "song". But if we look elsewhere in the *Chou Li*, we often find that, the *hsing* stand significantly alone, apart from the rest of these six terms, in singular eminence, and with a vibrant sense in relation to music. In its section on the "Great Minister of Music", *Ta Ssu-yüeh* 大司樂, a more eminent office than that of the "Grand Music Master" (note 33), the *Chou Li*, or *Rites of Chou*, cites *hsing* to head a list of descriptions of ways of *yüeh yü* 樂語 "musical elocution",⁴⁴ along with musical speech and declamation. And in its section on the "Dance Master," *Wu Shih*, it laconically cites the term *hsing wu* 興舞, noting that it was "not for minor sacrifices",⁴⁵ and so must have been for all major ones. Hence *hsing wu* with this solemn implication should not be taken merely to mean "rise to dance" as the later simplified sense of the word may seem to indicate, but should appropriately suggest memories of more ancient customs.

We treat the material in the *Rites of Chou* discriminately, relying on the consensus of early and modern scholars⁴⁶ including even some very radical ones, that despite its late discovery and many interpolations, the work had its basis in Early Chou tradition. Especially revealing of Early Chou life are those apparently innocent terms or expressions which we find to be at variance with such Han canonical interpretations as those in the "Great Preface" to the *Songs*. *Hsing* is precisely such a term. Citations from this earlier tome have proved, as we have seen, that it was a term for oral elocution regulated by music and that it signified in a ceremonial sense the start of dancing. These two senses, coming as they do from records reflecting Early Chou court life, will lead us even farther back to the primary meaning of *hsing*, pertinent to the origination of the *Songs* as lyrics stemming from the life of the primitive folk society, to be only later called *shih* after a long refining process. We shall then be also able to see in a fresh light the *hsing* in *Mao's Annotations*, which, even though as imperfect, poorly recollected remnants, when shorn of later superim-

44. *Chou-li*, Vol. VI, beginning of Section 1: "樂語……興道誦言語"

45. *Chou-li*, Vol. III, under *Wu Shih* 舞師 section.

46. For instance Wang Chung (汪中) (1744-1749), Sun Yi-jang (孫詒讓) (1848-1908), and, among modern scholars, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, 梁啟超, Kuo Mo-jo, 郭沫若, and Fan Wen-lan, 范文瀾. A comprehensive summary of the consensus is found in Chang Hsin-ch'eng, 張心澂 *Wei Shu T'ung K'ao*, 偽書通考, revised edition, Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1957.

posed allegorical fabrications, will yield to analysis a new generic understanding.

For the moment, for our investigation of the term *hsing* by delving into its more archaic history, beyond the *Rites of Chou* we have little to go by, and can do no better than re-establish its etymology. Unlike *shih*, the character *hsing*, to use Professor Karlgren's terminology,⁴⁷ is a "primary ideogram" of much older origin, whereas *shih*, as we have briefly seen, is a derivative "phonetic compound", with its primary etymon analyzable only by tracing it back to its phonetic component, **t̪iag*, "to go and to stop", i.e. primitive notions of the dance. The "determinative" or "radical" *yen* 言 (讠) or "word" added to **t̪iag* to represent *shih* < **śiag* 詩 (讠) shows the earmark of a later "civilized", discriminate consciousness of poetry as especially the art of words, apparently removed from, but implicitly still connected with, the notion of dance, as many ritual performances of the *Songs* still were during Chou time. But if the basic meaning of the word *shih*, so understood, gives us a sense of the Early Chou concept of the *Songs* in general and in the abstract, the rudimentary meaning of the word *hsing*, found in even remoter antiquity, will reveal a more specific feature of the origin of the *Songs*, later known as *shih*, with more concrete references to the essential parts of the *Songs* even as they later developed.

Being a primary ideogram", the word *hsing* is of itself illuminating by what is found to be its earliest archaic graph and sound, written 𠂔 and pronounced **x̥iəŋ*. When the word was first discovered in the oracle-bone inscriptions, it was misread by Lo Chen-Yü 羅振玉⁴⁸ for a rather amusing reason. Unable as yet to shake off the *Shuo Wen* 說文 tradition, Lo claimed the character to be *yü* 與, citing as its etymological cognate (𠂔) (𠂔) from the *Shuo Wen* read *yü* in the sense of "give". To force the identification Lo glossed over the fact that there are four hands around the graph 𠂔, and finally preferred to recognize only two hands to suit the cognate form. He could not quite make up his mind about the middle part of the graph, the element 𠂔, which had long since been in a state of confusion in the history of the Chinese script, thought to be either *chou* 舟 for "boat", or *p'an* 槃 for "tray", despite both their great phonetic difference and semantic variance. He tried to reconcile these by adding as an after-thought that "*p'an* is also *chou*, for containing things", thus inadvertently, of course, suggesting the broad sense of "vessel", which could

47. Bernhard Karlgren: *Grammata Serica*, "Introduction." 1941.

48. See 羅：殷墟書契攷釋 1914, p. 56.

be either “boat” or “tray” or any container, as we might accept it to be in English. But still *p'an* and *chou*, “boat” and “tray”, phonetically and in their semantic usages cannot possibly be identical. For the etymonic graph of *hsing* in our concern, the case must be decided one way or other. Lo's misinterpretation of 1914 was not corrected until Shang Cheng-tso 商承祚 and Kuo Mo-jo⁴⁹ 郭沫若 both uncovered it in 1933. Now we have no doubt⁵⁰ that the word *hsing* had its antique origin in the oracle bone inscriptions as 𠂔, identified by Shang Ch'eng-tso as “four hands each holding up the corner of a tray”. The fact that the middle element in the graph, the object that is held, is *p'an* or a tray and not *chou* or a boat, has been reinforced by Kuo Mo-jo's forceful argument.⁵¹ Kuo pointed out the “corrupt deviations” (*wei pien* 譌變) from *p'an* to *chou* in the bronze inscriptions, and, restoring the original significance of the graph *p'an* (𠂔) as the pictograph of a tray, he stressed its essentially dynamic sense of “turning round” by identifying it as the primary graph for 𠂔, later written 般, 槃, or 盤, which had long since been accepted as meaning both “tray” and “turning.” The association of these two senses in ancient and later usage is too close to be dismissed as a case of mere phonetic loan. Shang Ch'eng-tso's convincing analysis of the early graphic components of *hsing*, combined with Kuo's dynamic interpretation, in fact suggests their vital relationship, which will establish the true etymology of the word. This is what will reveal to our understanding the embryonic origin of the *Songs* as a generic whole and enable us to track down some of the transformations of their later developed fissiparous parts. Having established the graph as a symbol of four, or a group of, hands each holding part of a tray, Shang went on to observe the variant forms of the graph with an additional element 𠂔, *k'ou* or “mouth,” such as 𠂔 and 𠂔, in bronze inscriptions too, and came to the conclusion that *hsing* < **xiang* was an ejaculation uttered when a group of people were lifting up a thing together. He decided that the sound of the word *hsing* was onomatopoeic, in the class of such Chinese interjectives as *ya hu* 邪許. In English we may find as its equivalent something like “heave-ho”. The ejaculation thus uttered, however, may not, as Shang suggested, be only caused by the weight lifted toge-

49. Shang: 殷契佚存考釋 p. 62; and Kuo: 卜辭通纂攷釋 p. 34.

50. I owe it to my friend Professor 高去尋 of Academia Sinica to have reconfirmed the word's identity in our correspondences, March, 1967, where he supplied me with the most recent extensive data supporting Shang and Kuo's analysis, and refuting others. Especially appreciated are his citations of those relevant parts from Professor 李孝定: 甲骨文字集釋, Vol. III, 1965.

