The Interrelationship of Chinese Music and Poetry

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Unlike its Western counterpart, Chinese poetry has a more important role in Chinese literary history, especially classical Chinese poetry, which dominated literature as well as art throughout history. However, when making an intratextual analysis of this genre, we find the generic roots of classical Chinese poetry have stemmed from music. The studies of the dichotomous nature of Chinese poetry and music are an interdisciplinary domain that needs further investigation into the structures, forms and subjective matter in the interrelationship of music and poetry. However, for studies in the interdisciplinary areas of the music and poetic works, we are inclined to observe from poetic perspectives, since extant records of classical Chinese music are rare. The historical and intratextual perspectives of the Music Bureau *poetry,* Song Lyric *and* Various Tunes and Modes *posit an atlas for the interdisciplinary domain between music and poetry.*

On more theoretical investigation into the issue of poetic genres, we find that a generic difference existed between Chinese and Western poetry and poetics. Talking in general terms involves generalizations; however, in talking about two such major but widely different traditions, one can hardly avoid talking in these terms. Although there are some exceptions to the generalization of literary genre, we know that Western poetry is primarily bound to literary tradition and interacts with other literary genres, while Chinese poetry derives from artistic tradition (mainly ritual music) and interacts more with music than anything else. Thus Western poets would in general aim at poetic form and style whereas Chinese poets would concentrate on the production of poetic-music or music-poetic works. Unlike its Western counterpart, the term "poetry" in Chinese generally means "poetic-song" (詩歌) or "poetic-lyric" (詩詞). Because of its dichotomous nature in music and poetry, I initiate this observation of the interrelationship between Chinese music and poetry.

The first book of Chinese poetry is called *The Book of Songs*. This anthology of poetry, written earlier than 500 B.C., contains many works that appear to be ritual and folk songs, or at least works with ritual and folk song lyrics telling the sorrows, delights, love and tribulations of the ordinary people as well as the nobles. Because the anthology is the oldest in the language, it is not surprising that ritual and folk songs have occupied an important place in the Chinese poetic tradition. A number of songs in the anthology refer to the purpose of composing the text, which reflects the dichotomous nature of the poems:

> Therefore I wrote this song
> To convey my thoughts of mother. (*BS*, 162)

I have made this nice song
To explore your fickle mind. (*BS*, 199)

A few poems are presented
To be made into songs. (*BS*, 152)

Long and short the water lily
    To be culled left and right:
The graceful and chaste maid
    To be wooed with lute and zither.

Long and short the water lily
    To be plucked left and right:
The graceful and chaste maid
    To be cheered with bell and drum. (*BS*, 45)

The recurrent images in the poems seem to have no more relation to the subject matter than the singing of love songs and imaginings of the water lily. However, through careful observation we can see that the origin of primitive music had much to do with community ritual, daily activity, and the singer's feelings, emotions and passions for love and beauty. "The juxtaposition of natural and human activities in the poem helps to create a connection between its imagery and theme."[1] At the end of the songs quoted above the folk music married poetry just as the love expressions melted into images. However, owing to the lack of historical records about the production and performance of the songs, as well as the loss of music scores, further analysis on the assumption of the interaction of music and poetry is problematic.

Music Bureau Poetry (樂府詩)

The *Music Bureau* in the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.) was an institution that collected and composed music by imperial command and performed the music at certain court functions, both ritual and social. In the Han dynasty, Chinese music had undergone severe disruption in the transition to an imperial state. This disruption was compounded by the apparent lack of musical scores. Ancient Chinese music was transmitted outside of the scripted culture. There was a considerable effort, especially known by the Han Emperor Wu (武帝), to recover the lost music, or to find a viable substitute. With these activities there arose the new music (新聲), which was imported mainly from Central Asia as a byproduct of literature.[2] Down through the centuries a large corpus of poetry and its patterns of association reached a definitive shape in the eleventh century *Music Bureau* poetry anthology (樂府詩集). The *Music Bureau* poetry contains 5,500 poems organized by Guo Maoqian (郭茂倩) under twelve categories:

1. Lyrics for ritual songs (郊廟歌辭);
2. Lyrics for banquet songs (燕射歌辭);
3. Lyrics to tunes for drum and wind instruments (鼓吹曲辭);
4. Lyrics to tunes for the horizontal flute (橫吹曲辭);
5. Lyrics for songs with strings and bamboo wind instruments (相和歌辭);

