

CH'EN TZŪ-ANG ^{A.D.} (661-702),
INNOVATOR IN T'ANG POETRY

Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the
University of London

by

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Abstract

Ch'en Tzu-ang (661-702) is known to have been the first poet in the T'ang dynasty who openly expressed discontent over effeteness in poetry and advocated the return to the seriousness of the Han-Wei style. Some of his poems contain veiled criticisms of the régime of the Empress Wu (624?-705), while others bear equally serious themes. His precepts proved very influential and were greatly appreciated in the whole of the dynasty. His achievement in the poetic form, likewise, was duly recognized by poets after the T'ang dynasty, when the formal aspects of poetry were given fervent study.

Section I of this thesis begins with a prologue discussing the reign of the Empress, which shaped the career and works of Ch'en Tzu-ang as such. Then it deals with the life and career of the poet. In it a great many incidents which have a direct bearing on Ch'en's social and political poems are included. The mystery which surrounds Ch'en's death is also examined. This section ends with a general appraisal of the poet's political philosophy.

Section II begins with a survey of the poetic scenes of the pre-T'ang and early T'ang period, as a background to Ch'en's poetics, which are then examined in detail. This is followed by an analysis of the Kan-yü poems, which were greatly responsible for the poet's fame. Other poems of a similar nature are also discussed. To complete the study of his poetic attainments, some of the poet's regulated poems as well as his syntactic and tonal techniques in poetry are analysed. Section II, and the whole thesis, is concluded with a collection of appreciative references to the poet by the T'ang literati, and a suggestion of the social factors which brought him to his position.

Preface

Despite Ch'en Tzu-ang's position in the history of T'ang poetry, there has not been any comprehensive study of this great poet and his work; essentially, I suspect, because of the difficult allegory in many of his poems. However, the fact that he was much looked to in the T'ang explains his influence on the poetry of the same period, and thus calls most urgently for a study geared to such a purpose. Hence this thesis.

The chief aim of this thesis is to study the poetic works of Ch'en Tzu-ang, on the strength of which later poets of the T'ang dynasty accorded him the rôle of innovator. But to be able to do this, one must have a knowledge of the poet's life and times, particularly so in the case of Ch'en, whose most famous lines would hardly convey any meaning if divorced from their social context.

Several scholars over the past four decades have made studies on the life and times of Ch'en Tzu-ang. In 1935, Lo Yung published a year-to-year biography of Ch'en Tzu-ang, which provides good reference material. This has since been supplemented by two learned articles, one by Ts'en Chung-mien and the other by Mr Wu Ch'i-yü. In them all the datable works of Ch'en Tzu-ang are dated. Thus in this thesis I do not deem it necessary to mention his works which have no direct bearing on his main political and literary reputation. I will, rather, put emphasis on most of Ch'en's memorials, which serve the purpose of reflecting the state of affairs in China in the poet's time, and the poet's political views, as well as explaining his highly enigmatic Kan-yü poems in Section II.

For two of the past three years I was without the benefit

of a good library service. From the start of my research in 1971 to the summer of 1973, the School of Oriental and African Studies Library was practically non-existent. Only towards the close of the summer, when the new school library was in use, did I begin to find research work more rewarding. Thus though for the next twelve months my research was punctuated by one American trip and several European ones, my progress was in fact the fastest during that period. Since last autumn I have been in Madison, where everything, except the University Library, is good. The library here is run in such a way as to deter any student of Chinese from research: by its poor collection, by mingling Chinese books with books of other languages, by misplacement, and by the omission of all titles in general collections on catalogue cards. I would certainly have given up my research, if my thesis had not already been on the verge of completion. As a result, half of my time in the library was spent searching desperately for books, which was physically very tiring and mentally very distressing, and which has given me many a nightmare in which I searched futilely for what I wanted in the same exasperating library.

However, my lack of a good library service was to an extent compensated for by the tremendous help I have received from my teachers, colleagues and friends: in London from Prof. D.C. Lau, Dr K.P.K. Whitaker and Dr D.E. Pollard, my supervisor; in Paris from Mr Wu Ch'i-yü; and here from Prof. Tse-tsung Chow and Dr William Nienhauser. I thank Dr Pollard, Dr Whitaker and Dr Nienhauser for reading all my drafts; and Prof. Chow, Dr D.L. McMullen, Mr Paul Hirsh and Dr Joseph Lau for reading part of my drafts (Prof. Chow and Dr McMullen will read the whole thesis eventually). All of them have given me precious advice. The

following, among others, have also rendered me help in one way or another: Mr S.M. Chan, Dr J.L. Chang, Mrs Michelle Chang, Mr P.A. Harris, Miss Melissa Hsü, Mr H.L. Lo, Prof. Lo Hsiang-lin, Mr S.L. Lo, Prof. M. Ma and Dr Akira Miura. I am grateful to my wife Maria for her help over the past three years, including the typing of most of the drafts. She would have typed the final copy as well, if she had not been drawn to Washington D.C. by her work. The final preparation was made with the help of Miss Sharon Hou and Mr Dennis Hu, at the expense of their research time. To them I offer my sincere thanks.

Throughout the thesis I have employed a modified Wade-Giles system for romanization: I have used yi for i. Such words as 樂 and 勒 are romanized le to distinguish them from 羅, 洛 and 落, which are lo. As for such words as 何, 鶴, 悟 and 阿, which now have the same final as 樂, I have retained their original form because they do not confuse as much. Besides, I am still not used to seeing my surname changed from an interjection to a pronoun.

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Section I. The Life and Times of Ch'en Tzu-ang

Chapter 1. Prologue

Ch'en Tzu-ang entered into the official world after Empress Wu 武后 (624?-705) already had the supreme power of the country firmly in her grasp.¹ He died two years before the Empress was forced to abdicate; and he was outlived by the Empress by about three years. His political dealings were therefore mainly with the court of the Empress. Thus some words about Empress Wu's reign are necessary.

No one would doubt the fact that Empress Wu was a woman of tremendous ambition and ability. The social climate of the time was obviously not hospitable to a woman becoming ruler of the country, not to mention that the woman concerned was technically usurping the throne. Just as her ambition caused her to yearn for the supreme power in the Chinese empire, the social obstacles necessitated that she devote a great deal of her time and ability to her struggle for survival on her way to power, and to keep power when she had it, through highhandedness and cruelty. Her way of getting rid of Empress Wang 王皇后 and Imperial Concubine Hsiao 蕭淑妃 - by having them shorn of all their limbs and pickled in wine until they died - is but one such horrifying example.² History also records that she killed her own baby daughter in order to incriminate Empress Wang; and that she planned the death of two of her own sons.³ In view of her brutality as such one would not be surprised at her extensive employment of cruel and harsh officials.⁴

Her family background, likewise, seems to have acted to her discredit. Her father Wu Shih-huo 武士護, though an official of high rank, was formerly a dealer in timber,⁵ far removed from the scholar-gentry class. Needless to say her in-

cestuous relationship with Emperor Kao-tsung 高宗 (r. 650-683) also proved an embarrassment. Thus, in the sixth year of Yung-hui 永徽, 655, the imperial decision of making her Consort met with vehement objections on grounds of her non-gentry background and her dubious status. Ch'u Sui-liang 褚遂良 (596-658), who came of a powerful gentry-class family in the south, is recorded to have said the following words to the Emperor: "If Your Majesty really wants to change your Consort, I sincerely hope that you would choose with discernment from among the renowned clans in the Empire. Why must it be Wu? Everyone knows that Wu formerly served the late Emperor, this is a fact which cannot be hidden from the Empire. Thousands of years hence men will ask why Your Majesty did this thing."⁶ Later on when Lo Pin-wang 駱賓王 wrote a despatch for Hsu Ching-yeh 徐敬業 (?-684) calling for punitive measures against Empress Wu, he too had the following to write: "Wu the usurper is a woman of no virtue and low and insignificant origin."⁷ To overcome such opposition, Wu, when she became Empress, successfully persuaded the Emperor to use people of humble origin. With their help, Wu eventually managed to have many of her gentry-class opponents exiled and killed.⁸

It was during the reign of Empress Wu that the Civil Examination system became full-fledged.⁹ The function of the examination system was meant to be twofold: to recruit capable persons in a country-wide context; and, as a result of fairer competition, to reduce the opportunity of power-monopoly by the gentry class.

Empress Wu tactically strengthened her position by investing power in her nephews, who rallied behind her leadership, and by promoting officials of low origin to high office to gain their support. With such a nucleus of power in her hand, she

set out to remove members of the royal House of Li and rule the country with oppression, creating a reign of terror to frighten off any potential protesters. On the other hand, she did have under her very capable officials to help run the country. Ti Jen-chieh 狄仁傑 (630-700), who was Chief Minister in the reign of Empress Wu, has been considered one of the best ministers in the whole of the T'ang dynasty. She also increased the number of admonishing officials to offer her advice for her to choose from. The post of Omissioner, which Ch'en Tzu-ang occupied in his later years, was a new admonishing post created by the Empress.¹⁰

Empress Wu no doubt consolidated her power in the reign of Kao-tsung; but she made one vital move which I think greatly protected her already strong position and helped her to attract capable personalities into her court after Kao-tsung's death. This is her handling of her sons the Emperors Chung-tsung 中宗 (r. 684, 705-710) and Jui-tsung 睿宗 (r. 684-690, 710-712). Before her accession as Empress Regnant, Jui-tsung, though stripped of all power, remained the head of the country. This might have created the delusion among the more conservative officials that they were still serving under the House of Li, thus minimizing the degree of agitation within the empire. When she eventually acceded to the throne, Jui-tsung was immediately made heir-apparent, without the line of succession in the House of Li being broken; and later on Chung-tsung was made Crown Prince. Such skilful management on the part of the Empress, even when she was confident of her power to defy any form of opposition, must have pacified the empire to a great extent.

However, with due respect to her adept handling of complicated situations, there is no reason to suppose that the Empress was a popular figure in her own time. She was reputed

to be extravagant. Her liking for Buddhism, for instance, was responsible for the erection of gigantic Buddha statues and Buddhist temples. She also encouraged men and women to become priests and nuns to look after the temples, so reducing the productive capacity of the population. In the extant works of Ti Jen-chieh, there is a memorial against the Empress' excessive erection of temples and statues.¹¹ One of Ch'en Tzu-ang's Kan-yü poems also alludes to such a practice of the Empress.¹²

Her nephews such as Wu Ch'eng-ssu 武承嗣 (?-689) and Wu San-ssu 武三思 (?-707), her alleged paramours such as the monk Huai-yi 懷義 (?-695), Chang Yi-chih 張易之 (?-705) and Chang Ch'ang-tsung 張昌宗 (?-705), to whom she gave tremendous power at one time or other, were notorious in the empire; so were the cruel judicial officials such as So Yüan-li 索元禮 (?-691), Lai Chün-ch'en 來俊臣 (?-697) and Chou Hsing 周興 (?-691), whom the Empress had raised from a low station. As for most other officials, there really seemed little choice but to work on in a society where the bureaucratic career seemed the only career. Some of them, like Ti Jen-chieh, did the best they could to check the opposing force, often losing their life in the course of it. Ch'en Tzu-ang did his duty by submitting memorial after memorial to criticize the state of affairs and gave vent to his hidden feelings by implicitly giving the Empress his malediction in his Kan-yü poems.

Ch'en has left us with a great number of memorials. The state of affairs as portrayed by Ch'en in his memorials is very grim indeed. Even if one allows for the fact that censors are not obliged to praise, but to criticize, the gravity of the situation as described still suggests that the Empress' rule was deplorable. It is with such an understanding of the Wu regime in mind that I write on the life and works of Ch'en Tzu-ang.

Ch'en Tzu-ang 陳子昂 (661-702), courtesy-named Po-yü 伯玉, came of a wealthy family in She-hung District 射洪縣 of Tzu Chou 梓州 in Shu 蜀. It is said that his father, Ch'en Yüan-ching 陳元敬, was already reputed to be "generous and magnanimous" at the age of only 20. It once happened that his village was struck by famine, and he sent out a tremendous amount of corn for the villagers' relief, which was well appreciated.¹ At the age of 22, Yüan-ching passed the Classical Examination and was given the designation of Wen-lin Gentleman 文林郎, of the upper subordinate ninth rank, but was unable to take up any official post because he had to observe mourning.² It is said that he became so respected that people in the area would rather take their disputes to him than to the chou and districts to be settled; and as a result he was regarded by some as being unduly influential. In 683, he moved to Mount Wu-tung 武東山, where many of his ancestors had dwelt, and there lived in seclusion, feeding on yün-mu 雲母 to obtain ethereal and serene effects on the body and mind.³ In his seclusion Yüan-ching is said to have acquired a thorough knowledge of the mysterious aspects of heaven and earth.⁴

Ch'en Tzu-ang was Yüan-ching's heir. Yüan-ching may have had a younger son, to judge from a poem by Ch'en Tzu-ang addressed to his younger brother.⁵ But practically nothing is known about him. Yüan-ching had a younger brother Yüan-shuang 元爽, who had a son Tzu 孜.⁶

When Ch'en Tzu-ang was born is a matter that requires some discussion; the year of his birth being nowhere to be found in his biographies. According to his biography in the Chiu t'ang-shu 舊唐書 he died when he was on the shady side of 40.⁷

His biography in the Hsin t'ang-shu 新唐書 sets his age when he died at 43.⁸ But in the "Unofficial biography of Ch'en" 陳氏別傳 (hereafter referred to as Unofficial Biography), written by his good friend Lu Ts'ang-yung 盧藏用, and in the "Memorial stele inscription of the late Right Omissioner Lord Ch'en" 故右拾遺陳公旌德碑 (hereafter referred to as Inscription), written by Chao Tan 趙儻 some 70 years after his death, he is said to have died at 42.⁹ The Tun-huang 燉煌 manuscript version of the Unofficial Biography also says he died at the age of 42.¹⁰ The Inscription records, "In the first year of Wen-ming 文明, at the age of 24, he passed the Civil Examination; he also passed the examination on political issues with high marks."¹¹ If we "push back" 24 years in Chinese reckoning from the first year of Wen-ming, 684, we come to the first year of Lung-shuo 龍朔, 661, in the reign of Kao-tsung. This, then, should be Ch'en Tzu-ang's year of birth. The year in which he died, therefore, should be the second year of Ch'ang-an 長安, 702, if he died at the age of 42. The Unofficial Biography and Inscription tend to be more authentic in this respect, because they are much earlier works than the official histories. It is unlikely that Lu Ts'ang-yung, a contemporary and a great friend of Ch'en Tzu-ang, should have been wrong about how old he was when he died. The chance, too, of Ch'en's fairly immediate descendants having forgotten the age of their famous ancestor at death when the Inscription was written is again small.

Another problem arises when we refer to Ch'en Tzu-ang's "Tomb inscription of younger first cousin Tzu".¹² In the work it is mentioned Tzu died in the second year of Ch'ang-shou 長壽 in the Chou 周 (684-705) dynasty, 693, at the age of 35, in which year, however, Ch'en Tzu-ang was only 33, so that to call Tzu his "younger first cousin" would be ridiculous. Lo Yung 羅庸

dismissed the title as unauthentic, on the ground that most titles of works of past authors were added by people after them. He also pointed out that there is no mention in the text that Tzu was Tzu-ang's younger cousin.¹³

Ts'en Chung-mien 岑仲勉, in his article on Ch'en Tzu-ang, however, took a different view. He reckoned that extant editions of Ch'en's Works contain many figures which appear to be clerical errors, and that the Chinese characters "five" and "three" being alike, the figure 35 might have been a clerical error for 33, or even 25. Thus Tzu could be Ch'en Tzu-ang's younger cousin. He also pointed out that although there is no mention in the text that Tzu was Tzu-ang's younger cousin, there is equally no mention that the former was the latter's elder cousin; and judged from the lack of a more respectful pronoun in Ch'en's address to Tzu, the tomb inscription looks more likely to be written to a younger cousin.¹⁴

I personally find Ts'en's supposition more probable; for first of all tomb inscriptions always bear titles, and it is unlikely that this particular title was added by people after Ch'en Tzu-ang. Secondly, the inscription does look as if it is addressed to someone younger than the author.

Born of a rich family, Ch'en Tzu-ang is said in his childhood and youth to have taken to acts of legendary knight-errantry, and was rather wild-tempered. It was not until the age of about 18, when he one day went into a village school with his fellow gamblers, that he was moved by the atmosphere there and made up his mind to study. For the next few years he is said to have repulsed all visitors and concentrated on his studies, and was soon versed in the Classics, the histories and works of the various schools of philosophy.¹⁵

One, however, should not go so far as to think that he was

completely cut off socially. He probably allowed himself a select circle of friends. One of his earlier friends was T'ien Yu-yen 田游巖, who spent his early days in seclusion in Mount Sung 嵩山.¹⁶ The Emperor Kao-tsung, when passing by Ju Chou 汝州 in the second month of the first year of Yung-lung 永隆, 680, honoured him with a royal visit, and was very impressed by him.¹⁷ In the intercalary seventh month, the first year of K'ai-yao 開耀, 681, T'ien was appointed General Secretary to the Crown Prince, but soon he proved not particularly competent as an official, and was very embarrassed when his colleague Chiang Yen 蔣儼 tendered him a letter which savoured of contempt.¹⁸ We can find in Ch'en's Works a poem written to T'ien before he received the imperial appointment. The poem was in reply to T'ien, who had called on him in vain and left some words on the wall of his house. This is the earliest datable poem by Ch'en.

The wanderer departed after leaving a message,
 And returned to his heavenly abode at dusk.
 He had looked for his faery friend, to preach the sage's
 way,
 With the green bag he came to tell fortunes.
 Hearing orioles, he suddenly arrived for a visit,
 Leaving the character "phoenix" on the wall, he lingered
 for a long time.
 The handful of elixir was held for nothing,
 The scriptures from the golden coffer were never opened.
 I suspect that he, who wears the large-sleeved robe,
 Possesses talent which matches that in Lo-yang./19

In the first year of K'ai-yao, 681, Ch'en, at the age of 21, left home for the first time and went to Hsien-yang 咸陽 in pursuit of his studies.²⁰ A number of short poems in his Works must have been written on this journey: one written when he stopped at Pai-ti City 白帝城, which filled his mind with events of the past; one written when his boat passed by Mount

Ching-men 荆門山 ; one on reaching the historic Mount Hsien 峴山 ; one when he stayed in Le-hsiang District 樂鄉縣 ; and one written to his friends and relatives back home on entering Pa Gorge 巴峽 , when the wind was against him.²¹ Some of these poems I will discuss in Section II.

When he was in Hsien-yang he studied at the Grand Academy, and is said to have cut quite a figure there.²² He also visited his old friend T'ien Yu-yen when he was in the Capital. There is a poem which is supposed to have been written on the water-drawing device in the house of T'ien, who had already become General Secretary to the Crown Prince, and is referred to in the title of the poem as such.²³

In the next year, famine struck the Capital and its environs, which caused the price of rice to soar to three hundred cash per peck. Kao-tsung and Empress Wu thereupon moved to the Eastern Capital, Lo-yang 洛陽 , in the fourth month, and the Civil Examination was held there. Ch'en sat for the examination, but failed.²⁴

Obviously depressed, he set off westward for Ch'ang-an in late summer or early autumn and returned home. Before he left Ch'ang-an, he seems to have made the acquaintance of Hsüeh Yüan-ch'ao 薛元超 (622-683), Chairman of the Grand Council, who had been delegated by the Emperor to assist the Crown Prince in Ch'ang-an.²⁵ Hsüeh sought after Ch'en's literary works and Ch'en wrote him a letter in gratitude, expressing his own preference for "enabling the discerning Emperor to enjoy the same reputation as Yao 堯 and Shun 舜 " rather than being merely literary.²⁶

In the poems he wrote on his return journey, marks of frustration stand out prominently. He wrote a farewell poem to a Liu 劉 the Libationer and Kao 高 the District Magistrate when he set out for Ch'ang-an:

The lodging-house marks the empire of Chou,
 The homeward-bound horse enters the capital of Han.
 This part of the land adjoins the border of Han-ku,
 The river meets the city of Kuang-yang.
 I look into the distance, tall buildings appear,
 The road stretches far off, where mist and fog grow.
 Do not speak of lone birds,
 Though I am poor and lowly, there is your friendship.²⁷

In the poem which he wrote on his departure to another friend,
 Wei Lin 魏 稔 , he says:

Like tumbleweed I have no fixed goal,
 I am a lone bird that shies at the sound of the bow-string.
 Among hills and rivers, once we bid farewell,
 How many years will pass before our next joyful encounter?
 The pavilion where we part is dark with wind and rain,
 The road I have to walk fades into the clouds and fog.
 I shall follow the path on the northern hill,
 Return to look after the fields on the eastern slope.²⁸

In these two poems his fate is referred to in a subdued manner,
 considering what his feelings must have been. In three other
 poems, which must have been written at about the same time, the
 feelings are more pronounced. One of the poems was written by
 the river when he was in Ch'ing-shu Village 青樹村 in K'ung-
 ling Gorge 空輪峽 , where he probably stayed for a night or
 two:

Clear is the moon-lit water,
 Gibbons wail in the chilly night.
 Many confused thoughts beset the traveller,
 The shore of the islet is still, without a noise.
 I remember when I was a rich man's son,
 How could I know then of a wanderer's despair?
 With vain hopes of serving in the Imperial Palace,
 Bearing the seal of office, riding about in a tall chariot,
 I bade farewell to my parents' love,
 Longing for the discerning Emperor's favour.
 Now I'm off, I become like tumbleweed,
 I sigh, what is there to say?/29

Another one was written, also by the river, when he put up at the
 post-house near River Hsiang 襄河 :

Going downstream, I left the northern islet,
 To the southern isle, moored my boat to pass the night.
 Dusk shrouded the whole bank,
 In the dark, the eddies seemed to stop moving.
 My rest is punctuated by the cries of wild geese,
 I sit and listen to the sorrowful gibbons in the gorge...
 ...The sandy beach glows with the moon,
 But the reeds by the bank are grim, like autumn.
 I cannot match the full-throated cries of the geese,
 In vain I envy the gulls over the sea.
 The Milky Way; it is still far from dawn,
 Vast seas; my journey goes on and on./30

The third one contains some drastic resolutions, which he did not carry out. For after being much moved by the calm and pleasant surroundings after entering a steep gorge, he eventually made up his mind to stay a recluse forever:

A merry group singing the tree-felling song,
 Small oars paddle the light boat.
 Following the wavy water's leisurely course,
 Lapped by small cross currents.
 Misty sand marks either shore,
 An island rises round two rocks.
 Ancient trees merging with the clouds are thick and dense,
 Mountain peaks tangling up in the ripples float in the
 water.
 Cliffs and lake gracefully reflect each other,
 Rivulets and valleys winding round and round.
 The farther the path leads the brighter it becomes,
 In the depths of the mountains, the atmosphere turns serene -
 Hornless deer, flying squirrels, their chill thoughts
 towards night,
 Gibbons, birds, their evening calls in autumn.
 I vow to drop my plans for office,
 I will stay with the cinnamon trees,
 Through letters, I take leave of my loved ones,
 I will spend a thousand years seeking the Isles of the
 Blest./31

Two more poems might have been written on the same journey: one was when Ch'en's boat and that of his friend Li 李 the District Magistrate lost each other when entering Tung-yang Gorge 東陽峽,³² the other was written in Tung-yang, when he had

his younger brother on his mind. The latter runs as follows:

On rivers and lakes we are both strangers far from home,
Amidst islets and river banks I have lost my way.
My thoughts accumulate on the trees in the fragrant court-
yard,
My heart grieves for the white-browed man.
We used to share the same blanket, now we have become Ch'u
and Yüeh,
Our different islands are like Hu and Ch'in.
The wooded shores turn with the sky,
New clouded peaks appear before my gaze;
Far as I look, I cannot see you,
Without a word, I sit and frown.
I feel as if we had parted for three months,
Though less than ten days have passed since we went our
separate ways.
This lonely boat is full of calm delight,
But who is your neighbour now?/33

This poem, as already mentioned, is the only clue by which we know Tzu-ang had a younger brother. He was probably a wayfarer, so that they did not see each other often.

The next year, 683, was spent in seclusion. In the fourth month he wrote an epistle to bid farewell to a certain Ch'i 齊 the Assistant Magistrate, at the abode of the Buddhist Priest Hui 暉上人, a great friend of Ch'en's. In the epistle he says, "The Court you will enter, in the hope of riches and rank of the dynasty; in forests and hills I will dwell, still learning the ways of immortality."³⁴ This literary couplet, besides revealing much of his envy for his friend, also refers to his taking of exotic drugs. Ch'en Tzu-ang had indeed been brought up in such an environment. The Unofficial Biography says that his father in seclusion "fed on ti-ku 地骨 and refined yün-kao 雲膏 for over forty years."³⁵ In another work of Tzu-ang's, the introduction to his poem "Looking at the jade of Ching", he says, "My family has been fond of taking precious drugs for generations."³⁶

In the last month of that year, Kao-tsung died. By that time

Empress Wu was well established in her power. The original Crown Prince Li Hung 李弘, her son, had died mysteriously in 675, having done something which had displeased the Empress - the Hsin t'ang-shu actually records that he was poisoned by his mother.³⁷ Another son of hers, Li Hsien 李賢, had succeeded to his brother's title. He had, however, been relegated to the status of commoner in 680 on account of an alleged conspiracy, and had thereafter stayed in custody until his mother secretly ordered his death in 684.³⁸ On the death of Kao-tsung the Crown Prince was the Empress' mediocre son Li Hsien 李顯, to whom Ch'en's friend T'ien Yu-yen had been appointed General Secretary. Li Hsien thereupon succeeded to the throne and was afterwards known as Emperor Chung-tsung; but the actual power was in the hands of the Empress Dowager. The new Emperor, among his various gestures of gratitude, appointed the son of his wet-nurse to a post of the fifth rank, and, not satisfied with having his father-in-law Wei Hsüan-chen 韋玄貞 in the governorship of YU Chou 豫州, which his mother had recently given him, wished to promote him to the post of Head of the State Chancellery. His wish, however, met with the opposition of P'ei Yen 裴炎 (?-684), who had been appointed Minister of State by Kao-tsung on his death-bed. The new Emperor, utterly displeased, is alleged to have said, "Would it not be possible for me to hand the whole Empire to Wei Hsüan-chen? How would this mere post of Head of the State Chancellery matter?"³⁹ P'ei Yen was frightened and went to the Empress Dowager for help, and the latter had the Emperor deposed in the second month of the first year of Ssu-sheng 嗣聖, 684, slightly more than two months after he had first worn the crown, and put him in custody. Li Tan 李旦, also a son of the Empress Dowager, was placed on the throne and was

afterwards known as Emperor Jui-tsung. The name of the year was changed to Wen-ming in the ninth month. The new Emperor, however, was not allowed to handle any state matters, which were entirely in the hands of the Empress Dowager herself.

It was about this time that the young Ch'en Tzu-ang apparently became discontented with being a recluse. He returned to the Eastern Capital, where he again sat for the Civil Examination. This time he passed. He also passed the examination on political issues, which he took shortly after.⁴⁰ It was then that the late Emperor's coffin was about to be moved to the Capital for burial, escorted by the new Emperor and many others. Fearing it would cause unrest in the country, Ch'en Tzu-ang submitted, as a commoner, an admonition advising the royal house against it on humanitarian and political grounds.

The admonition was addressed to the Emperor, but was obviously meant for the Empress Dowager. In it, he explains that the capitals of Ch'in 秦 and Han 漢 - Hsien-yang and Ch'ang-an respectively - relied much on the resources in places to the north and south. Now that these places are under foreign attack and laid waste the Capital is virtually untenable. If the late Emperor's coffin is to be escorted by thousands to the Capital, he doubts if rations can suffice. Besides, tens of thousands of starving people and a tremendous army will surely be sent to help in the progress of the escort, which may result in ploughing being neglected and no harvest being reaped. It may also result in some people being unable to stand the work and poverty and thus fleeing, which brings disgrace to the Empire.

Ch'en goes on to quote the burials of Shun in Ts'ang-wu 蒼梧 and Yü 禹 in K'uai-chi 會稽, two places distant from the heart of the Empire, as examples of the great minds being free from all forms of conventionality. Likewise, Ch'en points out,

King P'ing of Chou 周平王 and Emperor Kuang-wu of Han 漢光武帝 had their capitals in Lo-yang while the imperial tombs were in the west, which are other examples of the rulers' great consideration for the country.

Finally, he tries to convince the Emperor and Empress Dowager of the beauty, historical standing, and, most important, affluence of the Eastern Capital, and warns that if the royal house should leave the Eastern Capital, however temporarily, and if the place, being rich, should be ravaged by bandits, the Emperor would be at a loss to suppress it.⁴¹

His suggestions were not accepted. In the fifth month, the hearse went west; in the eighth month, Kao-tsung was buried at what was afterwards known as Ch'ien-ling 乾陵, near Ch'ang-an City.⁴² Ch'en Tzu-ang, however, had impressed the Empress Dowager with his work, and was summoned before her. Soon after the audience Ch'en was officially appointed to the post of Col-lator of the Imperial Secretariat, which was then known as the Unicorn Terrace. The post was of the upper principal ninth rank. At the same time, his admonition became so popular in Lo-yang that it was copied and sold by others, as is said in the Un-official Biography.⁴³

Before he was officially at court, Ch'en wrote another piece of admonition, which is on the trend of government, and which sheds much light on his political views.

It was written in response to the Empress Dowager's proclamation which asked for the means to regulate the primeval force - "yüan-ch'i" 元氣. In it, Ch'en gives a description of the primeval force. "The primeval force is the basis of heaven and earth, the origin of the myriad creatures, and the main concern of an emperor's rule.

"In heaven and earth, nothing is greater than the yin and yang, no endowment among the myriad creatures is greater than that of man. Nothing is more commendable in an emperor's rule than giving the people a sense of security. Thus if the people feel secure the yin and yang are in harmony, when the yin and yang are in harmony heaven and earth are tranquil, when heaven and earth are tranquil, the primeval force is in a balanced state."

He goes on to explain that the past emperors understood the relation between man and heaven and thus brought up their subjects according to the virtue of heaven, and the people were happy, the primeval force was in a balanced state; auspicious things appeared from heaven and earth, winds and rains were timely, crops prospered. The rulers Chuan-hsu 顓頊, Yao and Shun dared not relax such a practice, and Hsi-ho 羲和 was appointed to foster the relation. This was an attainment of harmony. In the declining years of Hsia 夏 and Shang 商 dynasties, Kings Chieh 桀 and Chou 紂 exercised unrestrained tyranny and prodigality, the normal working of the yin and yang were hampered, heaven and earth were angered, calamities prevailed and caused the dynasties to be destroyed. This was a lack of harmony. When Kings Wen 文 and Wu 武 started a new dynasty, they practised honesty and fairness towards the people; as a result, during the reign of Ch'eng 成 and K'ang 康 no penalty was used for over thirty years. There was harmony in the order of heaven and man. But when Yu 幽 and Li 厲 went awry and defied the orders of heaven and earth, calamities again prevailed and the people were again thrown into distress.

More recently, Ch'en instances, Emperor Yang of Sui 隋 煬 帝 presumed on the richness of his empire, had canals dug and

made rivers overflow their banks, exhausted his people's energy and wasted the storehouse of heaven and earth. Thus disaster arose, and he was assassinated; the ancestral temples were turned into ruins. This was all because of the violation of the order of heaven and man.

Having quoted these historical precedents, Ch'en recommends the putting up of a ming-t'ang 明堂 - "hall of light" - for the purposes of regulating the primeval force and promoting harmony among the people. Again he quotes historical instances: the Yellow Emperor 黃帝, Yao, Shun and the Hsia empire all had their equivalents of the ming-t'ang; they were all for the purposes of regulating the primeval force and harmonising the yin and yang.

He says the ming-t'ang has constructional regulations pertaining to heaven and earth, the yin and yang, the 24 weather changes, 8 winds, 12 months, 4 seasons and the 28 mansions of the zodiac. The Empress Dowager should therefore erect a ming-t'ang in the southern suburb according to the prescriptions of the Chou rites, and utilize it for administrative and ceremonial purposes according to the same prescriptions. The Empress Dowager should, too, "go down in person to the state fields and tend the silkworms to encourage agriculture and sericulture in the Empire; care for as parents the san-lao 三老 and wu-keng 五更 in order to teach filial piety in the Empire; exercise justice over litigation and relax penalties to stop the excessive use of punishments in the Empire; remove the harmful and banish the cruel to ensure that good lives could be led in safety in the Empire; take to what is educational and venerate what is virtuous to end warfare in the Empire; search for the filial and raise the upright to remove the avaricious officials in the Empire; help the widowers, widows, orphans, the childless, the exhausted, the feeble, the

sick and the old, who cannot maintain themselves; marry off maids-of-honour who do not belong to the category of the three fei 妃, nine p'in 嬪 and eighty-one yu-nü 御女; give up pearls, jade, embroidery and finely finished ornaments which are of no benefit to righteousness; imprison and execute the wicked mediums and witches who deceive the good people." It will take only a few years to attain total peace if she does all these, he says.

The second suggestion is the reinstatement of the Grand Academy. He says, "While Your Majesty is so desirous to promote and venerate the sages' teachings, you are so unaware that the Grand Academy has been left unattended for years: the halls and houses are full of wild weeds, practically without a trace of man. Seldom does one hear the Classics and rites and music being practised. Your Majesty's discerning proclamation has not touched on this matter. This is why I have a deep regret within me.

"I have heard that the Grand Academy, under the auspices of the Emperor, can gather together the Empire's outstanding and virtuous personalities, and is the first concern in the political and doctrinal hierarchy. Thus the propriety between the ruler and the subject and the superior and the inferior prevails, manners to be observed between the host and the guest are occasioned. It is therefore through this means that the Emperor gets his virtuous officials. Now the school is neglected and the matter left undiscussed, and yet one desires to induce peace among men and encourage good manners; having failed at the beginning, yet trying to seek at the end, how could these be attained?

"Moreover, if a gentleman stops practising the rites for three years, they will decay; stops practising the music for three years, it will collapse. How is it that the Emperor's rule slights the rites and the music? That is why I have a deep regret within

myself. Why does Your Majesty not publish a proclamation to the descendants of nobility in the Empire to make them return to the Grand Academy to study? This is also a great concern of the country."⁴⁴

The functions of the ming-t'ang as described by Ch'en are rather abstract and ceremonial, and would strike one as serving no practical purpose. Over half of what he says about carrying out the imperial mission in the ming-t'ang consists of quotations from extant passages in the Book of Rites 禮記. However, I would imagine his intention of having a ming-t'ang was as a means of solemnizing the monarch's rule. Tying it up with the primeval force might prompt the one who ruled to exercise more discretion in the course of it and it seemed the only way, in a reign where theocracy had not died out, to keep any ruler's wanton ambition at bay.

In mentioning the ming-t'ang, Ch'en Tzu-ang intentionally or otherwise had likened the Empress Dowager to the sage Duke of Chou 周公, who, though possessing supreme power as Regent, never ventured to become emperor, and eventually handed the state over to his royal nephew when he was old enough to rule. The Book of Rites devotes a whole chapter to describing the Duke presiding as Regent at the ming-t'ang.

The putting up of a ming-t'ang had in fact been under discussion for half a century. The proposal remained in abeyance chiefly because its size could not be agreed upon. The ming-t'ang as described by the Book of Rites is a modest thatched building, but what the authorities had in mind was a mighty one. In 687, the Empress Dowager eventually ordered a ming-t'ang to be built in the Eastern Capital on the site of the former Ch'ien-yüan Hall 乾元殿, which she had had demolished for the purpose. The ming-t'ang was not a modest building as Ch'en might have imagined.

It was a gigantic monument symbolizing the might of the Empress Dowager's reign, rather than a building in which a monarch carried out the ritual of regulating the primeval force. The whole mission was carried out by the monk Huai-yi, the Empress Dowager's alleged paramour.⁴⁵

The Chiu t'ang-shu records a rather dramatized episode about Ch'en: about this time a man from Hsia-kuei 下邳, in the same chou as Ch'en's, by the name of Hsu Yuan-ch'ing 徐元慶, committed murder to avenge his father. Ch'en expressed his opinion that the murderer be sentenced to death, while afterwards insignia of merit be granted to his village and put on his grave, in praise of his filial piety. "Those who discussed the matter at that time all held that Tzu-ang was right. Before long he was appointed Collator of the Unicorn Terrace."⁴⁶ This is a concoction based on Ch'en's "Discussion of a revenge committed", which he submitted to the throne;⁴⁷ the style and tone of the discussion are obviously much loftier and more dignified than those of the two previous proposals, and since he does not style himself a commoner in the writing, this is certainly a piece of work written during office, at least when he was already Collator.

Chapter 3. Career as T'ang Official

Ch'en Tzu-ang appears to have had his fair share of attention from the Empress Dowager at the start of his career. On the 16th day of the eleventh month in the first year of Ch'ui-kung 垂拱, 685, he was summoned by the Empress Dowager, who bestowed on him the royal gift of paper and brush, and was ordered to give his opinions at the Grand Council on what he considered the immediate problems of the country. Ch'en thereupon submitted a memorial discussing them under three headings:

The first heading concerns the dispatching of Commissioners, which we infer had been reduced to a mere formality and had become at best a nuisance. Ch'en Tzu-ang therefore begins, "Does Your Majesty not, in sending out Commissioners, wish to let all people in the Empire know that Your Majesty rises early and retires late, anxiously and constantly having them on your mind? to let the virtuous, the good, the loyal, the filial know that Your Majesty rises early and retires late, wishing to appoint them to office? to let the wicked people and cruel officials know too that Your Majesty rises early and retires late, determined to remove them? Is Your Majesty's sacred wish not towards these that you send out Commissioners?" asks Ch'en. If so, he says, her Commissioners are not capable of such missions. For then commissioners will need to be benevolent, that they can relieve the helpless; discerning, that they can advance the suppressed; resolute, that they do not yield to pressure; wise, that they can uncover the evil. Thus before they leave the Capital, the whole Empire will wait with concern. But now, Ch'en alleges, before a commissioner starts his journey, men in the street are already laughing at the business. So how could the mission be fulfilled? Furthermore, the Chief Ministers, conditioned by the mere formality of the

operation, are not serious in the matter either. So the more frequently Commissioners are sent out, the more the Empire suffers, they "only cause the people in the Empire to garnish the roads, seeing them off and welcoming them, which has no benefit at all to the teachings of the sages." If the Empress Dowager still refrains from taking the appointment seriously, he warns, the good will definitely stay away, while the wicked will definitely fulfil their desires.

He beseeches the Empress Dowager and the Chief Ministers to choose carefully from among the officials at court for this purpose. "Send as Commissioner one that commands respect, and whose reputation is widely acclaimed. Your Majesty will, on the occasion of the grand levée, ascend the main Imperial Hall, assemble the hundreds of Court officials, and at the ceremony, receive the appointed person in the appropriate manner. Thereupon Your Majesty will tell him the intentions of the mission, warning him without fail against transgressions, and give to him the flag token and dispatch him. He will start from within the Capital to look for the wolfish; then taking the reins, mounting the chariot, he will set about clearing the Empire." "If Your Majesty knows for sure that the proper person cannot be got," he concludes, "it is better not to send out any Commissioner at all."

The second topic of discussion concerns the local magistrates. Ch'en considers chou governors and district magistrates a monarch's limbs in the enforcement of laws, and regrets that the Empress Dowager is not concerned with appointing suitable persons. Ch'en says, "I regard the posts of chou governors and district magistrates to rank first in the concern of Your Majesty's rule. When Your Majesty displays your virtue and publishes proclamations for the people in the Empire to see, you must rely on the governors and magistrates to make them known. Thus with suitable persons, they will be seen and heard by every family; without suitable persons, they

will simply ^{be} discarded by the authorities and left hanging on the office walls. If Your Majesty wishes to promote propriety and modesty in every family, to stimulate incorruptibility and industriousness among officials, but does not respect the appointments of governors and magistrates, what means could be employed to bring about the ends?"

Ch'en goes on to say, "Whether a country prospers or weakens solely depends on these posts. Why is that? For when a chou has a virtuous and able governor who administers with the utmost justice and understanding, thousands and tens of thousands of families will be under his blessing. If it has an avaricious and cruel governor, who administers with selfishness and severity, thousands and tens of thousands of families will be under his curse. The curse or blessing in one chou alone is already like this, how can it be said sufficiently of all the people in the Empire."

Ch'en is very much against the method of appointment adopted by the Board of Civil Office, which appoints a district magistrate as if it were filling the appointment of an assistant district magistrate, basing the appointment on seniority, without considering the moral and administrative qualifications of the person concerned. Even though the Vice-Presidents of the Board at times realize the defects of the practice and wish to promote a person over his seniors, they are bound to meet with vehement protests for violating the tradition. Now that the posts are mostly filled by people of mediocre ability, it is the general public who suffer most. This, Ch'en thinks, is a cause for deep concern.

He deals finally with the "public mechanism". He speaks of the critical mechanism in the Empire, "from which disaster and prosperity spring. If the mechanism is left in peace there will be prosperity, if it is agitated there will be disaster. This

mechanism in fact is the people in the Empire. If the people feel secure they will enjoy being alive. If they feel insecure they will despise death. If they despise death they will go to all lengths."

Ch'en says that now the people are insecure because they have been suffering for five or six years owing to military campaigns; husbands and wives, fathers and sons have all been driven apart; and several vast areas of the country are famine- or flood-stricken. Ch'en praises the Empress Dowager for her recent stoppage of part of the warfare on the border, but warns that the critical mechanism may be touched again by generals and ministers who are after the property of the barbarians and advise the Empress Dowager to resume the battles. Ch'en advises her to rule with kindness and care, to pacify the people, for then even the barbarians, knowing of such a virtuous ruler, will once again come to pay homage.¹

Probably to clear up possible misunderstandings that he had gone into officialdom for purposes other than the approved, he wrote the "Reply to my Lo-yang master", a poem based on the Confucian attitude of serving the country and retiring according to the demand of circumstances, which he shows he has adopted;

All my life I wish to be with white clouds,
Since an early age, I have longed to live like the Master of
Red Pine.
I regret I have not repaid my parents,
Now I am in office in the middle of the Empire.
Master why do you ask?
I am a traveller and stranger, I do not idle.
I have just waited upon the discerning sovereign,
In Ch'ing-yen Palace I offered my useful plans.
Next I will take the jade that is worth many cities,
And after that I hope to be created Marquis of P'ing-chin.
Otherwise I will dust my robe and leave,
Return to join the gulls over the sea.
I will not be like those nowadays,
Who fall and tilt and sink and float with time.²

Apparently, his fresh high hopes and ambition knew no despair; his thoughts on the "white clouds", on the other hand, seem more like a fashionable showcase of high ideals than anything else. For in the days when the recluse was prized, who would miss the opportunity of proclaiming himself one potentially?

In the second year of Ch'ui-kung, 686, Ch'en Tzu-ang was placed in the army of General Liu Ching-t'ung 劉敬同, which set north to combat the rebellion led by the tribes T'ung-lo 同羅 and P'u-ku 僕固, belonging to the ancient tribe of T'ieh-le 鐵勒 north to China. Till then, these tribes had remained in allegiance to China since 646, in the reign of T'ai-tsung 太宗 (reigned 627-649), who ordered the Yen-jan Protective Prefecture 燕然都護府 to be set up in Mongolia to tend to the affairs of these tribes, and appointed their chiefs Military Governors to rule their own men.³

Ch'en Tzu-ang served directly under Ch'iao Chih-chih 喬知之, who held the post of Left Reminder, and who had temporarily been appointed to the post of Censor to assist the General.⁴

The army headed for the troubled spot via the Sea of Chü-yen 居延海; it reached Chang-yi River 張掖河 in the fourth month, and stationed in T'ung-ch'eng 同城 in the fifth. Such a change of environment rendered Ch'en literarily very productive. Several poems in his Works can be dated from this time, most of them are addressed to Ch'iao.⁵

The army did not take long to suppress the main rebellious force. The ring-leaders were caught and executed.⁶ The Empress Dowager thereupon ordered that the An-pei Protective Prefecture 安北都護府 be set up temporarily in T'ung-ch'eng to look after the barbarians returning to allegiance.

