CHAPTER VIII

Three Short Poems

A. THE BIRD FROM THE FAR WEST [1]
(circa 101 A. D.)

Pan Chao's elder brother, Governor-general in East Turkestan, the Marquis of Ting-yüan, Pan Ch'ao, presented a (strange) large bird [2] to His Majesty (the emperor Ho, 89–105 A. D.).[3] His Majesty commanded Pan Chao by mandate to compose verses suitable to the occasion of the presentation of the gift, and she wrote:

Congratulations to haunts of the Bird (from the Far West);
Miraculous [4] that peak of the K'un-lun [5] which gave him birth:
He differs greatly from a small one of like name.[6]
Lo! he belongs to the ranks of the Imperial Phoenix.[7]

In his breast he cherishes virtue,[8] he seeks the Righteous One;[9]
Soaring ten thousand *li* he has come, travelling (eastward).
Alighting at the imperial court, he halts, resting;
He delights in the Spirit of Harmony, so at leisure here he roams.

(All ranks at court,) high and low, dwell in mutual love;
They listen to the harmony of music in its refined praise.[10]
(Themselves) from east and west, from south and north;[11]
All think[12] of submitting, and coming to serve and live.

大雀賦

大家同產兄西域都護定遠侯班超獻大雀詔令大家作賦曰

嘉大雀之所集生崑崙之靈丘同小名而大異乃鳳皇之匹疇懷有德而歸義故翔萬里而來遊集帝庭而止息樂和氣而優游上下協而相親聽雅頌之雍雍自東西與南北咸思服而來同

B. THE CICADA [13]

(Let us sing to:) [14]
That one [15] which of somber-colored [16] insects is least [17] and lowliest; [18]
Yet which also derives its life [19] from Heaven and Earth.
Just at the climax of summer's [20] heat,
Mounted [21] high upon a tree,[22] it vents [23] itself.
Following the warm breeze,[24] it roams this way;
Then, when autumn withers and oppresses,[25] it vanishes.

(Let us sing to:)
(That one which) drinks the clear dews [26] of the scarlet [27] garden;
And perched proudly on a high branch, plumes [28] itself.
It extols the glorious light of the adorable Imperial Dynasty,
The dazzling, brilliantly blinding, and luminous August One! [29]

(Let us sing to:)
(That one which) at the height of happiness [30] unsatisfied, (is cut off).
So it leaves behind only dullness and sadness on the horizon.

蟬賦

伊玄蟲之微陋亦攝生于天壤當三秋之盛暑陵高木之流響飡風被而來遊商焱厲而化往吸清露于丹園抗喬枝而理翮崇皇朝之輝光映豹豹而灼灼復丹款之未足留滯恨乎天際

C. THE NEEDLE AND THREAD

Strong [31] Spirit of Pure (Steel),[32] from autumn's metal cast; [33]
(Incarnate) body (of Power), slight and subtle, straight and sharp!
To pierce, then to enter gradually in, that is your nature; [34]
Things far apart all strung into one,[35] (that is your task).

Only your ordered footprints, (you wonderful) Needle and Thread,
Attest the quantity, the variety, the universality (of your work).
You retrace, you sway, you twist [36] (in your path) to mend flaws,
Until the results resemble the pure wool of the lamb.[37]

What measure [38] or basket suffices to count (the pieces of your work)?
All, all together these are your memorials.[39]
(They are found in the village home;)
They ascend [40] into the stately hall.[41]

鍼縷賦

鎔秋金之剛精形微妙而直端性通達而漸進博庶物而一貫惟鍼縷之列迹信廣博而無原退逶迤以補過佩素絲之羔羊何斗筲之足算感勒石而升堂

THE BIRD FROM THE FAR WEST: NOTES

[1] The title in Chinese is literally "Verses to the Great Sparrow."