51. Kuo: op. cit., p. 29.

ther. The central object being depicted in the shape of a tray, how much weight could it really have? As Kuo Mo-jo saw in it and in its cognates the dynamic sense of “turning round,” or the movement “around,” it may not be simple upward lifting but a group circling as well. Hence the indication of the sense of dancing. And the heave-ho was likely as well an expression of joy and excitement in the playful cavorting of the group as in co-operative labor. By but a slight semantic extension, the central element *p'an* in the word *hsing* soon came to generate such cognitive compounds in very early classical texts as *p'an yu* 盤游, “dallying”,⁵² and *p'an huan* 盤桓, “hovering about (blissfully)”.⁵³ And in texts of the *Songs* themselves, we see it either means “joy”⁵⁴ or signifies dance.⁵⁵

Thus the premise can be established that the *hsing* < **xjəŋ*, which was to become so mercurial in meaning yet to remain such a crucial key concept in traditional Chinese poetics as well as in the study of the *Songs*, was a primitive “heave-ho” or “hurrah,” ejaculated in joy and high spirits with a feeling of emotional and physical uplift by a group turning round a central object, which joined their hands together in a dancing circle. We believe that herein lies the primeval origination of the *Songs* as *shih*, which was to be the name for all later Chinese poetry. We shall see *hsing* as the essence of the *Songs*' generic character, concerning both their social functions, however idealized and formalized later in Chou time, and their intrinsic poetic distinction, even though the texts were evolved after long civilizing processes through many centuries. The primitive voices, transformed and refined into prosodic devices and conventions in their texts, still strike us, despite their great diversity, as a general “tonality”, which Mao, with perhaps very imperfect remembrance, gave prominence by reminding us of the common term *hsing*.

Let our discovery of the primeval sense of the word *hsing* first help us solve or clarify a few rather basic general problems of the *Songs*. In order to do so, we may greatly profit by introducing an analogy from western scholarship in the study of the medieval European carols and ballads, with which the

52. In *Shang Shu*: 尚書：五子之歌： *p'an yu wu tu* “盤游無度 to dally without temperance;”, 逸遇書， V: *p'an yu an chu* 盤游安居 to dally in secure living.”

53. In 易經：屯卦初九: *p'an huan li chu chen* “盤桓利居貞， hovering about, omen good for making home.”

54. Song no. 296: 殷 glossed as “joy.”

55. Song no. 56: *K'ao p'an*; 考槃; Song no. 137: “婆娑” *p'o so* = *p'an so*, 槃娑, with 婆 *p'o* given as *p'an* according to text in *Shuo Wen* 說文, Waley's superior translation of *K'ao P'an* is greatly helped by this textual emendation.

Songs are in many ways comparable, though not entirely similar, in their course of development, their later involvement with social, official and courtly life,⁵⁶ and their sometimes striking resemblance in formal features. As the modern tendency to treat the *Songs* largely as anonymous "folk songs" has been violently opposed to the earlier Chinese tradition of attributing them to individual ancient worthies, kings, queens, dukes and wise sages, so has contention been furious among western scholars studying the ballad and the carol, either insisting on their being communal folk products, or individual creation.⁵⁷ The question needs to be clarified before it is solved. No one reading a so-called "folk-song", be it a ballad, carol or a *Shih Ching* song of even the most naive primitive charm, will not feel that some individual talent, however natural-born and anonymous, is responsible for the current version. One cannot accept with ease that all were of a uniformly collective impromptu composition. Field studies in surviving customs of ballad production today have again and again reported discoveries of such individual talents in any backward community as *one* of the folk. And reading the *Shih Ching*, even those of the *Kuo Feng* or "Airs" section, one would more often than not feel the heart's cry of an individual, some self-expression which evidently, is the soul of the lyric, though spoken anonymously and without clear personal identity. But, on the other hand, one cannot help being struck by such distinctive elements in the *Shih Ching* as those in the burdens, refrains and especially the "incremental repetitions," sometimes vivid or odd and often "arcane of reason", but nevertheless stock figures that must have come from earlier convention long before the accomplished versions of the *Songs*. So the question of the "folk" origin of the *Songs*, as of the carol and the ballad, has reference not to the complete composition of the current versions, but to the more primitive *elements*, still generically shared by them, yet traceable to far more remote antiquity if we possess a clue. And the word *hsing*, as we have analyzed it, is such a clue. The case becomes clear beside its western parallel.

Sir Edmund K. Chambers, whom we can rely on as an up-to-date authority who takes a moderate position among hot contenders, would be the last to accept the "communal" folk production theory to account for current versions of

56. A revealing parallel can be found in A. B. Friedman, *The Ballad Revival*, treating the relations of ballads to official poetry from 1100 to the present.

57. Salient examples are arguments between F. B. Gummere, *The Popular Ballad* (1907) and Louise Pound, *Poetic Origins and the Ballad* (1921).

the ballads and carols transmitted since the medieval ages. In good humor he derided the “communalists”, from Lang to Gummere, by alluding to “the quiet irony of George Meredith in *The Amazing Marriage*, where Dame Gossip’s ‘notion of the ballad is, that it grows like mushrooms from a scuffle of feet on grass overnight.’”⁵⁸ In his learned and witty book, however, Sir Edmund nevertheless saw fit to trace the origin of the popular medieval carol to a common primitive central element through philology. Two chief senses of the etymology for the term carol are found relevant and can be reconciled in a composite meaning. From the Greco-Latin root *chorus* is suggested a “round-dance”, or in perhaps a lesser, derivative sense from *choraules*, the “flute accompanist” of such a dance, and finally, from *corrolla*, a little crown or garland, a concrete central object around which the dance was performed, or which implies the round movement. Sir Edmund comes to the conclusion that “in either case, the sense of a ‘ring’ is there”.⁵⁹ For a graphic illustration of the “ring” dance around a circle, he cited a medieval miniature showing “a group of men and women dancers with raised arms and joined hands”.⁶⁰ We may recall the ancient graph of *hsing* 興 as such an illustration, with hands joined around a central object, the *p’an* 𠂔, which in its dynamic sense, as we have seen, suggests the circling movement of the dance. Furthermore we have also seen that the original sense of *hsing* < **xiəŋ* has been traced to a primitive interjection, like a “heave-ho,” semanticized with the meaning of “start”, “rise” or “raise”. This meaning has remained ever since in the later highly developed Chinese vocabulary, but still most often atavistically would connote high spirited uprising, joyous, auspicious beginning, and emotional uplifting, so spontaneous as if from inspiration. Uplifting,⁶¹ indeed, of both body and spirit, is the all-evocative epithet when we try to picture the birth of the primordial dance and song. Having traced the embryonic origin of the carol in the basic central concept of the “ring”, for which our counterpart in the *hsing* < **xiəŋ* would be the *p’an* 𠂔, Chambers visualizes the scene in the primeval folk community, where under stimulation the “feet of the chorus (round-dancers) break into the *uplifting* (*italics mine*) of the dance”. And with the dance came “originally the song...

58. *English Literature at the Middle Ages*, Oxford University Press, 1947, p. 174.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

61. In a conversation with Professor Peter Boodberg on the *hsing* in our present concern, the word “uplift” spontaneously and simultaneously came to both our minds.

62. *Op. Cit.*, p. 69.

which may have been no more than an inarticulate outcry".⁶² And this "song," indeed this "inarticulate cry", we hear in the longdrawn interjection. the ejaculation of "*Xiəng!", an archaic Chinese "have-ho", spontaneously uttered in high spirits in a primitive communal gathering. At first it perhaps had been on happy occasions when the joy of joint labor transcended physical exertion and rose to the spirit of play. Or, again, it could have been from the sheer delight in the joint movement of limbs and bodies in the most primitive festivities. In either case, joyous labor or festive play, the "heave-ho" or its like was to grow and develop with the rhythmic repetition and variation which must have been of the essence in any collective movement that gave pleasure and uplift.

On this assumption we feel safe in saying that the most primal embryonic element of the "folk song", be it a "*Xiəng!", a "heave-ho", "hurrah" or what not, was "communal" in origin, stemming from the collective impulse and group feeling of "uplift". But "communalism" for the origination of the "folk song" can prevail in the strictest sense only up to this point. For after the practice of the joint rhythmic "inarticulate cry", or even perhaps during it, an individual "leader" would soon emerge who grasped the meaning of the occasion, imparted his personal insight, was inspired by immediate objects or contingent events symbolic of the feeling of the whole occasion, and became articulate with more words. Thus he would trace the theme, as it were, and utter inspired rhythmic and expressive phrases which would form "motifs" to "start" the song and set the pattern of the sound as well as the mood. Such was the *hsing* in the ancient Chinese case, as it developed and continued to be by name and nature in its function among the *Songs*. There had been the time when by repeated rhythm the uplifting "inarticulate cry" of the primordial "*Xiəng!" imaginably soon grew into inspired phrases, iterated by the group to the accompaniment of uncouth music and the round dance, while the "leader" continually traced and expanded the theme into more and more coherent statements to give rise to the prototypes of primitive folk songs. Between this time, however, and the time of the highly elaborated composition of the *Songs* of the *Shih Ching* with their adaptation to solemn courtly music and royal temple dances, as well as to lesser social ceremonies, there was of course the span of centuries if not aeons from bygone ages immemorial to the civilized Chou dynasty. But it is remarkable how the *hsing* element has remained recognizable in the extant texts of the *Songs*, its distinct identity surviving even in the *Mao Annotations* and persis-

ting through transformations to generate subtle poetic and literary theories. This precious clue we should exploit to full advantage.

