Creative Process in Cantonese Opera II: The Process of T'ien Tz'u (Text-Setting)

Author(s): Bell Yung

Source: *Ethnomusicology*, May, 1983, Vol. 27, No. 2 (May, 1983), pp. 297-318

Published by: University of Illinois Press on behalf of Society for Ethnomusicology

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/851079

# CREATIVE PROCESS IN CANTONESE OPERA II: THE PROCESS OF T'IEN TZ'U (TEXT-SETTING)

Bell Yung

The process of writing a new text to fit a preexistent tune is called *t'ien tz'u*, meaning literally "to fill in with text." This compositional process has great significance in the history of Chinese poetry. It is generally accepted that during the early stages of development of Chinese poetic genres such as *tz'u* and *ch'ü*, some poems were composed to be sung rather than simply read (Hightower 1953:90). Since some tunes became extremely popular among the poets, a large number of poems were composed to fit one tune. This is feasible even for musically less sensitive writers as long as the words of the different poems follow the same verse structure: patterns of beat, phrase structure, and, with some flexibility, the sequence of linguistic tones. Presumably, the verse structure was derived from the musical characteristics of the tune. Conforming to that structure ensures that the different poems would fit the musical characteristics of the same tune and thus could readily be performed. Known by the name of the tune that it fits, the verse structure came to be regarded as a model utilized by poets who wrote poems in ignorance of the original tune. As time went on, poems were performed orally less and less, and the tunes were gradually forgotten; they were not, with very few exceptions, preserved in notation. However, new poems were (and still are today) being composed to fit particular verse structures without the actual tunes. Thus among poets, the term *t'ien tz'u* has come to refer to composing a poem to fit a preexistent verse structure.

While the practice of composing a new poem to fit an actual tune is long lost among poets, it is still very actively carried out in some Chinese popular musical and dramatic genres today. In Cantonese opera this practice, also called *t'ien tz'u*, is an important part of the creative process of the opera. A study of this process is, thus, not only significant for the understanding of the performance practice of Cantonese opera, but may also shed some light on how poets might have composed poems at one time according to actual tunes rather than to an abstract verse structure.

Final version rec'd: 1/26/83
0014-1836/83/2702-297 $1.05

The music of all Cantonese operas is drawn from a common pool of preexistent material. No "composer," in the Western sense of the word, is responsible for any opera. The scriptwriter sets down the text and chooses from the common pool musical materials that he considers appropriate to the text. No musical notation is used in the scripts for the performers; the script simply specifies by name the tune to be sung and then gives the text. Occasionally today when a new opera is written, one new tune is introduced. This may be composed by the chief musician in the orchestra (the fiddler) or someone else.

During a performance, a singer may exercise some freedom in the execution of the preexistent tune: his version of the tune may vary from other versions of the same tune performed either by himself or by different singers, in either the same opera or in different operas. The degree of difference among the versions depends on many factors: the particular tune in question, the prosodic structure of the text, the dramatic context of the passage, and the individual styles of the singers. Thus, although musical materials of all operas are drawn from a common pool of preexistent tunes, it does not follow that music in Cantonese opera is necessarily repetitious: the "same" tune heard in two different operas (or sung to different texts in the same opera) may sound quite different. The identity of a tune and its scope of variation thus become important issues in the study of Cantonese opera (see Yung 1983 for further discussion of the performance practice of Cantonese opera).

The preexistent tunes of this common pool fall into several categories; the two most important ones, which make up about 90% of the total musical materials used in most operas, are known as the *bong wong* (aria type) and the *siu kuk* (fixed tunes). They differ from each other in history, structure, performance context, and dramatic function. The *bong wong* category has a total repertory of about thirty, which are historically related to a few regional operatic genres in Central and Northern China. The *siu kuk* category, on the other hand, has a much larger repertory of at least several hundred; the individual tunes come from a great variety of sources. The *bong wong* tunes are used exclusively in the opera, whereas many of the *siu kuk* tunes are also popular as instrumental music (Witzleben 1983). The *bong wong* tunes are used more likely during narrative moments, while *siu kuk* appear in the lyrical moments of the opera. I have already treated the *bong wong*, or aria type, in two previous studies (Yung 1981, 1983). This paper deals with *siu kuk*, which I translate as "fixed tunes": it examines (1) how a preexistent tune is chosen and fitted with text for a new opera by the process of *t'ien tz'u*, and (2) the performer's treatment of the text and tune during a performance.[1]

## THE FIXED TUNES

The fixed tunes come from many sources: any tune that has become popular in a community may be adopted again and again in different operas, thus joining the large repertory. The tunes, as a result, may have widely different melodic forms. Each tune is identified in the script by a name, but no musical notation. It is assumed that the performer knows these tunes just from the names given. Sometimes only part of a tune may be used in an opera, in which case the script will add to the name of the tune terms such as *ch'ien tuan* (front section), *chung tuan* (middle section), and so on.