[2] Literally, "great sparrow." The *Kuang Chih,* 廣志 (*P'ei-wên Yün-fu,* 佩文韻府, 1711, *chüan* 99, 雀), said that "the great sparrow is the ostrich of today," 卽今之駝鳥也; and (*I-wên Lei-chü,* 藝文類聚, *chüan* 92, 雀) that "Parthia's great sparrow lifts its head eight or nine feet (the foot-measure was probably nine English inches; see below, note 38), opens its wings more than ten feet, eats wheat, and lays eggs as (large as) a jar, 甕." (Cf. *Hou Han Shu, chüan* 88, 條支國, *Han Shu, chüan* 96a.) Similar comments with explanatory notes in the section for T'iao-chih Kuo are made upon the entry of the gift of a *ta ch'üeh,* 大雀. The Chinese name for this gift, "bird of Parthia," implies a Parthian origin, but Chavannes (*T'oung Pao,* VIII, 1907, 176-178) advanced the theory that "these birds originated from T'iao-chih, that is, Desht Misan or Mésène (the theory is disputed, however, by Laufer in footnote 2, *Chinese Clay Figures,* pp. 125-126), where ruled Arabic princes who had all facilities for obtaining ostriches from Arabia." The Chinese texts which the author of this study has examined seem to agree with Chavannes' theory, the writers naming T'iao-chih Kuo as the origin of the Parthian bird. According to the *Tung Kuan Han Chi* in "101 A. D. (Yung-yüan, thirteenth year), the King of Parthia sent up the gift of a great sparrow from T'iao-chih Kuo." See also *I-wên Lei-chü,* same; and *T'ai-p'ing Yü-lan,* 太平御覽, *chüan* 922, 大雀.

[3] According also to the *Hou Han Shu* (*chüan* 88, 安息國), in the thirteenth year of the reign of the emperor Ho (101 A. D.) Parthia sent tribute to the Chinese court. According to the *Tung Kuan Han Chi* (*chüan* 16, 班超) Pan Ch'ao sent his son Yung with the tribute train from Parthia (101 A. D.). Hui Tung, 惠棟 (c. 1750), quoting Yüan Hung, 袁宏, of the Chin dynasty (see Appendix, p. 159), added that this son brought the "great sparrow" to the emperor the tenth moon of the thirteenth year of Ho Ti, and Pan Chao was ordered to compose verses suitable to the occasion of the presentation of the gift (see Wang Hsien-ch'ien's edition, 1915, of the *Hou Han Shu*). The *T'ung Chien,* 通鑑 (*chüan* 48, 漢紀, 和帝, fourteenth year), dated these events 102 A. D., but the commentator noted the discrepancy in events thus dated, see p. 50; Chapter VI, note 16. This poem then can only be dated "*circa* 101 A. D."

[4] See Legge (*Classics,* IV, 456): "Some take it, 靈, in the sense of 'royal'; others as marvellous, a name of admiration." See Chapter VI, note 8, pp. 74, 78.

[5] The name is found in the "Tribute of Yü" (of the Book of History, *Classics,* III, 127) dated by Ku Chieh-kang (*Ku Shih Pien,* Intro. p. 58, p. 134) not earlier than the period of the Contending States (481-221 B. C.). It is also mentioned in the *Shan Hai Ching,* 山海經, which according to Ku Chieh-kang, is of the same or a bit later period. Maspero (same, p. 100, note 1, p. 610), however, credits the *Yü Kung* to a time probably prior to the end of the Western Chou, eighth century B. C.; and the first treatise of the *Shan Hai Ching* he places at the end of the Eastern Chou, fourth century B. C. (same, p. 611, notes 1 and 2). With the K'un-lun then and later were associated countless fictions. (For pre-Han foreign influence in China, see Maspero: same, pp. 607-621.) After the expedition of Chang Ch'ien to the West, 139-126

B. C., and the gradual opening of East Turkestan to Chinese intercourse, first in the Han dynasty, and then in the T'ang, Yüan, and Ch'ing dynasties, the name was applied to the range of mountains stretching east and west south of the Tarim Basin and lying north of Tibet, which was connected with the T'ien-shan on the north by the mighty eastern rim, the Pamirs. Here at the same time the name seems to be used in its mythological value as being the region where Hsi-wang-mu, 西王母 (Giles: *Adversaria Sinica,* pp. 1-19), reigns. It indicates that the bird being compared with a phoenix comes from the supernatural country of the Immortals.

[6] "One of like name" means the "sparrow," 雀.

[7] While, 鳳凰, *fêng-huang* is usually translated "phoenix," Florence Ayscough (*Fir-Flower Tablets,* Boston, 1921, Introduction, p. LV) translates "crested love-pheasants." Really, however, since it is a mythical creature, there is no adequate non-Chinese term for the *fêng-huang.*

Since the days of Confucius (see Analects 9:8, *Classics,* I, 219) it has occupied an important place both in Chinese literature and in Chinese thinking where its appearance signifies the reign of a Saint. For a description of the fabulous bird, see *Chinese Repository,* "Notices of Natural History," VII (1838-1839), pp. 212, 250 ff; C. A. S. Williams, "Chinese Metaphorical Zoology," *JRAS, NCB,* vol. L (1919), 26-27; Giles: *Dict.,* no. 3560; Mayers, I, no. 134, II, no. 94; Book of Poetry, III, II, 8:7, 8, and 9, *Classics,* IV, 493-494; *Shan Hai Ching, chüan* 1, 丹穴之山; *Huai-nan Tzû,* 淮南鴻列解說林訓, *chüan* 17. For a discussion of the Chinese character, *fêng,* see L. C. Hopkins, "The Wind, The Phoenix, and a String of Shells," *JRAS* (April, 1917), pp. 377-383.