6. Lyrics for tunes in the Qingshang key (清商曲辭);
7. Lyrics for songs with dance tunes (舞曲歌辭);
8. Lyrics for songs with lute tunes (琴曲歌辞);
9. Lyrics for songs with miscellaneous tunes (雜曲歌辭);
10. Lyrics for recent tunes (近代鼓詞);
11. Lyrics for miscellaneous songs and ditties (雜歌謠辭); and
12. Lyrics for new *Music Bureau* poems (新樂府辭).[3]

This categorization is based on five types of musical relationships: 1. The settings of ritual, banquet and dance; 2. The configurations of instruments—drums, wind instruments and strings; 3. The modality of *Qingshang* (清商) tunes; 4. The miscellaneous tunes; and 5. The modern lyrics.[4] The twelve categories themselves have a long textual history starting in the Han dynasty with various changes, expansions and simplifications. There were numerous literati from the Han dynasty down to the modern period who wrote poems in the style of *Music Bureau* poetry. These imitations, "which were not necessarily set to music, often bore the same titles as the original models but were considerably different from their models in meter and content".[5] There was also a considerable number of poems in the *Music Bureau* anthology, according to some critics, which were written as non-musical poems, including the use of old *Music Bureau* titles, titles from old *Music Bureau* verse and the use of *Music Bureau* themes.

While patterns of musical imitation, according to Joseph Allen, are invisible in the *Music Bureau* corpus, nonmusical patterns are often very visible. Though critics have often scoured the poems and secondary materials, trying to glean possible musical continuity in a category or subset of *Music Bureau* poems, they have been seemingly blind to the patterns of nonmusical imitation. There are some poems in the *Music Bureau* poetry written under the same title but different stanzas, which show the indirect evidence of shared musical patterns.[6] Here we assume that the musical continuity has been disrupted, and the interrelationship of music and poetry is thematic and visible. According to Joseph Allen, this pattern of supposed musical imitation followed by thematic imitation and intratextual derivation is often seen in subsets containing very early poems. Yet there are many subsets that do not contain such early poems, but in which similar intratextual relationships between the music and lyrics are formed.[7]

The musical categorization of ritual poems by Guo Maoqian rests on their assumed musical imitation, because other categories which have only a small group appeared to imitate exclusively on musical grounds. It is assumed that ritual poems have no thematic relationship with their designated models. However, the poems written in the Wei-Jin (魏晉) period (220–420 A.D.), especially by the three Cao (三曹) poets, imitate solely on musical grounds.[8] The thematic imitation appeared early in the history of *Music Bureau* poetry, especially in the works of the Jin poet Fu Xuan (付玄). Thematic imitation became a popular practice by the literati after the Wei-Jin period throughout the genre. However, most of the *Music Bureau* poems are prosodically identical with other poetic genres, since music lies behind their shared identity throughout the history of Chinese poetry.

At the earliest stages of the *Music Bureau* genre, musical imitation seems to have been the common practice. Yet we have not found the evidence that even at that early stage the thematic interrelationship between music and poetry was known. This is seen with two types of poems defined by Guo Maoqian as "old versions" of original lyrics (本辭) and the Jin

music (晉樂). Sometimes the Jin music version is identical with the original lyrics. In this case it is obvious that it is the interrelationship, even the same lyrics, that link the poems and music. In the case of a different Jin music version, musicality actually separates the associated poems.[9] It is the music and poetic themes and titles that bind *Music Bureau* poetry together and make it a cross-boundary genre of classical Chinese music and poetry.

There are four poets whose works represent the different musical features of earlier *Music Bureau* poetry. There are fourteen poems of Cao Zhi (曹植) and thirty-two poems of Lu Ji (陸机) written for bamboo and wind instruments (相和). Cao Zhi wrote nineteen and Lu Ji wrote seven miscellanneous tunes (雜曲). There are thirty-five miscellaneous tunes written by Bao Zhao (鮑照) and Xiao Gang (蕭綱), and thirty-five bamboo and wind tunes by the two poets including "South of the Yangzi Performances" (江南弄), "Boatman's Song" (船夫歌) and "Water Chestnut Song" (採蓮曲). Xiao Gang's "Water Chestnut Song" depicts the mulberry girls as symbols of spring eroticism:

> Their flowers fallen, water chestnuts tasted again
> The mulberry girls have finished with the new silkworms
> Cassia oars on a sampan like a floating star
> Back and forth through the lotus leaves moving south. (*MB*, 51.740)

One of the few titles of bamboo and wind tunes (相和) that Lu Ji, Bao Zhao and Xiao Gang share is "Boatman's Song", which illustrates well both the consciousness of their intratextual poetics as well as their individual tunes. "Boatman's Song" is a lyric embedded in a set of eleven poems with early but unknown folk music origins. Bao Zhao's version of the poem describes the poet's melancholy and loneliness with the "suffering traveler" motif:

> Ever since childhood this constant traveler
> Has floated and drifted without a place to stay
> Last fall stationed at the edges of the Yangzi river
> …
> Along the islands sadly honking the geese call
> Heavy and hauling the sails are raised high
> The violent waves offer no way of lingering
> The sailors on the boat will not dally there (*MB*, 40.594)

Lu Ji's "Boatman's Song" is indeed about boating, which is a relatively male and public activity. Yet Xiao Gang's version of the "Boatman's Song" altered the southern male sad voices into a female amorous singing. Comparing Lu Ji's poem to that by Xiao Gang, Wu Jing (呉兢) remarks: "The Jin music performed the text of the poem by Wei Emperor Ming (魏明帝) … these are only about taking a boat out for a row".[10] In Xiao's "Boatman's Song," we recognize the voice of his famous well-kept woman, erotic and passionate, out of her boudoir, floating along the Xiang river (湘江). The poet sings a more upbeat song:

> My home is along the River Xiang
> Thus I know the "Water Chestnut Song"
>
> Leaves are tangled from the trailing lilies
> Silken stems float off the broken lotus
> The spray in my makeup might be delicate sweat
> My damp dress seems intentionally wet

Clean silks dragged briefly in the muddy water
Fresh color comes back to the sullied brocade
Joining together with the beauty Zhao Yenfei
Asking the Music Master Li Yannian
Before it was adapted to string and winds
Who there sang the "Boatman's Song?" (*MB*, 40.594)

In additional to Xiao Gang's three poems for drum and wind tunes (鼓吹), Xiao Gang and Bao Zhao also composed a number of lyrics for dance music, lute melodies (琴曲), and horizontal flute melody (橫吹), which were associated with the poetry of non-Chinese origins. Xiao Gang and Bao Zhao also wrote lyrics for Wu songs (吳歌) and Western tunes (西曲). Wu songs were performed around the capital city (南京), while Occidental tunes flourished around Jiangling (湖北) and further to the west. The Wu songs often describe a woman's feelings and longing set off by her accessories and decorations, while the Occidental tunes often focus on the love and passion of a traveling merchant and draw on the outside settings of his life.[11] Both tunes are love songs and use quatrain form with four or five ideographs per line.

Some of these early ballads use lines of irregular length, varying from two to nine ideographs; they often employ syllables that do not make sense. It is said that many of "the songs of this period were written to be sung to melodies imported from Central Asia, and these nonsense syllables were presumably used as fillers to make the words fit the tune".[12] Other songs are predominantly or entirely in five-character or seven-character lines and are thus indistinguishable, in line form at least, from the ordinary poem.[13]

In sharp contrast to the highly elaborate form of the rhyme-prose, many *Music Bureau* songs from the Han dynasty were a continuation, both in terms of content and structure, of the tradition of the *Book of Songs*, especially of the lyric convention in the *Style* (風) section. These poems also illustrated the development of the new poetic form. The growing popularity of the pentasyllablic verse had already been found in new court songs, such as the lyric song "In the north there is a beautiful lady" (*MB*, 102). Because of their close relation with the accompanying music, these songs were widely circulated among musicians and adopted by the literati. One of the "Longer Songs" (長行歌), though different in prosodic form, its basic structural order, typical of the *Music Bureau* ballads in general, is remarkably similar to that of the lyric songs in the *Style* section of *The Book of Songs*[14]:

Green, Green, the hollyhocks in the garden,
The morning dew on them will disappear in the sun.
Warm spring bestows its generous grace around,
Everything in the world shines in its light.
Often one fears the approaching autumn
When flowers and leaves turn yellow and wither;
Hundreds of rivers flow east, towards the sea.
When will they ever return west?
If no effort is ever made in youth,
Then in old age only sorrow remains! (*MB*, 1.262)

Long and short the water lily
    To be culled left and right:

The graceful and chaste maid
    To be wooed with lute and zither.