To the extent that the *hsing* element spread through all the sections of the texts, we see it as a guide-line for establishing the general generic character of the *Songs*. And once it has been traced to its original sense, concept and significance, it enables us to presuppose that a very long and much earlier tradition had been behind the composition of the *Songs*, which can in themselves no longer properly be called primitive folk songs. But the primitive folk origin, carried over through long processes of refinement and sifting, became crystallized into entities with vibrant poetic force still clearly discernible in the *hsing* elements. And these elements retain in the *Songs* traces of the pristine beauty of the poetry of an innocent fresh world, where music, dance and song, altogether undifferentiated but spontaneous and simultaneous, lent magic power to each other and blended themselves into such lyrical qualities as models that were ever to be nostalgically harkened back, emulated but not equalled in the later Chinese poetic tradition.

Let us go further to deal with some other perennial problems about the *Songs* in the light of our discovery. These have to do with certain dominant themes and their treatment, and with a surmise, if possible, concerning the historical-social genesis and evolution of their texts into a collected corpus. First we take all the sections, the *Feng*, *Ya* and *Sung*, or "Airs", "Elegantiae" and "Eulogia", as a whole. The themes that stand out most distinctly are always those somehow related either to agricultural or to human fertility in the broad sense, the latter including of course love. These are treated either with a ceremonial attitude or otherwise, but most often with motifs derived from natural or man-made objects observed in agricultural activities and, to a lesser degree, in the herdsmen's or hunters' life and labor. Or, in the case of love songs, there are objects that smack of the open fields that were cultivated on plains, in the hills or by the streams. And especially remarkable in the love or courtship songs is the prominent position of woman. Ever so frequently. The songs take the female point of view.

We think we have sufficiently suggested the long tradition behind the composition of the *Songs*. These themes and motifs cannot therefore be entirely explained by contemporary Chou cultural conditions. Neither a political analysis of the Chou mode of agricultural production, whether slavery or feudal, nor

sociological knowledge of the position of the Chou women can give us a satisfactory answer, But by projecting these themes and motifs, and deducing them back to their generic origin, we may venture to produce the reason. The clue discovered in the *hsing* has given us graphic and semantic illustrations which both point to the scene of the primordial origination of dance and song in Chinese high antiquity, and maintain for us the possibilities of appreciating the traces of the pristine poetic qualities still manifest in the contents as well as in the formal features of the *Songs*. We can assume the growing importance of agriculture to Chinese life even before the Shang dynasty.⁶³ In investigating the origination of the carol and the ballad, the importance of agricultural factors has been assumed for ancient Europe. Gummere, in fact, found that the "agricultural community", even "in its crudest stages", was perhaps the most primary and certainly the most prolific source that "fosters the communal song"⁶⁴ in its origin. The "uplifting dance" and with it the simultaneous high spirited cry that was to grow into song, as the basic meaning of *hsing* compositely suggested, must have arisen on occasions of such vital concern to the community as bounteous crops and human productivity. Ritualistic and festive in mood as they gathered, the communal groups would be moved to feel that the essence of natural and human fertility was all in one. "And", in Chambers' words about the primitive origination of the carol, "as the spirit presided over human as well as other fertility, it was natural that women should take a leading part, and that the impulse of the dance should be amorous".⁶⁵ So the prominence of women's position in the *Songs* was not so much the result of contemporary Chou life as a sustained generic convention since of yore.⁶⁶ The convention had grown and was now elaborated and refined to produce many of the

63. Witness the highly developed knowledge of farming seasons and work, and the vital concern with them recorded in the Shang oracle bones.

64. F. B. Gummere: *Origins of Poetry*, The MacMillan Co., 1901, p. 279.

65. Op. cit., p. 89.

66. For the support of this view we would venture to suggest that when Confucius so often spoke of the *Songs* as if they were a whole, he must have sensed in them a long established generic unity. Furthermore, when he discoursed on the *Songs*, including the love songs, with so much reverence, aesthetically as well as morally, he was not reading out of them realistic depictions of contemporary social customs, which, we know, he in fact censured if not detested. Indeed, some of the *Songs*, at least in the "Airs" section, are found to have been composed near his own lamentable time. But he accorded them all, including the amorous love songs, equal appreciation and respect, for no other reason we can see than that he, even as a moral philosopher, recognized in them more ancient surviving conventions, which he wanted in idealistic retrospection to restore and reunite with meaningful rituals of a golden bygone age.

exquisite *Songs*, which we can even better appreciate, however, by gaining a greater psychic distance from contemporary Chou social history and turning back to the primary source of the genre. So too must the objects invoked from nature or the crafts have been laden with older traditional beliefs, primitive perceptions fashioned by convention into poetic usages which should be appreciated for their generic artistic effects rather than as mere realistic reportage.

These are generally to be recognized in the distinctive *hsing* elements, which still "uplift" us as they did the song-makers of Chou, who adopted them as the generic properties that established and characterized the *Songs* as a fully developed artistic genre. Even though the inspiration might now have been personalized and drawn from real life experiences, yet an established genre deriving from old traditions would continue to favor the treatment of certain themes and the use of certain motifs in such ways as had developed since olden times. Thus the prominent position of women in the love songs and the invocation of natural or other concrete objects can all be ultimately traced back to the first exuberant cries of "*Xiang!" that went with the "uplifting dance", when in felicitous moments Mother Earth's bounty in nature and the expectant fruition of the enamoured maidens in human love were felt at the fertility rites as undifferentiated as the art of song, music and dance that in its primeval unity was to express them.

Next we may surmise the ways in which the corpus of the "Three Hundred Songs" were formed and spoken of, perhaps even before Confucius' time, as if with a sense of generic wholeness. From primeval generic origination through primitive folk song to the *Songs* of the *Shih Ching* as the full growth of a genre was a long process of fissionation. It was the first instance characterizing Chinese literary history, the prototype of the many times to be repeated progress from folk origin to courtly refinement and formalization, along with gradually increasing capabilities of personalized lyricism. But the viability and florescence of a genre of a given period have to depend on mutual accommodation between the prevailing modes of life that nourish its growth, and the fitness of the original generic character to the finer imaginative expression of that life. And there must be an awakened sense of critical appreciation, however cryptically advanced at first. We see such happen in the case of the *Songs* during the early to middle Chou time. We have noted the embryo of the genre from the song, music and dance in the rites of a primitive folk society. And the folk song, however primitive, would presuppose a good degree of homogeneity

in social spirit and aspirations as well as composition. Long centuries elapsed before the emergence of the Chou dynasty. We know well the supreme importance of music and rites the dynasty attached to its rule. We also know that the Early Chou power prevailed by its successful agricultural colonization. And there was a quickening pace of opening up communications among the states, north toward south as west toward east. The homogeneity that had been a natural reality to remoter ancient communities, clan states, was now felt as a conscious national aspiration under the regime toward an ideal of cultural universality. It was perhaps the first awakening ideal of a civilized China differentiated from the "barbarians", with a sense of developing homogeneity of culture, if not of blood. It became an ideology personified in the still somewhat shadowy figure of the Duke of Chou, but soon later to be clearly articulated by Confucius. Such a regime in the development of institutions, of which art and literature were among the most important ones, would tend to seek deeper roots for them in the old Chinese soil and nourish their new growths. It would hark back to remote ancient forms, and sometimes transform them in idealized retrospection. It would revive and conserve elements of the old arts, as well as encourage by court fashion new works adopting ancient themes and motifs among the people to sing of their immediate feelings. We believe that the "Songs Three Hundred" of the *Shih Ching* texts formed the collected corpus, not of all the songs that were made during early Chou time, but an exemplary specimen of the song making process.