In a typical opera lasting four hours, ten to twenty different fixed tunes are generally used, each one lasting several minutes. An average singer or instrumentalist knows as many as two or three hundred fixed tunes. So far no survey has been made of the total number of these tunes used in Cantonese opera. Indeed such a survey is difficult to make and, if made, difficult to keep up-to-date, because whenever a new opera is written a new tune may be borrowed from outside the original repertory and used for the first time. The new tune will then join the rank of fixed tunes. During the 1930s and '40s, many Western popular tunes, for example, were borrowed. In the last two decades the performers have been more conservative than their predecessors. To a large extent only tunes already in the repertory have been used in new operas. Furthermore, the Western popular tunes introduced into the repertory several decades ago are no longer in vogue today and are almost never used.

The fixed tunes used today come from the following sources.

1. Traditional Cantonese folk or popular tunes of obscure origin. This category constitutes the majority of the present-day fixed tunes. Many of their names are identical to the ones used in traditional literary genres such as the *tz'u* and the *ch'ü*, for example, Nien Nu Chiao (Longing for my Beloved), Liu Yao Chin (The Swaying Golden Branches of the Willow). Aside from sharing the names, however, it is not known whether these opera tunes are related structurally to those from the literary genres. There are some fixed tunes indigenous to the Kwantung Province with names that are unrelated to other regional music of China, for example, Yu Ta Pa Chiao (Rain Beating on the Banana Tree Leaves) and E Ma Yao Ling (Hungry Horse Shaking the Bell).

2. Traditional tunes borrowed from a known source yet without a known composer, for example, ones borrowed from other genres of Chinese music. A small category, it consists of, for example, a recently popularized folk tune, Ma Ch'e Fu Chih Ko (Song of the Horse-drawn

Wagon Driver), from the Sinkiang Province, and a tune called Nan Pang Tzu (Southern Pang Tzu) from Peking opera.

3. Tunes with a known composer. A small number of these tunes have been used enough to be established as part of the standard repertory of fixed tunes. They are published in printed scores together with the names of the composers. Some examples are Sai Lung Tuo Chin (Winning the Prize in a Dragon Boat Race) by Ho Liu-t'ang, and K'ai Hsuan (Triumphant Song) by Ch'en Chun-ying.

4. Newly composed tunes, often by the fiddler in the orchestra or by someone else in the troupe who is musically gifted, for a new opera. If such a new opera becomes popular and is performed frequently, the new tune may also become well known. It, in turn, could be called a fixed tune and be borrowed for other operas. In the last two decades, very few new operas were being written. Even when they were, new tunes were seldom composed for them.

A scriptwriter chooses a particular tune for a particular dramatic situation in an opera for several possible reasons. First, certain musical characteristics of a tune may relate directly to a certain dramatic situation in the story. For example, a tune with a brisk tempo may be chosen for a scene with an excited mood. Second, the name of a tune may sometimes be enough to suggest a dramatic situation. For example, a beautiful young lady taking a walk and admiring the scenery in a garden sings a tune called Pu Pu Chiao (Dainty Steps), even though the music itself may not obviously suggest a walk. Third, the exceptional popularity of a tune may be enough reason for its being used. After the tune is chosen, a new poem is composed to be sung to it by the process of *t'ien tz'u*.

The process of *t'ien tz'u* is studied here by analyzing excerpts from several performances. The music and text are transcribed from recordings, and the relationship between the verse structure of the text and the musical characteristics of the transcribed tune is investigated. Through this relationship, the working process whereby a scriptwriter composes his poem to fit the tune, and how a performer sings it, can be understood. To put it in another way, the paper investigates what the scriptwriters and performers mean by "fit" when it comes to composing a poem and singing it to a preexistent tune.[2] The paper also investigates the question of identity and variability of these tunes.

The method of investigation involves comparison of several sets of text sung to the same tune. The prosodic similarities and differences among these different sets of texts are noted. The same tune, when performed to different texts, undergoes various kinds of changes from one version to another. These versions of the same tune are compared, especially in the light of the different texts.

For this study three versions of a tune called P'ing Hu Ch'iu Yueh (Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake), attributed to Cantonese *yüeh hu* (two-string fiddle) player Lü Wen-ch'eng, are used. The versions are taken from the following operas: Yü Chan Chi (Story of the Jade Hairpin), P'i Pa Hsiang K'ou Ku Jen Lai (An Old Friend Comes to Loquat Lane), and Yeh Sung Ching Niang (Chaperoning Mistress Ching in the Night). In the first opera, the complete tune was sung; in the other two, only parts of the tune were sung. Appendix 1 shows the transcription of the vocal lines of the three versions. Included also are the text in romanization (according to the so-called Yale system with minor modification, see Huang 1960) and the linguistic tone symbols for each word. Each of the three versions involves two performers singing alternately. For Version B, both voices belong to female roles. For each of Versions A and C, the voices belong to one male role and one female role. The entry of a new voice is indicated in the transcription by a change of clef. The notation accurately indicates the absolute pitch of the performances to within a half tone. For explanation of the symbols used in the transcription, refer to Yung 1983. Appendix 2 gives the text in Chinese characters, romanization and translation. The short pauses, or caesuras, in the text are marked by slanted strokes. Appendix 3 gives the names and symbols of the linguistic tones of the Cantonese dialect (for an explanation of appendix 3, see Yung 1983).

