THE TZ'U POETRY OF CH'EN WELI-SUNG (1626-1682):
SELECTED TRANSLATIONS AND CRITICAL COMMENTARY

by

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The Wade-Giles system of romanization is used throughout this thesis to render Chinese names and words. The only exceptions are those geographical names commonly romanized according to other systems. Dates of birth and death, when ascertainable, follow the first appearance of a person's name.

The difference in line length of any given poem is indicated by indentation in the translation. In other words, the shorter the line, the greater the indentation.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Biographical Sketch</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The Lyric Poetry of Ch'En Wei-Sung</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Conclusions</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

Ch'ien Wei-sung belonged to a family active in the political and literary life of China. Educated in the classical tradition, his close association with his father and men of the older generation schooled him in the questions of the time. Drafted into the service of the Manchu court, he assisted in the compilation of official histories.

Hailed as a literary master of his time, he was admired for his talents in the composition of classical verse and classical and p'ien-wen (parallel) prose forms. His major efforts, however, were concentrated on the tz'u, or Lyric Meters. Familiar with the conventions and intricacies of this form, his tz'u reveal him to have been a sensitive individual, concerned with man, nature, and the past, who clung to the traditional aspects of Chinese political and social life.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Literature is one of the great contributions of Chinese civilization. In its three thousand year history, Chinese literature has developed such genres as artistic prose, drama, the novel, the short story, and the most esteemed and studied genre of all, poetry. Much studied though Chinese poetry is, large areas deserving of serious scholarly inquiry remain relatively untouched.

Serious omissions in the formal study of Chinese poetry, as in the study of Chinese literature as a whole, are many. One such is the narrow focus of previous scholarship. The poetry of the classical period, from its beginnings in the Chou period (ca. 1122-221 B.C.) to the efflorescence of popular and polite verse in the T'ang and Sung dynasties (618-1279), has commanded the serious attention of critics and scholars alike for centuries. Except for that of the twentieth century, Chinese poetry written subsequent to the thirteenth century has been largely neglected. Critical scholarship of the literature of the intervening centuries has been largely concerned with the development of the drama and the vernacular novel.
Another limitation in the study of Chinese poetry derives from a tendency to concentrate on its historical and biographical aspects, mostly to the exclusion of literary considerations. Much attention has been given to the chronology of Chinese poetry, to relating a particular form or style to a particular period of time in Chinese history, and to concentrating on a few major poets of each period and their individual contributions to and departures from the tradition. Only recently have comparative studies of structure, form, and technique begun to appear and little emphasis has been given to verbal analysis.

One particular area of Chinese versification relatively untouched is that of the tz'u, or Lyric Meter. Like most Chinese poetry, the beginnings and growth of this form through the Sung dynasty have been subjected to detailed examination. Even so, there is a paucity of criticism and translation of early tz'u, and post-Sung tz'u has been largely disregarded.

Until recently, it was a commonplace of Chinese critical judgment that after the Sung dynasty no great tz'u was written, though the form continues to be cultivated by many poets. This attitude is reflected in critical works and anthologies, where little attention is given to the tz'u after the thirteenth century.
Although there has been comparatively little study of the history and cultivation of the Lyric Meter of the last seven hundred years, an abundance of verse in this form was written during that period, and especially during the last dynasty of the imperial era. One poet of that era is Ch' en Wei-sung.

Ch' en not only produced an abundance of tz'u, but was also prolific in the shih and classical p'ien-wen prose styles. A member of the lettered class, he traveled widely and was known to many of the great scholars, officials, and men of letters of his time. He cultivated close friendships among other known writers, and his worth as a poet was recognized and admired by his contemporaries. That his influence on his times was great is attested to by the fact that he became known as the leader of a school of tz'u poetry, and as a master poet of the seventeenth century.

In the following study, selected poems in the Lyric Meter mode from the brush of Ch' en Wei-sung are translated and examined with respect to their external and internal features. External here refers to the physical world of the poet, the world of actions, events, objects and natural scenes. The internal refers to the emotions, feelings, memories and thoughts of the poet. An analysis of these features permits a glimpse of how the poet
approaches his subject and leads the reader into his world. The reader thus learns that the poet often begins with a generalized description of the external scene, then moves toward a consideration of the internal world, expressing the thoughts or feelings aroused by the world he sees, and thus employing the physical environment to evoke a mood.

No attempt will be made to analyze the general structural features of the poem as to rhyme and tonal patterns, nor is specific attention paid to allusions found therein. The emphasis instead is placed on a verbal analysis of the poems, and specifically the use and function of image and symbol.

It is recognized that such a brief, introductory study cannot fully assess the literary record of Ch' en Wei-sung. And, as the first western language study of the man Ch'en Wei-sung and his poetry, and lacking any general study of the tz'u of the Ch' ing dynasty, or, for that matter, any Japanese or Chinese works of a monographic nature on the poet, this present undertaking is exploratory, and comparisons with other poets of the same period have not been possible. Similarly, all conclusions are necessarily preliminary and tentative, although it is hoped that this initial exploration of the poetic world of the poet will provide the basis for a more extended, detailed examination in the future.
CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The Ch'ing dynasty poet Ch'en Wei-sung descended from a long line of scholar-officials and literary men. His family traced their history to a Sung dynasty scholar, Ch'en Fu-liang (1137-1203). 1

Ch'en Fu-liang was a man of Yung-chia, Chekiang. A chin-shih, or holder of the third, or highest, examination degree, he held several official positions, among which were that of Assistant Department Director of the Ministry of Civil Appointments (Li-pu-yuan wai-lang), and that of a secretary in the Grand Secretariat (Chung-shu she-jen). 2 He was noted for being an expert on the Ch'in, Han, and Three Kingdoms periods (ca. 200 B.C.-A.D. 300). Besides his own poetic works, Ch'en Fu-liang wrote