Now we can attempt to view the general contents of the *Shih Ching* more closely, first in broad categories and then more in aesthetic detail. Among the contents of the *Shih Ching*, the *Sung* or "Eulogia" section of course had the most elevated position in the court. Of these the *Chou Sung* are the oldest, the *Shang Sung*⁶⁷ and *Lu Sung*⁶⁸ following as well known imitations from the middle 7th century B.C. We have been assured of one fact about the *Sung* or "Eulogia" songs. It is that they were each danced to on the most solemn occasions of sacrifice in royal ancestral temples. The *Chou Sung*, as the oldest pieces, perhaps of the 10th century B.C. when the Chou dynasty was first founded, typify this solemn spirit. Even though the parts we possess of them in our extant texts are known to have suffered the worst damage of the whole corpus, the *Chou Sung* Songs, even in their fragmentary version are clearly marked

67. In the time of Duke Hsiang of Sung 宋襄公 (r. 650-636 B.C.).

68. Time of Duke Hsi of Lu 魯僖公 (r. 659-633 B.C.).

with two main concerns. They are either devoted to praising ancestors as progenitors identified with a bounteous or protective heaven⁶⁹ that propagated as well as nourished man with "wheat and barley"⁷⁰; or to invoke a sacred religious feeling for farming labor and productivity.⁷¹ There is a third important concern admixed with these in the *Chou Sung*, namely, festive conviviality, the offering of wine and food, not only to the spirits of male and female ancestors,⁷² but among the sacrificers themselves, who would on these "spirited" occasions "have drunk and eaten our fill", *chi tsui ch'ich pao* 既醉且飽.⁷³ Songs nos. 290 and 291 are especially full of explicit expressions of the joyous excitement of agricultural work and fecundity, with women's part played in it, women who were "lovely", and were productive of children. We remember that all these were for the solemn occasions of the royal temple sacrifices. But they are all clearly reminiscent of the primordial fertility rites that began with the "uplifting dance".

The point of special interest here is the revelation of generic character from origination to full development. We believe this knowledge would add a fresh look to even these "Eulogia" songs which in the traditional as well as modern appreciation of the *Songs* as a whole used to put the readers off, either as requiring too great a reverent distance because of the religious awe traditionally taught about them, or as being too formalized and therefore mummified. To exhibit the generic elements in them is, we hope, to stir up a sense of life and revive some of the original lyricism which pervades all the *Songs*. Furthermore, we think that the "Eulogia" section was perhaps more instrumental than the popular "Airs" in establishing firmly the genre concept of the *Songs*, called *shih* since early Chou time. The importance of the idea of dance in the formation of the term *shih* we have decided earlier. We have also seen that dance was inseparable from the performance of these *Sung* or "Eulogia Song", and was in fact the fundamental meaning of *Sung*, as revealed by the latter's etymological identity with *yung* 容, "formal manners" of dance. But we further note that the "Eulogia", being the oldest in the corpus of the *Songs*, were also among the earliest to be quoted currently in courtly and diplomatic circles of the states since at least the 8th century B.C., while quoting from the

69. Most notably Songs nos. 273, 275, 294 in the Mao text.

70. Song no. 275.

71. Songs nos. 776, 277.

72. Songs nos. 279, 290.

73. Song no. 275.

"Airs" was not a practice until 636, according to the *Kuo Yü* and *Tso Chuan* records.⁷⁴ It is a very notable fact that when the songs of the *Sung* were so early quoted, they were often mentioned just as *shih*. Certainly when they so mentioned them, the quoters, mostly court officials or nobility, were very much aware that these songs were by implication all part and parcel of the formalized temple dances. Their use of the term *shih* applied to the "Eulogia" songs would therefore carry that implication on the one hand. But on the other, when quoted in conversation the songs were no longer sung, and the impact of the meaning of *words* became prominent. This was perhaps, we suspect, the way in which the word *shih*, with its primary etymon 𠂔 *chih* < **tiag* signifying dance, and its latier "determinal" 言 (*yen*) "word" element added, became a felicitous term gaining wide currency. Thus it came to denominate, or "glamorize" so to say, all the rest of the *Songs* of the other sections as a generic term. But we surmise it was primarily because the songs in the *Sung*, of such elevated position, had made precedents among courtly circles and the intelligensia who, in appreciation of the fact that they were both *danced* to with music, and spoken as polite quotations for the value of their *words* in polished conversation, sanctioned and circulated the term *shih* as carrying both senses.

Now since the *Sung* section has such a special significance for the *shih* genre, let us examine it a little more. We find that in the *Sung* both of these senses, of "dance" and of "word", were distinctly present, but in a way bifurcated, each growing in a grand manner in its own direction. Danced to they must be, but now in such grand processions of the Chou royal temples that, while still recalling the primordial unity of song, music and dance, they also sublimated it, as it were, with forms of religion whose elaborate rituals far advanced over the primitive. So the words in the composition of the songs, to suit the occasions, must be of such import, that most often they, too, sublimated the primordial devices of the "uplifting" *hsing* prototype of burdens or refrains. The effects of the motifs remained, as we have seen, but the patterns shifted. Reading the "Eulogia" texts, we should therefore, while savoring the words, visualize the pomp and circumstance of the solemn dance and music that were to go with them, to obtain the total uplifting effect. And in analyzing the structure of all the *Songs*, it will be in the the *Ya* and *Feng*, or "Elegantia" and "Airs" sect-

74. See: 勞孝興：春秋詩話 Vol. II. A *Tso Chuan* record of an early quoting of the "Airs" has been dismissed by authorities as spurious.

ions, that we encounter more fully the *hsing* element.

Whether or not all the "Airs" and the "Elegantia", as if in full reminiscence of the generic origin, having stemmed from the high-spirited, uplifting "**Xiang!*", were danced as well as sung to music, we cannot be sure, though the Moists in the 5th century B.C. claimed they were. But they have certainly retained many of the motifs in the ancient pattern of refrains and incremental repetitions, which are clearly recognizable, and were marked off, however haphazardly though frequently enough, in the *Mao Annotations* as "this is *hsing*". It is these *hsing* elements, as we have frequently noted, that gave the whole corpus of the *Songs* its generic unity, interspersed as they are through all the sections. They were given prominence by Mao, mainly in the "Airs" and "Minor Elegantiae", *Hsiao Ya* 小雅, sections with four additional instances in the "Major Elegantiae" *Ta Ya* 大雅, which next to the "Eulogia" are the most courtly and solemn in subject matter. And Mao did indicate two instances of the "*hsing*" in "Eulogia" section as well. We think we have now suggested strongly enough the importance of *hsing* for appreciating the *Songs* with a fair sense of generic criteria. It is also of importance to the development of later Chinese poetics in their long tortuous course, and has still larger implications for the history of the main Chinese literary tradition, as we hope later to discuss or indicate in this study.

For the moment, looking closely at the *hsing* element just as Mao noted them, we find that they are all invocations of either natural objects large and small: the sun, the moon, hills and rivers and the fields, birds, plants, fishes and insects; or objects of primitive crafts: boat, fishing rod, farming implements; plus a good portion inspired by work in the farm: picking herbs, cutting timber, or such activities in the fields as catching birds and animals; and a small amount having to do with clothing and weaving. Having traced the significance of *hsing* < **Xiang* to its primeval origin, we can now appreciate its pristine quality, as manifested in these evocations of objects, natural or human. There is the superb statement in appreciation of this pristine quality that glistened at the early dawn of poetic history in any civilization. Said Professor H. W. Garrod: Once upon a time the world was fresh, to speak was to be a poet, to name objects an inspiration; and metaphor dropped from the inventive mouths of men like some natural exudation of the vivified senses.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ As quoted in C. Day Lewis: *The Poetic Image*, P. 25.

The *hsing* elements in the *Songs* are of the quality inherited from that “fresh world”. They carry with them, in terms of formal distinction, the ancient integrity, the oneness or the unity of the musical speech and the rhythm of the spontaneous and simultaneous primeval “uplifting dance”. Their appeal is therefore instantaneous, even kinesthetic as well as imagistic. Observe the frequent doublets and rich onomatopoeia, and we hear the keynote and are tuned to the whole rhythm of any one of the *Songs* in which the *hsing* element is recognized. Recall how in the rest of the song a host of alliterations as well as rhymes or pararhymes grow as if in response to its spirit to make the whole poem vibrant with it, and we realize how the *hsing* element is the soul of the *lyric* by which the *Songs* as *shih* have their generic distinction.

