"RED CLIFFS" IN TAIWANESE HÀNBÛN

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Dedicated in friendship to Âng Tek̍-lâm 洪澤南

Introduction

In Taiwan one often hears that the Taiwanese reading accent is the ideal pronunciation for appreciating classical or other pre-modern literature, which is known in Taiwanese itself as Hànbûn 漢文". This paper presents a transcription into Taiwanese, of the "Qián Chìbì fù [First Red Cliffs Composition] 前赤壁賦" of Sū Shì 蘇軾 (1036-1101), and examines it both as a performance and as an expression of the innate sound of the literary work. The main question around which discussion revolves is: How well after all does the Taiwanese reading tradition suit the æsthetic needs of a late medieval lyrical work like the "Chìbì fù"?

Conventions

In recent research I have examined recordings of various premodern works as read aloud or chanted by contemporary Taiwanese scholars. Accents and reading styles do differ. In the present case, Taiwanese character readings are taken from the *Huìyīn bǎojiàn* [**Luī-im pó-kàm**] 彙音寶鑑 (Shěn 1954, hereafter "*Bǎojiàn*"), one of a small forest of native Taiwanese dictionaries. In order to make my points as clearly as possible, I have made a few typographical innovations that may be unfamiliar, for which I ask the reader's patience. I have adjusted the *Bǎojiàn*'s romanization slightly, to bring it nearer to the practice of the Amoy Romanized Bible (1960). Pīnyīn romanization of Mandarin is used for most forms not related to Taiwanese pronunciation. Taiwanese is printed in boldface to distinguish it plainly from Mandarin, and medieval forms are enclosed in curly brackets { }.

The vowel written ⟨ᵊ⟩ is phonetically [ɔ], while that written o varies

among [ɵ] (my preferred pronunciation), [o], [ɤ], and [ɯ]; some Taipei 臺北 speakers pronounce both ɵ and o as [o]. Tones vary more than is generally realized; in the accent I prefer they sound as follows:

example	*Taiwanese name*	*standard name*	*basic value*	*sandhi value*
a	***chiū^{n}-piâ^{n}*** 上平	*yī̍npíng* 陰平	ㄱˊ	ˊ
á	***chiū^{n}-chiū^{n}*** 上上	*yī̍nshǎng* 陰上	ㄱˇ	ˊ
à	***chiū^{n}-khì*** 上去	*yī̍nqù* 陰去	ㄱˋ	ˋ
ap, at, ak	***chiū^{n}-ji̍p*** 上入	*yī̍nrù* 陰入	ㄱ˙	˙
â	***ē-piâ^{n}*** 下平	*yángpíng* 陽平	ㄧˊ	ˊ
ā	***ē-khì*** 下去	*yángqù* 陽去	ㄧˋ	ˋ
a̍p, a̍t, a̍k	***ē-ji̍p*** 下入	*yángrù* 陽入	ㄧ˙	˙

As is the case in spoken Taiwanese, the normal pronunciation of every syllable is ordinarily that of its sandhi tone value. "Basic" tone values are heard only in certain exceptional syntactic environments:

(1) the last normally stressed syllable in a sentence;
(2) the last syllable of the grammatical subject or the "topic" (when grammar is analyzed according to the "topic-comment" principle); an exception is a pronoun in subject position;
(3) the last syllable of a coverb-noun phrase;
(4) certain phrase-initial conjunctions;

In addition, many particles are unstressed, and the syllable preceding such a particle does not undergo tone sandhi. This principle also applies to one-syllable pronouns serving as object to a verb (mainly ***chi*** 之).

I have added several symbols to assist reading, appended after the affected syllable:

\# indicates that syllable does not undergo tone change;
— indicates that syllable is drawn out or followed by a pause;
$_0$ indicates that syllable is pronounced unstressed.

Contemporary Taiwan dialects generally have either a **Chiang-chiu** [Zhāngzhōu 漳州] or a **Tsôan-chiu** [Quánzhōu 泉州] cast to them, though relatively few are actually close to the authentic accents of those two

southern Fújiàn 福建 cities. The dictionary on which the present transcription is based, the *Bǎojiàn*, is itself based on the conservative Zhāngzhōu dialect reading tradition embodied in the *Huìjí yǎsútōng shíwǔyīn* [**Lui-tsi̍p ngé-sio̍k-thong si̍p-ngó͘-im**] 彙集雅俗通十五音 (Chiā 1818). It is important to be aware that there are a variety of traditional rime-books current in Taiwan, and their readings are by no means consistent. Note that the *Bǎojiàn*, like much of modern Taiwan reading practice, uses ***-iu^{n}*** for the rime tradtionally pronounced ***-io^{n}*** [iɔ̃] in conservative Zhāngzhōu accents, and I have followed its ***-iu^{n}*** here. But in a number of other important cases its readings differ from the sounds more familiar to the majority of Taiwanese speakers, and that can also affect the perception of rhyming, as will be discussed below.

Taiwan is experiencing a renaissance of classical literature read aloud in Taiwanese. For recent recordings in traditional Taiwanese reading accents see Hóng Zénán (1999a and 1999b) and Liáng (1999a-c). For discussion of reading practices generally see Âng Te̍k-lâm (1999a), Chiou (1991), Lin (1989), and Wang (1997). There are musical transcriptions in Chiou (1991) and Wang (1997).

I present first the text and my transcription, then a translation, and finally discussion. I must emphasize that this transcription is my own, and surely contains errors of a kind that would not appear in the accent of native speaker better versed in chanting Hànbûn.

Text and transcription

	蘇軾、前赤壁賦	**sɔ͘ sit 、 chiân chhek phek hù**
1	壬戌之秋	**jîm sut#— chi$_0$ chhiu**
2	七月既望	**chhit go̍at#— kì bōng**
3	蘇子與客泛舟	**sɔ͘ tsú# í khek#— hoàn chiu**
4	游於赤壁之下	**iû# i$_0$ chhek phek# chi$_0$ hā**
5	清風徐來	**chheng hong#— chhî lâi**
6	水波不興	**suí pho#— put hin**
7	舉酒屬客	**kí chiú#— chiok khek**
8	誦明月之詩	**siōng bêng go̍at# chi$_0$ si**
9	歌窈窕之章	**ko iáu thiáu#— chi$_0$ chiang**