2. Sung-shih, Ssu-pu pei-yao Edition, 434/9a-10b. Hereafter, references to works in this collectanea will be cited as SPPY. For discussion of the various offices and their duties mentioned in this thesis, see Brunnert and Hagelstrom, Present Day Political Organization of China (New York, 1910).
commentaries on the Ch'\un-ch'i\u (Spring and Autumn Annals) and the Tso-chuan, both Chou dynasty works.\textsuperscript{3}

It is not the purpose of this thesis to reconstruct the Ch'\en family history. Therefore, no attempt has been made to discover the names and activities of ancestors living between 1200 and 1500. This project is reserved for a more extensive study in the future.

The grandfather of Ch'\en Wei-sung was Ch'\en Yu-t'\ing (1565-1635) of I-hsing, Kiangsu, a man very active politically during the last years of the Ming dynasty. A chin-shih of 1595, he successively held the posts of Magistrate (Chih-hsien) in the three hsien (counties) of Kuang-shan in Honan, T'ang-shan in Hopei, and Hsiu-shui in Chekiang. He was later promoted to the Censorate and was for a time in charge of the Salt Bureau in Ho-tung, Shansi. Ch'\en Yu-t'\ing also held other offices such as that of the Director of the Court of Judicature and Revision (Ta-li ssu-ch'\ing), that of Salt Censor (Hsun-yen yu\u-shih), and that of Senior Vice President of the Ministry of Revenue (Hu-pu tso-shih-lang).\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{3} Loc. cit.

\textsuperscript{4} Ming-shih, SPPY, 254/5a.
In his later life, Yu-t'ing became active in and a leader of the Tung-lin Party. This party grew out of the Tung-lin or Eastern Grove Academy founded in 1604 by Ku Hsien-ch'eng (1550-1612), a government official dismissed for his outspoken criticism of the court. A private academy originally founded to provide a forum where scholars and officials could discuss the philosophical and political problems of the time, its senior members were mainly officials who had been dismissed from government and were anxious to find ways by which corruption in government could be eliminated. The Tung-lin movement thus represented a kind of moral crusade, the aim of which was to restore control of the government to honest and incorruptible men. Its spokesmen argued that the age-old Confucian standards had been disregarded and government opportunists positions were being taken over by immoral opportunists. By 1610, the Tung-lin Academy was openly referred to as the Tung-lin Party.

As a member of this partisan group, Ch'en Yu-t'ing was very outspoken in his criticism of the government. When the conflict between the Tung-lin Party and the eunuch

5. Chao Erh-sun, Ch'ing-shih kao (Hong Kong, n.d.) Lieh-chuan 506/5b.

faction, led by the powerful figure Wei Chung-hsien (1568-1627), reached a peak, Yü-t'ing and others were dismissed from their posts. However, he was later reinstated and eventually rose to occupy the post of Senior President of the Censorate (Tso-tu yü-shih) and later still that of Junior Guardian of the Heir Apparent (T'ai-tzu shao-pao).

Ch'en Chen-hui (1605-1656), one of the three sons of Ch'en Yü-t'ing, was born at the family home in I-hsing, Kiangsu. Although lacking a high scholarly degree, he rose to prominence in the Fu-she Party. This party carried on the traditions of the Tung-lin Party and its membership included descendants of prominent Tung-lin men. Hence it was known as the "little Tung-lin." Along with his close friend and fellow student Wu Ying-chi (1594-1645), Chen-hui drafted a manifesto entitled Liu-tu fang-luan kung-chieh (A Proclamation to Guard Against Disorder in the Capital). This manifesto opposed the position taken by Juan Ta-ch'eng (1587-1646), a politician, dramatist.

8. Hummel, I, 82.
11. Ibid., I, 52-53.
and poet, who allied himself with Wei Chung-hsien in order to gain a coveted post, and denounced his alliance with the eunuch faction.\textsuperscript{13} Members of the Fu-she Party were arrested and Chen-hui was imprisoned, but the case against him was ultimately dismissed. He afterwards returned to his native place where he lived in seclusion until his death.\textsuperscript{14}

Included among the works of Ch'\textsuperscript{\textasciitilde}en Chen-hui are such titles as \textit{Huang-Ming y\textasciitilde-lin} (Discourse on the Imperial Ming), \textit{Hs\textasciitildeeh-ts\textasciitilde'en chi} (Snow-covered Peaks), and the \textit{Shan-yang Lu} (Notes on Shan-yang), which consists of short biographical sketches of his friends. Other works are \textit{Ch\textasciitildeu-y\textasciitildean tsa-p'ei} (Autumn Garden Miscellany), a work concerned with such subjects as tea, orchids, mushrooms, and hazel nuts, and the \textit{Shu-shih ch\textasciitilde'i-tse} (A Record of Seven Events), a narrative of seven major events that took place in his lifetime.\textsuperscript{15}

Ch'\textsuperscript{\textasciitilde}en Chen-hui had four sons: Ch'\textsuperscript{\textasciitilde}en Wei-mei; Ch'\textsuperscript{\textasciitilde}en Wei-y\textasciitildeeh who achieved some fame as a man of letters; Ch'\textsuperscript{\textasciitilde}en Tsung-shih (b. 1643), who served as a magistrate of An-p'\textasciitilde'ing, Chihli, and later as a second-class secretary

\textsuperscript{13} Chao, loc. cit. See Hummel, I, 398-399, for a biography of Juan Ta-ch\textasciitilde'eng.