To this extent, the *hsing* elements deserve the name, in the modern formal sense, of “motif” to the *Songs*. But they as well set off the mood and atmosphere of the whole song, or rise of a sudden to control and govern them in it. On this point we want to be specific rather than leaving such experiences of mood or atmosphere barely stated in the fashion of traditional as well as some modern appreciative critics, though we have no doubt that they genuinely and deeply felt these. First we may look at some almost too obvious examples. Too obvious, that is, when we approach them with full alertness to their sensuousness and all-evocative powers, and are ready for the uplifted feeling taught by the “*Xîng!” rather than vivisectioning them ratiocinatively or being too eager for allegorical arguments taught by scholastic tradition. Most often do the *hsing* element begin a song. Such an obvious example is Song No. 1, 關雎, “Quacks the Ausprey”. Not only do the starting lines:

關關雎鳩 **Kwan kwan ts'io kî'g*

在河之洲 **Dz'ag g'â tî'ag tî'g*

set the basic rhyming scheme, generate a host of alliteratives, and oblique, slant assonances and pararhymes which echo to the syllables of these lines (for sound effect we do not neglect the constant recurrences of the “particle” *chih* 之 either), but the sympathy of a whole range of sounds bear upon the dominant emotional tone of the song, which the *hsing* lines at the beginning have already set off. We can speak of the mood and atmosphere being “obvious” when sound and senses are realized to be so fused that we feel the overtones and the conjured light and color in their interplay inform and deepen our emotional experience of the total poem. It is after we have not only known the ratiocinative senses of the song, but felt the total impact of the *sensation* in the words in their

interrelationship that we can speak of “meaning beyond words”. Such “meaning” now is actually a feeling, genuinely felt but not entirely expressible in words. As such it may be called a spiritual or emotional “sensation” from the song, yet so readily experienced that we feel it is from something pervading the song, and its parts not isolable. Hence we recognize it as “atmosphere”, and as we feel it, we say we share the whole “mood”. It is, in the case of the song in the *Shih Ching*, the intricate, rich yet naturally harmonized sound relations, and the distinct yet spontaneous rhythm, as well as the striking, untrammelled, naked images like living things in their natural state that have done it. And it is the *hsing* element, retaining the primordial efficacy of the unity of song, music and dance that hold the core of it.

Approached this way, another example, Song No. 143, 月出, “The Moon Rises”, perhaps even more obvious, because there the *hsing* or “motif” lines:

月出皎兮 **Ngīwāt t'iwāt k'og γiei*

佼人僚兮 **K'og niēn k'og γiei*

generate three stanzas of incremental repetitions which constitute the total of the whole song, and because each and every line is an exclamatory construction ending with *γiei* 兮! (only a few of the *Songs* being likewise.) The total sympathetic sound relationships are even more readily felt than in Song No. 1, suffusing the whole song as does the light of the rising moon, which is the dominant image introduced by the *hsing* lines of this song. Thus when we speak of the “mood” and “atmosphere” of the poem we are referring to tangible things that have effected them: echoing syllables of sounds and pervading light or color evoked, which produce the “sensation” together with the simple regular beats of the tapping rhythm. And we believe that the high lyricism of this song is, even if not because it could be proved as a dance song, at least inspired by dance, as evidenced by its content, which again accounts for the efficacy of its generic origin.

These two examples are two relatively short poems, and perhaps have been readily enjoyed by readers with spontaneous pleasure. Our pleasure, however, will be enhanced, and our feeling for the poems' effects deepened, once we become so aware as we are now of the all-pervasive efficacy of the *hsing* elements, echoed and reflected in euphony and imagery throughout the entirety of each text. The “mood” and “atmosphere”, which everyone used to say that he feels about them, will no longer be vague terms, but analysable with material evidence. The analysis can be easily done by closely observing, even with our

as yet imperfect knowledge of archaic Chinese, the interplay of all the properties of evocative sounds and senses in the poems spread by and centered round their *hsing* elements. We shall now apply this observation and test it as a method for a detailed analysis of a much more complex poem, so as to settle some more of the issues in the *Shih Ching* poetics, as well as to exemplify the fuller enjoyment of a much longer text. We are doing this by rescuing the *hsing* from the morass of the latter day "Six Principles", and giving it, so to speak, its due.

Our following example will illustrate a varied kind of device of the use of *hsing* in a poem of much greater complexity. It will, however, become very clear, once the full force of the *hsing* elements is realized throughout the poem in distinct order and utter cogency. Traditional poetics tended to be obscurant. We have earlier noted that Chu Hsi, influenced by formerly evolved concepts as well as contemporary poetics of late Sung, authoritatively defined the *hsing* as either "starting a poem" or "what the poet saw" which touched him, hence "inspiration". These definitions would not have been so unfortunate if they had not been since taken either too facilely or too fancifully, or, again, too heavy-footedly. If they were understood after some knowledge of the generic origin of the *Songs*, such as we have tried to pursue, and with some insight from a proper distance into the primeval folk community, Chu's notions despite himself, we may say, could really be of merit. But in actual results, they have, even up to this day, encouraged two types of what we may call "cavalier" critics, and perpetuated the errors of a third. The idea of *hsing* as a way of "beginning a poem" has led to the too facile dismissal of all the rest of its import in poetic function and significance such as we hope to have just sufficiently brought forth. As "what the poet sees" and is thus "inspired" with so as to compose the *Songs*, the definition led to anachronism, to the total disregard of any of the generic convention evolved since of old, which the *Songs* so efficaciously adopted. And because the moral allegorical tradition of the *Shih Ching* interpretations still persisted, the same definition has made a third group of critics envision a Chou society of such high moral standard everywhere that the poet could just "see" and express the ideal. So these critics continued their paeans of the golden age of virtue and wisdom.

Now our example is to show that the *hsing* is not just a way of "beginning a poem", for here it does not even appear at the beginning; that it is one of the best illustrations of the *Song's* generic convention; and thirdly that its

function and significance are of direct poetic concern, and not at all allegorical. This is Song No. 168, 出車, "Set Out the Chariots". It belongs, we may note, to the *Hsiao Ya* or "Minor Elegantiae" section. The *hsing* lines are:

嘒嘒草蟲 **Iôg i'g ts'og d'i'ng*

趯趯阜螽 **T'ioh t'ioh b'i'g t'i'ng*

followed by

未見君子 **Mi'wəd kian k'iwən tsi'əg*

憂心忡忡 **I'g siəm t'iong t'iong*

The two *hsing* lines do not appear until after four long stanzas of the Song. That they had stemmed from a common source of old generic convention, and not "what the poet saw" at the moment of individual inspiration is clearly indicated by their recurrence elsewhere as stock phrases. Not only are the same lines, identical word for word, are found marked by Mao as "This is *hsing*" in a different song in another section among the "Airs" category, i.e. Song No. 14, in *Chou Nan* 周南; but the two lines that follow are also identical word for word, with more lines of similar sense and emotive impact in both Songs.

Song No. 168, typical of the "Elegantiae" section, is a much more elaborate composition than Song No. 14, of the "Airs". The "Elegantiae" Songs are not necessarily more attractive, may indeed be less to the "folklorist" bias, than the "Airs". But there is no denying their greater artistry. That is perhaps why, incidentally, we have discovered that the word *shih* as the first sign of the consciousness of the identity of poetry as the art of *words* appears in the "Elegantiae", Songs Nos. 200, 252 and 259, which we have cited. Not so bound up as the "Eulogia" with solemn, formalized royal temple rituals on the one hand, yet having risen farther above the "folk song" level than the "Airs", these "Elegantiae" songs might allow more room for individual ingenuity, hence the greater individual consciousness of the use of "words". We do still think, for reasons already indicated, that it was the elevated, grand position of the "Eulogia" that, sublimating yet still sharing the generic character of the *Songs*, lent dignity to the whole corpus, embraced as it was by the nobility and intelligentsia before middle Chou and accepted as the prestigious *shih*. But we think the song-makers of the "Elegantiae", though bards rather than poets in the modern sense, still were, in their observation of the *hsing* convention, more nearly individual artists articulating their own voices.