10 少焉	siáu# ian$_0$—
11 月出於東山之上	go̍at# chhut# i$_0$ tong san# chi$_0$ siāng
12 徘徊於斗牛之間	pâi hôe# i$_0$ té ngiû# chi$_0$ kan
13 白露横江	pe̍k lè#— hêng kang
14 水光接天	suí kong#— chiap thian
15 縱一葦之所如	chhiòng it uí# chi$_0$ sé jî
16 凌萬頃之茫然	lêng bān khéng# chi$_0$ bông jiân
17 浩浩乎如	hō hō# hē$_0$— jî
18 馮虛御風、而不知其所止	pêng hi#— gī hong#— jî$_0$ put ti— kî sé chí
19 飄飄乎如	phiau phiau# hē$_0$—jî
20 遺世獨立、 羽化而登仙	uî sì#— to̍k li̍p#— í hòa#— jî$_0$ teng sian
21 於是飲酒樂甚	i$_0$ sī#— ím chiú#— lo̍k sīm
22 扣舷而歌之、歌曰	khò hiân#— jî$_0$ ko# chi$_0$ — ko# o̍at
23 桂棹兮蘭槳	kuì tsāu# hē— lân chiáng
24 擊空明兮溯流光	kek khong bêng# hē— sè liû kong
25 渺渺兮予懷	biáu biáu# hē— î hôai
26 望美人兮天一方	bōng bí jîn# hē— thian it hong
27 客有吹洞簫者	khek# iú chhui tōng siau# chiá$_0$
28 倚歌而和之	í ko#— jî$_0$ *hō# chi$_0$
29 其聲嗚嗚然	kî seng# e e# jiân$_0$
30 如怨如慕	jî oàn#— jî bē—
31 如泣如訴	jî khip#— jî sè—
32 餘音裊裊	î im#— hiáu hiáu—
33 不絕如縷	put cho̍at#— jî lí—
34 舞幽壑之潛蛟	bú iu hok#— chi$_0$ chiâm kau—
35 泣孤舟之嫠婦	khip ke chiu#— chi$_0$ lî hū—
36 蘇子愀然	se tsú# chhiáu jiân
37 正襟危坐而問客曰	chèng kim# guî tsō#— jî$_0$ būn khek# o̍at
38 何爲其然也	hô uī# kî jiân#— iá$_0$

客曰	**khek# o̍at—**
月明星稀	**go̍at# bêng#— seng hi—**
烏鵲南飛	**o͘ chhiak#— lâm hui—**
此非曹孟德之詩乎	**chhú— hui tsô bēng tek# chi$_0$ si#— hō͘$_0$**
西望夏口	**se# bōng— hē kho͘**
東望武昌	**tong# bōng— bú chhiang**
山川相繆	**san chhoan#— siong liâu**
郁乎蒼蒼	**hiok# hō͘— chhong chhong**
此非孟德之困於周郎者乎	**chhú— hui bēng tek# chi$_0$ khùn# i$_0$ chiu lông# chiá$_0$ hō͘$_0$**
方其	**hong kî #—**
破荊州	**phò keng chiu**
下江陵	**hā kang lêng**
順流而東也	**sūn liû#— jî$_0$ tong#— iá$_0$**
舳艫千里	**tio̍k lô͘#— chhian lí**
旌旗蔽空	**cheng kî#— pè khong**
釃酒臨江	**si chiú#— lîm kang**
橫槊賦詩	**hêng sok#— hù si**
固一世之雄也、而今安在哉	**kò͘#— it sì#— chi$_0$ hiông#— iá$_0$— jî$_0$ kim# an tsāi# tsai$_0$**
況吾與子	**hòng#— gô͘# í tsú#—**
漁樵於江渚之上	**gî chiâu#— i$_0$ kang chí#— chi$_0$ siāng**
侶魚蝦而友麋鹿	**lí gî hê#— jî$_0$ iú bî lo̍k**
駕一葉之扁舟	**kè it ia̍p#— chi$_0$ *phian chiu**
舉匏樽以相屬	**kí pâu tsun#— í siang chiok**
寄蜉蝣與天地	**kí hû iû#— í thian tē**
渺滄海之一粟	**biáu chhong hái#— chi$_0$ it chhiok**
哀吾生之須臾	**ai gô͘ seng#— chi$_0$ si jî**
羨長江之無窮	**sōan tiâng kang#— chi$_0$ bû kiông**
挾飛仙以遨游	**hia̍p hui sian#— í iô iû**

66	抱明月而長終	phāu bêng go̍at#— jî$_0$ tiâng chiong
67	知不可乎驟得	ti put khó#— hō$_0$ tsō tek
68	托遺響於悲風	thok uî hiáng#— i$_0$ pi hong
69	蘇子曰	sơ tsú# o̍at#—
70	客亦知夫、水與月乎	khek# e̍k ti# hû#— suí#— í go̍at#— hō
71	逝者如斯、而未嘗往也	sī# chiá$_0$— jî su#— jî$_0$ bī siâng óng# iá$_0$
72	盈虛者如彼、而卒莫消長也	êng hi# chiá$_0$— jî pí#— jî$_0$ tsut bo̍k# siau tiáng# iá$_0$
73	蓋將	kài chiang#—
74	自其變者而觀之	tsū kî piàn# chiá$_0$— jî$_0$ koan# chi$_0$
75	而天地曾不能一瞬	jî$_0$ thian tē#— chêng put lêng it sùn
76	自其不變者而觀之	tsū kî put piàn# chiá$_0$— jî$_0$ koan# chi$_0$
77	則物與我皆無盡也	chek# bu̍t# í ngó#— kai#— bû chīn#— iá$_0$
78	而又何羨乎	jî$_0$ iū hô sōan#— hō$_0$
79	且夫	chhiá^{n} hû#—
80	天地之間	thian tē#— chi$_0$ kan
81	物各有主	bu̍t# kok#— iú tsú
82	苟非吾之所有	kó#— hui gô# chi$_0$ só iú
83	雖一毫而莫取	sui it hô#— jî$_0$ bo̍k# chhí
84	惟江上之清風	uî kang siāng#— chi$_0$ chheng hong
85	與山間之明月	í san kan#— chi$_0$ bêng go̍at
86	耳得之而爲聲	jí# tek# chi$_0$— jî$_0$ uî seng
87	目遇之而成色	bo̍k# gī# chi$_0$— jî$_0$ sêng sek
88	取之無禁	chhí# chi$_0$— bû kìm
89	用之不竭	iōng# chi$_0$— put kia̍t
90	是造物者之無盡藏也	sī#— chō bu̍t# chiá$_0$— chi$_0$ bû chīn tsōng#— iá$_0$
91	而吾與子之所共適	jî$_0$ gô# í tsú#— chi$_0$ só kiōng sek

92	客喜而笑	**khek# hí#— jî$_0$ chhiàu**
93	洗盞更酌	***sé tsán#— kèng chiak**
94	肴核既盡	**ngâu ha̍k#— kì chīn**
95	杯盤狼藉	**poe pôan#— lông cha̍k**
96	相與枕藉乎舟中	**siong í# *tsìm chià#— hō͘ chiu tiong**
97	不知東方之既白	**put ti tong hong#— chi$_0$ kì pa̍k**

In the translation that follows, comments appear in smaller type on the right-hand side of the page. I have placed them there, rather than in footnotes, in order to integrate them partially with the text. However, the text can still be followed without the notes.

Translation

First "Red Cliffs" composition
by East-hill **Sō͘** (1036-1101)

1 In the Fall of the year **Jîm-sut**,
2 once the seventh moon was full,

On the full seventh moon it is traditional to mourn the dead, especially those who have died away from home and are unburied.

3 Master **Sō͘** sailed out with guests
4 on an outing beneath Red Cliffs.

The exact location (if there could have been such a thing) is disputed, but it is an area on the Yangtze River.

5 A pure breeze blew gently,
6 the waves were not stirred up;
7 he raised his wine and toasted his guests,
8 and chanted the ancient poem about the bright moon,
9 reciting the verse that goes ***iáu-thiáu***, "graceful…"

A verse of the *Shījīng* poem "Yuè chū [The moon appears]" in the "Chén fēng [Airs of Chén]":

"The moon appears, gleams, yea —
the lovely woman, fine, yea —
moves away, graceful, yea —
pains my heart, aches, yea —

The poem is memorable for the large number of rhyming words it contains not only at the ends of

lines, but within lines. However, that euphony is not reflected in Sū Shì's composition.

