

## *The Classical Period*

The Analects, 13

The Shī, 13

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*Chinese poets worked in a tradition partly defined by the classical texts. The most esteemed of these was the Shī: the Poetry. The Shī are not of one date. Those of the courtiers, and the sacrificial hymns to the dynastic ancestors, are older than the 05th century. But in that century, when we have the evidence of other texts, we can see something new happening: the addition of poems, eventually making up half the Shī, which derive from popular culture. The Analects, the school text of the Confucian movement, lets us look on as these additions begin, are extended, and finally become part of the formally organized Shī repertoire.*

*It is this growth process that we will be observing in this chapter.*

*The final Shī repertoire, reached about the year 0330, had this form:*

- Fvng (“Airs”), Shī 1-160  
*Local songs and some later literary imitations*
- Yǎ (“Courtly”), Shī 161-234 and 235-265  
*Lesser (Syǎu Yǎ) and Greater (Dà Yǎ) court poems*
- Sùng (“Hymns”), Shī 266-300

*We will mostly be reading the Fvng poems, with a few from other sections; not in their canonical order, but in groups by theme:*

- *Love, both popular and elite: 6 poems*
- *Marriage, 0 poems*
- *War, 6 poems*
- *The High Jōu Tradition: 5 poems*

*The final total of 25 poems is not much (and the same must be said of every other chapter in this book), but may give a representative sample of what is going on.*

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*This section concludes with passages from two Dàuist texts, the Jwāngdǔ and the Dàu/Dǔ Jīng, whose advocacy of individual spontaneity and the simple life were highly influential in later ages, as an alternative to the duty of public service.*

*Analects*

## A Question from Dž-jāng (LY 5:19a)

(c0470)

*The Analects began when a group of Confucius's sayings preserved by the leading disciple Dž-gùng (they are now the core of LY 4) were followed by a set of dialogues in which various disciples ask "Confucius" about this or that point of school doctrine. In LY 5:19a, we read,*

Dž-jāng asked, Director Intendant Dž-wǎn thrice took office . . .

*Our interest is not in the answer, but in the questioner. Dž-jāng was a late addition to the Confucian circle; a refugee from the destruction of his state Chǎn in 0479. He brought with him the songs of his native Chǎn, and these songs inspired a fellow disciple, Dž-syà, to further explore popular song traditions.*

*Shī poems tend to be grouped in tens; so also the Chǎn poems, Shī 136-145. They have been much overwritten, but behind some of them there lurks what we may call a template song: one stanza, with the first and third lines fixed, and the second and fourth lines filled in by a succession of substitute words, making fun of some girl or guy, in the kind of teasing that often accompanies courtship in the villages, the blank lines being filled in by different persons in turn. Here are some examples of that underlying template. First, a girl skilled at repartee is repeatedly (and humorously) praised for that particular skill:*

## Shī 139 (Chǎn 4)

4444

The pond there by the Eastern Gate  
is very good for soaking flax.  
That lovely daughter of the Jì  
is very good at answer-backs . . .

*Or, to make fun of a series of girls in turn, we shift the girl's name to the rhyming position in line 2, where it will be varied, and we then have . . .*

## Shī 137 (Chǎn 2)

4444

Today's a day for festival;  
from south of town, here's our Miss Ywǎn.  
Her spinning she has left aside,  
and dances for us, fast as she can . . .

*That sort of game can go on as long as anyone can supply a girl and a rhyme. There is no high moral purpose to this; the young folk are simply having their fun, in a way still seen in the popular courtship customs of many peoples.*

## Analects

## A Criticism of Dž-syà (LY 6:13)

(c0460)

*Dž-syà, perhaps inspired by the folksongs shared in some idle moment by his junior colleague Dž-jāng, set out to systematically gather more of the same – not from any literary impulse, but in the thought that the songs of a state are an index of the moral fiber of that state, frivolous ones suggesting weakness, and thus vulnerability in the competition of each state to conquer all the others. and become the successor to the Jōu Kings. His efforts were known, and were disapproved of. The Analects passage in question reads:*

The Master said to Dž-syà, You should work on the tradition of the gentleman, not the tradition of the little people.

*The songs of Jvng, in particular, continued for centuries to scandalize readers with their outrageous impropriety. Bad enough that boys and girls are getting together without the proper formalities; this particular girl is so little committed to her guy that she will dump him for another if he does not cross the river to come to her:*

## Shī 87 (Jvng 13)

44446

If you fondly care for me,  
Hike up your robe and cross the Dzvñ;  
If for me you do not care,  
Are you then the only one?  
The craziest of crazy boys, is all you are!

If you fondly care for me,  
Hike up your robe and cross the Wai;  
If for me you do not care,  
Are you then the only guy?  
The craziest of crazy boys, is all you are!