## VERSE STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

The three major features of verse structure that concern traditional Chinese poets (Liu 1962:21-2) are: (1) the pattern of line-lengths (the number of syllables per line for all the lines); (2) the pattern of rhyming among the last syllables of each line; and (3) the pattern of linguistic tones of the syllables. Verse structures in Cantonese opera are comparable to some poetic genres: some verse structures require the same number of syllables for every line; others may have different, but specified, numbers of syllables for each line — what may be called a pattern of irregular line-lengths. In the case of fixed tunes, one wants to know whether or not the different texts that are composed to the same tune follow the same pattern of line-lengths and, if they do, what exactly is the pattern. An examination of the three versions shows that their patterns are not identical. The opening few lines for Version A have the following pattern: $7+5+10+5+5$ (each numeral refers to the number of syllables in a phrase), while those for Version B have $9+7+7+6$. (Version C does not include the opening lines.) The textual phrases are matched with the musical phrases in the following manner:

7 + 5 matches with 9 (sung to the first musical phrase)
10 matches with 7 (sung to the second musical phrase)
5 matches with 7 (sung to the third musical phrase)
5 matches with 6 (sung to the fourth musical phrase).

For the moment, one can conclude that the scriptwriter is not concerned with producing a particular pattern of line-lengths for a given fixed tune.

The last syllables of each phrase with few exceptions rhyme, and one rhyme carries through the whole song. However, different rhymes appear among the three versions. For example, the rhyming radical for Version A is *-an*, *-am* or *-aam*, considered the same rhyme by scriptwriters. In Version B it is *-ing* or *-in*. In Version C it is *-ong* or *-eung*.

The last syllables of each phrase do not always have the same linguistic tone. On the contrary, there is a general tendency toward Oblique Tone — Even Tone alternations, or at least an avoidance of several consecutive phrases with all Oblique Tone or all Even Tone as the ending syllables. The linguistic tones of other syllables do not adhere to any readily observable, consistent pattern.

## VERSIONS OF THE MELODY

A comparison of the melodies of the three versions shows that they are quite similar in phrase structure, melodic contour, and rhythmic characteristics; they share a large percentage of individual notes, especially the cadential notes. Minor variations are of three kinds:

1. Minor rhythmic variations such as in Measure 5 where Version B has a dotted rhythm, but Version A has two eighth notes.

2. Addition, deletion, or alteration of what one may call passing notes, ornamental notes, anacrusis, or, in general, notes on weak beats. Examples can be found in almost every measure.

3. The same melodic fragment is sung an octave apart between two versions. See Measures 36-43.

Since Versions B and C use only part of the tune, the scriptwriter obviously has the freedom to manipulate large musical units as long as the tune retains a relatively stable melodic structure on the local level. The identity of the tune, therefore, does not depend on its larger structure; the listener is expected to accept a portion of a tune as representing the whole.

The identity seems, on the other hand, to be sufficiently established simply by certain melodic characteristics of individual musical phrases or their combination.

This is crucial in defining, or understanding, the difference between a fixed tune and an aria type. In an earlier paper (Yung 1981) I showed that an aria type is unusual in that its identity depends very little on melodic contour: versions of the same tune may have vastly different melodic contours. A fixed tune, on the other hand, retains the melodic contour to a large extent. Furthermore, different versions of an aria type must retain the overall structure of its basic, couplet form. A fixed tune, on the other hand, appears to retain its identity when its large, overall structure is altered.

In "Creative Process I" (Yung 1983) I showed that the variation of melodic contour among versions of an aria type is due, to a large extent, to an important relationship between the linguistic tones and melodic contour: that the pattern of linguistic tones of the text must match closely the melodic contour. Different sets of text, therefore, naturally result in different melodic contours. Since different versions of a fixed tune doubtlessly also have different texts, why doesn't this fact cause the melodic contour of the different versions to vary to the same degree as an aria type? Does the rigid rule governing the relationship between the linguistic tones of the text and the melodic contour of the tune also apply to fixed tunes? Is there a basic difference in the composition process between an aria type and a fixed tune?

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VERSE STRUCTURE AND MELODY

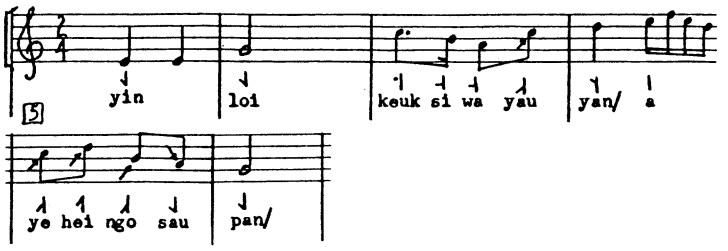
In order to answer the above questions, I shall investigate the relationship between the verse structure of the text and the musical characteristics of the tune. The focus will be on the relationship between textual and musical phrasing, and the relationship between linguistic tones of the text and the melodic contour of the tune.