In the sixth month Ch'en Tzu-ang wrote a memorial to the Empress Dowager on behalf of Ch'iao Chih-chih. It views the

situation of the northern tribes. They were loosely referred to as T'u-chüeh 突厥, i.e. Turks, whom these newly suppressed tribes had formerly served under. In the memorial, the Empress Dowager is commended for her wisdom in choosing the site of Anpei Prefecture, for the places around the Sea of Chü-yen and Chang-yi River are capable of producing crops and raising animals to feed tens of thousands, while Kan Chou 甘州, being in the neighbourhood, is an agriculturally highly productive place and can thus supplement the production of T'ung-ch'eng with ease. The Sea of Chü-yen too, is rich in fish and salt, all in all this is an ideal place for strengthening the army against the barbarians. However, the memorial goes on to say, what the place lacks now are capable generals and well trained soldiers, which the Empire at present fails to produce, and without which little hope can be rested on a complete victory over the rebellious Turks.⁷

When Ch'en Tzu-ang returned to Lo-yang, he submitted another memorial on the situation on the western frontiers. The first of the three topics it discusses refers to the Empress Dowager's refusal to grant entry to the Turkish chiefs. It had happened earlier on that the barbarian tribes belonging to the tribe of Toquz Oguz also rebelled. The tribe was categorically known as the Chiu-hsing 九姓.⁸ The reasons for their rebellion are not clear; it might have been due to severe famine and lack of relief support from the T'ang empire.⁹ The Empress thereupon ordered General T'ien Yang-ming 田揚名 to lead the Western Turks, or Shih-hsing 十姓, to suppress the rebellion. This they did. But they also, without imperial order, attacked the tribes of Hui-ho 回紇, which had chosen to reside in Kan Chou,¹⁰ and which probably did not take part in the rebellion, although they were part of the Chiu-hsing. Afterwards, the Turkish chiefs applied to pay homage to the throne; but the Empress refused them on the

ground that they had taken the attack of the Hui-ho tribes into their own hands. Ch'en thus explains the reason why the Empire has so far been able to keep the West Turks under control, which is because the strong Chiu-hsing have until recently been loyal to China and left the West Turks with no choice but to follow suit. Now that the Chiu-hsing have rebelled and the lands of the Hui-ho are in ruins, and places north of the desert are no longer the Empire's, the only way to deal with the rebels is to rely on the West Turks to form a bulwark against them. But despite the urgency, their chiefs are now forbidden to come to Lo-yang, just on account of the wrong committed by T'ien Yang-ming; this definitely is not the method to keep them. The barbarians are like animals, Ch'en says, they obey those who are kind to them, but rebel against those who suspect them. Now these Turks are deprived of the trust of their protector country, and are under the fear of vengeance from the Hui-ho; with this sense of insecurity, the West Turks too are bound to rebel. In view of this, punishing T'ien Yang-ming alone is enough, and the chiefs should not be forbidden to enter the Eastern Capital.

Secondly, Ch'en recalls the time when he was in An-pei Prefecture, where there were already over five thousand tents of surrendering Turks, with many more to come. The four thousand-odd tents in Kan Chou were also moved by Imperial order to T'ung-ch'eng, where An-pei Prefecture is. Ch'en praises the setting up of the prefecture as an act of benevolence, but regrets that the authorities did not look after them well in the first instance because provisions in T'ung-ch'eng were at first insufficient, and as a result, theft and robbery were not uncommon. Now An-pei Prefecture has six thousand sheep and cattle owned by the Government, and over ten thousand piculs of provisions, but the barbarians do not seem to be taken any better care of. With the outlying position

of the city, and the small number of soldiers, the number of burglaries is bound to increase with the number of barbarians surrendering, there will be a point at which the Prefecture breaks down and Kan Chou and Liang Chou 涼州 no longer belong to China. The disaster to be caused by the impending mutiny on the frontier will be immeasurable, and that means the Government is now wasting money to lure them to rebellion and to goad them to become thieves. Ch'en goes on to warn that every generation of the barbarians has its capable personalities who defy the central Empire. If they become powerful again on the border, these surrendered people will follow them.

Finally, Ch'en discusses the strategic situations of the various chou west of the Yellow River. Liang Chou, Ch'en has found out, has an annual provision of only sixty thousand piculs, and certainly is not the place now to hold a leading role in the strategy against the barbarians. Kan Chou has a provision of over four hundred thousand piculs, and moreover, commands an important strategic position. It holds the Hui-ho from the north and could resist the Tibetans, or T'u-po 吐蕃, from the south. But now this chou has less than three thousand families and hardly a hundred of the people there can join the army. Now Kua Chou 瓜州 and Su Chou 肅州 are relying for food on Kan Chou, which therefore decides the fate west of the River. But even with its annual harvest of twenty thousand piculs of rice, there are not enough people to gather it, which often causes one third of it to go waste. Formerly the Tibetans dared not invade eastwards because of the strong army stationed in Kan and Liang; but now that the guard is inadequate, if they invade and burn the granaries and raid the soldiers' camps there, Ch'en fears that the Government may be unable to hold on to these places any more. Thus he urges the Empress Dowager to send more soldiers to Kan Chou, which serves

both military and agricultural purposes.¹¹

In the winter of the third year of Ch'ui-kung, 687, the Empress Dowager ordered that a broad pass be cut across the mountains in Shu so that an army could be sent to attack the Ch'iang 羌 tribe through a route in Ya Chou 雅州, and from the Ch'iang territory the Tibetans could be attacked.¹² This again was considered most unwise by Ch'en Tzu-ang, who, being native to Shu, realized so well its strategic importance. He thereupon submitted a memorial, putting his arguments in seven points. Point one: The Ch'iang tribe has been behaving extremely well since the beginning of the dynasty. If China attacked the Ch'iang people without provocation, they would be so antagonised that they would retaliate, the country would need a big army to be stationed on the Shu border against them, which would certainly bring misfortune to the province. Point two: The Tibetans have so far proved unconquerable even by large and strong armies. It would be a folly now to send unfit soldiers against them. Point three: The state of Ch'in 秦 used beautiful girls and a golden cow to lure the chief of the then foreign Shu, who, in trying to deliver the large golden cow to Shu, had a path made through the mountains, only for Ch'in to come in and make it part of China. Shu thus met its fate through greed. Point four: The Tibetans have long set their eyes on the treasures of Shu; they would have long ago invaded it but for the high mountains and deep rivers which bar them off. Now that the Ch'iang tribe is to be wiped out and a pass to be made, it would certainly mean that Shu would be given to the Tibetans. Point five: To attack Ch'iang, which is a fairly barren place, would mean a risk taken at the expense of Shu, the richest place in the Empire. Granted the place be conquered, numerous innocent people would have to be killed, and a large sum of money would be needed for the upkeep of the place.

Point six: If the dangerous strategic points were eased, they would be eased only for the outside invaders, and much money would be squandered too in the process. Thus there exists the danger that before the army could attack Ch'iang, robbers from within and without would have appeared. Ch'en recalls the incident in which the Chief Secretary of Yi Chou 益州, Li Ch'ung-chen 李崇真, spread the rumour that the Tibetans were about to attack Sung Chou 松州, which caused the Government to send a big army and heavy provisions to be on the alert for the invasion. Within a couple of years the whole Shu was in chaos. The truth turned out to be that there were no Tibetans invading, but Li Ch'ung-chen had already made use of the situation to gain a tremendous amount of money. Ch'en wonders if there might not be someone trying to follow Li's example. Point seven: The people of Shu are no match for the barbarians in fighting. Therefore, if China could annihilate the Ch'iang and the Tibetans, it would indeed do well; otherwise, Ch'en fears that within a hundred years' time Shu would once again become barbarian territory.¹³

This expedition was soon abandoned, for reasons of which we are not informed.

It was probably in the early months of the fourth year of Ch'ui-kung, 688, that Ch'en Tzu-ang submitted a memorial calling for a stop to excessive punishments.

Back in the third month of the second year of Ch'ui-kung, 686, the Empress Dowager ordered a large copper box to be made. It comprised four partitions; the side of the box facing east was called Yen-en 延恩, that is, extending grace, which was for people who submitted their literary works in the hope of obtaining promotion or appointment; the side facing south was called Chao-chien 招諫, that is, inviting admonition; the side facing west was called Shen-yuan 伸冤, and was for those

who had been wronged to appeal; the side facing north, which was the most important, was called T'ung-hsuan 通玄, penetrating the mysterious, which was for those who reported and analysed heavenly manifestations pertaining to the Empire, and those who wished to discuss military matters or disclose conspiracies. This idea is said to have been initiated by a Yü Pao-chia 魚保家. Prior to this, about eight months after the deposition of Chung-tsung, the Empire had witnessed an unsuccessful coup d'état headed by Hsü Ching-yeh. It is alleged that while Hsü was plotting, Pao-chia had secretly taught him how to make good weapons. Shortly after the box had been put into use, Pao-chia's enemies put a statement into the box, disclosing this secret to the Empress Dowager. Pao-chia was consequently put to death and became one of the first victims of this system.¹⁴

In fact, ever since the rebellion of Hsü Ching-yeh, the Empress Dowager had begun to suspect that she was constantly being conspired against, especially by the Imperial family, whom she wanted out of the way in any case. Her first step towards the elimination of any possible conspirator was to invite people to inform her of their suspicions about others. Anybody of any profession from any corner of the empire, who wished to come to the copper box or to her to name his suspects was, in his journey to the Eastern Capital, supplied with horses and provisions which an official of the fifth rank was entitled to, and well put up in the guest house in the Eastern Capital. Informers whose suspicions were regarded as well-founded by the Empress Dowager were immediately appointed to high office; while those whose suspicions were considered groundless were sent back without consequence. This greatly encouraged potential informers and the whole country was immediately thrown into a state of tension. Successful informers were often given a post of the fifth rank. This practice had its precedent:

shortly after the deposition of Chung-tsung, in a wine gathering of over ten horse soldiers, a frustrated member stood up and said that if he had realized they would not be duly rewarded for their services, he would have chosen to side with the deposed Emperor. Thereupon another member rose and left and secretly went to the northern gate to have the Empress Dowager informed of the matter. The whole party was thus arrested before it broke up. The one who voiced treason was decapitated, the others, guilty of covering treason, were all strangled to death. The informer was promoted to a post of the fifth rank.¹⁵

This new indulgence of the Empress Dowager led to the rise of So Yüan-li, who was of barbarian origin. He found this a passport to high officialdom, gave evidence against others, and was appointed to the Yu-chi Generalship, a post of the upper subordinate fifth rank, won the favour of the Empress Dowager, and was put in charge of judicial matters. Many others toed the line of So Yüan-li, among them Chou Hsing and Lai Chün-ch'en. Chou was soon promoted to the post of Vice-President of the Board of Punishments, Lai to the post of President of the Censorate. Each of them kept a large number of street vandals under themselves and made it their first concern to trump up accusations against other officials. The process was usually well-planned to ensure that identical evidence was given by seemingly different sources. Lai Chün-ch'en, together with his subordinate Wan Kuo-chün 萬國俊, composed a book of several thousand words entitled Lo-chih-ching 羅織經, that is, the scripture of netting and weaving up evidence against innocent people, in which every step towards a successful false accusation was clearly and systematically explained to their followers. It was the Empress Dowager's usual practice to leave the trying of suspects to So Yüan-li and his lot, who soon began to indulge in a competition of inventing the

most cruel possible means of torture for the trials, with fanciful and euphemistic names given to them.¹⁶

Ch'en thus submitted a long memorial to the Empress Dowager, advising her against the abuse of punishments. He writes, "I have heard that the rulers in ancient times exercised three types of rules. The kingly exerted influence, they used benevolence and righteousness; the mighty exerted power, they employed authority and tactics; the tyrannical exerted intimidation, they resorted to punishments. So it is when influence proves inadequate that power is used; when power cannot bring about the expected change that punishments are employed. Thus when it reaches the use of punishments it is no longer valued by the kingly."

Ch'en says that relatives and friends of the accused seldom escape arrest and severe torture, and consequently are either killed or banished. Artful villains, Ch'en protests, make use of the situation to concoct evidence to make false accusations against those they dislike, in the hope of obtaining rewards themselves.

In this work, Ch'en's metaphysical political theory is again at play. He says, "Sighs and groans of the wronged hamper the force of harmony. When the force of harmony is perverted, inhabitants on earth will suffer pestilence, flood and drought will follow, and there will be years of famine. When the people are rendered without property, the idea of causing disaster and trouble will be encouraged. Lately heat and dryness have dominated the weather; clouds have been thick, but no rain has fallen. Farmers have put down their ploughs and are gazing at the sky wailing. Is it not because Your Majesty, who has divine virtue, does not bestow your blessing on your people?"¹⁷

Despite the length of his admonition, and his quoting historical incidents to support his belief, it does not seem to have had any effect on the Empress Dowager.

The Empress Dowager's nephew Wu Ch'eng-ssu, who was then President of the Board of Rites, had eight characters carved on a white piece of rock, which mean, "The Divine Empress has descended among men, to make the Emperor's calling forever prosperous." The characters were then varnished with an emulsion of ground fluorspar and other chemicals. In the fourth month of the fourth year of Ch'ui-kung, 688, Wu sent a T'ang T'ung-t'ai 唐同泰 to present the carved rock to the Empress Dowager, together with a memorial in which he claimed to have discovered it in River Lo 洛水. Empress Dowager ordered that the rock be called Precious Seal, and T'ung-t'ai was raised to the Yu-chi Generalship. In the fifth month, she decided that a ceremony by the River Lo be prepared for the official receipt of the seal, and granted herself the title of Divine Empress, Holy Sovereign. That is why for the next several years to come, before she eventually renounced the title, Ch'en Tzu-ang always addressed her in the memorials as "Holy Sovereign". In the seventh month, the seal was ordered to be known as Heaven-granted Holy Seal; River Lo to be known as Forever Prosperous River Lo, the River god was created Marquis of Divine Manifestation and raised to an officialdom of the second rank. Fishing in the River was prohibited, while sacrifice to it was made compulsory. The spot where the seal was claimed to have been found was named Fountain of the Holy Seal, and the nearest district named Yung-ch'ang District 永昌縣, that is, the district of everlasting prosperity.¹⁸

In the twelfth month, the Empress Dowager officially received the seal at a ceremony, attended by the Emperor, the Crown Prince, numerous officials and the chiefs of neighbouring tribes. Rare birds and animals and other treasures were displayed on the altar, and the spectacle was on a scale grander than any since the inception of the T'ang dynasty.¹⁹

The same year witnessed the beginning of the numerous large-scale slaughters of members of the imperial house in the reign of the Empress Dowager. The Empress Dowager had grown jealous of several royal princes who happened to be holding chou governorships, and who were enjoying acclaim for their virtues. When the Empress Dowager's summons for assembly at the ming-t'ang reached them in the middle of the year, they, suspecting conspiracy, were thrown into a dilemma of whether to go to the Eastern Capital to be caught or to stay and be condemned for disobedience. The first prince to grow impatient was Li Ch'ung 李冲, Prince of Lang-yeh 琅琊 and Governor of Po Chou 博州, who rebelled in the eighth month, at the same time writing to the Princes of Han 韓, Huo 霍, Lu 魯, Yüeh 越 and Chi 己, asking them to join in the rebellion. Li Ch'ung's move left no time for preparation and coordination among the other Princes, so that only his father Li Chen 李貞, Prince of Yüeh and Governor of Yü Chou 豫州, could raise an army in a hurry to rebel. Owing to bad organization, the rebels were soon defeated, Li Ch'ung was killed and Li Chen committed suicide. The aftermath was calamitous; many royal princes and others who were found, with or without evidence, to be involved, were put to death. Chou Hsing was appointed to take charge of the case and killings were numerous. However, many of those in Yü Chou were saved by Ti Jen-chieh, then Left Superintendent of the Government Boards, who had additionally been charged with the governorship of Yü Chou in the place of Li Chen; he had secretly sent an admonition to the Empress Dowager to entreat for pity on those wrongly sentenced.²⁰

In the next year - the first year of Yung-ch'ang 永昌, 689 - on the nineteenth day of the third month, Ch'en Tzu-ang was summoned by the Empress Dowager to discuss the prerequisites

of good governmental administration to suit the requirement of the day. This time, however, the Empress Dowager explicitly cautioned him against quoting incidents of the past and indulging in empty words.

Ch'en Tzu-ang thereupon submitted a memorial where he puts his idea into eight points, the first of which advocates the stopping of lavish punishments, which obviously had grown to be the order of the day. In the second, which calls for the employment of the worthy, he says, "Thus the worthy, once employed, should be trusted; once trusted, they should be trusted to the very end; once they are trusted to the very end, they should be rewarded. For if mere employment but no trust is given them, their abilities will have no way to show; if the trust does not last to the very end, their calling cannot be accomplished; if mere lasting trust but no reward is bestowed on them, their accomplishments cannot be distinguished from those of others." The third point expounds the way of discovering the worthy, which lies solely in the discerning power of the sovereign, and once again Ch'en emphasizes the importance of employing the worthy, for a few of them in high places will cause other birds of the same feather to flock in. The fourth point is a follow-up of the second and the third, which holds that the integrity of the worthy should not be suspected, and the ruler should rely on them for the satisfactory running of the Empire, for "the Empire cannot be run single-handed," he says. The fifth passage deals with the encouragement of admonitions. The sixth encourages the bestowal of rewards on worthy subjects. The seventh calls for an end to warfare, for taxes and levies of service are heavy in the Empire on account of incessant fighting; even so, the uneconomical manoeuvring of armies often reaps no victories, thus the Government must send out armies only when it proves necessary. In the last passage, which alludes to the

incident the year before, he calls for the proper treatment of the imperial kindred, relieving them of all doubts and fear that they are endangered; this is a way to keep the Empire in peace.²¹

This memorial does not seem to have brought about any effect, except perhaps his own subsequent promotion. Shortly afterwards, his term of office as Collator expired, and he was appointed to the post of Commissary of Records of the Right Military Division, which was of the lower eighth rank. He thus had a small promotion by three grades.²²

The series of massacres which followed showed Ch'en's plea fell on deaf ears. Hsü Ching-chen 徐敬真, younger brother of Hsü Ching-yeh, had formerly been banished to Hsiu Chou 肅州, whence he managed to escape and was about to flee to the Turks. When he passed by Lo-yang, he was secretly financed by Kung Ssu-yeh 弓嗣業, Assistant Governor of Lo Chou 洛州 and Chang Ssu-ming 張嗣明, Mayor of Lo-yang. He was however spotted and arrested in Ting Chou 定州. Ssu-yeh and Ssu-ming were thereupon imprisoned. The former was hanged, while the latter and Ching-chen, hoping to escape decapitation through uncovering conspiracy on the part of others, claimed to have discovered a plot to overthrow the Empire. Important personalities accused of being involved in this plot were again executed in large numbers. Such incriminations, however, did not save Ching-chen and Ssu-ming from being put to death in the eighth month of the year. A reprieve was granted by the Empress Dowager to a few, among whom were Chang Ch'u-chin 張楚金, President of the Board of Punishments, Kuo Cheng-yi 郭正一, Governor of Shān Chou 陝州, and Wei Yüan-chung 魏元忠, the new Mayor of Lo-yang, at the last minute, when they were awaiting execution in the market place. They were all banished.²³

In the intercalary ninth month, Chou Hsing set out on a trail of revenge against those he suspected of having prevented Emperor Kao-tsung from promoting him when he had been Magistrate of Ho-yang 河陽, on the grounds that he had not gone through the proper examinations. His first target was Chief Minister Wei Hsuan-t'ung 魏玄同, who had been responsible for informing him of the failure to get a promotion. He trumped up a charge before the Empress Dowager, saying that Wei had remarked that she had become old, and it would have been of more long-term benefit for them to have served the deposed Chung-tsung. Wei was ordered to commit suicide at his home. A large number of officials accused of being involved in the conspiracy were either executed or banished.²⁴

The tenth month saw the execution of six members of royalty and the banishment of six others.²⁵

Amidst these executions and banishments, Ch'en Tzu-ang again submitted, probably in the ninth month, a memorial calling for a halt to lavish punishments, bringing the Empress Dowager's attention to the fact that many of the criminals had in fact been wrongly accused. He recalls that since the eighth month of the previous year the weather had been rainy until amnesty was granted to four wrongly accused officials on the 15th day of the eighth month of the present year. As a result it was extremely sunny on the 18th day when Her Majesty feasted at the ming-t'ang. He also recalls the sudden change for the better in the weather when the death penalty on Chang Ch'u-chin and several other officials was lifted in the market place on the 21st day, which clearly reflected the reaction of heaven. Yet at present, Ch'en continues, it is again dark and rainy, and he fears it is due to the fault of those who are in charge of punishments. He beseeches the Empress Dowager to conduct the trial herself: if she indeed finds the accused guilty, they should of course be given the appropriate

punishments; if she discovers they have been indicted rashly, those who are responsible should be heavily penalised. This memorial was submitted through the copper box.²⁶

In the following year, 690, another slaughter of the royal members and their followers was carried out, together with many high-ranking officials. Li Ssu-chen 李嗣真, Vice-President of the Censorate, submitted a memorial to protest against the situation, but like Ch'en's, it was of no avail.²⁷

The Imperial prison then was situated at Li-ching Gate 麗景門, i.e. the gate of beautiful view, which was the southern gate on the western side of the Imperial city of Lo-yang. Imprisoned here were usually those who were accused of conspiracy, who more often than not did not leave the prison alive. Wang Hung-yi 王弘義, a judicial official who followed the lead of Chou and Lai without fail, gave the gate a homophonic sobriquet "Li-ching" 例竟, i.e. finished as a rule. It is said that many court officials hardly dared talk to one another in case this gave grounds for suspicion, and before a levée, they would bid their families an eternal farewell lest they should not return.²⁸

So Yüan-li, Chou Hsing and Lai Chün-ch'en were the three leading "cruel officials" of the time. The Tzu-chih t'ung-chien 資治通鑑 says that Chou Hsing, So Yüan li and Lai Chün-ch'en competed with one another in harshness and cruelty. Chou and So each had killed several thousand people, while Lai had ruined over a thousand families. So Yüan-li was in fact the most blood-thirsty of the three.²⁹ But they themselves were all paid in the same coin. So Yüan-li was executed in 691. Chou Hsing was banished in the same year and was killed on the way to exile by his enemies. Finally, after the execution of Lai Chün-ch'en in the summer of 697, which was reluctantly ordered by the then Empress Regnant, wholesale executions markedly diminished, which prompted the

Empress to ask in curiosity why it was that after the death of
Chou and Lai, no conspiracy was heard of again.³⁰

In the eleventh month of the first year of Yung-ch'ang, 689, the Empress Dowager officially adopted the Chou 周 calendar, which takes the traditional eleventh month to be the first month of the coming year: in this case, the first year of Tsai-ch'u 隋初. This new first month was called the cheng-yüeh 正月, the new second month was termed the la-yüeh 二月, while the traditional cheng-yüeh of the Hsia 夏 calendar, which had been in use since the Han dynasty, was simply called the yi-yüeh 一月, or first month, and was in actual fact the third month in the reckoning of the Chou calendar.¹ This change, which lasted till 701, was coincidentally or otherwise the harbinger of the formation of the new Chou dynasty later in 690.

In the summer of Tsai-ch'u, a monk of Tung-wei-kuo Monastery 東魏國寺, named Fa-ming 法明, annotated the Ta-yüan Sutra 大雲經 and submitted it to the Empress Dowager. In the annotation it was proved that the Empress Dowager was in fact Maitrêya Buddha 彌勒佛, the Buddha of the future, incarnate, and should replace T'ang as ruler on earth. This sutra was immediately given the imperial order to be circulated throughout the empire.²

In the ninth month of the first year of Tsai-ch'u, 690 - which was in fact the second-last month in the new calendar, Censor Fu Yu-yi 傅遊藝 (?-691), leading a multitude of over nine hundred inhabitants of the Eastern Capital, submitted a memorial at court, besecching the Empress Dowager to change the name of the dynasty to Chou 周, and to grant the Emperor the surname Wu. The Empress Dowager modestly declined, but promoted Yu-yi to the post of Supervising Censor. Thereupon members of the houses of Li and Wu, officials, peasants, foreign chiefs,

Buddhist monks and Taoist priests, amounting to over fifty thousand in number, submitted memorials duplicating the ideas of Fu Yu-yi. The Emperor too submitted a memorial asking to be granted the surname Wu. About the same time, some propitious signs were reported: a phoenix appeared from the south, escorted by thousands of other birds. Hundreds of red birds appeared from the east over the palace, followed by yellow birds. Bright colourful clouds also appeared over the Eastern Capital, which attracted numerous farmers and peasants, who cried with surprise. Ch'en Tzu-ang, in the preface to his poems submitted to the Empress Dowager when she ascended the throne, explains that the phoenix is the bird of supremacy, and red birds are the essence of fire. The yellow birds, which followed the red birds, represent earth, which is the offspring of fire. It is thus clear, says Ch'en, that it is Heaven's will that the son in question should adopt the surname of the mother.³

Seeing the time was at last ripe, the Empress Dowager officially acceded to the throne in the same month, and became the first and only Empress regnant of China, changing the name of the dynasty from T'ang to Chou, receiving the title of "Divine and Holy Sovereign" 聖神皇帝. The Emperor was made heir apparent, adopting the surname Wu. The name of the year Tsai-ch'u was changed to Tien-shou 天授, i.e. granted by Heaven.⁴ The whole plot for the accession was apparently so well-wrought, little by little over a span of years, that the change of dynasty was almost accepted as a natural outcome rather than a contrivance on the part of the new Empress.

Naturally numerous officials submitted congratulatory memorials to the throne on this occasion, Ch'en Tzu-ang among them. He submitted a congratulatory memorial and a cycle of four poems of praise, entitled "The holy phoenix", "The red birds", "The colourful clouds" and "The praise of the farmers", with a preface in which

he explains the omens.⁵

In the second year of T'ien-shou, 691, Ch'en Tzu-ang's step-mother died. Ch'en was thereupon released from the post to return home to observe mourning.⁶ When he reached San-kuan 散關 on his way back, he wrote a poem to his long-parted friend Ch'iao Chih-chih, who was still stationed at the north:

Beautiful phoenixes on the green wu-t'ung,
Chirping cicadas among white dew-drops.
My feathers are no match for yours,
How is it our friendship can remain so intact?
That time, when you confronted the barbarian horses,
I was able to serve under your banner.
Hand in hand we made for the desert border,
To mountain passes and rivers up in the north.
Several fragrant years have since ended,
The white sun has flitted away many times.
Our merits are too small for the Cloud Terrace,
Our life is like a jade pendant discarded.
Alas on the day of my southward journey home,
I still hear of you stationed on the northern frontier.
The Tai Water cannot be traversed,
The Pa River too is very turbulent.
Lifting my garment, I cross the Han-ku,
Restraining my tears, I look in the direction of the Capital.
The entrance to Shu begins here,
Clouded mountains are spreading out in a vast expanse.⁷

During this period of mourning, Ch'en suffered from ill-health. This is constantly spoken of in the poems he wrote during this time. In the poem written on meeting his friends Chi Kuei 冀珪 and Ts'ui T'ai-chih 崔泰之 back home he says:

I have retired to the southern hills to nurse my health,
Lying in solitude, I am unaware of spring./⁸

In the poem "Falling ill at home" he writes:

On this earth I have no name,
In this world, years and months fleet by.
I have discarded my ambitious plans,
Now the quiet way of life is my resort.
Ill in bed, I receive few guests,
In retirement I have neglected the beauty of spring.
I still think of friends in the heavenly abode,
Who practise immortality and stay among clouds.

With magic drugs they make for the sun,
To combat old age they feed on cloud buds.
Is it known this lodger in the white cottage
Is not tired of melons from the green gate?/9

In a poem to Priest Hui written in autumn, during his illness,
he writes:

In solitude and illness, time drags on,
Woods and gardens turn calm and serene.
Tired and ill I am doing nothing,
Alone I sit and carelessly finger my jasper lute.
My bosom carries feelings of thousands of years,
My sorrow is for my never-ending illness.
Heavy thoughts come incessantly,
I appear careless, I often feel lost.
How I wish to live like the Master of the Red Pine,
Searching for calm high up in the heavenly palace.
Fame and shame never exist from the start,
To be a recluse is indeed a blessing.
Numerous books cover my bed,
The pleasant scenery fills my room.
What my mind was set on in former years,
From now on ceases to be my life's concern.
Who understands this heart of mine?
On the prayer mat there is a comrade.
It's the eighth month, night falls on the high autumn sky,
The cold wind is whistling./10

It is obvious that Ch'en again had the chance of enjoying the
company of the priest.

In 692, the second year of Ch'en's mourning, his grand-uncle
Ch'en Ssu 陳嗣 died.¹¹ And it must have been during his period
of mourning that Ch'en's good friend Ch'iao Chih-chih was treach-
erously undone. The Tzu-chih t'ung-chien records that Ch'iao
Chih-chih had a maid called Pi-yü 碧玉, i.e. green jade, of
whom Chih-chih was so fond that he refrained from marrying women
of higher standing.¹² Wu Ch'eng-ssu, who was then Chief Minister,
borrowed Pi-yü from Ch'iao to coach his own maids. After quite some
time, Wu, however, showed no intention at all of returning Pi-
yü. Ch'iao, love-lorn, composed a poem entitled "The anguish of

of Lu-chu" 綠珠怨 and had it sent to Pi-yü, who was much moved by the poem and committed suicide by jumping into a well. Ch'eng-ssu eventually discovered the poem in Pi-yü's girdle, and out of spite, ordered his underlings to bring false evidence against Ch'iao Chih-chih, who, together with his family, was then executed, and his property confiscated.¹³

In the seventh month of the second year of Ch'ang-shou 長壽, 693, Ch'en's first cousin Tzu died.¹⁴ It was about this time that Ch'en's period of mourning for his step-mother ended. He thereupon returned to the Eastern Capital, taking a route via Chung Chou 忠州 and Chiang-ling 江陵. When he reached Sui Chou 遂州 he wrote a farewell poem to some friends who saw him off:

On the River Ch'u I am again a traveller,
The oars are set for a long journey.
Old friends, you pity me and see me off,
On this southern island you prepare the farewell feast.
What is there to regret in my life?
I used to be in woods and hills in former days.
Now I am leaving the mountains of my village,
I will sing a long ballad to my home-parting sorrow.¹⁵

He further expresses his seeming reluctance at going back to court in a poem written in Wan Chou 萬州 to relatives and friends in Shu:

The air is misty, rain has thinned over the cliffs,
In large flocks the morning clouds return.
I start my journey at dawn, shouting freely,
The running oars tangle with the broken jetty.
Wooded peaks turn in the vast sky,
Billows surge and surf flies.
Above the far-off shore a lone cloud rises,
By the distant mountain-peak the morning sun is dim.
I look ahead, and before I can blink,
I have already reached the scene.
Right or wrong rests in now or then,
Time rides over why and wherefore.
My return is still a long way off,

My travelling thoughts are like a horse galloping on.
I send this to take leave of you, you are all well-off,
Across rivers and seas things run counter to one's wish.¹⁶

He was promoted to the rank of Right Omissioner after his return to court.¹⁷ He thus had a small promotion by one grade. He was then 33. He is said to have felt unhappy after his return to Lo-yang and to have dwelt on the Taoist classics and the Yi-ching 易經, in which he became well-versed. It is said that he even thought of resigning.¹⁸

Luck was not smiling on Ch'en Tzu-ang, for in the first year of Yen-tsai 延載, 694, he was involved in a court case and cast into prison. No further details are known concerning this; suggestions have been made that it might have been due to the case of Ch'iao Chih-chih, or that of a clansman, a Ch'en Chia-yen 陳嘉言, who had held a high post at court.¹⁹ Ch'en Tzu-ang had written a memorial protesting Chia-yen's guiltlessness, attributing his unfortunate custody to the plot of the rapacious officials who were afraid and jealous of him.²⁰ Plausible though this guesswork might be, the real cause of Ch'en's imprisonment can never be known from extant material.

Ch'en's imprisonment probably lasted for over a year. In his statement of gratitude at his release, and what is more, without demotion, he volunteers to be sent to the frontiers to fight the foreign attackers as a gesture of deep appreciation of the pardon from the throne.²¹

In the mid-summer of the first year of Wan-sui-t'ung-t'ien 萬歲通天, 696, two notable Kitans, i.e. members of the Ch'itan 契丹 tribe, Li Chin-chung 李盡忠, Military Governor of Sung-mo 松漠 and Sun Wan-jung 孫萬榮, Governor of Kuei-ch'eng Chou 歸誠州, brother-in-law to Li, rebelled, occupied Ying Chou 營州 and killed its Military Governor Chao Wen-hui

趙文歲羽。 Chao had always been infamous among the Kitans; when they were suffering from famine, he refused to supply them with food, while treating the Kitan chiefs like servants, and thus caused them to rebel. The Empress sent a large army, led by 28 generals, to suppress the rebellion. Among the generals was Ts'ao Jen-shih 曹仁節, whom Ch'en Tzu-ang had earlier on spoken slightly of in a memorial.²² To signify her disgust with the rebels, the Empress ordered that the name of Li Chin-chung be changed to Li Chin-mieh 李盡滅, Chin-mieh meaning "totally exterminated", and that the name of Sun Wan-jung be changed to Sun Wan-chan 孫萬斬, Wan-chan meaning "tens of thousands of cuts", which she thought he undoubtedly deserved. Changes of names of course did not affect the rebels at all, and Li Chin-chung, with Ying Chou as his military base, proclaimed himself Khan of Unsurpassed Superiority 無上可汗, employed Sun Wan-jung as vanguard and gained considerable victories in a matter of months. In the eighth month, when the Chou army headed by Ts'ao Jen-shih, Chang Hsüan-yü 張玄遇 and Ma Jen-chieh 麻仁節 were approaching the rebels, the Kitans instructed their prison guards to tell the hundreds of Chinese captives in Ying Chou, "We are a poor lot, suffering from starvation and cold, hardly managing to keep ourselves alive. We are only waiting for the advent of the Government's army, when we will surrender." Thereupon they released the captives, fed them with coarse porridge, telling them, "If we still kept you alive in prison we would not have enough food; we could kill you, but we cannot bring ourselves to do so. So we are setting you free now." And they set them free. When the released captives reached Yu Chou 幽州 and told the Chinese army what had happened, the army was in haste to make for the rebels; when the army reached Huang-chang Valley 黃腸谷, the Kitans had already sent a batch of old and feeble people to welcome them

there, and left a multitude of old cows and lean horses by the wayside. Ts'ao Jen-shih and his generals thereupon left the infantry behind and led the horse troops on to receive the surrender, and only when they found themselves in an ambush at Hsia-shih Valley 硤石谷 did they realize what a blunder they had made. Corpses of the Chou soldiers filled the valley, Chang Hsüan-yü and Ma Jen-chieh were caught alive. Hardly anyone escaped. The army seal was captured by the Kitans, and Hsüan-yü and Jen-chieh were forced to sign a despatch to Commanders Yen Fei-shih 燕匪石 and Tsung Huai-ch'ang 宗懷昌, which reported the victory of the army, and ordered the rest of the army to join them with the greatest speed, threatening to execute the generals if they went to Ying Chou instead. Fei-shih and the other generals thereupon set out at full speed. This tired-out army was met by the Kitans half-way and totally wiped out.²³

In the ninth month, the Empress ordered that prisoners and slaves of all races who could fight should be taken out or bought from their masters to join the army to fight the Kitans. Meanwhile, the Empress' nephew Wu Yu-yi 武攸宜, Prince of Chien-an 建安 and Governor of T'ung Chou 同州, was appointed Field Marshal of the Right Wu-wei 武威 Military Division and Commander-in-Chief of the Ch'ing-pien 清邊 Political Division, and placed in charge of the suppression of the rebellious Kitans.²⁴ Ch'en Tzu-ang, who had expressed his wish to help fight foreign intruders, was placed in the army as counsel to assist Wu Yu-yi in army matters.²⁵ Wu, perhaps prompted by Ch'en, was quite against the idea of having a crowd of worthless men, untrained, in the army. Ch'en submitted a memorial on his behalf, raising this objection. In it he criticizes the Empress' move in the following words, "I have seen your gracious proclamation, granting an amnesty to prisoners and ordering slaves of all races to be bought, that

they can join the army to fight; this is a hasty makeshift plan, the soldiers are in fact not the sovereign's soldiers. Moreover, crimes and imprisonments have lessened for a considerable time, and the slaves are mostly weak, not used to going on long journeys. Though they are enlisted, they are hardly useful. Furthermore, not one in ten thousand of the loyal and the valiant in the Empire has been used yet. The Kitans are just petty trouble-makers, usurping the mandate of heaven and waiting to be slaughtered, how can it merit the amnesty of prisoners and enlisting of slaves? If there should be more atrocities coming, what else would be enlisted? I fear this is not the way to display the Empire's dignity to the people." The memorial also gives an alternative to enlisting prisoners and slaves. Ch'en advises the Empress to recruit as many people as possible in Shan-tung 山東, because the people there were hardy and extremely arrogant, and outlaws were plenty there; putting those who were able to fight into the army would be a means of making them and their relatives and friends behave properly.²⁶

At about the same time, Mo-cho 默, 曷, the new Khan of the Turks, applied to fight the rebellious Kitans for the Empire. The Empress, much pleased, proclaimed him Field Marshal of the Left Military Division and Khan of Advancing towards Good 遷善可汗.²⁷ Earlier on in the winter of 693, Mo-cho had attacked Ling Chou 靈州, a frontier place, but had soon retreated to his base.²⁸ In the winter of 695, Mo-cho pledged allegiance to the Empress and was given a generalship of high rank and created a duke.²⁹ But Mo-cho proved to be China's greatest enemy towards the close of the Empress' reign.

In the tenth month, Li Chin-chung died, and his army was taken over by Sun Wan-jung. Mo-cho made use of the unsettled state the Kitans were in and attacked Sung-mo, making captives of Li's

widow, Sun's wife and their children, and was duly rewarded by the Empress.

Sun Wan-jung's force, however, soon recovered its morale and won a series of victories; having taken Chi Chou 冀州, killed its Governor, and slaughtered thousands of people, Sun turned his army on Ying Chou 瀛州. The whole of Ho-pei 河北 was in a state of alarm.³⁰

In the third month of the first year of Shen-kung 神功, 697, the Chinese army, which was heading for P'ing Chou 平州, stationed itself at Yu-yang 漁陽. The Commander of the advance forces was Wang Hsiao-chieh 王孝傑, who had, as Assistant Commander-in-Chief, invaded the territory of the Tibetans and been captured. The Tibetan chief, or Tsan-p'u 贊普, however, found that Wang looked much like his deceased father and treated him with utmost care; and Wang was even allowed to return to China eventually. He finally made use of his knowledge of the strategic situation of the Tibetans and badly defeated them in the winter of 692.³¹ In the spring of 696, however, he suffered defeat on another confrontation with the Tibetans and was relegated to the status of a commoner.³² Now he was back into office again.

Wang gained some small victories for the rest of the month. In the third month, Wang, with General Su Hung-hui 蘇宏暉, leading one hundred and seventy thousand soldiers, confronted the army of Sun Wang-jung. The Kitans retreated and Wang Hsiao-chieh chased them. When Wang's army at last reached east Hsia-shih Valley with the steep cliffs behind them, the Kitans once more turned on them; Su Hung-hui escaped, Wang fell from a cliff and died, the rest of the army was almost annihilated.

When the news reached Yu-yang, the army was frightened and dared not advance. The Kitans, with victory at their back, raided Yu Chou. Wu Yu-yi sent some of his generals to fight the Kitans

there, but without much success.

Meanwhile, Chang Yüeh 張說 (667-730), the great literary figure who was to become Chief Minister in the reign of Emperor Hsüan Tsung 玄宗 (685-762), and who was then serving in the army as Recorder, reported the incident of the confrontation in east Hsia-shih Valley to the Empress, who thereupon granted posthumous titles to Hsiao-chieh, and despatched an envoy to execute Su Hung-hui for escaping. Before the envoy's arrival, Hung-hui had acquired other merits in the army which cancelled out his death penalty.³³ Ch'en Tzu-ang was asked by Su to write a statement of gratitude to the throne on his behalf.³⁴

Meanwhile, the state of morale did not appear to be satisfactory in Wu Yu-yi's army. Wu is said to have been a rather indecisive man, lacking in the strategical talents required of a general.³⁵ Ch'en Tzu-ang thereupon reminded him of the crucial situation they were in, and how the fate of the Empire was in the Prince's hand. He also warned that stationing a large army without properly manoeuvring them would always leave a way open for conspiracies from within. Ch'en took the Prince to task for "laying down no army regulations, and treating the whole business as if it were child's play".³⁶ He also volunteered to lead ten thousand soldiers to combat the Kitans with superior tactics. Wu Yu-yi, however, was desperately looking for fighters, and turned down Ch'en Tzu-ang on the ground that he was only a scholar. A few days later, Ch'en again tendered his advice, which displeased the Prince, who transferred him to the army's clerical unit.³⁷

It was then, when Ch'en was greatly frustrated, that he composed his famous song on ascending the Chi-pei 碣石 barbican:

Those who have gone before, I cannot see,
Those who are to come after, I cannot see.
I think of heaven and earth, which go on forever,
Alone I grieve, and tears fall./38

He also wrote a cycle of seven poems to Lu Ts'ang-yung.³⁹ Lu says in the Unofficial Biography that it was when Ch'en thought of the moving episodes involving King Chao of the State of Yen 燕昭王 and Yüeh Yi 樂毅, which his relation with Wu Yu-yi stood opposite to, that he composed the cycle of poems, after which he sang out his quatrain in tears.⁴⁰

In the fourth month, the Empress' nephew Wu Yi-tsung 武懿宗 was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Shen-ping 神兵 Political Division to lead an army with General Ho Chia-mi 何迦密 to attack the Kitans; in the fifth month, Lou Shih-te 婁師德 (630-699), who had suffered defeat by the Tibetans with Wang Hsiao-chieh in the previous year, was appointed Assistant Commander-in-Chief of the Ch'ing-pien 清邊 Political Division; together with the foreign General Sha-cha Chung-yi 沙吒忠義 as Commander of the advance forces, he led an army of two hundred thousand to attack the Kitans.⁴¹ In the sixth month, Wu Yi-tsung's army, on reaching Chao Chou 趙州, had news that thousands of Kitan soldiers were again heading for Chi Chou, which was very near Chao Chou. Yi-tsung was frightened, and despite advice that the Kitans lacked provisions and could be defeated simply by attritional warfare, he withdrew his army to Hsiang Chou 相州, discarding provisions and weapons on the way. Consequently, the Kitans succeeded in carrying out massacres in the practically unprotected Chao Chou.⁴²

However, the tables were soon turned upon Sun Wan-jung. Having defeated Wang Hsiao-chieh's army, Sun had ordered a rampart to be built four hundred li north-west of Liu-ch'eng 柳城 to protect the old and weak, the women and booty, and had assigned his brother-in-law Yi Yüan-yü 乙窵羽 to guard the precinct. He was now about to attack Yu Chou, but feared that the Turks would take this opportunity to attack from the rear. He therefore despatched

five messengers to Mo-cho to suggest joining forces to attack Yu Chou. However, two of the messengers secretly told Mo-cho of Sun's real fear and intention and offered to lead Mo-cho's army to attack the new rampart. The rampart was thus captured; but Yi Yuan-yü was released so that he could send the news to Wan-jung, who was then engaged in confrontation with the Chinese army. Sun's army was in chaos on receiving the news, and part of the army, which belonged to the Hsi 奚 tribe, rebelled against Sun, who immediately found himself being attacked from in front by the Chinese army, and from behind by the Hsi rebels. His army defeated, Wan-jung led a few thousand of his horse troops and fled eastward, but was intercepted by Chinese soldiers half-way. Wan-jung was thus forced to leave his cavalry and fled with his slave, who killed him and surrendered to the Chinese. The rest surrendered to the Turks, and the rebellion was eventually subdued.⁴³

In the seventh month, Wu Yu-yi's army returned in triumph from Yu Chou to the Eastern Capital,⁴⁴ where Ch'en Tzu-ang stayed on as Right Omissioner.⁴⁵

In the next year, the first year of Sheng-li 聖曆, 698, when he was 38, Ch'en Tzu-ang submitted to the throne his last datable memorial on socio-political matters. It was the 14th day of the fifth month when he submitted it, and it concerns the military situation of Shu, his native land. In it Ch'en discusses the necessary steps to be taken to ensure the protection of the inhabitants of Shu after the dissolution of the T'ung-ch'ang Army 同昌軍, which had been stationed there for over twenty years. He also points out the importance of inviting into submission those who fled from registration when forced labour and heavy taxation to support the army were in full swing. Such a step is urgent because many of them have already become robbers. Finally, Ch'en puts the blame on the avaricious and irresponsible local

officials for the situation mentioned, and asks the Empress to see to it that proper personalities are chosen to man the posts.⁴⁶

Chapter 5. Retirement and Death

Later in the year 698, Ch'en Tzu-ang applied for leave to go home to look after his aging father, Yüan-ching. This met with the approval of the Empress, who granted him an indefinite paid leave, allowing him to retain his post of Right Omissioner. Ch'en again left the hubbub of the Eastern Capital and pursued a more secluded way of life. The Unofficial Biography says that he built several thatched houses on the western hills of She-hung District, spending some of his time growing trees and gathering herbs.¹

He was not completely cut off from social life, though. In the next year, he wrote a commemorative inscription for the province's Ta-ch'ung-fu Taoist Monastery 大崇福觀, where the body of the Empress' father Wu Shih-huo had lain for seven months after his death.² Since beginning his leave, Ch'en had developed an interest in historiography. He felt that the method of presentation used in later histories was unsatisfactory and planned to rewrite the history from the periods of Emperor Wu of Han 漢武帝 to T'ang, tentatively giving it the name of Hou shih-chi 後史記, i.e. a sequel to the Shih-chi. He went on with the plan for several months, but it was brought to an abrupt halt by his father's death on the 7th day of the seventh month in the second year of Sheng-li, 699.³ His father lived to the age of 74 and died a natural death at his home.⁴ In the tenth month he was buried at Shih-fo Valley 石佛谷 in Mount Wu-tung, where many of his ancestors had been buried.⁵ It is said that Ch'en Tzu-ang, being an exceptionally filial son, was so grieved that he almost went out of his mind. He became extremely thin and feeble and could only get up and walk with the help of a walking stick.⁶ Ch'en lived by his father's tomb and it was in the same

month that he wrote the tomb inscription for his father.⁷

The next two years were spent in mourning. In the second year of Ch'ang-an, 702, when he was 42 and his mourning was over, he was too unwell to go back to court, and stayed on at home. In the same year he died.

