

# The Development of Two *Yüeh-fu* Themes in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries – Implications for T'ang Literary History

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## Introduction

This paper proposes to perambulate a T'ang generic back street – the *yüeh-fu* 樂府 or “music-bureau verse” – enroute to the larger avenues which trace Chinese literary history through the eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. It is preliminary to a more extensive examination of the development of *yüeh-fu* poetry in the T'ang dynasty (618-907 A. D.) currently in progress. Although other T'ang genres such as *shih* 詩 (classical poem), *ch'uan-ch'i* 傳奇 (classical tale), and *tz'u* 詞 (lyric) are mentioned, the discussion and examples provided focus on but this single genre. It is, however, changes therein that suggest more general trends of periodization.

The T'ang dynasty, in following with a long tradition which identifies each political period or dynasty with a dominant literary genre, is associated with the *shih* or classical poem. In this scheme genres seem to correspond with an age and then, as a result of a kind of “form fatigue” or “style exhaustion” (Wellek, 1979, p. 426; Wong, 1978, p. 60) die out as the era culminates.<sup>1</sup> Thus the subsequent Sung dynasty (960-1278) is noted for its *tz'u* or lyric.

As a result of scholars examining only the dominant classical-poetry genre (*shih*), only a few, nearly identical, periodizations are available for the T'ang (Wong, 1978, pp. 61-64). The following list provides an approximation of the accepted division:

- Early T'ang 初唐 (618-712);
- High T'ang 盛唐 (712-765);
- Mid T'ang 中唐 (765-835);

Late T'ang 晚唐 (835-907).<sup>2</sup>

Yet none of these "periods" really accommodate the development of other contemporaneous genres such as the classical tale, the lyric, neoclassical prose (*ku-wen* 古文), etc. The classical tale, for example, rises in the late-eighth century and flourishes through the late ninth — in no way following the traditional periodization based upon poetry and outlined above.

It would seem therefore that as a basis to a more comprehensive history of T'ang literature a more catholic, general generic approach is necessary. Such a theory is well known to have been developed by formalist and later structuralist critics who see literature as a system.<sup>3</sup> They maintain that although certain genres may gain temporary hegemony, and although certain theoretical generic possibilities may be unfulfilled for a time, the general literary system remains more or less constant in terms of certain genres treating certain themes for a certain audience. This scheme has been likened to a kaleidoscope. To follow this analogy, it is only when the tube of the literary kaleidoscope is turned, shuffling the colorful generic pieces, that a new literary order can be achieved. This disruption of the pieces — which remain the same, just repositioned — marks a significant literary-historical change. An era with no major disruptions in the arrangement of the colored, generic pieces may safely be identified as a "literary period" (Ducrot, 1979, p. 147; Tynjanov, 1969).

## A Brief Review of T'ang Literary Events

The seventh century was marked by historical and philosophical scholarship patronized by the court. Numerous dynastic histories were compiled and "new" commentaries to the classics (the *Cheng-i* 正義 which was based to a great extent on earlier, Six Dynasty exegeses) completed. This close attention to history and to the classics led first to a skepticism which can be seen best in Liu Chih-chi's 劉知幾 *Shih-t'ung* 史通 (Generalities of History) and in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* 春秋 scholarship of the eighth century (Pulleyblank, 1959, pp. 147ff and 1960; Nienhauser, 1980, pp. 1-3). Liu Chih-chi's discrimination of history and non-history, and the general intellectual milieu of this period, had significant influence on the rise of what has been called the first "fiction by intent," the classical tale (earlier works had been viewed subsequently as fictional, but were not so intended by their authors). The study of classical commentaries similarly caused many T'ang scholars to

question work of earlier exegetes, editors, and, in some cases, the classics themselves. This iconoclasm coincided closely with the rise of an educated but non-aristocratic group of intellectuals in the seventh-ninth centuries. Their upward social motion in turn abetted the success of certain popular genres such as the lyric.

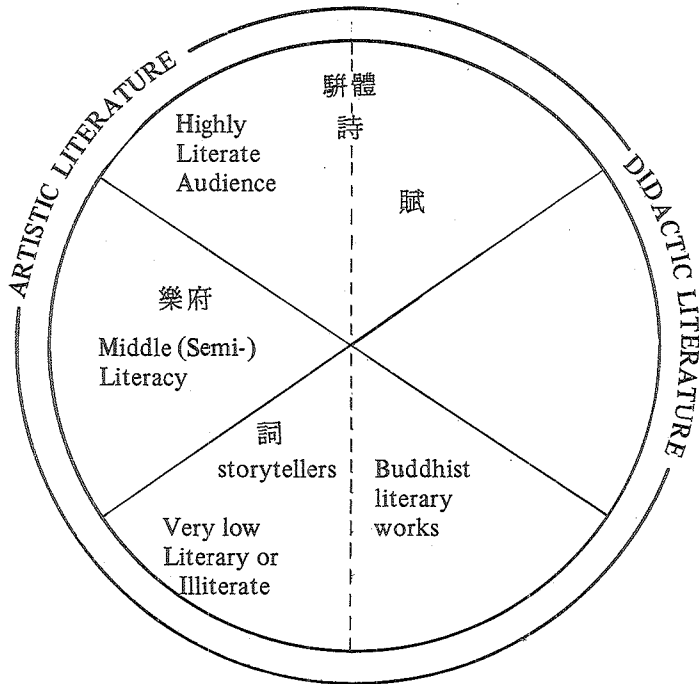
The increasing prominence of these men on the literary scene had much to do with the civil service examinations to which they had first won admittance in the late seventh century. The classical tale itself may well have gained popularity in the late eighth century as these men turned to it as a means of making a literary reputation with the examiners.

In classical poetry the *chin-t'i shih* 近體詩 (modern-style verse), controlled by a carefully defined and complex prosody came to the fore during the early eighth century. Two subgenres — one in eight lines and one in four — dominated the literature of this century. The four-line variety or *chüeh-chü* 絕句 became the sung verse of this period (Liang, 1980, A.11a; Chang, 1981, p. 3).

The ninth century saw the rise of a neoclassical reform movement in prose. Emphases were on didacticism, Confucianism, and a simple, "classical" style. This movement was not without its influence on *yüeh-fu* poetry (as will be seen below) and on classical poetry. During the early ninth century the latter bifurcated into two schools, one which emphasized an obscure, allusive, personal verse and the other a socially aware poetry composed in a clear, laconic style influenced by neoclassical prose.

The above selective synopsis fails to address the vernacular and oral literatures which also flourished throughout the T'ang as in all eras (Hanan, 1974, p. 301). Storytellers, female singers (in entertainment troupes, wine houses and courtesan quarters), dramatic groups, foreign musicians, and many other "performers" created countless literary works and adapted many elite songs for their purposes. Their work in turn influenced the numerous poets who frequented such performances.<sup>4</sup> A high oral literature also existed in the works of the imperial music and entertainment organs. But compared to the elite literary genres noted above, very little information remains on these activities.

A kaleidoscopic view of literature in the early eighth century could resemble the following:



Early Eighth Century Literature  
(Capital Literature)

### Two T'ang Yüeh-fu Themes

*Yüeh-fu* is a polysemous term which refers to hymns, folk ballads and literary imitations of these ballads (Frankel, 1974, pp. 69-70). By the T'ang the masses had turned to other forms and only literary ballads were produced. Moreover, the *yüeh-fu* was no longer a musical form (Chang, 1981, pp. 3 and 495; Wang, 1971, fol. 2a-2b; Lung, 1979, p. 1287), although numerous such popular genres existed (Lung, 1979, pp. 1283). The style or tone of the *yüeh-fu* changed from the intricate prettiness of late Six Dynasty ballads to a bolder, more vigorous one. The subjects treated increased accordingly. But the genre was still beset by the exaggerated and eccentric language of the literati (Lo, 1981, pp. 248-49), which continued through the mid-eighth

century.