In the three versions of the song under discussion, the scriptwriters all seem to treat the phrase structure of the tune identically. Not only does the musical phrasing for the versions agree (for example, both Versions A and B have a pause in the melody at Measure 6), but the textual phrases also break at those points for all the versions. Thus at Measures 6, 11, 14, 17, 20, 45, 51, etc., the different texts all have a small syntactic break where the melodic breaks occur. This implies that the scriptwriters compose their text by molding the textual phrase patterns to fit the phrase patterns of the tune: pauses in the text coincide with the cadential or semicadential points in the music.

When two texts are sung to the same melodic phrase, however, the number of syllables in the two texts need not be identical. A melodic phrase, without changing its overall length, can accommodate a larger number of syllables by having passing notes and anacruses added to it, and a smaller number of syllables by reducing the number of notes in the melody or by being more melismatic. The flexibility of the melody to accommodate a larger or smaller number of syllables thus allows the scriptwriter freedom in this aspect of verse structure.

In terms of the relationship between the linguistic tonal patterns of the text and the pitch contour of the tune, the first phrase of Version A shows that, as the tune moves up and down the pitch scale, the linguistic tones of the text match the movement with a similar contour:

Version A

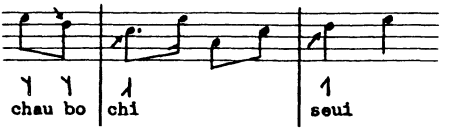



All three versions verify this general rule of contour matching, which may be formulated as: words are chosen on the basis of the relative pitch levels of their linguistic tones so that they match the relative pitch levels of the tune. This is most evident for the beginning and ending syllables of a textual (and the corresponding musical) phrase. For example, the first two syllables of both Versions A and B belong to the Lower Even Tone ˩ . They are chosen so that the low pitch of the linguistic tone will match the musical pitch, which is relatively low at that point. In Measure 6, the end of the melodic phrase on a low pitch is sung in both versions to syllables with the same Lower Even Tone, so that the matching is again achieved. This rule is reflected in the verse structure of the text even without reference to the music: a comparison of the ending syllables of the textual phrases of the versions shows that they generally have the same linguistic tones, or different linguistic tones with similar pitch behavior. For example: Measure 11, Lower Even Tone ˩ for both versions; Measure 14, Upper Rising Tone ˥ and Upper Even Tone ˦ (both with relatively high pitch level); Measure 15, Lower Even Tone ˩ for both versions; Measure 20, Lower Rising Tone ˨ and Upper Going Tone ˥ (both with medium high pitch level).

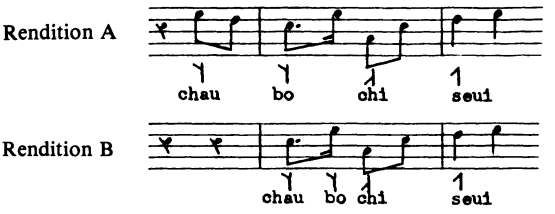
The matching between linguistic tones and pitch levels of the tune can either be fixed or relative. It is fixed if the syllables of one linguistic tonal category are consistently set to one particular pitch throughout a tune. It is relative if the syllables of the same linguistic tonal category may be set to different pitches at different points of the tune, as long as the tonal contour of a cluster of syllables still resembles the melodic contour, regardless of pitch level. In the versions of the fixed tune under study, the matching appears essentially to be of the relative kind. For example, the Lower Even Tone ♩ in Measure 1 is sung to the pitch E above Middle C, but in Measure 37, the Lower Even Tone ♩ is sung to D above High C; but the overall linguistic tonal contour and the melodic contour do match each other locally in both cases. A comparison with the aria types shows that, in the latter case, the rule of matching between linguistic tones and pitch levels of the tune is of the fixed kind (see Yung 1983).

The rule of matching stated above appears to restrict greatly the freedom of choice of syllables for the scriptwriter: as the tune is relatively fixed, he has only a limited number of syllables (words) to choose from in order to fit the pitch contour of the tune. In reality, the application of the rule can be quite flexible, especially in the middle of a musical phrase. This is because the singer can make some adjustments during a performance to avoid breaking the rule when the linguistic tones of the text do not match the pitch contour of the tune:

1. The singer may adjust the syallable placement of the text so that the syllables are sung to the right pitches. An example can be found in Version B, Measures 2 to 3. Instead of the rendition as given in the transcription:



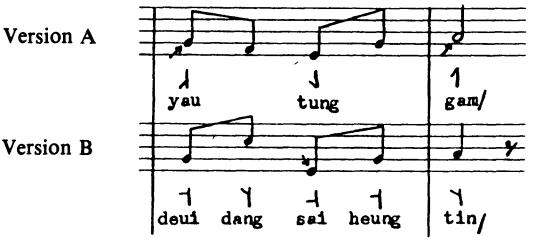

one may imagine two alternative renditions:




In either of the latter cases, the syllable placement is quite plausible, although Rendition A is unlikely due to the syntactic structure of the