The Unofficial Biography related his death in the following words, "It happened that the District Magistrate Tuan Chien 段簡 was a man of greed and cruelty. He had heard that Ch'en's family was rich, and so he trumped up charges and was about to bring them against Ch'en. Tzu-ang, frightened, sent his folk to Tuan with two hundred thousand cash. But Chien was not satisfied, and Ch'en was dragged several times to the district court. Tzu-ang, having been feeble for a long time, and weakened further from his mourning, could not rise even with the help of a walking stick. Thus harassed by the administration, he, fearing his life to be failing him, made a hexagram with the shih 蓍 grass⁸ to foretell what was going to befall him. When the hexagram was completed, he raised his head and cried, 'Heaven's will does not bless me, I am doomed!' Thus he died, aged forty-two."⁹ The Hsin t'ang-shu follows the Unofficial Biography, but specifies that Ch'en died in prison.¹⁰ The Inscription leaves this episode out altogether, it simply records that at the death of his father, Ch'en "became as lean as a piece of firewood and went out of his mind. There was nobody in the Empire who did not sigh over it. He lived to the age of forty-two, and was buried at Mount Tu-tso 獨坐山 of She-hung."¹¹ This version, I think, is attributable to the fact that an inscription would not normally like to record a death which is far from glorious.

The Chiu t'ang-shu's account is at variance with the others; it says, "Tzu-ang's father, who was in his native village, was insulted by the District Magistrate Tuan Chien. When Tzu-ang

heard of this, he immediately returned home to intervene. He was however imprisoned by Chien, who had made up evidence against him, and he died of chagrin."¹² This recording differs too much from the Unofficial Biography to be credible. The sequence of events which can be deduced from Ch'en's extant writings follows that told by the Unofficial Biography. The narrative of the Chiu t'ang-shu mentions nothing of the death of Ch'en's father and even creates the impression that Ch'en was outlived by him. Ch'en applied for leave in 698, but died in 702; had he begun his dealings with Tuan Chien immediately he returned, and been imprisoned, the central Government would have looked into the matter before 702.

Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that the Unofficial Biography does not give the whole story of Ch'en's death. Shen Ya-chih 沈亞之, who lived about a century after Ch'en's death, and who at one time held the post Ch'en had once held, that of Collator of the Imperial Secretariat, makes the following remarks in his "Letter to Governor Cheng of Chiu-chiang", "Ch'iao [Chih-chih] died through slander, Ch'en died through injustice. Both deaths were due to Wu San-ssu, who in a moment of jealousy and anger, went to extreme lengths to calumniate them, one by snatching his maid and traducing him, the other, being suspected of opposing him, by secretly ordering a local chief to have him tortured; both died an unnatural death."¹³ This passage doubtless sheds new light on Ch'en's death. Hu Chen-heng 胡震亨 (fl. 1630) of Ming 明 (1368-1644), in his T'ang-yin kuei-ch'ien 唐音癸籤, finds Shen Ya-chih's allegation plausible; but he has somehow felt obliged to conclude with some moralistic yet factitious remarks, which run, "Tzu-ang undoubtedly was an underling of Wu Yu-yi. The calamity definitely started from here. Serving

under the wicked it is indeed difficult to stay out of calamity."¹⁴ Leaving aside the fact that the argument in the final sentence is not supported by the statistics, Ch'en Tzu-ang only served under Wu Yu-yi for a few months, and for a patriotic cause. Moreover, at a time when the Wu's were at the height of their power, I wonder how many officials did not, at one time or another, serve under them. If Ch'en Tzu-ang was thus branded an underling of a Wu, I doubt if many could escape such a stigma. I suspect Hu's allegation that Ch'en Tzu-ang had served Wu Yu-yi to be derived from an apocryphal episode in the book Tu-yi-chi 獨異記 of T'ang, which goes as follows: When Ch'en Tzu-ang first went to the Capital, he was quite unknown. It happened that in the east market someone was trying without success to sell his precious lute, the hu-ch'in 胡琴, at a very high price. Tzu-ang thereupon bought it with ten thousand cash, which astounded the crowd that had gathered to see the hu-ch'in. Ch'en Tzu-ang told the crowd that he was an expert at the hu-ch'in, and on being asked to perform he invited the spectators to go to his house on the next day and promised them wine. So on the next day, a large crowd gathered at his house; and after giving them a substantial feast, Ch'en Tzu-ang, holding the hu-ch'in, introduced himself to the guests as having written hundreds of pieces of literary work, and having been to all parts of the Capital without becoming known. Then, having described the hu-ch'in as the product of a mere craftsman, which was therefore not worth paying attention to, he smashed it and distributed his writings to the guests, and thus became well-known in a day's time. He was then appointed secretary to Prince Wu Yu-yi of Chien-an.¹⁵ The main part of the story is typical romancing. And as we have seen, he assisted Wu Yu-yi at a much later date.

Coming back to the question of Ch'en's death, one wonders at the circumstances in which a district magistrate could have

enough power and courage to get the better of a court official, as Ch'en Tzu-ang was. Ts'en Chung-mien, in his article on Ch'en Tzu-ang and his anthology, brings forward three queries regarding his death. First he calls our attention to the Biography of Lai Chün-ch'en in the Hsin t'ang-shu, which says that Tuan Chien had a beautiful maid, whom Lai coveted and pressed Chien to hand over. Chien eventually did so out of fear of Lai. Seen from this, Tuan Chien in fact was a cowardly man. Ch'en Tzu-ang on the other hand never showed fear of the Empress, and even criticized the misdeeds of people like Chou Hsing and Lai Chün-ch'en. Why is it that he feared Tuan Chien? Secondly, Ch'en had been imprisoned for over a year in the Eastern Capital; with such experience, why did he cower before a mere district magistrate? Thirdly, Ch'en Tzu-ang was still a court official though he was in his village, and so was well able to stand up to a district magistrate; why is it that he should have tendered the bribe so hurriedly? Furthermore, a bribe of 200,000 cash was a handsome sum; Tuan Chien should have felt satisfied.¹⁶

Not all the queries, however, are well thought out. It is indeed true, from his extant works, that Ch'en Tzu-ang always stood firm at court. It is also true that his imprisonment in Shu was not a new experience; but everybody has his moment of weakness. For Ch'en Tzu-ang, who was in his forties, enfeebled by his distress and lack of good food during the period of mourning, it is possible that he suddenly found it hard to stand torture, and any means available, therefore, must be employed to get himself out of it. Therefore the argument based on his alleged once strong character does not seem valid at all.

But Ts'en's queries do raise two useful points, namely, the character of Tuan Chien and the status of a court official as compared with that of a local magistrate. These naturally lead

one to consider the remarks of Shen Ya-chih, for without superior backing, Tuan Chien could not possibly have ridden roughshod over Ch'en.

Wang Yün-hsi 王運熙, in his article on the life and works of Ch'en Tzu-ang, examines Shen's letter and points out that Wu San-ssu, who is supposed to have caused Ch'en's death, was a younger first cousin of Wu Ch'eng-ssu. Both were in supreme power during the reign of the Empress and planned many treacherous undertakings together. Thus Wu San-ssu would naturally have joined in the plot for Ch'iao Chih-chih's death. He quotes a passage from the Biography of Wu Ch'eng-ssu in the Chiu t'ang-shu to support his speculation concerning the relationship between the two. The passage reads, "Ch'eng-ssu had once advised Tse-t'ien 則天 [Empress Wu] to set up a new empire and exterminate the imperial princes and high-ranking officials who were not on the Wus' side. The younger first cousin of Ch'eng-ssu, San-ssu, totally supported his idea. The Empire today still holds them in contumely."

Wang also quotes passages from the Biography of Wu San-ssu in the Hsin t'ang-shu, "He was specially jealous of and stood against the upright. He once said, 'I do not know how to tell who are good people; those who are on my side are probably them.'... often brought about large-scale imprisonments, harmed the good and uprooted their lineage, and rocked the empire by it." Consequently he suspects that people like Ch'en Tzu-ang, who stayed upright and was constantly against excessive penalties, had very early been considered an obstacle by Wu San-ssu. He also suggests the earlier imprisonment of Ch'en was caused by Wu San-ssu's faction. Only when Ch'en returned home could Wu succeed in getting rid of him by the hand of Tuan Chien. Wang reckons this to have been the usual style of Wu Ch'eng-ssu and Wu San-ssu, for they also employed unscrupulous underlings in the case of Ch'iao Chih-chih.

To strengthen his argument still further, Wang quotes a passage from the Biography of Wei Fang-chih 韋方質 in the Hsin t'ang-shu, in which it is said that the two Wu's went to inquire after the ailing Chief Minister Wei Fang-chih, who did not get out of bed to receive them. Wei was soon set on by their gang and was subsequently banished and killed, his property confiscated. He also quotes a passage in the Ch'ao-yeh chien-tsai 朝野僉載 by Chang Cho 張鷟 of T'ang, which describes Wu San-ssu as a man who possessed an honest exterior look, but was extremely cruel at heart. While dispensing justice, he practised treachery secretly; he also used the law for vengeance and his power at court to harm others.¹⁷

As we have seen, Wang fails to resist the temptation of going so far as to suspect Ch'en's earlier imprisonment to have been a result of a plot on the part of Wu San-ssu's confederates. Apart from that, I find Wang's speculations on the whole reasonable.

If Shen Ya-chih's allegation that Ch'en Tzu-ang's death was caused by Wu San-ssu is true, then Lu Ts'ang-yung, when writing Ch'en's biography, was either intentionally hiding the fact or unaware of it. Wang Yun-hsi attempts to attribute the missing of the fact to Lu Ts'ang-yung's character and situation, and he quotes a passage from the Biography of Lu in the Chiu t'ang-shu, "When he eventually got to court, he behaved hesitantly and cunningly, devoted himself to serving those in power, and was extravagant and unrestrained, thus inviting low opinions from others." Wang alleges that it was because of his fear for the price he would have had to pay if the truth had been revealed that Lu hid this anecdote in the Unofficial Biography.¹⁸

Lu Ts'ang-yung was a man of mixed merits and faults. The Chiu t'ang-shu says that he was not a man of particularly strong character and constantly found himself under the pressure of those

in power. On the other hand, Lu was an accomplished scholar and a devoted friend. The same history records, "He had, from an early age, been close friends with Ch'en Tzu-ang and Chao Chen-ku 趙貞固. Both died early. Ts'ang-yung brought up their children with loving care, and was duly praised by his contemporaries."¹⁹ The Hsin t'ang-shu records something similar, and says he "was praised for being able to keep a friendship from beginning to end."²⁰ But just because he was a good friend of Ch'en Tzu-ang, the pressure at court on him might have been the greater.

To sum up, that the incidents which eventually caused Ch'en Tzu-ang's death were manipulated by somebody superior to Tuan Chien is probable. I personally favour the allegation by Shen Ya-chih for the following reasons:

1. Since Shen Ya-chih alleged that his predecessor's death had been due to Wu San-ssu, he must have had reasons for saying so. As Shen lived in a time when the T'ang Empire was no longer threatened by the Wu's, he ought to have been able to say what he believed to be the truth. Shen's allegation also looks convincing in that despite the relationship between San-ssu and Ch'eng-ssu, he did not suggest the latter was involved in this matter. The fact remains that Wu Ch'eng-ssu died four years earlier than Ch'en Tzu-ang.
2. Although the rank of a district magistrate was superior to that of an omissioner, the fact that an omissioner was a court official should have cancelled out the difference. Only in 704 the Chief Ministers Li Chiao 李嶠 (644-713) and T'ang Hsiu-ching 許休璟 are said to have expressed to the Empress their regret that court office was too much preferred to local office.²¹ Tuan Chien could not have handled Ch'en the way he did, unless the former was under orders from a superior.

3. Ch'en had more than once spoken against excessive punishments. He was also against persecution of the members of the House of Li. This had undoubtedly put him in bad odour with the Wu cousins, who were in favour of such policies. He could well have been on their elimination list.

4. By the time of Ch'en Tzu-ang's retirement, most of the ministers and senior judicial officials whose policies Ch'en had opposed had died; so had Wu Ch'eng-ssu. For want of evidence suggesting other possible personalities with an interest, Wu San-ssu was the most likely man behind the scene. If Lai Chün-ch'en had exacted compliance from Tuan Chien, there is no reason why Wu San-ssu could not have done the same.

5. Ch'en's office as Omissioner allowed him close contact with the Empress. The fact that the Empress granted him an indefinite paid leave also shows that he was not out of favour. Thus it might have been inconvenient for Wu San-ssu to get rid of Ch'en at court; but having him removed while he was in a border province should have been much easier.

6. Lu Ts'ang-yung, who was Ch'en's close friend and who eventually rose to a high official position, must have known of Wu San-ssu's part in the plot. The Unofficial Biography, according to Mr. Wu Ch'i-yü's article, was published sometime between 710 and 711, when Lu Ts'ang-yung was Deputy Head of the State Chancellery.²² Wu San-ssu was killed in 707 by Crown Prince Ch'ung-chün 重俊, much to the displeasure of Emperor Chung-tsung, who offered the Crown Prince's head before Wu San-ssu's coffin.²³ It was not until the time of the publication of the Unofficial Biography that Wu San-ssu was officially denounced by Emperor Jui-tsung.²⁴ I therefore suspect the publication of the Unofficial Biography, and therefore Ch'en's Works as well, was made possible only as a result of Wu San-ssu's fading influence. But Lu might, on account

of fear of any possible hidden threat from Wu's followers, have left out this crucial episode.

Wang Fu-chih 王夫之 (1619-1692) says the following in his Tu t'ung-chien lun 讀通鑑論 :

Ch'en Tzu-ang was known in the T'ang dynasty for his poetry. However, he was not just a literary man. If he had had the opportunity of serving under a discerning ruler so that his ability could be used to the full, he would have excelled Ma Chou 馬周 [T'ai-tsung's Chief Minister] and equalled Yao Ch'ung 姚崇 [Hsüan-tsung's Chief Minister]. Indeed he would have made a capable minister. His arguments concerning the cutting of the pass to attack T'u-po already display a good long-term plan for running a country. Moreover, at a time when the Wu's were slaughtering the princes and when they were at the height of their cruelty and harshness, Ch'en was courageous enough to plead for lenient treatment of the members of the royal house, that they could live in peace. In so doing, he was undauntedly facing the savage anger of the Wu's. Furthermore, that he called attention to the wickedness of the excessive killings operated by the cruel officials, sought to enable justice to prevail, and said what the country dared not say, and yet the treacherous and the cruel were at a loss to harm him, shows that he was capable of hitting them at the right spot and even frightening them. He certainly was not one who blindly and recklessly exposed himself to the claws of the cruel. That is why I say he could have been used as a minister to undertake the responsibility of the empire./1

Wang Fu-chih's prognoses cannot be verified, for Ch'en never did become a minister. But if we examine Ch'en's political precepts by way of his memorials, we shall find that his compassion, knowledge and insight stand out prominently; these main features Wang Yün-hsi has discussed in fair detail.² If we compare the extant memorials of Ch'en Tzu-ang and those of Ti Jen-chieh,³ who was generally regarded as the best Chief Minister of his time, we shall find that their political views are in many ways similar. Of course I am not suggesting that Ch'en Tzu-ang would have made a successful chief minister with his precepts alone, but the knowledge, insight and compassion which he displays in his memorials are certainly relevant to his time, and they deserve high regard.

Ch'en Tzu-ang's role as innovator in T'ang poetry bears a moralistic connotation and reflects the extent to which his personal character was respected by the T'ang literati; they certainly would not have paid such a high tribute to someone whose character was in doubt. His Kan-yü poems spoke for his loyalty to the House of Li, and stood him in good stead for the rest of the dynasty. One notices that although the great master Tu Fu 杜甫 (712-770) admired Ch'en for being a man of great literary capability, he specially gave credit to Ch'en's Kan-yü poems for the "loyalty and righteousness" that were set "for millennia to come".⁴ Lu Kuei-meng 陸龜蒙 (d. 881) in fact touches solely on his character when he says in his poem,

The will of Li [Po] and Tu [Fu] never changed,
The principle of Meng [Hao-jan] and Ch'en [Tzu-ang] never swayed.⁵

These examples are indicative of the extent to which his name thrived on his good character.

However, with the passing of the T'ang dynasty, the "loyalty and righteousness" in his Kan-yü poems seem to have been obscured. Not even such a scholar of high standing as Sung Ch'i 章 祁 (998-1061), who wrote Ch'en's biography in the Hsin t'ang-shu, seems to have understood the poems. He, like the author of the Chiu t'ang-shu, mistook the Kan-yü poems for poetic exercises in the poet's early years, displaying his total ignorance as regards their hidden themes.⁶ Having taken from Ch'en Tzu-ang this vital proof of his loyalty, Sung Ch'i seizes upon the "Ta-chou shou-ming sung" 大周受命頌 to discredit him, saying that on Empress Wu's accession, "Tzu-ang submitted the 'Chou-shou-ming sung' to flatter the Empress."⁷ and concludes the biography by exposing Ch'en's serious political precepts to ridicule. The following is his concluding passage:

Tzu-ang persuaded Empress Wu to revive the institution of the ming-t'ang and restore the Grand Academy, and gave forth very exalted ideas. This is indeed strange and laughable. The Empress usurped the supreme power, killed high-ranking officials and members of the royal house, intimidated the rightful emperor and seized his authority. Yet Tzu-ang kept admonishing her with the kingly way; so his proposals were abused and rejected by the woman. It was just like taking some precious gem and jade to a woman's bed-chamber to be smeared with oil and grease. The blind do not see Mount T'ai 泰山, the deaf do not hear thunder; was Tzu-ang not deaf and blind towards words! /8

To say that Ch'en's serious views are strange and laughable because they were put to Empress Wu seems to suggest that they should only be reserved for very deserving rulers, who might actually have conceived such ideas themselves anyway. In saying this, too, Sung Ch'i was elevating the ruler over the country, while officials like Ti Jen-chieh and Ch'en Tzu-ang might have preferred otherwise. To me, the political precepts of Ch'en's, presented at such a time, make up one important feature of his political undertakings - high seriousness - which also forms the basis to his poetic views and works. One also finds this feature in his social life; for he is said to have been a loyal friend. The Unofficial Biography says that he "particularly valued friendship. Once the good relationship was established he would not have given it up even if confronted with a knife."⁹ With such information it is not difficult to understand the intrinsic side of the serious nature of his poetic views and works.

On the other hand, Ch'en was obviously a man much subject to the conflicting attraction of advancement and seclusion, and a victim of the desire for fame. In his Works, there is a poem which he wrote, after his second frontier expedition, to his colleague by the name of Yen 嚴, to ask him to tell his fortune,¹⁰ which clearly shows he was not at all indifferent to temporal

glories. Although common sense tells us that the submission of the laudatory memorial in question must have been part of the official ritual then, in which Ch'en Tzu-ang was certainly not the only one to participate, it is not unlikely that it was also a means to gain favour from the Empress. Ch'en is in a way like Juan Chi 阮籍 (210-263), whose poetry he highly regarded.¹¹ Ch'en certainly would welcome favour from the Empress, as Juan Chi had received favour from Ssu-ma Chao 司馬昭 (211-265).¹² For Juan Chi it was self-preservation against his enemies, for Ch'en Tzu-ang it might, in addition, have been a means to faster promotion and an avenue by which to realize his political ideals - though apparently he was not very successful in either case. But Ch'en is not reported to have resorted to any out-of-the-way manoeuvring for favour such as would put his reputation in jeopardy. Ch'en, like Juan, also took the clandestine way of expressing his loyalty towards the suppressed royal house and of deploring contemporary events. This proved to be an important contributing factor to his literary status.

Ch'en's loyalty to the House of Li is in fact the key to many of his Kan-yü poems; and the serious side of his character, as deduced from his works and from the testimony in his biographies, forms the internal force behind his poetic views and works as such. It is from this viewpoint that I deal with his poetics and poetry in Section II.

Section II. The Poetry of Ch'en Tzu-ang

Chapter 1. Predecessors and Contemporaries

To understand the significance of Ch'en Tzu-ang's poetics and works, it is necessary to describe the poetic scene in the early T'ang, as well as give an account of the general development of the poetic style in the pre-T'ang period, so that one can see the background against which and the material with which Ch'en Tzu-ang operated on poetry. I have made the account as brief as possible so that it does not outweigh the more important subjects of discussion, but serves only to elucidate them. The discussion of the various poetic styles in this chapter also conveniently serves to elaborate Ch'en's poetics as presented in the following chapter. Thus this seeming digression is necessary. I also wish to state at this point that I do not intend to discuss a style which was not prominent in its time, because it would not serve any useful purpose here.

The general poetic atmosphere in the early T'ang was very much a continuation of what is commonly known as the Ch'i-Liang style 齊梁體. The Ch'i-Liang style in fact comprises two prominent poetic styles of the Ch'i-Liang period, namely, the Yung-ming style, or Yung-ming-t'i 永明體, and the palace style, or kung-t'i 宮體. The Yung-ming style came into being when the awareness of the intrinsic tonal beauty of poetry came to fullness in the Southern Ch'i 南齊 (479-502) dynasty, which witnessed the discovery of the four tones in the Chinese language, as recorded in the Nan-ch'i-shu 南齊書 :

Towards the close of the Yung-ming era, literary creations were in full bloom. Shen Yüeh 沈約 of Wu-hsing 吳興, Hsieh T'iao 謝朓 of Ch'en Prefecture 陳郡 and Wang Jung 王融 of Lang-yeh 琅瑯, who had similar likings in literature, helped one another along in their literary activities. Chou Jung 周顒 of Ju-nan 汝南 was versed

in tones and rhymes. The writings of Yueh and his contemporaries all employed kung-shang 宮商 ; they designated the four tones as level, rising, departing and entering, whereupon stringent regulations were imposed on poetry. This was called Yung-ming style in their time./1

The palace style deals mainly with sensual topics in flowery language. It thrived in the wake of the discovery of tones and came as a final form of escape from bitter reality for the courts and the literati of the Southern Dynasties. The Yung-ming style has been popularly looked upon as the forerunner of the regulated poetic form, which Ch'en Tzu-ang is seen to have worked on with interest. But the flowery style and sensual content of the kung-t'i met with the poet's strong opposition. In the following paragraphs, I will venture to trace the formation of these two styles. I will also touch on the socio-political background which I think inspired these poetic styles, and the styles on which the Ch'i-Liang style acted. Only then can the heritage be better understood; needless to say Ch'en Tzu-ang's poetics and works will also be considered in the same light.

Ever since poetry as an independent literary form started to flourish in the Chien-an 建安 (196-220) period of the Latter Han 後漢 (25-220), it had undergone several general changes in style before it reached the Ch'i-Liang era. On the whole, the bulk of poems of the Chien-an period can be looked upon as positive socio-political poems and poems of an urgent and serious nature, written in a time when the strong Han empire was split up and fatally crumbling amidst war, hardship, uncertainty and insecurity. The Chien-an period was a time when most of the poets themselves had their share of sufferings as well as seeing others suffer, a time of frustrations and disappointments for many. All this led to serious and explicit themes of social protest and verses in which the poets mourned their own fate. In the course of such compositions, however, the demand for expressiveness, and therefore skilful handling of form, structure and language to create the kind of

atmosphere needed for the poems was bound to be felt, which must have caused an increased awareness of the formal aspects of poetry.

The Wei (220-265) dynasty also produced socio-political and other serious poems, but of a reticent type, as distinct from the tone of realism and concreteness which characterized much of Chien-an poetry.

Both the Chien-an period and the Wei dynasty witnessed the massive break-down of Han Confucianism in their unsettled state of affairs, which on the one hand caused Taoism as a philosophy and a religion to gain ground, and on the other caused the utilitarian and indoctrinational concept of literature to be replaced by the consciousness of its intrinsic value as art. The Taoist ascendancy was continually helped on by the uncertain life led by the literati towards the latter part of the Wei dynasty, when political struggles did not take the form of military leaders fighting for power, but of parties at court being involved in political intrigues, often resulting in many lives being lost, creating an even more delicate and dangerous situation. In such a political atmosphere, which convinced the literati of the utter precariousness of life, there was little wonder that the Taoist philosophy, which inspired serenity, carefreeness and a levelled view of life and death, was so much sought after for its release from temporal threats and worries when the mental pressure of the real world proved too much to bear. Many extant poems of this period take on a pessimistic view, containing few ideas on progressive political and social changes, but rather embodying a feeling of detachment from undesirable political involvements. While many Chien-an poets dwelt on their own sorrow, the difficulty of the time, and the sufferings of the people, thus gaining later recognition as the Chien-an style 建安體, Wei poets universalized their sorrow, made it inescapable, and yet desperately strove to

escape it by working out faery and mystic symbols for a utopia, betraying the conflict in them between responsibility and Taoist detachment; these characteristics were later recognized as typical of the Cheng-shih style 正始體 . The era name Cheng-shih 正始 (240-249) has its Taoist and mystical significance, as T'an Tao-luan 檀道鸞 (fl. 5th cen.) says in the Hsü chin-yang-ch'iu 續晉陽秋 ,

In the Cheng-shih era, Ho Yen 何晏 and Wang Pi 王弼 were fond of talking on the writings of Chuang-tzu 莊子 and Lao-tzu 老子 and other mystical topics, and enjoyed great popularity./2

Despite their indulgence in myths, bitterness, frustration, despair and helplessness underlie the poems so strongly that they seldom go unnoticed, as can be seen in such poems as the cycle of Yung-huai 詠懷 , or "Singing of thoughts", by Juan Chi. Though Chien-an poetry and Cheng-shih poetry are different in the approaches adopted, they nevertheless have the same social and political awareness, revealing as they do the grim aspects of life and society.

On the other hand, the growing awareness of the intrinsic and independent value of poetry was very much crystallized when it reached the Western Chin 西晉 (265-317). It was then that Lu Chi 陸機 (261-303) wrote his celebrated "Rhyme-prose on literature" 文賦 , in which the values of poetry are re-fashioned especially by the line "Poetry follows the feeling and is well-patterned and beautiful,"³ showing a marked switch from the maxim "Poetry expresses the mind,"⁴ which Han classicists looked to. While "Poetry expresses the mind" was coated with didacticism by Han classicists, Lu Chi's remark simply means that poetry reflects the poet's feelings, which could be of any type as long as they are beautifully represented. In fact, even before the rhyme-prose, this awareness of literature had already broken the surface a few times. In the "Lun-wen" 論文 chapter of his Tien-lun 典論 ,⁵

Ts'ao P'i 曹丕 (186-226) made his historic appreciation of literature as an independent entity, while Ts'ao Chih 曹植 (192-232) in his "Letter to Yang Te-tsu" 與楊德祖書⁶ and Juan Yü 阮瑀 in his "Treatise on pattern and substance" 文質論⁷ also made some rudimentary literary criticisms of a similar nature. But it was not until Lu Chi that the values and the formal aspects of literature became the subject of detailed studies. In the same line of Lu Chi's rhyme-prose, the formal aesthetic value of poetry is also acknowledged ipso facto when the epithets "well-patterned" and "beautiful" are applied to it; words which coincidentally or otherwise enlarge on the remark by Ts'ao P'i in the "Lun-wen" that poetry and rhyme-prose should be beautiful.

In fact, beauty is probably the keynote for the poetry of the main part of the Western Chin. For once the formal independence and intrinsic aesthetic values of poetry were realized, experiments and discoveries along such lines tended to go on. In the first half of the Western Chin, this was also socially possible, with the empire in a much less turbulent state, and with one of the strong heads of government, Chia Mi 賈謐, being an aesthete in literary tastes. Ingenious variations in diction and treatment of greater intricacy and polish are general features of the extant poems written in the first half of the Western Chin, and verbal parallelisms, which do not seem to have matured before this period, feature prominently. The general poetic style of the Western Chin was later denoted by the era names T'ai-k'ang 太康 (280-289) and Yüan-k'ang 元康 (291-299).⁸

In the era of Yung-chia 永嘉 (307-313), when the Western Chin empire came to face a total collapse, Taoism and other forms of mysticism again gained tremendous popularity. This time the literati, rendered more helpless after a period of comfort and safety, were apparently quite determined to detach themselves utterly from reality, thus poems representing this period hardly contain a trace of bitterness or a note of protest, but on the con-

trary show serenity in pure expositions of the Taoist philosophy. The escapist flavour penetrated ever deeper into the Eastern Chin 東晉 (317-420).

Mystic poetry very soon led to the rise of nature poetry in the Southern Sung 南宋 (420-479) dynasty, which succeeded the Eastern Chin. One main reason was probably the change of location of activities for the scholar-gentry from the flat northern China to the mountainous south, which must have opened their eyes to the immense beauty of nature and therefore increased their urge to describe it; needless to say nature had always been associated with the Taoist recluse and immortals, and mystical poets of the Eastern Chin were almost invariably lovers of nature.⁹ But in the course of writing about nature, a very high descriptive ability was again required to capture its spirit, leading to an even greater attention to poetic techniques. At any rate, the detachment from society is on the whole very obvious in the bulk of Chin-Sung poems, which also appear less forceful than Han-Wei poems.

The awareness of the formal aspects of poetry eventually brought about the discovery of tones in the Southern Ch'i dynasty, which gave rise to the Yung-ming style. It was also this time which witnessed the beginning of obsession with form at the expense of ideas. The tonal beauty which the Yung-ming style gave to poetry inevitably stimulated and demanded further poetic stylization to match it. For instance, the device of parallelism was even more extensively and consciously employed; while such a device helps to give poetry symmetry, and therefore an architectural beauty, ill-controlled use might cause it to appear forced and mechanical. The device of allusion was also more extensively employed; and while such a device gives textured compression to the language and endows poetry with greater richness of association, indiscreet employment often creates unnecessary indirection and staleness.

To both abuses poets then seemed to be prone. Care in diction led to refinement, itself quite legitimate; refinement itself might give forth a certain amount of graphic beauty; but it in turn gave way to pedantry and obfuscation. Indeed, it seems that poets of this period were beginning to shift their interest rapidly from the question of what to say to that of how to say it, and poetry of this period, as a result, grew increasingly mannered and stereotyped.

Even so, poets still needed one thing or another to say. As the country's affairs deteriorated, as the resort to escapes continued, and probably as the description of nature as a means of escape grew stale, mildly erotic themes were eventually taken to blend with beautiful poetic forms to create an exciting dramatic beauty, which was also a foreseeable result of the general softening of strength in poetry started in the Western Chin. Thus the age's poetry turned from escape into nature to escape into sex.

However, the thematic change from mysticism and nature to sex must also be attributed to the life style and social origins of the royal houses of the Southern Sung onwards, all of which rose from low social strata, far removed from the spiritual and philosophical education which the scholar-gentry class received. The royal members, like the scholar-gentry, also needed means of escape in an insecure time; lacking in spiritual and philosophical education, they thus tended to go for excitements much less restrained. Life at court in the Southern Dynasties was astoundingly sensual and perverted, as recorded vividly in the Nan-shih 南史.¹⁰ Their way of life being such, there was little wonder that they wrote about things of the same nature in poetry. When such poetry was established among the royalty, it took but little time for the scholar-gentry to follow. Thus in the Liang 梁 (502-557) dynasty, the palace style flourished. The initiation of the palace style has generally been attributed to the Emperor Chien-wen of

Liang 梁簡文帝 (503-551), as the Liang-shu 梁書 records:

He was fond of writing poetry; in one of the introductions to his poems he says, "Since I was seven years of age I have developed an addiction to poetry, which I never tire of as the years grow." But his poetry suffers from beauty of a frivolous kind; it was referred to as the palace style in his time./11

The term began with Emperor Chien-wen probably when he was Prince of Chin-an 晉安王 and afterwards Crown Prince, for he was assassinated only a year after his accession to the throne. Poems of the nature described can in fact be found before Chien-wen's time, but it was he who caused them to develop into a prominent style.

Almost as a rule, kung-t'i poems are lusciously but elegantly presented, with rich imagery and subtle diction, they deal mainly with ladies of the palace, and through descriptions of their femininity and implications of their sexual attractions and unsatisfied longings, aim to arouse in the reader a mild erotic tingle. Homosexuality is also touched on in poems of this period.¹² Understandable when sex with women had reached surfeit, eroticism in other guises could have an occasional place.

In the last years of the Southern Dynasties, kung-t'i poetry was written at the court of the emperor Hou-chu of Ch'en 陳後主 (553-604) by men and women alike.¹³

During the Liang-Ch'en period, the attitude towards poetry accordingly moved a step further from what Lu Chi saw as "followig the feeling". Emperor Chien-wen in his "Letter of admonition to Ta-hsin, Duke of Tang-yang" 誠當陽公大心書, written to his son, says,

Establishing one's personal character is different from writing literature, in establishing one's character, one needs first and foremost be cautious and respectful; in literature, one's emotions should be uninhibited./14

Without questioning the compatibility of the two attitudes, the works of the time fully bear out the literary bent towards "un-inhibitedness".

Meanwhile, poetic form, especially that of the five-character verse, was in general very mature in the Liang-Ch'en period, as a result of unceasing efforts on the part of the Southern Dynasties poets. It is indeed not very difficult to come across poems which coincidentally fit into the later standard patterns of the chin-t'i 近體.

Kung-t'i poetry, and in fact literature other than that of a plain style, were under pressure in the early years of the united Sui 隋 (581-618) dynasty, when Yang Chien 楊堅 (541-604), as Emperor Wen 文帝, took account of the adverse effects of such a literary style in terms of expediency and national morale and was quite averse to its continuation. However, his effort was brought to a halt by his son Yang Kuang 楊廣 (580-618), who succeeded him as Emperor Yang 煬帝, and who required kung-t'i poetry to go along with his decadent private life. He ruled for thirteen years before he was assassinated. Two years later the Sui dynasty collapsed; but not the palace style in poetry, which stayed on into the early T'ang. So it was that the writers of poetry in the early T'ang period were faced with an immense legacy from the latter part of the Southern Dynasties, which could claim indirect descent from even Chien-an poetry but had departed so far from its themes and intentions.

Emperor T'ai-tsung 太宗 (597-649), despite his being a politically progressive and dedicated ruler, was an enthusiast for the kung-t'i, which, admittedly, being by this time a deep-rooted poetic style, was able to serve to decorate an empire in time of peace. It is said in the Ch'üan-t'ang shih-hua 全唐詩話 that T'ai-tsung once wrote a poem in the kung-t'i and asked Yü

Shih-nan 虞世南 (558-638) to harmonize it, but was mildly admonished by Yü for setting a bad example to his kingdom.¹⁵ However, Yü Shih-nan himself has left us with poems which savour much of the palace style. Anyhow, the poetry at court in the era of T'ai-tsung and his son Kao-tsung really seems to have reached a dead end, for with a T'ang court politically much more capable and generally much less decadent than any Liang or Ch'en court, the kung t'i poems it produced inevitably lack the fervent desire and conviction of their counterparts in the Liang-Ch'en era, and were little more than lifeless imitations.

While poetic content remained stagnant in general, poetic forms based on the Yung-ming style continued to mature positively towards standardization, which is said to have been accomplished some time later when poetry reached the hands of Shen Ch'üan-ch'i and Sung Chih-wen, two influential courtiers and contemporaries of Ch'en Tzu-ang. Meanwhile, Wang Po 王勃 (648-675), Yang Chiung 楊炯 , Lu Chao-lin 盧照隣 and Lo Pin-wang, collectively known as the "four remarkable personalities of the early T'ang", were in the limelight for their effort to explore new tracts in poetry with the prevailing Ch'i-Liang poetic elements; this was regarded by many later critics as a faint first sign of breaking away from the banality and effateness of the palace style as well as the obsession with form, which the Yung-ming style had created. In fact, in the preface to the Works of Wang Po, Yang Chiung does point out that Wang was concerned with reforming poetry. Yang says Wang felt strongly about the overworked beauty of current literature, in which "vigour totally disappears and strength is no longer heard of," and that Wang "thought of reforming such malpractices, so as to brighten his aims and calling."¹⁶ However, Wang Po's views were mild; and the society of the time did not demand drastic changes in existing trends. Wang Po died at the

age of 28 in the reign of the emperor Kao-tsung, which was still the golden age of the dynasty, and his contribution to poetic changes was cut short.

Lu Chao-lin, who suffered most in life, being constantly overwhelmed by illness, wrote the saddest poems among the four. Yang Chiung was the best-off, and his poems seem the least striking. Wang Po and Lo Pin-wang have the largest bulk of poems extant; the most appealing, it seems, are those written on partings and in distress, which blend moving feelings with beautiful poetic style. The following poem, "Assistant Magistrate Tu leaving for Shu to assume office" 杜少府之任蜀州, was written by Wang Po:

The walls and gates fence the metropolis of the three Ch'in,
In wind and mist I gaze in the direction of the five streams.
This parting feeling I share with you,
We both are wanderers in the official world.
Within the seas we keep our friendship,
Between ends of heaven we are like neighbours.
Let us not, on this divergent road,
Moisten our handkerchiefs in a childish and womanly way.¹⁷

The following is a tonal transcription of the poem, which shows, apart from the placings of antithetical couplets, that it is a perfect lu-shih 律詩 in the distribution of tones. In the transcription a level tone is represented by the letter "P", an oblique tone is represented by the letter "T", a syntactic parallelism is underlined:

PTTPP PPTTP TPPTT PTTPP
TTPPT PPTTP PPTPT PTTPP

The following poem, "In prison singing of cicadas" 在獄詠蟬, was written by Lo Pin-wang:

Under Western Land the cicadas call,
In my southern hat, I am invaded by travellers' thoughts.
How could I bear to see this shadow of dark hair
Facing the White-headed Song.
Dewdrops are heavy, to fly forward is hard,
Winds blow frequently, your voice is easily drowned.

Thus no one believes this noble heart,
Who will make it known for me?/18

The following is a tonal transcription, showing it to be a perfect
lü-shih:

PTPPT PPTTP TPPTT PTTTP

TTPPT PPTTP PPTTP PTTTP

Eventually, when the golden days of T'ai-tsung and Kao-tsung were past, with power falling into the hands of Empress Wu, and the empire beginning to show signs of insecurity, disturbance and decline, the time was ripe for the by then lifeless and meaningless kung-t'i to receive its fatal blow. For while such poems could stand if they were sincere, and might be accepted as court pastimes in time of peace even if they were insincere, they definitely could not stand if they remain insincere at a time when a peaceful and strong empire was experiencing its first signs of deterioration, for at such times an empire cannot afford to have such an important form as poetry devoted to mere play. Against this sort of political and social background poetry was bound to come full circle, and the Han-Wei spirit was bound to emerge, needing only an influential advocate. This was Ch'en Tzu-ang.

Chapter 2. Poetics

Ch'en Tzu-ang had written an essay entitled "A literary treatise by the man on the river" 江上人文論, which, as described by Lu Ts'ang-yung, "was able to penetrate the secrets of divine working and communicate with the Creator."¹ The essay would probably have helped us to understand his literary views in greater detail, if not for the fact that it was lost during the time of Ch'en Tzu-ang's fatal imprisonment. However, his views on poetry can still be seen in his introduction to his own poem "The tall bamboo" 修竹篇, written to Tung-fang Ch'iu 東方虬 the Left Censor. This introduction has been taken by many modern critics as a piece of writing in which Ch'en delivers his total condemnation of the Ch'i-Liang style and advocates a revival of the Han-Wei spirit; such a view is held by critics like Lo Ken-tse 羅根澤, Kuo Shao-yü 郭紹虞 and others.² But this is an over-simplified view. In the introduction Ch'en does not clearly mention the formal aspects of the Yung-ming style, which are certainly a part of the Ch'i-liang-t'i. If he does not take the formal aspects to task, his condemnation may not be regarded as total. The interpretation of the modern critics concerned seems to stand, because practically every one of them chooses to ignore Ch'en Tzu-ang's attachment to and achievements in the regulated poetic form. Likewise, Ch'en's precepts are by no means exhaustive in the introduction, because he obviously did not intend it to be a standard literary treatise. But this is somehow the only extant piece of work in some length which contains his poetic views in some detail. Thus it has to be, and has become, the only piece of work which poets and critics over the centuries had to work on, if they were to discuss his poetics at all. None of them, however, has yet made a comprehensive

analysis of the ideas conveyed in this piece of writing, the absence of which renders any speculation questionable. In this chapter I venture to carry out the analysis as comprehensively as I possibly can, so that I may arrive at a more acceptable conclusion. The following is the introduction itself:

My lord Tung-fang: It has been five hundred years since the deterioration of the way of literature. The feng-ku 風骨 of the Han-Wei the Chin-Sung has not persisted. However, evidence of it can still be found in literary records. I, your humble servant, have in my freer time looked at poems of the Ch'i-Liang period. They vie with one another in extravagance of colour and beauty but are totally lacking in the application of hsing 興. Often have I sighed over it. When I think about the ancients, fearing that with the increase of effeteness and decadence, works in the tradition of feng-ya 風雅 will no longer be produced, I often feel disturbed. The other day I was at the house of Hsieh San 解三 and saw Your Excellency's poem "The solitary t'ung tree" 孤桐篇; its appearance is so proper, its air so ethereal, its sound so rhythmic, and its emotion so deep; it is so brilliant, noble, clear and expertly written that it produces the "music of metal and stone". It has cleansed my mind, broadened my sight, and expressed those feelings deep in my heart. Never had I thought that the sound of the Cheng-shih era could be experienced in the present time. This would indeed have made the Chien-an writers smile at one another with appreciation. Mr. Hsieh said, "Chang Mao-hsien 張茂先 and Ho Ching-tsu 何敬祖 find their match in Mr. Tung-fang." I, your humble servant, consider such to be discerning comments. I therefore, moved by and marvelling at your elegant piece of work, composed this poem of the tall bamboo./3

There are a few terms in the passage which are best clarified at the start. The first is the term "feng-ku". Ch'en Tzu-ang seems to have inherited its connotations from the Wen-hsin tiao-lung 文心 雕龍, writtin by Liu Hsieh 劉勰 of the Ch'i-Liang period. "Feng", or wind, and "ku", or bone, together or in isolation, frequently appear in Liu's book to refer to the ideas of literary work and the kinds of impact they produce. Despite the solid look of the

term "ku", the two terms are on the same level of abstraction and owe their existence solely to words, or literary expressions. The "Feng-ku" chapter has a passage which reads,

To be thin in ideas and fat in words, or confused and disorganized and without unity, are signs of lack of bone./4

which clearly treats "ku" as an abstract noun. "Feng" and "ku", as two integral parts of ideas, may well come from two forms of emotion: "feng" comes from subjective passion while "ku" from objective rationalization, as the opening passage of the "Feng-ku" chapter clearly suggests:

The Book of Odes contains six elements, of these feng stands at the head of the list. It is the source of transformation, and the correlate of the mind and vitality. Thus it starts with feng to express one's vexed feelings, and nothing is emphasized more than ku in one's careful arrangement of words. Literary expressions rely on ku in much the same way as the body is supported by its skeleton, feeling embraces feng as a physical form envelops vitality./5

The connotations of "feng-ku" have been examined in detail, and I think correctly, by Prof. Hsü Fu-kuan 徐復觀⁶ and it is therefore not my intention to dwell on them, except that it is necessary to observe that "feng-ku" is clearly a term of merit, symbolized by the prevalent moving air and substantial bone. Ch'en's usage does not seem to be an exception.

Next come the terms which were originally related to the Book of Odes, "hsing" and "feng-ya". But they are best examined with another term, "pi-hsing" 比興, which appears in Ch'en Tzu-ang's introduction to "Song in drunkenness on a happy meeting with Commissary Ma" 喜馬參軍相遇醉歌序, in which is also found his attitude towards poetry:

Long indeed have I been of no use; in my career I cannot mend the country with righteousness, in seclusion I cannot hide myself with high ideals in life... Now is a night in

winter, the crescent moon is in the sky, white clouds cover half of the mountain, setting my mind afloat on the sea. Now that I am warm with wine, and the lute sounds so clear, my contentment is indescribable; and how vast the universe! How I would like to be with the green birds and settle myself on the cinnabar hill! Days and months are striding away, what does the cricket say? Poetry is for one to use pi-hsing, if one does not speak the occasion how can it be made known?⁷

In mentioning these terms, Ch'en seems to have inherited much of the serious attitude of the Han classicists. One can trace the definitions of the terms "pi" and "hsing" to as far back as the Latter Han period, when Cheng Ch'ien 鄭虔, as quoted by Cheng Hsüan 鄭玄 (127-200), explained them in the following words,

"Pi" is to liken one thing to another, "hsing" is to put one thing into another./⁸

In practice, it is hardly possible to separate the definitions. However, these explanations do compare favourably with those of Cheng Hsüan, which are absolutely unconvincing. The following are Cheng Hsüan's explanations of "fu" 賦, "pi" and "hsing",

"Fu" means "p'u" 鋪, "to set forth", to set forth and relate in a straight-forward manner the good and evil of contemporary cheng-chiao 政教 [i.e. the policies of the government pertaining to the culture and civilization of the country under it].