This progression can be seen in the following series of *yüeh-fu* written to the title "Wang Chao-chün" 王昭君 and related titles (the discussion of the poems below does not represent a complete explication, but merely commentary pertinent to the development of the *yüeh-fu* genre; other textual and exegetic comments are relegated to footnotes). Wang's fate has been of particular interest in Chinese poets and early became a *yüeh-fu* theme. She had been a palace lady in the harem of Emperor Yüan of the Han (r. 48-33 B.C.), but had never been favored by the emperor. She was married to the chieftain of the Hsiung-nu, a powerful nomadic neighbor to China's north, to effect an "alliance by marriage" (*ho-ch'in* 和親). But as the emperor saw her for the first time during a formal ceremony to see her off, he was shocked by her beauty and lamented his choice. Some versions of this story introduce an additional motif (Eoyang, 1982, pp. 9-10): that of a court painter named Mao Yen-shou 毛延壽 who had been ordered by the emperor to paint portraits of each of the thousands of palace ladies. The emperor could then look through the paintings and choose his partner accordingly for a banquet or an evening of dalliance. Mao was corrupt and demanded bribes from the women. Wang refused to pay, so Mao disfigured her portrait. When the emperor saw it, he decided to present her to the nomad ruler. Needless to say once Mao's scheme was uncovered the artist was put to death.

The first verse on Wang to be examined, "Ming-chün tz'u" 明君詞 (A Song of Wang Chao-chün), was written by Hsiao Kang 蕭綱 (503-551), known to posterity as Emperor Chien-wen of the Liang (r. 550-551; text in Kuo, 1979, p. 431):

玉艷光瑤質，金鈿婉黛紅。  
 一去蒲萄觀，長別披香宮。  
 秋簷照漢月，愁悵入胡風。  
 妙紅偏見詆，無由情悵通。

A jade sensualness to her radiant form,  
 Golden hair-ornaments, lovely mascara and rouge —  
 Once she left the Grape Lookout,  
 She took leave forever of the Incense Unfolding Palace.  
 It's the Chinese moon on the autumn eaves,  
 But the tartar wind slipping through sorrowful bed-curtains.  
 Misrepresented in the bias of that subtle artist,  
 There was no way for them to communicate their regret.

In the first two lines Hsiao limns Wang Chao-chün while she was still in the Han harem. The lookout and palace in lines three and four are places where she may have waited – unsuccessfully – for the emperor. The jade and gold of the first couplet, along with the grapes and the incense here are all suggestive of her luxuriant, if lonely, life in Ch'ang-an. The incense would have also been intended to attract the emperor. Although Hsiao Kang finally allows a brief description of Wang's life in the Tartar camps, he even colors that by intimating that she has bed-curtains and eaves similar to those of China – she was more likely in a tent! Finally, his emphasis in the final couplet is upon the relationship between emperor and attendant in his concern over *their* lack of communication.<sup>5</sup> This approach reveals not only a decidedly “courtly style” (cf. Owen, 1981, p. xi) and “courtly point of view,” but also a personal (imperial) touch in the final line.

The next version is by the early eighth-century poet, Ch'u Kuang-hsi 儲光羲 (fl. 726). Ch'u moves the setting to the lands of the Tartars (Kuo, 1979, p. 430):

明妃曲四首之三

日暮驚沙亂雪飛，傍人相勸易羅衣。  
強來前殿看歌舞，共待單于夜獵歸。

Song of Mei-fei [i.e., Wang Chao-chün, third of four poems]

At sunset the wind shakes the sand,  
snow flies wildly;  
Those beside her urge the lady  
to change her robes of gauze.  
They force her out to the forehalls  
to watch the songs and dances,  
And wait together for the Great Khan  
to return from his nightly hunt.

(Translation revised from Owen, 1981, p. 70)

One can empathize with Wang Chao-chün in this verse, still clinging to her “robes of gauze,” which, like the woman herself, are out of place in this new, harsh environment. The character role here is what Eugene Eoyang (1982, p. 5) has called the “beauty despoiled,” her helplessness emphasized by her own attendants forcing her to join the revelry. Yet some vestiges of the Six Dynasty courtly tradition can be detected in the final line which echoes poems back to the *Shih-ching* 詩經 (Book of Poetry) in its depiction of the

palace women waiting for the ruler to return from a hunt or battle.

The third poem, entitled “Chao-chün yüan” 昭君怨 (Wang Chao-chün’s *Plaint*), is the only extant poem by Ku Chao-yang 顧朝陽 (fl. 730), a contemporary of Ch’u (Kuo, 1979, p. 429):

莫將鉛粉匣，不用鏡花光。  
 一去邊城路，何情更畫妝。  
 影鎖胡地月，衣盡漢宮香。  
 妾死非關命，都緣怨斷腸。

Don’t take the cosmetic boxes,  
 There’s no use for the ornamented mirror’s reflection!  
 Once on the road to the border cities  
 For what love would I need to makeup again?  
 The moon in these Tartar lands is locked in shadows,  
 The incense of the Han palace has faded from my robes.  
 If I die it has little to do with fate —  
 It’s all because my complaints have broken my heart!

This poem professes to record an account of Wang Chao-chün’s journey to the Tartar camp in her own words. The first couplet openly rejects conventional appurtenances of palace-style poetry seen in Hsiao Kang’s verse above. The transitional third couplet emphasizes the contrast between her new home and China. The verbs *so* 鎖 “locked” and *chin* 盡 “exhausted” suggest Wang’s own state of mind. The final, powerful lines complete a piece which is strikingly fresh and devoid of the borrowings so common in *yüeh-fu* verse. Nevertheless, even the rejection of the Six Dynasties’ style in the opening lines suggests its continued presence in the minds of mid-eighth century bards.

A complete break with the intricate prettiness of the Six Dynasties can be seen in Li Po’s 李白 (701-762) second of two pieces entitled “Wang Chao-chün” (Kuo, 1979, p. 430):

昭君拂玉鞍，上馬啼紅頰。  
 今日漢宮人，明朝胡地妾。

Chao-chün brushes clean the jade-inlaid saddle,  
 Then mounts, tears on her reddened cheeks.  
 Today a lady in the palace of Han —  
 Tomorrow an attendant in the Tartar land!

There is none of the frail loveliness of the palace beauty in Li Po's lines — she is flesh rather than jade. This character is a much more independent woman.<sup>6</sup> She brushes off the saddle and seats herself unassisted. Moreover, the two details in this work — the “inlaid saddle” and the “tears” suggest the incongruity of her situation. Nothing of the palace can be seen and the poem, in the broad strokes of the final couplet, takes on the larger meaning of the vagaries of fate.

The final poem on Wang to be examined was written by Ling-hu Ch'u 令狐楚 (766-837), a poet, official, and literary patron two generations Li Po's junior. Here is the second of two he entitled “Wang Chao-chün” (Kuo, 1979, p. 430):

仙娥今下嫁，驕子自同和。  
劍戟歸田盡，牛羊遶塞多。

Now the fairy beauty has been given to one beneath her,  
The “proud children” of their own co-exist in peace;  
Swords and halbreeds all have returned from the fields,  
The borders surrounded by herds of sheep and cattle.