Long and short the water lily
    To be plucked left and right:
The graceful and chaste maid
    To be cheered with bell and drum. (*MB*, 3.45)

The language of the *Music Bureau* ballads is on the whole direct, simple, and often very colloquial. Aside from these characteristics, the ballads are almost totally innocent of the allusions, similes, metaphors, or other tropes that play such an important part in the poetry of the literati.[15]

Song Lyric (詞)

In the Middle Tang period the *New Music Bureau* poetry (新樂府) appeared and flourished around the capital city of Chang An (長安). *New Music Bureau* poetry was represented by Bai Juyi (白居易) and Yuan Zhen (元禎) who escaped Li Bai's (李白) looming shadow by avoiding his intratextual company. In the same period of High Tang (713–715), as new music came in from Central Asia and the old *Music Bureau* ballads ceased to be sung, *Song Lyric* emerged and became a prominent literary form during the Song dynasty (960–1279).[16] *Song Lyric* is basically a song form, set to particular tune patterns. Generally it is in lines of unequal length, with a two-stanza or more than two-stanza structure. *Song Lyric* uses oblique tone rhymes in a single poem. There are two sub-genres in the *Song Lyric* category: Short lyric (小令) usually contains no more than sixty-two ideographs and Adagio (慢詞) ranges from seventy to 240 ideographs with various stanzaic patterns. At first the genre was known as *Qu zi ci* (曲子詞), meaning simply "song words" or "words for tunes". In terms of musical function, *Song Lyric* was often viewed as a continuation of *Music Bureau* ballads, and thus many critics and poets throughout the Song dynasty continued to place *Song Lyric* under *Music Bureau* category. According to Kang Sunchang, although the music of *Music Bureau* and *Song Lyric* has long been lost, these two poetic genres have a common interrelationship with music.

Song Lyric, however, did not emerge merely as an extended form of *Music Bureau* ballads. It initiated a special tradition of composition. Whereas the *Music Bureau* titles do not point to fixed metric patterns, the *Song Lyric* titles specify particular tune patterns (詞牌) to which the poems are composed.[17] During the Tang and Five Dynasties period, the subject of a Song lyric often corresponded to the meaning of its tune title.[18] As Kangsun Chang pointed out, after the Song dynasty the subject of the poem gradually lost its thematic connection with the tune pattern. "Filling in words" (填詞) was the term used to describe the unique method of *Song Lyric* writing. These tune patterns were of great variety. According to the prosodic manual (詞律) and its supplement, there were 825 tunes and more than 1,670 forms when the variants of each pattern were taken into consideration.[19] It was the use of these tune patterns and the new music which first marked the Song lyric as an independent genre, distinguished from other poetic forms.

Song Lyric was not sufficiently developed until the Late Tang poet Wen Tingyun (温庭筠) put great effort into producing individual collections of the lyrics.[20] It was through his

work that *Song Lyric* was transformed from mere songs of music performance to lyric verse of high literary quality. However, the Song lyric structure was basically built on the invention of and adaptation to new tunes. The development of new tunes were directed by the Tang emperor Xuan Zong (玄宗), who established the Imperial Music Academy (教坊) in the capital city, where hundreds of musicians and singers were trained to perform new music.[21] The emperor even admitted both "popular" and foreign music (胡樂) into the court, and thus destroyed the earlier rigid dichotomy between "elegant music" (雅樂) and "popular music" (俗樂).[22] The emperor himself also engaged actively in the invention of tunes and lyric composition. The two Song emperors Tai Zong (太宗) and Ren Zong (仁宗) were enthusiastic about new music and continually encouraged the imperial Music Academy to adopt hundreds of new tunes, which were said to be quite different from the music of the Tang and Five Dynasties. It was natural that a poet-musician like Liu Yong would take advantage of contemporary musical trends to experiment with unconventional tunes. However, the poet had to draw his inspiration from various tunes.