"Pi" reveals the wrongs of the time, as the poet dares not point them out blatantly, things similar in nature are used for expression; "hsing" reveals the good deeds, but in order not to make the mention of such deeds savour of obsequiousness, the poet uses other good things to allude to and encourage them./⁹

In this case "pi" and "hsing" would differ not mainly in device, but in the nature of things they reveal, which does not seem in the first place to be practised in the Book of Odes. But his interpretations of the terms in the socio-political context have proved influential. Pi-hsing as a method of socio-political criticisms in fact already acknowledges the requirement of genuine feelings and serious attitude as the driving force, not to mention

that "Poetry speaks the mind" is itself a statement of such a requirement. This basic requirement is picked up by Liu Hsieh in the "Pi-hsing" chapter of his Wen-hsin tiao-lung. The purposes of pi-hsing as expounded by Liu, who lived in the climate of "Poetry follows the feeling", appear less politically oriented, but the seriousness of attitude is no less prominent. Liu also pointed out that "hsing" is most deeply-felt, and it thus became the most prized technique of the three.¹⁰ But his explanations of the technical differences remained vague; and it must have been this age-old vagueness which prompted many scholars and literary exponents to be indiscriminate in their use, and they seem to have fused in one common property of reticence. "Hsing", being the more prized technique, is sometimes found to be used alone to stand for the compound term "pi-hsing".

The term "feng-ya" has been explained in the Mao-shih-hsu
毛詩序 in fair detail. In one passage, it says,
Feng is to influence, to educate; to influence in order to
move, to educate in order to transform./11

In another passage, it explains the terms "feng", "ya" and "sung"
公頌 in the following words,

The superior used feng to transform the inferior, the inferior used feng to criticize the superior. Through masterly compositions they did the admonitions tactfully, so that the ones who wrote the poems were not guilty of any offence, but it was enough for those who heard about them to take warning. That is why it was called feng. When the kingly way was neglected, and the cheng-chiao were out of hand, different states began to have different forms of administration, and different families different practices, and there appeared the modified feng and modified ya. State historians understood the course of rights and wrongs, mourned the abandonment of human relationships, and grieved over the harshness of governments and cruelty of punishments, so they crooned and sang out their genuine feelings to criticize those in high positions by pointing to the change of things and expressing their longing for the former social order. Thus the modified

feng was initiated from feelings, but it stayed within the boundaries of good manners and righteousness. The initiation from feelings is human nature, the staying within the boundaries of good manners and righteousness is the good influence of our former emperors. Thus that which concerns a state which was originally under the influence of one personage was called feng, that which covers the affairs of the whole country and embraces the feng from all parts is called ya. Ya means that which is proper, and it talks about the rise and fall of the kingly rules and their causes. There are smaller and larger aspects of such rules, that is why there are the hsiao-ya 小雅 and ta-ya 大雅. Sung refers to the immortalization of abundant grace, the reporting of achievements to gods and ancestors./12

Cheng Hsüan also explained these three elements of the Book of Odes along the same lines,¹³ so it is unnecessary to dwell on his explanations. By now, one sees how very closely all these elements as expounded by the Han classicists are related to statements concerning society and politics, and how prominent is their didactic and utilitarian function of aiming at the betterment of society through their relation to cheng-chiao.

From the remarks about sung in the Mao-shih-hsü, one can easily realize why the term is not normally used to represent the spirit of the Book of Odes, and hence the spirit of poetry in general, for "feng-ya" already suffices to embody the socio-political spirit. The same applies to "fu", because reticence is obviously better prized in what the Mao-shih-hsü refers to as tactful admonitions.

Himself not a classicist, Ch'en might not entertain ideas of the "elements" in such a clear-cut manner as the Han classicists might have done; but from his use of these terms in their respective contexts, one can be positive of his moralistic and socio-political attitude towards poetry, in the tradition of the Book of Odes. Prof. Hsü Fu-kuan, again, has analysed brilliantly and in detail the intricacies of "pi" and "hsing", and has pointed out that "hsing" stems from a direct outburst of passion while "pi" reflects a reasoned

comparison.¹⁴ Such intricacies, however, were probably not Ch'en Tzu-ang's main concern; if pi-hsing had meant pure technicalities to Ch'en Tzu-ang, poems of the Ch'i-Liang, which he condemned, certainly are not lacking in them. It is obvious that Ch'en, like the Han classicists and critics like Liu Hsieh, conceived of pi-hsing as basically serious in purpose and therefore a means of expressing serious and deeply-felt emotions, as is suggested by his praise of Han-Wei poetry and his condemnation of Ch'i-Liang poetry. Socio-political connotations undoubtedly form part and parcel of pi-hsing to Ch'en Tzu-ang because they are not only serious, but also were imminently relevant to his time. Other topics, as long as they do not stray outside the moral boundaries of the tradition of the Book of Odes, were obviously considered worthy of the pi-hsing technique. In his introduction to the poem to Ma the Commissary, Ch'en Tzu-ang uses the expressions "Days and months are striding away, what does the cricket say?" which clearly allude to the poem "Hsi-shuai" 蟋蟀 in the Book of Odes, a stanza of which reads:

The cricket is in the hall,
This year is taking its leave;
If we do not enjoy ourselves now,
Days and months will just stride away.¹⁵

Ch'en again invokes the cricket in the introduction to a poem written on meeting his friends Chi Kuei 冀珪 and Ts'ui T'ai-chih 崔泰之 :

Days and months stride fast, if we do not enjoy ourselves now, it only increases our regret after parting; the cricket will laugh at us./16

Thus, in the introduction to the poem to Ma, it is clear that the image of the cricket is employed as a symbol of encouragement to make the most out of their wine-gathering, which was not socio-political, but which is covered by his use of "pi-hsing". "The tall bamboo", likewise, does not contain a deeply etched social

theme. It is a poem in which the poet sees himself in the upright and heavenly tall bamboo.

Thus, it must be mainly in terms of seriousness of purpose and depth of feeling that Ch'en Tzu-ang gave credit to Han-Wei poetry, putting it in the tradition of feng-ya; that he reckoned the failure of Chin-Sung poetry, in which mysticism and scenery descriptions dominate for their own sake, to continue the Han-Wei feng-ku; and that he dismissed Ch'i-Liang poetry for its obsession with colour and beauty which left no room for serious-mindedness and depth of feeling, causing effeteness and decadence. This incidentally, reminds one of the following passage in the "Feng-ku" chapter of the Wen-hsin tiao-lung:

If a literary piece has nothing but rich and brilliant colours, without wind and bone to keep it air-borne, then the gaudiness loses its freshness and lacks the vigour to sustain its tune./17

Ch'en barely avoided referring to Ch'i-Liang poetry as being immoral, but "effeteness and decadence" comes near enough. He was obviously against anything which implies immorality, himself being a follower of the tradition of the Book of Odes, on which Confucius once commented, "The design of the three hundred pieces in the Book of Odes can be summed up in one phrase - 'Having no depraved thoughts.'"¹⁸ His attitude is also shown in his "Seat-side reminder" 座右銘, a couplet of which says,

Shih and Li one may indeed study,
Cheng and Wei are not worth listening to.¹⁹

Ch'en Tzu-ang's condemnation of Ch'i-Liang poetry might well have been directed at the poetry of the early T'ang too, though he did not say so. However, his regret for contemporary works is conveyed in his letter to Hsüeh Yüan-ch'ao, though not explicitly,

Literary creation is a petty skill which the worthies discard; a writer is one of trifling ability which wise men despise. Is it not that the superior men consider

literature to be the thin side of the way and virtue?
My ability is in fact small, and am unable to learn from
master writers. Although in flashes of mad ambition and
hastiness I have produced songs of the toiler, and I do
possess thoughts of Juan Chi's when I dejectedly sing out
my mind, nevertheless I still much regret - and in vain - that
I have found myself among dissolute beauty and my name fallen
in with the playful lot. Forever shall I be with the crowd
of ignorant children, without hope of joining the line of
capable men./20

All that Ch'en advocated, in other words, was chiefly a
return to more serious themes, which naturally would cause a change
of style and therefore modify the ultimate aesthetic appeal of
poetry. Thus Tung-fang Ch'iu's poem "The solitary t'ung tree",
with a title as such, can hardly be expected to be written with
extravagant colour and beauty without being rendered ridiculous.

Ch'en's poetic views are certainly utilitarian in the socio-
political context, because seriousness of purpose tends to develop
in one a serious attitude towards life and cause one to be aware
of the aspects of society and politics, and appraise them, the
aim of which is naturally at a better society.

It is beyond doubt that Ch'en Tzu-ang wanted the return of
the Han-Wei spirit, or more specifically, the Chien-an style and
Cheng-shih style in poetry, so that poetry could once more identify
with society and the individual of deep and serious feelings. It
is obvious too that he believed these two styles were relevant to
his time because there were evils to expose. His most celebrated
poems, the Kan-yü, not only resemble Han-Wei poetry in spirit, but
in diction and imagery as well. The following table shows some
instances of resemblance in diction and imagery between the Kan-
yü poems and some well-known poems of the Han-Wei period.²¹

蘭若生春夏

Lan-jo-sheng-ch'un-hsia

(#2)

蘭若生春陽

Lan-jo-sheng-ch'un-yang

(Nineteen Old Poems)

朱萼冒紫莖

Chu-jui-mao-tzu-ching

(#2)

死生俱未停

Ssu-sheng-chü-wei-t'ing

(#8)

便便夸毗子

P'ien-p'ien-k'ua-p'i-tzu

(#10)

萬世同一時

Wan-shih-t'ung-yi-shih

(#10)

咄咄安可言

To-to-an-k'o-yen

(#17)

伯陽遁西溟

Po-yang-tun-hsi-ming

(#17)

多材固為累

To-ts'ai-ku-wei-lei

(#23)

三五明月滿

San-wu-ming-yüeh-man

(#24)

朝發宜都渚

Chao-fa-yi-tu-chu

(#27)

朱華冒綠池

Chu-hua-mao-lü-ch'ih

("Kung-yen" 公燕 by Ts'ao

Chih 曹植)

死生自然理

Ssu-sheng-tzu-jan-li

(Yung-huai 詠懷 by Juan Chi

阮籍)

如何夸毗子

Ju-ho-k'ua-p'i-tzu

(Yung-huai)

萬代同一時

Wan-tai-t'ung-yi-shih

(Yung-huai)

咄咄復何言

To-to-fu-ho-yen

(Yung-huai)

伯陽隱西戎

Po-yang-yin-hsi-jung

(Yung-huai)

多財為患害

To-ts'ai-wei-huan-hai

(Yung-huai)

三五明月滿

San-wu-ming-yüeh-man

(Nineteen Old Poems)

朝發鄴都橋

Chao-fa-yeh-tu-ch'iao

("Ts'ung-chün-shih" 從軍詩

by Wang Ts'an 王粲)

涕泣久漣洏
T'i-ch'i-chiu-lien-erh
(#32 & 36)

攜手在何時
Hsi-shou-tsai-ho-shih
(#32)

涕淚漣洏
T'i-lei-lien-erh

("Tseng-ts'ai-tzu-tu-shih" 貝曾蔡
("Tseng-ts'ai-tzu-tu-shih" 貝曾蔡

子篤詩 by Wang Ts'an)

執手將何時

(Tseng-pai-ma-wang-piao" 貝曾白馬
王彪 by Ts'ao Chih)²²

In the above sample of lines, one notices how frequently lines from the Yung-huai appear. That Ch'en Tzu-ang held very high opinions of Juan Chi we have seen in his letter to Hstleh; it is also invariably acknowledged by critics of Ch'en Tzu-ang's Kan-yü poems that the cycle is an imitation of Juan Chi's Yung-huai both in spirit and in style. As Ch'en Tzu-ang lived in a political era sufficiently intricate and dangerous to resemble Juan Chi's, such claims might well be very reasonable.

But the fact that Ch'en Tzu-ang looked to the poems of the Han-Wei period does not mean that his poems have no connexion with post-Han-Wei poetry. It is interesting to note that, although he complained of the Chin-Sung era as having failed to continue the Han-Wei spirit, there are lines in his Kan-yü poems which do resemble lines of Chin-Sung works. Although a physical resemblance may not necessarily mean a resemblance in spirit, nevertheless several instances at hand may convince one of the impression Chin-Sung poetry made on Ch'en Tzu-ang. The following are some examples:

微月生西海
Wei-ytleh-sheng-hsi-hai
(#1)

微月出西方
Wei-ytleh-ch'u-hsi-fang
("Tsa-shih" 雜詩 by Fu
Hstlan 傅玄)

骨肉且相薄

Ku-jou-ch'ieh-hsiang-po

(#4)

水木淡孤清

Shui-mu-tan-ku-ch'ing

(#13)

窮岫泄雲生

Ch'iuung-chou-hsieh-yün-sheng

(#29)

聞道泰階平

Wen-tao-t'ai-chieh-p'ing

(#29)

瑤臺有青鳥，遠食玉山禾

Yao-t'ai-yu-ch'ing-niao, /

Yüan-shih-yü-shan-ho

(#25)

骨肉還相薄

Ku-jou-hai-hsiang-po

(Yung-shih 詠史 by Tso

Ssu 左思)

水木湛清華

Shui-mu-chan-ch'ing-hua

("Yu-hsi-ch'ih" 遊西池

by Hsieh Hun 謝混)

窮岫泄雲

Ch'iuung-chou-hsieh-yün

("Wei-tu-fu" 魏都賦

by Tso Ssu)

故令斯民覩泰階之平

Ku-ling-ssu-ming-tu-t'ai-chieh-

chih-p'ing

("Wei-tu-fu")

誠不及青鳥，遠食玉山禾

Ch'eng-pu-chi-ch'ing-niao, /

Yüan-shih-yü-shan-ho

("Tai-k'ung-ch'eng-ch'üeh" 代空

城崔 by Pao Chao 鮑照)²³

Ch'en Tzu-ang's Kan-yü and Tso Ssu's Yung-shih are in fact very similar in themes and spirit, hence in diction. However, as Tso Ssu was not in the mainstream of the poetic trend of his period, Ch'en Tzu-ang was quite justified to use a sweeping statement in complaint of Chin-Sung poetry. It is up to the readers to single out the possible exceptions. This brings us to the last part of Ch'en's introduction to "The tall bamboo", in which he commended Tung-fang Ch'iu for equalling Chang Hua 張華 (232-300) and Ho Shao 何劭, who were poets in the Chin dynasty. Judged from the praise which Ch'en accorded to Tung-fang Ch'iu, it was

undoubtedly a positive one with reference to poets who managed to stay outside his indiscriminate net of adverse criticism.

Ch'en Tzu-ang's condemnation of Ch'i-Liang poetry does appear to be total; but again one spots resemblances between some of the lines in his Kan-yü cycle and some of the Ch'i-Liang lines:

誰能測淪冥

Shei-neng-ts'e-lun-ming

(#6)

誰能測幽微

Shei-neng-ts'e-yu-wei

("Juan-chi" 阮籍 of Tsa-t'i 雜體
by Chiang Yen 江淹)

寶鼎淪伊穀

Pao-ting-lun-yi-ku

(#14)

素景淪伊穀

Su-ching-lun-yi-ku

("Ho-wang-chu-tso-jung-pa-kung
shan" 和王著作融八公山
by Hsieh T'iao 謝朓)

巫山彩雲沒

Wu-shan-ts'ai-yün-mo

(#27)

巫山彩雲沒

Wu-shan-ts'ai-yün-mo

("Ku-yi" 古意
by Wang Jung 王融)

親友盡睽違

Ch'in-yu-chin-k'uei-wei

(#32)

舊愛盡睽違

Chiu-ai-chin-k'uei-wei

("Tseng-chu-chiu-yu" 贈諸舊遊
by Ho Hstn 何遜)

朔風吹海樹，蕭條邊已秋

Shuo-feng-ch'ui-hai-shu,/

Hsiao-t'iao-pien-yi-ch'iu

(#34)

朔風吹飛雨，蕭條江上來

Shuo-feng-ch'ui-fei-yü,/

Hsiao-t'iao-chiang-shang-lai

("Kuan-chao-yü" 觀朝雨
by Hsieh T'iao)

每憤胡兵入，常為漢國羞

Mei-fen-hu-ping-ju,/

Ch'ang-wei-han-kuo-hsiu

(#34)

時觀胡騎飲，常為漢國羞

Shih-kuan-hu-chi-yin,/

Ch'ang-wei-han-kuo-hsiu

("Lung-t'ou-shui" 龍頭水
by Liu Hsiao-wei 劉孝威)²⁴

Thus again, one must make exceptions to his sweeping statement as regards Ch'i-Liang poetry. It is a fact, too, that in practice Ch'en showed receptivity towards some of the Yung-ming precepts, which helped to bring about the regulated verse form. Though he obviously believed that an obsession with form hampered the application of hsing, and for that he condemned the Ch'i-Liang poems, he certainly did not disregard considerations of form as such. In chapters 5 and 6, one can see how Ch'en utilized his inheritance of these formal aspects of the Ch'i-Liang style, the spirit of which never got the better of him. There is not a poem in his Works which savours of the kung-t'i. The poems discussed in chapters 3 and 4, most of them political allegories, are extremely serious. In practice, therefore, he should be considered as having lived up to his principles.

Finally, there comes the inevitable question of why it was Ch'en Tzu-ang and not someone else who came forth with such doctrines of poetry. Wang Po might have been the first if he had not been shortlived and if he had been in different circumstances. Ch'en's introduction to "The tall bamboo" was composed in the reign of Empress Wu. His "Song on ascending Yu Chou Barbican" 登幽州臺歌, the Chi-ch'iu lan-ku 薊丘覽古 poems and the main bulk of the Kan-yü, which together give him his distinctive poetic identity, were written in his late years. Thus, apart from his excelling literary capability and sincerity, which are manifested in his poems, Ch'en Tzu-ang actually had the necessary environment about him, which made him one of the first officials to witness the drastic change in the social and political order. Furthermore, his career was enough to cause him tremendous frustrations and to stimulate in him deadly serious attitudes towards poetry. Chang Chiu-ling 張九齡 (673-740), Ch'en's renowned younger contemporary, also produced his Kan-yü and other

serious-minded poems; but given equal literary capability and sincerity, Chang would have been unlikely to assume the initiating role even if Ch'en had not assumed it, as can be deduced by the lack of any usable poetics from him. This might in fact be accounted for by his successful career. If one agrees that sad poems are generally more deeply-felt than happy poems are and affect people more than happy poems do, perhaps such sayings as "Objects produce sounds when they lack stability" and "Poetry... takes poverty to be near perfection"²⁵ suggest the prerequisites.

Chapter 3. Kan-yü Poems

The major part of Ch'en Tzu-ang's poetic reputation is related to his cycle of 38 poems entitled Kan-yü 感遇, which, as the title suggests, is supposed to record what the poet "felt" and "met". The T'ang-yin 德音 explains this term as "what is felt in the heart and met in the eyes; thus the emotions grow from the inner self and are expressed through words."¹

One of the cycle's earliest appreciators was Tu Fu, who praised it for having set an example of loyalty and righteousness for millennia to come.² Priest Chiao-jan 皎然 regarded it as a successor to Juan Chi's Yung-huai,³ and to Yüan Chen 元稹⁴ (779-832) it was his first inspiration to social poetry. However, since a large bulk of these poems are so mystically presented and filled with uncommon diction, the contents tend to be very obscure, and, therefore, difficult. These poems were apparently so enigmatic, thus so patience-wearing, that some later historians and critics were content either to look at the title and nothing else, or study the diction without going any deeper into the meanings. For the first instance one finds a story in both the Chiu t'ang-shu and the Hsin t'ang-shu, that Ch'en composed the Kan-yü poems in his youth and showed them to Wang Shih 王適, who readily conveyed to him his anticipation of Ch'en's greatness in literature.⁵ Such an account sounds as if the Kan-yü poems were a group of his early poetic exercises. A reading of the poems, however, shows beyond doubt that most of them were composed in his late years; and they were surely much more than a poetic exercise. The two histories have tampered with the original text of Lu Ts'ang-yung's Unofficial Biography, which merely states that Ch'en's early poems were highly praised by Wang Shih. For the second

instance one may look to an essay by Ch'en T'ing-ching 陳廷經 of the Ch'ing dynasty. His father was Ch'en Hang 陳沆, the author of the Shih pi-hsing chien 詩比興箋. The essay records a contemporary of his, by the name of P'an Te-yü 潘德興, who, in his Yang-yi-chai shih-hua 養一齋詩話, dismisses Ch'en's Kan-yü poems as pertaining to nothing but Taoism; and condemns the themes as orderless and aimless, the meanings obscured and nonsensical. P'an's views were shared by another contemporary, Lin Ch'ang-yi 林昌彝; these can be found in his She-ying-lou shih-hua 射鷹樓詩話.⁶ It is indeed true that the mystical appearance of the poems is created by the dominance of mystical allusions. The Unofficial Biography records that Ch'en became well-versed in the Yi-ching 易經 and the Lao-tzu 老子 in his late years, without which he could not have been able to fill these poems with such allusions. The referents for many of his allusions can also be found in such books as the Yi-lin 易林 and the T'ai-hsüan-ching 太玄經; and in fact Ch'en made use of many other mythological sources as well. But explaining his poems in terms of mysticism and mysticism alone would definitely fail to bring out what the T'ang masters appear to have seen in them. To a true critic of Ch'en Tzu-ang's Kan-yü poems, it pays to bear in mind Ch'en's position as the first poet in T'ang who is known to have advocated the revival of allegorical qualities in poetry, and one would expect him to put his advocacy into practice. Thus, on encountering symptoms of obscurity and even naivete, one should perhaps see them on the allegorical level, rather than stop at and condemn the superficial appearance. If one sees the Kan-yü poems as the Yung-huai reborn, the allegorical interpretation is essential. Justice was done to Ch'en Tzu-ang when Ch'en Hang tried to decode these 38 poems in his Shih pi-

hsing chien. Ch'en Hang, however, at times swings the pendulum so far in the allegorical direction that far-fetchedness is bound to occur. But this is a small demerit. By doing so, he at least opened the eyes of the readers of Ch'en Tzu-ang's Kan-yü poems to the probability of deeper layers of meaning and offered a glimpse of the spirit dominant in the whole cycle, which is in accordance with Tu Fu's appraisal of it.

The Kan-yü poems are important as the milestone of the changing trend of T'ang poetry because of their rich cosmic and socio-political themes, which are virtually lacking in the poetry of the Ch'i-Liang period. Because of this alone this cycle of poems merits a detailed analysis. Moreover, a detailed study of these poems also reveals Ch'en's attitude towards the political trends of his own time, and his recourse to poetic methods to state his attitude.

The cycle is frequently haunted by the poet's amazement at the rapid passage of time, which nullifies all temporal achievements. In the poems the poet also mourns the sufferings of the people, for which the ruler and her courtiers are held responsible. An unsatisfactory ruler on the one hand inspires his yearning for the return of the former imperial house, and on the other hand, the speed of time, which always runs ahead of his achievements, inspires his longing for seclusion.

The placement of the first and last poems of the cycle, as it is ordered in his Works, shows a careful consideration. The rest of the placement is sometimes random and sometimes with poems of the same nature going together in small groups. The poems are not arranged in chronological order.

Before the 38 poems are analyzed, attention must be drawn to the fact that part of the analysis, wanting sufficient evidence in

context, has to remain speculative. Such has been the case for the past thousand years. But the speculations mostly concern details only; as long as the poems are viewed in the allegorical aspect, the general themes are obvious enough.

The order of the poems in the Kan-yü cycle is not exactly the same in all editions. What are numbers 30 and 31 in the Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an 四部叢刊 edition of Ch'en-po-yü wen-chi 陳伯玉文集, for instance, are numbers 31 and 30 respectively in the Ch'üan t'ang-shih 全唐詩. As the Kan-yü as well as most of Ch'en Tzu-ang's other poems have to be numbered in this Section to facilitate discussion, I have decided to use the Chung-hua shu-chü 中華書局 edition of Ch'en-tzu-ang chi 陳子昂集 for this purpose. This edition is revised, punctuated and has the most complete collection of Ch'en Tzu-ang's poems. The order of the Kan-yü poems in this edition, incidentally, is the same as that in the Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an edition.

The following are the poems.

Poem 1:

The thin moon begins its appearance over the western sea,
This dim yang thus starts to grow and rise.
As the round brightness is full in the east,
The dark part has in the morning formed.
Since the Absolute gave existence to heaven and earth,
All things have been having their rise and fall.
Nature's quintessence indeed lies here,
Who can reckon the philosophy of the fifteenth?⁷

This is a difficult poem to start with. It contains a cosmic premise from which is deduced the philosophy of a decline immediately following the peak of power. Such an all-embracing philosophy conveniently heralds all other poems in the cycle. However, the uncommon and unclear diction have given rise to ambiguous meanings.

The first two couplets are hurdles that must be cleared in order to enable the whole poem to be understood. In them, there are three ambiguous terms, namely yu-yang 幽陽 in the second line, yüan-kuang 圓光 in the third and yin-p'o 陰魄 in the fourth. To refer to the moon, which belongs to the yin, as yang, is quite unconventional. This has been pointed out by Yang Shen 楊慎 (1488-1559) in his Tan-ch'ien tsung-lu 丹鉛總錄.⁸ Though unconventional, this term is not unacceptable because the moon, which "shines", could reasonably assume a miniature yang aura. The third and fourth lines are misleading at first sight; the yin-p'o, which has been conventionally used either to mean the moon, or the obscured part of the moon, makes a not altogether happy combination with the round brightness, yüan-kuang. It is therefore not surprising that the Chung-wen ta-tz'u-tien 中文大辭典 explains it by quoting a passage from the Section of Rites 禮志 in the Sung-shih 宋史 which deals with the autumnal equinox, when the moon begins to appear as the sun is at the point of noon.⁹ The encyclopaedic dictionary has obviously taken the round brightness to mean the sun, and the yin-p'o the moon; and the couplet becomes a description of the solar-lunar behaviour at autumnal equinox rather than some general cosmic phenomenon. This explanation, besides being irrelevant in the context of the poem, has at least two flaws: First, when the sun reaches the point of noon at autumnal equinox, it can hardly be said to be in the east. Second, the sun, except during eclipses, is always round, and it would be very odd to describe the sun as full, because most of the time it appears to be. Only the continuously waxing and waning moon can be said to display its fullness because most of the time it does not. In the context of the following lines by Wang Wei 王維

(699-759), "round brightness" indeed means the sun:

The vast sky, cool and quiet,
Clear and brilliant, the white sun of autumn.
The round brightness comprehends all nature,
Broken shadows are strewn into the leisurely stream.¹⁰

But it is obvious that "round brightness" qualified by the epithet "full" or its opposite means the moon, as in the following two couplets by Li Po:

The round brightness wanes in the middle of the sky,
This silvery moon thus dwindles and disappears./11

When the round brightness passes its full, it wanes,
When the sun moves to the meridian, it verges./12

Thus, in Ch'en's poem, it is the key word "full", man 滿, which has always been used to qualify the moon on the fifteenth day, that rules out any possibility of the "round brightness" being a solar one. And it is exactly this full round brightness of the moon that leads to its associated term "three-five", or san-wu 三五, in the last line of the poem. A more specific example of "three-five", that is, "fifteen", going with the full moon can be found in the same cycle: the third line of poem 24 reads, "The fifteenth [three-five], the bright moon is full." It is only through this explanation that the poem makes good sense.

That the moon begins its appearance over the western sea, and not the eastern, may cause a doubt to some. However, such has always been the astronomical phenomenon. Though it rises in the east, it is first seen in the west. Yang Hsiung 揚雄 (53-18 B.C.) records in the "Wu-pai" 五百 chapter of his Fa-yen 法言, "Before mid-month, the moon starts carrying its dark part in the west; by mid-month it will have filled all its dark part in the east."¹³ This entry appropriately glosses the first half of the poem.

Yang Shen gives the following explanation concerning the first couplet in his Tan-ch'ien tsung-lu, with an entry titled "Yu-yang". He says, "Ch'en Tzu-ang's poem - The thin moon begins its appearance over the western sea, / This dim yang thus starts to grow and rise. The moon is actually yin, and is described as dim yang; [the moon of] three-five is yang, but it becomes deficient in the morning. This follows the same principles as the Taoist's, who uses the moon to symbolize the trigram K'an 坎, as both are internally full; and the baby [which is the essence of yang] to stand for the female, which is actually yin [for a female is capable of giving birth to a baby]."¹⁴ Yang Shen does not explain the whole poem, and he never really succeeds in explaining the first couplet with his confused reference to the Taoist doctrine (for one thing the moon as a symbol of K'an is first seen in the Yi-ching). So this entry is not at all helpful to our understanding of the poem, except that it points out that the dim yang stands for the moon.

Yet, to overlook the immense significance of this poem would hamper our understanding of the whole cycle. Basically, this poem embraces a cosmic philosophy which reflects the rise and fall in the temporal world. The other Kan-yü poems are registrations of moments of this natural cycle. Still, it is the allegorical meaning of the poem that matters most.

It is the odd term yu-yang which signals the probability of another level of meaning to the poem. One possible explanation of the use of such a term is on the technical level: he probably could have used the character kuang 光 for yang to make a conventional and acceptable term yu-kuang; but then the kuang would become uglily repetitious with the less replaceable kuang in the line immediately following. But Ch'en could very

well have re-written the two lines concerned by changing the diction and retaining the meaning at the same time. Ch'en, therefore, might have had some specific symbolism in mind. His choice of yu-yang might have been very deliberate; it might have been used to symbolize Empress Wu, who, being a member of the yin, was usurping the traditional rôle of the yang. This poem might thus anticipate the decline of the Dowager's power by applying the natural law, and explain away the poet's frustrations with a reign he is not satisfied with.

Ch'en Hang sees this poem in more or less the same allegorical spirit; but his understanding of the lines is rather different. This is how he explains the poem:

The yin moon points to the state of K'un 坤 as in the "yellow lower dress" [a term in the K'un section of the Yi-ching]. The yang brightness points to the position of Ch'ien 乾, in the nine-five line. When the Junior Imperial Concubine entered into court [this explains the first line], the order of the country was beginning to prosper [this explains the second line]. When the succeeding emperor ascended the throne [this explains the third line], she became powerful and took over the sovereignty [this explains the fourth line]. The three dynasties rose one after another, the virtues of the five elements reigned in succession. Such cyclic and see-saw movements of all things who could really reason out?/15

Here Ch'en Hang is no doubt taking the yu-yang and yüan-kuang for the sun, and the yin-p'o for the moon. Now that both the sun and moon are in the poem, three-five can no longer bear its traditional meaning in relation to the lunar changes; and Ch'en Hang therefore tears the two figures apart to stand for the respective rises of the dynasties Hsia 夏, Shang 商 and Chou 周, and the interactions of the elements metal, fire, water, earth and wood, which underpin the philosophy of rise and fall. In my opinion, the line-by-line explanation is far-fetched and unacceptable.

For all this confusion in the poem's meaning, Ch'en Tzu-ang must be held at least partly responsible. He also digresses rather unnecessarily in the third couplet. It depicts a natural and social phenomenon which has been happening since the beginning of heaven and earth. I would imagine Ch'en Tzu-ang used this couplet to point to the happy conclusion that Wu's reign is not going to be everlasting; since it looks very likely that her reign is at its peak, it is about time that it fell. But unfortunately, while the last couplet emphasizes only the "three-five" philosophy to prognosticate the reign of Empress Wu, this rational deduction of rise and fall in the third couplet is too general to be congruous with the emotional touch elsewhere in the poem. Also because of the present placement of these lines, the "quintessence" is bound to confuse the reader as to whether it means the rise and fall or the fall after the peak of power. Though the general theme of the third couplet and the specific theme of the fourth couplet are both sound in their own right, it would be better if they did not appear alongside each other.

One slight complication is caused in this poem by the variant tai 𠄎 for hua 化 in the second line. This appears in the Ch'üan t'ang-shih as well as the Shih pi-hsing chien.¹⁶ Whether the character should be tai or hua should not have bothered Ch'en Hang much, because to him it would only be a matter of whether the yu-yang rises in place of the Sui dynasty or the yu-yang simply grows and rises. It would not make a big difference either now that yu-yang is to mean the moon, for then it is whether the moon rises in place of the sun or the moon simply grows and rises. The only drawback is that tai is liable to lure one into looking for the sun replacing the moon as one goes on until one is frustrated. And tai also

poses the hazard of leading one into taking the term yu-yang to mean the faint rising sun, which replaces the moon, and going on with the interchange of the solar and lunar activities until one gets stuck in the last line. Ch'en Hang seems to have been misled by the character tai but he transforms the yu-yang into a power that no longer displaces the moon, but another dynastic power, which is even more undesirable. Syntactically, tai lacks a direct object and looks unnatural. It appears to be a textual error as a result of its very close resemblance to hua.

There is likely to be a query concerning the interpretation that in the last couplet the poet expects Empress Wu's downfall. For while it is quite true that the moon wanes immediately when it is full, by the same token it waxes again when it starts another lunar cycle. However, one must allow Ch'en Tzu-ang the licence of showing his subjective emotion in poetry, and must refrain from exhausting an "aftermath" in this case. Perhaps an analogy can be drawn from a poem by Chang Chiu-ling, which reads,

Since you were gone, my Lord,
I have not attended to the unfinished loom.
I miss you - just like the full moon,
Whose clear brightness diminishes night after night.¹⁷

Here again, one must allow the parallel to stop at the waning of the moon; and must not ask whether the heroine in the poem would recover again with the moon.

Besides insinuating at a current issue, poem 1 also, as more than a by-product, pessimistically depicts such an astoundingly fast passage of time as to render decline irremediable.

Poem 2:

During spring and summer the fragrant plants grow,
In clusters of green they flourish.
Amidst the solitude of the wild wood,
Flowers sprout from the purple stems.
The leisurely white sun is at its journey's end,¹⁸

Blowing and flowing, the autumn wind rises up.
The year's prime wilts and falls,
Your fragrant intent - what has it accomplished?¹⁹

This poem likens the poet's mind to better his country to the "fragrant intent" of the flowers. The fragrant plants, because they grow in a wild wood, are but seldom appreciated. As the flowers they bear have now withered away, so the poet's own intent has also proved futile. This, coupled with the depiction of the rapid deterioration of season in the poem, produces a deep tone of pessimism.

Poem 3:

Dark green, the border of Ting-ling,
Since ages past, a long and desolate track.
The fire-beacons, how they jut up!
The sun-baked bones lie torn apart.
Clouds of yellow sand rise south of the desert,
The sun is hidden in the west.
Han soldiers, three hundred thousand of them,
Once confronted the Hsiung-nu here.
Man only sees the deaths on the battle-field,
Who would pity the widows and orphans by the border?²⁰

This poem deploras warfare in general and commiserates with the inhabitants on the frontier. This was probably written during his first frontier expedition. Ch'en Heng dates the poem from the poet's second expedition, that of fighting the Kitan rebels.²¹ However, Ting-ling 丁零 was then part of the Hsiung-nu 匈奴 tribe, and Ting-ling Chou must therefore have been in Tibet, quite far away from the Kitans, which were to the north-east of China. On his first expedition Ch'en Tzu-ang wrote the "Oration to the old man on the border", which begins, "This year ping-hsu 丙戌, I have come to fight the Hsiung-nu."²² And in the memorial he wrote shortly afterwards for Ch'iao Chih-chih he also referred to the rebels as Hsiung-nu. So this poem can only be convincingly dated from his first expedition.

Poem 4:

When Yüeh Yang was general of Wei,
He ate his son to get at military honour.
He showed no care even for his own flesh and blood,
To others how could he be loyal?
I have heard the Minister of Chung-shan
Was a man who freed a captured fawn.
Even a mere animal he could not bear to see harmed,
How would he not serve his master till the very end! /23

This poem seems to hit at the treacherous officials of the Empress' time. As seen in the T'ang histories the Empress herself was no less so inclined. She is alleged to have been responsible for the deaths of her own sons Crown Prince Hung and Crown Prince Hsien, which, in a way, was "eating" her sons.

This poem brings out two historical figures for discussion, namely: Yüeh Yang 樂羊 and Ch'in Hsi-pa 秦西巴. The former led an army of Wei 魏 to attack Chung-shan 中山, where his son happened to be. The state of Chung-shan thereupon had his son slaughtered, made into soup and sent to Yüeh Yang, who immediately ate up the contents of the bowl. Marquis Wen of Wei 魏文侯 duly rewarded him but doubted his loyalty.²⁴ Ch'in Hsi-pa, on the other hand, could not even bear to separate a captured fawn from its mother. Once Lord Meng-sun 孟孫 of the State of Lu 魯, Ch'in's master, captured a fawn and put it under the custody of Ch'in to be slaughtered. When Ch'in was on his way back with the fawn, the mother deer followed him and cried piteously. Ch'in could not bear the cry and eventually set the fawn free. Lord Meng-sun was much angered by the loss of the fawn and ousted Ch'in from his court. However, after a period of time, he saw the benevolence in Ch'in Hsi-pa and appointed him Tutor to his son.²⁵ Through this poem, the poet condemns the cruel officials and questions their loyalty; he also places the Empress in contempt through the image of Yüeh Yang, who literally ate his son,

and by contrasting her to the mother deer. Ch'en Hang, in his Shih pi-hsing chien, calls our attention to the episode in which Empress Wu was pondering on the idea of granting an amnesty to a Ts'ui Hstian-li 崔宣禮, who had been incriminated of grave offences. Ts'ui's nephew Huo Hsien-k'o 霍獻可 insisted on the execution of his uncle and wounded himself by forcibly knocking his head onto the hall steps to show his impartiality. Ch'en Hang commented on this event by remarking that Huo had the son-eating loyalty but was without the fawn-freeing affection.²⁶ This poem is in line with his memorial Ta chih-wen-shih 答制問事, which condemns lavish punishments and beseeches for kindness towards the members of the House of Li. Although referring to Ch'in Hsi-pa as a minister in Chung-shan, while he was in fact a minister in Lu, a neighbouring but different state, is a geographical mistake, this hardly impairs the spirit of the poem.

Poem 5:

Ordinary men take to trivial craftiness,
 They are ignorant as a child of the true way:
 Pushing and grabbing, boasting and bragging,
 Without knowing the real aim of life.
 They don't know the Taoist mystic,
 Who sees the world in a pot of jade;
 Leaving far behind him heaven and earth,
 He transfigures himself and enters the endless.²⁷

This poem talks directly of seclusion. It expresses the author's reluctance to mingle with profit-hunting people and his preference to stay away from this temporal world, just like the Taoist mystic who lifted himself above mercenary mankind. Here Ch'en probably refers to Hu-kung 壺公, the old man of the pot. The pot was in fact a gourd, which Hu-kung got into after a day's work as physician, according to legend.²⁸ Jade has always been very closely associated with Taoism and is there, I think, only to give the poem a Taoist air.

Poem 6:

When I observe the changes of the dragon,
I know the zenith of the yang power.
No matter how dark and thick the forest of rocks,
Or how deep the caves, they cannot hold it captive.
In the past, those who acquired the immortal's way,
I believe, must have been in harmony with the operations of nature.
Such subtle inspirations are not for the dull to perceive,
Which of them can plumb such fathomless depths?
Men are bound by what they see of the temporal,
Warm with wine, they laugh at the book of the elixir.
On Mount K'un-lun there is a jasper tree,
How can they ever gather its blossoms?/29

This poem appears to be very mystical. It brings into the scene a dragon, the supreme creature in Chinese geomancy. As heaven-mandated emperors have always been symbolized by dragons, this might well refer to the T'ang sovereignty.

The first couplet might have its ideas derived from the Ch'ien 乾 hexagram , where the dragon symbol is dominant. It is perhaps not too important to speculate over whether this dragon refers to Chung-tsung or Jui-tsung, it suffices for us to be reasonably sure that it refers to the rightful T'ang sovereign. If one day this supreme symbol of the yang, the dragon, has to free itself of all the tethers, it is not to be hindered by forests of rocks or deep caves, which are of the yin. In this poem Ch'en appears to believe in the probability of the revival of the House of Li. He also believes that this is too profound for the ordinary to understand: by this he probably refers to those who rallied around Empress Wu and her cousins.

Poem 7:

The sun is more and more reluctant to return,
The season of blooms has come to an end.
Where am I leading my wandering thoughts?
Lying in the wood, I observe the boundless universe.
Fragrant flowers are giving themselves up to unpropitious times,
Cuckoos' cries are mournful to my ears.

The primeval times have long since faded,
Who would think of the nest dweller?/30

This shows a sudden flash of pessimism in the author's reckoning the lateness of time, implying the futility of effort, and resorting to the course of Ch'ao-fu 巢父, the man of the nest, the classic example of the recluse.³¹

Poem 8:

I look at the mysteries of K'un-lun,
The sun and moon, penetrating the profound.
Spirits of the primeval forces intercoured,
Heaven and earth were born and properly placed.
Chung-ni investigates the Absolute,
Lao Tan treasures the deep and dark.
The white immortal of the west
Lays special emphasis on unenlightenment:
Once the idea of thing and nothing was totally extinguished,
How would cause and resultant arise?
Doctrines are indeed confusedly numerous,
The cycle of life and death never stops./32

This poem seems to show the author's disillusionment and frustration in life, and attempts to negate the values of religions and doctrines and leave everything to fate, which makes the final decision. This idea is also picked up in the next poem.

Poem 9:

The sages keep secret heaven's will,
Fearing that the world would muddle its truth.
Why do people like Lord Sung,
With jests and jokes, make fools of mankind?
What is ordained by heaven may indeed be beautiful,
When disorder arises, who is responsible for it?
The Great Wall was to hold off the barbarian intruders,
Yet the fall of the House of Ying was triggered from within.
If the Red Prince should be besotted by the idea of Han,/33
How could Tzu-nien save Ch'in?
O leave it, let's imitate the peaches and plums,
Where there is much talk, there are numerous deaths.³⁴

According to Ch'en Hang, this poem refers to a particular incident in the T'ang dynasty: It happened in the reign of T'ai-tsung

that one morning the star T'ai-po 太白 appeared in the sky; the significance of this phenomenon was interpreted by the Chief Astrologer as boding the emergence of a female ruler. At the same time, a mysterious ditty that the female ruler went by the name of Wu 武 had spread in the empire. T'ai-tsung thereupon suspected General Li Chün-hsien 李君羨 to be the one referred to, because Li had a feminine pet-name of Wu-niang 五娘, that is, the fifth lady, and his feoff and the district he belonged to both went by the name of Wu. Thus the Emperor had him executed. In the year T'ien-shou, the family of Li Chün-hsien appealed to Empress Wu and Li eventually had his titles and office restored posthumously. The Hsin t'ang-shu therefore comments, "Even a discerning emperor like T'ai-tsung could be misled by the omens and prophecies and unjustly brought about the execution of Chün-hsien, thus allowing the evil empress to exploit the situation to uplift her image. This is indeed sad."³⁵ Ch'en Hang's speculation is probable.

The execution of General Li finds a parallel in Shih-huang-ti's 始皇帝 construction of the Great Wall. He received a report of the discovery of a mystical book, on which was written "wang ch'in che hu yeh" 亡秦者胡也, which means that the one who overthrew Ch'in was "hu". The Emperor's immediate reaction was that it meant the barbarians; and thus he ordered the connexion of the walls built by the various former frontier states to form the Great Wall to ward off the barbarians.³⁶ But later it was proved that "hu" turned out to be his second son Hu-hai 胡亥.

The following couplet is again very fatalistic. It means if heaven's will was that Liu Pang 劉邦 should establish the Han dynasty, no human power could prevent him from doing so; and in the same spirit, since it was heaven's will that Fu Chien's 苻堅 Ch'in 秦 dynasty should end, not even a man who understood

heaven's working like Wang Chia 王嘉 (courtesy-named Tzu-nien 子年), could help restore it. The story goes that Fu Chien sent an attendant to ask Wang Chia how long his reign would last, and received the two-word reply of "Wei yang" 未央, which was considered fairly auspicious by Fu and his court because it apparently meant "not yet half-way". But it happened that the following year was the year kuei-wei 癸未 and Fu Chien was defeated in Huai-nan 淮南. The character yang actually punned on that which means misfortune - yang 殃, and the term actually implied that misfortune would come in the year of wei.³⁷ The significance of using Fu Chien's Ch'in dynasty is perhaps because it is never recognized by historians as a rightful dynasty, just like the Chou dynasty of Empress Wu. This may in turn convincingly imply that since the T'ang dynasty is bound to revive, no one could save the Chou dynasty.

Lord Sung is Kung Sung 宮嵩, who submitted to Emperor Shun of Han 漢順帝 (reigned 126-144) a mystical book called Shen-shu 神書.³⁸ Here the Chief Astrologer, the fortune teller and Wang Chia are probably likened to Lord Sung, for they all fooled others in their own ways.