[8] Virtue, 德, harmony, 和, and similar expressions need to be interpreted in terms of the idealism of the Han Confucianists, who would unite and pacify by the civilizing influence of virtue, 德化, see pp. 5-7.

[9] That is: since he appears whenever there is a Sage Ruler. The poem thus contains the highest compliment to the rule of the emperor.

[10] This line refers to court music and songs. For the place of music in Han thinking see the *Li Chi,* "The Record of Music," with notes by John Chalmers in *China Review,* XV (1886-1887), 9-10; Legge: *Li-Ki, Yo-Ki, SBE,* XXVIII, 92-131; B. Jenkins, *JRAS, NCB,* V (1868), 30-57, a complete translation of the "Memorial of Music," under the title, "Notions of the Ancient Chinese Respecting Music." Contemporary Chinese scholarship (see p. 14) recognizes this "Record of Music" as the work of the Han Confucianists based upon earlier material, chiefly that of Hsün Tzû, 荀子, so it doubtless reflects Han conceptions of the art.

[11] A use of "The Fame of Wên Wang," Book of Poetry, see *Classics,* IV, 463: 自西自東, 自南自北. 無思不服, 皇王丞哉.

"From the west to the east, from the south to the north,
There was not a thought but did him homage."

In the submission of his seventy disciples to Confucius because of his virtue, the excerpt is the same, but Legge translated the third phrase: "There was not one who thought of refusing submission," see Mencius, II, I, 3:2, *Classics,* II, 197.

[12] 無思不服 of the quotation above from the Book of Poetry, *i.e.,* under the Sage rule of the emperor.

THE CICADA: NOTES

[13] The cicada, or broad locust is common all over China, and has many names. L. C. Arlington noted in *New China Review* (IV, 1922, 412-413) that "it is a small green insect common in the seventh moon; a small black one which appears during the fifth moon, and also a large black one." The *Tz'û Yüan* describes the cicada as "born in the summer and autumn," and of many names and varieties. Of the five ancient Chinese fables translated by C. Arendt (*China Review,* XIII, 1884-1885), the fable of "The Cicada and The Mantis" seems to be one of the two earliest known. The most ancient source for this apologue is Liu Hsiang's, 劉向, version in his "Garden of Stories" (*Shuo Yüan,* 說苑, BK. 9, fol. 3, first century B. C.). A second source is the *Wu Yüeh Ch'un-ch'iu,* 吳越春秋 (BK. 3, fol. 14), a semi-historical work belonging to the first century A. D. (see Wylie: *Notes,* p. 40). Based doubtless, said Arendt, on this second source, the apologue is found in the "History of the Various States under the Eastern Chou Dynasty," 東周列國志. (Bk. 18, chap. 82), a late Ming or early Ch'ing dynasty historical narrative (see Wylie: *Notes,* p. 203). For a translation of a poem "The Cicada" by Ou-yang Hsiu, see Waley: *The Temple,* pp. 99-102.

[14] "Let us sing to" is added in order to make something of a whole of the three fragments of Pan Chao's poem, in translation arranged in three stanzas of unequal length.

[15] 伊, this, that; he, she, it, etc., is noted by J. Edkins ("Evolution of the Pronoun," *China Review,* XVI, 1887-1888, 49-53) as one of the root pronouns, a demonstrative. "That one which" is supplied as introductory for stanzas two and three as well as for one.

[16] J. Edkins ("The *Yi King* and Its Appendices," *China Review,* XIV, 1885-1886, 306) wrote that this word, 玄, somber-colored, "the dark principle, constitutes the base of the operations of the universe, and it is convertible with (the Way), 道 of Lao Tzû." See *Tao Tê Ching,* Paul Carus, pp. 148, 97, 337. According to *Kung-kuei Wên Hsüan,* 宮閨文選 (*chüan* 1), the first three characters are 伊鳴蜩, and the reading would be, "That one which is of chirping creatures a small and lowly one."