\textsuperscript{14} Hummel, I, 83.

\textsuperscript{15} Loc. cit.
of the Board of Revenue; and his most famous son, the subject of this thesis, Ch' en Wei-sung. 16

Ch' en Wei-sung was born in I-hsing on January 3, 1626. 17 In keeping with the family tradition and the late Ming—early Ch'ing renaissance in classical learning and letters, he received a standard classical education. Wei-sung was a very close companion to his father and this association provided many opportunities to listen to the discussions and debates of learned men. He became well acquainted with his father's associates and impressed them so much that he was thereafter welcomed to their discussions and began to associate regularly with men of the older generation. 18

After attaining the rank of hsiu-ts'ai, or first degree, Wei-sung traveled widely, visiting friends and famous scenic spots. Everywhere he was received as a welcome guest, and was much admired as a congenial, personable young man. Known as a free spirit, he spent freely what little money he was given and was always careful to share his sustenance with his friends and acquaintances. His only care seemed to be for books. It is said

16. Loc. cit. Birth and death dates for Ch'en Wei-mei and Ch'en Wei-yüeh are not presently ascertainable.
17. Ibid., I, 103.
18. Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan (Shanghai, 1928), 71/la,b.
that he was an avid reader, and the story is told that even when sailing on a boat in a storm or riding in a carriage on a dangerous road, he read as calmly and undisturbed as ever.19

When he was more than fifty years old, Ch'ên Wei-sung participated in the po-hsüeh hung-ju examination on the recommendation of the scholar Sung Te-i.20 This was a special examination conducted under imperial edict in 1679 for the purpose of bringing some of the more famous Chinese scholars of the time into the service of the alien Manchu court as official historiographers.21 Wei-sung passed the examination, was made a corrector in the Hanlin Academy, and was delegated to assist in the compilation of the official Ming history.22 He held this office for a period of four years until his death.23

Ch'ên Wei-sung was a man who moved in the circle of nobles and officials but was always careful to show a

20. Loc. cit. For a biography of Sung Te-i, see Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan, 7/32b-35b.
23. Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan, loc. cit.
sincere love and respect for the common man. Very thin and wearing a long beard, he was affectionately known as Ch'ien Jan, Bearded Ch'ien. 24

A lover of nature, he often longed for the mountains and streams of his native place, but because of the obligations of his official post, he was unable to return to his home. During a serious illness, he was known to have said, "Oh, the birds and flowers of the mountains, they are my old friends." 25 Never regaining his health, Ch'ien Wei-sung died on June 12, 1682. 26

25. Loc. cit.
26. Hummel, I, 103. Birth and death dates for Ch'ien Wei-sung are those given in Hummel, although his biography in the Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan states that he died at the age of 58 in the 27th year of the Emperor K'ang Hsi (1688), which would make the year of birth 1630. Other secondary sources cite 1625-1682 as the dates of Ch'ien's birth and death.
CHAPTER III

THE LYRIC POETRY OF CH'EN WEI-SUNG

Ch' en Wei-sung showed an interest in the literary arts early in his youth. It is reported that at ten years of age he wrote a short piece entitled Yang Chung-li hsiang-tsan (Caption to the Portrait of Yang Chung-li). A short essay written at the bottom of the portrait of Yang Lien, an opponent of Wei Chung-hsien put to death with six other men in 1625, who was posthumously given the name of Chung-li, it was originally to have been written by Wei-sung's grandfather, Yu-t'ing; instead, Wei-sung was given permission to draft the essay for his grandfather. Later, at a banquet, Ch' en Wei-sung picked up a brush and proceeded to write, very rapidly, a piece of some length and apparently of some quality. All the guests were greatly amazed, praised him highly, and allowed him to sit with them in their discussions.  

2. Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan, loc. cit.
3. Loc. cit.
As Ch'ien grew older, he began to write seriously and exchanged poetry with such leading poets of the time as Wang Shih-chen (1634-1711), Wang Shih-lu (1626-1673), and Sung Shih-ying (1621-1705). Becoming widely known for his literary talents, he was often referred to as one of the "Three Phoenixes of Kiangsu," the other two men earning this appellation being Wu Han-ch'a and P'eng Ku-chin.

Among his many friends was another literary master of the early Ch'ing period, Chu I-tsun (1629-1709). While at the capital, they jointly wrote a work entitled Chu Ch'ien ts'un-tzu (Rustic Lyrics of Chu and Ch'ien) which circulated among the court officials and was much praised and admired by them.

A master of various literary types and styles, Ch'en showed a talent for the parallel or antithetical prose style called p'tien-wen. A highly artificial

5. Loc. cit.
7. Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan, loc. cit. Other information concerning these two men is not presently available.
literary form, p'ien wen is characterized by verbal parallelism, frequent allusions, and an ornate, euphuistic language. A contemporary, Wang Wan (1624–1691), remarked that Ch'en's talent for the p'ien-wen style was greater than any since the T'ang dynasty.

Ch'en Wei-sung also wrote several chüan (chapter) of shih, the standard form of Chinese poetry. His works, entitled collectively Ch'en Chia-ling chi (The Collected Works of Ch'en Chia-ling), include his prose in six chüan, p'ien-wen in twelve chüan, shih in eight chüan, and tz'u, or Lyric Meters, in thirty chüan. Other editions of his works using his studio name of Hu-hai-lou are Hu-hai-lou shih-kao (The Draft Poetry of Hu-hai Pavilion), a collection of his poetry in ten chüan, Hu-hai-lou chi (The Collection of the Hu-hai Pavilion) in fifty-eight chüan, consisting of shih, prose, p'ien-wen, and tz'u.