The last couplet reflects the prohibition of freedom of speech at the time the poem was written. Thus Ch'en Tzu-ang reminds himself that he had better imitate the peaches and plums, which never speak.³⁹

Poem 10:

Dwelling in seclusion, I look at the operations of nature,
 Eagerly, people struggle for material interests.
 With slanders they devour one another,
 Everywhere selfishness cries aloud.
 The round-bellied obsequious men
 Cling firmly to their worldly glories.
 Wu-kuang waived the offer of an empire,
 The mercenary compete for small profits.

Let's talk about it no more, I'll go pick the plant of
long life,
Through ten thousand generations things are the same.⁴⁰

This poem resembles poem 5 in that it also expresses the author's yearning for staying away from the profit-hunting world. Wu-kuang 務光 is the name of a legendary sage who refused the offer of the empire from T'ang 湯, the first emperor of the Shang dynasty,⁴¹ and is now used by the poet to contrast those who eagerly struggled for material interests.

Poem 11:

I love Kuei-ku-tzu -
By the clear brook, free from worldly dust.
Possessing the ways of running the world,
He dwelt secluded in the white clouds.
The seven states like dragons fighting,
The world was chaotic and without a ruler.
Floating glories are not worth treasuring,
He cultivated his ideals, obscured himself from his time.
Unfurled, his excellence fills the universe,
Furled, it is tinier than an atom.
Surely it was not his yearning for long life
That made him keep company merely with the deer.⁴²

In this poem the author attempts to put seclusion on a more worthy level. Kuei-ku-tzu 鬼谷子 withdrew because, the author thinks, the country did not deserve him and his capabilities. Seclusion was therefore a means to keep one's merits intact and for one to wait for a more deserving government. Not much is known about Kuei-ku-tzu except that he was the teacher of Chang Yi 張儀 (?-309 B.C.) and Su Ch'in 蘇秦 (?-317 B.C.). Ch'en probably obtained his idea from poem 2 of Kuo P'u's 郭璞 Yu-hsien 遊仙 cycle.⁴³

Poem 12:

Bleating, the deer of the southern hills,
Makes for its mate and falls into a snare.⁴⁴
In the green cassia tree of Mount Chao-yao
Tiny worms can bore a great hole.

The world admires favoured courtiers,
 Their glory and splendour are immeasurable.
 Before grudge and hatred are returned to one another,
 Their beloved bring about their calamity.
 The Jasper Terrace was turned to ruins by artful smiles,
 The jade cups fell, because of two pretty eyebrows.
 Has anyone seen the tree stumps in the waste city?
 Green with leaves, they become axe-handles./45

This poem seems to tell of the role women play in the fall of officials and kingdoms. The deer, which runs into a snare by making for another deer of the opposite sex, which is used as a decoy, symbolizes officials who perished through the ones they loved. The cassia tree is probably a symbol of noble-charactered personalities who all the same could be "eaten up". The last character in the fourth line, k'o 科, also puns on the meaning of incrimination. These two couplets, with the next two couplets, may actually point to such incidents as the death of people like Ch'iao Chih-chih and incrimination against people like O-shih-na K'u-se-lo 阿史那斛瑟羅, a Turkish chief, whose beautiful maid Lai Chün-ch'en coveted.⁴⁶

Ch'en then goes further to talk about the imperial house. That Chieh 桀 and Chou 紂, who are symbolized by the Jasper Terrace and jade cups,⁴⁷ perished through Mei-hsi 妹喜 and Ta-chi 妲己 may in fact refer to the fall of the T'ang dynasty caused by the doting of Kao-tsung on Empress Wu. However, Ch'en ends on a less pessimistic note by resting his hope in Kao-tsung's sons as he echoes a passage in the T'ai-hsüan-ching, which says, "Past the waste city, here and there the stumps are green with leaves." which is explained, "'Past the waste city' means mistakes corrected and a new life being led."⁴⁸ Although the location of the tree stumps in Ch'en's line is slightly different, the symbolism is obvious. Axe-handles symbolize power, especially

power to remove obstacles, as in the song Kuei-shan-ts'ao 龜山操, allegedly written by Confucius. The song goes:
"I want to gaze afar at the State of Lu, the Tortoise Mountain
[Kuei-shan] blocks it. I do not hold an axe-handle, I can do
nothing to the Tortoise Mountain."⁴⁹

Poem 13:

Dwelling in a wood, I have been ill for some time,
The streams and trees are limpid, lonely and calm.
Idly, I lie down and look at the changes of nature,
Lost in thought, I ponder on the state of no life.
Just as the green spring starts to bud and prosper,
The red fire of summer has reached its height;
It is then that everything begins to wither and perish.
Such vexations, when will they be subdued?/50

This poem, like poem 1, also depicts the astoundingly fast passage of time which renders decline inevitable. This poem was probably written during Ch'en Tzu-ang's first leave, when he is said to have been taken ill for quite some time.

It is the eventual loss of life of things in the world that inspires the poet to ponder on the state of no life. For it is said in the "Chih-le" 至樂 chapter of the Chuang-tzu 莊子 that the beginning of the universe was a state of no life.⁵¹
Now that things budding and prospering in spring so quickly wither and perish, the poet is helplessly resorting to the thought of no life. Where there is no life, there is no death, such is the painful deduction.

Such an obsession with and fear of the passage of time are perhaps not without cause. Ch'en Tzu-ang's keenness on serving the country did not seem to be well rewarded with his being left one of the rank and file. It looked so probable too, that he, with his untimely uprightness, was not going to climb very far up the official ladder and that he was not going to achieve any-

thing at all eventually. Such a feeling must have enhanced his realization that he was outrun by time, and hence his fear.

Poem 14:

When I reach Mount Ch'i I lament the affairs of the world,
Heaven's will is indeed profound.
Once long ago, the prince of Yin,
That "jade horse", went over to the empire of Chou.
The precious sacrificial tripods lie sunk in the Yi and Ku,
The Jasper Terrace has turned into an old wasteland.
On the western mountain mourn the old men of the former
dynasty,
Tung-ling has its former marquis.⁵²

A very clear allegory is presented in this poem. First of all the poet gives the relevant geographical settings: Mount Ch'i 岐山 is where the empire of Chou originated. Yi 伊 and Ku 汭 are the rivers near Lo-yang, the east capital of, among other dynasties, T'ang. The prince of Yin 紂 refers to Wei-tzu 微子, or Viscount Ch'i of Wei 微子啓, who was himself a prince and cousin to Chou 紂. It is said in the Analects, "Wei-tzu left [King Chou]".⁵³ The Lun-yü pi-k'ao ch'en 論語比考識, the mystical glossary of the Analects, says, "Yin was beguiled by Ta-chi and the jade horse left."⁵⁴ Jen Fang 任昉 (460-508) of the Ch'i-Liang period takes over this image in a memorial of his, "So it is that the assiduous galloping of the jade horse signified the departure of Wei-tzu."⁵⁵ So it is too that the going over of the jade horse to Chou reflects exactly what happened when Empress Wu officially ascended the throne - the dynastic name was changed to Chou and Emperor Jui-tsung, now a prince again, was there to pay homage to his mother.

The penultimate line borrows the reference from Juan Chi's Yung-huai poem 3, which mentions the western mountain.⁵⁶ Li Shan 李善 explains it as the place to which Po-yi 伯夷

and Shu-ch'i 叔齊 went on the establishment of the Chou empire.⁵⁷ This western mountain is more popularly known as Mount Shou-yang 首陽山. The former marquis of Tung-ling 東陵 refers to Shao P'ing 召平, who was Marquis of Tung-ling in the Ch'in 秦 dynasty but fell to the status of a commoner when the dynasty was replaced by Han. As he was poor, he grew melons east of Ch'ang-an city to sell. Because the melons he grew were very tasty, they earned themselves the name of Tung-ling melons. In the eleventh year of Emperor Kao-tsu of Han 漢高祖, Hsiao Ho 蕭何 was appointed Prime Minister and was granted an additional foeff; it was Shao P'ing who, for the future safety of Hsiao, successfully dissuaded him from accepting the additional foeff.⁵⁸

As seen from these allusions, Ch'en Tzu-ang probably regarded himself as an official of the former dynasty, having the same loyal heart as that of Po-yi, Shu-ch'i and Shao P'ing.

Poem 15:

The noble person finds it hard to be satisfied,
 His favour and love last for but a while.
 Don't, with your heart as pure as jade,
 Try to take from him the precious pearl.
 Once she was likened to a young peach-tree,
 Now she is among those in the grain-pounding market.
 The poem of the Owl makes its plaint from the east,
 Hosts of deer weep at the Ku-su Terrace.
 Has anyone seen the man of the leathern pouch?
 In a skiff, he left for the five lakes./59

As an allegory, the meaning is obvious. The poem tells of the tragic fate officials were liable to encounter under a temperamental ruler. The term kuei-jen 貴人 in the first line puns on the rank of imperial concubine, which Empress Wu used to be. The second couplet draws on a passage in the Chuang-tzu for the pearl under a dragon's chin, which a young man luckily

got while the dragon was asleep and therefore did not kill him.⁶⁰
It also resorts to a passage in the Han-fei-tzu 韓非子, which tells of the reversed scales under a dragon's chin: the one who stroked these scales would irritate and immediately be killed by this otherwise tame reptile. The passage goes on to talk about similar scales under the chin of the rulers.⁶¹
Here Ch'en is undoubtedly alluding to officials who unawares stroked these scales of the Empress and met their fate.

The next couplet probably embraces more than one image. Women who committed crimes were often sent to work in a grain-pounding market;⁶² and here Ch'en may be referring to Imperial Concubine Ch'i 戚夫人 of the Former Han, who was made to pound grain before her limbs were amputated, and she was deafened, muted and had her eyes gouged out as ordered by Empress Lü 呂后.⁶³ However, there is at least one case where men were sent to the grain-pounding market: Liu Wu 劉戊, Prince of Ch'u 楚, secretly planned a rebellion with the Prince of Wu 吳 against Emperor Ching of Han 漢景帝. Liu Wu's ministers, Lord Shen 申公 and Master Po 白生, who had been much revered by the prince's father, admonished him against such a plan. The Prince did not listen, but had them fettered and put in the grain-pounding market.⁶⁴

A peach tree has commonly been likened to a happy and beautiful girl, as in the poem "T'ao-yao" 桃夭 in the Book of Odes.⁶⁵ But a peach almost always conjures up the episode involving Duke Ling of Wei 衛靈公 and his courtier Mi Tzu-hsia 彌子瑕. When he was in favour, Mi once gave the duke his half-eaten peach and was duly praised for being willing to part with his succulent fruit. However, when his beauty faded, he was eventually punished by the duke for, among others,

having once had the discourtesy of offering him the half-eaten peach.⁶⁶ These anecdotes fit in with the theme of this poem. Though the grain-pounding market has nothing to do with this incident, it must have been the poet's intention, however vaguely, to intermingle these stories in the couplet.

Next comes the analogy of Chi Tan 姬旦, commonly known as the Duke of Chou 周公, being distrusted by his nephew King Ch'eng of the Chou dynasty 周成王. The Duke retired to the east and later wrote the poem of the Owl, "Ch'ih-hsiao" 鷓鴣集, to the King to protest his own innocence.⁶⁷ The next line, besides mourning the death of the disfavoured Wu Tzu-hsü 伍子胥, conveniently embodies the fall of Fu-ch'ai 夫差, King of Wu 吳, which also serves the current purpose. Wu Tzu-hsü, having failed to convince Fu-ch'ai of his wrong doings, said, "I can now see hosts of deer rambling at the Ku-su Terrace."⁶⁸ which implied that the state of Wu would perish and the terrace left to run wild.

The last couplet offers a strategy to stay away from tragedy, which, it seems, is to leave court as Fan Li 范蠡 had done. The leathern pouch, or ch'ih-yi 鴟夷, was later used by Fan Li as his surname. Two explanations have been offered by commentators: the first is that earlier on Fu Ch'ai had put the body of Wu Tzu-hsü in a leathern pouch. Having left the State of Yüeh 越, Fan considered himself a guilty man in leaving his king, and thus called himself Ch'ih-yi Tzu-p'i 鴟夷子皮, that is, the "hide" of the leathern pouch. Another explanation is that a leathern pouch was used to contain wine, and was capable either of providing a great capacity or of being folded up, as the situation required. Because of this philosophical significance, Fan Li chose it to be his new surname.⁶⁹

Poem 16:

The sages are long past,
The proper way, so remote, is hard to find.
So pretentious, those obsequious men -
Yao and Yü would have considered them treacherous.
They are proud of their glories, fond of cunning,
They pursue power and profit one after the other.
The King of Yen revered Yüeh Yi,
He shared his state with him, so as to share his pleasure.
Lu Lien declined the offer of a fief from Ch'i,
Leaving the patterned silk, he departed from Han-tan.
These men have indeed gone,
So roused are my feelings - for whom do I sigh?⁷⁰

In this poem the poet nostalgically recalls historical incidents in which show the heart to heart understanding and cooperation between rulers and ministers. It contrasts what the poet sees to be the present trend of ruler-minister relationship, which is based on exploitation and profit, with the respect King Chao of Yen 燕昭王 had for his minister Yüeh Yi 樂毅 and Lu Chung-lien's 魯仲連 disregard for temporal glory.⁷¹

Poem 17:

In seclusion I observe the will of heaven,
Deep in thought, I set my mind on mankind.
Since antiquity, dynasties have risen and fallen,
Even the great sages could not oppose them.
The three declining dynasties were closed with Chou Nan,
The seven states were exterminated by the empire of
Ch'in-Ying.
I have also heard of the Red Prince,
Who took up a sword and entered the capital Hsien-yang.
As the Flaming Brightness was extinguished,⁷²
Chin rebels wrought havoc everywhere.
The doctrines of Yao and Yü had been obscured,
Confusion and cruelty prevailed on earth.
Not that there were no heroes during that time -
But the way of heaven was with the barbarian soldiers.
Sighing and muttering, how can I speak my mind?
Mankind has not woken from its drunkenness.
Chung-ni was drowned by his high ideals in eastern Lu,
Po-yang retired into the remote west.
Heaven's will has come down from old,
Insignificant as I am, what use is there to sigh?⁷³

The poem, besides being apparently a general historical account which forms an exposition of the fatalist view, seems to point at the fact that the way of heaven was now on the side of the unrightful, which had rendered several coups d'état unsuccessful. The fact that the historical countdown stops at the time when the proper way was obscured and the improper in full force, must bear an implication. The character hsiung 凶 in line 13, which is also the opposite of tz'u 此, makes a good pun because Ch'en's monarch was a female. In this poem, the author's hankering after seclusion comes quite naturally and is easily perceived.

Poem 18:

The crooked way has long been dominant,
 Uprightness is bound to fail.
 Not that there is no one provoked by this,
 But present customs oppress such tendencies.
 What is so lowly about being a gardener?
 Pure and unsullied was Wu-ling Chung.
 He was not compatible with the way of his time,
 Alas! I sigh for Chang Chang-kung./74

This poem expresses the author's discontent over the present government and his difficulty in getting along with colleagues whose temperament and aim in life the poet found very different from his own. The Hsin t'ang-shu says Ch'en was several times called on by Empress Wu for his opinions on current government issues. His discussions were detailed and thorough; but it was exactly because of this that very soon the Empress refrained from hearing them.⁷⁵ This is perhaps what he refers to as the failure of uprightnes.

Two historical figures are mentioned in the poem: the first one is Ch'en Chung-tzu 陳仲子, who left his cousin, a minister in the State of Ch'i 齊, because he found his cousin far from righteous. He thus went to Ch'u 楚 and dwelt in a

place called Wu-ling 武陵 and was known as Wu-ling Tzu-chung 武陵子仲. The king of Ch'u wanted to offer him a premier-ship, but he declined and fled with his wife and worked as a gardener.⁷⁶ Such is an instance of one who did not want to get into office at a time of chaos. The second historical figure mentioned is Chang Chih 張執, courtesy-named Chang-kung 長公, who served in the reign of Emperor Ching of Han and rose to the rank of ta-fu 大夫, but left his office because he was unable to mix with the rest of the court officials.⁷⁷ This appears to reflect the poet himself. The two historical figures epitomize the poet's failure to acquiesce in the doings of the current world and his intention to withdraw into seclusion.

Poem 19:

Sages do not look to their own profit,
 They care for the people, and their salvation.
 Yellow-canopied chariots were not Yao's idea,
 Let alone such things as the Jasper Terrace.
 I have heard about the sacred teaching of the west:
 Cultivate calm and quiet, so that the way may stretch far and wide.
 Why is it gold and jade are all used up,
 Fashioned into Buddhist idols?
 Soaring temples - mountains and forests stripped bare,
 Gaudy pagodas - pearl and jade in distressing profusion.
 Even the mysterious powers might not cope with such tasks,
 So how can the strength of man prevail?
 Displaying such foolishness only brings increasing trouble,
 Valuing such cleverness makes the way more obscure./78

This poem points specifically at the Empress' lavishness in the erection of Buddhist temples. According to history, after her accession, the Empress ordered all chou to build Buddhist temples by the name of Ta-yün 大雲, and had the White Horse Temple 白馬寺 renovated for Priest Huai-yi. She also ordered the erection of a large statue of Buddha, the small finger of which could hold tens of people. The statue was housed in a building called T'ien-t'ang 天堂, the Heavenly Hall, north of the Ming-t'ang. Shortly

after the completion, the hall and the statue were both damaged by a storm, and both had to be restored. As a result, tens of thousands of people had to be recruited to fell trees and transport the wood to Lo-yang for the purpose; thus the national treasury was heavily eroded.⁷⁹ In the first year of Chiu-shih 久視, 700, the Empress again pondered on the idea of having another Buddha statue erected, and ordered every priest and nun to contribute one cash per day to have the project realized. This met with the protest of Ti Jen-chieh, who submitted a memorial saying, "The present-day temples and pagodas are more lavish than palaces. However, the great effort involved still cannot get the better of ghosts and spirits; it only enslaves man. The materials do not come from heaven, they have to be obtained from the earth. When Buddha founded his religion, he based it on piety and compassion; how could he have wanted to enslave man to get these useless decorations."⁸⁰ So Ch'en's poem might either have been written shortly after the Empress' accession, or during his mourning for his father, around the time when Chief Minister Ti Jen-chieh submitted his memorial.

Poem 20:

The profound heaven is withdrawn and silent,
Why are men's voices so loud and jeering?
Though the doctrines of the sages still remain,
The order of the world has long declined.
What can one string suspend?
Sorrowful and drunk, I cannot hold myself together.
Leave it, I'll go pick the plant of long life,
I am not to be deceived by this mortal world./81

This poem reflects a conflict in the poet between serving the country and staying away from it, with an eventual resolution to do the latter.

Poem 21:

The dragonfly wanders freely amidst heaven and earth,
Bearing no evil to other creatures.
It flies and flies, before it can go far,
The siskin comes to interfere.
The Marquis of Jang was rich in Ch'in's favour,
Their affection was comparable to gold and stone.
He did what he wanted in Hsien-yang,
The lords dared not utter a word.
Who'd have thought the stranger from east of the hills
Would set the king's heart on fury!
As a commoner he took the premiership;
A thousand years now, we still grieve over it.⁸²

The encouragement of informing against others and the adverse result on the innocent officials are alluded to in this poem, where the victims are likened to the harmless dragonflies which were under the attack of siskins. The historical incident as mentioned here is slightly twisted, probably for want of a more appropriate one. For this stranger from east of the hills, Fan Chui 范雎, is known to have been an outstanding politician who offered King Chao of Ch'in 秦昭王 the strategy of allying distant states to attack near ones, and he proved no worse, if not better, than the Marquis of Jang 穰侯 Wei Jan 魏冉, whom he displaced.⁸³ Anyhow, if one overlooks the slight twist and ventures into the spirit of the poem, the analogy comes out quite clearly. As a result of the encouragement from the Empress, unknown informers often rose to august political positions. Ts'ui Ch'a 崔擘 and Li Ching-ch'en 李景讓 secured the post of chief minister through bringing false charges against P'ei Yen. So Yüan-li and Lai Chün-ch'en, through informing, secured high ministerial posts, and in this respect they are comparable to Fan Chui. This poem finds its prose equivalent and glossary in the author's own memorial, the Chien yung-hsing shu 諫用刑書, where he accuses informers of making false charges against others in the

hope of obtaining rewards themselves.

Poem 22:

A slight frost - I know the year is coming to a close,
Axe-handles have only just begun to look green.
Moreover, it is an autumn evening,
Numerous dewdrops are moistening the flowers.
I ascend a mountain and look at the universe,
The sun has been obscured in the west.
The cloud-reflecting sea is rough yet,
How does a lone scaly creature acquire peace?⁸⁴

This is another poem in which the poet cherishes the idea of retirement. It hints at the unsettled state of affairs in the country and the danger he was exposed to. Here the image of axe-handles is again picked up to mean exactly the same thing as it does in poem 12. The way this image is used, however, betrays the poet's anxiety that their maturity is far behind time.

Poem 23:

The turquoise king-fishers nest on the southern seas,
Male and female, amidst pearl-bearing trees,
Not knowing the mind of the pretty girl
Who considers them as dear as gold.
They are slain on the tropic isles,
Their feathers given up in the shade of the jade hall.
Waving gracefully, the feathers brighten head ornaments,
In luxuriance, they make embroidered garments glitter.
Surely these birds live far away,
But the net comes upon them suddenly.
Having many good qualities is indeed a curse,
I sigh for these precious birds./⁸⁵

The poem uses the fate of turquoise king-fishers to reflect on that of the capable men who somehow found themselves serving at court. One perhaps should not see the unfortunate fate of the turquoise king-fishers as simply the loss of life of capable officials. One could, besides losing one's life, be exhausted of one's capabilities for nothing, thus having one's political life smothered, which is also comparable to a bird's being killed and plucked.

Poem 24:

A small vessel he is, who is he?
Beautifully dressed, and in his youth.
The fifteenth, the bright moon is full,
It does not treasure its full beauty.
In the majestic hall he scatters the gold and jade,
With a thin thread he suspends a tremendous weight.
How can he bear the ruler's tripod?
So it is snatched, and he laughed at by his contemporaries.⁸⁶

Ch'en Hang glosses the poem in the following words, "It mourns the premiership being occupied by unqualified people, which caused a succession of downfalls. Empress Wu appointed new chief ministers frequently, and the appointments and dismissals were fast. In twenty years there were tens and tens of chief ministers. Chief ministers like Ts'ui Ch'a 崔謩, Ch'ien Wei-tao 韋味道, Li Ching-ch'en 李景湛, Shen Chün-liang 沈君諒, Wei Tai-chia 韋待價, Fu Yu-yi 傅游藝, Shih Wu-tzu 史務滋, Wu Shih-fang 武什方, Yang Tsai-ssu 楊再思 and Tsung Ch'u-k'o 宗楚客 were people of low breed; they all underwent the process of quick appointment and quick dismissal, and were eventually killed. That is why this poem sighs over their small talent but great ambition and their lack of ability to perform basic duties, which a 'small vessel' is expected to do. With such an inadequate ability but so great a responsibility, it is just like suspending a large weight with a thin thread. They are thus like the full moon, which cannot avoid waning. There in the hall are gold and jade, but they cannot look after them. So it is that the tripod which each of them bears breaks its leg and is snatched by others. He will only be laughed at by the world."⁸⁷

The last couplet in this poem has its appropriate source and explanation in the Yi-ching. In the chapter of the Ting 鼎

hexagram  it says, "Nine-four: the tripod breaks a leg, the ruler's food is overthrown, the place is soaking wet. Unlucky."⁸⁸
 In the "Hsi-tz'u hsia-chuan" 繫辭下傳 is recorded the following said by Confucius, "Little worth but high position, small talent but great ambition, inadequate capability but big responsibility, indeed how can he cope with the job! The Yi-ching says, 'The tripod breaks a leg, the ruler's food is overthrown, the place is soaking wet. Unlucky.' This refers to one's inability to bear one's responsibility."⁸⁹

More immediately, in the reign of Empress Wu, a Ho Feng-yao 和逢堯 carried a tripod on his back and sought an audience with the Empress, that he could discuss with her "cookery" on a nation-wide scale. He was reprimanded by the authorities for misusing the precedence of Yi Yin 伊尹 and was banished.⁹⁰
 Ch'en may have had this incident in mind when he wrote the poem.

Poem 25:

The black cicada cries at the white dew,
 This year has been wasted.
 All things submit to the changes of nature,
 What else could a lone flower do?
 On the Jasper Terrace there are the green birds
 That eat the corn from the remote Jade Mountain.
 On K'un-lun we see the heavenly phoenixes,
 They are never endangered by the cloud-like nets.⁹¹

This poem again mentions seclusion as a solution to current problems and as a means of avoiding the political snare. The Jasper Terrace in the poem refers to a dwelling place for immortals, as described in the Li-sao 離騷;⁹² the Jade Mountain 玉山 was west of Mount K'un-lun 崑崙山 and the home of the Queen Mother of the West 西王母, who was waited on by three green birds; the heavenly phoenixes were birds of Mount K'un-lun. They are all mentioned in the Shan-hai-ching 山海經.⁹³ Here the lone flower probably symbolizes the

poet himself and the birds and phoenixes symbolize recluses.

Poem 26:

Undisciplined was Emperor Mu,
Who liked making dates with white clouds.
Women in the palace repined at being neglected,
On Ts'eng-ch'eng peak he was shut off with his beautiful one.⁹⁴
Every day he indulged in pleasure at the Jasper Pond,
Never pitying the short years of peaches and plums.
The green moss withered away, for nothing,
White hair grew within bed-curtains./95

The white clouds in this poem are associated with the Queen Mother of the West. Legend has it that when one day Emperor Mu of Chou 周穆王 and the Queen Mother were feasting at the Jasper Pond 瑶池, the goddess composed the following song for the emperor:

The white clouds are in heaven,
Mountains and hills exist by themselves.
The road is long,
Mountains and rivers intercept it.
May you not die,
That you can come again.⁹⁶

Thematically this poem seems to be about the doting of Emperor Kao-tsung on Empress Wu and his consequential neglect of many imperial duties.

Poem 27:

At dawn I started from the bank of Yi-tu,
Thoughts of home have overwhelmed me.
Home I cannot see,
The way is blocked by Mount Wu's south face.
Mount Wu is hidden by coloured clouds,
Its lofty peaks are far and blurred.
I stand gazing for a long while,
My teardrops fall and wet my clothes -
Not because of my home-parting sorrow,
But I remember King Hsiang of Ch'u in the past.
The morning clouds were without a dwelling place,
The state of Ching also perished./97

This poem, like the previous one, also makes use of a legend to characterize a recent episode.

The anecdote is based on the prefaces to the rhymed proses of Kao-t'ang 高唐賦 and Shen-nü 神女賦, alleged to have been written by Sung Yü 宋玉 of the State of Ch'u. King Huai of Ch'u 楚懷王 once rested in the temple of Kao-t'ang and met a girl in his dream. The girl introduced herself as the goddess of Mount Wu 巫山 and offered to serve the king. Thus they spent the night together. On leaving the king she told him that her constant dwelling place was on the south side of Mount Wu, by the lofty peaks; in the morning she took on the form of morning clouds and in the evening she took on the form of falling rain. Some years afterwards, King Ch'ing-hsiang of Ch'u 楚頃襄王 also visited the temple, was told of what had happened by Sung Yü, and on that night he also met the goddess in his dream.⁹⁸ This is a very apt parallel of the affairs between T'ai-tsung, Kao-tsung and Empress Wu.

That the morning clouds were without a dwelling place is originally a euphuistic reference by Sung Yü to the disappearance of the morning clouds after rain.⁹⁹ As it is, the last couplet sighs over the disappearance of the goddess and the State of Ch'u, the romance and the glory, and the mortality of things in this world. However, it can also be interpreted as pointing to the "improper" place of Empress Wu and the disappearance of the T'ang empire. The Empress' situation as interpreted can well be explained in the spirit of the Yi-ching: "The position is noble, but not the proper place; high, but without the support of the people."¹⁰⁰

Poem 28:

Once long ago, at the banquet at Chang-hua Terrace,
The King of Ching revelled in profligacy.

His banners colourful, his chariot canopied with blue-
 green feathers,
 He shot the one-horned buffalo in the forest of Yün-meng.
 Coming to the Kao-t'ang Temple,
 I vexedly gaze at the mountain peak of Yün-yang.
 Where are the masterly plans now?
 Only the siskins are moaning sadly, in vain.¹⁰¹

In this poem his pi-hsing technique is again at full play.
 The incident of the shooting of the one-horned buffalo is one
 in which Lord An-ling 安陵君, who impressed the king of Ch'u
 by his beauty, obtained his feoff by affectionately weeping and
 asking to be buried alive with the king on his death.¹⁰² This
 might well reflect the relation between Kao-tsung and Empress Wu,
 and might even refer to the investiture of the latter. While
 siskins were commonly found in the place that had been the State
 of Ch'u, and fit in well with a poem about the Ch'u king, the
 name siskin alone bears an allusion to the analogy made by
 Chuang Hsin 莊辛, who warned King Hsiang of Ch'u by likening
 him to a siskin that was not aware of the lurking danger of the
 missile of the hunter, and took him to task for neglecting
 state affairs and spending his time hunting in Yün-meng 雲夢
 with his four favoured courtiers.¹⁰³ The siskin may also refer
 to Chung-tsung, who had been relegated to Prince of Lu-ling 蘆
 陵王 and exiled to Fang Chou 房州, Lu-ling and Fang Chou
 being places in Ch'u. He was supposedly moaning in vain.

Poem 29:

The year ting-hai is coming to an end,
 On the western hills soldiers are engaged in warfare.
 Heavy provisions fill the path in Ch'iung,
 The spears they bear frighten the ramparts of Ch'iang.
 Winter is severe, the mountain mist is grim and heavy,
 From the barren mountain-holes clouds leak and grow.
 It is dark and gloomy, there is no day and night,
 The feathered despatches repeatedly cause alarm.

Climb and crawl, to the height of ten thousand jen,
 The severed rocks run down to Hades.
 Soldiers crowd the ravines in confusion,
 Grief-stricken, in snow they march.
 When a sage rules the world,
 I have heard, the T'ai-chieh is in balance.
 What unwise plans have the meat-eaters made,
 That pulse-leaves are flourishing everywhere?¹⁰⁴

This poem deplores the intended invasion on the Ch'iang tribe and is a depiction of what the author thought to be the scene as the soldiers advanced. It winds up with a parting shot at the policy of the government, or the Empress. The T'ai-chieh 春階 constellation, which consists of six stars paired off in three levels, was regarded as a vane for the state of affairs on earth. The balance or imbalance of the stars in this constellation would signify the harmony or discord on earth.¹⁰⁵ Obviously when the poem was written, the stars were supposed to be out of balance. "Meat-eaters" has always been used to refer generally to men of high position.¹⁰⁶ The "pulse-leaves" must have been based on the Biography of Kai K'uan-jao 蓋寬饒 in the Han-shu 漢書, which says, "If mountains are infested with fierce beasts, pulse-leaves will not be picked. If the empire has loyal officials, the treacherous will not rise."¹⁰⁷ Thus the abundance of pulse-leaves reflects the dangerous state the empire was in.

Poem 30:

There, men in elevated positions,
 Power and profit are the doorway to calamity.
 You will sigh the sigh of orchid oil,
 Mourning over your self-incurred misfortunes.
 What most others are after, one should know how to avoid,
 Though forsaken by prevailing trends the way still exists.
 When the refuge of freedom is lost,
 There is no one to talk to about nets and snares.
 In Mount Chi there is lofty chastity,
 River Hsiang has a clear source.
 There seems only the white sea-gull
 To whom I can pour out my heart./108

This is another poem advocating seclusion. The keen but unjust competition in the political arena is a source of self-annihilation, and therefore it is more advisable to leave worldly matters behind, as Hsu Yu 許由 and Ch'ao-fu had at different times turned down the offer of the empire by Yao 堯 and T'ang 湯, and stayed in seclusion in Mount Chi 箕山.¹⁰⁹ The clear source of River Hsiang 湘水 refers to River Mi-lo 汨羅江, where Ch'u Yuan 屈原 drowned himself. Such exalted behaviour only the unworldly white sea-gulls could understand.

As the turquoise king-fishers in poem 23 lose their lives because of their beautiful feathers, the orchid oil burns itself up because of its fragrance and the light it gives.¹¹⁰ But in this context the cause of disaster is certainly not inherent only, because the second line mentions power and profit. The first two couplets may in fact have the idea contained in poem 6 of the yung-huai, which says,

Burning oil pains and torments itself,
Great riches incur calamity.
Being a humble commoner the whole life is enough,
Favour and high rank are not reliable./111

Poem 31:

Lovable is this tree on the Jasper Terrace,
Brilliant is its mien, like that of a beautiful girl.
Its gleaming flowers and scarlet fruits reflect one another,
And are plucked while they are young.
Indeed they are full of eminent distinction,
Adorning the sovereign's white jade courtyard.
But I am vexed at the fading away of the fragrant redness,
Their witherings affect my heart./112

In it the poet speaks plaintively of his own sad lot, which again reflects his inner conflict between officialdom and retirement, a conflict which seems obsessive in him. The third couplet shows how tightly the poet still clings to his golden days, when he was constantly summoned to give his views on political issues.

Poem 32:

I have retired for but a few days,
The hot summer suddenly fails.
What was bright and gay is dim and glum,
Relatives and friends are all parted from me.
I ascend a hill and gaze, but cannot see them,
I weep for a long while, and tears flow incessantly.
I have always missed his presence,
How could I make a date with him over the white cloud?
The proud and arrogant men on horse-back
Are chasing about, causing great confusion.
The mountains of Shu and rivers of Ch'u,
When could we be together, hand in hand?/113

Ch'en Hang suggests that this poem is one in which the author expresses his nostalgia for the House of Li.¹¹⁴ It indeed seems so. Ch'en Tzu-ang passed the civil examination in 684. In the same year Emperor Kao-tsung died and the curtain went up on the Wu usurpation. This poem seems to allude to this incident.

It starts off, quite characteristically, with the rapid transition of time and goes on to insinuate the sudden dimming of the House of Li, the flocking in of undesirable personalities at court, and the dying out of imperial members and loyal officials. Ch'en Tzu-ang then expresses his affection for his former emperor, probably Chung-tsung. The proud ones on horse-back probably refer to those newly in power. The last couplet seems to express the author's yearning for the return of the Li House, with the affection one would feel if yearning for reunion with a friend. Ch'u again may refer to the Prince of Lu-ling.

The image of the white cloud, it seems, is treated somewhat differently from poem 26. It reminds one of a passage in the "T'ien-ti" 天地 chapter of the Chuang-tzu, "[The sage] rides on the white cloud and arrives at the homeland of the [Heavenly] Emperor."¹¹⁵ It is, I think, this possible reticent association that suggests the probable theme of the poem.

Poem 33:

That the elixir can be produced in the golden tripod
People on earth consider a hoax.
Fly, fly, the goat-riding deity,
Why then is he in Mount O-mei?
For those who are not fated to transform,
How long can their prime last?
Weariness and disease increase their sufferings in this fallen world,
Sorrow and regret daily eat into and blacken their life.
They will think of with affection the recluse's serge,
And weep at the white clouds in vain./116

This poem seems to carry the same theme as the one above;
and like poem 6, it appears very mystical. Here the poet conjures
up the goat-riding deity. This deity is Ko Yu 葛由, who is
described in the Lieh-hsien-chuan 列仙傳 as having been active
in the Chou dynasty. Ko Yu liked to fashion wood into goats and
sell them. When he went to Shu riding a goat, the noblemen and
rich people all went after him for the artefacts. He went into
Mount Sui 綏安山, south-west to Mount O-mei 峨嵋山. Those
who followed him into the mountain tasted the peaches there and
thus became immortals.¹¹⁷ Again, this story as applied in the
poem must be understood on an allegorical level; otherwise it
would be nonsensical indeed to question why such a deity exists
in O-mei if alchemy was a hoax, for it would deserve no logical
answer other than that the deity is purely legendary. The use of
this particular deity, among numerous others, might have been
that the word "goat", yang 羊, is a homophone of and therefore
puns on the surname of the Sui emperors, because the House of
Yang 楊 was actually "overridden" by the House of Li. Again,
the first two couplets, without resorting to any analysis of the
logic in them, are there to express the poet's belief in the
revival of the House of Li. The rest describe how the "infidels"
suffer as "mortals", and how vain it is in the end for them to
weep at the unattainable "white clouds".

Poem 34:

The northern blast blows the seaside trees,
It is autumn on this desolate frontier.
Above the pavilion, who is there
Grieving in the moon-lit tower?
He says: I am a stranger from Yu-Yen,
When my hair was tied back I started to wander afar.
With red pellets I killed government officials,
With white daggers I carried out my own revenges.
To run away from enemies I went into the sea,
And served on this frontier place.
My home village is three thousand li away,
The Liao River is deep and wide.
I am always roused by the invasion of the barbarian soldiers,
Often felt sorry for our Chinese Kingdom.
Who could know that after going through seventy battles,
White-headed, I have not been enfeoffed./118

Plainly, this is the story of a frustrated soldier who had gone through numerous battles for the country and yet not been duly rewarded.

The allusion of the red pellets comes from a passage in the Biography of Yin Shang 尹賞 in the Han-shu, which tells of the larrikins in Ch'ang-an who made money as hired murderers to those who sought revenge on government officials. The assignments were made through drawing lots - one who drew a red pellet would murder military officials, one who drew a black pellet would murder civil officials, and one who drew a white pellet would take care of funeral services for fellow-larrikins if such needs arose.¹¹⁹

The tying back of the hair (on coming of age) and what is said in the last couplet are from the Biography of General Li Kuang 李廣 in the Shih-chi, which records at one place, "Kuang said to his generals in the army, 'Since the time I tied back my hair I have engaged in over seventy battles, big and small, with the Hsiung-nu.'" and at another, "Once Kuang said to geomancer Wang Shuo 王朔 at a feast, 'Ever since the Han Empire set out to combat the Hsiung-nu there has not been a battle which I was

not involved in. However, just look at the various military divisions; scores of commanders of the palace guards and their subordinates whose capability is not even mediocre have been created marquises for military merits in combating the barbarians. I have never lagged behind in battles; why is it that my merits have not acquired me a fief? Does my physiognomy declare I do not deserve to be ennobled?"¹²⁰

Poem 35:

I come of a wealthy family,
And I take pride in my capabilities.
Roused by time's difficulty I wanted to serve my country,
Pulling out my sword I left my home village.
I rode west to the border of Ting-ling,
To the north I ascended Ch'an-yü Terrace.
Having ascended this mountain, seeing a thousand li,
I am lost in thoughts of antiquity.
Who says our never-ending misfortune
Has vanished like dust?/121

In this poem Ch'en Tzu-ang portrays himself as a patriot who has left behind his wealth and comfort to serve his country. He also alludes to his two frontier expeditions and is grimly positive that the barbarian invasions are not going to end.

Poem 36:

Deep in thought, what am I longing for?
In Shu, my home, there is O-mei.
How I'd love to make a date with the madman of Ch'u
High above amidst the white clouds.
Alas, our times are different, we cannot meet,
I weep for a long time, my tears flowing unceasingly.
I dream of ascending into the caves of Mount Sui,
And picking the plant of long life in Mount Wu to the south.
I explore the mysteries and observe nature's operations,
And leave the temporal world to follow the hornless dragon
in heaven.
Our happy moment together, it seems so lasting,
But when I wake up it is no longer with me./122

This poem is of a similar nature as poem 32; recurrent in the two poems is the white cloud symbol. O-mei 峨眉, the

mountain that Ch'en Tzu-ang is affectionately thinking of, has long been a seat of the immortals, and it may well symbolize the T'ang emperorship. If this is so, then "my home" in the second line is no less than "my country". The madman of Ch'u is to the poet a comrade, for he refrained from serving a regime he did not like.¹²³ It is perhaps not unlikely that ch'u-k'uang-tzu 楚狂子 in line 3 also hints at ch'u-wang-tzu 楚王子, the deposed Chung-tsung. The mountains Sui and Wu, both in Shu, were well connected with mystical legends. It was said that on Mount Sui peaches were grown which would give longevity, if not immortality, to anyone who ate them.¹²⁴ The hornless dragon, with whom the poet is together in dreams, apparently refers to a deposed T'ang emperor. However, what worries the poet is how the peaches and the chih 芝, the plant of long life, can be found, and likewise how the T'ang emperorship is to be restored. The conflict between the poet's emotion and reasoning is well represented in the poem by dreams and reality.

Poem 37:

Early in the morning I entered Yün-chung Prefecture,
 Here I gaze north at Ch'an-yü Terrace.
 How near! the barbarian territory and the Middle Kingdom,
 The desert north is indeed grand and imposing!
 Crowds of these beloved children of heaven
 Have come again in raving madness.
 On the frontier wall there are no distinguished generals,
 The fire-beacons jut up for no purpose.
 I heave a loud sigh, what is it for?
 For the people on the frontier, who are in great agony.¹²⁵

The Biography of the Hsiung-nu in the Han-shu has the following remarks, "The barbarians are the beloved children of heaven."¹²⁶

It is this association with the Hsiung-nu, together with the place names of Yün-chung Prefecture 雲中郡 and Ch'an-yü Terrace 單于臺, that shows the date of composition of this poem to be on the poet's first frontier expedition. In the poem, Ch'en

Tzu-ang sighs over the lack of capable generals, which left the barbarian invaders uncontrollable. In theme it tallies with his memorial on the T'u-chüeh written on behalf of Ch'iao Chih-chih, where he also refers to the lack of capable generals on the frontier.

Poem 38:

Chung-ni probed the operations of nature:
The wild goose from the deep submitted to the yang harmony.
Heaven's workings flow and ebb,
Spring and autumn have alternately come and passed.
All of a sudden a violent storm roars angrily,
All things are torn apart and crushed;
The vast sea is shaken to its bed,
What is a lone phoenix supposed to do?¹²⁷

This last poem in the cycle, like the first one, bears a great significance. The first line obviously associates Confucius with the Yi-ching. The second line is explainable by the same book. It says in the chapter of the Chien 漸 hexagram , "Nine-three: the wild geese gradually advance to the dry plains. The husband goes on an expedition, but does not return; the wife is pregnant, but does not give birth to her child. Unlucky. It might be advantageous in resisting plunderers." This is further explained thus, "The husband goes on an expedition, but does not return: he separates himself from his comrades. The wife is pregnant, but does not give birth to her child: she has failed in the proper course. It might be advantageous in resisting plunderers: by submitting to one another they would preserve one another."¹²⁸ In the above passages, one finds the characters hung 鴻 and shun 順, which are contained in the poem's second line. For a more exhaustive explanation one can look to the annotations by K'ung Ying-ta 孔穎達 (574-648). In fact, a reference to K'ung's annotations is relevant here because it helps to show the views of early T'ang scholars on the Yi-ching and thus helps to explain the poem as well. K'ung's explanation is

traditional enough. The following is how he explains nine-three in Chien:

This means that although the third line differs from the first two lines, the former being yang and the latter yin, they all constitute the Ken 艮 trigram ☶, that is why they are comrades. To have failed in the proper course refers to the pregnancy which was not caused by the husband, and the pregnancy which does not result in childbirth. This is because she has failed in the proper course. Submitting to preserve one another points to the fourth line, which is yin, being on top of yang [the third line], and thus is considered not submissive. However, if they are on friendly terms they are in perfect agreement; and if they are in harmony they coexist peacefully. This is what it means by submitting to preserve one another./129

In K'ung's annotations, one finds two more terms that are contained in the poem's second line, namely yang 陽 and ho 和. However, here it is the concept embodied that matters most. Yu 魚, an attribute of the yin force, qualifies the wild geese, which are water-birds. Water is a yin element.

The character shun with its idea of submissiveness also appears in the six-four line of Chien, "Six-four: the wild geese gradually advance to the tree. They may alight on the flat branches. No error." This is explained, "They may alight on the flat branches: there is submissiveness going on to flexible penetration."¹³⁰

The above quotations are helpful in interpreting the first couplet of the poem. What it means, therefore, is simply: Confucius explored the mysteries of the Yi-ching and expounded the idea that the yin force submits to the yang to attain a state of harmony. The rest of the poem is thus clear: nature's workings went on until they were finally thwarted by Empress Wu's usurpation, which brings about chaos. Confucius was referred to by the madman of Ch'u as a phoenix;¹³¹ doubtless the poet also uses the lone phoenix to symbolize himself, with all his virtues. In the last couplet the poet on the one hand asks what Confucius would do

now that the yin force is no longer submissive; on the other hand he asks himself what he would do now that the kingdom is being usurped and tossed apart. As Confucius eventually gave up writing the Spring and Autumn Annals in his despair, the reader is shown that this is likewise the poet's last poem in the cycle.

In the Kan-yü poems, the poet's technique in presenting the rapid passage of time constitutes a striking feature. By using a continuous tense in the first line and a perfect tense in the second line of the same couplet, the poet easily produces an illusion in which the second action comes even before the first. One example is the second couplet in poem 1:

As the round brightness is full in the east,
The dark part has in the morning formed.

Poem 13 also contains the poet's characteristic treatment of the transition of time:

Just as the green spring starts to bud and prosper,
The red fire of summer has reached its height;
It is then that everything begins to wither and perish.