Ling-hu's emphasis is clearly upon an ancillary aspect of this theme — the relations between the Tartars and China which Wang Chao-chün's marriage was intended to improve. Not only has the court faded completely from view, here barely a glimpse of Wang herself can be seen. This poem focuses on the foreign threat of “those beneath us”; it is an especially socially relevant piece in light of the difficult relations between the T'ang and its northern neighbors during Ling-hu Ch'u's lifetime. The “proud children” are the Hsiung-nu themselves (alluding to the “Hsiung-nu chuan” 匈奴傳 of the *Han shu*).

The *yüeh-fu* title “Shao-nien hsing” 少年行 (Song of the Unruly Youth) and its related title may serve as a second example of the development of a *yüeh-fu* theme during the T'ang. The title was originally “Chieh-k'o shao-nien-ch'ang hsing” 結客少年場行 (Making Friends at the Young Bloods' Turf<sup>7</sup>), a title derived from the friends of a certain Chi Tsun 祭遵 who killed a minor official because he had offended Chi (Kuo, 1979, p. 948). These young men gathered at various areas (fields?) outside the city and were available — to friends — to seek redress for wrongdoings. Although they shared some attributes such as valuing righteousness over life with the *hsia* 俠 or knight-errants, early poets depict them more as ruffians than as Robin Hoods. Pao Chao's 鮑照 (405-466) piece is one of the earliest (Kuo, 1979, p. 948):

聽馬金絡頭，錦帶佩吳鉤，失意杯酒間，  
 白刃起相讎，追兵一旦至，負劍遠行遊，  
 去鄉三十載，復得還舊丘，升高臨四關，  
 表裏望皇州，九衢平若水，雙闕似雲浮，  
 扶宮羅將相，夾道列王侯，日中市朝滿，  
 車馬若川流，擊鐘陳鼎食，方駕自相求，  
 今我獨何爲，轆轤懷百憂。

A fine piebald horse with a golden halter,  
 A curved knife worn on a brocade belt.  
 A disappointment washed away in cups of wine –  
 A feud settled with glittering blades.  
 When one day soldiers came in pursuit,  
 I left for a distant land, carrying my sword.  
 Having left home for thirty years,  
 I now once more return to the old hills.  
 I ascend a peak overlooking the four passes,  
 And gazes at the imperial city, in and out.  
 The nine avenues lie as smooth as water,  
 The double palace gates rise like clouds.  
 Generals and ministers arrayed to protect the palace,  
 Princes and lords line the roads.  
 At noon the marketplace is crowded and busy,  
 Carriages and horses pass like a running stream.  
 As bells strike, men dine from rows of vessels;  
 Driving out, they seek the company of friends.  
 What is this I alone am doing,  
 Frustrated and beset with a hundred cares?

(Translation adapted from Liu, 1967, pp. 59-60)

The youth in this poem is first seen as a carefree lad, enjoying the kind of hedonistic life these gallants favored. However, Pao Chao removes the glamor from this lifestyle in his portrayal of the man first as a fugitive and then as an old man cut off from the prosperous townspeople he can observe only from afar.

Of the eight other extant *yüeh-fu* which take this title, all of them are critical of these "bloods." Li Po, who is not altogether unsympathetic to such types, distinguishes Ching K'o 荆軻, whom he admires, from the youth Ch'in Wu-yang 秦武陽 or 秦舞陽, who accompanied Ching on the ill-fated assassination attempt on the King of Ch'in. Li Po considers Ch'in an "unruly

youth” and incapable of any great merit (cf. Kuo, 1979, p. 951).

Another related *yüeh-fu* title treating these youth was “Shao-nien tzu” 少年子 (Unruly Youth). These works emphasized the cavalier side of the youth and are probably related to a variant title, “Shao-nien le” 少年樂 (The Unruly Youths’ Pleasure). Wang Jung’s 王融 (467-493) “Shao-nien tzu” is the earliest remaining example (Kuo, 1979, p. 952):

聞有東方騎，遙見上頭人。  
待君送客返，桂釵當自陳。

I've heard there are riders from the east,  
From afar I can see the man who rides out front.  
I'll wait for him to see off his guests,  
Then tell him all that's in my heart.

Wang Jung's verse is the first to ignore the conventional meaning of *shao-nien* for the literal one — simply “young man.” The first two lines allude to the earlier *yüeh-fu* “Mo shang sang” 陌上桑 (The Mulberry by the Dike-path):

東方千餘騎，夫婿居上頭。

More than one thousand riders from the east,  
At the head is my husband.<sup>8</sup>

They are spoken by Ch'in Lo-fu 秦羅敷 to a prefect, who, though married, has approached Lo-fu improperly. Thus some similar experience may be what Wang Jung's persona wishes to tell her recently returned husband in the final line.<sup>9</sup>

Li Po also has a poem written to this title (Kuo, 1979, p. 952):

青雲年少子，挾彈章臺左，鞍馬四邊開，  
突如流星過，金丸落飛鳥，夜入瓊樓臥，  
夷齊是何人，獨守西山餓。

A young man whose ambitions reach the sky  
Carries a crossbow beside the Chang Terrace.  
As horsemen make way for him on all sides,  
He rides by, as fast as a shooting star.  
His golden pellets fell flying birds,  
At night he enters the jasper tower to sleep.

What kind of men were Po-i and Shu-ch'i.  
That they alone starved themselves on the Western Hill?

(Translation adapted from Liu, 1967, p. 65)

The libertinism, hautiness, and ambition which also characterizes these youth is portrayed in the first six lines.<sup>10</sup> James J. Y. Liu, moreover, believes Li Po mocks Shu-ch'i and Po-i in the final couplet, viewing their self-sacrifice as "silly" (1967, p. 65). Given Li Po's personality and his philosophy, this is indeed a possible reading. There may be, however, some irony in his comparison of the life of luxury of these youth to the spartan existence of these two famed martyrs – not only the names of this virtuous pair, but their principles are completely unknown to these young men.<sup>11</sup>

The only other extant poem to this title is by a later poet, Li Ho 李賀 (790-816), who shared Li Po's interests in chivalry and in *yüeh-fu* verse (Kuo, 1979, p. 953):

芳草落花如錦地，二十長遊醉鄉裏。  
紅纓不動白馬驕，垂柳金絲香拂水。  
吳娥未笑花不開，綠鬢聳墮蘭雲起。  
陸郎倚醉牽羅袂，奪得寶釵金翡翠。

Scented grasses, falling petals –  
the ground is like brocade.  
A youth of twenty roaming afar  
in the Land of Drunkenness.  
His red hat-strings never move  
as he rides his white horse so proud.  
Weeping willows golden silk  
fragrantly brush the water.  
If the beauty from Wu doesn't smile,  
flowers won't open.  
Lustrous tresses, piled high or let drop –  
orchid clouds rising.  
Master Lu leans drunkenly on her,  
tugging her gauze sleeve –  
Then pulls out a jewelled hairpin,  
a kingfisher of gold.<sup>12</sup>

(Translation modified from Frodsham, 1970, p. 283)

This poem, too, stresses the handsome figure, the wealth, and the sensuality

of these youth. One sees nothing of the martial or rowdy nature which had been depicted in earlier poems. Here the emphasis is on pleasure.<sup>13</sup>

The third related title is "Shao-nien hsing." Wang Wei 王維 (701-761) wrote four verses to this title (Kuo, 1979, p. 954):

## I

新豐美酒斗十千，咸陽遊俠多少年。  
相逢意氣爲君飲，繫馬高樓垂柳邊。

In Hsin-feng, fine wine – a gallon for ten thousand cash.  
At Hsien-yang the knight-errants were mostly young in years.  
Meeting together in high spirits they drank to each other,  
And tied their horses at the tall tower next to the  
drooping willows.<sup>14</sup>

(Translation based on Yu, 1981, p. 69)

This verse recalls the "Shao-nien tzu" and "Shao-nien le" type of *yüeh-fu* discussed above. Again the hedonistic lifestyle of the youths, now much more ruly, is the focus. Hsin-feng (New Feng) was built near the capital by the founder of the Han for his father who was homesick for his native town of Feng. Hsien-yang was the capital of the Ch'in dynasty. Here it is probably not anachronistic, but merely an indirect way of referring to the Han capital, Ch'ang-an. The tall tower next to the weeping willows is likely the residence of courtesans.