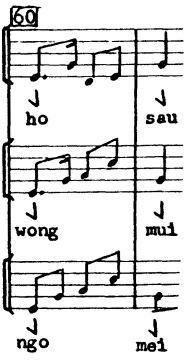
text, the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this paper. Rendition B, however, makes sense rhythmically because the elimination of the anacrusis in Measure 2 makes the musical phrase identical to that of Version A. But the rule of matching will then no longer be observed: the syllable *chau*, with an Upper Even Tone ˥ , should be sung to a relatively high pitch. If it is sung to the pitch C as in Rendition B, the syllable would sound like another syllable with an Upper Going Tone ˦ meaning "stinking" rather than the intended syllable, which means "autumn." Thus one sees how the singer adjusts his text to a particular syllable placement so that the rule of matching can be observed. In this example he adds an anacrusis to solve the problem. In aria types, on the other hand, the identity of the tune is defined largely by a relatively fixed syllable placement, so the singer does not have the freedom he does in the fixed tune to manipulate the placement of the syllable (Yung 1981).

2. The singer may add or alter passing notes in order to accommodate syllables that have the "wrong" linguistic tones. This is tolerated as long as the general contour of the melody is not affected. An example can be found in Measure 13:




In Version B, in order to accommodate the syllable with the Upper Even Tone ˥ , the melodic contour jumps up a 4th to the pitch C and then down a 6th, while in Version A the melodic progression is much more gentle. It is not possible to say one version is the "ur-tune" while the other is a variant form.[4] The point here, however, is that such alterations are seen to be possible (and quite frequent, as the transcription shows) as a way to satisfy the rule of matching between linguistic tone and melodic contour.

Thus, to understand the creative process of *t'ien-tz'u* in the fixed tunes, one should not limit one's attention to the scriptwriter alone. While the duty of the scriptwriter is to choose the tune and compose a poem to fit it, the actual fitting process depends to a certain extent on the singer, who is ultimately responsbile for the rendering of the poem according to the tune. How a singer, within the restrictions of a preexistent tune, renders a text during a performance is a complicated issue and may involve many factors other than the rule of matching. Measures 60 to 61 offer an example in which the melodic contour varies from one version to another even though the verse structure of the text is identical:




The variations obviously are due to factors that do not involve the verse structure of the text; they may be the style of a "school" of singing, the dramatic situation, and individual musical-aesthetic considerations. These factors, however, are beyond the scope of this study.

## T'IEN-TZ'U AS CREATIVE PROCESS

To summarize the creative process called *t'ien tz'u* for fixed tunes in Cantonese opera, the scriptwriter first chooses a tune that he considers to match the dramatic requirement of the opera. He then composes the poem to match the tune, considering two major factors in the verse structure:

1. Phrase structure of the text is designed so that it matches the phrase structure of the tune. Since a melodic phrase can accommodate a larger or smaller number of syllables by adding or deleting passing notes and anacruses, the exact number of syllables within a textual phrase is not critical. What is critical is that a textual phrase should begin and end with a melodic phrase.

2. The choice of words for the poem is based upon a rule of tonal matching: syllables with linguistic tones of low pitch level are chosen for the portion of the tune that has low pitch levels, and vice versa. In general, the tonal contour of the linguistic tones of the text matches the tonal contour of the tune according to this rule. The matching, however, is "relative": so long as linguistic tonal contours match the melodic contour on a local level, the rule is satisfied. The rule may also be relaxed since the singer, in performance, can either adjust the rhythmic placement of the syllables or modify slightly the melodic contour in order to follow the rule of matching.

Two overriding rules affect, indeed control, the compositional process in both "fixed tunes" and "aria types": (1) the identity of a tune must be

preserved in order for it to serve its dramatic function; and (2) the linguistic tones of the text must match the melodic contour of the tune. How these rules are dealt with, however, is different in the two cases.

In the case of aria types, the identity of the tune depends to a large extent upon the so-called syllable placement of the text: the number of syllables in a textual line is fixed, and they must be sung to a prescribed rhythmic pattern in the tune. This pattern does not change from version to version, and constitutes one of the important marks of identity for a particular tune. The scriptwriter, therefore, must adhere to the prescribed number of syllables in each line quite rigidly. The identity of the tune, however, does not depend on the melodic contour of the tune, which varies from version to version, sometimes to a large extent. The scriptwriter, therefore, has the luxury of not having to be too much concerned with choosing the "correct" linguistic tones for the text.[5] The singer simply adjusts the melodic contour to fit the linguistic tones during a performance. In aria types, the text determines the melodic behavior.

In the case of fixed tunes, the identity of the tune depends to a large extent upon its melodic contour, with allowance for minor variations among the versions. The scriptwriter, therefore, must compose his text carefully so that the linguistic tones match the predetermined melodic contour of the tune. The identity of the tune, however, is not affected by the syllable placement of the text. The scriptwriter, therefore, is given a certain degree of freedom in his choice of pattern of phrase lengths. In fixed tunes, the tune determines the linguistic tonal behavior of the text.