From a quantitative study of the collected works of Ch'en Wei-sung, it is evident that the tz'u was his

12. Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan, loc. cit.
favorite form. Approximately eighteen hundred individual pieces have been preserved in his collected works.\textsuperscript{15} This is the area then to which he devoted his major efforts and for which he is best known.

The \texttt{ts\u{u}}, or Lyric Meter, is a song-poetry form characterized by lines of unequal length, but with a prescribed number of syllables per line and stanzaic structures, as well as fixed rhyme and tonal sequences.\textsuperscript{16} When ultimately catalogued in the seventeenth century, some eight hundred major \texttt{ts\u{u}} patterns, or modes, were recognized, with the number exceeding two thousand when variants were included in the total.\textsuperscript{17} Each pattern or mode bears the title of a T\textsuperscript{ang} or Sung dynasty song, the title not necessarily related to the conventional theme of any given mode.\textsuperscript{18} By late Sung times, the musical scores had been lost, but the structural patterns and song titles remained. Thereafter, the composition of \texttt{ts\u{u}} constituted the filling-in, as it were, of a given

\begin{itemize}
\item[15.] Ch\textsuperscript{\'ing}-shih lieh-chuan, loc. cit.
\item[16.] Hightower, pp. 90-92.
\item[17.] Glen William Baxter, "Metrical Origins of the Tz\textsuperscript{u}," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, XVI (1953), 110.
\item[18.] Ibid., pp. 110-111.
\end{itemize}
pattern with the required number of mono-syllabic characters, with attention being paid to the rhyme and tonal sequences.\textsuperscript{19}

The popular tunes from which many \textit{tz'u} modes originated were largely foreign importations.

Song words for such tunes could be supplied in three ways: a pre-existing poem could be adapted to a given tune, a new poem could be written in a traditional form for the tune, or a new poem could be written directly for the tune and derive its form from the musical phrasing peculiar to that tune. The last alternative would produce the multitude of patterns characteristic for the \textit{tz'u}, and was undoubtedly responsible for the examples of the form once established.\textsuperscript{20}

Thus, certain fixed prosodic patterns came to be established and the modes, known by the name of the tune underlying it, came to be regarded as fixed poetic structures.\textsuperscript{21} As the Lyric Meter became an established form, certain modifications took place. New patterns were composed and the modes were eventually classified according to length. Those modes containing fifty-eight or less syllables were classified as \textit{hsiao-ling}, or short verse; the \textit{chung-tiao}, or tunes of medium length contained from fifty-nine to ninety syllables; and modes having more than ninety

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Hightower, pp. 90-91.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 91.
\end{itemize}
syllables were classified as ch'ang-tiao, or long tunes. This strict classification gave way to a more general differentiation among modern scholars. The term hsiao-ling now includes those tunes containing less than sixty-three syllables, while those tunes having more than sixty-two syllables are designated as man-tz'ü, or slow tunes, which include the chung-tiao and the ch'ang-tiao. The former category applies to the T'ang and Five Dynasty Meters, while the latter generally describes the Meters of the Sung and later periods.

Although the early history of this poetic form is obscure on many points, it began to take serious root in the T'ang dynasty. A mid-tenth century anthology, the Hua-chien chi (Amidst the Flowers) contains Lyric Meters of eighteen individual poets. The poet most fully represented and accorded pride of place in this collection is the late T'ang poet Wen T'ing-yun (ca. 813-870), who is generally regarded as a pioneer in the development of the form and one of the representative poets of the Hua-chien school. "Taken as a whole, the poets of this school wrote

23. Ibid., p. 520.
mainly love lyrics that make a sensual appeal with their descriptions of the female traits and trappings. They suggest strongly the glamour of metropolitan life either at court or in the entertainment world."\(^2^5\)

The most famous writer of Lyric Meters of the Southern T'ang period, and one of the major Chinese poets of all time, was its last emperor Li Yü (937-978). He was able to enlarge the scope of the \( tz'\u \) and to introduce new materials and techniques that influenced later writers. With his emphasis on personal emotions and the strong lyrical element of his \( tz'\u \), he stands as one of the major contributors to this genre.\(^2^6\)

The \( tz'\u \) reached its peak in the Sung dynasty when the country was fairly peaceful and prosperous and society was highly sophisticated and cultured. It was in such an environment that the Lyric Meter flourished, cultivated as it was by emperors, courtiers, the great scholar-poets, and professional musicians and female entertainers.

Liu Yung (ca. 990-1050), a representative \( tz'\u \) poet of the Northern Sung period (960-1126), was an unsuccessful candidate in the literary examinations who spent much of his time in the company of singsong girls.

\(^{25}\) Loc. cit.  
\(^{26}\) Ibid., pp. 103-105.
writing song lyrics to new melodies he heard in the cabarets. Extremely popular with those who frequented such an atmosphere, his Lyric Meters often were set to the new, longer modes, and employed slower tempos, more felicitous for detailed descriptions of the sorrows of parting and separation. It is for his introduction and use of longer, slower melodies that he is best known, and which set a new trend for tz'u poetry. 27

The most famous literary figure of the Northern Sung period was Su Shih (1037-1101). A man skilled in painting, calligraphy, shih, fu (prose-poetry), and prose, Su was also a master of the Lyric Meter. In his tz'u are to be found elements of Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist concepts, which represented a new development in the thematic concerns common to the genre. The meters of Su are characterized by a vigorous, cheerful outlook on life and the joys to be found in nature and good companions. Su Shih wrote tz'u suitable to all occasions—to recount common daily happenings and historical events, or to expound on moral and philosophical ideas. Thus the scope of the tz'u was broadened and invested with a new vitality, removing it from its earlier concern for the