After a little while,
the moon came out above the eastern hills,
and dallied between the Dipper and the Cowherd.

The Dipper and the Cowherd are two constellaations. On the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, the Cowheard is supposed to have a love affair with the Weaving Girl, a nearby constellation.

White mist lay across the River,
light from the water met the heavens.

The Yangtze, China's great southern river.

Set adrift to wherever their mere reed of a boat would go,
crossing the vastness of a million acres.
So bright —
as if treading on emptiness, riding the wind for their carriage, and not knowing where they were headed.
So breeze-blown —
as if leaving the world, living as a lone hermit, and ascending into the spirit-world, bewinged.

Then they drank, so happy.
They sang as they rowed:
"*Cassia paddles, yea —*
orchid oars,
stroke the empty brightness, yea —
row against the current of light.
Distant distant, yea —
I yearn,
I gaze toward the Lovely One, yea —
off in one part of the sky.

The words "Lovely One" and this verse-form both recall the poetry of the ancient South. In that tradition, cassia and "orchid" (actually a different plant is meant) are common symbols of the poet's self-cultivation. The poem "Xiāng jūn [Goddess of the Xiāng River]" in the *Jiǔ gē* mentions cassia and orchid oars on a boat in which the poet tries

in vain to reach the beautiful goddess he idolizes.

A guest played a pipe,
accompanying the song, note against note.
It made a deep hollow sound, *woo* —
    as though resentful, as though longing,
        as though lamenting, as though telling of a wrong done.
    The lingering echo continued a great distance —
        unbroken, as if a single strand,
    a submerged river-monster dancing in dark shoals,
        a widow weeping for her dead in a lone boat.

Master **Sə** was shaken.
He sat up, straightening his shirt-front, and asked the guest,
"What is the matter with you?"

The guest said,
    "*Bright the moon, few the stars,*
        only the magpie's southward flight.
Aren't these the lines of **Tsô Bēng-tek**?

Cáo Cāo, the brilliant and bloodthirsty warrior poet of the early 2nd century.

    Looking westward to **Hē-khó͘**,
        east to **Bú-chhiang**.
    Hills and rivers coil together,
        and lush! green surpassing green.
Isn't this where **Bēng-tek** ran into trouble at the hands of Gentleman **Chiu**?

Having just
        smashed **Keng** County,
        he came down past **Kang-lêng**,
sailing east with the current.

    Prow after stern, prow after stern, for three hundred miles;
        his banners and standards hid the heavens.

He poured himself wine, gazed down at the River,
put aside his spear and chanted verse.
He was the greatest soul of his generation, and where is he now?

Then how insignificant must you and I be!
fishing and cutting kindling, yea —
on the islets —
our companions are fish and shrimp, yea —
deer our friends —
riding a single leaf, yea —
this tiny boat —
raising a gourd wine-cup, yea —
to toast each other —
consigning ourselves like mayflies, yea —
to Heaven and Earth —
a mere millet grain, yea —
far from the world, on the great sea.

I mourn my life, yea —
so fleeting —
and envy the long River, yea —
unending.
I would grasp the hand of a flying spirit-being, yea —
to travel afar —
embrace the bright moon, yea —
to delay my end.
I know it cannot be, yea —
to attain this so quickly —
and so entrust my echoes, yea —
to the mournful wind."

Master Sə said,
"My guest knows — surely? —
of the waters and the moon.
The one that flows away does so always,
yet it never leaves.

The one that waxes and wanes does so forever,
yet in the end there is never loss or increase.
The truth is,
if we see the world as changing,
then Heaven and Earth have been here for but a blink.
If we see the world as unchanging,
then both other things and ourselves are endless.
So what is there to envy?

And what is more,
between Heaven and Earth,
each thing has its master.
What belongs not to me,
I will take not a hair of.
Only the pure breeze on the River,
and the bright moon in the hills —
my ear meets one; it becomes a sound;
my eye meets the other; it becomes a sight.
To these things I can help myself without limit,
use them without ever using them up.
They are the boundless storehouse of the Maker of Things,
and quite enough for you and me to share."

The guest smiled, happy,
rinsed their cups and poured again.
The dried meat and fruit were already eaten;
cups and plates lay scattered.

They cradled their heads on each other's bodies, yea —
in the boat —
and did not know that the East, yea —
was already light.

Medieval Alternate Readings in the *Bǎojiàn*

One of the pleasures of reading Classical Chinese aloud is the correct use of variants — alternate pronunciations that express specific meanings associated with a given character. The medieval dictionaries (such as the *Guǎngyùn* 廣韻) and the best modern dictionaries of the classical language list these variants in rich diversity. Sadly, there are a number of cases where important medieval alternates simply lack corresponding forms in the *Bǎojiàn* presentation. The knowledgeable reader can supply them, but it is a shame not to find them ready-made in our chosen dictionary.

For example, for 洗 (line 93) the *Guǎngyùn* gives two readings, one corresponding to Taiwanese ***sián*** and the other to ***sé***. Both are valid character readings in the *Guǎngyùn*, though ***sé*** means "to wash" and ***sián*** is limited to a few exceptional usages (the name "姑洗" of an ancient musical scale, a rare surname, and a few others). The *Bǎojiàn*, however, allows only the more formal reading ***sián***. ***Sé*** is said by the *Bǎojiàn* to be "colloquial" and hence not prescribed for use in reading texts. In the "Chìbì fù", however, 洗 means only "to wash", for which it is necessary for us to borrow the pronunciation ***sé***, colloquial or not.

Another example is 和 (line 28), which the *Bǎojiàn* assigns only the reading ***hô***. The *Guǎngyùn*, however, gives us several readings, of which **hō* would be expected for the meaning "to accompany musically", as it is used here by Sū Shì. We must supply ***hō*** if we wish to preserve the traditional distinction.

For the character 扁 (line 59), the *Guǎngyùn* offers us four readings:[1]

{ $phan_{3b}$ } "小舟 [small boat]"
{ $banQ_4$ } "姓也… [surname…]"
{ $panQ_4$ } "扁署門户 [? to place an inscription over a doorway]"
{ $panQ_{3b}$ } [no gloss].

The last two of these four correspond to the Taiwanese form actually found in the *Bǎojiàn*, *pián*. For our purposes in the "Chìbì fù", however, we need something corresponding to the first reading, which would give ****phian*** (homophonous with 篇). I have supplied ****phian*** here.

There are a number of *Bǎojiàn* character readings for forms in this

[1] Medieval transcription follows Branner 1999. and 2002

piece that show clear influence from the colloquial language, especially in the initials. For instance, for 笑 we would expect ***siàu***, but instead find ***chhiàu***, reminiscent of colloquial ***chhiò***. For 粟 we would expect ***siok***, but instead find ***chhiok***, apparently influenced by colloquial *chhek*. For 壁 we would expect ***pek***, but instead have ***phek***. For 抱 we would expect ***pō***, but instead we have ***phāu***, distinct from but evidently influenced by colloquial ***phō***. It is hard to avoid concluding that the character readings show the fingerprints of the colloquial language and are not a pure expression of medieval phonology.