## II

漢家君臣歡宴終，高義雲臺論戰功。  
天子臨軒賜侯印，將軍佩出明光宮。

In the house of Han the lords and officials have feasted,  
In the lofty spirit of righteousness at Cloud Pavilion  
they talk of great victories.  
The emperor comes in person to bestow a marquis' seal,  
Which the general wears at his girdle on emerging from  
the Imperial Palace.

(Translation modified from Yu, 1981, pp. 70-71)

Here the "youth" is a military hero, honored by the emperor in the Cloud Pavilion where a Han ruler had hung portraits of twenty-eight great generals. The eccentric and extravagant style noted above for early T'ang *yüeh-fu* is evident in this set of poems written in Wang Wei's youth.

## III

出身仕漢羽林郎，初隨驃騎戰漁陽。  
熟知不向邊庭苦，縱死猶聞俠骨香。

They began their careers serving the Han as imperial  
bodyguards,  
And followed the cavalry general to battle at Yü-yang.  
Who would have known that those not facing the frontier's  
miseries  
Even after death would leave behind "the fragrance of chivalrous  
bones"?

(Translation modified from Yu, 1981, pp. 69-70)

This poem appears as the last of the series in Wang Wei's collected works. As such it casts a more negative tone over the entire group of poems, since Wang Wei is critical of the ease with which these young gallants achieve success. In contrast to the average soldier, they begin their careers in high positions. Though courageous, theirs is but the valor of battle, ignorant of the loneliness and deprivation which are the lot of the majority of frontier troops.

## IV

一身能臂兩雕弧，虜騎千群只似無。  
偏坐金鞍調白羽，紛紛射殺五單于。

A single soldier is able to draw two carved wooden bows:  
Barbarian horsemen, in companies of one thousand, seem  
like nothing.  
Sitting sideways on a golden saddle he adjusts his white-  
plumed arrows:  
One after another he shoots and kills the five enemy  
leaders.<sup>15</sup>

(Translation based on Yu, 1981, p. 70)

This verse is filled with praise for the physical strength and military prowess of the youth. Yet his pampered status (white-plumed arrows and a golden saddle) lends some support to the possibility that Wang Wei is not unambiguously in his praise for this group.

Li Po, as noted above, exhibits a certain ambivalence towards these young men, too. His "Shao-nien hsing" describes them at play (Kuo, 1979, p. 953):

五陵年少金市東，銀鞍白馬度春風。  
落花踏盡遊何處，笑入胡姬酒肆中。

The young men from the Five Mounds roam by the Gold Market,<sup>16</sup>  
Their silver saddled white horses gallop in the spring  
breeze.  
Having trampled every fallen flower, where to next?  
Amid laughter they enter the tavern served by a pretty Tartar  
maid.

(Translation based on Liu, 1967, p. 67)

It is difficult (for this reader at least) to determine whether the poet approves of this behavior: the "trampling every fallen flower" in line three seems to suggest excess. The associations between Five Mounds, the Han dynasty youth, and their conventional bad reputation in the *yüeh-fu* support this assumption.

Another of Li Po's "Shao-nien hsing" verses is often cited by critics (see Huang, 1979A, for example) as an example of his approval of the lifestyle of these men (Kuo, 1979, pp. 953-54):

君不見淮南少年遊俠客，白日毬獵夜擁擲。  
呼盧百萬終不惜，報讎千里如咫尺。  
少年遊俠好經過，運身裝束皆綺羅。  
蘭蕙相隨喧妓女，風光去處滿生歌。  
驕矜自言不可有，俠士堂中養來久。  
好鞍好馬乞與人，十千五千旋沽酒。  
赤心用盡爲知己，黃金不惜栽桃李。  
桃李栽來幾度春，一回花落一回新。  
府縣盡爲門下客，王侯皆是平交人。  
男兒百年且樂命，何須徇書受貧病。  
男兒百年且榮身，何須徇節甘風塵。

衣冠半是征戰士，窮儒浪作林泉民。  
 遮莫枝根長百丈，不如當代多還往。  
 遮莫親姻連帝城，不如當身自簪纓。  
 看取富貴眼前者，何用悠悠身後名。

Don't you see

The younger wandering knight from south of the river Huai  
 Plays polo and hunts by day, and gambles by night?

He wagers millions on the throw of the dice without  
 regret,<sup>17</sup>

And thinks nothing of going a thousand miles to avenge  
 a wrong.

The young wandering knight passes in triumph:

Dressed from head to foot in rich silk and gauze,  
 Followed by noisy singing girls as beautiful as orchids.

Everywhere he goes, music and songs are heard.  
 He tells himself not to grow arrogant and proud;

Many another knight he has kept within his hall.

Fine saddles, fine horses, he gave to any who begged;

Ten thousand, five thousand, he squandered in a moment  
 on wine.

He spent his loving thoughts on those who appreciated him,

And did not grudge to use his gold to plant peaches  
 and plums.<sup>18</sup>

Several springs have passed since the peaches and plums  
 were planted,

Each time the blossoms fall, each time they are renewed.

Prefects and mayors come to pay him respects;

Princes and lords are all his social equals.

A man should enjoy himself during his lifetime;

Why stick to books and suffer want and sickness?

A man should seek glory during his lifetime;

Why stick to principles and enjoy wind and dust?

Half the richly clad officials are fighting men,

While poor scholars idle among the people of the woods  
 and springs.

No matter how deep the roots of your family tree go,

It's not as good as having many friends now.

No matter how many relatives you have in the imperial city,

It's not as good as being an official yourself.

Let us take the wealth and honors that lie before our

eyes!

What's the use of eternal fame after death?

(Translation revised slightly from Liu, 1967, p. 66)

The first eighteen lines of this thirty-line poem are similar to the "Shao-nien le" theme discussed above. Here, however, Li Po describes a more civilized "youth" than was usually the case. His character is a bit older and a bit more established than the conventional. The second portion of the poem (beginning with line 19: "A man should enjoy himself during his lifetime. . .") is more philosophical. The rather clumsy style and the incongruities of a *shao-nien* serving as an official (cf. lines 23 and 28) have led many traditional critics to judge this last section (lines 19-30) an interpolation included by an undiscerning editor (Ch'ü, 1981, p. 459). Even without the laudatory final section, this poem stands as one of Li Po's more approbative descriptions of these youth.