E. R. Eichler (*China Review,* XV, 1886-1887, 74) translated 玄冥, "the spirit of water." So the cicada is the 玄蟲, "the spirit of Insect Life," in these fragments from the brush of Pan Chao.

[17] 微, "small," note its use in the *Tao Tê Ching,* Carus, Chap. 14, pp. 103, 165.

[18] 陋, "lowly." The *Tz'û Yüan* (戍, p. 113) says: 地位卑賤曰陋.

[19] The modern term for 攝生 is 衛生, "to preserve your health." There is the suggestion of the Taoist "simple life" as preached by Chuang Tzû.

[20] 三秋 usually means the three autumn moons, seventh, eighth, and ninth. It is also a name for the ninth moon. From approximately the first week in August to the first week in November is the period known as autumn in China. As the ninth moon (late September—early October of the western calendar) is rather cold for cicadas anywhere in China, certainly in Honan Province, here 三秋 is taken to mean 三伏, or the Three Decades of Heat (see Mayers, p. 316).

秋 not infrequently means 時, "time." Since the Three Decades of Heat cover the hottest part of the season, 三秋, is translated "the climax of the summer."

[21] 陵. See *Tz'û Yüan,* 戎, p. 123.

[22] The *Tz'û Yüan* says that the female cicada lays eggs in the branches of the trees, and when hatched the young fall to the ground, and burrow below the surface where they feed on the moisture from the roots. The larva becomes a pupa, emerges from the ground, mounts the trees, and from this pupa issues the cicada. This process covers not more than two years. As soon as the cicada comes forth, it seeks a mate. If male, it then usually dies immediately; if female, it lays and hatches eggs, then dies. The life period of the cicada, male or female, is not generally more than a few days, though specimens are known to have lived as long as two years. (For the western species, see *Encyclopedia Britannica,* Article, Cicada.)

C. Arendt (*China Review,* XIII, 1884-1885, *23*), translating from "The Cicada and The Mantis," wrote: "The song of a cicada from the boughs of a high tree,—the cicada singing the protracted notes of its ditty in the breeze of the morning" (東周列國志, BK. 18, Chap. 82). Same, p. *27*: "In the garden there is a tree, on which a cicada was perched. The cicada was sitting there on high, singing the mellow tones of its ditty, and drinking the dew." (Liu Hsiang's "Garden of Stories," BK. 9, fol. 3.)

[23] Both the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* Article, Cicada; and the *Tz'û Yüan,* Character 蟬, agree that "Cicadas are chiefly remarkable for the shrill song of the males, which in some cases may be heard in concert at a distance of a quarter of a mile or more,—no auditory organs have been found in the females."

The *Li Chi* (Legge, *SBE,* XXVII, *275*) under the record for the first moon of summer says that "Cicadas begin to sing."

[24] The *Shuo Wên,* 說文, defined this term, 融風, as a "northeast wind." At the beginning of spring, 立春節, comes this wind; at the arrival of autumn it goes. The use of 被 (Giles: *Dict.,* no. 8709) here shows that the cicada is under the influence of the wind; or wrapped, as it were, in the wind.

[25] After autumn begins, 立秋節, the early mornings in north China bring a breeze which withers and exhausts both plant and animal life. In the summer of 1926 in Peking the writer saw her last cicada of the season during the week following the beginning of autumn, which occurred that year on August eighth.

[26] Chuang Tzû's 吸清露 (莊子集釋, *chüan* 1a, 遙遊) is translated by Giles (*Chuang Tzû, Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer,* London, 1926, Chap. I, p. *7*): "lives on air and dew."

C. Arendt (*China Review,* XIII, 1884-1885, *26*) wrote that "In the 'Annals,' 吳越春秋, the cicada is prettily described as 'drinking the dew of the morning,' 飲清露."

[27] *Tan,* 丹, has a Taoistic connotation: "the elixir of life."

[28] A barbershop in Peking is called 理髮館.

[29] Legge (*Classics,* IV, 12, in his note on the use of 灼 in the Book of Poetry, I, I, 6, line 2) said that "灼灼 is descriptive rather of the brilliance of the flowers than of their luxuriance."

[30] 丹款之未足. "The scarlet entertainment had not been enjoyed to the limit.

According to the *Shuo Wên,* 款 means that which is desired," 意有所欲也. According to the *Po Ya,* 博雅, it means 愛也.