The use of *hsing*, as well as the structure and intent, of Song No. 168, bears remarkable evidence. It is a song of six long stanzas, doubling the normal

three of those in the "Airs", but with a clear shift and development of senses observable in two parts with three stanzas to each. The two *hsing* lines, which we may mimic in translation,

Iôg, iog, sing the cicadae,⁷⁶

Tip, dip, go the grasshoppers,

appearing in the beginning of the fifth stanza, thus stand out right in the middle of the concluding part. We hear in them a new crescendo of sounds, drawing resonance out of syllables of the foregoing stanzas from their alliterative and rhyming effects and foreshadowing those later to come. We also see these *hsing* lines introduce the stanza that constitutes a new focus in the sense of the poetry of the song, thus with a new dimension of meaning reveal the real intent of the poem as its central image. All the three stanzas in the first part of the song speak of a military expedition. The individual status, though not the individual personality, of the song-maker (who was an officer of the army on trek) is clear. In the first three stanzas, through his "song-words", we hear the rumbling, the **pwang-pwang* 彭彭, of the chariots; we see and also hear the fluttering, the **b'wad-b'wad* 旃旃, of the banners and flags, out on the long roads and open fields. But the tenor of the poem ("poem" we are calling it now, with emphasis on the song-*words*) is not that of military triumph, nor of such triumph is the whole emotional tone. But it is the hardship, anxiety, and forlorn existence of the officer and his soldiers separated from their wives that are the poem's concern and set its emotional tone, rather than martial spirit or victory, though victory did in the end come, and reunion was enjoyed. The whole picture from the beginning is that of small, desolate human beings who go helplessly "tip, dip" on vast plains and endless roads. Their stature in that threadbare existence is even further dwarfed by contrast with that of the Commanding General named Nam D'îông 南仲, alluded to with only a cryptic phrase as **xăk-xăk* 赫赫, "awesome", "terrible", or "overpowering", who finally brought them victory. But while in the description of the whole expedition in the first three stanzas the dominant emotion is the "worry", the *îôg* 憂 in heart that was "anxious-anxious", *ts'îog-ts'îog* 悄悄, it is also the seeking of relief in the hope of a successful campaign and homecoming, thus foreshadowing the efficacious use of the *hsing* convention here to express a changed but further developed and

⁷⁶ Waley took this, originally, 草蟲 to be cicadae, and interpreted the line as "Dolefully cry the cicadae." The entomological accuracy may still be in question. But the effect of the sense is clear here for our purpose.

more complex, uplifting emotion. Then in the *hsing* lines which stand out in the central stanza of the concluding part of the poem, we hear the “*îôg, îôg*” 嚶嚶 of the cicada and see the “tip, dip” of grasshoppers, and feel in a flash that things in nature are at last again what they ought to be, and men are reuniting with their wives in joy. But these *hsing* lines in their total organic relationship to the three stanzas of the first part, play more parts than just to change the mood. The mood pervades the whole poem, but not until we reach these *hsing* lines is it so epitomized and highlighted. The tiny insects with their small movements and sounds recall the smallness and insignificance of men erstwhile in the wilds, but now by transmutation back to normal stature, as husbands with their wives. And the insects, which the wives as grasswidows would have often forlornly heard and watched would now be heard and seen together in peace and quiet. Their “worries”, so “anxious-anxious”, that is, their **îôg*, so **ts'îôg-ts'îôg*, now in the transformation into joyful feeling begin to be echoed and refracted, as it were, in the **îôg îôg* of the “singing cicada” as the *hsing* lines begin. Thus alerted by these *hsing* lines, if we read the poem again, we may realize that many of the rest of the sounds in the total six stanzas cohere into vibrant senses, mutually related by parallel or contrast. The **îôg* sound with its assonance *îô*, as if it were the excited cry that gave the keynote to the primeval dance-song from its generic origin, dominates much of the poem. We have observed the *îôg* that expresses the worry and “anxiety” as the basic emotion of the poem, and the **îôg-îôg* as relief and uplift of it. No doubt in the first three stanzas of the poem the “fluttering” and “rumbling” of the military emblems and equipment are also tinged with the same emotion. And we note the “banners” and “flags” that are the sources for the “fluttering” sounds are **d'îog* 旛 and the **mog* 旂; the “chariots” that go “rumbling” are the **kîo* 車, and what caused the greatest “fear” and “anxiety”, the “King’s tablet of Command,” is the **sîo* 書. The two insects in the *hsing* lines are the cicadae, the **d'îong* 蟲, and furthermore, the grasshopper, the **tîong* 螽. We have observed that their sounds and movements signify a state of agitation to begin with, but are utterly sympathetic and benign. And we find them in the same stanza rhymed with the “agitation,” **t'îong* 忪, of the heart, and then the blissful “calm”, *g'ông* 降. The name of the “awesome” Commanding General was mentioned once and singularly unfitted to the rest of the sounds among the first three stanzas of the poem. Now in the concluding part the name Nam D'îong is brought into sonorous rhyme with the *hsing* lines and the rest of this central

stanza. Rhymed, the name is now invoked and thus harmonized with the context of the human scene in peace and victory, where families are at last reunited, "the spring days are long-drawn, the plants and trees flourishing," the insects jump and sing **i^hg-i^hg*, while the bumpings and rumblings of the war chariots are memories fainter perhaps than even the cicada song, and all is right with the world. And the "awesome" general who in the end obtained the peace and victory for them is back in harmony with nature and his fellowmen, too.

To have recognized the function of the *hsing* in this manner is, we hope, to enjoy the *Songs* more fully, by discerning the whole mosaic of interrelated sound and imagistic effects that rally around the central core. We also hope that our discovery of the primeval origin of the *hsing* in the "uplifting dance" may constantly sustain our interest to regard its elements with a fresh eye. For they had come from the practice of a fresh world. It was the "fresh world" in Professor Garrod's sense, when the "vivified senses of men" felt their "high-spirited" words were at one with music and dance, and their fresh-world perceptions of immediate objects radiated through parallel ranges of enlivened thought and feeling and marshaled all the sympathetic sounds and corresponding rhythms around the initial invocation of those objects for the expression of such thought and feeling. We are not for a moment suggesting that all the elements marked *hsing* in the extant Mao texts of the *Songs* had been ready-made in their primeval origin and passed on like so many original jewel pieces to the Chou song-makers. What we emphasize is the *practice* carried over, with the *hsing* still clearly recognizable in both name and nature, used now for the elaborate expression of much more sophisticated poetic sensibilities befitting the Chou high civilization. Yet we do well to remember the *hsing* as the basic generic character of the *Songs*. To appreciate its efficacy for integrating the total sound, sense and imagistic effects of these incomparable *Songs*, as we have tried, is to free ourselves from the tedium of interminable arguments about their allegorical meanings, and to extricate ourselves from the rather fruitless, pallid debates of their being metaphor or simile according to latter day rhetorical concepts, which soon enough fall back into the allegorical trap.

The examples we have so far cited are strictly in accordance with the *Mao Annotation* which have distinctly marked as *hsing* those lines we have just analyzed. Mao's allegorical bias understandably diverted him from giving any further attention to the function of the *hsing* in the whole structure of the

Songs. He was therefore blandly unconcerned with marking out the refrains, burdens and "incremental repetitions," which were obviously the direct developments of the *hsing*, in clear evidence among a large majority of the *Songs*. We should pay a tribute to Chu Hsi's poetic insight in his *Shih Chi Chuan*, or *Comprehensive Annotations to the Songs*, where, despite his unfortunate definitions, he read out many more *hsing* lines from the *Songs* texts, not missing the burdens and "incremental repetitions." We must restate with emphasis that in the *Songs* there are few simple and pure burdens consisting of completely identical lines repeated in each stanza without relation to the growth and development of meaning of the whole song. There are many more instances of "incremental repetition" contributing to the meaningful build-up of the tenor of the song as well as to the enrichment of its harmonious and contrapuntal song pattern. Those lines which Chu Hsi reidentified as *hsing* are in many cases such "incremental repetitions." If we keep well in mind the efficacy and significance of the *hsing* developed from its generic origin, such as we have been at pains to discover and analyze, then we can properly follow Chu Hsi's more liberal spirit in recognizing more *hsing* elements than those indicated in the Mao texts, and treat them fruitfully.

We well realize Chu Hsi's inability to free himself from the moral allegorical tradition, and therefore cannot expect him to go much further beyond it. He did indicate the meaning, too, of the "incremental repetitions" which he reidentified as *hsing*. But this "meaning" was derived by him rather from his ethical concern than from the poetic, as regards structure, emotional and psychological logicity within the context of the poem. He was also trammled by the Han formula of the "Six Principles" set down in the "Great Preface", and moved narrowly within the stringent categories of "metaphor," "simile" and "narration". He therefore tended to recognize a large number of "incremental repetitions" as being *hsing* only when they seemed to him allusive, metaphorically suited to his moral allegorical interest. He would dismiss those more direct ones and call them "narration," even though they were distinctly "incremental repetitions" with the simplest pattern of recurring sounds and rhythm throughout, and therefore reminiscent of the most primitive high-spirited song and dance. These in fact represent the most revealing features of the pristine *hsing* usage such as we have found and studied. The outstanding example is the familiar Song No. 8:

采采芣苢 *Ts'ag ts'ag b'ing z'ing*

薄言采之 **B'âk ngiân ts'ag tîag*

采采芣苢 **Ts'ag ts'ag biũg zîag*

薄言有之 **B'âk ngiân giũg tîag*

Our mimicry of a translation would be:

Pick, pick, we pick the plaintain,

Hurrah, we pick it!