*Shī*

## 86 (Jǜng 12)

2(4546)

*The most scandalous of the Jǜng poems could not be removed from the Shī (in antiquity, a public text is only rarely diminished), but they could be countered. Alongside the original ten Jǜng poems there were later placed ten parallel but less outrageous poems, restoring some semblance of proper behavior to the section. This one was juxtaposed to the unbearable Shī 87. Unlike the floozy at left, this girl registers distress when her swain fails to come; she is a one-guy girl.<sup>1</sup>*

*We do not have a folk tradition here; rather, a constructed one – constructed so as to make its neighbor poem more congenial to elite needs and sensibilities.*

Yonder madcap boy, ah,  
 Won't consent with me to meet, ah,  
     It is all because of you  
     That my food I cannot even eat, ah  
 Yonder madcap boy, ah,  
 Won't consent with me to share a bite, ah,  
     It is all because of you  
     That my rest I cannot get at night, ah

<sup>1</sup>Since there are still “crazy boys” around, the amelioration may seem very slight. Others of the later additions were more venturesome. That there were originally ten is likely; the “decade” pattern of the elite poems was probably a model for Dž-syà and his successors. The original ten were Shī 76, 77 (countered by the military 78), 81, 84, 85, 87 (countered by 86, above), 88, 89, 91, and 94. The ameliorative ten emphasized constancy (86, above), the domestic and dutiful, the ideal wife (75, 82, 90), the military and national (78, 79, 80), or the male viewpoint (92 on brothers, 93 on an amour as seen from the male side). There is also a portrait of an admirable elite woman (83). Here are the two sides of early culture as the Shī compilers saw it. As for the improper union of male and female, to document that was precisely Dž-syà' intention. He meant to suggest that Jǜng was an effeminate state, and thus of no more military consequence than the scarcely less effeminate Chǜn (previous page).

Shī

## 95 (J̀ng 21)

2(3434444 / 34445)

*These efforts at mitigation later ran into trouble.*

*The ameliorative ten poems were put in place, and the count stood at twenty. The problem of J̀ng had been solved. But the naughty J̀ng poems had their fans. Some very sophisticated later writer took up the naughtiest of the J̀ng poems, 78, and did an updated version of it. It features the meeting of a lass and a lad; it mentions the names of the two J̀ng rivers. But those rivers are now far behind. The atmosphere of this encounter is more that of dinner on some Chicago rooftop, with a scenic waterview down below, and the languorous middle movement of Gershwin's Concerto in F as background music.*

*The moralists had done what they could to rewrite, or recontext, the naughty original songs of J̀ng. Their efforts led to a balanced twenty-poem J̀ng section. They along came this one, the twenty-first, and undid all their good work.*

The Dzvn and eke the Wai  
 Are now at floodtime height, ah  
 The gallants and the girls  
 With sweet grass are bedight, ah  
 The girl says "Have you seen the sight?"  
 The gallant says "I have indeed,  
 But shall we see again the sight?"  
     Out beyond the Wai  
     One may roam delightfully;  
     And so the gallant and the girl  
     Exchange a bit of pleasantry,  
     And she presents him with a peony

The Dzvn and eke the Wai  
 Are flowing very clear, ah  
 The gallants and the girls  
 In multitudes appear, ah  
 The girl says "Have you seen the sight?"  
 The gallant says "I have indeed,  
 But shall we see again the sight?"  
     Out beyond the Wai  
     One may roam delightfully;  
     And so the gallant and the girl  
     Exchange a bit of pleasantry,  
     And she presents him with a peony

## 96 (Chí 1)

4444 4454 4545

*Pleasure in sex had its own public, and here is another couple.*

*Custom permitted, but did not officially approve, a youth's visit to a maiden, as long as he was discreetly gone before the morning. If this poem were in French, it would be called an aubade.*

*The girl's concern is for them not to be discovered. Dawn is here, and the danger is great. This is comically portrayed in each successive stanza: her urgings become steadily more urgent, and his responses become ever more unconcerned. He burrows down deeper into the bedclothes, symbolized acoustically by the rhymes: first -ing (a high open vowel), then -ang (lower and muted), finally -vng (central and muffled; those phonetic nuances are not reflected in this translation). Whoever wrote this thing had a lot of fun doing it.*

*There is formal closure in the third stanza, which does not duplicate the plot of the other two, but instead reverses the order of speakers: his invitation to further intimacies, and her angry refusal.*

'Tis cockcrow, end of night, now;  
 The dawn is full in sight, now.  
     'Tis not the cockcrow, end of night,  
     Just buzzing insects, faint and slight.

The east is growing light, now;  
 The dawn is brilliant quite, now.  
     'Tis not the east that now is growing light,  
     But rising moon that glows so bright.

    The flies are humming in their flight;  
     I'd share a dream beside you if I might . . .  
 You had best be going now,  
 Do not make me come to hate your sight.

Shī

## 73 (Wáng 9)

3(4444)

*Probably this little piece was actually collected in the old Jōu royal domain. It taps into a widespread story (for another appearance, see p80) of faithfulness unto death, or in this case, beyond death and in the grave. That outcome, in the popular mind, validates their love, even if it did not follow standard procedures. We have a member of high society, with court dress and fine carriage, and his girl. They are arguing about her failure to follow through with their planned elopement. He speaks first, and she responds at the end.*

Carriage rumbles, coursing there,  
 Official robes, beyond compare –  
 “How did I not think of you?  
 But I feared you would not dare.”

Carriage rumbles heavily,  
 Official robes, so fine to see –  
 “How did I not think of you?  
 But I feared you would not flee.”