Note the use of 足 in *Tao Tê Ching,* Carus, Chap. 44:3 and 8; 46:3, pp. 217, 219, 120-121, as "Contentment."

[31] Strong 剛, literally "firm" or "hard" (in "Lessons for Women," p. 85), slight, 微 (in "The Cicada," p. 103), straight, 直 (in "Lessons for Women," p. 88), to pierce, 通達 (see 通 in "Travelling Eastward," p. 113), illustrate the use of terms in this poem which convey with their descriptive power psychological meaning that no doubt carried weight with Pan Chao in her selection of them.

[32] Hirth (*Ancient History,* pp. 235-237) wrote of the probability of steel being known as early as the time of King Kou-chien, 勾踐 (496-465 B. C.), of Yüeh State, 越國. Maspero (same, p. 43) writes that iron was not used until the end of Chou.

[33] Metal, 金, *"chin"* is one of the Five Elements, 五行 (see Maspero: same, p. 439, note 3), or the perpetually active principles of Nature (see *Shu King,* Legge: *Classics,* III, 325). The later speculations and enlargements on them were derived from the disquisitions of Tsou Yen, 騶衍 (fourth century B. C., Chavannes: *Mémoires,* I, p. CXLIV; Maspero: same, pp. 613-615), followed by the *Wu-hsing Chih,* 五行志, of Liu Hsiang, and the *Po-hu T'ung,* 白虎通, of Pan Ku (see p. 28). The nature of the element *Chin* (see Mayers, II, no. 127, 135) is coolness, 凉. Of the Five Metals (see Mayers, II, no. 139), the fifth is iron. The grain of the Five Grains which corresponds with metal is hemp, 麻. Metal is overcome by earth, 土. According to Chang Hêng, 張衡 (78-130 A. D., see p. 17), Venus was the Metal Planet, 金星, of the Five Planets (see Mayers, II, no. 162.) The *Yin,* 陰, principle (pp. 84, 85) corresponds to metal.

As Spring is under the rule of wood, Summer of fire, and Winter of water, so Autumn is under the metal element.

[34] In translation F. H. Balfour (*China Review,* IX, 1880-1881, 288-289) quoting from "The Principle of Nature," a chapter from "The History of Light." said that Huai-nan Tzû wrote: "It is always the man who does a thing for the first time, who has the difficulties to contend with; to those who come after him the fight is easy—the point (of the spear) encounters dangers; —yet the virtuous and wise are unable to avoid being always in the position of the point."

Huai-nan Tzû (see *T'ai-p'ing Yü-lan, chüan* 830, 鍼) also wrote a short verse on "The Needle and Thread" to show their mutual need for accomplishment of results.

"First the thread, then the needle,
Fails to fashion garments.
First the needle, then the thread,
May complete a curtain;
May fill enough earth baskets
To build a city wall."

[35] The meaning of this character, 貫 (Giles: *Dict.,* no. 6378), is "to run a thread through; to string; to connect," and doubtless Pan Chao had reference to its use in the "Analects." See Analects 4:15, *Classics,* I, 169; Analects

15:2, same, p. 295. The first use in 吾道一以貫之; the second in 予一以貫之. Legge's explanation (same, note 2, p. 295) is wrong. The unity in knowledge is the point. It means "to string together" as used by Pan Chao.

[36] Note the use of these ideas in the field of morals in "Lessons for Women," Chapter VII.

[37] In China the lamb is associated with filial piety. 羊跪乳, "The mother sheep stands and the lamb kneels." Thus for example the practice of filial piety is enforced by the reference to the lamb which always kneels when it is suckled by the dam.

If, however, Pan Chao meant the line to be an allusion to a similar line in the Book of Poetry, I, II, 7, (see *Classics,* IV, 28-29), the wording might be changed to read: "Until the results resemble court garments." These garments of skin, as explained by Legge, were seamed with white silk thread.

[38] In 1924 when the Ch'ing imperial family was driven out of the Forbidden City, Peking, there was discovered in the K'un-ning, 坤寧, Palace the original standard measure of capacity, a bronze *hu,* 斛, cast by order of Wang Mang. This measure of capacity unquestionably fixes the length of the foot measure of the Wang Mang period (9-22 A. D.) at slightly over nine English inches length; and determines the depth of the Han *tou,* 斗, "peck," to be slightly over nine-tenths of an English inch. (Wang Kuo-wei, 王國維, 1877-1927, in a lecture, "The Foot Measure in Various Chinese Dynasties," July, 1926, delivered in Yenching School of Chinese Studies, Peking). "The Coin-Foot-Measure of the Wang Mang period has the same length as that made in the Chien-wu, 建武, period (25-55 A. D.) of the later Han dynasty, and is also the same length as the foot measure of the Chou dynasty." (Translation by A. W. Hummel, cf. *JRAS, NCB,* LIX, 1928, 112-113.)