27. Ibid., pp. 105-108.
delicate and the feminine, and making it a more fitting medium for the expression of the entire range of human emotions.28

One of the most famous women poets of China, Li Ch'ing-chao (ca. 1081-1143) lived during the transition from Northern Sung to Southern Sung (1127-1276). Very little of her work is extant, but what remains of her poetry gives evidence that she ranks high in the realm of Lyric Meters. Drawing upon her own personal experiences, Li Ch'ing-chao succeeded in delineating the inner emotions of a young woman, from the deep attachments of a young wife in love, to her sorrows at her husband's departure from home, and her profound grief at his death.29

One of the last of the great tz'u poets of Sung was Hsin Chi-chi (1140-1207). Noted for his patriotic and military activities, Hsin often included observations on army life in his poetry. Like Su Shih, he continued to broaden the subject matter of the tz'u form, to create new styles, and to adapt the form to comments on current events. Adept at employing familiar quotations from the classics, he also made frequent use of historical and literary allusions. Hsin was also fond of using colloquial expressions throughout his verse, thus enriching the

29. Ibid., pp. 121-124.
language of the tz'u and providing it with a new flexi-
bility. Hsin Ch'i-ch'i's six hundred tz'u songs represent
the largest production of tz'u poetry by any single Sung
writer. 30

Although the tz'u continued to be written in later
centuries, it saw a marked decline in popularity during
the Yuan and Ming dynasties. It was at this time that the
ch'ü, or san ch'u (Dramatic Verse), emerged as a new and
popular poetic form. The ch'ü differs from the tz'u "in
the nature of the tunes employed, in the use of a wider
range of subject matter, and by the admission of a larger
amount of colloquial language; the basic difference is
that the san ch'ü does not observe the many rules which
made tz'u a difficult form." 31

The popularity of the ch'ü in the Yuan dynasty was
due mainly to its adaptability on the one hand, and to its
comparative lack of strict rules of prosody, rhyme, tone,
and syllable count on the other. In the Ming dynasty, the
tz'u became even less popular. "The reason for such a
decline of the tz'u in Ming times is simply that it was
encroached upon by the 'new and old' phases of the literary
world: the old being a revival of the shih and prose;

30. Ibid., pp. 121-124.
31. Hightower, p. 95.
the new being the flourishing of the shih." Those who advocated the revival of the shih and classical prose looked to the Han and T'ang periods for their models. Any poetic works after the T'ang were virtually ignored, thus excluding the tz'u from public attention. Those who favored the chü form argued that it was closer to the spoken language, thus giving it more popularity. Traditionally, the tz'u was believed to be more suitable to descriptions of the fleeting, personal feelings of the moment. Several chü, however, could be linked together to form a suite, or longer structure, capable of sustaining extended description and dramatic themes. More flexible and expansive, the chü, which like the tz'u derived from popular song, provided the poet with a newer, freer vehicle for his poetic thoughts.

So it was that the tz'u passed largely into disuse during the several centuries of Ming rule. In the standard collections, there are only in the neighborhood of one thousand tz'u, only twenty or thirty of them measuring up to the quality of T'ang and Sung tz'u.


33. Ibid., pp. 1-2.

34. Loc. cit.

35. Ibid., p. 1.
It was not until the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912) that the tz'u form was revived and enjoyed a new-found popularity. "The Ch'ing dynasty is the period of the greatest flourishing of the literary arts. Excluding all the rest and speaking only of the tz'u, in the number of tz'u and the abundance of tz'u collections, it was more extensive than the golden age of the Sung."36

In the seventeenth century, three general schools of tz'u came into prominence: the Che-Hsi school led by Chu I-itsun, which looked back to the Southern Sung masters for its models; a school led by Na-lan Hsing-te (1654-1685), said to be the greatest tz'u poet of Ch'ing times, who took the Southern T'ang poet Li Yu as his model; and the Yang-hsien school, which regarded Ch'en Wei-sung as its master, and which sought to emulate the examples of Su Shih and Hsin Ch'i-chi.37

The following translations are of those tz'u of Ch'en Wei-sung which are most often included in anthologies of Ch'ing dynasty tz'u poets, and are found in the SPPY edition of the Hu-hai lou tz'u-chi (The Collected Tz'u of the Hu-hai Pavillion).


37. Liu Ta-chieh, Chung-kuo wen-hsueh fa-chan shih (Shanghai, 1963), III, 1326.
CLEAR, CALM MUSIC

On hearing a youth strum the lute after my drinking companions had left the inn one evening.

The rain on the front eves has ceased
Its cold, lonely patter.
On the city wall an old crow caws
And the drum of the third watch has already sounded.

Drunkenly, I scribble on the lamp shade,
While happily they leave the courtyard amid songs and bells.
No wonder the candle sputters
As a frosty wind begins to howl through the room.38

Within its brief compass, this Lyric Meter effectively evokes in the reader a feeling of empathy for the lonely and melancholy poet. It is not uncommon to encounter a general prose statement at the head of a classical Chinese poem. The purpose of these remarks, whether tersely stated or more discursive in nature, is to establish in the reader's mind the general circumstances or situation which initially gave rise to the poem. Here we are informed that the poet sits alone listening to the strains of a lute song, following the departure of his male drinking companions.