In the total repertory of Cantonese opera tunes, there are about thirty aria types, and several hundred fixed tunes. The two lines of an aria type are often repeated during a single musical passage, sometimes several times. The same aria type may also appear several times at different points within the same opera. On the other hand, a fixed tune never appears in an opera more than once, and is never repeated within a passage. There may be complex historical reasons for these contrasting behaviors. However, this study on the fixedness and variability of the melodic contour of these two categories of tunes certainly provides possible musical-aesthetic explanations.

## NOTES

1. This is a revised version of a paper entitled "*T'ien-tz'u* (Text-setting) in Cantonese Opera" read at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies held at Los Angeles in April 1979.

2. The study of *t'ien tz'u* may of course be also approached by interviewing scriptwriters who practice the art today. This researcher intentionally chose to concentrate on actual musical examples, based on the conviction that what is done is often more informative than, or at least offers an alternate source of information to, what is said. Interviews on this subject have also been conducted during my field work in Hong Kong in 1972-73 and 1974-75. "What is said" generally verifies "what is done."

3. The first version is performed by Lin Hsiao-ch'ün and Lü Yu-lang on China Records M-377; the second performed by Pai Hsüeh Hsien and Jen Ping-erh on Tien Shing Records Company (Hong Kong) TSLP-2018; the third performed by Mai Ping-jung and Li Fen-fang on Tien Shing Record Company TSLP-2040.

4. One touches here upon a basic issue of musical identity. The question of whether there exists an "Ur-tune" may not be a valid one in this case in spite of the fact that Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake has been attributed to a specific person. A comparison of four published notations of this tune show four slightly different versions. See *Kuangtung Yinyüeh* [Cantonese Music] (Hong Kong: T'aip'ing Shuchü, 1963) p.3; *Yüeh Yüeh Mingch'üchi* [One Hundred Pieces of Cantonese Music] (Hong Kong: Hsinch'eng Shuchü, 1971) p.37; *Kuangtung Yinyüeh Ch'üchi* [Collection of Cantonese Music] (Peking: Renmin Yinyue Chubanshe, 1981) p.25; *Kuang Yüehch'u Ipai Shou* [One Hundred Pieces of Cantonese Music] (Jilin: Renmin chubanshe, 1981) p. 7. One probably should not make the assumption that the identity of a fixed tune can be represented by a single, unambiguous configuration of pitches with "variants" or "versions." The identity, on the other hand, may be the aggregate of all the existing versions. This issue certainly deserves further research.

5. As my 1981 paper has pointed out, the identity of an aria type depends also upon several other factors, among which are cadential notes of the musical phrases. It is the responsibility of the scriptwriter, therefore, to ensure that the syllables that are to be sung to the cadential notes should have the "correct" linguistic tones. Furthermore, aesthetic principles prohibit certain behavior of the tune, such as having a melodic contour which stays on one pitch level for an extended period (Yung 1983). This further puts a degree of restraint on the scriptwriter in his choice of syllables for the text. However, relatively speaking, he has a greater degree of freedom than when he composes the text for the fixed tunes.

## REFERENCES CITED

Hightower, James Robert
1953 *Topics in Chinese Literature.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Huang, Parker Po-fei and Gerard P. Kok
1960 *Speak Cantonese.* New Haven: The Institute of Far Eastern Languages, Yale University.

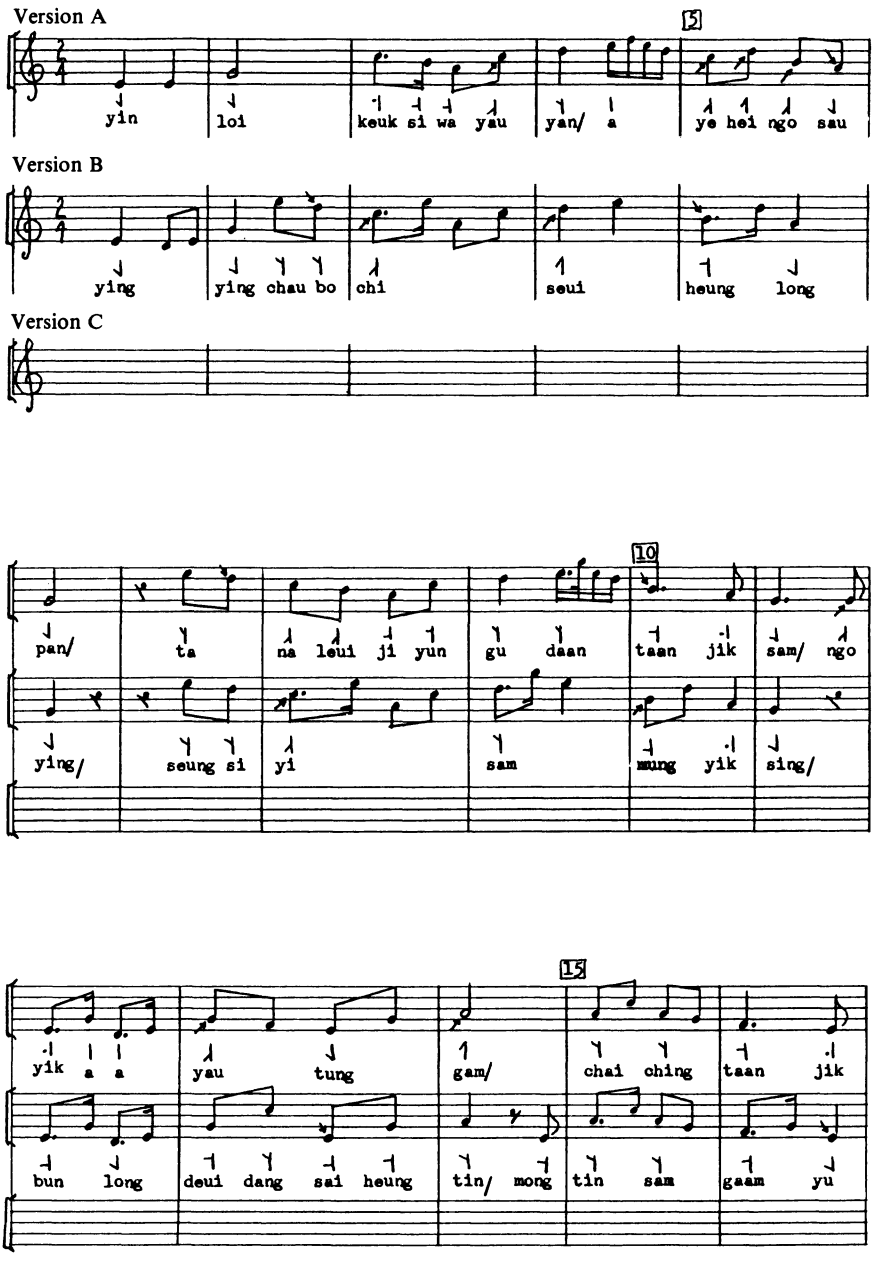
Liu, James J.Y.
1962 *The Art of Chinese Poetry.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