Pick, pick, we pick the plaintain,

Hurrah, we have it!

The rest of the "incremental repetitions" throughout the song continues with small variations of a word or two, in the same tapping-clapping rhythm and rhyme, to depict various movements of the picking, such as "plucking," "culling" or "putting in lapel." The belief that the plaintain fruit is "good for pregnancy," as Mao recorded it, has had a long Chinese tradition decisively authenticated by modern *Shih Ching* scholarship.⁷⁷ So the "picking" of the plaintain here is undoubtedly a symbolic action derived from primitive fertility rites uniting human objectives with natural objects, and expressed in the fashion of the "uplifting dance" and song. Both the theme and the structure of this Song clearly signify the primary origin and function of the *hsing*, we are certain. The "incremental repetitions" here which carry forward the motif throughout the Song evince the essence of the *hsing*, exhibited in a large number of the other *Songs*, where Mao noted "This is *hsing*." If Mao's failure to indicate the *hsing* in this Song can be explained by such negligence and inconsistency as criticized by later commentators of his whole *Annotations*, Chu's regarding it as *fu* or "narration" is because of its great simplicity and directness, since it was in the other subtler ones of the *Songs*, better suited to his circumspect allegorical moral interpretations, that he was readier to discover more *hsing* elements than Mao had indicated.

Of course in some of the *Songs*, the "incremental repetitions," having clearly stemmed from the ancient *hsing* convention, had in the development of rhetorical devices become less egregious but more of an integral part of a Song's straightforward statement. Perhaps because of this, which may indeed be a better reason, Chu recognized in Song No. 76 a "narration." The first stanza begins with:

將仲子兮 **Tsiang dî'ng tsiag yiei*

無踰我里 **Miwo dîu ngâ liag*

⁷⁷ See Wen I-to: 聞一多：詩經通義 and 匡齋尺牘 in Wen's *Complete Works*, 1948.

All the eight lines of the first stanza redevelop into two more stanzas of "incremental repetitions," line for line, to complete the whole poem. The tenor of the poem is clear, that of a girl's trepidation about others' concern with the relation between her and her lover. As the stanzas progress by repetition, with changes of only a few essential words, the concerns develop and subtly vary: From "parents' words" to "brothers' talk" and finally "people's gossip." The concerns according to the contexts range from perhaps light scolding or even solicitous care of the closest and next of kin to a public scandal: From just "words" or "talk", *yen* 言, of parents and then of brothers, to *to yen* 多言, the "busy gossip" of everyone in village or town. She sees the three situations develop as if her lover's movements toward her were watched. And the psychological truth of the poem is cogently presented in clear order. When the young lover just "clambered" into the "hamlet" or "small village", the **liag* 里,⁷⁸ broke some village trees,⁷⁹ the parents being closest to her, would already with natural solicitousness begin to worry and speak up. When he came closer, clambering over the "wall" 牆 of the house and broke some trees there, the brothers, initially less concerned than the parents, would now "talk." It is finally only when he came closest to her, clambering into the "garden" 園, as the tryst was nearly to happen, that she was palpitating with the greatest trepidation, as well as with love, that a public scandal would be abroad among all the village people who might not have hitherto much cared. A "narration" Chu Hsi preferred to call this Song. It is not our own intention to quibble about the stringent categories of the unrealistic aspects of the old "Six principles". But this song is obviously not a simple narrative. It is not a story of any great interest. It is its psychological and emotional logic that attracts us. But we further observe that it is the sound-and-meaning pattern subtly wrought into a song with total "incremental repetitions" derived from the original *hsing* convention that enhances its generic character and makes it one of the most popular and loved pieces of the *Songs*.⁸⁰ It is the haunting, lilting rhythm throughout and the delicately varied, echoed and repeated sounds congruous with the images that give us the uplift with the effect of such an appealing *lyric* true to its genre.

Enough linguists and philologists have noted the extraordinary richness of

⁷⁸ Mao notes 里 as a community of 25 families.

⁷⁹ These trees are explained by 馬瑞辰 as, (傳)社木, 其社所宜木, village trees specially suited to the community, in 毛詩傳箋通釋。

⁸⁰ This Song is perhaps one of the most favored among Chinese and western anthologists.

sound patterns, perhaps partly because of the special tonal and monosyllabic nature of the Chinese language, of the *Songs* in their profusion of rhymes, pararhymes, consonance and assonance, in complex internal oblique and slant relationships as well as line-endings. K'ung Kuang-sen,⁸¹ for instance, recognized these relationships by categories, and analyzed them according to 130 formulae. Modern efforts of phonologists suggest even greater possibilities of recognizing more elements of euphony.⁸² We are grateful for the meticulous works of such scholars in exhibiting the immense riches in the *Shih Ching* of sounds interacting with sounds. We also appreciate Arthur Waley's remark that when he first read the *Songs* in 1913, without quite understanding the sense, even as mere "incantations," with a rich "succession of fresh and lovely tunes," the sounds of "the texts sang."⁸³ Our present hope, however, is to have further exemplified the possibility of reintegrating the richness of sounds with the richness of sense and imagery, by the aid of a proven hypothesis of the generic origin where the sounds and senses of words were integrated with musical melodies and even with the rhythm of the "high-spirited" dance. This the primal meaning of *hsing* has now informed us; and we have seen that even the meaning of the word *shih* still had, however covertly, such implications when it was first adopted to name the *Songs* in early Chou time.

We may again recall Liu Hsieh's significant observation that, as he saw it in the 5th century A.D., "the meaning of the *hsing* had perished and vanished." The reason, however, was not, as Liu said, that "The Way of expostulation by indirection was lost,"⁸⁴ that is, that political criticism in the now idealized ancient "Way" of coding for allegorical apprehension was no longer practised. We would say that "the meaning of *hsing* perished" precisely because political and allegorical interpretations were later too much insisted on, a consequence of the great popularization of the *Songs* in late Chou by quoting them out of context, followed by the canonization of the whole corpus in Han. We are indebted to the *Mao Annotations* for maintaining the distinction of the *hsing* elements, but, as we have noted, Mao's attention was already much distracted by his contemporary intellectual ambience, which would account for the many instances of neglect as

⁸¹ 孔廣森：詩聲分類。

⁸² Cf. Tung-ho 董同龢：上古音韻表稿，BIHP, XVII, Academia Sinica, 1948.

⁸³ Waley: *Book of Songs*, 1937, p. 326.

⁸⁴ OP. cit.: 「諷刺道喪」，諷 emendation for "詩" in popular text, according to Fan Wen-lan, 范文瀾：文心雕龍注，Chap. 36, 1936.

well as irrelevancies. What we should do now about the *hsing* is, with our knowledge of it as keynote to the generic origin of the *Songs*, not only to restore it to its proper contextual position, but to view it in its active "uplifting" function, in its uniting all sound and sense elements, in its bearing upon the structure of each Song as leading motif. In this manner we may really be able to appreciate the *Songs*, the lyric *Shih*, (by whose ancient name all Chinese poetry has later come to be known), as "song-words," as language built into music, which, as such, even pristinely recalls the spontaneous rhythm of the "high-spirited" dance. So appreciated, the *Songs*, where they fulfill their generic law with the *hsing* recognized in its essence, are truly the *lyric* by perhaps the best modern definition. Commenting on the lyric, R. P. Blackmur said, "words build into their poetic meaning by building into sound. . . , sound into composition: music." Or as Northrop Fry put it, it is "the internal mimesis of sound and imagery."³⁵

We do think that the *Songs* of the *Shih Ching* represent the full florescence of an ancient, primary Chinese literary genre, with the *hsing* as its essential generic distinction, not confined only to Mao's indications but understood both from its origination and for its observable structural capacity. We must also recognize, however, that after a genre has consummated its full growth in a large body of works, it does cease to be productive, but only so far as all the formal features in the strict sense are concerned. The language of a nation changes as time elapses. Social customs differ, the formal components of an old genre become no longer viable, and its qualities unreduplicatable. When Liu Hsieh observed that "the meaning of *hsing* perished," he was preoccupied with the later vogues of poetic creation still practised in his own time. But he ought to have meant by *hsing* a strictly formal matter, no longer fitted to the needs of poetic structure in the "Middle Chinese" language used by man and society of lost innocence in his latter day. So Liu's statement may in a way be too obvious or redundant, for no longer were the generic laws which centered around the *hsing* in the *Songs* operative even before Liu's time.