In life, their common lot was none;  
 In death, the room they shared was one.  
 “You thought that I had not kept faith,  
 But I was faithful as the sun.”



## 17 (Shàu-nán 6)

444 2(555544)

*But even if the formalities were observed, and the bride price was paid, the girl herself might not much welcome the match that had been made for her. The contracting parties (the families, not the girl) might go to law to enforce the marriage they had arranged. This particular girl will have none of it.*

*The poem opens with an allusion to “dew on the path,” which in another Shī poem had been a guy’s excuse for not meeting his girl as he had promised. It continues with her rejection of the whole legal process.*

*Heavy on the path lay dew:*

*I came ere dawn to meet with you,*

*But you complained of too much dew.*

Who can say the sparrow has no beak?

How else into my chamber did it sneak?

Who can say you have no family?

How else could you this hurried trial seek?

But though this hurried trial you seek,

Your family cannot me bespeak.

Who can say the rat has got no jaw?

How else into my dwelling did it gnaw?

Who can say you have no family?

How else could you thus hale me to the law?

But though you hale me to the law,

Me after you you’ll never draw.

Shī

## 6 (Jōu-nán 6)

3(4444)

*So much fuss. What the world needs right now is a poem of proper marriage, where security is not based on personal affection, but on the bride's role in her future household. Here is that poem. It is an abstraction, it portrays the ideal wife. The nature-image (the peach flower) is followed from blossom to fruit, and in parallel, the woman is seen as wife, mother, and finally ancestress. The third stanza departs from the pattern of the first two, looking beyond marriage to lineage; it serves as a rhetorical conclusion. It is a happy auspice for the couple, and even moreso for the long future.*

*The Jōu-nán section (referring to the Lǚ domain of Jōu-gūng) does not contain poems of Lǚ. Its poems are instead meant to display the Jōu cultural ideal.*

Peachtree in its radiance –  
Brilliantly its flowers are spread;  
Yonder maid a-journeying  
Suits the man that she will wed.

Peachtree in its radiance –  
With fruit its boughs are bending low;  
Yonder maid a-journeying  
Suits the home to which she'll go.

Peachtree in its radiance –  
Its leaves shine thick and glossily;  
Yonder maid a-journeying  
Suits her future family.

## 23 (Shàu-nán 12)

2(4444) 555

*A brilliant late poet has complemented the preceding proper poem with a dramatic sermon on the evils of improper relations. This one was put, not in the Jōu-nan (Shī 1-11), but in the parallel Shàu-nán (Shī 12-25), representing the virtues of that other founding figure, Shàu-gūng. The girl is not raped, not at all: she cooperates in her own seduction. It is implied at the beginning that he left her afterward; the poem is a retrospection. The dead doe symbolizes her situation, which is one of social ruin..*

*The brilliance is in the last stanza, a flashback which takes us back to the moment of intimacy. It is one of the most vivid pieces of description in all the Shī. The previously regular form begins to dissolve already in the second stanza, where all the lines obsessively rhyme; then comes the final stanza. The meter changes, and we hear her voice for the first time, not protesting, but asking his carefulness: to be gentle to her, and to be sure not to alert anyone who may be nearby.*

In the wilds a dead doe lay,  
 With grasses white they bound her, oh:  
 There was a girl inclined to play,  
 A gallant got around her, oh  
 Scrubby bushes of the glade,  
 A dead deer lying in their shade,  
 The grasses white a cover made.  
 There was a girl as fair as jade –

*“Take it easy – gently, gently – hark!  
 Careful not to muss my kerchief – hark!  
 Careful not to make the puppy bark!”*

## Analects

## The Higher Connection (LY 8:3)

(0346)

*Dzṽngdž, the fourth head of the Analects school, took Confucian tradition into the big time, identifying it not only with its founder Confucius, but also with the founder of the Lǔ state itself. The virtue of Jōu Wǔn-wáng (“King Wǔn”) was thought to have prepared the way for the conquest of Shāng; his son Wǔ-wáng did the actual conquering. Wǔ-wáng soon died, creating a precarious situation for Jōu Jōu-gūng’s regency during the years when Wǔ-wáng’s successor Chǔng-wáng was still a minor; saved the new Jōu Dynasty. Jōu-gūng’s fief was the state of Lǔ, which was Confucius’ native state. It was a brilliant move to identify Confucius with the tradition of Lǔ, and from Dzṽngdž’s time onward, the Analects Confucians had a position at the Lǔ court.*

*The popular Shī collected by Dž-syà were not the only show in town; there existed a body of elite Shī, reflecting the aspirations and pleasures of the Lǔ court. With these poems, Dzṽngdž was familiar. On his deathbed, he quoted one of them. That passage reads as follows:*

When Dzṽngdž fell ill, he summoned the disciples at his gate, and said,  
Uncover my feet; uncover my hands. The poem says,

Tremblingly and full of fear,  
As at the edge of a deep abyss,  
As though I trod the thinnest ice . . .

But now and hereafter, I know I have come through safely, my little ones.