There are also puzzles like the reading ***chhiáⁿ*** for 且 (line 79). This and a few other common literary forms have nasalized vowels, although there is no known reason why they should. Vowel-nasalization has no regular place in medieval phonology as expressed in Taiwanese.[2]

Many of the Hànbûn particles are unstressed in actual reading practice. However, at least two of the common ones are actually assigned readings by the *Bǎojiàn* in the *yángqù* 陽去 tone, rather than the canonical *yángpíng* 陽平: 兮 ***hē*** (expected ***hê***); 乎 ***hō*** (***hô***); note that Mandarin also gives both of these characters uncanonical readings *xī* (**xí*) and *hū* (**hú*).

I have observed that practitioners of traditional Hànbûn chanting do not hesitate to restore medieval readings not found in their modern character-books. They also continue the traditional habit of improving the rhyming of early texts (*xiéyùn* 叶韻). Thus, while they do consult books like the *Bǎojiàn*, it is mainly for difficult characters and readings, but they display a somewhat skeptical attitude toward the traditional sources.

The Taiwanese Reflection of Medieval Phonology

Apart from the question of specific missing readings, the *Bǎojiàn*'s overall accent suffers from the same problems as do the several other Taiwanese reading traditions I have examined: it represents the features of

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[2] It is striking that a number of these examples are in tone 3:

táⁿ	打	***hó͘ⁿ***	火夥好	***cháiⁿ***	宰載滓第		
chhiáⁿ	且	***jíⁿ***	耳邇騃洱"首	***kóaⁿ***	寡	***jiáuⁿ***	鳥

While there are also examples in other tones (***thaⁿ*** 他, still sometimes heard even in Taiwan Mandarin!; ***hè͘ⁿ*** 貨好; ***íⁿ*** 易異肄; ***phàⁿ*** 怕), tone 3 contains the majority of examples. Is this effect connected with the lingering glottal stop ending of tone 3? See Branner 2000:119-144.

medieval phonology with only partial consistency. For instance, the four medieval tone categories are split into seven, with the integrity of the *shǎngshēng* 上聲 compromised by its partial merger into the *qùshēng* 去聲. When a text is read aloud, tone sandhi further disguises the identities of the medieval tones. Medieval vowel and *děng* 等 ("division") distinctions are harshly reduced, and the diversity of the medieval initial system is cut down from some 36 or 40 categories to a mere 15. Finally, inconsistencies are introduced so that not all medieval rhyming categories remain whole; words that would have rhymed in the medieval system will not necessarily rhyme here.

Failure in rhyming is the most serious flaw in any reading system, because it cripples the primary cohesive prosodic element in most early literature. I suppose it is not generally appreciated today by Mandarin speakers that the "Qián Chìbì fù" is in fact meant to rhyme. Sū Shì's attitude toward rhyming and prosody in his *fù* 賦 is like Beethoven's attitude toward counterpoint in his late fugues: "a little studied, a little free." The rhyme-words are as follows — I give them together with readings from the *Bǎojiàn*, as well as (for comparison) the somewhat different system of Campbell (1913) and medieval transcription.[3]

line	*character*	*Bǎojiàn*	*Campbell*	*medieval transcription*
12	間	**kan**	**kan**	{ kan_{2b} }
14	天	**thian**	**thian**	{ $than_{4}$ }
16	然	**jiân**	**jiân**	{ $nyan_{3b}$ }
20	仙	**sian**	**sian**	{ san_{3b} }
24	光	**kong**	**kong**	{ $kwang_{1}$ }
26	方	**hong**	**hong**	{ $pang_{3}$ }
30	慕	**bō̍**	**bō̍**	{ $muoH_{1}$ }
31	訴	**sò̍**	**sò̍**	{ $suoH_{1}$ }

[3] Though a Westerner, Campbell produced a legitimate Taiwanese character dictionary. The Hànbûn specialist Niû Kéng-hui 梁炯輝 prefers Campbell's dictionary, and the Taiwanese dialectologist Dǒng Zhōngsǐ 董忠司 has called it the easiest to use and most reliable (p. c. 1999).

33	縷	**lí**	**lú**	{ luoQ$_{3c}$ }
35	婦	**hū**	**hū**	{ bouQ$_{3b}$ }
44	昌	**chhiang**	**chhiong**	{ tshyang$_{3}$ }
46	蒼	**chhong**	**chhong**	{ tshang$_{1}$ }
58	鹿	**lo̍k**	**lo̍k**	{ luk$_{1b}$ }
60	屬	**chiok**	**chiok**	{ tsyuk$_{3c}$ }
62	粟	**chhiok**	**siok**	{ suk$_{3c}$ }
64	窮	**kiông**	**kiông**	{ gung$_{3b}$ }
66	終	**chiong**	**chiong**	{ tsyung$_{3b}$ }
68	風	**hong**	**hong**	{ pung$_{3b}$ }
71	往	**óng**	**óng**	{ ghwangQ$_{3}$ }
72	長	**tiáng**	**tióng**	{ trangQ$_{3}$ }
75	瞬	**sùn**	**sùn**	{ sywenH$_{3c}$ }
77	盡	**chīn**	**chīn**	{ dzenQ$_{3b}$ }
81	主	**tsú**	**tsú**	{ tsyuoQ$_{3c}$ }
83	取	**chhí**	**chhú**	{ tshuoQ$_{3c}$ }
85	月	**gò̍at**	**gò̍at**	{ ngwat$_{3a}$ }
87	色	**sek**	**sek**	{ srek$_{3}$ }
89	竭	**kia̍t**	**kia̍t**	{ gat$_{3a}$ }
91	適	**sek**	**sek**	{ syeik$_{3b}$ }
93	酌	**chiak**	**chiok**	{ tsyak$_{3}$ }
95	藉	**che̍k**	**che̍k**	{ dzeik$_{3b}$ }
97	白	**pe̍k**	**pe̍k**	{ beik$_{2a}$ }

In several places, Campbell's vowels make better sense than the *Bǎojiàn*'s — Campbell avoids the dissonance of ***i*** and ***u*** in lines 33-35 and 81-83, for instance, and of ***iang*** and ***ong*** in lines 44-46 and 71-72.

All Taiwanese reading traditions violate medieval rhyming consonances in a number of ways, but the conservative Zhāngzhōu reading tradition represented by the *Bǎojiàn* is more discordant than Campbell's Amoy-based

system. In particular, many forms classified traditionally as *yùshè sāndĕng* 遇攝三等 {u_3} and having non-labial initials are read ***-i*** by this tradition. Campbell assigns the whole of the *yùshè sāndĕng* 遇攝三等 category to ***-u***:

character	*Campbell*	*Bǎojiàn*	
武	**bú**	**bú**	
夫	**hu, hû**	**hu, hû**	(traditionally a labial initial)
如	**jû**	**jî**	
徐	**sû**	**chhî**	
處	**chhù**	**chhì**	
舉	**kú**	**kí**	
去	**khù**	**khì**	
於	**u, û**	**i**	
予	**û, ú**	**î, í**	
與	**ú**	**í**	

People speaking Zhāngzhōu-leaning varieties of Taiwanese tend to pronounce most of these educated forms as prescribed by the *Bǎojiàn*, but with ***jî*** 如 and ***chhì*** 處 the readings ***jû*** and ***chhù*** now predominate, possibly because of their likeness to Taiwan Mandarin pronunciation. I have only succeeded in eliciting the expected form ***jî*** when it happened to appear in the name of an older relative of one of my informants. And the nature of Taiwanese is such that neither the *Bǎojiàn* nor Campbell can let us hear that these words should have rhymed with the *yùshè yīděng* 遇攝一等 category {u_1}, where the vowel ***ɔ*** appears (words such as 慕 ***bɔ̄*** and 訴 ***sɔ̀*** in this piece). This ***ɔ*** has a weakening effect on the onomotopœia in line 29, where the author says that the guest's flute makes "a deep hollow sound", and the Taiwanese vowel is not [u], as Sū Shì must have intended, but [ɔ]. The piece would sound better if there were no difference between the vowels ***ɔ***, ***i***, and ***u***; the *Bǎojiàn*'s accent is thus not the best one for reading Sū Shì.