A much different attitude towards these "unruly youth" can be seen in Tu Fu 杜甫 (712-770), who has left three poems on the theme (Kuo, 1979, p. 956):

I

莫笑田家老瓦盆，自從盛酒長兒孫。  
傾銀注玉驚人眼，共醉終同臥竹根。

Don't smile at the farmer's old earthenware pitcher!  
Since it was first filled with wine sons and grandsons  
have grown up.  
To pour from silver, to serve from jade, startles men's  
eyes,  
But after all each allows us to get drunk and sleep  
at the roots of the bamboo.<sup>19</sup>

Here Tu Fu depicts the youth far from his conventional urban or frontier setting — he's in the countryside. In fact, without the title there would be little reason to detect a youth here. Because of the title-theme, however, it can be assumed that the mood is imperative and that the poet (or a persona — the speaker is an experienced, elder man, as can be seen from line two) speaks directly to the young man, admonishing him for his love of transitory luxury. The philosophic tone similarly can not often be found in earlier works on the theme, although to a certain extent it is a return to Pao Chao's work.

## II

巢燕養雛渾去盡，紅花結子已無多。  
 黃衫年少來宜數，不見堂前東逝波。

The young nursed by the nest swallow have all flown away.  
 The red flowers bore fruit, little of it is left.  
 The young man in the yellow shirt should come again often,  
 Can't he see the waves moving east before the hall?

This piece again celebrates a foible of the unruly youth — their *carpe diem* lifestyle. The persona-speaker is apparently a courtesan or lover who gently reminds her audience (this poem may also be addressed only to the youth) of the transience of youth. The final line depicts the flowing of the river waves toward the sea, a cliché for the rapid passage of time.

## III

馬上誰家白面郎，臨階下馬坐人牀。  
 不通姓字粗豪甚，指點銀瓶索酒嘗。

Who is that fair young gentleman on horseback?  
 He dismounts beneath the steps and comes to sit on  
 another's couch.  
 Sorely coarse and overbearing he does not give his name,  
 But points to the silver pitcher and demands to taste  
 the wine.

(Modified from Liu, 1967, p. 63)

This poem begins with a typical portrayal of the youth — handsome and on horseback. The second line is also not very striking, except for the detail of him sitting on someone else's couch (*jen-chuang* 人牀) and the interior view of what is normally seen only from without. Huang Yung-wu (1979B, p. 9) notes that in contrast to the "youth" Wang Wei *tells* us about, Tu Fu allows the youth to *reveal* himself through his own acts, with little commentary from the poet himself. By the third line, however, another persona is definable — someone within the wine shop, perhaps a serving maid. Here a glimpse of the haughtiness of these youth is provided — haughtiness not in dealing with enemy troops or with powerful lords, but with the common people.

This indeed is the accomplishment Tu Fu offers this set of poems on these youth. Although earlier poets such as Pao Chao and Wang Wei had been critical of the excesses of these young men, these poets adopted points-of-view much nearer that of their subjects. Tu Fu's ability to empathize with those social groups these men bullied — the peasantry, shopkeepers, courtesans, etc. — is innovative.

Chang Chi 張籍 (?766-829?) is noted for his *yüeh-fu* verse. His "Shao-nien hsing" is also didactic (Kuo, 1979, p. 955):

少年從出獵長楊，禁中新拜羽林郎。  
 獨到輦前射雙虎，君王手賜黃金鑿。  
 日日鬪雞都市裏，贏得寶刀重刻字。  
 百里報讎夜出城，平明還在倡樓醉。  
 遙聞虜到平陵下，不待詔書行上馬。  
 斬得名王獻桂宮，封侯起第一日中。  
 不爲六郡良家子，百戰始取邊城功。

A youth follows the hunt in the Ch'ang-yang Park;<sup>20</sup>  
 He's the newly appointed Feather-forest Gentleman of  
 the emperor's quarters.  
 Alone he goes before the emperor's carriage to shoot a  
 pair of tigers,  
 So the emperor rewards him with a golden wine vessel.  
 Daily he fights cocks in the capital markets,  
 Winning a precious sword, he carves his own name [over  
 or next to that of the original owner].  
 One hundred miles to get revenge — it's night before he  
 leaves;  
 By break of day he's returned to the courtesan-tower  
 and is drunk.  
 From afar he hears the enemy has descended from P'ing-  
 ling,  
 And, not waiting for a summons from the throne, he  
 saddles up.  
 He kills a famous king and presents his head at the  
 Cassia Palace.  
 Enfeoffed a marquis, his mansion built, all within a day!  
 Not like the good families of the Six Frontier Commanderies,  
 Who only achieve success and merit after one hundred battles.

At first glance the poem seems to resemble the third of four verses by Wang Wei discussed above. But Chang Chi, like Tu Fu, is concerned not only with the ease of this youth's success, but also with the "good families" of the ordinary soldiers at the border. Nevertheless, like the excesses of the *fu* 賦 genre or the erotic Chinese novel which subsume any intended didactic effect, the appealing portrait of the youth drawn in the bulk of the work cannot help but sway the reader towards the youth, leaving him with more admiration for this lifestyle than for the poet's moralistic epilogue.

The following piece by Chang Hu 張祐 (fl. 821-825), another poet fond of *yüeh-fu*, was written to the title "Shao-nien le" (Kuo, 1979, p. 953):

二十更封侯，名居第一流。  
 綠鬢深小院，清管下高樓。  
 醉把金船擲，閑敲玉鐙遊。  
 帶盤紅鬃鼠，袍斫紫犀牛。  
 錦袋歸調箭，羅鞋起撥毬。  
 眼前常貴盛，那信世間愁。

At twenty he is enfeoffed a marquis —  
 His name rests in the first rank.  
 Lustrous tresses deep in the small courtyard,  
 A clear flute descends from the tall tower.  
 Drunk he loses his money,  
 Casually he taps jade stirrups and saunters off.  
 His belt plate is red and shaped like a tapir,  
 The stones [weighting] his robe are purple rhinoceros.  
 To his brocade quiver he returns fitting arrows,  
 In silken shoes he kicks up the ball.  
 Before his eyes always the noble and flourishing,  
 How could he believe there is sorrow in the world?

The poem includes many of the stereotyped descriptions of the "unruly youth." Only in its final lines is there a deviation from earlier works. Certainly Chang is critical of the youth for ignoring the suffering in the world, yet the overall tone is rather resigned and the "criticism" almost sympathetic.

In another poem, entitled "Shao-nien hsing," however, Chang Hu makes his distaste for the youth more apparent (Kuo, 1979, p. 957):

少年足風情，垂鞭賣眼行。  
 帶金師子小，裘錦騏驎薄。  
 選匠裝金鏡，推錢買鈿箏。  
 李陵雖效死，時論得虛名。

Among the unruly youths there are enough profligates,  
 Dangling their whips they head for those who "sell  
 their glances."

On their belts are golden lions small,  
 Their furs and brocades, unicorns fierce.  
 They seek artisans to make golden stirrups,  
 And squander money to buy inlaid zithers.  
 Even if Li Ling had died in the service of his country,  
 In time they would say he gained an empty fame.

Although the poem begins by reiterating conventions of the "Shao-nien le," it is apparent by lines 5 and 6 that Chang is describing not only a licentious life, but one of luxury. The final couplet ironically belittles Li Ling, the famous Han general who surrendered to the Hsiung-nu and was dubbed a traitor by Emperor Wu. Chang Hu here is critical, of course, of the youth themselves who he sees as dandies. But he also implies a lack of imperial discernment, possibly a slight directed to the ineffective T'ang monarchs of the ninth century.