*He need not worry about assuming a ritually improper posture in his dying moments; he has safely negotiated the perils of life. It is not the ritual (the posture of the corpse) that counts: the dying man’s previous life has been one long prayer; one continuous effort, and by that he will be justified.*

*The lines quoted here are identical with three lines in Shī 195, a lament that the ruler follows bad advice. But the sense of the quote is closer to Shī 196 (with three nearly identical lines), on meeting a standard of conduct. This tells us that the final form of Shī 195-196 had not yet been reached as of this date.*



*Neither Dzṽngdž nor his elder son Dzṽng Ywǎn, who inherited Dzṽngdž’s position as head of the Analects school, had anything directly to do with the Shī. It was rather Dzṽngdž’s younger son, Dzṽng Shǔn (p22), who succeeded Dž-syà as the proprietor of the expanding Shī collection.*

## Analects

## A Court Lament (LY 9:15)

(0509)

The Master said, When I returned from Wèi to Lǚ, only then did the music get put right, and the Yǎ and Sìng find their proper places.

*Dz̄vng Sh̄vn, the younger son of Dz̄vngd̄z (p22), who took over the Sh̄r project after Dž-syà, added to Dž-syà's folk gatherings the previous body of elite poetry. the "Yǎ" and "Sìng," a contribution attributed to Confucius in the above quote. Dz̄vng Sh̄vn continued to gather local material, and from Wèi he brought back many of the 39 poems which now make up three Sh̄r sections: Bèi (19 poems), Ȳng, and Wèi (10 each). This one is a lament for the banished wife of a Wèi ruler; spoken by a companion who accompanies her partway on her journey. The last stanza, in a different form, gives the poet's own comment on the situation.*

## 28 (Bèi 3)

3(4444/44) 444444

Swallow, swallow, on the wing,  
In ragged line your feathers show;  
Yonder maid a-journeying:  
Far o'er the fields with her I go –  
I stare and stare, but see her not,  
And like the rain my tears do flow.

Swallow, swallow, on the wing,  
Darting back and forth you whirr;  
Yonder maid a-journeying:  
Far on her way, I go with her –  
I stare and stare, but see her not,  
And stand and weep and do not stir.

Swallow, swallow, on the wing,  
Both high and low your notes do tend,  
Yonder maid a journeying:  
Far to the south with her I wend –  
I stare and stare and see her not,  
And bitter pain my heart doth rend.

*The part of Lady J̄ng she took,  
With an undivided mind;  
Modest in her every deed,  
Always friendly, always kind,  
The favorite of her former lord,  
She cared for those he left behind.*

Shī

## 36 (Bèi 11)

2(4345)

*And here is something more folkish that Dzŷng Shīn also brought back from his travels. It is a complaint of the hardships of soldiering. In its present version it has only two stanzas, but in practice it would have been capable of endless extension. Such songs are a way to keep a line of marching men together. One thinks of the “cadence counts” of recent times, like “You had a good home, but you LEFT / your RIGHT,” mimicking the march itself. Nor should we think that their seemingly subversive quality implies unwillingness. Consider “I don’t want to join the bloody army; I don’t want to go into the war; I’d rather be at home, never more to roam, living on the earnings of a whore.” Shared complaint is a kind of cohesion, and cohesion is what keeps armies moving.*

*The first stanza is addressed to the sergeant:*

Worn down, alack; worn down, alack –  
 Why do we not go back?  
     Were it not because of you,  
     What would we be doing in the dew?  
 Worn down, alack; worn down, alack –  
 Why do we not go back?  
     Were it not to serve our Sire,  
     What would we be doing in the mire?

*And whatever may have been the distant origin of this military complaint, as it stands, its message is one of loyalty to the King.*

*Shī*

## 133 (Chín 8)

2(4444/44444)

*Among the many poems of war in the Shī are these two, not gathered in Chín, but invented to represent its well-known military ardor, at a time when Chín was not yet seen as the mortal threat which it later became. This one represents the camaraderie of the soldiers, the better-off young men helping out the less well-off:*

That you've no clothes, how can you say?  
 With you I'll share my robes so long;  
 The King is raising troops today,  
 And I've made ready a spearshaft strong:  
 Together we will march along

That you've no clothes, how can you say?  
 With you I'll share my shirts so fine;  
 The King is raising troops today,  
 And I've made sharp my halberd-tine:  
 Together we will form the line

That you've no clothes, how can you say?  
 To you a woven kilt I'll yield;  
 The King is raising troops today,  
 And I've made ready my leathern shield:  
 Together we will take the field

## 131 (Chín 6)

3(434444 / 344444)

*To die for one's lord, or die before him to prepare the way for him in death, was standard ancient practice. But the memory of the live burial of 170 men with Prince Mù of Chín in 0621 still caused shock. It was imagined this way:*

Crisscross fly the yellow birds,  
 Their nests at last they seek:  
 Who did follow Mu the Prince?  
 Dzigu's son Yam Zik  
 No one else but Yam Zik –  
 Among a hundred men unique  
     He stood beside the pit,  
     And trembled as he looked at it;  
     Azure Heaven there on high  
     Only our best will satisfy;  
     Could he but be ransomed, ah,  
     We'd let a hundred others die