A similar situation holds in *dàngshè sāndĕng* 宕攝三等, where the *Bǎojiàn* has ***-iang*** for most words while Campbell uses ***-iong*** throughout. The traditional Zhāngzhōu value ***-iang*** is still heard in many parts of Taiwan, but is definitely in the minority. The fact that, for example, the readings of characters such as 郎 ***lông*** and 良 ***liâng*** have different main

vowels is a charming bit of Zhāngzhōu dialect color, but it sets Zhāngzhōu apart from the vast majority of other varieties of Chinese, and makes traditional poetry sound strange; we would expect such vocalic parallelism as:

Amoy	*lông*	*liông*
Tàiyuán 太原	[ˌlɔ̃]	[ˌliɔ̃]
Chángshā 長沙	[ˌlan]	[ˌlian], etc.

However that may be, anyone regularly reading poetry in the *Bǎojiàn*'s accent encounters many such examples of poor rhyming, and eventually learns to hear ***-ong*** and ***-iang*** as an acceptable rhyme, and similarly ***-i*** and ***-u***.

So too, the rhyming in lines 12-20 of ***kan*** ([-an]) with ***thian***, ***jiân***, and ***sian*** (usually [-ɛn] or [-i̯æn]) is unnatural phonetically, but it should quickly become familiar because we hear it in all Taiwan accents as well as in Mandarin. (Poets did not begin to avoid rhyming [-an] with [-i̯æn] until about the thirteenth century.)

The most serious failure of rhyming in the *Bǎojiàn*'s "Qián Chìbì fù" is the sequence of seven rhyme-words in lines 85-97. The Taiwanese rimes ***oat***, ***ek***, ***iat***, and ***iak***~***iok*** go together poorly, and it is interesting that the medieval categories ***at***, ***ek***, ***eik***, and ***ak*** do no better. We can hide from the problem by pretending that only lines 87, 91, 95, and 97 (all ***-ek***) are meant to rhyme. Yet all seven words really *were* intended to rhyme. It happens that this particular sort of mixed-up *rùshēng* rhyming is quite typical of Sū Shì's *cí* 詞 and other non-traditional verse (see Lǔ Guóyáo 1991). But that does not help us as we seek the visceral satisfaction of hearing them rhyme when we read. Now, if we were to use conservative Mandarin dialects such as Héféi 合肥 or Tàiyuán 太原, we would not have so much trouble:[4]

[4] For Héféi and Tàiyuán data see *Hànyǔ fāngyīn zìhuì*. 月, p. 54; 色, p. 19; 竭; p. 46; 適, p. 70; 白, p. 141. 籍 is cited following 籍, p. 86. 酌 is reconstructed from rhyming graphs 著 tʂuɐʔ˩/tsəʔ˩, p. 184; 綽 tʂʻuɐʔ˩/tsʻəʔ˩, p. 38; 勺 ʂuɐʔ˩/səʔ˩ p. 186.

	rhyme-word	*Héféi*	*Tàiyuán*
85	月	yɐʔ˩	yəʔ˩
87	色	sɐʔ˩	səʔ˩
89	竭	tɕiɐʔ˩	tɕiəʔ˩
91	適	ʂəʔ˩	səʔ˩
93	酌	*tʂuɐʔ˩	*tsəʔ˩
95	藉	*tɕiəʔ˩	*tɕiəʔ˩
97	白	pɐʔ˩	piəʔ˩

This rhyming is closer than one would find in any of the southern dialects or even in Wú-area dialects. It may well be that Sū Shì composed some of his more colloquial rhymed works to be read in just such a form of Mandarin, of which Jiāng-Huái and Jìn dialects like Héféi and Tàiyuán are survivals. Be that as it may, we are reading in Taiwanese, and Taiwanese is powerless to bind together the final 14 lines of verse that these rhyme-words are supposed to embrace. Not only Taiwanese, but the majority of modern southern dialects, vaunted for their conservative phonology, would also fail here.

And yet, surprisingly, the "Qián Chìbì fù" was a particular favorite for recitation in all parts of China in the old days, not so very long past, before Mandarin replaced local language as the vehicle for transmitting traditional literature. A Taiwan-born Cantonese friend now in middle age tells of his illiterate Mainland nanny having sung this *fù* in a strange dialect, as a sort of lullaby. I have heard men now in their seventies and eighties chant it spiritedly in various dialects, recalling the days of youth when it was a favored children's text — for, apart from the particles and the inevitable word "moon", it contains few repeated characters. (My Fújiàn informants said the first Red Cliffs piece was generally taught to boys about 10-14 years old — after the various primers and the *Sìshū* 四書, as part of training in composition, based on texts in the *Gǔwén guānzhǐ* 古文觀止.) Sū Shì's gift with words has scarcely been matched in any era; yet this, one of his most popular compositions, has generally been read aloud in ways that conceal its basic sonority.

Prosody

I see no pattern of tonal opposition (*píng* 平 "even" *vs. zè* 仄 "oblique") within the individual lines of this piece, and that is as expected in a

"rhyme-prose" piece of such late date. Medieval *piántǐwén* 駢體文, of course, sometimes employs the *píngzè* contrast very rigorously. And Sū Shì was no weakling with prosody. When he chose to, he could write tonally exacting poetry and *piántǐwén*. Below is the opening of his "Qǐ jiàozhèng Lù Xuān gōng zòuyì zházi 乞校正陸宣公奏議劄子", written in a prosodically formal style.[5] Beside each line I have transcribed its syllables as ○ (*píng*), ● (*zè*), or ※ (neutral, outside the prosodic scheme). "Key" syllables, meaning grammatical particles (而, 之, 於, *etc.*) that serve to break up the prosody of lines longer than four syllables, are included unchanged in the transcription.

臣等	
猥以空疏	※●※○
備員講讀	※○※●
聖明天縱	※○※●
學問日新	※●※○
臣等	
才有限而道無窮	※※●而※※○
心欲言而口不逮	※※○而※※●
以此自愧	※●※●
莫知所爲	※○※○
竊謂人臣之納忠	※※※○之※○
譬如醫者之用藥	※※※●之※●
藥雖進於醫手	※※●於※●
方多傳於古人	※※○於※○
若已經校於世間	※※※●於※○
不必皆從於己出	※※※○於※●

We can describe the prosodic rules that Sū Shì is observing here as follows:

(1) The prosodic unit is the couplet.
(2) The tones of most syllables are irrelevant to prosodic order. Those that are important prosodically are the ones immediately preceding the cæsura and the end of the line. (Specifically, in four-syllable

[5] Text from Chang Jen-Ching [Zhāng Rénqǐng] (1986:155).

lines, the second and final syllables are prosodically important. In lines of longer than four syllables that have a "key" word, the final syllable and the syllable preceding that key word are prosodically important. The second syllable of a four-syllable line is like the syllable preceding the key word, in that both are typically followed by a cæsura.)