Ling-hu Ch'u, who like Chang Hu wrote many *yüeh-fu*, has left four verses to the title "Shao-nien hsing" (Kuo, 1979, p. 956): °

## I

少小邊州慣放狂，騏驎蕃馬射黃羊。  
 如今年事無筋力，猶倚營門數雁行。

When I was young, so young in the frontier prefectures  
 I was wont to give rein to my actions —  
 Bareback I rode Tibetan horses, shot mountain goats.  
 And now aged, my physical strength gone,  
 Still leaning on the camp-gate I count the wild geese.

The theme undergoes a further transformation in this set of poems. In the first Ling-hu establishes, through the use of first-person narration, the

identification of these youth with the troops stationed at the border, a variation of preceding poems which contrasted the *shao-nien*'s brief, albeit spectacular, service at the front with the long years put in by the regular troops. The overall tone here is one of sadness. The first poem views a now aged youth reminiscing about days of glory — he still sees the geese with a hunter's eyes.

## II

家本清河住五城，須憑弓箭得功名。  
等閑飛鞚秋原上，獨向寒雲試射聲。

My family is originally from Ch'ing-ho, we lived in  
the Five Cities.  
I had to rely on my bow and arrows to gain merit and  
fame.  
To pass the time my reins fly across the autumn fields.  
Alone I sound an arrow to test the cold clouds.

This poem again suggests that these youth are self-made men. Originally from Ch'ing-ho and the Five Cities (all in the border regions), the persona of this poem has no powerful family connections to enhance his career — only his skills as a soldier. Though the autumn fields may evoke the traditional season for warfare, they also emphasize the loneliness of this proud warrior as he looses his arrows at the sky.

The autumn season provides the setting for the third poem as well:

## III

弓背霞明劍照霜，秋風走馬出咸陽。  
未收天子河湟地，不擬回頭望故鄉。

A bow bright in the clouds of dawn, a sword reflecting  
the frost;  
Autumn winds and racing horses emerge from Hsien-yang.  
Until we recover the emperor's lands by the confluence  
of the Ho and the Huang,<sup>21</sup>  
We'll not turn our heads to look homeward.

This piece is a straightforward statement of the courage and patriotism of these youth.

## IV

霜滿中庭月過樓，金樽玉柱對清秋。  
當年稱意須爲樂，不到天明未肯休。

Frost fills the courtyard, the moon passes the tower.  
The golden goblet, the jade bridge are in accord with  
the clear autumn.<sup>22</sup>

These years doing whatever we wished, we had to be happy.  
Not until dawn were we ready to take our rest.

Although this last poem of the group depicts a life of luxury and ease such as was often the target of attack in earlier *yüeh-fu*, given the context of the preceding poems, there seems to be little censure here. Overall Ling-hu Ch'u has initiated a subtheme by equating *shao-nien* with border troops.

The final poems to be examined are three verses ("Shao-nien hsing") by the poet-monk Kuan Hsiu 貫休 (secular name Chiang Te-yin 姜德陰, 832-912). Kuan spent most of his life in the Lower Yangtze Valley at a time when the T'ang was disintegrating and little concern was given the northern borders. His youth are therefore more related to the tradition than those of Ling-hu Ch'u. Yet they are prospering during a period of suffering for many:

## I

錦衣鮮華手擎鵝，閑行氣貌多輕忽。  
稼穡艱難總不知，五帝三皇是何物？

Brocade clothes in rare splendor, hand holding a falcon —  
Leisure the gait, the manner most light and easy.  
Of farming's hardships he knows nothing at all.  
The Five Emperors, the Three Sovereigns — who were they?

This first poem depicts a wealthy, somewhat foppish young man whose concerns are his own welfare. Not only is he blissfully ignorant of the hardships of the peasants, he has no education of training in traditional history or

philosophy — in other words he lacks the ethical basis of a gentleman.

## II

自卷五色毬，迸入他人宅。  
去捉蒼頭奴，玉鞭打一百。

Rolling the five-colored ball himself,  
It got away into someone else's home.  
But he seizes his black-haired servant,  
And gives him a hundred lashes of his jade whip.

The second poem provides an example of the deficiencies noted in the first. It marks the most vehement condemnation of the youth save that of Tu Fu.

## III

面白如削玉，猖狂曲江曲。  
馬上黃金鞍，適來新賭得。

With a white face like polished jade,  
Running crazed through the bends of the Bent River —  
Ahorse on a golden saddle  
He's just won in a recent bout of gambling.<sup>23</sup>

The final verse portrays a youth amuck midst the park-like environs of the Bent River in the southeastern part of the capital city. His dissolute life is also suggested by the extravagant saddle and his gambling which may have taken place at the Bent River.

### Concluding Remarks

Having now examined a small, but perhaps representative sample of T'ang *yüeh-fu*, some previous conceptions of the development of the genre can be tested. In the series of Wang Chao-chün poems a progression from the attention to her appearance in the early works, through the concern for her life in the Tartar lands, to the broader perspective of Ling-hu Ch'u, who saw her story as but a part of the ongoing struggle between China and its northern neighbors can be seen.<sup>24</sup>

The various characterizations of the *shao-nien* (three are apparent: ruffian, roué, and warrior) also demonstrate a historical development. Pre-T'ang verses adhere closely to the presentation of these youth as ruffians (using the title "Chieh-k'o shao-nien ch'ang'hsing"). Gradually an interest in the love life of the youth (perhaps as a result of "contamination" from a related *yüeh-fu* theme such as "Ch'ang-an tao" 長安道 which described youth who had come to the capital to take the examinations, but spent their time and money in the pleasure districts instead) is evinced in a new, related theme-title: "Shao-nien le" (The Pleasures of the Unruly Youth). The youth acquired an opulent lifestyle and several poets even idealistically identified themselves (Li Po and Li Ho) with these men. As foreign military incursions drew attention to the northern and western frontier regions, poets such as Wang Wei depicted the youth as soldiers of fortune. The return to a critical attitude toward these youth, foreshadowed in a poem by Wang Wei, comes to fruition in Tu Fu's three poems. The contrast between his view of the youth as outsiders and that of Li Po marks a clear break in the development of the theme.

In the Wang Chao-chün poems, too, two types of poem, roughly corresponding to the eras traditionally designated as Early and High T'ang can be seen. Early T'ang poems depict Wang Chao-chün in the palace and High T'ang verses show her enroute to or in Tartar lands.

Although no such delineation is apparent in the *shao-nien* pieces, the mid-eighth century remains a dividing line. Li Po, in his identification with these youth, and Tu Fu, in his condemnation of them break the continuity of the theme at a time when interruptions in many other social, economic and political traditions were taking place.<sup>25</sup> Although Tu Fu has been acknowledged the founder of the *hsin yüeh-fu* 新樂府 (new *yüeh-fu*), his poems actually recall the original purpose of the genre — to present to the emperor a record of popular complaints expressed in song.<sup>26</sup>

Subsequent poets continue the identification of *shao-nien* and military men which Wang Wei initiated, but they are increasingly critical: Chang Chi contrasts their easy military fortunes with that of the regular troops, Chang Hu emphasizes their lack of social concern, and Kuan Hsiu portrays their hubris and cruelty. Ling-hu Ch'u comes closest to identifying with the youth among later poets, but he has moved his charges from the capital to the frontier and make them into soldiers.