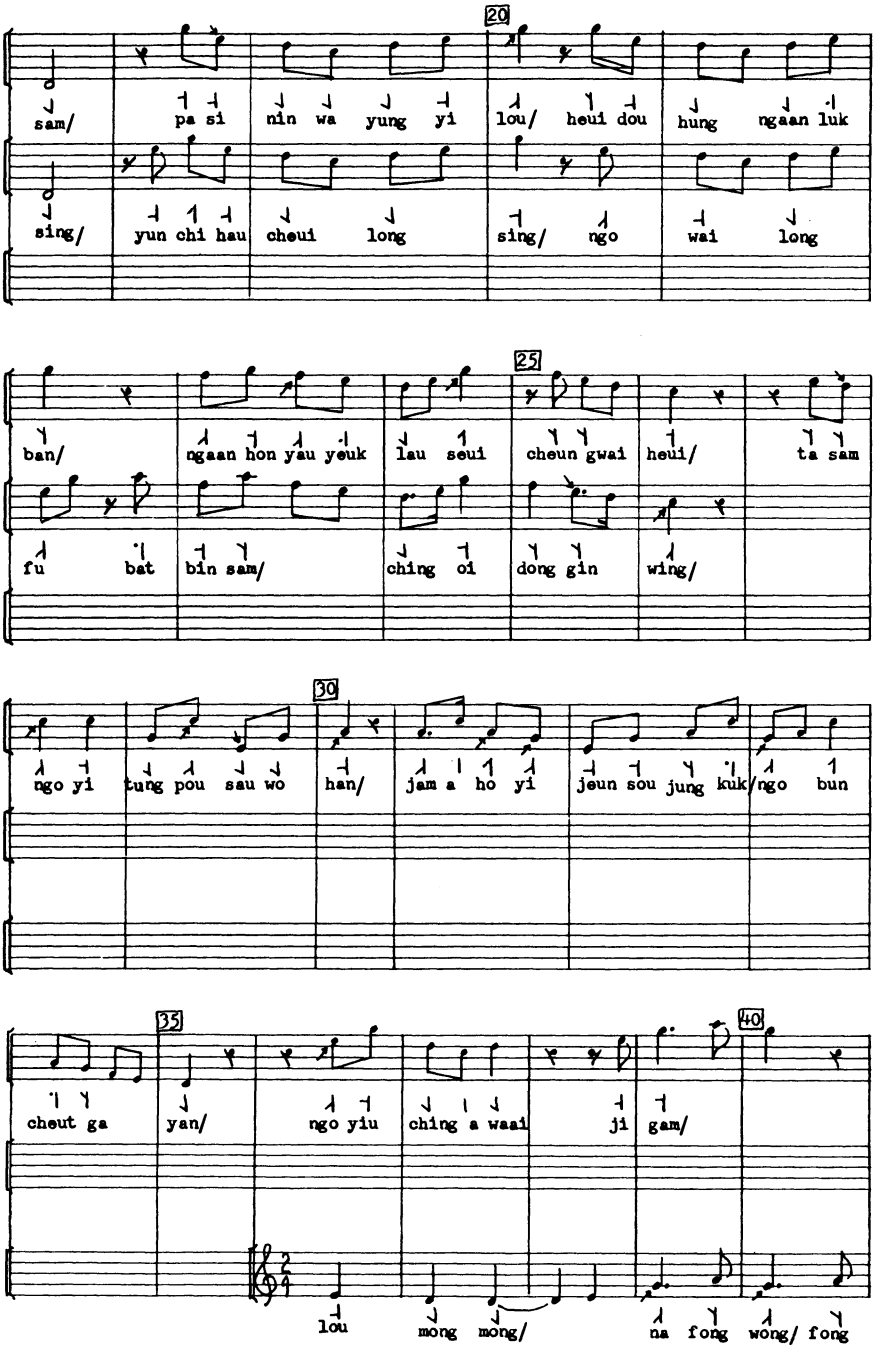
Witzleben, John Lawrence
1983 "Cantonese Instrumental Ensemble Music in Hong Kong: An Overview with Special Reference to the Gou Wuh (Gao Hu)." M.A. Thesis, University of Hawaii.