The first line above describes the beginning of spring; immediately the reader is presented with the height of fiery summer in the second line; likewise this is immediately followed by the contraction of autumn in the third. The rapidity of the transition is breathtaking.

One finds other examples outside the Kan-yü poems. The fourth couplet in "The tall bamboo", for instance, reads:

As the spring wind is leisurely blowing,
White dew has turned clear and cold./132

However, in this couplet, the time depicted runs so fast that summer is not touched on at all. Such a jumping of steps in his description of time is also seen in poem 2 of the Kan-yü:

The leisurely white sun is at its journey's end,
Blowing and flowing, the autumn wind rises up.

The opening line shows the end of spring, when the sun is traditionally qualified by the term ch'ih-ch'ih 溽溽 ; the closing line, however, describes the autumn wind. Summer again is not mentioned.

In poem 17, the poet, in the same obsession with the fastness of time, makes a long jump in his historical account:

As the Flaming Brightness was extinguished,
Chin rebels wrought havoc everywhere.

This couplet passes over a missing link. The historical fact remains that after the fall of the Latter Han, there were still the Three Kingdoms and the dynasty of Chin before there came the havoc-working barbarians. This indeed seems to be pushing to the limit the liberties which a poet can legitimately take.

In poem 9, however, the poet takes even greater liberties by ingeniously, but rather mischievously, I suspect, playing on the possible connotations of the combination of the characters Han 漢 and Ch'in 秦 in the second-last couplet:

If the Red Prince should be besotted by the idea of Han,
How could Tzu-nien save Ch'in?

Since the opening line states heaven's will to let Liu Pang, the "Red Prince", or "Red Essence", establish the Han dynasty, one would naturally expect the closing line to be on the failure of the Ying-Ch'in 嬴秦 to hold on. But immediately the name Tzu-nien comes out of nowhere. That Tzu-nien, the courtesy-name (and much less known name) of Wang Chia, is used may have been for the poet's love for obscurity in the cycle. Also, as "Tzu-nien" makes the whole couplet antithetical (tzu 子, first of the twelve earthly branches, goes marvellously well with the character ch'ih 赤, the colour of the south, while nien 年 and ching 精 are both abstract and unearthly nouns), the poet's choice is understandable. But no matter what the poet's intention

might have been, putting side by side two historical incidents hundreds of years apart as if they were interactive is by no means ideal.

In the Kan-yü cycle Ch'en Tzu-ang also plays on, and even defies Chinese grammar. There are very incomplete lines, such as the second-last line of poem 9 - "Go go peach plum flower", and the second-last line in poem 17 - "Great operations from old come". Though incomplete, their meanings can be deduced quite easily. However, readers must be annoyed by the totally irresponsible line 6 in poem 17 - "Seven heroes annihilated Ch'in-Ying". History tells us that Ch'in, one of the seven "heroes", crushed the other six states and united the whole of China. Tu Mu 杜牧 (803-852), a famous poet of the late T'ang, therefore starts his "Rhymed prose on O-fang Palace" 阿房宮賦 with "The six kings came to an end, the four seas were united."¹³³ Such a presentation is surely acceptable. But a line like line 6 immediately begs the question of whether the seven states annihilated Ch'in-Ying, or whether the seven states were annihilated by Ch'in-Ying; either way would make eight states. Ch'in, being one of the seven, could never have annihilated herself and the other six to get at a united Ch'in. One finds out the correct meaning in the light of the historical incident itself, not by the meaning apprehended in the jumble of five words. Here Ch'en has overstepped the mark.

In poem 34, Ch'en Tzu-ang's choice of allusion seems to be at fault. The theme of the poem, it seems, is to deplore the negligence of the government towards soldiers of merit. But here is one who, after going through seventy battles, feels frustrated because he is not ennobled! The gist of the matter is that going through seventy battles does not necessarily merit an ennoblement, which was supposed to be the highest form of,

and therefore a very select award. Furthermore, the soldier, without a description of how well he performed in battles, is represented as an unrepenting ex-outlaw who killed government officials and took revenge into his own hands, and is therefore someone who should have long since been brought to justice. The reference to the Biography of Yin Shang has obviously been unwisely made. To me, the poem has failed to gain what it appears to aim at gaining - sympathy. The last character in the poem, hou 侯, marquis, appears to be the inevitable sequel after the allusions to tying back his hair and going through seventy battles, to complete the reference to Li Kuang's frustrated utterances. It also happens to be a rhyme word which, when removed, might incur a cumbersome alteration of the rhyming scheme of the poem. However, it is too strong a word not to make the stranger in the poem savour of undue greed.

However, the defects which I have ventured to point out must not preclude the Kan-yü poems from being considered a remarkable poetic attainment in the cycle's own right and in the history of poetry. Although the diction is plain and the tone straightforward, the poems, through the use of allegory, are capable of producing an impact far greater than their outward form suggests. But their reticence has been shown to demand an appreciative and learned readership. In terms of the history of poetry, the cycle of Kan-yü poems were generally regarded as the model of socio-political allegory in the T'ang dynasty, and were highly praised by the main-stream of T'ang poets.

Yao Fan 姚範 (1702-1771) of the Ch'ing dynasty, in his Yüan-ch'un-t'ang pi-chi 後鷗堂筆記, appraises Ch'en Tzu-ang's Kan-yü poems in the following words:

The style is erect and lofty; but the poems are still deficient in the necessary force and rhyme. Thus on reading them one feels the lack of versatility in their tone and rhythm./134

My impression, however, is that it might have been Ch'en Tzu-ang's intention to re-create in the cycle the formal monotony of Juan Chi's Yung-huai poems. His themes, his sparing use of vocabulary and glamorous words and his straightforward expression all help in this re-creation. The appeal of this re-creation to individuals must vary; and Yao Fan is certainly entitled to his view. However, one should refrain from seeing this as the inadequacy of the poet, because as we shall see later, what seems to be lacking in the Kan-yü poems is made up for in many of Ch'en's chih-t'i 近體 poems.

Liu K'o-chuang 劉克莊 (1187-1269) of the Sung dynasty sees the poems in a different light when he says in his Hou-ts'un shih-hua 後邨詩話,

When I read the several Kan-yü poems, I discovered that they were quite out of the beaten track in composition. They enable one's eyes to see beyond the four seas and one's soul to travel beyond the limits of heaven and earth./135

This comment is again allowable, and highly complimentary too. The mystical elements in the cycle are capable of conjuring up limitless visions of the universe and stretching the imagination as poetry in the Ch'i-Liang period hardly does. While acknowledging this aspect, one must also realize this is only of secondary value as far as this cycle of poems is concerned. The mystical elements are guises. The true value still lies in the spirit of the poems and due credit must be given to his expertness in allegory.

Chapter 4. Lan-ku Poems and Song on Ascending Yu Chou Barbican

The cycle of Chi-ch'iu lan-ku 薊丘覽古 and the "Song on ascending Yu Chou Barbican" 登幽州臺歌, all written at Chi-ch'iu after the rejection of Ch'en Tzu-ang by Wu Yu-yi, are also poems of high standing. Chi-ch'iu lan-ku, or "Viewing Antiquities at Thistle Hill",¹ were written where the remains of the Yen 燕 capital lay, and where vestiges of Hsüan-yüan 軒車 were found. The Lan-ku poems are overlaid with a bland and straightforward style of narration but are in fact very allusive through the historic places and figures they conjure up, and carry a notable political gravity. The cycle reflects the poet's frustration by the medium of comparable and contrasting situations in history, focusing on figures and events that are related to the poet's own situation, containing, like the Kan-yü, references to the passage of time, and current political insinuations.

The last six poems deal with two periods in the history of the State of Yen, one centering on King Chao 昭王 and the other on the Crown Prince Tan 太子丹. King Chao, who reigned from 312 to 279 B.C., greatly strengthened the state with the guidance and assistance of such ministers as Tsou Yen 鄒衍 and Kuo Wei 郭隗; but Yen fell short of winning the hegemony over the other feudal states mainly because King Chao died too early to see his plans through. While he was alive he succeeded in defeating the State of Ch'i 齊 with the help of his capable minister and general Yüeh Yi 樂毅; but after his death, his successor King Hui 惠王 listened to libels against the old ministers and had Tsou Yen imprisoned, while Yüeh Yi fled to the State of Chao 趙 to escape persecution, thus finally rendering abortive the attempt for the hegemony of Yen. King

Chao seems to be the key-figure in this cycle and is contrasted with Prince Wu Yu-yi; while the former attracted capable men and revered them and had definite plans for victory, the latter acted in precisely the opposite way.

As we can see, all the heroes of the State of Yen which Ch'en Tzu-ang invokes in the cycle had the common cause of fighting against overwhelming odds and laying down their lives for their country. They and their unsuccessful actions appropriately contrast with the poet's inaction, which was against his patriotic will, and satire on the alleged undiscipline and cowardice of Wu Yu-yi.

The first four poems undoubtedly have a political undertone:

Poem 1. "Hsüan-yüan Terrace" 軒袁臺
Heading north I ascend Chi-ch'iu and gaze,
Looking for the ancient Hsüan-yüan Terrace.
Ying Lung is no longer seen,
Only grazing horses are amidst yellow dust.
I still think of Kuang-ch'eng-tzu,
Who settled himself in white clouds.²

Ying Lung 應龍 in the third line was a general to the Yellow Emperor Hsüan-yüan, who sent him to defeat Ch'ih-yu 蚩尤; the fourth line puns on the past and present, for as there is little doubt that the poet did see horses among the ruins, at the same time the first character "mu" 牧 evokes the image of Li Mu 力牧, the chief minister of the Yellow Emperor, whose image is in the same line evoked by the fourth character "huang" 黃. Grammatically mu-ma can also be taken to mean Mu's horses, which is also appropriate in the sense that the place was within the jurisdiction of Li Mu's government. This poem seems on another level to sigh over the lack of capable people in the poet's time. Finally, sudden hopelessness leads him to

the idea of seclusion, symbolized by Kuang-ch'eng-tzu 廣成子 .
Another significance of Kuang-ch'eng-tzu is that as a recluse,
he was consulted by Hsüan-yüan, a contrast to Ch'en Tzu-ang,
whose advice to Wu Yu-yi was rejected.

Poem 2. "King Chao of Yen" 燕昭王

Ascending south I reach the Chieh-shih Lodge,
There I gaze afar at Yellow Gold Terrace.
The mountains and hills are covered with tall trees,
Indeed where is King Chao?
Gone are the plans of hegemony, it is saddening,
Still, I spur my horse and come back once more./3

The Chieh-shih Lodge 碣石館 is the name of the house which
King Chao of Yen built for his adviser Tsou Yen; Yellow Gold
Terrace 黃金臺 is the name of the terrace which the same
king built to receive Kuo Wei. Superficially the poem records
the poet's nostalgia roused by the sight of the remains; on a
personal level it contrasts the relationship between the devoted
King Chao and his ministers with that between Prince Wu and the
poet; this in a political context may also be looked upon as an
analogy of the golden days of the T'ang with T'ai-tsung as the
King Chao of his time.

Poem 3. "Mr Yüeh" 樂生

The kingly way was obliterated,
The Warring States competed for profit and weapons.
How loyal, Mr Yüeh,
Devoted to duty, he set out capturing the Ch'i cities.
His heroic plans were ruined half-way,
Leaving me to sigh for this much relied-on minister.⁴

This poem may imply a mourning of the unsuccessful attempts of
people like Hsü Ching-yeh in overthrowing the reign of Empress
Wu. The last line contains the spirit of the whole poem:

O-heng 阿衡, although superficially referring to Yüeh Yi in
this poem, is actually the designation of Yi Yin 伊尹, the
first prime minister in the Shang dynasty; as Yi Yin had enthroned

the banished T'ai-chia 太甲 , this might well insinuate a parallel wish of having one of the deposed emperors restored. The poem also discloses the poet's envy for Yüeh Yi; Yüeh lost favour with King Hui when he was half-way to success, Ch'en Tzu-ang lost favour with the prince before he was even allowed to begin his way.

Poem 4. "The Crown Prince of Yen" 燕太子

The King of Ch'in ruled more cruelly each day,
The resentment from the crown prince likewise grew deeper.
There came news of T'ien Kuang's righteousness -
The dagger was procured and a thousand pieces of gold offered.
Although the mission was not accomplished,
I grieve over it after a thousand years./5

While the contrast of relationships between the historical figures and Ch'en and Wu is apparent as an issue, this poem also finds an echo in the various unsuccessful coups.

The next three poems look as if they reflect more the poet's personal grievances:

Poem 5. "Master T'ien Kuang" 田光先生

From the beginning death has been inevitable for all,
But few people have died for the cause of righteousness.
It is perplexing that the Crown Prince of Yen
And Master T'ien should have had cause for mistrust.
He fell on his sword, nothing could be done,
But it moves me, and tears moisten my robe./6

This poem loosely puts the poet himself in T'ien Kuang's place: T'ien felt that the Crown Prince of Yen, in asking him to keep secret his plan to have the King of Ch'in assassinated, did not bear him full confidence, and so killed himself to ensure that the secret would hence be kept. Ch'en likewise did not have the confidence of Wu Yu-yi though he believed himself to be capable of doing what he proposed.

Poem 6. "Tsou-tzu" 鄒子

Supernatural operations were obliterated with the
Three Dynasties,
Hardly anyone could see the relationship between heaven
and men.

What vastness Tsou-tzu explored
Talking unreservedly about the edges of the nine seas.
A thousand years of rise and fall have since past,
Now there is no way to prove or disprove what he said.⁷

This poem perhaps likens the poet to Tsou Yen, who explored and philosophized on aspects of the universe, and who is said to have worked miracles on several occasions too.⁸ Despite what he is reported to have said and done, not much about Tsou Yen was in fact known to posterity; now that Ch'en, who believed he had the capability and true heart, was not even able to carry out his good plan, he naturally wondered how posterity could believe in his worthiness.

Poem 7, entitled "Kuo Wei" 郭隗, is marked incomplete in its extant form in the Chüan t'ang-shih. As it has only four lines, while the other six poems have six lines each, the last couplet in this poem might have been lost. Judged from the first four lines, it looks as though the poem on a more allusive level mourns his misfortune of meeting with the wrong time, capable as he was:

He who meets with the right time alone is successful,
Not that there are no capable persons through the ages.
Wei the gentleman was indeed fortunate,
For him Yellow Gold Terrace was built./9

No poem by Ch'en Tzu-ang, I think, could epitomize better his feelings at their most mixed than the following four-line sonnet, "Song on ascending Yu Chou Barbican", written while he was, in his frustration, overwhelmed by the power of time and space:

Those who have gone before, I cannot see,
Those who are to come after, I cannot see.
I think of heaven and earth, which go on forever,
Alone I grieve, and tears fall./10

This poem is one in which the poet, in a fit of depression and desperation, suddenly realizes his loneliness in this vast world and vast time span. It touches on the root of existence itself and implies a series of questions concerning what he knows in the midst of the limitless past and future, what he should do at this juncture of the past and future, what he wants, and eventually, what he is; all of which are suggested by the key-phrase "yu-yu" 悠.悠, which stretches far beyond the physical limits of the poem.

In form, the song would be a five-character poem if not for the two expletives "chih" 之 and "erh" 而 in the third and fourth lines respectively. But they are vital in giving the poem its doleful rhythm, its solitary lingering effect, and its life.

The caesural patterns in the poem are also peculiar, being 1/2/2 in the first two lines and 1/2/3 in the second two; thus in every line, the cadence tends to accelerate, especially in the last two lines, where each time measure contains one, two and three syllables respectively, building up a sense of urgency.

The merit of this poem is that because of its vastness, every reader can find in it a space and something to identify himself with. Poems such as this one are best not analysed in too much detail, lest it should be like Hun-tun 渾沌 in the book of Chuang-tzu, who, having had seven openings bored into his featureless face, died.¹¹

Chapter 5. Regulated Poems

While the old poems of Ch'en Tzu-ang contain themes and ideas by which he was generally known in the T'ang dynasty, his regulated poems were so highly rated for their presentation and style by post-T'ang critics that he was considered a pioneer in regulated poetry as well. In many of his old poems such as the Kan-yü and Lan-ku Ch'en adopts a concrete style and straightforward manner of expression; but his regulated poems are written with such an elegance and versatility of style that they fully show the poet's resourcefulness in handling the current verse form. In fact, many of his extant regulated poems are so rich in ideas, forceful and balanced in presentation, and highly skilful in syntactic and tonal manoeuvrings that they must be among the finest productions in the history of T'ang poetry. While a regulated poem with careful syntactic and tonal subtleties is liable to fall into effateness or to catch the spiritless beauty of the Six Dynasties, Ch'en Tzu-ang's regulated poems are sufficiently charged with seriousness and strong feeling to stay wide of such pitfalls. In Section I I have translated a number of Ch'en's regulated poems, most of which are of a high quality.¹ In the regulated poems which I have chosen to discuss here (translations of which do not appear in the former section), one is able to see the great skill of the poet in the various aspects of this verse form.

Ch'en's skill of blending emotions with scenery descriptions is high, his use of historical references is likewise ingenious, as the following poem, "Thinking of antiquity at the City of the White Emperor" 白帝城懷古, shows:

The sun setting, dusk falls on the river,
 I stop the oars and ask about the local life.
 The city overlooks the viscounty of Pa,
 The buildings of the Han king's palace faintly appear.
 Though a wild district, it was in the domain of Chou,
 On the large mountains the work of Yü still shows.
 The precipices seem being suspended, the green cliffs
 are sheer,
 The region is dangerously rugged, yet this blue stream
 flows through.
 Old trees appear among the clouds,
 A home-coming sail emerges from the mist.
 My river journey seems to know no end,
 As I sit here, my wayfaring thoughts overwhelm me.²

This poem was probably written by Ch'en during his first trip to Hsien-yang, when his boat was heading towards Ch'u 楚, and stopping at Pai-ti-ch'eng, the City of the White Emperor, which was built by Kung-sun Shu 公孫述 towards the end of the Latter Han. This poem shows a neat and compact presentation, with the first couplet fixing the locality of Pai-ti-ch'eng and the last couplet touching on the poet's thoughts of antiquity, thus covering the title. The rest of the lines are devoted to scenery descriptions from past to present, giving the poem a very clean pattern of development. The subject of the thoughts of antiquity in the poem being the city by the river, and the one who entertains such thoughts being the poet on the boat, the time being dusk, which often veils antiquated sites with a poetic sadness, the poem thus starts off with dusk on the river and the stopping of oars to provide for the time, place and mood for the poet's thoughts. As the poem goes on, it is threaded with the blue stream and a home-coming sail, and knitted with the poet's endless river journey, never letting the vein of description go astray.

The historical references used to describe the site are very appropriate, for the area of land, with its ancient name of

Pa 巴 , was a viscountcy in the ancient Chou dynasty. The palace of the Han king points to the episode in which Liu Pei 劉備 , after being defeated by Lu Hsün 陸遜 of Wu 吳 , retreated to the city and built the Yung-an Palace 永安宮 , where he stayed and died as king. The two historical references also make up a fine antithetical couplet. The poet holds on to his thoughts of antiquity by reckoning the place to have been the border of the ancient Chou domain as well as recalling the great feat of Yü in combating flood in this area, which was supposedly specially difficult owing to its ruggedness. The fact that Pai-ti-ch'eng was still very much a T'ang border city, and the marks of Yü's achievements thousands of years ago could still be seen, link the past and present congenially together, superimposing T'ang on Chou, fixed by the two adverbial particles "jeng" 仍 and "shang" 尚 , which denote continuity. The two lines are further qualified by the next couplet, the first line of which describes the sheer precipices and cliffs, characteristic of the sparsely populated and mountainous southern border region, while the second line instances the great feat of Yü by mentioning the flow of the stream amidst the rugged landscape, which the poet considers a means by which Yü cured the flood in the area. Having conjured up sufficient historical references, the poet turns to paint a serene but melancholy twilight picture of old trees standing among clouds which thicken towards dark and a solitary homeward-bound sail in the evening mist which grows dense in the gorge, creating a vast and lonely mood which not only enhances the poet's wayfaring sorrow, but quite naturally causes incessant thoughts of antiquity. In this poem, one sees the way the reader is induced to enter into the poetic picture. One also sees the author's skilful handling of

the four middle couplets by giving them different sentence structures to avoid any possible syntactic monotony. The poem also shows his compact, substantial, and forceful style, without a touch of frivolity, which marks the difference between the nature of his regulated poetry and that of Ch'i-Liang poetry.

In the poem "Thinking of antiquity at Mount Hsien" 山見山懷古, Ch'en's ability at the regulated verse form is also easily seen. This poem also seems to have been composed during his first trip to Hsien-yang, when he passed by Hsiang-yang 襄陽, where the ancient Ching Chou 荊州 stood.

I have come to this outlying district to have my horse fed,
 Ascending the mountain I survey the ancient capital.
 Still saddened by the "stele of falling tears",
 Thinking of the strategy of the couching dragon.
 The city stretches to a distance, dividing Ch'u;
 Half the landscape has entered Wu.
 The mountains and hills jut up as they did,
 Generations of worthies and sages have since withered away.
 Behind the trees in the fields appear broken wisps of
 grey smoke,
 The evening air fills the pier house with solitude.
 Who would know this stranger from far away
 Is cherishing thoughts of the past and is reluctant to leave.³

Here again, one sees the poet's superb control over the pattern of the poem both in form and in thematic development. The five consecutive antithetical couplets show no monotony; on the contrary, the different sentence structures they possess give the poem the vital rhythm it requires. The poem is divided into three general sequences, with two couplets in each. The first couplet again fixes the place and opportunity for the poet's thoughts - because his horse needs to be fed, he stops in this outlying district; because of the long history behind this place the poet is urged to ascend Mount Hsien and survey what used to

be Ching Chou, which Liu Pei and Sun Ch'üan 孫權 in turn occupied. Once the poet is on top of the mountain, his attention is immediately brought to the stele there which commemorates Yang Hu 羊祜 of the Western Chin, who, when he was Governor of Hsiang-yang, frequented the mountain. It is said that one day, while he and his subordinates were drinking and feasting on the mountain, he was suddenly struck by melancholy and mourned the people of the past who, like him and his subordinates, had been at the very place, and had since passed away, leaving hardly any trace of their existence. He also said that if after death his soul was still conscious, it would certainly come to this place again. After Yang Hu's death, the people of Hsiang-yang erected a stele on top of the mountain to show their gratitude towards his administration, and those who saw the stele could not help shedding tears. Tu Yü 杜預 thus termed it the "stele of falling tears".⁴ As Ching Chou was closely associated with Chu-ko Liang 諸葛亮, the man responsible for borrowing it from Sun Ch'üan for Liu Pei's headquarters, Ch'en Tzu-ang immediately thinks of him and his strategy; it is possible that "t'u" 圖 also puns on the Pa-chen-t'u 八陣圖, which Chu-ko Liang was renowned for. These two historical references very subtly unfurl the next two couplets, which point to the futility of human undertakings and mortality of man. The fifth line, besides describing the scenery at that particular time, also contrasts the existence of the ancient city with the non-existence of the past heroes concerned, echoing the third line of the poem; the sixth line of the poem echoes the fourth and ironically refers to the eventual seizure of the city by Wu despite the strategy of the couching dragon. The seventh line utilizes the legend involving

the Queen Mother of the West and Emperor Mu of Chou to contrast the everlastingness of mountains and hills with the mortality of the human race:⁵ such a grim ending not even the worthies and sages of the past could avoid. Thus the personalities involved earlier on in the poem, and many more, are grouped together in one final and inevitable annihilation, clinching the second sequence of the poem.

From the overwhelming thoughts of annihilation, the poet turns, as he does in the previous poem, to the melancholy picture of the present, which fuses quietly with the past, and causes thoughts of it to grow and blend with the traveller's sorrow into an unfathomable depth of poetic feeling.

The following poem, "Reaching Le-hsiang District at night to stay" 晚次樂鄉縣, touches specially and ingeniously on the wayfarer's sorrow. Le-hsiang District, like Mount Hsien, was in Hsiang-yang. In this poem, one sees the poet's arrangement of ideas and his unemphatic way of presenting his theme:

The old village is endlessly far away,
The sun has set, alone I journey on.
Rivers and highlands obscure my home town,
Roads and paths enter this frontier city.
From the outlying posts rise broken wisps of smoke,
On the deep mountains stand straight old trees.
What is my deep sorrow like at this moment?
Gibbons' calls wail across the night./6

Here one sees how the atmosphere is gradually built up with the endless distance from home, dusk, and a lonely journey in the first couplet, which are echoed in the second couplet and romanticized with the key-word "mi" 迷. "Tuan" 斷 to describe smoke in the fifth line is also a forceful word which, with the mountains and trees, brings out the desolation and solitude of the place. Eventually, the mood comes to a climax in the second-last line, when the poet's deep sorrow breaks out,

but instead of dwelling a second more on the climax, the poet immediately directs one's attention to the gibbons' wails in the silence of the night, which immediately expands and deepens the whole melancholy situation, while the sorrow flows on.

In the last poem one sees the poet presenting his traveller's sorrow without resorting to distinct allusions. In the following one sees pure scenery descriptions without the moving theme of sorrow as its mainstay, the result of which is still a substantial and impressive poem, a robustly styled piece of work which does not fall into banality. The poem is entitled "Ascending Chin-hua Monastery on a day in spring" 春日登金華觀：

The white jade heavenly terrace is old,
Here I gaze afar at the cinnabar hill.
Mountains and rivers confuse the clouds and the sun,
Buildings and towers enter the misty sky.
Cranes dancing - the trees of a thousand years,
Rainbow flying - the bridge of a hundred feet.
There I see the Master of the Red Pine
Sitting on the road to heaven waving to me.?

One of the merits of this poem is the allusiveness and subtlety in the descriptions of scenery. None of the points in the title is concretely repeated in the poem, but they are craftily suggested. While the poet is standing on the terrace of the monastery, he refers to it as a heavenly terrace. The ascent which the poet has made is suggested by the fact that he is gazing afar at the cinnabar hill, a domain of the immortals. The two lines not only give relevance to the title, but also veil the whole atmosphere with an appropriately ethereal mystery. The ascent is further confirmed by the multitude of mountains and rivers before the poet, intermingling with the sun and the clouds, and most probably their reflections, and the aloofness of the buildings and towers where he is, which touch the misty

sky, a mark of springtime. The next couplet offers superb descriptions of the branching old trees and the spanning bridge of the monastery by metaphorically branding them as dancing cranes and a flying rainbow, both bearing rich, heavenly connotations, which eventually, and smoothly, lead the poet into a fantasy in which he sees the immortal Ch'ih-sung-tzu 赤松子, the Master of the Red Pine, waving to him amidst the heavenly objects mentioned.

In this poem, one must of course not overlook its consistent metaphorical cast, which inspires illusions of realness and gives the poem its necessary strength and unearthly vitality.

In the following elegantly-styled poem, the first of the two "Taking leave of friends on a night in spring" 春夜別友人, the poet deals ingeniously with friendship and parting through his skilful use of association and proper control over his expressed emotion, without letting it flow in excess, but rather leaving it to be divined by the reader's imagination. Thus the mood blends with the well-balanced style and form of the poem:

Silvery candles emitting green smoke,
Golden goblets at a fine feast.
In this hall of parting, how I long for lutes and zithers,
The traveller's route winds over mountains and rivers.
The bright moon hidden behind tall trees,
The milky way disappearing in the dawning sky;
Long is the road to Lo-yang -
When again can such a gathering be?⁸

While parting sorrow is diffused through the whole poem, it is never openly mentioned, but carried in every couplet. The poet begins with a description of the luxury of the meeting place - silvery candles, golden goblets and a fine and substantial feast; only in the third line are the readers informed of the

purpose of the gathering, rendering the first couplet even more significant as a contrast. The poet's longing for the music of lutes and zithers is in fact the key to the poem, opening to the long and winding road over mountains and rivers to Lo-yang which he has to take early in the following morning, when the moon is hidden behind tall trees and the milky way disappears; and after his departure, the memorable gathering amidst silvery candles and golden goblets will probably never happen again. It is these thoughts that cause the poet to crave for fine music in one last desperate hope of enjoying the gathering with his friends to the full. Thus these strands of thoughts are woven into a beautifully sad and deeply felt poem without any resort to historical references. One should also note that while the tones in the poem run smoothly, the poet has in fact accomplished the dangerous feat of putting an oblique tone in the middle of every line.

There is perhaps one more theme in his regulated poems which one should look at, that which falls in the wider context of the affairs of the country. In the following poem, "Seeing off Ts'ui Jung, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Records, and others, on their eastward war expedition with the Prince of Liang" 送蕃作佐郎崔融等從梁王東征, Ch'en Tzu-ang deals with this subject with equal ease and proficiency, without the smallest sign of being fettered by the poetic form. Unlike the previous three poems, which do not employ any distinct historical reference, consonant with the poet's spontaneity in dealing with parting sorrow and scenery, this poem, which has more urgent ideas and calculated arguments to express, must needs use historical references to bring them home. It contains many references, and embodies far deeper and richer meanings

than its forty words can hold:

The white autumn sky has just turned grave and severe,
White dew appears, the subjugation starts.
The kingly army does not revel in war,
You, my good sirs, caution your sharp weapons.
The desert air is invading southward,
Frontier winds are sweeping Pei-p'ing.
Do not trade the border of Lu-lung
For your fame in Unicorn Gallery./9

This poem, with basically one sequence in each couplet, shows a high degree of compactness of ideas. The grave and severe autumn weather and the appearance of white dew, besides indicating the time of the army's eastward expedition, also evokes the ancient custom of the emperor selecting armies in autumn to combat the unrighteous, as mentioned in Ch'en's introduction to this poem.¹⁰ Now that the army of Prince Wu Yu-chi 武攸暨 was about to combat the invasion of the Kitans, Ch'en Tzu-ang therefore hopes that they would carry out the sacred mission as their counterparts in olden days had done. This is also an indirect disclosure of his fear that the Wu army would trespass outside its mission. In the second couplet, his fear is turned into a positive admonition to the army against causing any excessive bloodshed. The fourth line contains a reference to a passage in the book Lao-tzu 老子, which says, "Sharp weapons are signs of ill omen."¹¹ and warns Ts'ui Jung and his colleagues of such a possible consequence if the weapons were abused. The righteous mission of the kingly army is insisted upon in the third couplet when the poet looks further afield to expose the unrighteousness of the barbarians, using the two key-words "ch'in" 侵 and "sao" 掃. Thus Ch'en Tzu-ang presses home his argument that as it is not the nature of the kingly army to indulge in depredation, as it is only the invasion of the barbarians that causes the army to set out in combat, righteousness

must therefore be observed by the army. In the last couplet such ideas are eventually made more explicit by the poet's hope that Ts'ui and his colleagues do not see this war as a means towards personal profit and fame. This couplet looks for its reference to the San-kuo-chih 三國志, which tells of Ts'ao Ts'ao's 曹操 invasion of the Wu-huan 烏桓 tribe, in which he used T'ien Ch'ou 田疇 as the guide because of his knowledge of short cuts to Wu-huan; eventually the army invaded from the border of Lu-lung 盧龍 and obtained success. When Ts'ao Ts'ao was about to reward him, T'ien Ch'ou declined and said, "How would I trade the border of Lu-lung for rewards!"¹² The Unicorn Gallery 麒麟閣 was where Emperor Hsüan of Han 漢宣帝 housed the pictures of his eleven officials who had attained great merits, and therefore symbolizes fame,¹³ which the poet discourages the army from trading for by dishonourable means.

Structurally, the mentioning of the season and its connotation in the first couplet leads to the statement of righteousness and the admonition in the second couplet, and the first and second lines of the second couplet are respectively glossed by the third and final couplets of the poem, showing its close-knit scheme.

Some may wonder why, with his remarkable achievements in regulated poetry in style, which I have shown, and in form, which I will show in the next chapter, Ch'en Tzu-ang was not as often acknowledged in the T'ang dynasty as his merits deserve. Extant material has shown that on the whole T'ang poets were not keen on singling out the regulated poetry of fellow-poets for discussion. But still, in this case, one must acknowledge the shadow of Ch'en's own Kan-yü poems over his regulated poems, for it is the themes of the Kan-yü poems that proved to be influential

throughout the T'ang dynasty. Secondly, it is very probable that he was from the start overshadowed by his two influential contemporaries Shen Ch'üan-ch'i and Sung Chih-wen, who have generally been accredited with perfecting the regulated verse form. It was not until after the T'ang dynasty, when critics were able to view the history of T'ang poetry more analytically, that his regulated verse was singled out for appraisal and given its due.

To conclude this chapter, the following is a selection of favourable comments on Ch'en Tzu-ang's regulated poetry by post-T'ang critics:

Fang Hui 方回 (Sung-Yüan period):

Omissioner Ch'en Tzu-ang was indeed the founder of T'ang poetry; not only were his thirty-eight Kan-yü poems the basis of the ku-t'i 古體, his regulated poems were also the basis of the chin-t'i 近體. The two poems on Pai-ti and Mount Hsien are extremely good./14

The talent of Ch'en Tzu-ang was above that of Shen Ch'üan-ch'i 沈佺期 and Sung Chih-wen 宋之問. Only Tu Shen-yen 杜審言 could equal him. The T'ang regulated verse by these four people came before Tu Fu; thus they were, so to speak, the founders of the regulated verse form./15

Hu Ying-lin 胡應麟 (Ming period):

The five-character regulated verse form reached its zenith of popularity in the T'ang. To sum up its main features, there are two categorical styles: Ch'en, Tu, Shen and Sung - their style is sophisticated, beautiful, refined and skilled; Wang [Wei] 王維, Meng [Hao-jan] 孟浩然, Ch'u [Kuang-hsi] 儲光羲 and Wei [Ying-wu] 韋應物 - their style is serene, ethereal, leisurely and far-reaching. This is the general outline./16

To learn to write five-character regulated verse one should not learn from poets before Wang [Po] and Yang [Chiung], nor should one look into those after Yüan [Chen] and Po [Chü-yi]. One should begin by taking the works of Shen, Sung, Ch'en, Tu, Su [Wei-tao] 蘇味道 and Li [Chiao] 李商隱 and imitate them day and night, one would thereby develop a lofty and variegated style, extensive and rich syntax, masculine and clear rhythm, and fine and disciplined methods of parallelism./17

Wang, Yang, Lu and Lo of the early T'ang, and Wang, Meng, Kao [Shih] 高適 and Ts'en [Ts'an] 岑參 of the high T'ang; though the bearing and style of their works are of more or less the same order, they still differ slightly in their attainments. But in the case of Ch'en, Tu, Shen and Sung, it is difficult to grade them./18

Sung Lo 宋 樂 (Ch'ing period):

The regulated verse reached popularity in the T'ang; the five-character form was even more popular. From the era of Shen-lung 神龍 [705-707] on, Ch'en, Tu, Shen and Sung acted as pioneers; poets like Kao, Ts'en, Wang and Meng followed and attained eminence./19

Shen Te-ch'ien 沈德潛 (Ch'ing period):

As regards the five-character regulated verse form, Yin K'eng 陰鏗, Ho Hsün 何遜, Yü Hsin 庾信 and Hsü Ling 徐陵 had in fact started it. T'ang poets researched further into its tonal and rhythmic effects and smoothed its form and style, thus the whole structure was complete. In the time of Shen-lung, Ch'en, Tu, Shen and Sung were like pure gold and natural jade, which do not need further polishing to possess class and nobility./20

Li Ch'ung-hua 李重華 (Ch'ing period):

In the five-character regulated verse form, Tu Fu is certainly the "immortal", while Wang and Meng are the vanguards. Famous poets who came after them, despite their great effort, could not tread out of the confines of these three masters. Before them, Ch'en Tzu-ang and Li T'ai-po 李太白 were also good. The rest are only minor figures./21

Yao Nai 姚鼐 (Ch'ing period):

Ch'en the Omissioner, Tu of the Hsiu-wen 修文 Academy, Shen, Sung and Ch'ü-chiang 曲江 [Chang Chiu-ling]: these are the remarkable personalities before the K'ai-yüan 開元 [713-741] era./22

Chapter 6. Tonal and Syntactic Techniques in Poetry

Ch'en Tzu-ang has not left us with a single seven-character poem;¹ even his regulated poems are invariably in the more archaic five-character form as distinct from the more modern seven-character. This of course does not rule out the possibility that Ch'en Tzu-ang did write seven-character poems; but it still suggests his conscious preference for a certain degree of archaism in his work, though it is quite clear that at the same time he was unable to resist the more contemporary temptations of tonal and syntactic beauty in poetry. Meng Ch'i 孟軻 quoted Li Po 李白 (701-762) as having said that in terms of allegorical expression and profundity, the five-character form fell short of the four-character form, while the seven-character form was weakest of all.² This may perhaps account for the virtual non-existence of seven-character poems in Ch'en Tzu-ang's works. The archaic ruggedness which appears sporadically in his regulated poems may perhaps be viewed as a reconciliation - if not a conflict - between the old form and the new. It more often than not vitalizes the poems, redeeming them from any possible monotony of elegance of form and tonal harmony.

At this juncture, it is essential to offer a definition of a regulated poem as the term was understood in Ch'en Tzu-ang's time. As regulations governing the new verse form do not appear to have been rigidly laid down then, one needs to be correspondingly lenient in one's criteria for regulated poems of this period. In the case of Ch'en Tzu-ang, I consider a five-character poem of two couplets or more to be in the regulated verse form if the poem sustains the same level-tone rhyme throughout,³ and if the second and fourth characters of each line do not belong to the same tonal category of level or oblique; but I feel obliged to

accept the two tonal patterns PPTPT and TPTPT: the former has proved to be extremely fashionable among later poets as a licensed tonal violation, the latter, which is in fact a slightly modified form of the former, has also been in use. As a matter of fact, Ch'en Tzu-ang deserves credit for being one of the first executors of such patterns, which certainly convey a feeling of archaic angularity. There are other contrived tonal patterns too in the poet's regulated poems which greatly help to bring about an air of archaism, they are: TTTPT, PPPTP, PPTTT, TTPPP, TPTTT and PTPPP. I consider these patterns semi-violations of tones - the first two for their uneven distributions of level and oblique tones; the next two for the monotonous second caesura in each case; and the last two for their having both properties.

Tonally mislinked, or falsely linked, lines hardly mattered during this period of regulated poetry, as can be easily seen from their abundant occurrence in the poems of Ch'en Tzu-ang, Tu Shen-yen, Shen Ch'üan-ch'i and Sung Chih-wen. By the same token syntactic parallelisms were probably not compulsory, but they undoubtedly contributed to the making of a regulated poem of respectable standing, and again they are abundant in the regulated poems of Ch'en Tzu-ang.

In the following tonal transcriptions of Ch'en Tzu-ang's regulated poems,⁴ one is able to see his application of tone and syntax. The archaic tonal patterns above-mentioned are parenthesized, and syntactic parallelisms are underlined. A false link is indicated by a cross between the even and odd lines concerned in the case of shih-nien 失粘, and the odd and even lines in the case of shih-tui 失對. The numbering of the poems again refers to their order in the Chung-hua shu-chü edition of the poet's works, and for ease of cross reference, I have romanized as far as the fifth character of each title. In the

following transcriptions, as in all previous transcriptions, a level tone is represented by the letter "P", and an oblique tone by the letter "T".

43 Lo-ch'eng-kuan-p'u-ying-

(TPTPT) PTTTP PTPPT PPTTP
 (PPTPT) PTTTP PTPPT PPTTP
PPPTT TTTTP TTTPT PPTTP
+PTPPT PPTTP (PPTPT) TTTTP⁵

44 Pai-ti-ch'eng-huai-ku

TTTPT PPTTP PPPTT PPTTP
PTPPT PPTTP PPPTT TTTTP
TTTPT PPTTP (PPTPT) TTTTP

45 Tu-ching-men-wang-ch'u

(PPTPT) TTTTP PTPPT (PPPTP)
PPPTT TTTTP PTPPT PPTTP

46 Hsien-shan-huai-ku

TTTPT PPTTP (PPTTT) TTTTP
PTPPT PPTTP PPPTT PPTTP
TTTPT PPTTP (PPTTT) PTTTP⁶

47 Wan-tz'u-le-hsiang-hsien

(TPTPT) TTTTP +PPPTT TTTTP
TTTPT PPTTP (PPTPT) TTTTP

48 Ju-ch'iao-hsia-an-chü-

TPPTT TTTTP TTTPT PPTTP
PPPTT TTTTP TTTPT PPTTP
PPPTT PPTTP TTTPT PPTTP
PPPTT PPTTP TTTPT PPTTP
(PPTPT) PTTTP⁷

50 Su-hsiang-ho-yi-p'u

PPPTT TTTPP TTPPT PPTTP
(TPPTT) TTTPP PTPPT PPTTP
+TTPPT PPTTP PPPTT PPTTP

51 Ju-tung-yang-hsia-yü-

PPPTT PPTTP TTPPT +PPTTP
+PPPTT PPTTP TTPPT PPTTP
(PPTTT) TTTPP TTPPT PPTTP
(PPTTT) TTTPP TTPPT (PPPTP)
+PTPPT PPTTP (PPTTT) PPTTP⁸

55 T'i-ssu-shan-feng-shu-

TPPTT PPTTP +TPPTT TTTPP⁹

64 Ch'u-ju-hsia-k'u-feng-

TPPTT PPTTP +PPPTT PPTTP¹⁰

67 Ta-han-shih-t'ung-tsai-

(TPPTT) PPTTP PTPPT +PPTTP
+(TPPTT) TTTPP +(TPPTT) PPTTP
(TTTPT) PPTTP PPPTT PPTTP
+PPPTT TTTPP +TPPTT PPTTP
TTPPT (PPPTP) (PPTPT) TTTPP
+(TPPTT) TTTPP PTPPT PPTTP¹¹

69 Wan-chou-hsiao-fa-fang-

PPPTT TTTPP TTPPT PPTTP
PPPTT TTTPP TTPPT PPTTP
(PPTPT) TTTPP TTPPT PPTTP
PPPTT PPTTP TTPPT +PPTTP

70 Tseng-yen-ts'ang-ts'ao-ch'i-

TTTPPT +PTTTP +PPPTT TTTPP
PTPPT PPTTP TPPPT PTTTP
TTTPPT PPTTP (PPTTT) PTTTP¹²

71 Ta-lo-yang-chu-jen

(PPTPT) TTTPP +(TPTTT) PTTTP
+TPPPT (TTPPP) PTPPT +PTTTP
TTTPPT (PTPPP)+(TPTPT)+PPTTP
PPPTT PTTTP¹³

73 T'ung-wang-yüan-wai-yü-

PTPPT PPTTP PPPTT TTTPP
TTTPPT PPTTP PPPTT PTTTP¹⁴

76 Ch'ou-t'ien-yi-jen-chien-

(PPTPT) TTTPP PTPPT PPTTP
(PPTPT) PTTTP TTTPPT PPTTP
PPPTT TTTPP

77 Tung-cheng-ta-ch'ao-ch'en-

(PPTPT) PTTTP +(PPTPT) PTTTP
+PPPTT PTTTP TTTPPT PPTTP¹⁵

78 Ho-chou-chin-k'ou-pieh-

(PPTPT) PTTTP TTTPPT +PTTTP
+PPPTT TTTPP PTPPT PPTTP
PPPTT TTTPP TTTPPT PPTTP
PPPTT PTTTP

79 Chü-yen-hai-shu-wen-

PTPPT PPTTP PPPTT PTTTP
+(PPTTT) TTTPP +TPPPT TTTPP

80 T'i-li-san-shu-chai

TPPPT PPTTP PPPTT PTTTP
TPPPT +PPTTP +PPPTT PTTTP¹⁶

81 T'i-t'ien-hsien-ma-yu-

TPPPT PPTTP (PPTPT) TTTPP¹⁷

85 Ho-lu-ming-fu-tseng-

TPPPT PPTTP TPPPT +PPTTP
+PPPTT TTTPP PTPPT PPTTP
TPPPT PPTTP +PPPTT PTTTP

86 T'ung-min-shang-jen-shang-

PPPTT PTTTP PTPPT +PPTTP
PTPPT PPTTP PPPTT PTTTP
TPPPT PPTTP PPPTT TTTPP
TPPPT PPTTP (PPTPT) TTTPP
TPPPT PPTTP PPPTT PTTTP¹⁸

87 Yung-chu-jen-pi-shang-

TPPPT PPTTP +TPPPT PPTTP
(TPPTT) PPTTP PTPPT (PPPTP)

89 Sung-wei-ta-ts'ung-chün

PPPTT TTTPP TPPPT PPTTP
TPPPT PPTTP TPPPT +TTTPP¹⁹

90 Sung-yin-ta-ju-shu

TPPPT (TTPPP) +(TPPT) PPTTP
+TPPPT PPTTP +TPPPT PPTTP

- 91 Lo-ti-hsi-huan-pieh-
TPPPT PPTTP TPPPT PPTTP
TPPPT (PPPTP) TPPPT PPTTP
- 92 Lo-ti-hsi-huan-pieh-
TPPPT TTTPP (PTTPT) PPTTP
(PPPTP) PPTTP +(PPPTP)(PTPPP)
- 93 Sung-k'o
(TPTPT)(PTPPP) PTPPT PPTTP
(TPTPT) TTTPP +PPPTT PPTTP²⁰
- 94 Ch'un-yeh-pieh-yu-jen (1)
PTTTP PPTTP (PPPTP) TTTPP
PTTPT PPTTP (PPPTP) TTTPP
- 96 Sui-chou-nan-chiang-pieh-
(TPTPT)(PTPPP)+(TPTPT) TTTPP
+(PPPTP) TTTPP PTPPT PPTTP
- 97 Sung-tung-lai-wang-hsüeh-
TPPPT PPTTP (PPTTT) PPTTP
+PPPTT TTTPP TPPPT PPTTP²¹
- 98 Sung-liang-li-erh-ming-
TPPPT PPTTP TPPPT PPTTP
PPPTT TTTPP PTPPT PPTTP
- 99 Sung-wei-ping-ts'ao-shih-
PPPTT PPTTP PTPPT PPTTP
PPPTT PPTTP TPPPT +PPTTP

100 Chiang-shang-tsan-pieh-hsiao-

TPPPT (PPPTP) (PPTPT) TTTPP
TPPPT PPPTP (PPTTT) PTTPP
PTPPT PPPTP +PTPPT +PTTPP²²

101 Sung-chu-tso-tso-lang-

PPPTT TTTPP +PPPTT PTTPP
TPPPT PPPTP +TPPPT (PPPTP)

102 Ch'un-hui-chien-t'ao-ch'i-

TPPPT (PPPTP) PPPTT PTTPP
+PPPTT PTTPP PTPPT +PTTPP²³

104 Ch'iu-jih-yü-ching-chou-

(PPTPT) PTTPP +(PPTPT) PTTPP
TPPPT PPPTP (PPTTT) TTTPP
TPPPT PPPTP PPPTT PTTPP

105 Hsi-yü-chi-shih-yü-

TPPPT +PTTPP +TPPPT PTTPP
+TPPPT (PTPPP)+(PPTPT) PTTPP²⁴

109 Nan-shan-chia-yüan-lin-

(TPPPT) PTTPP PTPPT (PPPTP)
TPPPT TTTPP +PPPTT PTTPP
TPPPT PPPTP (PPTPT) TTTPP
TPPPT PPPTP (TPTTT) PTTPP
TPPPT (PPPTP) (TPPTT)(PTPPP)²⁵

111 Wo-chi-chia-yüan

TPPPT PPPTP (PPTTT) TTTPP
TPPPT (PPPTP) +PTPPT PPPTP
PPPTT TTTPP +(PPTTT)(TTPPP)²⁶

112 Yüeh-yeh-yu-huai

(TPPTT) TTTPP (TTTPT) PPTTP
(PPTPT) PTTPP +(PPTPT) PTTPP

113 Yü-chang-shih-shan-ch'ih-

(TPTPT) TTTPP TTPPT PPTTP
PPPTT TTTPP PTPPT (PPPTP)
PPPTT PTTPP TTPPT PTTPP

115 Hsia-jih-yu-hui-shang-

PTPPT PPTTP (PPTPT) TTTPP
TTPPT (PPPTP) TPPTT PTTPP²⁷

116 Ch'un-jih-teng-chin-hua-

TTPPT PPTTP (PPTPT) PTTPP
TTPPT PPTTP (PPTPT) PTTPP

117 Ch'ün-kung-chi-pi-shih-

(PPTPT) TTTPP TTPPT PPTTP
(TPPTT) PTTPP +(PPTPT) TTTPP

118 Yen-hu-ch'u-chen-chin-

(PPTTT) PTTPP +(PPTPT) TTTPP
TTPPT (PPPTP) +TTPPT PPTTP²⁸

The above poems transcribed already constitute almost half of Ch'en Tzu-ang's extant poetic works; an inclusion of poems with one or two lines off the chin-t'i standards would take the number past the half-way mark. This is sufficient to show that Ch'en was attracted to the new verse form and did undertake to work on it. At this juncture, it is appropriate to consider the

following passage by a certain Hsü Hsüeh-yi 許學夷 in his Shih-yüan pien-t'i 詩源辨體, which, as quoted by Wang Yün-hsi, comments on Ch'en Tzu-ang's poetry in the following words,

His poems are still mixed with lines of the regulated verse, those with level-tone rhymes even specially avoid shang-wei 上尾; such poems as those of "The mandarin ducks" 鴛鴦篇 and "The tall bamboo" are all mixtures of the old form and the regulated form; such are the bad influences from the Six Dynasties that he inherited./29

While Hsü Hsüeh-yi's factual observations concerning Ch'en Tzu-ang's poetry are not unacceptable, his subjective comments certainly are, and they are no doubt caused by his misunderstanding of Ch'en's attitude to poetry. Ch'en never expressed a rejection of the basic values of the tonal and syntactic aspects of Ch'i-Liang poetry, which in fact eventually brought about the regulated verse form; what he was against was its apparent over-emphasis on form and style at the expense of serious ideas. Hsü's comments even seem to say that Ch'en Tzu-ang should never have written a regulated poem, and therefore chin-t'i lines in his poems are at least accidents if not downright demerits. If one looks at Ch'en Tzu-ang's poetry with such an attitude, the poet was no more than a theorist who failed to abide by his theories. As a matter of fact, in his works, one sees no over-gaudiness of style, no sensual themes and no frivolity, but seriousness in his purpose and in his allusions. This must be regarded as evidence of his keeping true to his own precepts. To see all his regulated poems as ku-t'i poems inconsistently stuffed with chin-t'i lines could not be farther from the truth.