While Pan Chao probably had in mind the expression in the "Analects," her use here seems also, especially on the surface, that of an ordinary measure of capacity. See Analects 13:20, *Classics,* I, 272: 斗筲之人, "peck and hamper people—mere utensils, fit to fulfill a given function and no more."

[39] According to the *K'ang-hsi Dictionary*: 勒又刻也. Giles (*Dict.,* no. 7316): 勒石, "to carve upon stone." So here taken to mean that the quantities of the pieces of work are the memorial stones to the needle and thread. The Sung dynasty commentator, Chang Ch'iao 章樵 (1232 A. D.), of the *Ku Wên Yüan,* 古文苑 (1886 A. D.), *chüan* 3, 賦, interpreted 石 to tell of quantities only, without the thought of "memorial stones." From a small beginning a great number is gradually made as a result of work.

[40] While 堂 may mean a stately hall, undoubtedly Pan Chao had in mind the expression of Confucius about Tzû-lu from the Analects 11:12, *Classics,* I, 242): 升堂. He "has ascended the hall, though he has not yet passed into the inner apartments." Legge (same, note 14:2) wrote, "This contains a defense of (Tzû-lu), and an illustration of his real attainments"; given at a time when the other disciples began not to respect him.

[41] For purposes of bibliographical record it may be mentioned that the translation of this poem into English was done by the author in 1926-1927 at which time there existed, so far as she knows, no translation of it into any western language. The admirably poetical translation by Professor W. E. Soothill which appeared in Lady Hosie's *Portrait of a Chinese Lady* in 1929 was made from a Chinese text supplied to the translator by the present author in 1928.

For a discussion of the poems see Chapter XII.

They are about the same in construction. The longest is that of "The Bird from the Far West," which having one phrase of seven instead of six characters, exceeds the poem of "The Cicada" in length by one character. These two poems, however, are exactly the same length in phrases, each having twelve. The shortest of the poems is that of "The Needle and Thread," which has ten phrases, and so a total of only sixty characters. Each of the three poems uses about the same characters for the lightly stressed conjunctions, prepositions, and enclitics. In "The Bird from the Far West" are found 而 in seven phrases, 之 in four phrases, and 與 in one phrase. In "The Cicada" are found 而 in four phrases, 之 in five phrases, 于 in two phrases, and 乎 in one phrase. In "The Needle and Thread" are found 而 in five phrases, 之 in four phrases, and 以 in one phrase. The first part of the long poem also uses about these same characters: namely, 而 thirty-two times, 之 twenty-two times, 乎 three times, 其 twice, 于 twice, and 以,與,欲,爲,多, once each, see next chapter.

CHAPTER IX

Travelling Eastward

Pan Chao's son Ku was appointed an official in Ch'ên-liu.[1] While travelling with him from the capital [2] to his post, Pan Chao composed an essay in rime,[3] "Travelling Eastward."

It is [3] the seventh year of Yung-ch'u; [4]
I follow my son in his journey eastward.
It is an auspicious [5] day in Spring's [6] first [7] moon;
We choose this good hour, and are about to start.
Now I rise to my feet and ascend my carriage.[8]
At eventide we lodge at Yen-shih: [9]
Already we leave the old and start for the new.
I am uneasy in mind, and sad at heart.[10]

Dawn's first light comes, and yet I sleep not; [11]
My heart hesitates as though it would fail me.[12]
I pour me out a cup of wine [13] to relax my thoughts.[14]
Suppressing my feelings,[15] I sigh and blame myself;
I shall not need to dwell in nests, nor (eat) worms from dead trees.[16]
Then how can I not encourage myself to press forward? [17]
And further, am I different from other people?
Let me but hear Heaven's command and go its way.[18]

Throughout the journey [19] we follow the great highway.[20]
If we seek short cuts, whom shall we follow?
Pressing [3] forward, we travel on and on;
In abandonment our eyes wander, and our spirits roam.
We pass through the Seven [21] Districts, watching, gazing;
At Kung Hsien [22] we experience difficulties,[23]
Further on we watch the Lo [24] unite with the Great River;
We see Ch'êng-kao's [25] "Farewell Gate."