Crisscross fly the yellow birds,  
 To their nests they throng:  
 Who did follow Mu the Prince?  
 Dzigu's son Jung Hong  
 No one else but Jung Hong –  
 Among a hundred none more strong  
     He stood beside the pit,  
     And trembled as he looked at it;  
     Azure Heaven there on high  
     Only our best will satisfy;  
     Could he but be ransomed, ah,  
     We'd let a hundred others die

Crisscross fly the yellow birds,  
 And seek their nests anew:  
 Who did follow Mu the Prince?  
 Dzigu's son Kam Hu  
 No one else but Kam Hu –  
 A hundred men he could outdo  
     He stood beside the pit,  
     And trembled as he looked at it;  
     Azure Heaven there on high  
     Only our best will satisfy;  
     Could he but be ransomed, ah,  
     We'd let a hundred others die



Shī

## 167 (Syău Yă 7)

3(4444/4444) 4444/4444

*This piece supposedly describes an ancient encounter with the non-Sinitic Syén-yŭn tribes. Its last stanza is the soldier's homecoming – not as accomplished, but only as something in progress; still difficult and uncertain.*

The ferns we hack, the ferns we hack,  
 The ferns do grow so great, ah  
 We shall go back, we shall go back,  
 But the year will then be late, ah  
     Away from home and family  
     Because of the Syén-yŭn it must be  
     Duty leaves no moment free  
     Because of the Syén-yŭn it must be

The ferns we hack, the ferns we hack,  
 The ferns are tender-leaved, ah  
 We shall go back, we shall go back,  
 But my heart is truly grieved, ah  
     My grieving heart within doth burn  
     I hunger and I thirst by turn  
     Our term of service is not done  
     No messenger of home can learn

The ferns we hack, the ferns we hack,  
 The ferns are hard and dry, ah  
 We shall go back, we shall go back,  
 But the year is almost by, ah  
     The King's affairs I cannot slack  
     Duty forbids me doff my pack  
     My grieving heart within is sore,  
     From the campaign I come no more

*Long ago we left, ah  
 The willows trailed full gracefully  
 Now we come again, ah  
 The snow doth blow most bitterly  
 I trudge the highway sluggishly  
 Now thirstily, now hungrily  
 My heart is wounded inwardly  
 No one knows my misery*

## 31 (Shàu-nán 6)

5(4444)

*The long-service soldiers suffered more than most. The first stanza of this piece is the original assignment; in the second comes a further duty. Their return is delayed in the third stanza. The fourth is a brilliant flashback to the soldier's marriage; in the fifth he laments that it did not last for this lifetime, since she, thinking him dead after so many years, has remarried.*

We take the field to rumbling drum,  
In battle we do overcome;  
We build the earthen walls of Tsáu –  
But then for the south, new orders come.

With Sūn Dž-jùng we thither hied,  
Both Ch'yn and Sùng we pacified;  
But even then we came not back –  
Our hearts are sore unsatisfied.

Briefly we pause, in camp we stay,  
But now our horses all do stray;  
And we go seeking after them,  
In that forest, far away.

“In death or life, I will be true,  
Together, apart; what e'er ensue;  
I take your hand in mine, in pledge  
Of growing old along with you.”

*Alas for that security!  
Me she never thought to see;  
Alas, for what we once had said –  
She did not keep her faith with me.*

Shī

## 208 (Syǎu Yǎ 48)

3(444 / 44) 44444

*But all questions are answered by the solemnity of ritual; a memorial service for a general who had fallen on a campaign against the tribes of the River Hwái.*

*In the fourth stanza of this poem, the pattern of the preceding three is broken, the music swells louder, and a last memorial statement concludes. No one who has played what survives of this music (somewhat preserved in Japanese gagaku) can fail to recognize what happens in this fourth stanza: volume increases, tension builds – and then the beat breaks, and the music ends. This coming-apart effect, this sense of dissolution, would have made a strong impression on listeners.*

*The last word has been spoken.*

Strike bells, and let them now be played:  
The River Hwái a flood has made,  
My heart within is sore dismayed;  
Peerless was that gentleman –  
His memory will never fade.

Strike bells, and let them loud resound:  
The River Hwái is streaming round,  
My heart within feels grief profound;  
Peerless was that gentleman –  
His like will nevermore be found.

Strike bells and beat the standing drum:  
The Hwái has islands, three in sum,  
My heart within with grief is numb;  
Peerless was that gentleman –  
Such prowess ne'er again shall come.

*Strike bells in fullest harmony:  
Strike cithern and strike psaltery:  
Syrinx and chime let doubled be:  
In meter strict, in meter free,  
In flute notes blended perfectly.*

## 184 (Syāu Yǎ 24)

2(4444 44444)

*War was how the state expanded its territory. But there was another side. The Chí statecraft texts which we know as the Gwǎndž were fully aware of the agricultural basis of state prosperity. They also recognized the need to keep the population happy, lest they depart for other lands, leaving their fields untilled. Equally, it was hoped to attract the farmers of other states to settle on Chí land.*

*In this poem the motif of mobile population is expressed, not in terms of farmers, but in terms of the artisans who could take their tools with them.*

*The cry of the bird suggests the artisan's plaint, in a situation seemingly favorable but in fact full of "thornwood." A skilled craft like jade carving could be practiced anywhere, working with the stones of "other hills."*

In ninefold marsh the crane-bird trills,  
its voice is heard upon the moor;  
Fishes hide in watery lair,  
or they linger by the shore.