The statement of the poem itself is simple and relatively uncomplicated. The rain has stopped, a crow cries in the night, and it is late. The poet, now alone,

scribbles, perhaps a poem, on the paper lamp shade, while his friends raucously and joyously make ready to ride away. The candle sputters to a sudden gust of cold air.

Ch'en's opening remarks establish the mood of the poem, and the imagery which he employs serves to intensify the general tenor of the two stanzas, namely, a sense of personal loss and gentle melancholy. The first stanza opens with an observation on the weather, referring specifically to the rain which has been falling on the eves of the inn. This conventional image immediately evokes a sense of separation and depression. The poet literally describes the feeling it evokes with the words "cold" and "lonely." The cry of the old crow, drifting through the night air, adds to the mood set by the opening lines. The drum of the third watch has already sounded, indicating to the reader that it is near the hour of midnight.

In the second stanza, there is a blending of exterior description with an exposition of the poet's inner feelings. He and his friends have spent the evening drinking together and engaging in light conversation, having all in all a very enjoyable time. Suddenly the poet seems to realize that he is alone, not only lacking the company of his friends, but alone in a world of his own. He can see and hear his companions leaving the courtyard laughing and cheered by the evening's activity. Their gay fellowship
contrasts with his own situation and serves to intensify the mood of the poem. A cold, frosty wind blows through the room, causing the candle to sputter fitfully. Left alone and in near darkness, the poet conveys the impression that he finds himself out of time, out of place. A question may arise in the reader's mind: why didn't the poet leave the inn with his friends, choosing instead to stay behind by himself?

Restricted in time and movement to one brief scene, the poet makes effective use of such conventional imagery as the dripping rain, the sound of the crow on the city wall, the candle, and the cold wind to create an intense mood of solitary isolation in a world of men. The following Lyric Meter uses a similar technique, although the language is much richer and the imagery more involved.

**PAINTED RED LIPS**

**Lodging at Lin-ming Station**

Like cascading hair
Or a wriggling tadpole are the features of the
T'ai-hsing Mountains.
Millet flowers fill the field;
Frost is an inch thick.

Chao, Wei, Yen, and Han,
All I can clearly recall.
A sad wind moans,
Blowing from the station door
Yellow leaves toward the central plains.39

39. Ibid., 1/8b.
The sub-title indicates the subject matter of the poem. Ch'ien Wei-sung has stopped for the night at a post-station. The surrounding countryside induces him to express in writing the feelings that come to him in this particular environment. It is evidently late autumn and the poet, looking from the station door or window, sees a field of millet flowers and the frost-covered ground. In the distance is a range of mountains. He recalls days of old as a cold wind stirs the fallen leaves.

The region in which the poet is traveling happens to be the general geographic area formerly occupied by the ancient states of Chao, Wei, Yen and Han of the Chou era (ca. 1027-256 B.C.). These were among the early states of the civilized past, a past commonly regarded as the highest ideal of human achievement. In that age, philosophers flourished and the great classics of prose and poetry took form. Ch'ien's father and grandfather were both advocates of the classical ideals. This poem suggests that Wei-sung may have shared similar feelings. Perhaps dissatisfied with the alien Manchu rule, he also, like his grandfather and father, longed for a return to former times when the Chinese ruled themselves and the classical traditions held sway.

The last three lines leave the reader with a feeling of melancholy and desolation. The sad moaning
of the cold, autumn wind is a conventional image of sadness, as is the image of the yellow leaves. This tz'u employs the standard method of introduction by exterior description, followed by a revelation of the poet's own thoughts, then a sudden shift back to the external world, and ending with a description of the exterior scene sad and softly melancholy in intent.

The following poem is in keeping with the autumnal mood set by the above selection.

THE DIVINING ABACUS

Delayed at the locks at Kua-pu.

Autumn winds rage in the southern sky
As the evening sun sinks into the Wu mountains.
Tallow and red pear, each tree crystal-covered,
Boats at anchor in the frost.

In the distance is the Lo-fan rest house;
I hear drums hastening the boats.
Day and night is heard the sound of the river, flowing;
Why doesn't it carry me along? 40

Here the use of external description is dominant, with only the final line being a statement of the poet's feelings. Ch'en Wei-sung is near his birthplace, Kua-pu, the Wu mountains, and Lo-fan, all of which are located in Kiangsu province. The season is late autumn as evidenced by the frost-covered trees. From the initial visual images of the raging wind, the sinking sun, and the frost-covered trees, the poet shifts to aural images.

40. Ibid., 2/6a.
Drums are heard hastening the boats to harbor, and the sound of the river, incessantly flowing, reaches the ear.

The conventional image of the river as used here is reminiscent of the following tz'u by Li Yu.

**NIGHT CROW CALLING**

The flowered woods have dropped their springtime rose festoon.
So soon, so soon.
But night-blowing winds and the cold dawn rain were bound to be.

Your tear-stained rouge will keep me drinking here beside you.
Then—who knows when again?
Our lives are sad like rivers turning always to the sea.

The steady, unending flow of the river symbolizes the inexorable passage of time and the sorrow of the poet. Explicitly stated by Li Yu and implicitly by Ch' en Weisung, the image is still powerful, conveying to the reader the emotions of the poet.

The following poem is much longer, contains numerous images and allusions, and is, at the same time, more explicit in its statement of the poet's feelings.

**WATER DRAGON'S MOAN**

*Autumn Thoughts*

With night comes the west wind,
Suddenly transforming this peopled earth.

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Cold, lonely, ephemeral,
The Ch'in palaces and Han courts
Are blown asunder by it.
Alas, this unfortunate life,
Where bits and pieces of things past
Have become like flowing water.
I recall peach blossoms at the open well,
Wu-t'ung flowers along the palace lanes
Where I used to tether
My piebald pony.