During this period, *Adagio Lyric* (慢詞), a sub-genre of *Song Lyric*, was created and became popular especially among the well-known lyric poets. Some traditional poetic critics attributed the development of *Adagio Lyric* form in the early Song dynasty to the combined effect of a sudden urban growth and a need for new music in entertainment circles. As Wu Zeng observed, *Adagio Lyric* was created during the Ren Zong period (1023–63).[23] After the war was over in the Central Plains (中原), Bianjing (開封) became prosperous and flourishing, and the singing clubs and dance halls competed in creating new sounds. Liu Yong (柳永) incorporated colloquial idioms extensively in his lyrics so that entertainers could sing them. Later other poets as Su Shi, Qin Kuan (秦寬), and Huang Tingjian (黃庭堅) continued to write in this form, and thus *Adagio* became popular.[24] The poets were often inspired by musicians and courtesans. These musicians and courtesans in the capital district knew the art of new music, and by joining the professional singers they naturally made *Song Lyric* a fashionable art form. To accompany this new music they sometimes composed their own song lyrics and sometimes asked well-known poets to write the poems for them. In fact, courtesans and musicians had been singing *Song Lyric* for a long time before literati poets began to take this new song form seriously. Lyric songs became popular among the poets only when entertainment quarters in urban centers were in full bloom.

As Kang Sunchang observed, another important subject that came in at the same period concerns a parallel literary development. The High Tang was also known as the zenith of the *Quatrain* (絕句). The *Quatrain* poems by Wang Changling (王昌齡), Wang Zhihuang (王之渙), Qin Shen (秦參) and Gao Shi (高適) of this period were often performed by singers, and were simply regarded as *Music Bureau* poetry.[25] The practice of setting quatrains to music can be traced back to the Southern Dynasties (420–589). During this period the two major groups of *Music Bureau*, *Wu Songs* (吳歌) and *Occidental Tunes* (西曲) were derived from the *Quatrain*, and "these quatrain-ballads were particularly popular in the capital city. Therefore, the practice of singing the *Quatrains* in the early Tang was merely a continuation of the *Music Bureau* tradition".[26] However, the regulated *Quatrain* written to new melodies sometimes had interpolated words (和聲) conforming to the length of the melody. Since these quatrains were sung to various melodies, in terms of literary form, they were quatrain verse, but as song lyrics, they were regarded as *Song Lyric*.

Bai Juyi, a great poet of the Tang dynasty, composed a set of famous lyrics to the tune "Yi Jiangnan" (憶江南), in which he expressed his love for the South after visiting Hangzhou and Suzhou, the two beautiful Southern cities. During the same period Liu Yuxi (劉禹熙) stayed in Suzhou for a few years and wrote his lyric to match Bai Juyi's "Yi Jiangnan" songs. Both poets knew musical technique, loved popular tunes and enjoyed the company of courtesans.[27] They experimented with the "long-and-short line" (長短句) lyrics mainly as a response to the popularity of lyric songs:

> The South of Yangzi, how great!
> Its scenery I once knew by heart.
> At sunrise, the river-flowers more red than flame,
> In spring, the river water greenish blue.
> How can I not think of the South of Yangzi? (*SLTF*, 1.31)

In this poem Bai depicted his poetic interaction between nostalgic feelings and the beautiful scene, using a traditional technique called "feeling and scene together " (情景交融). Here the illusion of an objective world and a vision of a perceptual space are naturally projected both outside and inside the poet himself. Sometimes in their poems they both declared their departure from old tunes and indicated that their poems were set to new music. Bai Juyi sings:

> Listen to no ancient songs and old music,
> But the newly revised "poplar-willow tune." (*SLTF*, 1.33)

And Liu Yuxi matches Bai's tone:
> Do not play the music of the former reigns,
> Listen and sing to the newly revised "poplar-willow tune." (*SLTF*, 1.23)

Like the musicians, quite often the lyric poets drew their inspiration from the singing girls. In the Song lyrics of the Tang and Five Dynasties, the names of two famous courtesans Xie Niang and Xiao Niang were often used as general names for singing girls. But in the Song dynasty the real names of the singing girls appeared as individuals and they sometimes were portrayed as symbols of the poets' own personalities. Liu Yong, the frontier lyric poet, wrote more lyric songs about his favorite singing girls such as the "Mulan Hua" (木蘭花) series. Liu Yong spent most of his youth in the entertainment quarters. When musicians invented new tunes, he was always ready to write song lyrics for them. And in fact he himself was a remarkable musician who knew how to compose tunes for his own lyric. Thus, he was very popular among singing girls. A legend has it that after his death a general custom emerged for courtesans to visit his tomb annually.[28] However, Su Shi did not start to write Song lyric until he went to Hangzhou as a local official, and began to appreciate the courtesans' musical performances.