Thus, although Li Po is generally acclaimed as the poet who broadened the *yüeh-fu* by increasing the general themes (Lo, 1981, p. 235), a gradual

distancing of the original *yüeh-fu* *Stoff* can be traced in both the Wang Chao-chün and *shao-nien* poems. This distancing took place first in the addition of new titles and character roles, and later in complete departures from the original *yüeh-fu* theme in the hands of the T'ang poets. Ling-hu Ch'u's verse on Wang, which doesn't even allow a glimpse of her, and Tu Fu's first "Shao-nien hsing," in which the youth is at most a passive listener, illustrate the extent of these alterations. This process, along with the increasing didactic content of the new *yüeh-fu*, resulted in a type of verse hardly distinguishable from the *shih* or classical poem.

Some comments on the form of the T'ang *yüeh-fu* seem called for at this juncture. As noted above, the *yüeh-fu* popular tunes had all been lost by the T'ang. Among most of the literati the *chüeh-chü* was the major lyric form, while professional and court entertainers performed proto-*tz'u* lyrics (Chang, 1981, p. 496). These latter songs could be thought of as the "popular music" of the day and as such a direct descendent in function of the Six Dynasties *yüeh-fu*. In fact, one term for the early *tz'u* was *hsin yüeh-fu* 新樂府. Of the 25 T'ang *yüeh-fu* examined above, 18 are *chüeh-chü*, or approximate that form. As a result of this tradition from *yüeh-fu* tunes, to an imitative genre with no music (early T'ang), to a literati song form (high and mid T'ang), *yüeh-fu* grew virtually indistinguishable from *shih* or classical poetry. As this process continued, despite Li Po's efforts to the contrary, a number of topics — notably love and heroism<sup>27</sup> — were excluded from the genre. This exclusion seems to have taken place in the generation following An Lu-shan when poets turned to social criticism or to eremitic verse and parallels the rise of the *tz'u* closely (Lung, 1979, p. 1305), as poets sought stimulation from other popular verse forms (Fang, 1982). The confusion in terminology — *hsin yüeh-fu* indicated both elite, didactic verse and popular song — has resulted in the inclusion of many works by Wang Chien 王建 (c. 765-835), Po Chü-i 白居易 (772-846) and Liu Yü-hsi 劉禹錫 (772-842) in the *Yüeh-fu shih-chi* 樂府詩集 which are more probably *tz'u* (cf. Kuo, 1979, *ch.* 82 and Chang, 1981, p. 510). From this period on there is very little left of the traditional *yüeh-fu* as the following statistics compiled by Chang Hsiu-jung 張修蓉 (1981, p. 506) illustrate:

POET	Old Themes		New Yüeh-fu	
	Traditional Meaning	New Meaning	Subtotal	
Chang Chi	33	5	38	52
Wang Chien	31	0	31	175
Po Chü-i	38	1	39	194
Liu Yü-hsi	20	1	21	131
Li Ho	<u>34</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>72</u>
	156	9	165	624

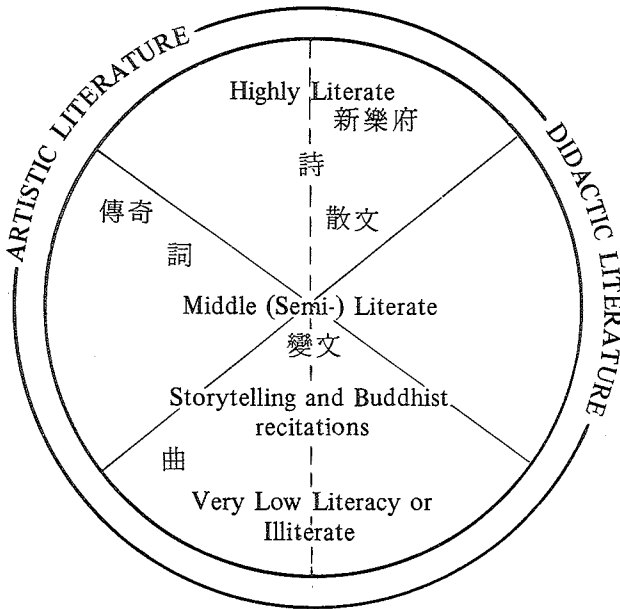
The genre, under pressures created by Li Po and Tu Fu, split, the themes of heroism and love taken over primarily by the *tz'u*, the didactic verse constituting the "new" *yüeh-fu* which gradually became indistinct from *shih*. This situation resulted in the bifurcation of "literary worlds" between the classical poem (*shih*) and the lyric (*tz'u*) noted by James J. Y. Liu (1974, pp. 146f). It also marked a turn of the literary kaleidoscope.

Indeed this break between Li Po, who in many ways is the culmination of the aristocratic Six Dynasty literary tradition, and Tu Fu, who represents the beginning of a new tradition, is reflected in other genres, as was noted in the synopsis of T'ang literary development presented above. For example, in the generation after Tu Fu had created the new *yüeh-fu*, the classical tale, neoclassical prose, and the lyric all appeared on the literary stage. In terms of both form and content there was a great deal of interchange between these new genres themselves, and between the new forms and their precursors. A peasant adversarius, for example, was a common feature of both neoclassical fictional pieces and of new *yüeh-fu*.<sup>28</sup>

From one point of view the forces which caused the traditional *yüeh-fu* to die in the eighth and ninth centuries are those which shaped literature in general for this period. First, a return to didacticism which led to a new *yüeh-fu*, and, second, a revival of the love lyric in the *chüeh-chü* and the *tz'u*. The processes can be viewed as a popularization of literature which culminated during the eleventh century.

The data base for this study is too limited — a perusal of one portion (two themes) of a single genre — for any independent conclusions. However, the suggested hypotheses from this study coincide closely with existing theories of larger literary changes and can therefore perhaps be said to strengthen them. Since a literary period (in our definition) is an era with no major

disruptions in the arrangement of genres, the changes noted between Early and High T'ang in the poems analysed do not seem sufficient to label these eras "literary periods." The decade of the An Lu-shan Rebellion looms as a watershed (Lin, 1960). For several centuries theretofore an "aristocratic literature" in its heyday can be sketched from extant literary records and works. The literary *yüeh-fu* and the literary system in general enjoyed a fairly stable existence. The centuries which follow the rebellion saw these two *yüeh-fu* themes and the literary stage in a state of flux, which resulted in the demise of the *yüeh-fu* and the rise of several new genres as the following graph attempts to depict:



Mid-ninth Century Literature  
(Provincial? Literature)

Like China, which was being transformed from an eclectic, oligarchic, Yellow River based society to one ruled by an absolute monarch, governed by a larger group of scholar-officials loyal to Confucianism alone, and which was increasingly dependent both socially and economically on Central China, this was an era of transition for literature. A new literary period would have to wait nearly a century for the establishment of the popular genres which were born in the ninth century – an establishment which corresponded to a great

degree with the return of political stability to China under the Sung in the eleventh century.

These conclusions are in concert with Fu Ssu-nien's (1919) concept of a literary period, which he calls the "Era of the Rise of New Literature" 新文學代興期, from about 750 to 1450, or Yu Kuo-en's (1960) identification of an era marked by many styles and new literary genres running from 800 through 1125. This era, which heralded "modern" genres and tastes, almost completely excluded or restructured traditional genres such as the *yüeh-fu*. It is thus no coincidence that the reign of the Hsüan-tsung Emperor (712-756), which encompassed the culmination of one great literary era and the onset of another in the guise of Li Po and Tu Fu, should have attracted the interest of so many scholars of Chinese literature. But the talents of the great poets of this political period should not be allowed to seduce literary historians into dividing the T'ang into periods based solely on the development of the classical poem (*shih*).