The scene is as if it were again before me.
I remember meeting a maiden at the jade tower.
Through the thin mist, a pale moon shines
On the corridors winding through the rooms.
So many affairs of the heart!
Today I journey again
Amid wild flowers and flitting butterflies.
Only gloom and nothing more.
Oh, that heaven would return me
To that year and that place
Of jade towers and silver steps. 42

In contrast to the preceding three tz'u, there
is very little description of the immediate physical setting
in this particular Lyric Meter. As the sub-title states,
this is a record of the thoughts passing through the poet's
mind as he contemplates what has gone before. Autumn refers
to the season of the year, but also to the late years of
the poet's life. Thus, the reader is at once aware that
the poem constitutes a lament for lost youth.

The poet introduces the poem with the image of the
west wind, transforming the reality of the present world
into a dream world or the world of yesterday. Immediately
there is an allusion to the Ch'in and Han dynasties, the

42. Hu-hai-lou tz'u-chi, 21/3a.
first great empires of China. The glory and fame of those periods in the history of China are blown away by the wind, and all remnants of former greatness seem to pass into non-existence. Moreover, the image of flowing water connotes the ephemeral, transient nature of life and man's works. Through the poet's thoughts, the reader is introduced to an event in the poet's life that must have happened years ago, in his youth. The first stanza ends with a description of flowers and trees in full bloom, the wut'ung tree being a common image of separation and sentimental longing. With the reference to the piebald pony, the reader visualizes a vigorous young man, in the prime of life.

In the second stanza, the poet takes the reader back with him to those days of gay and romantic youth. Conventional images of jade towers, storied mansions, and many-roomed corridors are used to suggest luxurious splendor and romantic attachments. The poet seems to return to the reality of the moment as he mentions a journey through wild flowers and butterflies. Flowers are a common euphemism for the courtesan. In his association with young and beautiful women, he is reminded of his loss of youth and vigor, and thus his gloom and regret.

The last three lines of the ts'iu express the
poet's wish to return to the days of his youth, to the rich, romantic environment he knew in the springtime of his life, though he realizes the impossibility of his dreams.

The lyrical quality of this tz'u is greatly enhanced by the many images of romance and the gaiety of youth. Through the effective use of such images and symbols, the poet creates a nostalgic and melancholy mood completely harmonious with his theme of irrecoverable youth.

The following selection is a good example of the use of historical allusion.

SOUTH COUNTRY BOY

Written on the road to Ping-chou.

The autumn cold is like a knife
And gusts of grievèd wind roll like billows.
Hardy lads from San-ho ride side by side
Into the black oak forest to drunkenly shoot hawks.

With dregs of wine I recall the glories of Ch'U.
The sad songs of Yen and Chao have not yet faded.
I recall of old the rumble of the chariot over the frozen I River. Today,
How chivalrous was the revenge at Yu-jang's bridge.43

On his way to Ping-chou, located in the province of Hopei, Ch'en Wei-sung recalls certain events, perhaps evoked by the local scenery, and proceeds to expound on them. The first line makes clever use of the image of the cutting cold of autumn. Ping-chou is famed for the sharp

43. Ibid., 5/4b.
knives produced there, thus providing the poet with an accurate image to describe the weather in the first line. Not only is it cold, but there is a strong wind, making the weather even more biting. The poet sees a few hardy youths riding from the direction of San-ho, somewhere in the vicinity. Seemingly unconcerned with the weather, they ride into the forest to shoot hawks, perhaps waving their flasks of wine as they ride by.

In the second stanza, the poet drifts into a recollection of two famous historical events. He evidently has stopped to rest and refresh himself with some wine. He recalls the glories of the ancient states of Han, Yen, and Ch'iu. With the memory of those days comes the familiar story of two historical figures. The reference to the I River concerns a man by the name of Ching K'o, sent by the Prince of Yen to assassinate the Prince of Ch'in, the man who ultimately unified the country under the Ch'in empire. Ching K'o is accompanied to the river, the I River, by knights, nobles and friends, all dressed in white mourning clothes. They prepare a farewell feast, knowing that Ching K'o will not return. The people in attendance begin to sing. Ching K'o joins in, then mounts his carriage and rides across the frozen river to begin his mission.

44 Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Shih-chi, SPPY, chüan 86.
The second reference is to Pi Yu-jang. When his lord was killed, Yu-jang hid under a bridge to assassinate the murderer. Upon being discovered, he threw himself upon his own sword rather than be captured and executed by the man he sought to kill for revenge. 45

The above Meter serves to illustrate the custom of introducing historical allusions into the poem. That this tz'u is a hint of Ch'en Wei-sung's own feelings about the political leaders of his time is one possibility. However, he may simply be writing of events called to his attention by historical landmarks.

The following Lyric Meter, like those translated above, opens with a description of the external world and concludes with an account of the internal world of the poet.

HAPPY AFFAIRS NEAR AT HAND

One day, Mr. Shih Ch'u-an invited me in to drink. Because of his joy at my visit on my way home from Su-chou, I wrote the following.

As we part, willow blossoms from the sky
Drift like snow past the empty window.
My eye catches the freshly embroidered beauty
of the mallow,
And the red balustrade.

Since we parted, the world has taken a turn.
Only I and my disciples are still in the past;
We talk of heroes until we lose our way.
Suddenly a cold breeze sighs. 46


46. Hu-hai-lou tz'u-chi, 3/1b.
In this poem, the reader is furnished with a very clear background by means of the introductory remarks. Ch' en Wei-sung, on his way home, stops off to visit a certain Mr. Shih, evidently an old friend of the poet. As the two friends are about to part company, the poet's attention is drawn to the natural scene. A brief description of the setting follows; then the poet strikes a philosophical note. We are told that there has been a change in the affairs of the world, and that the poet and a few friends are the only ones who still labor to keep alive the remnants of the former state of affairs.