Pleasant is that garden there,  
with timber-trees all planted fair,  
but all beneath, the deadwood spills,  
and the stones of other hills  
would suffice for making drills

In ninefold marsh the crane-bird trills,  
its voice is heard upon the air;  
Fishes linger by the shore,  
or they hide in watery lair.

Pleasant is that garden there,  
with timber-trees all planted fair,  
but all beneath, the thornwood fills,  
and the stones of other hills  
would suffice to show our skills.

### The Sacred Mission (LY 9:5)

(c0405)

*Dzṽngdž, in his own Analects chapter, LY 7, had identified Jōu culture as central to Confucian self-identity. LY 9, by Dzṽngdž's son Dzṽng Ywáén, goes further: Confucius has a divine mission to preserve Jōu culture; his destiny is to recreate it under Lǔ auspices, and that destiny protects him from earthly perils.*

*That culture itself was increasingly defined in terms of a fixed tradition based on written texts. The word Wńn, which defines the civilian and not the military side of life, was the posthumous epithet of the first Jōu King, Wńn-wāng, who at this time was thought to embody the best of Jōu culture. The phrase sṽ wńn, which in this passage means "this culture," could also mean "these writings." We will meet it in that sense on p86, in the immortal "Orchid Pavilion Preface" of Wáng Syi-jř.*

The Master was given cause for fear in Kwáng. He said "King Wńn having passed away, does not culture reside in me? If Heaven is going to destroy this culture 斯文, how could a later person have come to share in it? If Heaven is *not* going to destroy this culture, what can the men of Kwáng do to me?"

Shī

## 154A (Bīn 1; “Seventh Month”)

44 5544 55444

*The time is around 0330, and the Shī are in final editing. They will be first referred to as the “Three Hundred Shī” in LY 13:5 (c0322). The overall theme is the correctness of Jōu tradition, as applied to all facets of life: fidelity in love, loyalty in war, morality in all of life. The Jōu-nán, as we have seen (p20), standing at the head of the Fvng, was there to represent the Jōu ideal. The Bīn section, the last one and thus the tail of the Fvng, has a similar purpose, from the other end: it represents the ancient Jōu homeland, and thus the origin of its values.*

*Those values, as we here meet them, are agricultural. The first Bīn poem combines many calendars of “works and days,” as Hesiod calls them.. There several examples in Gwändž and other early texts; one divides the year into 72 five-day segments, each with its assigned task. Assigned, of course, from above: this is a society of control. But the rural picture which they present, however regimented, is not without its charm. Here is the first stanza of this long piece.*

*The rhymes are pseudo-archaic; they are here represented by assonances.*

Seventh month, the Fire Star low;  
 Ninth month, we give winter clothes.  
 Days of the First: biting winds appear;  
 Days of the Second: cold is now severe.  
 Without warm clothes, for us to wear,  
 How could we get through the year?  
 Third month, to his plow each plowman sees,<sup>2</sup>  
 Fourth month, and the plowmen lift their feet.<sup>3</sup>  
 With wife and child in company,  
 We take food to the southern fields;<sup>4</sup>  
 The field inspector is very pleased.

<sup>2</sup>Other Bīn poems show excitement at the efficiency of the new iron plows.

<sup>3</sup>Go out to the fields to do their spring plowing (so the commentaries).

<sup>4</sup>Everyone either plows or supports the plowmen.

## 161 (Syău Yă 1)

44444444 44444<sup>2</sup>44<sup>2</sup>4 4444444<sup>3</sup>4

*The Jōu heritage is stressed in many of the Shī poems, especially in the Yă. We have just met the last poem in the Fvng; here is its neighbor: the first poem in the Yă. It introduces and sets the tone for that section. The theme is social propriety. In particular, these high-level banquet guests are expected to instruct the host in “the ways of Jōu.” Even at these moments of leisure, the virtues of Jōu are to be constantly borne in mind.*

*There are three eight-line stanzas, each tending to divide into two quatrains. All lines are tetrameter; with metrically uncounted incipits in the last two stanzas.*

“Yōu” and “yōu” the deer do cry,  
Feeding on wisps of meadow rye;  
I have got auspicious guests,  
Syrinx and psaltery do ply.  
Syrinx does ply, its reeds shrill high,  
With offering-baskets they reply -  
But those for me who truly care  
Will show me the ways of Jōu gone by

“Yōu” and “yōu” the deer do cry,  
Feeding on shoots of meadow cress;  
I have got auspicious guests,  
The fame of their virtue limitless.  
They treat the people with tenderness –

*A gentleman*

on them could pattern, could acquiesce  
I have got the best of wine:

*Auspicious guests*

on it will feast in happiness.