(3) The prosodically important syllables within a given line may or may not alternate with respect to *píng* and *zè*. However, within a couplet, the prosodically important syllables always contrast from one line to the other. (That is, if the last syllable of the opening line of a couplet is *píng*, then the last syllable of the second line is *zè*, and *vice versa*. If the pre-cæsural syllable of the opening line of a couplet is *píng*, then the pre-cæsural syllable of the second line is *zè*, and *vice versa*.)

(4) Couplets themselves alternate as to the *píng* or *zè* of the last syllable. Such an arrangement automatically precludes standard rhyming, in which every couplet must end in the same tone.

Sū Shì does not always observe these rules perfectly in his *piántǐwén*, but overall we can see that he is making the effort. For comparison, here are some examples of the same types of line from our "Chìbì fù"; at the right edge I have described the formal organization of each couplet:

10	少焉		*[intro.]*
11	月出於東山之上	※●於※※※●	*2-key-4*
12	徘徊於斗牛之間	※○於※※※○	
13	白露横江	※●※○	*4-syll.*
14	水光接天	※○※○	
15	縱一葦之所如	※※●之※○	*3-key-2*
16	凌萬頃之茫然	※※●之※○	
17	浩浩乎如		*[intro.]*
18	馮虛御風、而不知其所止	※○※○、※※○其※●	*4, 3-key-2*
19	飄飄乎如		*[intro.]*
20	遺世獨立、　羽化而登仙	※●※●、　※●而※○	*4, 2-key-2*
30	如怨如慕	※●※●	*4-syll.*
31	如泣如訴	※●※●	

32	餘音裊裊	※○※●	
33	不絕如縷	※●※●	
34	舞幽壑之潛蛟	※※●之※○	*3-key-2*
35	泣孤舟之嫠婦	※※○之※●	
51	舳艫千里	※○※●	*4-syll.*
52	旌旗蔽空	※○※○	
53	釃酒臨江	※●※○	
54	橫槊賦詩	※●※○	
59	駕一葉之扁舟	※※●之※○	*3-key-2*
60	舉匏樽以相屬	※※○以※●	
61	寄蜉蝣與天地	※※○與※●	
62	渺滄海之一粟	※※●之※●	
63	哀吾生之須臾	※※○之※○	
64	羨長江之無窮	※※○之※○	
65	挾飛仙以遨游	※※○以※○	
66	抱明月而長終	※※●而※○	
67	知不可乎驟得	※※●乎※●	
68	托遺響於悲風	※※●於※○	
79	且夫		*[intro.]*
80	天地之間	※●※○	*4-syll.*
81	物各有主	※●※●	
82	苟非吾之所有	※※○之※●	*3-key-2*
83	雖一毫而莫取	※※○而※●	
84	惟江上之清風	※※●之※○	
85	與山間之明月	※※○之※●	
86	耳得之而爲聲	※※○而※○	
87	目遇之而成色	※※○而※●	
88	取之無禁	※○※●	*4-syll.*
89	用之不竭	※○※●	

Sū Shì does give us prosodically balanced couplets here and there (*e.g.*, lines 11-12, 18-19, 34-35, 59-60, 84-85). He certainly knows how to write

them; in fact, in the last couplet of the piece, every syllable contrasts tonally:

96	相與枕藉乎舟中	○●●●乎○○	*4-key-2*
97	不知東方之既白	●○○○之●●	

But in far more cases it looks as if he is not really trying, and that is significant to our understanding of how to present this piece aloud.

There are some other places where Sū Shì has disrupted the neat sequence of parallel couplets that would be the norm for a piece of *piántǐwén*. Near the beginning, he gives us not a couplet but a triplet, beginning with line 5:

5	清風徐來	※○※○	*4-syll.*
6	水波不興	※○※○	
7	舉酒屬客	※●※●	

We could treat the first line as "introductory" — essentially as a prose line intended to begin a new section of the composition, followed by a couplet displaying correct tonal contrasts. But its four-syllable length and evenly placed cæsura make it more plausibly part of a sequence with the next two lines. The appearance of this triplet near the beginning of the *fù* seems to warn us not to expect too neat a presentation.

At the head of the guest's long complaint in "3-key-2" meter (*i.e.*, three syllables, then key word, then two syllables; lines 59-68), the author has placed two lines insinuating that meter but failing to convey it precisely:

57	漁樵於江渚之上	※○於※※※●	*2-key-4*
58	侶魚蝦而友麋鹿	※※○而※※●	*3-key-3*

These lines are a prosodic botch, and also make a poor parallel couplet, metrically speaking. Formally they should probably be treated as prose. But semantically and in overall sound we feel they flow together with the parallel lines that come after.

Lines 74-77 also seem to contain a rhyming couplet, malformed metrically and prosodically, buried between long introductory lines:

74 自其變者而觀之
75　而　天地曾不能一瞬　　※　※※※※※※●
76 自其不變者而觀之
77　則物與我皆無　　盡也　　※※※※※※　　●※

This is a marginal example, but there is just enough parallelism and the rhyming of 瞬 and 盡 is just viable enough that we may accept a sort of linkage here.

On the whole, then, the tonal contrasts usual in medieval poetry are not important in this piece. In any case, the traditional *píngzè* opposition is difficult to articulate in contemporary Taiwanese, or indeed in most modern varieties of Chinese, because the basic contrast of the tonal categories *píng* and *zè* has been eroded: the medieval *píngshēng* 平聲 ("even tones") is now almost universally divided in two, and the three *zèshēng* 仄聲 ("oblique tones", encompassing five modern Taiwanese tone categories) have little in common. Admittedly, the Taiwanese accent I prefer merges the *yîpíng* and *yángpíng* in tone sandhi; not all accents do so. That does not affect the many syllables that do not undergo sandhi, and in practice such syllables (those at the end of the line or before a conjunction or prosodic "key" word) are exactly the ones whose tone values are prosodically the most important in *piántǐwén*. A more natural distinction for Taiwanese would be to classify the three medieval tones *píng*, *shǎng*, and *qù* as "natural" (*píng*) and the medieval *rùshēng* alone as "checked" (*zè*, Taiwanese ***chek***). But medieval poetry does not work that way. However, we can see that the "Chìbì fù" is not intended to be poetry in the formal sense, because even though it rhymes and uses typically poetic line-meters, it nonetheless lacks regular prosody and prescribed line-lengths. We read it as prose.

Register

Sū Shì makes extensive use of register changes to punctuate the flow of his narrative, a technique characteristic of ancient-style prose and easily incorporated into modern reading. "Register" here refers to the variety of literary voice the author uses. Most of the "Chìbì fù" is composed in what I call "ordered prose", meaning prose whose organization is restricted by consistent parallelism and other devices. It is typically characterized by a dense juxtaposition of morphemes, interlarded with relatively few grammar particles other than those appearing as "keys". Ordered prose is metrically

comparable to the poetic line of ancient verse forms and often, as here, it rhymes. It differs from poetry proper in that the length of its lines frequently varies from couplet to couplet (or triplet). Chinese poetry, to be Chinese poetry, must rhyme and must exhibit mostly regular or at least prescribed line-lengths.