Furthermore, Hsü's mentioning of Ch'en Tzu-ang's avoidance of shang-wei, which he sees as regrettable, is on the contrary an achievement of the poet. Shang-wei happens when the opening line of two or more consecutive couplets end in the same oblique

tone.³⁰ Tu Fu has been commended by later critics for his avoidance of shang-wei in his lü-shih.³¹ If Tu Fu should be given credit for it, there is no reason why Ch'en Tzu-ang should not, even more because he was able to do it ahead of Tu Tu. I have taken all of Ch'en Tzu-ang's poems which answer to all the tonal requirements of the standardized lü-shih form including those on tonal links, to show how consistently he avoids shang-wei:

44 Pai-ti-ch'eng-huai-ku

TTPPT(rising)	PPTTP
PPPTT(entering)	PTTTP
PTPPT(departing)	PPTTP
PPPTT(rising)	TTTTP
TTPPT(departing)	PPTTP
PPTTP(rising)	TTTTP

45 Tu-ching-men-wang-ch'u

PPTTP(entering)	TTTTP
PTPPT(rising)	PPPTP
PPPTT(departing)	TTTTP
PTPPT(entering)	PPTTP

46 Hsien-shan-huai-ku

TTPPT(departing)	PPTTP
PPTTT(entering)	TTTTP
PTPPT(rising)	PPTTP
PPPTT(entering)	PTTTP
TTPPT(rising)	PPTTP
PPTTT(entering)	PTTTP

48 Ju-ch'iao-hsia-an-chü-

TPPPT(entering) TTTPP
TTPPT(rising) PPTTP
PPPPT(departing) TTTPP
TTPPT(entering) PPTTP
PPPPT(departing) TTTPP
TTPPT(entering) PPTTP
PPPPT(rising) TTTPP
TTPPT(entering) PPTTP
PPTPT(departing) TTTPP

73 T'ung-wang-yüan-wai-yü-

PTPPT(rising) PPTTP
PPPPT(departing) TTTPP
TTPPT(entering) PPTTP
PPPPT(rising) TTTPP

76 Ch'ou-t'ien-yi-jen-chien-

PPTPT(departing) TTTPP
PTPPT(rising) PPTTP
PPTPT(departing) TTTPP
TTPPT(entering) PPTTP
PPPPT(rising) TTTPP

91 Lo-ti-hsi-huan-pieh-

TTPPT(entering) PPTTP
TPPPT(departing) TTTPP
TTPPT(entering) PPTTP
TPPPT(rising) TTTPP

- 94 Ch'un-yeh-pieh-yu-jen
- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| PTTTP | PPTTP |
| PPTPT(entering) | TTTTP |
| PTTPT(departing) | PPTTP |
| PPTPT(rising) | TTTTP |
- 98 Sung-liang-li-erh-ming-
- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| TPPTT(departing) | PTTTP |
| TTTPT(rising) | PPTTP |
| PPPTT(entering) | TTTTP |
| PTTPT(rising) | PPTTP |
- 113 Yü-chang-shih-shan-ch'ih-
- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| TPTPT(entering) | TTTTP |
| TTTPT(rising) | PPTTP |
| PPPTT(entering) | TTTTP |
| PTTPT(departing) | PPPTT |
| PPPTT(rising) | PPTTP |
| TTTPT(entering) | PPTTP |
- 115 Hsia-jih-yu-hui-shang-
- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| PTTPT(departing) | PPTTP |
| PPTPT(rising) | TTTTP |
| TTTPT(departing) | PPPTT |
| TPPTT(entering) | PPTTP |
- 116 Ch'un-jih-teng-chin-hua-
- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| TTTPT(rising) | PPTTP |
| PPTPT(entering) | PPTTP |
| TTTPT(departing) | PPTTP |
| PPPTT(rising) | PPTTP |

From the above examples, one is able to see that of the twelve poems, none slips into using shang-wei. Such an achievement was by no means accidental.

The poet's high degree of sensitivity to poetic tones is further confirmed by the different techniques employed in his old poems, best represented by the Kan-yü and Lan-ku cycles, which contain an abundance of archaic tonal arrangements. It is quite safe to speculate that tonally his ku-t'i were products of his intentional avoidance of the chin-t'i, for it is obvious that in Ch'en Tzu-ang's time some tonal arrangements must have come to look much more regulated than others, thus any arrangement that did not look regulated must have been desirable for the old form.

In the following tonal transcriptions of his Kan-yü and Lan-ku poems, one notices a marked reduction of syntactic parallelism, a feature of the poet's much more straightforward manner of expression, reminiscent of the manner of Han-Wei poets. As sometimes tonal arrangements which fall into the chin-t'i pattern come naturally and are quite unavoidable without impeding the use of the right word in the right place, a relatively simpler and therefore older syntax is helpful in creating a less modern air. One also notices the marked increase of archaic tonal patterns: some are archaic patterns in the regulated verse, others are non-regulated patterns, all of which I have parenthesized. Poem 7 of the Kan-yü rhymes in the oblique tone, which is peculiar to the old form. In addition, it has in line 5 an oblique-tone final syllable which does not rhyme. As for the rest of the poems, which rhyme in the level tone, poem 17 has in lines 13 and 15 level-tone final syllables which do not rhyme, so has poem 33 in the first line; while poem 18 has in line 7 a rhyming final syllable. All such features are

again quite peculiar to the old form. Rhyme changes, which are present in poems 9 and 17, are another salient feature of the old verse form. I have indicated the rhyme changes with small letters.

Kan-yü

1 PTPPT PPTTP (PPTPT) PTTTP
 TTTPT (PPPTP) (TPTPT)(PTPPP)

2 PTPPT (PTPPP) PTPPT PPTTP
 (PPTTT)(TTPPP) (TPTPT) PTTTP

3 (PPPPT) PTTTP PTPPT (TTPPP)
 (PPTPT) TTTTP (TPTTT) PTTTP
 TTTPT PPTTP

4 TPPTT TTTTP (TTTPT)(PPPTP)
 (PPPPT) TTTTP (PTPTT) TTTTP

5 TPPTT PTTTP PTPPT TPPTP
 TTPPT PTTTP (TTPPT) PTTTP

6 PPPTT (TPTTP) (TTPPT)(PTPPP)
 (TPTPT)(TTTTP) PTPPT (PPTTP)
 TPPTT PTTTP (PPTPT) PTTTP

7 (TTTTP) PPPTT (PPPPP) PTPPT
 (TPTPT) PTPPT PTTTP PTPPT

8 (PPPPT)(TTTTP) PTTPT PTTTP
 TPPTT (TPTTP)³² (PPPPT) PTTTP
 (PTPTT) PTTTP PTTPT TPPTP

- 9 (TPPT) TTTP (PPPPT) PTTP
 (PPPPT) PTTP (PPTPT) PTTP
(TPPT) TPPT (TTPTp)(PPTPp)
- 10 (PPPPT) TPPT (PTPTT)(TTTP)
 (PPPPT) PTTP (TPPT) PTTP
 (TTPPT)(TTPPT)
- 11 (PTTTT)(PPPT) (PTPTT) PPTP
 (TPPT) PTTP (PPTTT) PTTP
 (PTPTT)(TPPT) TPPTT (PTPT)
- 12 (PPPPT) PTTP PPPT PTTP
 TPPTT (PTTP) (TPPT)(PTPT)
PPPTT (TPPT) PPTT (PPPT)
- 13 (PPTPT) TTTP (PTPTT)(PPTP)
(PPTPT)(PTTP) (PTPTT)(TTTP)
- 14 (PPTTT)(PTTP) TTPPT TTTP
 TTPPT (PPPT) PPPT PPTP
- 15 TPPT TTTP TTPPT TPPT
(TPPT)(PPPT) (PPPPT) PTTP
 PTPPT (TPTT)
- 16 (TPTTT) PTTP (PPPPT) PTTP
 (PPTPT) TTTP PPPT PTTP
 (TPPT) PTTP (PPTTT) TTTP

17 PPPTT (PPTPP) PTTPT PTTTP
PPTPT (TPTPP) (TPTFT) PTTTP
(PPTPT) TTTTP (PTTTT) PTTTP
TPPTP PTTTP (TTPTP)(PTPTP)
(TPTPT)(TPTPP) (TTTTp)(PPPTp)

18 (PPTTT) TTPPP (TPTTT)(PTPTP)
(TPPPT)(TTPPP) TTTTP (PPPTP)

19 (TPTTT) PTTTP PTPPT (PPPTP)
(PPPPT) PTTTP (TPPPT) PTTTP
PPTPT (PPPTP) (TPTTT)(PTPPP)
(PPTPT) PTTTP

20 PPPTT PTTTP (TPTPT) TTTTP
(TPPPT) PTTTP (TTPTP) TPPTP

21 (PPPPT) TTTTP (PPTPT)(PTPPP)
(PPTPT) PTTTP TTPPT PTTTP
(PPPPT)(TTPPP) (TPTPT) PTTTP

22 PPPTT (TPTPP) TTPPT (TTPPP)
(PPTTT) TTTTP (PTPTT)(PPPTP)

23 TTPPT (PPPTP) (PPTPT) PTTTP
TTPPT TTTTP (PTPTT) PTTTP
(TTTPT) PTTTP (PPTPT) PTTTP

24 (TPTPT)(TTPPP) (PTPTT) PTTTP
(PPTPT)(PTPPP) (PPTPT) TTTTP

25 PPPTT PTTTP (PTPTT)(PPPTP)
(PPTPT) TTTTP (PPTPT)(TTPPP)

26 (PPTPT) TTTPP (PTPTT)(PPTPP)
 (TPPPT) TPPTP (PPPPT)(TTPPP)

27 PTPPT TPPTP (TPTTT)(TTPPP)
 (PPTPT)(PPTPP) (TTTTT)(TTPPP)
 (TPTPT) TTTPP PPPTT PTTTP

28 TTPPT (PPTPP) (PPTTT)(TTPTP)
(TPPPT)(TTPPP) (PPPPT)(PTPPP)

29 PTTPT PPTTP (PPTPT)(TTPPP)
(PPPPT) PTTTP (PTPTT) TTTPP
(PTPTT) PPTTP (TTTTT)(PPPTP)
 (TPTTT) PTTTP TTPPT PTTTP

30 (TPPPT) TTTPP (PPPPT) TTTPP
 TPPTT PTTTP (PPTTT) PTTTP
(PPTPT) PTTTP (PPTPT) TTTPP

31 (TPPPT)(TTPPP) (TPTPT)(PTPPP)
 (TTTTT) PPTTP TTPPT PPTTP

32 (TPTTT) PTTTP PTPPT PTTTP
 (PPTTT) TTTPP (TTTTT) TTTPP
 TTPPT PTTTP (TPTTT) PTTTP

33 PTTTP TPPTP (PPPPT) PTTTP
(TTTTT)(PPPTP) (PPTPT) PTTTP
 (TPTPT) TPPTP

34 TPPTT (PPPTP) PTPPT (PPPTP)
(TPPPT)(TTTTP) (TPTPT) TTTPP
(TPTTT) TTTPP (TPPPT) PTTTP
TPPPT (PTTTP) (PPTTT) TTTPP

35 (TPTPT) PPTTP TPPTT TTTPP
(PPPPT)(TTPPP) (PPTPT)(PTPPP)
(PPTPT)(PTPPP)

36 (TPTPT) PTTTP (TTTTPT)(PPTTP)
PPPTT TTTPP (TPPPT)(PTPPP)
(TPPPT)(PTPPP) (TPTTT)(TTTTP)

37 PTPPT (TTPPP) PPPTT PTTTP
TPPPT PPTTP (TPPPT)(PTPPP)
(TPPPT)(PPPTP)

38 (TPPPT)(PPTTP) (TTTTPT)(PPTTP)
(PPTPT)(TTPPP) (PTPTT)(PTPPP)

Lan-ku

57 (TPTPT)(PTPPP) (TPTTT)(TTPPP)
(TTTTPT) PTTTP

58 (PPTTT)(PTPPP) (PPTPT)(PPPTP)
(TPTTT) PTTTP

59 PTTPT TTTPP TPPTT TTTPP
(PPTPT) PTTTP

60 (PPTPT)(TTTTP) (TPPPT) TTTPP
(PTPTT) PTTTP

- 61 (TTPPT)(PTPTP) TPPTT (TTPPP)
 (TTPPT) TTTPP
- 62 TTPPT PPTTP PTPPT TTTPP
 (PPTPT) PTTPP
- 63 (PPTPT)(TTPPP) (PPTPT)(TTPPP)

Finally, to show the poet's handling of tone and syntax in some old poems with relatively less urgent and more light-hearted themes, I offer transcriptions of the following two poems: "The mandarin ducks" and "The tall bamboo":

(PPPPT)(TTPTP) (PPTPT) TTTPP
PPPTT TTTPP (PPTPT) PTTPP
TPPPT PTTPP (PPTPT)(TTPPP)
 (TPTPT)(TTPPP) (PTPTT) PTTPP
 (PPTTT) TPPTP TTTP_p PPTT_p
TTPPT PTTP_p (PPTPT)(PPPT_p)
PTPPT (TTPPP_p) (PPTPT) TTTP_p

PTPPT PTTPP PPTPT PTTPP
TPPPT (TTPTP) (PPTTT) TTTPP
PPTPT (TTPTP) TPPTT PTTPP
 (TTTPT)(PTPTP) PPTPT (TTPPP)
 (TTPPT) PTTPP TTPPT PPTTP
 TTPPT PTTPP TTPPT PPTTP
 TPPTT PTTPP (PPTPT) PTTPP
 (TPPPT)(PTPPP) (PTPTT) TPPTP
PPPTT TTTPP (TPTPT)(PPPTP)³³

The peculiarity of these two poems is the abundance of syntactic parallelisms amidst the archaic tonal patterns, which I, unlike Hsü Hsüeh-yi, whose comments were pejorative comments, see as an exciting combination of the tonal aspects of the old verse form and the syntactic aspects of the new. These two being long poems, an uninterrupted straightforward progression would actually appear precipitate, making the poems ill-cadenced and giving them an undue leanness. In these two poems, the rapidity of the non-parallel lines is checked by antithetical couplets to produce a varied and graceful tempo, while the ruggedness of archaic tonal patterns is tempered by the even distribution of regulated lines, thus providing the poems with the tonal and syntactic variety so necessary to sustain their length and harmonize with their content.

Chapter 7. Significance in History of T'ang Literature

Ch'en Tzu-ang owes much of his fame to Lu Ts'ang-yung, who compiled his works, thus immortalizing his literary achievements. From Lu's preface, one is given to understand that Ch'en Tzu-ang's precepts did arouse among his contemporaries a certain degree of response. By the latter part of the high T'ang, Ch'en Tzu-ang's literary reputation was quite firmly established.

It was not as much his literary techniques as his seriousness of purpose in literature (which demands corresponding techniques,) that caused him to be appreciated in the T'ang dynasty; this is suggested by the constant references among the T'ang literati to his having revived the spirit of feng-ya. Furthermore, he extended this seriousness of purpose to all forms of literature, so that he was in fact revered not only for his poetry, but also for his prose, although it is evidently the former that mostly accounts for his fame through the dynasties. Thus in dealing with the significance of Ch'en Tzu-ang as a poet in the T'ang dynasty one is sometimes obliged to deal with his significance as an all-round literary figure.

It is, however, obvious that in the T'ang dynasty poetry was considered representative of literature. Ch'en Tzu-ang, for instance, began his introduction to "The tall bamboo" with mention of the decadence of literature in general, but the main part of the work and its conclusion concerns poetry alone. It was not until the prose reform movement in the mid-T'ang that prose gained more attention.

In order not to take on trust Ch'en Tzu-ang's significance in the T'ang literary world, one is sometimes obliged to probe into the literary theories and works of individual members of

the T'ang literati to look for resemblances to Ch'en's and find some evidence of his influence on them. For the same purpose one might also see how frequently the terms feng-ya and pi-hsing and favourable references to the Han-Wei style appear in the works of later T'ang writers. Such terms and references do appear frequently, as can be seen in the Ch'üan-t'ang-wen. But unless the name of Ch'en Tzu-ang also appears in conjunction one can go no further than speculation.

Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200) once alleged the following concerning Li Po's cycle of Ku-feng 古風 poems,

His two volumes of Ku-feng mostly imitate the works of Ch'en Tzu-ang, there are also instances in which the whole of a sentence is duplicated. T'ai-po's time was not far from Tzu-ang's, his admiration for him is yet so great./1

That Li Po was an admirer of Ch'en Tzu-ang is a fact which the former has made known in a poem of his, thus Chu Hsi's attribution is supported. Otherwise one would not know that the Ku-feng cycle was not a direct imitation of the Yung-huai.

The case of Yüan Chieh 元結 (719-772), however, is of a somewhat difficult nature: in his extant works there is not a single mention of Ch'en Tzu-ang. Still the similarity of their poetics is striking. In his introduction to the poem "Feasting on a moon-lit night with Censor Liu" 劉侍御月夜讌會 Yüan Chieh says,

Alas, it has indeed been a long time since the way of literature perished. The works of contemporary writers overflow with trivialities, which are loved by singers and dancers. It is doubtful if anybody could consider them fit to be attached to the feng-ya tradition./2

The resemblance it bears to the introduction to "The tall bamboo" is noticeable. Many of Yüan's extant poems, all of which happen to be in the old form, also match Ch'en Tzu-ang's

socio-political poems in spirit. Nevertheless, though one feels the urge to bring such facts to notice, and many critics have done so, to say with confidence that Yüan Chieh was actually influenced by Ch'en Tzu-ang or actually acknowledged the significance of Ch'en the poet would still be tantalizingly subjective and speculative.

Thus, I feel compelled to attempt nothing less concrete than putting together passages in which the name of Ch'en Tzu-ang is actually referred to, so that his literary significance can be safely evaluated. Happily, Ch'en Tzu-ang is in a fortunate position of having been not infrequently mentioned by prominent members of the T'ang literati after him; their remarks and references unequivocally confirm his importance.

In the preface to Ch'en Tzu-ang's Works, Lu Ts'ang-yung acknowledges Ch'en's literary standing among his contemporaries and commends some of his prose-writings for the proper manner in which they are written. But he pays special tribute to the Kan-yü poems for their gravity, reticence and the philosophy they convey. Most of all, however, he reckons Ch'en Tzu-ang to be the first poet in the dynasty to bring about the reversion to the way of feng-ya in literature.³ This assessment was echoed to greater or lesser extent by literary men in different periods of the T'ang, including Yen Chen-ch'ing 顏真卿, Tu-ku Chi 獨孤及 (725-777), Li Yang-ping 李陽冰, Li Chou 李舟, Liang Su 梁肅 and Lu Hsi-sheng 陸希聲.⁴ The degree of success they attributed to Ch'en Tzu-ang differs, as do the aspects they refer to. Li Yang-ping, for instance, reckoned that it was not until Li Po's effort that decadence in literature was finally wiped out; Lu Hsi-sheng referred solely to prose and gave credit for the fatal blow to Han Yü; Li Chou and Liang Su

also referred to prose. None of them, however, disputed Ch'en Tzu-ang's initiating rôle.

There were others who treated Ch'en Tzu-ang more affectionately and in greater detail. Li Po, to return to him, was an admirer of Ch'en, which is confirmed in his own poem entitled "To Priest Hsing-jung" 贈僧行融, in which he likens Ch'en Tzu-ang to a unicorn, a symbol of rare excellence,

In the Liang there was T'ang Hui-hsiu,
Who constantly kept Pao Chao company./5
Shih Huai-yi of O-mei --
A distinguished reflection of Lord Ch'en.
Highly remarkable were these two priests,
Making acquaintance with the phoenix and unicorn.⁶

Wei Hao 魏景質, a friend of Li Po, puts their two names together in his preface to the Works of Li the Han-lin Academician 李翰林集,

The people of Shu who were known at all enjoyed great eminence; thus were born there [Ssu-ma] Hsiang-ju 相如, [Yen] Chün-p'ing 君平, Wang Pao 王褒 and Yang Hsiung 揚雄. More recently there were Ch'en Tzu-ang and Li Po, after a lapse of five hundred years./7

Meng Ch'i, in his Pen-shih-shih 本事詩, also mentions them together,

Po had an extraordinary talent and a supernatural endowment. His fame equalled that of Omissioner Ch'en. This links them together in one common virtue./8

Ch'en Tzu-ang's impression on the great master Tu Fu was immense, and this is strongly conveyed in Tu Fu's own poems. In the last four lines of his poem "Seeing off Mr Li, Governor of Tzu Chou, on his departure to assume office" 送梓州李使君之任, Tu Fu expresses great affection for Ch'en Tzu-ang,

Lord Ch'en met with a malicious plot and fell,
Even now the road to Shu is filled with grief.
Sir, when you pass by She-hung District,
Please weep for me./9

In another poem, entitled "Visiting the monastery of Mount Ching-hua on a wintry day, thus getting to the remains of the school attended by the late Lord Ch'en the Omissioner" 冬到金華山觀因得故拾遺陳公學堂遺跡, Tu Fu clinches with the couplet:

The grief-stricken wind rises for me,
Vehemently blowing, mourning the man of great ability.¹⁰

In yet another poem, "The former house of Omissioner Ch'en"

陳拾遺故宅, Tu Fu has the following to say after describing the house,

What matters it to be of a low position?
Sages and worthies are the prized class.
You possessed the talent to continue the Sao and Ya,
No ordinary artists and poets can equal you.
My lord, who lived after Yang and Ma,
Your name shines with the sun and moon.

and lastly, he expresses his appreciation of the principle of the Kan-yü poems,

Loyalty and righteousness are set for millennia to come,
The Kan-yü poems are our heritage./11

The references to Ch'en Tzu-ang in these poems are made with great affection and respect, always revealing the high degree of prominence which Ch'en occupied in Tu Fu's mind, higher, perhaps, than Ch'en's early T'ang contemporaries, including Tu Shen-yen, Tu Fu's grandfather.

Han Yü 韓愈 (768-824) also held a very high opinion of Ch'en Tzu-ang. In his "Epistle of farewell to Meng Tung-yeh" 送孟東野序, which he wrote to Meng Chiao 孟郊, he gives a short list of representative literary men of the T'ang; Ch'en Tzu-ang is on the list:

Since the T'ang came into possession of the empire, Ch'en Tzu-ang, Su Yüan-ming 蘇淵明, Yüan Chieh, Li Po, Tu Fu and Li Kuan 李觀 have given voice to their capability./12

In his poem "Recommending a scholar" 薦士, in which he recommends Meng Chiao to the chief minister Cheng Yü-ch'ing 鄭餘慶, Han Yü accords Ch'en Tzu-ang the rôle of innovator in poetry in the following words,

Our dynasty sees the flourishing of literature,
Tzu-ang was the first to stride high;
With Li and Tu it rapidly prospered,
Minor personages were at their mercy. 13

It is worth noting that Han Yü was a much acclaimed poet on top of being a prose reformer; and although Ch'en Tzu-ang was famous for his achievements in literature as a whole the lines here refer specially to his poetry; for the poem itself begins by mentioning the Book of Odes and continues with an historical account of the development of poetry. The fact that Li Po and Tu Fu are mentioned with Ch'en Tzu-ang also defines Han Yü's theme.

Han Yü's praise for Ch'en Tzu-ang, however, pales by comparison with Liu Tsung-yüan's 柳宗元 (773-819) in his postface to the Works of Mr Yang, Assistant Judge of the Grand Court 大理評事楊君文集, in which he places Ch'en Tzu-ang on top of the T'ang literary pyramid for his proper conduct in the disciplines of both poetry and prose. The following is his exposition:

There are two ways in literature: precise expression of praise and censure, which derived from expository and transmissive writings; evocation and veiled criticism, which derived from pi-hsing. Expository and transmissive writings derived from the Mo 謨 and Hsün 訓 sections of the Book of Records, the Hsiang 象 and Hsi 繫 sections of the Book of Changes, and the recording and deletion of the Spring and Autumn Annals, and require a robust and compact style, precise diction and well-arranged arguments, as to be fit for being contained in documents; pi-hsing writings derived from the songs of the Yü and Hsia periods and the Feng and Ya of the Yin and Chou dynasties, and require an elegant and clear style, fluent expression and beautiful ideas, as to be fit to go down in ballads and

songs. These two aspects are, if we examine them, different and distinct from each other: this is why writers usually achieve and excel in only one; very seldom can they show mastery in both. If any of them could take advantage of both conventions, he could indeed be considered accomplished in literary execution. Yet, even in the prosperous age of antiquity, such persons did not exist even in a pair. Ever since the rise of the T'ang, the only one who fully deserves such a consideration is Omissioner Ch'en of Tzu-t'ung 梓潼. After him, Wen-chen 文貞 of Yen 燕. [Chang Yüeh] tackled pi-hsing in between expository writings, but could not exhaust it; Chang of Ch'ü-chiang 曲江 [Chiu-ling] applied himself to exposition in between pi-hsing writings, but could not embrace all of its aspects. The rest pursue one course and head in opposite directions, taking themselves further and further away from one another. That it is hard to master both ways of literature is indeed very true./14

Prior to this exposition by Liu Tsung-yüan, Li Hua 李華, the uncle of Li Kuan, had already recorded the similar view of Hsiao Ying-shih 蕭穎士. The writing concerned is his preface to the Works of Hsiao Ying-shih 蕭穎士文集, in which the author records Hsiao's views that

In recent times the literary style of Omissioner Ch'en is the most proper.

and comments,

Judging from his views, I can see the nature of his [Hsiao's] works./15

At about the same time, social poets such as Po Chü-yi 白居易 (772-846) and Yüan Chen 元稹 also looked upon Ch'en Tzu-ang as a venerable figure in social poetry. Yüan Chen in his "Letter to Le-t'ien on my poetry" 敘詩寄樂天書 acknowledges that Ch'en Tzu-ang's Kan-yü poems first inspired him to eloquence in social poetry. Yüan talks of the social evils which he witnessed as a young man, which greatly disturbed and angered him and evoked in him a determination to call attention to them; then:

It happened that someone showed me the Kan-yü poems by Ch'en Tzu-ang, which I read over many times and was greatly aroused; on the same day I composed twenty poems entitled "To the one who thinks about the mysterious" 寄思玄子 .¹⁶

The title of the twenty poems, which are no longer extant, seems to allude to the "Rhyme-prose on thinking about the mysterious" 思玄賦 by Chang Heng 張衡 (78-139) of the Latter Han.¹⁷ This work has been regarded as criticizing the powerful eunuchs of the author's time, and contrasting the lack of virtue in the contemporary world by holding up the virtue which lies in the mysterious. Thus one would think that Yüan Chen saw the Kan-yü poems by Ch'en Tzu-ang, to whom he dedicated the twenty poems, in the same light.

Po Chü-yi's admiration for Ch'en Tzu-ang is verified in the second of his two poems "In mourning of T'ang Ch'ü" 傷唐衡, in which Po says with gratitude,

Placing me on the level of Ch'en and Tu, ¹⁸
Your praise and affection were tremendous.

The following passage from his "Letter to Yüan Chiu" 與元九書, which he wrote to Yüan Chen to discuss, among others, the social and political values of poetry, contains his high opinion of Ch'en Tzu-ang's Kan-yü poems:

It has been two hundred years since the T'ang dynasty came into being; poets over this period of time are innumerable, some of those who are worth mentioning are Ch'en Tzu-ang with his twenty Kan-yü poems, and Pao Fang 鮑防 with his fifteen Kan-hsing 感興 poems./¹⁹

I suspect the number twenty to have been the result of a sudden preoccupation on Po's part with the number of poems which Yüan Chen wrote after reading Ch'en Tzu-ang's. It is almost inconceivable that only twenty Kan-yü poems appeared in Po Chü-yi's time, nor should there be a possibility that eighteen of the thirty-eight poems we now see are counterfeits. Since Tu Fu's

time, the Kan-yü poems do seem to have remained popular throughout the T'ang dynasty. It was most unlikely that forged poems could have an opportunity to creep in without being noticed. Likewise, that eighteen of the poems should have been lost in the time of Po Chü-yi was hardly possible because only in a slightly earlier time, Chao Tan had observed in his Inscription that practically every family in the empire had a copy of Ch'en Tzu-ang's works.²⁰ Allowing for its high exaggeration, it still reflects the popularity of Ch'en's poems during that period.

There are two episodes in T'ang literary life which, though they do not involve Ch'en Tzu-ang directly, give much credit to him. The first episode involves Su Huan 蘇渙, who later led an unsuccessful rebellion against the government and was executed. Su Huan wrote very impressive poems. Tu Fu, his senior contemporary, once expressed his admiration for Su's poems by describing them as "excelling the poetry of Huang-ch'u",²¹ Huang-ch'u 黃初 being the first dynastic era of the Wei, succeeding Chien-an. Kao Chung-wu 高仲武, the compiler of the Ta-t'ang chung-hsing chien-ch'i-chi 大唐中興間氣集, records in the book the following episode,

[Su] composed nineteen "poems of modified applications" 變體詩 and presented them to Lord Li, Governor of Kuang Chou 廣州. The themes of the poems specialize in satirizing social affairs, possessing a few traces of the qualities of Omissioner Ch'en, thus the governor held him in favour./22

The faint praise given to Su Huan's poems was probably all that a political rebel could be expected to deserve in a monarchic hierarchy. But because of this the passage magnifies Ch'en Tzu-ang's influence in the mid-T'ang era even more.

The second episode involves one who must be among the last few renowned poets of the T'ang, Tu Hsün-ho 杜荀鶴 (846-904?).

In the following passage from the preface to Tu's T'ang-feng-chi 唐風集, written by Ku Yün 顧雲, one not only sees the importance of Tu Hsün-ho as a celebrated poet, but also sees the influence of Ch'en Tzu-ang stretching to the closing years of the T'ang dynasty:

In the early months of Ta-shun 大順, the Emperor [Chao-tsung 昭宗] commissioned Lord P'ei [P'ei Chih 裴贄?] of Ho-tung 河東, Vice-President of the Board of Rites, to take charge of public service examinations./23 In two years, candidates came from afar and out of seclusion, and men of extraordinary talents and fine scholarship gathered in the Capital. Of the chin-shih graduates that year, Tu Hsün-ho of Mount Chiu-hua 九華山 was placed in the top class. On the day of thanks-rendering to the Emperor, when seats were properly taken, his lordship saluted Master Tu and said, "His Majesty is worried that the teachings of literature are not spread far and wide, and longs to have someone like Lord Ch'en the Omissioner in the time of Kao-tsung, whose poetry penetrates the spirit of the two Ya, gallops in the style of Chien-an, cuts away obscurity and trifles, overcomes wantonness and shallowness, breaks through the ranks of seductive beauty, captures the leaders of artificiality, mutilating them, dispersing them, thus sweeping them off the field of literature and clearing away their evil influences. Only then could Tai of Jung Chou 戴容州, /24 Liu of Sui Chou 劉隨州 [Liu Chang-ch'ing 劉長卿] and Wang of Chiang-ning 王江寧 [Wang Ch'ang-ling 王昌齡], with their associates, wielding whip and drawing rein, lead the coming eras onto the proper way. Because your poetry possesses Ch'en's style, and can therefore nourish the customs of the country and pronounce the kindness of the throne, I have therefore promoted you to your position in response to His Majesty's wish. May you exert yourself that you may become the leader of poetry of this prosperous age."/25

The extant poems of Tu Hsün-ho are all in the regulated form, as distinct from the ku-t'i, which all of Ch'en Tzu-ang's famous socio-political poems are in. This shows only too clearly that it is the spirit of the poems, not the form, that matters most. The spirit of Tu Hsün-ho's poetry is touched on by himself in

the third couplet of his poem "On myself" 自敘, which reads,

My poetry ignores not the salvation of mankind,
But alas this world does not accept true hearts.²⁶

Such ideals bring him very near to Ch'en Tzu-ang.

From the above evidence, it is clear that Ch'en Tzu-ang, as a literary figure, more so as a poet, was highly regarded and taken very seriously by the prominent members of the T'ang literary world. He gained a deep respect from Li Po and Tu Fu, the giants of T'ang poetry; he was highly praised by Han Yü and Liu Tsung-yüan, the leaders of the prose reform movement; and was regarded as no less than the father of social poetry by Po Chü-yi and Yüan Chen, the two representative social poets of the mid-T'ang. This is even more significant in so far as Han-Liu and Yüan-Po both had their own strong literary circles in their times, who probably shared their opinions; and as the Emperor Chao-tsung is actually known to have admired Ch'en Tzu-ang's works, the strong hold of his work in the late T'ang is not hard to imagine either. With his popularity in the T'ang literary world thus attested, one can confirm his great significance in T'ang poetry. His place as innovator in T'ang poetry is beyond dispute.

One notices from the above account that from the time of the publication of Ch'en's works to the time when Tu Fu wrote about his admiration for Ch'en's Kan-yü poems, there was a lapse of about half a century without the poet's being in the limelight. I again suspect this to be a social phenomenon, for during the K'ai-yüan 開元 (713-741) era of Emperor Hsüan-tsung 玄宗 (685-762) the T'ang empire is said to have been in a prosperous state of affairs, hence a poetic attitude such as Ch'en Tzu-ang's, which tends to expose social evils

and, to put it in a common manner, "spoil the fun", was not considered pertinent. It was not until the era T'ien-pao 天寶 (742-756) that social malaise gradually forced its way out and not until the rebellion of An Lu-shan 安祿山, which began in 755, that the T'ang empire weakened considerably, never to recover. But the weakness, though further worsened by barbarian invasions and different forms of internal strife, did not seem to be an incurable case for more than a century to come; thus the literati were still given to hope that the country could somehow be mended and saved. It must have been this hope which led them once again to realize the urgent need for seriousness of purpose in poetry. As it has always been the Chinese practice to find an avatar to claim a tradition, Ch'en Tzu-ang became the inevitable choice. The monarchs on the other hand must have been glad to encourage their officials to look to Ch'en because to the House of Li he was a staunch loyalist. Thus besides needing the right time to make his innovations, Ch'en Tzu-ang also needed the right time to be acknowledged innovator in T'ang poetry; what he says in the first line of his poem "Kuo Wei": "He who meets with the right time alone is successful," can very well be applied to himself.

Notes

Section I Chapter 1

1. Among the more comprehensive biographies of the Empress are: C.P. Fitzgerald, The Empress Wu (Melbourne, 1955); Tōyama Gunji 外山軍治, Soku-ten Mugo 則天武后 (Tokyo: Chūōkōron sha 中央公論社, 1966).
2. See Ssu-ma Kuang 司馬光, Tzu-chih t'ung-chien 資治通鑑 [hereafter TCTC] (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1963), ch. 200, p. 6294.
3. *Ibid.*, ch. 202, p. 6377; ch. 203, p. 6419.
4. Cf. Chiu t'ang-shu 舊唐書 [hereafter CTS] (K'ai-ming ed.), ch. 186A (Biographies of Cruel Officials 酷吏傳), pp. 508-9. All of them flourished in Empress Wu's reign.
5. See Li Fang 李昉 et al., T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi 太平廣記 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1961), ch. 137, p. 986.
6. TCTC, ch. 199, p. 6290.
7. "Tai li-ching-yeh t'ao wu-shih hsi" 代李敬業討武氏檄, Ch'in-ting ch'üan-t'ang-wen 欽定全唐文 [hereafter CTW] (Taiwan: Hui-wen shu-chü, 1961), ch. 199, fol. 1a, p. 2541.
8. The most notable high-ranking minister of humble origin was Li Yi-fu 李義府 (614-666), who, with Hsü Ching-tsung 許敬宗, was most active in eliminating the gentry-class statesmen who opposed the investiture of Empress Wu. For their elimination, see Fitzgerald, chap. 3, pp. 35-52.
9. See Ch'en Yin-k'o 陳寅恪, T'ang-tai cheng-chih-shih shu-lun-kao 唐代政治史述論稿 (Taiwan: Commercial Press, n.d.), p. 16.
10. CTS, ch. 43, p. 192.
11. "Chien tsao ta-hsiang shu" 諫造大像疏, CTW, ch. 169, fols. 6b-7b, pp. 2173-74.
12. #19, Ch'en-tzu-ang chi 陳子昂集 [hereafter CTAC] (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1960), ch. 1, p. 7.

Chapter 2

1. Lu Ts'ang-yung 盧藏用, "Ch'en-shih pieh-chuan" 陳氏別傳, CTAC, p. 252.
2. See "Wo fu-chün yu-chou chü-shih wen-lin-lang ch'en-kung mu-chih-wen" 我府君有周居士文林郎陳公墓誌文, CTAC, ch. 6, p. 115. The obituary only mentions that Yüan-ching could not take up office because he had to observe mourning; there is no mention as to which parent it was who died.
3. CTAC, ch. 6, p. 116. For the qualities of yün-mu cf. Ch'ung-hsiu cheng-ho cheng-lei pen-ts'ao 重修政和證類本草 (SPTK ed.), ch. 3 (s.v. Yün-mu), pp. 73-74. It could belong to the mica family.
4. CTAC, ch. 6, p. 116.
5. See "Ho-chou chin-k'ou pieh she-ti chih tung-yang pu-ch'en-pu-chi chüan-jan-yu-huai tso-yi-shih-chih" 合州津口別舍弟至東陽步趁不及眷然有懷作以示之, ibid., ch. 2, p. 28.
6. See "T'ang-ti tzu mu-chih-ming" 堂弟致墓誌銘, ibid., ch. 6, pp. 130-32.
7. Ch. 190B, p. 527.
8. Hsin t'ang-shu [hereafter HTS] (K'ai-ming ed.), ch. 107, p. 302.
9. Unofficial Biography, CTAC, p. 255; Inscription, ibid., p. 257.
10. Pelliot 3590, at Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
11. CTAC, p. 256.
12. Ibid., ch. 6, pp. 130-32.
13. Ibid., p. 316.
14. "Ch'en-tzu-ang chi ch'i wen-chi chih shih-chi" 陳子昂及其文集之事蹟, Fu-jen hsüeh-chih 輔仁學誌, vol. 14, combined issues 1 & 2, p. 172.
15. Unofficial Biography, CTAC, p. 252.
16. T'ien's biography in HTS, ch. 196, p. 460.

17. TCTC, ch. 202, p. 6393.
18. Ibid., p. 6403.
19. "Ch'ou t'ien-yi-jen chien-hsün-pu-yü t'i yin-chü-li-pi" 酉州田逸人見事不過題隱居里壁 , CTAC, ch. 2, p. 27.
20. Lo Yung 羅庸 , "Ch'en-tzu-ang nien-p'u" 陳子昂年譜 [hereafter Chronological Table], ibid., p. 320.
21. "Pai-ti-ch'eng huai-ku" 白帝城懷古 , ibid., ch. 1, p. 17; "Tu ching-men wang-ch'u" 度荆門望楚 , ibid.; "Hsien-shan huai-ku" 峴山懷古 , ibid.; "Wan-tz'u le-hsiang-hsien" 晚次樂鄉縣 , ibid., p. 18; "Ch'u-ju-hsia k'u-feng chi ku-hsiang ch'in-yu" 初入峽苦風寄政鄉親友 , ibid., ch. 2, p. 23.
22. Unofficial Biography, ibid., p. 252.
23. "T'i t'ien-hsien-ma-yu-yen chieh-kao" 題田洗馬遊巖桔槔 , ibid., ch. 2, pp. 28-29.
24. See Chronological Table, ibid., p. 322.
25. See Ts'en; op. cit., pp. 154-55.
26. "Shang hsüeh-ling wen-chang ch'i" 上薛令文章啟 , CTAC, ch. 10, pp. 230-31.
27. "Lo-ti hsi-huan pieh liu-chi-chiu kao-ming-fu" 落第西還別劉祭酒高明府 , ibid., ch. 2, p. 32.
28. "Lo-ti hsi-huan pieh wei-ssu-lin" 落第西還別魏四懷 , ibid.
29. "Su k'ung-ling-hsia ch'ing-shu-ts'un p'u" 宿空舫峽青樹村浦 , ibid., ch. 1, p. 18.
30. "Su hsiang-ho-yi p'u" 宿襄河驛浦 , ibid., pp. 18-19.
31. "Ju ch'iao-hsia an-chü-ch'i fa-mu ch'i-yüan yu-sui lin-ling hsiang-ying yu ch'i-chih yen" 入峭峽安居谿代木谿源幽邃林嶺相映有奇致焉 , ibid., p. 18.
32. "Ju tung-yang-hsia yü li-ming-fu ch'uan ch'ien-hou pu-hsiang-chi" 入東陽峽與李明府船前後不相及 , ibid., p. 19.