Our concern, unlike Liu's, is not to lament that later Chinese poets were not able to write as the *Shih Ching* song-makers composed the *Songs*. We are to

³⁵. These are cited as authority in the *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* from "contemporary critics" who, "predicating the musical essence of the lyric as its vital characteristic, have come close to formulating an exact, inclusive definition of the genre which eliminates semantic contradictions." See the *Encyclopedia*, under "Lyric."

look afresh at the *Songs* and appreciate them as consummate achievements of superb lyrics, given the linguistic, social and psychological resources of their times. If we also feel nostalgic in our admiration of them, it is because we realize that in generic resources they benefited from such "fresh-world" perceptions, and were equipped with such a sense of the primeval unity of song, music and dance, as had become not available to later civilization-contaminated ages. Here we want to make a cautionary point as regards the modern "folklorist" approach to the *Shih Ching*. Having resources from a pristine fresh world, the *Songs* are not comparable to the later extant Chinese folk songs in quality or form. With the continual fluctuation and intermingling of Chinese social classes through a long history, later folk songs no longer sprang from primitivity. An especially favorite method among the "folklorists" has been to take the *hsing* as "the beginning lines" of a Song, which we have already shown to be even formally untrue, and to equate them with the elements of the opening stichs of a currently available "folk song."⁸⁶ But we can readily see that these folk songs' opening stichs do not at all have the organic function of governing and directing the whole sound, sense and imagistic relationship in the closely woven poetic contexture that we have found in the *Shih Ching* lyrics. One of the most unfortunate bypaths which the "folklorist" approach has led to has been the disastrous attempt to translate the *Shih Ching* into modern Chinese in imitation of current folksongs of today. The results, even at best, have been vulgarized verses reminiscent, perhaps half consciously, of fractured T'ang or Sung prosody, without the latter day folksy charm, and with a sense of music, if any, derived rapidly from some modern Peking or other operatic tunes.

Chinese folk tradition is no doubt important to the study of Chinese literary history. It has been through the ages, as we suggested at the beginning of this study, the main source to which each of the major Chinese literary genres since the *Shih Ching* can be traced. But to locate a generic origin does not at all mean to reduce our appreciation of the whole body of works of a genre to the level of its primitive source. On the contrary, it is the height of artistic achievement, through processes of refinement, and even of sublimation, that we want closely to observe, as we hope we have at least partly done in the case of the *Shih Ching*. The processes in the case of the later genres, as in that of the *Shih Ching*, often would have to be very long and tortuous. We have also

⁸⁶ Most notable in the works of 顧頡剛, see 古史辨 III.

hinted that historical, social and cultural factors may be as much involved in our genre study as the development of the intrinsic quality of the fissiparous forms of the art itself, though it is on the latter that our attention must focus. The studies of later genres may have the advantage of the availability of more abundant and better established knowledge of these other cultural factors of later history than we may wish to have of the age of *Shih Ching*. The refining processes of later genres, too, from folk origin to the ultimate sublimation into personal art expressions of the individual genius, may be exhibited in more spectacular instances than we can possibly expect of those of an archaic era. Of course, later developed genteel literati traditions may seem more directly the heritage of, and the influence on, individual creation. But in terms of Chinese literary genres, the primary folk tradition in each major case, be it poetry, drama or fiction, is too conspicuous a fact to be overlooked. This fact may signify a reason for an *average* quality of traditional Chinese literature, in which no matter what high sophistication, refinement and individuality there may be, there are as a rule the naturalistic earthiness in its imagery and the broadly human concern in its themes. Any high degree of otherworldly vision or romantic egoism is rare. The symbolism is hardly private; the psychological interest is most often public. Faults there sometimes may be of naiveté, but seldom of morbid introversion.

The study of literature by genres may indeed seem inevitably to lead to observations of the law of average. But useful as such a law might be, it would be of inadequate service if we do not realize that the law does of itself suggest the co-existence of phenomena, sometimes even in polarized fashion, yet still related to each other within the genre. It embraces and measures unusual distinction as well as the bare meeting of standard or substandard. Thereby we recognize paragons as well as prototypes, sublimations as well as subordinations. Yet it is an exceedingly great reward to see a unity among them all in a given genre. Applied in the broad context of the relation between folk tradition and the creation of individual genius, such a genre approach guides our perspectives of literary appreciation in two directions, which finally converge and make our appreciation grow in depth and breadth. It leads us on the one hand to see the progression from the natural communal instinct for artistic expression of the group for the group to the cultivated consciousness of the individual creation of art as communication of the artist himself to all his fellow men. So the poet

metamorphoses from the bard, but without alienation. The selfhood of the Chinese poet, writing in all genres, never seems to become so detached and introverted as to be conscious only of the "pure self" and declare "of myself I sing." Or on the other hand we may first observe bodies of highly accomplished works, of great individual writers or anonymous collections, each as an artistic achievement in itself, and then apply the genre concept in our appreciation. We may begin by admiring the intrinsic quality of each, feeling its unique beauty as if it were the only thing that matters in the world. True, this is what we do demand of educated literary appreciation in depth. But even this uniqueness, when felt deeply enough by educated literary sensibility for a literary work, must be accompanied by broad awareness of its kind. Then as the illuminating concept of genre advances upon us, we identify similarities and distinctions. We see conventions behind them, not only to detect imitation or unoriginality, but to discover and discriminate creativity within use and wont developed far back in time. And ultimately we reach the generic origin. Between the folk origin and the high polish of individual genius or courtly refinement, the results in quality may indeed seem polaric. But in Chinese literature, in the case of each major genre broadly surveyed and deeply searched, we sometimes see the results reunite. The reunion is often a happy one, and our realization of it heightens rather than diminishes our appreciation. So individual a poet as Li Po, particularly apt to pour his soul into the pentasyllabic "ancient" form or *wu ku* 五古, moves everyone and gains truly universal appeal⁸⁷ with his "Song of Long Shore" 長干行, with a distinctly folk theme, folk motif and folk imagery. Such a most art-conscious poet as Tu Fu, again, writing in this by now highly cultivated "ancient" form, made it explicit that he was adopting sound patterns and motifs from the popular anonymous "Song of Mu Lan" 木蘭辭, not only in his "War Chariot Song" 兵車行⁸⁸ about social woes, but in a very personal poem, on his own "Grass Hut" 草堂.⁸⁹ The effect in either case is that the folk character enhances the vividness of the poet's feeling for the suffering common humanity by identifying his voice and perception with theirs, or makes his highly personal emotion broadly shared by all with ease and intimacy. And we are convinced

⁸⁷. So much so that this poem becomes most easily successful in translation. I have heard it acclaimed by American poets as the best translation Ezra Pound ever did.

⁸⁸. After the line "爺孃妻子走相送" in his poem, Tu Fu himself put down a note that it was after the *Mu-lan* Song: *Ssu-Pu Ts'ung K'an* edition.

⁸⁹. Eight lines of incremental repetition patterned after the *Mu-lan* Song, e.g., 舊犬喜我歸, . . . 鄰里喜我歸, . . . etc.

that it was no accident, nor mere mannerism, that the most sophisticated Chinese novel, the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, should be claimed by its author from the very beginning as “fictional words and rustic talk” 假語村言 personified. We read this as the pregnant remark of an individual genius in the Chinese literary tradition, in his crowning success with a major genre, harking back to its generic folk origin. Thus we are reminded that the highest achievement of an individual art is reunited with the common order of life, in all its unadulterated folk-experienced poignancy and delight. Thus the high polish of artistry maintains in its organism the ingredients of the freshness of primal humanity. Realizing this with the generic concept in our appreciation of Chinese literature, we feel further inspired rather than disenchanted, as we have been in our consideration of the *Songs* of the *Shih Ching*, when we discovered and could harken to the early “high-spirited” voice at the primeval “uplifting” dance.