The distinction between literati lyric and popular lyric provides us with more insight into the interrelationship between music and poetry. Kang Sunchang believes that we might make an assumption that there was an absolute distinction between literati verse and popular song verse, because their purposes seemed so different. Nevertheless the problem with such an assumption was seen in the total extant corpus of Dunhuang (敦煌) songs, which might be only a small portion of the lyric songs of that kind in existence in the Tang and the Five Dynasties. The diversity of themes in these songs also suggests that they might not be

intended for identical audiences. However, there was a difference between these surviving Dunhuang songs and popular tunes. It may not be necessary to draw a clear distinction between the literati lyric and "popular" songs, especially because Song lyric was originally considered a popular song form.[29] Nevertheless, the obvious distinction of subject matter between literati lyric and popular lyric songs pointed to a more basic difference regarding modes of poetic expression. Whereas the literati lyric songs were characterized almost exclusively by the lyrical mode, "the popular songs contain a variety of modes—narrative, dramatic, and lyrical".[30] In fact, a major portion of the Dunhuang songs is narrative or dramatic, rather than lyrical in nature. The tendency to express feelings in a straightforward manner is characteristic of the popular lyric songs, in keeping with the tone of simplicity and directness in all such verse. The persona in popular song often expressed a particular feeling explicitly and then dwelled on it throughout the poem. When we compare a "popular" Dunhuang song to the tune "Yi Jiangnan" and Bai Juyi's poem to the same tune quoted above, we can see the basic differences of content and meaning in the two kinds of poems. The woman in the "popular" song expressed her particular feelings concerning her persona in a clear and explicit manner:

> Don't pluck me,
> Plucking me will shake your heart.
> I am a willow by the pond near the river,
> One man plucked and so did the other,
> Love stayed with me just a moment. (*DHC*, 86)

In terms of music, the popular song is generally distinguished from the literati song in the following way. While the popular tends to adopt new forms immediately in response to "new musical requirements, the literati stays within the conceptual framework of past rigid poetic conventions and progresses slowly in an orderly fashion until a new genre is established."[31] Although there is a distinction between literati and popular tunes, the literati poets do not avoid popular styles. This is seen in Wen Tingyu's poems, although in his couplet-tune (雙調) poems the paratactic syntax and the rhetoric of implicit meaning are most predominant, and the influence of popular lyric song is rather limited in his one-stanza (單調) poems. His style is characterized by straightforward and explicit expressions echoing the popular song style. In his poem "Southern Song", the poet used a colloquial expression to reinforce the impression of a popular style. The technique of mentioning first one part and then another of the woman's body is similar to a general practice in popular songs.

> Holding a golden parrot in her hand,
> An embroidered phoenix on her breast.
> She steels a glance at him
> Marry him and better
> Become a pair of mandarin ducks. (*SLTF*, 1.47)

Most of Wen's lyrics were written from the viewpoint of a female persona. Almost none of them has the pure lyrical utterance of the poet himself. When Wen speaks, he most often does so under the guise of the voice of a female protagonist.[32] This is because the dramatic voice of a woman was actually in keeping with the performance purposes of the early *Song Lyric*. Most of the poets in the Tang dynasty composed lyric songs primarily for singing girls, and in actual practice a singing girl, who took the role of the protagonist in the songs, had to

sing to the audience.[33]

Various Tunes and Modes (諸宮調)