## Notes

I should like to thank Professor Lo Lien-t'ien 羅聯添, Ms. Chuang Po-hui 莊博蕙 and Ms. Wang Mei-ch'in 王美琴 for their assistance in preparing this paper (Professor Lo loaned me not only his expertise in matters T'ang, but also many volumes from his extensive personal library during a season when libraries in Taiwan are more often closed than open). Infelicities in explication or understanding the poems are due entirely to the obdurate optimism with which I approach classical Chinese poetry.

1. Although the original of the term "form fatigue" is *Formermüdung* coined by the German architect Adolf Göller in the 1880s (Wellek, 1979, p. 426), Chinese critics as early as the seventeenth century recognized this process — see Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武, *Jih-chih lu* 知錄, ch. 7, p. 70 (Wan-yu wen-k'u 萬有文庫 ed.).
2. These dates may vary and there are schemes with three or five eras, but all share the weakness of being based primarily on changes in the *shih* 詩 genre.
3. See Guillen, 1970, 1971 and Dubrow, 1982, pp. 91ff.
4. In this regard Cooper's (1973, p. 33) comments are of interest: "Li Po's ear was also without doubt informed by the 'urban pop music' of his day, in places with food, wine and cabaret, which were the contemporary equivalents of night clubs. Many of the girls in those places were foreign and brought new kinds of song and dance from Central Asia.
5. There seems to be two possible readings of the final line: "There was no way for her to communicate her regret" or "There is no way for them [Wang and the Emperor] to communicate their regret."
6. This type of woman may admittedly have as much to do with Li Po's personal predilections for active women as to any historical development of the theme.
7. The translations of these titles are borrowed or adapted from those used in James J. Y. Liu (1967).

8. See *Liang Han wen-hsüeh-shih ts'an-k'ao tzu-liao* 兩漢文學史參考資料. Rpt. Taipei, 1981, pp. 515-20 for the text of and notes to "Mo-shang sang."
9. Professor Lo Lien-t'ien has suggested that "shang-t'ou" 上頭 may be a Han dynasty colloquial term. *Kuei-chai* 桂釵 (cassia-word hairpin) is a term I have not been able to fix. It may be intended to be similar to *ching-chai* 荆釵 (thorn-wood hairpin), a depreciatory term for a wife which Lo-fu uses here herself.
10. In line one *ch'ing-yün* 青雲 is pars pro toto for *ch'ing-yün hsin* 青雲心. The Chang Terrace in line two marked a pleasure area in Han dynasty Ch'ang-an. Some critics want to connect the golden pellets of line five with those Emperor Wu of the Han provided his favorite, Han Yen 韓嫣 (cf. *Hsi-ching tsa-chi* 西京雜記, SPTK ed., ch. 4, fol. 3a), but there is no integral association apparent. The "jasper tower" of line 6 is a palace on the moon – here it very likely refers to a courtesan's bower.
11. Although this is not the place for such debate, it seems Li Po is less an unequivocal admirer of these youth than either James J. Y. Liu (1967) or Huang Yung-wu (1979A) would have us believe.
12. The Land of Drunkeness 醉鄉 was depicted in Wang Chi's 王績 (585-644) "Tsu-hsiang chi" 醉鄉記, see *Ch'üan T'ang wen* 全唐文, Taipei: Hwei wen, 1961, vol. 3, ch. 132, fol. 1a-2a. Frodsham (1970, p. 55) identifies Master Lu as Lu Yü, a favorite of Ch'en Shu-pao, the last emperor of the Ch'en dynasty who was famous for his love of wine and women.
13. These youth took on some of the characteristics of the young scholars who came to the capital to take the examinations probably by a contamination of this title with those of "Ch'ang-an tao" 長安道 or "Lo-yang tao" 洛陽道 – see below.
14. Hsin-feng was apparently a popular place for these youth, cf. Li Po's poem on Ch'in Wu-yang, Kuo, 1979, p. 951.
15. The five enemy leaders are literally the five *shan-yü*, khans of the Hsiung-nu.
16. According to Liu, 1967, p. 67, "the 'Five Mounds' refer to the five imperial masoleums near Ch'ang-an conventionally associated with wandering knights, and the 'Gold Exchange' refers to a section of the capital where many foreigners resided." However, the translation "Gold Exchange" seems inaccurate in its suggestion of a financial center. Several commentators note that the market is called "gold" 金 (or "metal") because of the association between this word and the West (this is Ch'ang-an's west market) in the *wu-hsing* 五行 scheme (Ch'ü, 1981, p. 437). On the associations between Five Mounds and knight-errants see also *Chung-wen ta-tz'u-tien* 中文大辭典, Rpt. Taipei: Chinese Cultural University Press, 1973, vol. 1, pp. 666, 262, 739.
17. *Hu-lu* 呼盧 means "to call black," five blacks being the best throw in dice, but a very difficult combination to make. This youth, however, would wager huge amounts of money on this low percentage roll with no trepidation or regret.
18. "Peaches and plums" here are friends whom he has "planted" or set up.
19. Some commentaries suggest that *chu-ken* 竹根 refers to the bamboo cup which is emptied. As others have noted, however, this reading reduces the overall cohesiveness of the poem.
20. A "park" in the Han dynasty imperial palace where hunts were often held.
21. The confluence of the Yellow and Huang 滄 Rivers in the extreme northwest border region.
22. "Bridge" here is that to be found on a musical instrument such as a zither.
23. The last line and indeed much of the language of these three poems seems to have been influenced by T'ang colloquial, as might be expected in work by a monk.

24. Eoyang, 1982, p. 12 believes the Wang Chao-chün story "took on a local color in the latter half of the T'ang."
25. If a source is needed, Toliver, 1981, p. 43 argues for the close relationship between social and literary evolution: "Certainly neither social nor literary forms go their own way without altering course upon contact with one another. The language of literature derives much of its force from what it gathers contemporaneously; the borrows the charters and the preshaped tendencies of surrounding institutions." cf. also Aldridge, 1973, p. 23. Gernet, 1982, p. 261, gives a clear statement of the historical theory that views the mid-eighth century as a watershed: "The rebellion of An Lu-shan and Shih Szu-ming may be regarded as one of the great turning points in the history of the Chinese world, for it was accompanied and followed by a clear change of direction in every domain. . . ."
26. Ironically, Li Po's greatest contribution was to increase the thematic scope of the *yüeh-fu* to include works about transcendents, heroes, military victories and nostalgia (Lo, 1981, p. 235), similar to Su Shih's contribution to the *tz'u* genre three centuries later; he thereby contributed to the demise of the traditional *yüeh-fu* by making it too much like the *shih*.
27. Frankel, 1976, p. 50 notes that "love is essentially a private affair and therefore not a proper subject to be communicated by the man of letters to his public audience. Thus love poetry, by and large, is outside the mainstream of Chinese literature, and is to be found in certain types of popular and semi-popular poetry, such as the anonymous *yüeh-fu* songs of the Six Dynasties." This assessment would seem to be more accurate for pre-T'ang than post-T'ang verse. Nevertheless, Frankel's observation is generally valid with regard to classical poetry (*shih*).
28. Cf., for example, the peasant narrators of Liu Tsung-yüan's 柳宗元 (773-819) "Pu-she-che shuo" 捕蛇者說 and Yüan Chen's 元稹 (779-831) "Lian-ch'ang kung-tz'u" 連昌宮詞

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