The style of writing that serves here and there to punctuate tracts of ordered prose is a much more free form classical-style prose, simpler and generally more direct. Typically, these interruptions make some sort of parenthetic comment about the poetic lines preceding them, or ask a question, perhaps rhetorical. Such "comment" or "capping" lines often end with a grammar particle. For instance:

39 客曰
40　月明星稀
41　烏鵲南飛
42 此非曹孟德之詩乎

43　西望夏口
44　東望武昌
45　山川相繆
46　郁乎蒼蒼
47 此非孟德之困於周郎者乎

Here the guest quotes two four-syllable lines of a poem by Cáo Cāo 曹操, then asks in prose if it is not in fact his poem that the landscape has brought to mind. The guest does not require an answer, and continues with four more poetic lines in Cáo Cāo's own expansive four-syllable style, describing the scene of their little outing, then sums up by suggesting that this might be precisely where Cáo Cāo met his greatest military defeat. Again the guest requires no answer, and continues:

48 方其
　　破荊州
49　下江陵
50 順流而東也

51 舳艫千里
52 旌旗蔽空
53 釃酒臨江
54 橫槊賦詩
55 固一世之雄也、而今安在哉

Lines 48-49 and 50 break up the run of tetrameter with an interlude of two three-syllable lines, followed by another prose comment. Lines 51-54 then return to the effusive four-syllable style, after which the guest comments again in plain prose, bemoaning Cáo Cāo's fall.

Register changes of this kind are extremely common in Sòng dynasty classical prose, and they have a long history in earlier Chinese writing. They appear to have begun, in late Zhōu 周 literature, as a rhetorical device in the speeches preserved in historical records. Formal speeches by officials remonstrating with their rulers are especially full of register alternations of this kind.[6] The speaker's main ideas are expressed in a length of poetry or ordered prose, capped with a line or two of plain prose that serves to comment on the more formal material, summarize it, or add a rhetorical question reinforcing the main point. The ordered prose portion of the speech usually consists of a quotation or string of quotations of ancient wisdom or poetry from an ancient work such as the *Shījīng* 詩經, or material that has a similarly formal ring to it. The "capping" line ends the paragraph, so to speak, although a single speech may contain a long run of such paragraphs.

The remainder of this section treats the relationship between register changes in writing and those in spoken language.

A passage in the *Analects* (7:18) tantalizes with a clue about the oral origins of this way of quoting ancient texts. It is commonly punctuated "子所雅言、詩書執禮、皆雅言也" and construed to mean: "What the Master used the correct pronunciation for: the *Odes*, the *Book of History* and the performance of the rites; in all these cases he used the correct pronunciation" (Lau 1979 cited here is typical of English and Mandarin translations). Modern commentators generally add that, in his teaching, Confucius used a special, courtly accent to quote high texts, and some other local accent

[6] Their rhetorical organization has been made a subject of special study by Schaberg 1997.

for everything else. That is not an impossible scene; one thinks of the Ashkenazy yeshiva, where ancient books were recited in Hebrew, their traditional commentary read in Aramaic, and daily discussion conducted in Yiddish or another local spoken language.

For our purposes, this claim is suggestive. Most modern varieties of Chinese exhibit register distinctions of one sort or another, and it is attractive to imagine matching dialect register to textual register when we read aloud. It happens that in Taiwanese, more than in most forms of Chinese, there is an immense gulf between the spoken language and the written Chinese language as it is read aloud. What would happen if we tried to assign Sū Shì's ordered prose to the Taiwanese reading language, and his capping lines to the spoken language? Perhaps something like this:

39 客曰	~~khek# o̍at~~ > lâng-kheh# kóng
40 月明星稀	go̍at# bêng#— seng hi—
41 烏鵲南飛	~~ơ~~ chhiak#— lâm hui—
42 此非曹孟德之詩乎	~~chhú — hui tsô bēng tek# chi0 si#— hō͘0~~ > chhe# kám m̄ sī tsô bēng tek# ê si#— le0

All but the name **Tsô Bēng-tek** and the single word ***si*** "poem" are altered. The Taiwanese colloquial translation, replacing both the grammar and lexicon of the original, involves changes so extensive that it is really untrue to what Sū Shì wrote. As a matter of performance, it sounds unattractive to me. And, in reading and chanting practice as I have actually observed it in Taiwan and elsewhere, it is never done to replace the original text so invasively.

Moreover, there is good reason to understand the *Analects* passage differently, as making no reference to pronunciation or dialect differences at all:

> 子所雅言詩書、執禮皆雅言也
>
> The language that the Master considered elegant was the *Shījīng* and *Shūjīng*; in carrying out ritual, he always spoke elegantly.

I have come to believe these lines originally referred to style rather than

different dialects (cf. Branner 2000:7).

The idea that *yǎyán* 雅言 refers to some sort of ancient standard language is today the most common interpretation of the passage. In early commentaries, such as the Máo Preface, *yǎ* is prominently glossed as *zhèng* 正 'correct, rectified". This influential gloss led, apparently in Manchu times, to the theory that *yǎyán* referred to an ancient standard language. A piece of evidence for this theory comes from Liú Bǎonán 劉寶楠 (1791-1855), who asserted that *yǎ* is an old variant of Xià 夏, said to mean a northern language related to that of the ancient court. Pān Wéichéng 潘維城 had earlier come to a similar if less philologically explicit conclusion, and there is another account of this kind, with much poorer evidence, cited by the 20th century Jiǎng Bóqián 蔣伯潛. Phonologically, the equivalence of 夏 and 雅 is not excessively far-fetched, and there is at least one known case of them alternating in early texts (Gāo Hēng 1989:849). Still, the larger claim is labored. If there ever really had been a "standard language" in pre-Imperial times, one would have expected to see discussion of it in the early writings. But there is essentially none. The only important term seems to have been *tōngyǔ* 通語, which does not imply standardization, meaning essentially "regularly understood language".

Pre-modern Chinese commentators would have found Liú Bǎonán's explanation of *yǎyán* strange. A note on the *Analects* passage by the great 2nd century scholiast Zhèng Xuán (127-200) 鄭玄 is representative of most opinions before the Sòng dynasty:

> 讀先王典法必正其音然後義全、不可有所諱
>
> In reading the standards and regulations of the former kings, one must get the pronunciations correct and only then will the meaning be complete. It is not permissible to avoid certain words.

Zhèng Xuán does not mention any sort of standard language; he simply wants us make an effort to use 'correct speech', meaning pronunciation that has not been altered to avoid taboo words.

Taboos were traditionally applied to the names of deceased ancestors or rulers, and educated people avoided writing the characters for these names or even pronnouncing them. The practice has become virtually extinct. Today virtually no one taboos personal names, some common Mandarin character-readings are still tabooed, however. Specifically, when

a syllable that is the expected reading of a common character has an obscene meaning in speech, we find it replaced:

character	*usual reading*	*standard gloss*	*expected reading*	*apparent colloq. meaning of expected reading*
鳥	*niǎo*	'bird'	**diǎo*	'male organ'
操	*cāo*	'to handle'	**cào*	'to copulate with'
卑	*bēi*	'of low position'	**bǐ*	'female organ'
松	*sōng*	'pine tree'	**sóng*	'semen'

Most varieties of spoken Chinese have examples of this kind. Surely Zhèng Xuán meant only the avoidance of taboo personal names; he could not have meant that obscene homophones should be used in the recitation of the *Shījīng*.[7]

Zhèng Xuán's insistence on authentic traditional pronunciation is admirable, but it has a decidedly Eastern Hàn dynasty ring to it and is unlikely to be the original meaning of the *Analects* passage. If surviving evidence is representative, pronunciation was scarcely even a topic of discussion in China before the Hàn. I prefer to retain the better attested senses 'elegant' and '*elegantia*' for *yǎ* in *Analects* 7:18.