“Yōu” and “yōu” the deer do cry,  
Feeding on bark of meadow tree;  
I have got auspicious guests  
Plying cithern and psaltery.  
Plying cithern and psaltery  
The concord echoing endlessly  
I have got the best of wine:

*With it I shall give*

auspicious guests satiety

*Shī*

*The Sùng or sacrificial hymns include some brief pieces, often unrhymed, which might be intoned during a sacrifice or performed as mime-dances on solemn occasions. Many ask blessings from the Jōu founders, Kings Wún and Wǔ. This one describes what is taking place as the ancestral spirit comes to inhabit the body of present ruler, who is offering the sacrifice. The first stanza is the preparation, the second describes the response of the spirits.*

## 266 (Jōu Sùng 1)

4444 4545

Awesome is the shrine so pure,  
 Impressive are those looking on;  
 In their ranks, the officers,  
 Hymning the virtue of Kingly Wún  
 From Heaven the response has come –  
     All about they go, within the shrine,  
 Manifest and bright they are,  
     Bringing blessings unto men, ah

*But Jōu was not all. There was a parallel, and originally separate, tradition. Food is the basis of life, and the gods of the basic food grain (in China, it is millet) are accordingly revered. Thus there were also hymns to the Lord of Millet, Hòu Jì,<sup>5</sup> now seen as the ancestor of the Jōu people, back in the ancient realm of Syà. Again there are two stanzas, though they do not function as do those of the poem above, they are better described as invocation followed by prayer.*

## 275 (Jōu Sùng 10)

4444 4455

Accomplished, ah! is Millet Lord  
 Worthy match with Heaven afar;  
 For all the folk providing food,  
 In every way the most supreme.  
 From him do all of us derive,  
 Whom God appointed nourisher;  
 No boundary has his domain so vast,  
 Making permanent the Age of Syà.

<sup>5</sup>“Lord of Millet,” Hòu Jì 后稷, would normally be Jì Hòu, but the grammar was different in ancient times. So also 時夏, “of Syà the time” = “the Age of Syà.” These grammatical differences were of course known to later writers, who could easily imitate them if they wished to compose something in an ancient style.



*Dào/Dé Jīng*

Against War (DDJ 31)

(c0312)

*In 0343, Chǐ with its version of the new-style army shocked the Chinese world by achieving a decisive victory over neighboring Ngwèi, – and in Ngwèi territory. Next year, a Lǚ meditation school going back to the days of Confucius went public, announcing a new art of minimalist government, which among other things was opposed to the use of force both within and outside the state.*

*At the age of thirty, Lǐ Dān (later, as an old man, called “Lǎudž”) succeeded to the headship of that meditation group; his pronouncements make up most of the rest of the Dào/Dé Jīng. In 0312, Chǐ unwisely sought to annex Yēn, its northern neighbor. A coalition of five other states responded, driving Chǐ out of Yēn and back into its own territory. The DDJ response was to condemn the use of arms: they have no proper use at all.*

Weapons are implements of ill omen,  
 but if one cannot but employ them, the quickest is the best.  
 Do not regard them as things of beauty.  
 If you regard them as things of beauty,  
 it is the same as taking pleasure in the killing of men.  
 And if you take pleasure in the killing of men,  
 you will never be able to achieve your ambition in the world.

*Jwāngdž*

### The Great Bird (JZ 1:1)

(c0248)

*Another influential classical text is the zany Jwāngdž, whose charm is that it opposes the dedication to public service which was the final message of the Shī. It does so by ridiculing that dedication: the times are simply too dangerous to serve in government. The Jwāngdž preaches withdrawal, including the ultimate withdrawal to some higher realm, above all such worldly strivings. The basic expression of this ideal was placed at the head of all the Jwāngdž writings.*

*Some doubted that leaving the world, in that or any other way, was an answer to the problems of the world; others doubted that there was any such alternative. The latter are represented here by the unbelieving little birds. As for the great bird, symbolic of high ambition, we will hear of it again as the great swan of p45.*

*A long section of later-added commentary has been removed from this piece.*

In the northern deep there is a fish whose name is Kūn. The size of the Kūn is I know not how many thousand leagues. It transforms itself into a bird whose name is the Phoenix. The span of the Phoenix is I know not how many thousand leagues. When it launches into flight, its wings are like clouds draped across the heavens. This bird, when the ocean currents shift, sets out for the southern deep.

The cicada and the dove laugh at this; they say “When we rise up and fly toward yonder green elm tree, sometimes we don’t make it, but drop back to earth again. What is all this about going nine myriad leagues to the south?”

## The Fish in the Háu (JZ 17:7)

*Hwèidž was a real person. In the late layers of the Jwāngdž he becomes Jwāng Jōu's opponent in metaphysical matters, such as the question of knowledge.*

*In this story, he is the too logical thinker; he cannot get past his idea that it is impossible to know another. Against him, Jwāng Jōu asserts the possibility of intuitive identification. We know because we know. The end is a verbal quibble: Hwèidž has asked how Jwāng Jōu knows, a question that assumes that such knowledge exists to be inquired about. The turning of the sophist's own weapon against him is a moment to be savored by the understanding reader.*

*The larger moral is that knowledge is not gained through the senses, or by gradual effort, as the Confucians assert. It is intuitive.*

Jwāngdž and Hwèiž were wandering above the weir on the Háu. Jwāngdž said, The minnows go wandering at their ease – this is what fish like. Hwèidž said, You are not a fish; from where do you know what fish like?" Jwāngdž said, You are not me; from where do you know that I don't know what fish like? Hwèidž said, I am not you, and I certainly don't know you. You are certainly not a fish, and so the proof that you don't know what fish like is complete. Jwāngdž said, Let's go back to the beginning. You said "from where" do you know what fish like, so you already knew *that* I knew it when you asked me. And as for where I knew it from – I knew it from being here above the Háu."