33. See note 5.

34. "Hui-shang-jen fang chien ch'i-shao-fu shih ju ching-fu hsü"
暉上人房錢齋少府使入京府序, CTAC, ch. 7, p. 162.

35. Ibid., p. 252. Ti-ku and yün-kao, literally "bones of the earth" and "fat of the clouds", are probably terms for precious plants and stones which alchemists feed on.

36. "Kuan ching-yü p'ien" 觀荆玉篇, *ibid.*, ch. 1, p. 13.

37. Ch. 76, p. 241.

38. TCTC, ch. 203, p. 6419.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 6417.

40. Inscription, CTAC, p. 256.

41. "Chien ling-chia ju-ching shu" 諫靈駕入京書, *ibid.*, ch. 9, pp. 196-200.

42. TCTC, ch. 203, p. 6420.

43. CTAC, p. 252.

44. "Chien cheng-li shu" 諫政理書, *ibid.*, ch. 9, pp. 207-14.

45. TCTC, ch. 204, p. 6447; pp. 6454-55. For Huai-yi's relation with the Empress cf. TCTC, ch. 203, pp. 6436-37.

46. Ch. 190B, p. 527.

47. "Fu-ch'ou yi-chuang" 復讎議狀, CTAC, ch. 7, pp. 152-53.

Chapter 3

1. "Shang chün-kuo li-hai-shih" 上軍國利害事, CTAC, ch. 8, pp. 183-89. Also cf. TCTC, ch. 203, p. 6436.

2. "Ta lo-yang-chu-jen" 答洛陽主人, CTAC, ch. 2, pp. 25-26.

3. Cf. preface to "Yen-jan chün-jen hua-hsiang ming" 燕然軍人畫像銘, *ibid.*, ch. 6, p. 137; TCTC, ch. 203, p. 6435

misdates the rebellion one year earlier. For the allegiance of the tribes concerned and T'ai-tsung's setting up of the Yen-jan Protective Prefecture, cf. TCTC, ch. 198, pp. 6238-39; 6244-46.

4. See preface to "Kuan ching-yü p'ien" 觀荆玉篇, CTAC, ch. 1, p. 13.

5. e.g. "T'i chü-yen ku-ch'eng tseng ch'iao-shih-erh chih-chih" 題居延古城贈喬十二知之, *ibid.*, ch. 2, pp. 21-22; "Chü-yen-hai-shu wen-ying t'ung-tso" 居延海槿村聞鶯同作, *ibid.*, p. 23; "T'i ssu-shan feng-shu tseng ch'iao-shih-erh shih-yü" 題祀山烽槿村贈喬十二侍御, *ibid.*, p. 21; "Tu hsia-k'ou-shan tseng ch'iao-pu-ch'üeh-chih-chih wang-erh-wu-ching" 度峽口山贈喬補闕知之王二無競, *ibid.*

6. See "Wei ch'iao-pu-ch'üeh lun t'u-chüeh piao" 爲喬補闕論突厥表, *ibid.*, ch. 4, p. 87.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-90.

8. For a detailed discussion of the Chiu-hsing, cf. J. Hamilton, "Toquz-oguz et On-uygur", Journal Asiatique (1962), pp. 23-63. Also cf. Ts'en Chung-mien, T'u-chüeh chi-shih 突厥集史 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1958), ch. 16, pp. 857-70. For quick reference cf. E.G. Pulleyblank, The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 167-68. The Biography of Ch'en Tzu-ang in HTS miswrites pei-fan 北蕃 as t'u-po 吐蕃, a mistake which has been pointed out in Ts'en, *op. cit.*, ch. 8, p. 317.

9. "It has been three years now since the Chiu-hsing suffered from severe famine," "Lun t'u-chüeh piao", CTAC, p. 87.

10. Some tribes stayed in Outer Mongolia. Cf. "Lun t'u-chüeh piao", *ibid.* Also cf. Ts'en, T'u-chüeh chi-shih, ch. 16, pp. 908-26.

11. "Shang hsi-fan pien-chou an-wei shih" 上西蕃邊州安危事, CTAC, ch. 8, pp. 190-95.

12. TCTC places the episode in the fourth year of Ch'ui-kung, see ch. 204, pp. 6455-56. According to #29 of Ch'en's Kan-yü poems, which refers to the Empress' plan to attack the Ch'iang, the year was the third year, cf. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 10.

13. "Chien ya-chou t'ao sheng-ch'iang shu" 諛雅州討生羌書, CTAC, ch. 9, pp. 200-204.

14. TCTC, ch. 203, pp. 6437-38. Yü Pao-chia is written Yü Pao-tsung 魚保宗 in HTS, ch. 47 (s.v. Tso chien-yi ta-fu 左諫議大夫), p. 115.
15. TCTC, ch. 203, p. 6418.
16. Cf. ibid., pp. 6438-40.
17. "Chien yung-hsing shu" 諫用刑書, CTAC, ch. 9, pp. 214-19. For the dating of this admonition, cf. Ts'en's article, Fu-jen hsüeh-chih, vol. 14, combined issues 1 & 2, p. 170.
18. TCTC, ch. 204, pp. 6448-49.
19. Ibid., p. 6454.
20. Ibid., pp. 6449-54.
21. "Ta chih-wen-shih" 答制問事, CTAC, ch. 8, pp. 164-73. Also cf. TCTC, ch. 204, p. 6457.
22. The submission of the previous memorial and the promotion follow the order as recorded in HTS, ch. 107, p. 302.
23. TCTC, ch. 204, pp. 6459-60.
24. Ibid., pp. 6460-61.
25. Ibid., p. 6461.
26. "Chien-hsing shu" 諫刑書, CTAC, ch. 9, pp. 204-7. The dating follows Lo Yung's Chronological Table, CTAC, p. 334.
27. TCTC, ch. 204, pp. 6466-67 & 6471.
28. Ibid., p. 6465.
29. Ibid., p. 6472.
30. Ibid., ch. 206, p. 6523.

Chapter 4

1. Cf. TCTC, ch. 204, p. 6462.
2. Cf. ibid., p. 6466. Ch'en Yin-k'o has verified that the Ta-yün Sutra had existed long before Empress Wu's time, and that

the monk did little more than annotating it, see "Wu-chao yü fo-chiao" 武壘與佛教, Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology (Academia Sinica), vol. 5, part 2, pp. 144-46.

3. See "Ta-chou shou-ming sung" 天周受命頌, CTAC, ch. 7, pp. 141-45. Also cf. TCTC, ch. 204, p. 6467.

4. TCTC, ch. 204, p. 6467.

5. "Shang ta-chou shou-ming sung piao" 上大周受命頌表, CTAC, ch. 7, pp. 140-41; for "Ta-chou shou-ming sung", see note 3.

6. See Unofficial Biography, CTAC, p. 253. Also cf. Chronological Table, *ibid.*, p. 336.

7. "Hsi-huan chih san-kuan ta ch'iao-pu-ch'üeh chih-chih" 西還至散關答喬補闕知之, *ibid.*, ch. 2, p. 20.

8. "Hsi-yü chi-shih-yü-kuei ts'ui-ssu-yi-t'ai-chih erh-shih" 喜過冀侍御珪崔司議泰之二使, *ibid.*, p. 39.

9. "Wo-chi chia-yüan" 卧疾家園, *ibid.*, p. 43.

10. "Ch'iu-yüan wo-chi ch'eng hui-shang-jen" 秋園卧疾呈暉上人, *ibid.*

11. See "Tzu-chou she-hung-hsien wu-tung-shan ku chü-shih ch'en-chün pei" 梓州射洪縣武東山故居士陳君碑, *ibid.*, ch. 5, p. 113.

12. Ch. 206, p. 6518. CTS gives the maid's name as Yao-niang 窈娘 (Biography of Ch'iao Chih-chih, CTS, ch. 190B, p. 526).

13. TCTC, ch. 206, p. 6518. For a detailed discussion of the date of Ch'iao's death see Chronological Table, CTAC, pp. 338-40.

14. CTAC, ch. 6, p. 131. Also cf. Chronological Table, *ibid.*, pp. 341-42.

15. "Sui-chou nan-chiang pieh hsiang-ch'ü ku-jen" 遂州南江別鄉曲故人, *ibid.*, ch. 2, p. 33.

16. "Wan-chou hsiao-fa fang-chou ch'eng-chang huan-chi shu-chung-ch'in-yu" 萬州曉發放每桑漲還寄蜀中親友, *ibid.*, p. 25.

17. Unofficial Biography, *ibid.*, p. 253.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Cf. Chronological Table, *ibid.*, pp. 350 & 344-45.
20. "Shen tsung-jen yüan-yü shu" 申宗人寬獄書, *ibid.*, ch. 9, pp. 219-23.
21. "Hsieh mien-tsui piao" 謝免罪表, *ibid.*, ch. 3, pp. 57-58.
22. "Chien ts'ao-jen-shih ch'u-cheng shu" 諫曹仁師出征書, *ibid.*, ch. 9, pp. 223-24.
23. TCTC, ch. 205, pp. 6505-7.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 6507.
25. Unofficial Biography, CTAC, p. 253.
26. "Shang chün-kuo chi-yao shih" 上軍國機要事, *ibid.*, ch. 8, pp. 178-83.
27. TCTC, ch. 205, pp. 6509-10.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 6493-94.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 6503.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 6510.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 6487-88.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 6504.
33. *Ibid.*, ch. 206, pp. 6514-15.
34. "Wei fu-ta-tsung-kuan su-chiang-chün hsieh-tsui piao" 為副大總管蘇將軍謝罪表, *ibid.*, ch. 3, pp. 56-57.
35. HTS, ch. 107 (Biography of Ch'en Tzu-ang), p. 302.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.* Also see Unofficial Biography, CTAC, pp. 253-54.
38. Unofficial Biography, CTAC, P. 254.
39. "Chi-ch'iu lan-ku tseng lu-chü-shih ts'ang-yung" 鱈丘覽古贈盧居士藏用, *ibid.*, ch. 2, pp. 22-23.

40. Unofficial Biography, *ibid.*, p. 254.
41. TCTC, ch. 206, p. 6517.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 6520.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 6521-22.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 6522.
45. Chronological Table, CTAC, p. 351.
46. "Shang shu-ch'uan an-wei-shih" 上蜀川安危事, *ibid.*, ch. 8, pp. 173-75. For more information on the T'ung-ch'ang Army, see Ts'en's article, Fu-jen hsüeh-chih, vol. 14, combined issues 1 & 2, p. 162.

Chapter 5

1. CTAC, p. 254.
2. "Ching-chou ta-ch'ung-fu-kuan chi" 荊州大崇福觀記, *ibid.*, pp. 237-39.
3. Unofficial Biography, *ibid.*, p. 254. For the date of Yüan-ching's death see Ch'en Tzu-ang's tomb inscription for his father, *ibid.*, ch. 6, p. 116.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Unofficial Biography, *ibid.*, pp. 254-55; Inscription, *ibid.*, p. 257.
7. "Wen-lin-lang ch'en-kung mu-chih-ming", *ibid.*, ch. 6, pp. 115-17.
8. i.e. yarrow stalks.
9. CTAC, p. 255.
10. Ch. 107, p. 302.
11. Inscription, CTAC, p. 257.

12. Ch. 190B, p. 527.
13. "Shang chiu-chiang cheng-shih-chün shu" 上九江鄭使君書, CTW, ch. 735, fol. 9b, p. 9609.
14. T'ang-yin kuei-ch'ien (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1962), ch. 25, p. 218.
15. This book is probably the same as the Tu-yi chih 獨異志. Extant editions do not contain this episode. It is quoted in Chi Yu-kung 計有功 (fl. 1126), T'ang-shih chi-shih 唐詩紀事 (SPTK ed.), ch. 8, p. 69; and Yu Mao 尤袤 (1127-1194), Ch'üan t'ang-shih-hua 全唐詩話; ch. 1, fol. 18b, Li-tai shih-hua 歷代詩話 (Taipei: Yi-wen yin-shu-kuan, n.d.), p. 41.
16. Fu-jen hsüeh-chih, vol. 14, combined issues 1 & 2, p. 151.
17. "Ch'en-tzu-ang ho t'a-ti tso-p'in" 陳子昂和他的作品, CTAC, pp. 279-80; 306-7. Also cf. biographies of Wu Ch'eng-ssu and Wu San-ssu in CTS, ch. 183, p. 497; HTS, ch. 206, pp. 483-84.
18. Ibid., p. 280.
19. Ch. 94, p. 313.
20. Ch. 123, p. 332.
21. TCTC, ch. 207, p. 6570.
22. Cf. Wu Ch'i-yü 吳其昱, "Tun-huang-pen ku ch'en-tzu-ang-chi ts'an-chüan yen-chiu" 敦煌本故陳子昂集殘卷研究, Symposium on Chinese Studies, vol. 2 (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1966), p. 303. In the copy given me last summer, Mr Wu has added an entry which says that in the Tun-huang Buddhist MS Stein 2423, Lu Ts'ang-yung titles himself as Vice-President of the Board of Works, the date attached is the fourth month of the first year of T'ai-chi 太極, 712. This also evidences that the Unofficial Biography was written before that date.
23. TCTC, ch. 208, pp. 6611-12.
24. Ibid., ch. 209, p. 6650.

Chapter 6

1. Tu t'ung-chien lun (SPPY ed.), ch. 21, fols. 16b-17a.

2. Op. cit., CTAC, pp. 268-74.
3. CTW, ch. 169, fols. 1b-8b, pp. 2171-74.
4. See Section II, chapter 7, note 11.
5. "Hsi-mei hsien-pei yi kuei-meng so-hsien wu-pai-yen..."
 襲美先輩以龜蒙所獻五百言...; Ch'üan-t'ang-shih
 襲美詩 [hereafter CTShih] (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1950),
 ch. 617, p. 7110. Also cf. Lu's poem "Tu ch'en-shih-yi-chi" 讀陳
 拾遺集, *ibid.*, ch. 629, p. 7219.
6. See Section II, chapter 3, note 5.
7. Ch. 107, p. 302.
8. *Ibid.*
9. CTAC, p. 255. Also cf. HTS, ch. 107, p. 302.
10. "Tseng yen-ts'ang-ts'ao ch'i t'ui-ming-lu" 贈嚴倉曹乞
 推命錄, CTAC, ch. 2, p. 25. Also cf. Lo Yung, *ibid.*, p. 357.
11. See Section II, chapter 2, note 20.
12. Cf. Biography of Juan Chi, Chin-shu 晉書 (K'ai-ming ed.),
 ch. 49, p. 140.

Section II Chapter 1

1. Nan-ch'i-shu (K'ai-ming ed.), ch. 52 (Biography of Lu Chüeh
 陸厥傳), p. 84.
2. Ch. 2, fol. 3a, Chin-yang-ch'iu chi-pen 晉陽秋輯本,
Shih-hsüeh ts'ung-shu 史學叢書 (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ed.).
3. Liu-ch'en-chu wen-hsüan 六臣注文選 (SPTK ed.), ch. 17,
 p. 311.
4. Shang-shu 尚書 (SPTK ed.), ch. 1, p. 11. For a detailed
 interpretation of the term cf. Chu Tzu-ch'ing 朱自清, Shih-
 yen-chih pien 詩言志辨 (Taiwan: K'ai-ming shu-tien, 1964),
 pp. 1-48.
5. Liu-ch'en-chu wen-hsüan, ch. 52, pp. 968-70.

6. Ibid., ch. 42, pp. 790-92.
7. Ch'üan hou-han-wen 全後漢文, ch. 93, fols. 4a-b, Ch'üan shang-ku san-tai ch'in-han san-kuo liu-ch'ao-wen 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 [hereafter CSKS] (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1958), p. 974.
8. Shih-p'in 詩品, fol. 2a, Li-tai shih-hua, p. 7. Sung-shu 宋書 (K'ai-ming ed.), ch. 67 (Biography of Hsieh Ling-yün 謝靈運傳), p. 179.
9. e.g. Sun Ch'o 孫綽 (320-377) and Hsü Hsün 許詢, the two representative poets of the period; see Chin-shu, ch. 56 (Biography of Sun Ch'o), p. 159.
10. Nan-shih (K'ai-ming ed.), ch. 2 (Records of Former Fei-ti of Sung 宋前廢帝本紀), pp. 10-11; ch. 5 (Records of Fei-ti of Ch'i, Prince of Yü-lin 齊廢帝鬱林王本紀), p. 16; (Records of Fei-ti of Ch'i, Marquis Tung-hun 齊廢帝東昏侯本紀), pp. 17-18. The above are but some examples.
11. Liang-shu (K'ai-ming ed.), ch. 4 (Records of Chien-wen-ti), p. 13.
12. e.g. Chien-wen-ti's "Lüan-t'ung" 變童, Ch'üan liang-shih 全梁詩, ch. 2, fols. 7b-8a, Ch'üan han san-kuo chin nan-pei-ch'ao-shih 全漢三國晉南北朝詩 [hereafter CHSK] (Taipei: Yi-wen yin-shu-kuan, 1968), pp. 1126-27; Liu Tsun's 劉遵 "Fan-hua ying-ling" 繁華應令, ibid., ch. 11, fols. 11a-b, CHSK, pp. 1485-86.
13. Nan-shih, ch. 10 (Records of Hou-chu of Ch'en), p. 31.
14. Ch'üan liang-wen 全梁文, ch. 11, fol. 1a, CSKS, p. 3010.
15. Ch'üan t'ang-shih-hua 全唐詩話, ch. 1, fols. 1a-b, Li-tai shih-hua, p. 33.
16. CTW, ch. 191, fol. 12a, p. 2440.
17. CTShih, ch. 56, p. 676.
18. Ibid., ch. 78, p. 848.

Chapter 2

1. CTAC, p. 255.

2. Cf. Lo, Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh p'i-p'ing-shih 中國文學批評史 (Shanghai: Ku-tien wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1958), vol. 1, pp. 16-18, vol. 2, pp. 48-49; Kuo, Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh p'i-p'ing-shih 中國文學批評史 (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1961), pp. 98-99. Similar views are found in several other books of literary criticism published in mainland China.
3. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 15.
4. Wen-hsin tiao-lung (SPTK ed.), ch. 6, p. 33.
5. Ibid.
6. Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh lun-chi 中國文學論集 (Taipei: Min-chu p'ing-lun-she, 1966), pp. 304-29.
7. * CTAC, ch. 2, pp. 41-42.
8. See Cheng Hsüan's commentary on "Liu-shih" 六詩, Chou-li 周禮 (SPTK ed.), ch. 6 ("Ch'un-kuan tsung-po" 春官宗伯), p. 110.
9. Ibid.
10. Ch. 8, p. 41.
11. Shih-ching 詩經 (Shih-san-ching chu-shu ed.), ch. 1, p. 12.
12. Ibid., pp. 16-17.
13. Shih-p'u-hsü 詩譜序, *ibid.*, pp. 4-7.
14. Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh lun-chi, pp. 91-117.
15. Shih-ching, ch. 6 ("T'ang-feng" 唐風), p. 216.
16. "Hsi-yü chi-shih-yü-kuei ts'ui-ssu-yi-t'ai-chih erh-shih" 喜遇冀侍御珪崔司議泰之二使, CTAC, ch. 2, p. 39.
17. Ch. 6, p. 33.
18. Lun-yü (SPTK ed.), ch. 1 ("Wei-cheng" 為政), p. 5. Also cf. Shih-ching, ch. 20, p. 765.
19. CTAC, p. 239.
20. *Ibid.*, ch. 10, pp. 230-31.

21. Cf. Andō Shunroku 安東俊六, "Chin shikō no shiron to sakuhin" 陳子昂の詩論と作品, *Kyūshū chūgoku gakkai hō* 九州中國學會報 14, pp. 47-62.
22. The Han-Wei lines in CHSK: p. 71; p. 230; p. 309; p. 310; p. 303; p. 313; p. 308; p. 301; p. 113; p. 255; p. 251; p. 241.
23. The first three and the last Chin-Sung lines in CHSK: p. 400; p. 513; p. 644; p. 865. The fourth and fifth lines in Liu-ch'en-chu wen-hsüan: p. 136; p. 133.
24. The Ch'i-Liang lines in CHSK: p. 1275; p. 1019; p. 983; p. 1388; p. 1013; p. 1465.
25. Han Yü 韓愈, "Sung meng-tung-yeh hsü" 送孟東野序, Ch'ang-li hsien-sheng chi 昌黎先生集 (SPTK ed.), ch. 19, p. 150; Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修, "Mei-sheng-yü shih-chi hsü" 梅聖俞詩集序, Ou-yang-wen-chung-kung wen-chi 歐陽文忠公文集 (SPTK ed.), ch. 42, p. 318.

Chapter 3

1. See Hsü Wen-yü 許文雨, T'ang-shih chi-chieh 唐詩集解 (Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chü, 1959), vol. 1, p. 86.
2. See Section II, chapter 7, note 11.
3. Shih-shih 詩式 (Shih-wan-chüan-lou ts'ung-shu ed.), ch. 3, fol. 1b.
4. See Section II, chapter 7, note 16.
5. CTS, ch. 190B, p. 526; HTS, ch. 107, p. 302.
6. Shih pi-hsing chien (Taipei: Yi-wen yin-shu-kuan, n.d.), ch. 3, fols. 21a-24a, pp. 67-68.
7. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 2.
8. Tan-ch'ien tsung-lu (1588), rare copy at University of Chicago Library, ch. 20, fol. 5b.

9. Vol. 35 (radical "fu" 阜, s.v. "Yin-p'o" 陰魄), p. 392. The same mistake is also made in Dai kanwa jiten 大漢和辭典, vol. 11, p. 849.
10. "Fu-te ch'iu-jih hsüan-ch'ing-kuang" 賦得秋日懸清光, CTShih, ch. 127, p. 1293.
11. Kung-feng 古風 poem 2, *ibid.*, p. 1671.
12. "Chün-tzu yu-so-ssu-hsing" 君子有所思行, *ibid.*, p. 1698.
13. Yang-tzu fa-yen 揚子法言 (SPTK ed.), ch. 8, p. 21. Also cf. Kuei-ssu ts'un-kao 葵巳存稿, ch. 2, fols. 15b-16a, Huang-ch'ing ching-chieh hsü-pien 皇清經解續編, ch. 841, p. 9726.
14. *Op. cit.*
15. Shih pi-hsing chien, ch. 3, fol. 5a, p. 59.
16. CTShih, ch. 83, p. 889; Shih pi-hsing chien, ch. 3, fol. 5a, p. 59.
17. "Fu-te tzu-chün-chih-ch'u-yi" 賦得自君之出矣, CTShih, ch. 49, p. 609.
18. "Chih-chih" 滢滢 describes the spring sun, cf. Mao-shih 毛詩 (SPTK ed.), ch. 8 ("Ch'i-yüeh" 七月), p. 60; ch. 9 ("Ch'u-chü" 出車), p. 69.
19. CTAC, ch. 1, pp. 2-3.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
21. Shih pi-hsing chien, ch. 3, fol. 15a, p. 64.
22. "Tiao-sai-shang-weng wen" 西塞上翁文, CTAC, ch. 7, p. 148.
23. *Ibid.*, ch. 1, p. 3.
24. Huai-nan-tzu 淮南子 (SPTK ed.), ch. 18, p. 134.
25. *Ibid.*

26. Shih pi-hsing chien, ch. 3, fol. 10b, p. 61. Also cf. TCTC, ch. 205, pp. 6479-81.
27. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 3.
28. See Shen-hsien-chuan 神仙傳 (Lung-wei mi-shu ed.), ch. 5, fols. 9a-11b.
29. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 4.
30. Ibid.
31. See Kao-shih-chuan 高士傳 (Ku-chin yi-shih ed.), ch. 1, fols. 3a-b. Also cf. Wang K'ang-chü 王康琚, "Fan chao-yin-shih" 反招隱詩, Liu-ch'en-chu wen-hsüan, ch. 22, p. 404.
32. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 4.
33. For "Ch'ih-ching" 赤精 see Han-shu 漢書 (K'ai-ming ed.), ch. 11 (Records of Ai-ti 哀帝紀), p. 28. Ying Shao's 應劭 commentary: "Kao-tsu was conceived by the red dragon. Thus he called himself the essence of the Red Emperor." Ibid.
34. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 4.
35. Shih pi-hsing chien, ch. 3, fol. 5b, p. 59. Also cf. HTS, ch. 94 (Biography of Li Chün-hsien), p. 277.
36. Shih-chi, ch. 6, p. 25. Also cf. TCTC, ch. 7, pp. 242-43.
37. Chin-shu, ch. 95 (Biography of Wang Chia), p. 258.
38. In Han-shu, ch. 60C (Biography of Hsiang K'ai 襄楷傳), p. 123, Kung Sung is known as Kung Ch'ung 宮崇. He should, however, be the same person as the Kung Sung in the Shen-hsien-chuan, ch. 10, fol. 9a.
39. Shih-chi, ch. 109 (Biography of General Li 李將軍傳), p. 243.
40. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 5.
41. Nan-hua chen-ching 南華真經 (SPTK ed.), ch. 9 ("Jang-wang" 讓王), p. 206.
42. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 5.

43. Liu-ch'en-chu wen-hsüan, ch. 21, p. 400. Also cf. Shih-chi, ch. 69 (Biography of Su Ch'in), p. 188; ch. 70 (Biography of Chang Yi), p. 191. Shang-yu-lu 尚友錄 (Shanghai: Chin-chang t'u-shu-chü, 1927), ch. 6, p. 17 gives his name as Wang Hsü 王翹. I fail to trace the authentic source of information.
44. For the cassia of Mount Chao-yao see Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu 呂氏春秋 (SPTK ed.), ch. 14 ("Pen-wei" 本味), pp. 81-82.
45. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 5.
46. TCTC, ch. 206, pp. 6519-20.
47. For the Jasper Terrace see Hsin-hsü 新序 (SPTK ed.), ch. 6 ("Tz'u-she" 刺奢), p. 35; for the jade cups see Shih-chi, ch. 38, p. 134.
48. T'ai-hsüan-ching (SPTK ed.), ch. 1 (Ch'a 差 quadrigram ䷗), p. 14.
49. Ku-yao-yen 古謠諺 (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1958), ch. 80, p. 881.
50. CTAC, ch. 1, pp. 5-6.
51. Nan-hua chen-ching, ch. 6, p. 130.
52. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 6.
53. Lun-yü, ch. 9 ("Wei-tzu" 微子), p. 84.
54. Lun-yü ch'en 論語識, ch. 1, fol. 26, Yü-han shan-fang chi-yi-shu 玉函山房輯佚書 (Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-pan-she, 1967), p. 2176.
55. "Pai-pi ch'üan-chin-chin-shang chien" 百辟勸進今上牋, Liu-ch'en-chu wen-hsüan, ch. 40, p. 758.
56. Ch'üan san-kuo-shih 全三國詩, ch. 5, fol. 1b, CHSK, p. 300.
57. Liu-ch'en-chu wen-hsüan, ch. 23, p. 419.
58. Shih-chi, ch. 53, p. 169.
59. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 6.
60. Nan-hua chen-ching, ch. 10 ("Lieh-yü-k'ou" 列禦寇), p. 226.

61. Han-fei-tzu (SPTK ed.), ch. 4 ("Shui-nan" 說難), p. 20.
62. Chou-li, ch. 9 ("Ssu-li" 司厲), p. 179.
63. Han-shu, ch. 97B (Biography of Empress Lü), p. 323.
64. *Ibid.*, ch. 36, p. 162.
65. Mao-shih, ch. 1, p. 5.
66. Han-fei-tzu, ch. 4 ("Shui-nan"), p. 20.
67. Shang-shu, ch. 7 ("Chin-t'eng" 金縢), p. 49. For the poem see Mao-shih, ch. 8, pp. 61-62.
68. Shih-chi, ch. 118, p. 260.
69. Cf. commentaries on "Ch'ih-yi", Shih-chi, ch. 41, P. 147; ch. 129, p. 276.
70. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 6.
71. For King Chao and Yüeh Yi see Shih-chi, ch. 80, pp. 204-5; for Lu Chung-lien see *ibid.*, ch. 83, pp. 207-8.
72. "Yen-kuang" 炎光 alludes to the Han dynasty, see Ts'ao Chih 曹植, "Wang-chung-hsüan lei" 王仲宣謀, Liu-ch'en-chu wen-hsüan, ch. 56, p. 1045.
73. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 7.
74. *Ibid.*
75. Ch. 107, p. 302.
76. See Meng-tzu 孟_子 (SPTK ed.), ch. 6 ("T'eng-wen-kung" 滕文公), p. 54; Shih-chi, ch. 83 (Biography of Tsou Yang 鄒陽傳), p. 209; Shuo-yüan, ch. 8 ("Tsun-hsien" 尊賢), p. 37; Ku-lieh-nü-chuan 古列女傳 (SPTK ed.), ch. 2 ("Hsien-ming" 賢明), p. 34.
77. Shih-chi, ch. 102 (Biography of Chang Shih-chih 張釋之傳), p. 233.
78. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 7.

79. TCTC, ch. 203, p. 6436; ch. 204, p. 6469; ch. 205, p. 6498.
80. "Chien tsao-ta-hsiang shu", CTW, ch. 169, fols. 6b-7b, pp. 2173-74.
81. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 8.
82. Ibid.
83. For Wei Jan see Shih-chi, ch. 72, p. 195. For Fan Chui see ibid., ch. 79, pp. 202-4.
84. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 8.
85. Ibid., pp. 8-9.
86. Ibid., p. 9.
87. Shih pi-hsing chien, ch. 3, fols. 11a-b, p. 62.
88. Chou-yi 周易 (SPTK ed.), ch. 5, p. 33.
89. Ibid., ch. 8, p. 50.
90. HTS, ch. 123, p. 333. For the anecdote concerning Yi Yin see Shih-chi, ch. 3, p. 11.
91. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 9.
92. Ch'u-tz'u pu-chu 楚辭補注 (SPTK ed.), ch. 1, p. 18.
93. For Jade Mountain and the heavenly phoenixes (sometimes called ch'un-niao 鸞鳥), see Shan-hai-ching (SPTK ed.), ch. 2 ("Hsi-shan-ching" 西山經), pp. 15 & 14; for the phoenixes also see ibid., ch. 11 ("Hai-nei hsi-ching" 海內西經), p. 58. For the green birds see ibid., ch. 16 ("Ta-huang hsi-ching" 大荒西經), p. 68.
94. Ts'eng-ch'eng, sometimes known as Tseng-ch'eng 增城, is said to be the highest peak of Mount K'un-lun; see Shui-ching-chu 水經注 (SPTK ed.), ch. 1 ("Ho-shui" 河水), p. 14.
95. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 9.
96. Mu-t'ien-tzu chuan 穆天子傳 (SPTK ed.), ch. 3, p. 8.
97. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 10.

98. See Liu-ch'en-chu wen-hsüan, ch. 19, pp. 345 & 349.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 346.
100. Chou-yi, ch. 1, p. 2.
101. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 10.
102. Chan-kuo-ts'e chiao-chu 戰國策校注 (SPTK ed.), ch. 5 ("Ch'u-ts'e" 楚策), pp. 107-8. Also cf. Shuo-yüan, ch. 13 ("Ch'üan-mou" 權謀), pp. 63-64. The Ch'u king is identified as King Hsüan 宣王 in the Chan-kuo-ts'e, but as King Kung 共王 in the Shuo-yüan. In the Ku-lieh-nü-chuan 古列女傳, ch. 6 ("Pien-t'ung" 辯通), p. 75, Chiang Yi 江乙, who initiated the idea for Lord An-ling, is said to have flourished in King Kung's time. Here Ch'en Tzu-ang obviously has followed the Chan-kuo-ts'e, because Chang-hua Terrace 章華臺 was built by King Ling 靈王, who was after King Kung but before King Hsüan.
103. Chan-kuo-ts'e chiao-chu, ch. 5, p. 123.
104. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 10.
105. Cf. commentaries on "T'ai-chieh liu-fu" 泰階六符, Han-shu, ch. 65 (Biography of Tung-fang Shuo 東方朔傳), p. 234.
106. Ch'un-ch'iu ching-chuan chi-chieh 春秋經傳集解 (SPTK ed.), ch. 3 (Tenth year of Duke Chuang 莊公, chuan), p. 28.
107. Ch. 77, p. 266.
108. CTAC, ch. 1, pp. 10-11.
109. See Kao-shih-chuan, ch. 1, fols. 3a-4b. Also cf. Han-shu, ch. 72 (Biography of Pao Hsüan 鮑宣傳), p. 253.
110. For "lan-kao" 蘭膏 cf. Chin-shu, ch. 92 (Biography of Yü Ch'an 庾闡傳), p. 247.
111. Ch'üan san-kuo-shih, ch. 5, fol. 2a, CHSK, p. 301.
112. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 11.
113. *Ibid.*

114. Shih pi-hsing chien, ch. 3, fol. 8a, p. 60.
115. Nan-hua chen-ching, ch. 5, p. 92. Also cf. Fei-yen wai-chuan 飛燕外傳 (Lung-wei mi-shu ed.), fol. 3a: "I prefer to grow old in this homeland; I cannot be like Emperor Wu, who sought the homeland of the white clouds."
116. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 11.
117. See Lieh-hsien-chuan 列仙傳 (Ku-chin yi-shih ed.), ch. 1, fols. 10a-b.
118. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 12.
119. Ch. 90, p. 301.
120. Ch. 109, p. 243.
121. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 12.
122. Ibid.
123. See Kao-shih-chuan, ch. 1, fols. 15a-16b.
124. See note 117.
125. CTAC, ch. 1, pp. 12-13. The character "hsing" 興 in line 7, which appears in SPTK and CHSC ed., is obviously a clerical error. It should be emended to "wu" 無 as in CTShih ed.
126. Ch. 94A, p. 310.
127. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 13.
128. Chou-yi, ch. 5, p. 35.
129. Chou-yi (Shih-san-ching chu-shu ed.), ch. 5, fol. 30b, p. 117.
130. Chou-yi, ch. 5, p. 35.
131. Lun-yü 論語, ch. 9 ("Wei-tzu" 微子), pp. 84-85.
132. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 15.
133. CTW, ch. 748, fol. 1a, p. 9797.
134. See Wang's article, CTAC, p. 295.

135. Hou-ts'un shih-hua (Shih-yüan ts'ung-shu ed.), "ch'ien-chi"
前集 ch. 1, fol. 5a.

Chapter 4

1. Cf. Hans H. Frankel, "The Contemplation of the Past in T'ang Poetry", Perspectives on the T'ang (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), Arthur F. Wright & Denis Twitchett, ed., pp. 354-58.
2. CTAC, ch. 2, p. 22.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 23.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Cf. Wang Meng-ou 王夢鷗, Tsou-yen yi-shuo-k'ao 鄒衍遺說考 (Taipei: T'ai-wan shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1966).
9. CTAC, ch. 2, p. 23. The table of contents of the Ch'en-po-yü wen-chi 陳伯玉文集 (SPTK ed.) treats this poem as one independent of the Lan-ku cycle. I have followed the interpretation of the CTShih and Chung-hua shu-chü eds.
10. Unofficial Biography, CTAC, p. 254.
11. Nan-hua chen-ching, ch. 3 ("Ying ti-wang" 應帝王), p. 66.

Chapter 5

1. Cf. Section I, chapter 2, poems noted 27, 28, 30, 31 and 33.
2. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 17.
3. Ibid.
4. Chin-shu, ch. 34 (Biography of Yang Hu 羊祜傳), pp. 104-5.
5. See Section II, chapter 3, note 96.

6. CTAC, ch. 1, p. 18.
7. Ibid., ch. 2, p. 45.
8. Ibid., p. 33.
9. Ibid., p. 36.
10. Ibid., p. 34.
11. Lao-tzu tao-te-ching 老子道德經 (SPTK ed.), p. 11.
12. San-kuo-chih 三國志 (K'ai-ming ed.), ch. 11 (Biography of T'ien Ch'ou), p. 37.
13. Han-shu, ch. 54 (Biography of Su Wu 蘇武傳), p. 205.
14. Ying-k'uei lü-sui 瀛奎律髓 (Ssu-k'u shan-pen ts'ung-shu ed.), ch. 1, fol. 1a.
15. Ibid., ch. 24, fols. 1a-b.
16. Shih-sou 詩數 (Taipei: Cheng-sheng shu-chü, 1973), inner chapter ch. 4, p. 56.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., ch. 5, p. 90.
19. Man-t'ang shuo-shih 漫堂說詩 (Ch'ing-shih-hua ed.), fol. 2b.
20. T'ang-shih pieh-ts'ai 唐詩別裁 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, n.d.), "fan-li" 凡例 p. 2.
21. Chen-yi-chai shih-shuo 貞一齋詩說 (Ch'ing-shih-hua ed.), fol. 4a.
22. Chin-t'i-shih-ch'ao 今體詩鈔 (SPPY ed.), preface fol. 1b.

Chapter 6

1. CTAC, p. 234 contains one seven-character chüeh-chü. Its authenticity, however, is doubtful.
2. Pen-shih-shih 本室詩 (Li-tai shih-hua hsü-pien ed.), fol. 7b.

3. This also includes "neighbouring rhymes" 鄰韻 . For this I also accept an extreme case like #113, in which the first rhyme word belongs to the ch'ing 青 rhyme and the rest belong to the keng 庚 rhyme, despite the fact that it is stated in the Kuang-yün 廣韻 that the ch'ing rhyme is not to be interchanged with other rhymes. As he was not fettered by any strict enforcement of rhyme use, Ch'en Tzu-ang might have preferred an older rhyming scheme. In Tu Fu's poem "Yang-ch'i" 揚旗, written in the old form, the three rhymes keng 庚, ch'ing 清 and ch'ing 青 are used together. In fact, one does encounter non-examination chin-ti poems composed in the high T'ang and onwards which resort to neighbouring rhymes. In the poem "Hsing-kung" 行宮 by Yüan Chen 元稹, which is a chüeh-chü 絕句, both the tung 東 rhyme and tung 冬 rhyme are used, despite the fact that in his time these two rhymes were supposed to be used apart in regulated poetry.

4. To avoid complications, I have not transcribed poems in the "pu-yi" 補遺 section.

5. CTAC, ch. 1, pp. 16-17.
6. Poems 44, 45 & 46, *ibid.*, p. 17.
7. Poems 47 & 48, *ibid.*, p. 18.
8. Poems 50 & 51, *ibid.*, p. 19.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
12. Poems 69 & 70, *ibid.*, p. 25.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
16. Poems 78, 79 & 80, *ibid.*, p. 28.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
18. Poems 85 & 86, *ibid.*, p. 30.
19. Poems 87 & 89, *ibid.*, p. 31.

20. Poems 90, 91, 92 & 93, *ibid.*, p. 32.
21. Poems 94, 96 & 97, *ibid.*, p. 33.
22. Poems 98, 99 & 100, *ibid.*, p. 34.
23. Poems 101 & 102, *ibid.*, p. 36.
24. Poems 104 & 105, *ibid.*, p. 39.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
27. Poems 112, 113 & 115, *ibid.*, p. 44.
28. Poems 116, 117 & 118, *ibid.*, p. 45.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
30. It is not known when the term was first used thus. For its interpretation cf. Ch'iu chao-ao 仇兆鰲, Tu-shih hsiang-chu 杜詩詳註 (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü, n.d.), ch. 1 (commentary on "Cheng-fu-ma-chai yen-tung-chung" 鄭駙馬宅宴洞中), fols. 32b-33a, pp. 176-77. Also cf. Wang Li 王力, Han-yü shih-lü-hsüeh 漢語詩律學 (Shanghai: Shang-hai chiao-yü ch'u-pan-she, 1962), pp. 119-31.
31. *Ibid.*, 121-24.
32. Such a tonal arrangement is called "fan-ku-p'ing" 犯孤平, generally condemned in the chin-t'i form. Cf. Wang Li, p. 85.
33. "Yüan-yang p'ien", CTAC, ch. 1, pp. 14-15; "Hsiu-chu-p'ien", *ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

Chapter 7

1. Chu-tzu yü-lei 朱子語類 (Taiwan: Cheng-chung shu-chü, 1962), ch. 140, p. 5400.
2. CTShih, ch. 241, p. 2711.
3. CTAC, pp. 260-61.

4. Yen Chen-ch'ing, CTW, ch. 337, fol. 11a, p. 4320. Tu-ku Chi, *ibid.*, ch. 388, fol. 12a, p. 4988. Li Yang-ping, *ibid.*, ch. 437, fol. 14a, p. 5639. Li Chou, *ibid.*, ch. 443, fol. 16b, p. 5716. Liang Su, *ibid.*, ch. 518, fol. 6a, p. 6671. Lu Hsi-sheng, *ibid.*, ch. 813, fol. 1b, p. 10779.
5. T'ang and Pao in fact belonged to the Sung of the Six Dynasties period.
6. CTShih, ch. 171, p. 1763.
7. CTW, ch. 373, fol. 21a, ch. 4801.
8. Pen-shih-shih, fol. 7b.
9. CTShih, ch. 227, p. 2457.
10. *Ibid.*, ch. 220, p. 2316.
11. *Ibid.*
12. CTW, ch. 555, fol. 3a, ch. 7126.
13. CTShih, ch. 337, p. 3780.
14. CTW, ch. 577, fols. 5b-6a, p. 7407.
15. *Ibid.*, ch. 315, fol. 8b, p. 4044.
16. CTW, ch. 653, fol. 4a, p. 8414.
17. Cf. Hou-han-shu (K'ai-ming ed.), ch. 89 (Biography of Chang Heng), p. 186. Also cf. commentaries, Liu-ch'en-chu wen-hsüan, ch. 15, p. 275.
18. CTShih, ch. 424, p. 4664.
19. CTW, ch. 675, fol. 3a, p. 8738.
20. CTAC, pp. 257-58.
21. "Su-ta-shih-yü fang-chiang-p'u fu-pa-yün chi-yi" 蘇大侍御訪江浦賦八韻記異, CTShih, ch. 223, p. 2383.
22. CTW, ch. 458, fol. 18a, p. 5923.
23. Hsin Wen-fang 辛文房 (Yüan period), T'ang ts'ai-tzu-chuan 唐才子傳 (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1965), ch. 9,

pp. 167-68 says the official responsible for Tu's graduation was P'ei Chih 裴執. However, it is nowhere mentioned in history that P'ei Chih ever held the post of Vice-President of the Board of Rites.

24. It might be Yüan of Jung Chou, i.e. Yüan Chieh.

25. CTW, ch. 815, fols. 18b-19a, pp. 10819-20.

26. CTShih, ch. 692, p. 7975.

Glossary of Administrative Terms

Assistant Commander-in-Chief 副大總管

Assistant Governor 司馬

Assistant Magistrate 縣尉

Censor 侍御史

Chairman of the Grand Council 中書令

Chief Secretary (of a chou) 長史

Chou 州

Collator of the Imperial Secretariat (Unicorn Terrace)
秘書省正字 (麒麟臺正字)

Commander 總管

Commander-in-Chief (行軍) 大總管

Commissary of Records of the Right Military Division
右衛門省參軍

Commissioner 大使

Deputy Head of the State Chancellery 門下侍郎 (黃門侍郎)

District 縣

Field Marshal 大將軍

General 將軍

General Secretary to the Crown Prince. 太子洗馬

Governor 刺史

Grand Council 中書省

Head of the State Chancellery 侍中

Left Reminder 左補闕

Left Superintendent of the Government Boards

尚書左丞 (文昌左丞)

Libationer 祭酒

Magistrate 縣令

Mayor of Lo-yang 洛陽令

Military Division 衛

Military Governor 都督

Political Division 道

President of the Board of Punishments 刑部尚書

President of the Board of Rites 禮部尚書

Protective Prefecture 都護府

Right Omissioner 右拾遺

Secretary of the Grand Council 中書舍人 (鳳閣舍人)

Supervising Censor 給事中

Vice-President of the Board of Civil Office 吏部侍郎

Vice-President of the Board of Punishments 刑部侍郎

Vice-President of the Board of Works 工部侍郎

Vice-President of the Censorate 御史中丞

Yu-chi General 游擊將軍

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Abbreviations:

- CHSK: Ch'üan han san-kuo chin nan-pei-ch'ao-shih
CSKS: Ch'üan shang-ku san-tai ch'in-han san-kuo liu-ch'ao-wen
CTAC: Ch'en-tzu-ang chi
CTS: Chiu t'ang-shu
CTShih: Ch'üan t'ang-shih
CTW: Ch'in-ting ch'üan-t'ang-wen
HTS: Hsin t'ang-shu
SPPY: Ssu-pu pei-yao
SPTK: Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an
TCTC: Tzu-chih t'ung-chien

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