Passages from the *Shī* and *Shū* are exactly what Confucius and generations of scholars after him quoted as the definitively *yǎ* 'elegant' form of language. In the modern recitation of classical prose, often both ordered prose and capping text are rendered in the same accent, without distinction. That is especially true when the piece is sung. However, the register distinction is Sū Shì's second most important organizing element, after rhyme. Although this distinction is not generally reflected in the native performances I have studied, I can imagine preserving it by chanting the ordered prose and then merely reading aloud the capping text. That

[7] Interestingly, the Taiwanese reading tradition does not always avoid obscene pronunciations. For example, the words for 'bird' and 'penis', both ***chiáu***, are frankly homophonous. ***Kàn*** is 'to copulate', and there is a long list of literary characters with this sound, including 澗 and 幹. Yet, in Taiwan Mandarin, homophonous syllables *gàn* (幹, 灨, etc.) are avoided (they are usually rendered *gān*) because they are felt to be taboo on the basis of the Taiwanese obscenity. It thus appears that Taiwan Mandarin has a more prudish æsthetic sense than Taiwanese.

technique could be applied to any reading accent, of course, not merely Taiwanese.

The Virtue of Traditional Reading

The Taiwanese reading accent is, all in all, quite remote from the æsthetics of medieval phonology, and at times inadequate to the requirements of literature. What is the value of preserving the Hànbûn reading style? I can offer two opinions.

First, unless all Classical Chinese is to be read in reconstruction alone, we must make allowances for the vagaries of modern accents. Standard Mandarin, certainly, is an inadequate vehicle for reading traditional Chinese literature. It has lost the whole *rùshēng* ("entering") tone category and shifted many of the vowels in *rùshēng* words away from their historical colors. Even more egregiously than Taiwanese, Mandarin has failed to maintain the unity of the traditional *shǎngshēng* ("rising") category. Mandarin has also lost the ancient initial-voicing distinction in most tone categories. But since Mandarin is now the main spoken language of the ethnic Chinese world, most of us can borrow classical phrases into our speech only if we use Mandarin readings. The occasional classical expression in conversation is a necessary token of literacy and good breeding. So for Taiwanese speakers, too, it makes sense to use Hànbûn in its Taiwanese dress rather than in Mandarin. The Taiwanese spoken language is today experiencing a resurgence after decades of official and unofficial suppression and scholarly neglect. Unless we wish to squelch Taiwanese for some reason, it follows that its reading tradition must remain alive in order to feed into the larger flow of spoken language. This need is already being felt in Taiwan, where there is blossoming interest in native Hànbûn practice. Taiwanese speakers by all means hunger and thirst after literary knowledge and its cultural tokens, just as Mandarin speakers do.

Second, the Taiwanese reading of Hànbûn is historically real. It has actually existed, and no amount of concealment can alter that fact. We may find it inconvenient to learn, or we may feel opposed to it for some reason, but it is a real and valid reading tradition thoroughly distinct from the Mandarin voice. For this reason it should continue to be heard, if only in the interest of a maintaining a more diverse intellectual and artistic world. On this point, which is by all means a moral issue in a world rushing toward uniformity in all things, I offer an analogy with Western

classical music.

I was raised at a time when the movement for historically "authentic" performances was gaining sway in the mainstream concert hall. The result of this "*fùgǔ* 復古 [restored antiquity]" movement was that interpretations of the older virtuoso era were sometimes derided as emotionally over-wrought or beclouded with historical inaccuracies. On concert programs and record liners of the day, Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) was a favorite villain, as was Franz Liszt (1811-1886) with his maundering opera paraphrases and his "improved" transcriptions of other composers, including even Bach.

Today, I listen in awe to Liszt's Bach transcriptions and to "reworked" Bach compositions such as Busoni's massive piano arrangement of the Chaconne from the violin Partita no. 2, or Leopold Godowsky's (1870-1938) fantasy-transcriptions of the solo cello suites and violin sonatas. It is true that they are quite different from the "clean" sound we have more recently learned to prize in Bach. Yet Liszt and Busoni presented Bach in ways that were highly original and intelligently conceived. These may not have been true to Bach's own practice, but they were true to Liszt and Busoni, two of the most gifted musicians of their eras and neither one a fool. The tampered-with versions of the virtuoso era are among Bach's many legitmate voices.

In the same way, although the Taiwanese reading accent is frankly untrue to the sound of any major period of Chinese literature, it is nevertheless true to one native tradition of reading that literature. When we read the "Chìbì fù" aloud in the *Bǎojiàn*'s accent, we are hearing it substantially as it has been read in Zhāngzhōu-type dialects for at least two or three hundred years. If nothing else, there is virtue innate to cultivating that traditional activity. And if literature read in this bastard voice gives us any satisfaction or inspires us, then, after all, like Busoni's Bach it is not to be dismissed as illegitimate.

Students of Hànbûn who do read aloud use Mandarin almost exclusively, and virtually no one chants now. But it seems to me that any accent we can use for reading aloud is a bona fide one. Let it be noted that the Taiwanese reading accent has two pedagogical advantages over ordinary Mandarin. One is that, as described above, tone sandhi helps parse grammar, serving as an aid to understanding and memory. Mandarin allows no such analysis to be built into pronunciation. The other advantage is the innate music in Taiwanese tone values, which are expressed melodically when

Hànbûn is chanted. The principles of chanting are well known — level tone contours become level pitches in the musical scale, and rising or falling tone contours become sequences of two or more notes or a single note preceded by a grace note. The text makes its own melody, as a fish-head makes its own soup. These principles are applied whenever any dialect is chanted (although both prose texts and poems are also sometimes fitted to fixed melodies that have no relation to the tones of individual words). But every dialect has its own inventory of tone values, and so the chanted sounds of no two dialects are exactly the same. Taiwanese has 7 distinct tone contours, plus the feature of shortness characteristic of the *rùshēng*. These values give it much more musical variety than standard Mandarin, which has only 4 contours and no length contrast.

Most Westerners who read Hànbûn in fact do not read it aloud at all; we therefore experience it only with our dumb eyes. Literature taken in through the eyes can attract us, at best, by its content. If the content is dull or beyond our ken, we have no other path to familiarity except stubbornness, and life is really too short for much of that. But by reading it aloud we have the chance become intimate with it first, and that intimacy will hold our attention long enough to let our interest be appealed to a second and third time. Surely that is how many native readers come to learn classical literature in the first place. As in an arranged marriage, love is sometimes born more of familiarity than of passion. That secret of teaching is known in all the long-lived literate cultures of the world, and we would do well to heed it today. We must learn to be our own illiterate nannies, and sing Hànbûn into memory like the lullabies of childhood.

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