*Jwāngdǔ***Jwāngdǔ's Wife Died (JZ 18:2)**

*Understanding also took a more personal form. This piece features the usual eccentricities, for which the Jwāngdǔ, and its friends in later times, are famous. Beneath it all is something poignant: ascending – not to some height, as did the Great Bird, but to a higher understanding of the universal natural process.*

*Not all Jwāngdǔ's admirers in later times could reach that particular height. among them Pān Ywè of the Six Dynasties (p71).*

Jwāngdǔ's wife died. Hwèidǔ went to mourn for her. Jwāngdǔ was then sitting with his legs stretched out, beating on a bowl and singing. Hwèidǔ said, You lived with her; you raised children with her; you grew old in body along with her. It's bad enough that when she dies you don't weep for her. Isn't it a little too much to beat on a bowl and sing?

Jwāngdǔ replied, Not so. To be sure, when she had just died, how could I but feel distressed? But then I thought back to how at the beginning she had no life, and not only had no life but had no form, and not only had no form but had no spirit. Then there was a change, and she had spirit. The spirit changed, and she had form. The form changed, and she had life. Now she has changed again, and come to die. This is just like the seasonal progression of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. She has become weary, and for a moment has gone to rest in some great room. Were I to follow noisily after her with weeping, she herself would think I did not understand the ways of fate. Therefore I stopped.

*Dàu/Dv' Jīng*

Making the Best of Loss (DDJ 80)

0253

*In 0254, Chǔ had conquered half of Lǚ, making its Prince a mere puppet. The proprietor of the Dàu/Dv' Jīng, who along with his headship of that group was an advisor to the Lǚ Prince, did his best to put a good face on this loss. He argues that the state is better off small, that reversion to a simple livelihood is advantageous. He portrays a people so content that they never seek to leave their native villages: a stable and thus a politically dependable population. For this, he draws heavily on an earlier Jwāngdž picture of the ideal society.*

*This bit of apologia has been very successful as a picture of the ideal society. Its sounds of neighbor dogs are evoked in that idyllic sense by Táu Chyén (p94).*

Make the country small 小國, and make its people few 寡民. Let there be mechanical contrivances but they are not used; let the people regard death as a serious matter and not serve afar. Though there be boats and carts, no one will ride them; though there be arms and armor, no one will array them. Let people again knot cords and use them [instead of writing]. Let them find their food sweet, their clothes fine, their dwellings comfortable, their customs good. Let neighboring villages be within view, and let the dogs and chickens be heard back and forth, yet people grow old and die without ever going from one to another.

*Analects*

## Answering the Hermits (LY 18:6)

(c0272)

*But there is also a question of duty. The more dangerous the times, the more is dedication needed. Many passages in the Jwāngdž ridicule the idea of service, pointing out the dangers, and laughing at the Confucians who do not see the point. In three passages in LY 18, the Analects people made reply, showing the Jwāngdž hermits to be cowards (18:5) and without any sense of public duty (18:7). In 18:6, the Analects responds to passages in JZ 9 and 12. It invents two hermits with their return to nature (the mud and mire of farming), who have abandoned the world of men, where the problems arise, and where alone they can be solved. How to get over the crisis was unclear; but one could seek it; one could “ask about the ford.” The very difficulty of action creates the duty to act. This rejoinder so shamed some Jwāngdž writers that they added new stories in which Confucius is an authoritative teacher. They had the decency to accept at least some obligation to other people. Well they might; this is the most eloquent statement of the duty of man to other men that was ever written.*

*For an allusion to this passage by Táu Chyén, who himself celebrated the pleasures of a life safely apart from the troubles of the times, see again p94.*

Tall-in-the-Mud and Bold-in-the-Mire were plowing together. Confucius passed by, and sent Dž-lù to inquire of them about the ford. Tall-in-the-Mud said, Who is that who is driving? Dž-lù said, It is Kǔng Chyōu. He said, Would that be Kǔng Chyōu of Lǔ? He said, It would. He said, Oh, *he* knows the ford.

He inquired of Bold-in-the-Mire. Bold-in-the-Mire said, Who are *you*? He said, Jùng Yóu. He said, Would that be the follower of Kǔng Chyōu of Lǔ? He replied, Yes. He said “A thing overflowing – all the world is such, and who is going to change it? And rather than follow one who withdraws from men, why not follow one who withdraws from the whole age?” And he went on plowing without further pause.

Dž-lù went and told of it. Our Master said consolingly, Birds and beasts cannot be flocked together with. Were I not a follower of men, with whom then should I take part? If the world possessed the Way, Chyōu would not be taking part in trying to change it.