Although *Song Lyric* was continuously practiced by the literati and musicians, it had been gradually adopted into a new music genre: *Dramatic Lyric* (散曲) in the Yuan dynasty. *Dramatic Lyric* is in lines of unequal length, often written to an integral set of tunes and incorporated into drama. It frequently uses additional words and colloquial expressions. The major work of *Dramatic Lyric* is the *Various Tunes and Modes* (諸宮調), a chant-fable written by Dong Jieyuan (董解元). Stephen West explains the dramatic, musical, and poetic characteristics of this poetic-musical genre, especially its interrelationship between music and poetry. In the majority of *Zhu Gong Diao* forms the verse sections are "written to a fixed meter of five, seven, or ten syllables per line; these lines are chanted to a melody or melodies specific to that form, while each form prescribes the musical instrument or instruments for the accompaniment".[34] In the *Various Tunes and Modes* the verse sections are songs written to a variety of melodies; each verse section may consist of a couplet song, a couplet song and a three-line coda, "or a suite of songs in either one or two stanzas but belonging to the same mode or key and culminating in a coda".[35] Unfortunately, Dong Jieyuan's *Romance of the Western Chamber* (西湘記) written in the forms and styles of *Various Tunes and Modes* is the only complete example of the genre. *Various Tunes and Modes* in the chant-fable *Romance of the Western Chamber* contains 184 prose passages and 5,263 lines of verse.[36] "It contains excellent character portrayal; sophisticated narrative techniques; witty manipulation of levels of diction; moving lyrical and nature poetry".[37] The verse sections in *Various Tunes and Modes* can be in any of these three forms:

> A single poem set to one musical tune; a single poem and a coda; and a group of poems set to a suite of succeeding tunes, followed by a coda. The third type of verse sections can be quite long, containing as many as a hundred lines of verse and more. The tunes for each verse section must all belong to the same mode, and one rhyme is used throughout a verse section. With rare exceptions, there are no prose interruptions within the unit of a verse section, and normally, a verse section leads to a prose passage, not to another verse section. In all, fifteen musical modes with 126 different musical tunes, hence, 126 different verse forms are used in Master Tung's *Western Chamber Romance*.[38]

Dong's verses in the chant-fable create a greater variation in both narrative and poetic forms than that of the *Music Bureau* ballads, *Song Lyric* and other genres of Chinese poetry. Despite the difficulty of complying with the exigencies of the verse forms, Dong also obtained felicity and vividness in every mood and situation, thus his verse of *Various Tunes and Modes* in *Romance of the Western Chamber* became an excellent narrative medium. Dong's chant-fable is basically constructed in a prose-lyric-coda structure, which can be seen in the following part from Chapter 5 of *Romance of the Western Chamber*:

> Prose:
>> Chang opened the door and could hardly contain his joy. Whom did he see? Whom did he see?
>>> A pillow for one head
>>> Is shared by two.
>>> A single-sized quilt
>>> Covers a pair.

Who was it? Who was it? It was Ying-ying. Astonished, Chang said: "But only just now you dismissed me most unceremoniously…." Ying-ying replied: "Ah, that was merely a rule to protect me from my maid." Chang put his arm around Ying-ying and led her to bed.

The Elaborate Melody:
"You stood in the flower shadows.
It took me a long time
To see you clearly, to see
Your delicate, slender waist,
Your emerald-colored jacket and skirt.
Was it spring which made you tired?
You leaned on a garden rock.
For a while I thought that I had surprised
Guifei (貴妃), lingering to the north of Aloes Pavilion."

Coda:

"A black rope I tie to the ridgepole,
A true man does not grieve over death.
I can well be a gallant ghost in the nether world!"

New Green tune: (Flower-viewing time)
Rain-drenched cherry blossoms, brilliant as blood,
Dripped from outstretching branches.
Each coquettish flower, showing off its color,
Displayed a different hue of red or purple.
Willow strands had grown into long, graceful silken threads.
Such beauty
Inspired in Chang verses of the darkest despair.

Parallelism is a prominent prosodic feature of classical Chinese poetry, especially its rhetorical, syntactical and imagistic parallel structures in couplet, quatrain and four-stanza ballads in *The Book of Songs*; five-stanza and seven-stanza poems in *Tang Poetry* (唐詩) and parallel lines in *Song Lyric*. Nevertheless, parallel structure is too excessive and rigid, which can not match the new form and style of poetry, especially the dichotomous harmony of poetic-song (詩歌). This classical prosodic feature had been reformed by Dong in his *Various Tunes and Modes*.

Acknowledgements

A Note on the Use of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used in the text: *BS*, *The Book of Songs*; *MB*, *Music Bureau Poetry*; *SLTF*, *Song Lyric Tang Five Dynasties*; and *DHC*, *Dunhuang Collection*.

Notes

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