As the poem opens, we are immediately introduced to the image of the willow, a conventional image of parting and separation. It is late spring or early summer and a feeling of lush, green freshness prevails. Color in this poem is expressed very vividly. The yellow of the willow blossoms, the reference to snow, and the red balustrade all lend an air of delicate beauty and brilliance to the poem.

In the second stanza, the tone of the poem shifts to one of melancholy. The poet reminisces about conditions of the past, grieving over the changes that have taken place, perhaps altering his life. The few who still esteem the past spend their time recalling heroes who lent that era its greatness. The poem closes on a note of sadness,
despair and melancholy. The image of the cold wind again appears in Ch'en's Lyric Meters. It seems to suggest the reality of the moment, bringing the poet back to the present, while at the same time conveying a feeling of regret at having to leave the past.

Like the preceding poem, the following contains many images of springtime, color, wind and the general sentiment of a cleaving to the past.

CELEBRATING FERTILE SPRING

Spring Shade

Already the Day of Flowers approaches,
The Spring Festival has not yet passed.
All day I remain in the small tower, deep in thought.
For several days it has been dark as night;
It is difficult to refuse the weary traveler from Chiangnan.
The pool at the doorway is as muddled as a dream.
A cover of whitewashed clouds
Hides the distant peaks.
By the side of the bridge are faded,
Frozen, plum blossoms.
And crystallared shadows of spring.

It is now the season for honeysuckle.
Yellow returns to the cheeks of the willow,
Red pierces the heart of the peach.
Sing and dance with fan and gown!
Rolling orchards are ten li around.
The east wind brings the pleasant peace of spring.
Who knows if men were always as today?
I wonder when the sun will shine on the branches,
And birds begin their beautiful song.

This tz'u, written to a long mode, is simple and direct in its statement. It is just the beginning of spring, but the trees and flowers are already blossoming.
The weather is overcast and somewhat dreary, and the poet remains in his pavilion, meditating, anticipating the final thaw. There is an aura of tranquility about the scene. All that is needed is for the sun to come out and the birds to start singing to make this a perfect season.

In the first stanza, the time of the year is indicated by the references to the Day of Flowers and the Spring Festival. The Day of Flowers falls on the twelfth day of the second lunar month. The Spring Festival is a period of fifty days following the Beginning of Spring, approximately the twentieth of February. Thus, it is early spring, sometime during the Spring Festival and before the Day of Flowers. The poet seems to desire solitude, as evidenced by the fact that he remains in his tower all day, but finds it difficult to refuse a weary traveler who seeks lodging, or simply his company.

It has probably rained recently because there is a pool of water at the doorway, and clouds still hang low over the mountains in the distance. There may have been an earlier thaw since the plum trees have already blossomed, but are now faded and frozen from the cold. Even the ground remains frozen in the shade of the trees.

In the second stanza, the poet paints a colorful picture, mentioning the honeysuckle, the yellow of the willow, and red of the peach tree, just starting to bloom.
There is joy in the air, as the people sing and dance during the Spring Festival in honor of their household gods. The surrounding countryside is covered by vast orchards, not flat and uninteresting, but gently rolling over the hilly landscape. Again wind enters into this poem. The east wind, bringing warmth, sunshine and the season of rebirth, lends a breath of peace and tranquility to the scene. The poet seems to be in a reverie, wondering if men of former ages ever experienced such a time. Anxious for the cold to pass and the warmth of spring to arrive, the poet inquires of nature concerning the sun and birds.

This Lyric Meter is exceptional in the way it employs visual imagery. The mention of clouds, pools of water on the frozen ground, budding trees and flowers, fans and gowns of the dancers, and the acres of orchards, make this one of the most colorful, lyrical, and expressive of his tz'u. As in the rest of the selections, the external and internal features of the poem are also present.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing analyses, it is evident that the poet explores two worlds: the external world of events and the internal world of emotions. In general, Ch'ên Wei-sung begins with an observation of the external scene, commenting on the weather, the landscape, the beauties of nature and of the season. He then proceeds from the external world into the internal world of his own feelings, his personal feelings having been aroused by the circumstances of the physical world, or of the immediate situation. As the poet moves into the inner world of experience, the poetic statement becomes subjective, as the poet expresses his personal sentiments.

These sentiments, however, are rarely expressed in an explicit manner. The reader must deduce the poet's state of mind by examination of the imagery and symbolism employed. The internal evidence of the poems reveal that Ch'ên Wei-sung employs an abundance of conventional images, suggesting to the reader alternate levels of meaning and overtones, thus greatly enriching each tz'u.
Among the elements common to the selections are a concern for the passing of time and lament for lost youth, a cleaving to the past, and an appreciation for natural beauty. It is quite evident that nature is a source of inspiration for the poet. This inspiration may take the form of a celebration of nature, or it may serve as a motivation for the poet, leading him into other thoughts, memories of the past, or personal feelings. Within the Lyric Meters here discussed is revealed a strong classical learning, a knowledge of the history of the great ages of China, and at the same time, a sense of disillusionment for the conditions of his time.

The few tz'iu selected for translation in this thesis are a very small part of the total number of Lyric Meters written by Ch'ien Wei-sung. However, they show him to be a sensitive person, familiar with the conventions of this form, and adept in both the long and short modes.
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