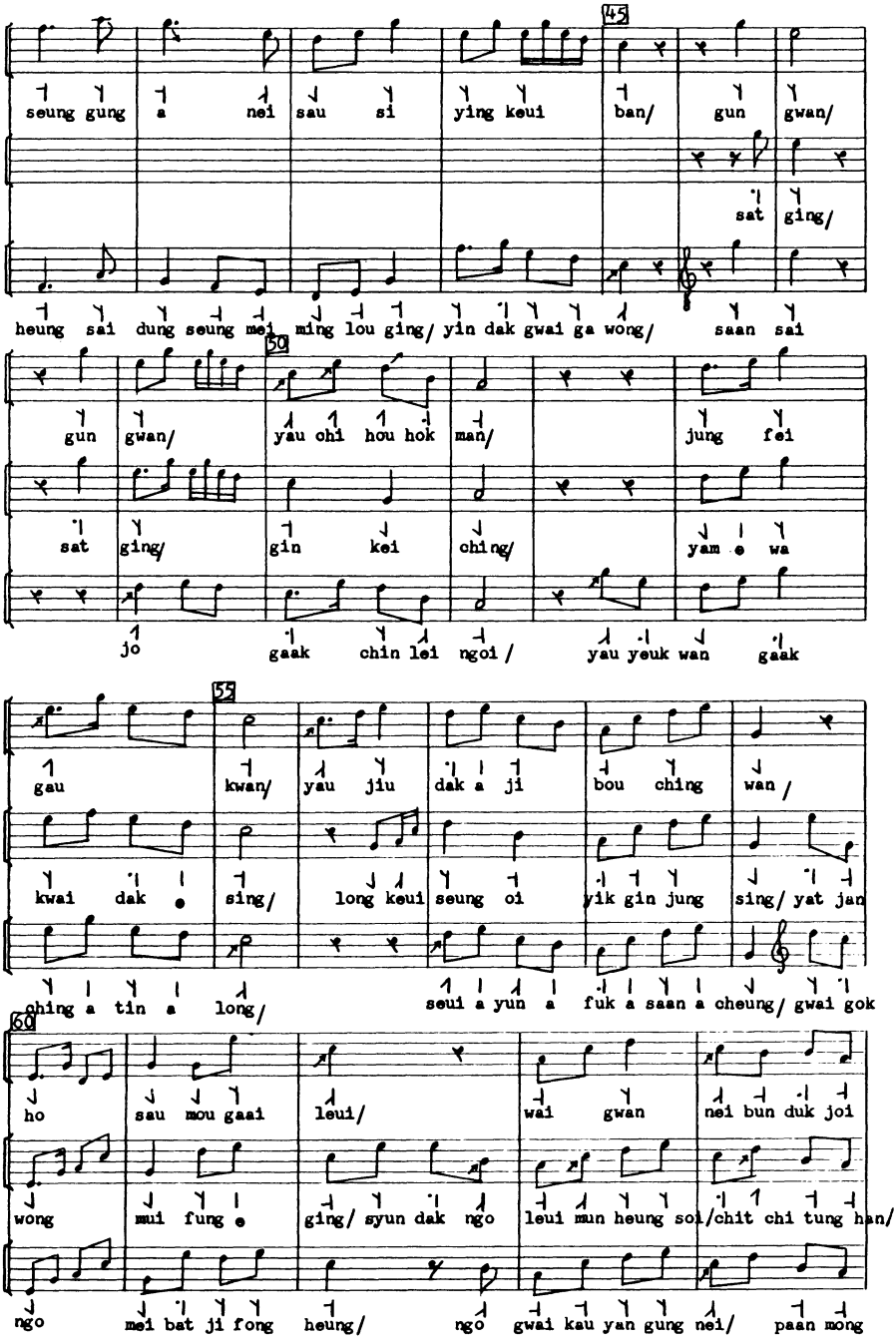
Yung, Bell
1981 "Music Identity in Cantonese Opera," *in* Daniel Heartz and Bonnie Wade, *eds., International Musicological Society: Report of the Twelfth Congress Berkeley 1977* (Kassel: Barenreiter Kassel), pp. 669-75.
1983 "Creative Process in Cantonese Opera I: The Role of Linguistic Tones," *Ethnomusicology* 27(1):29-47.

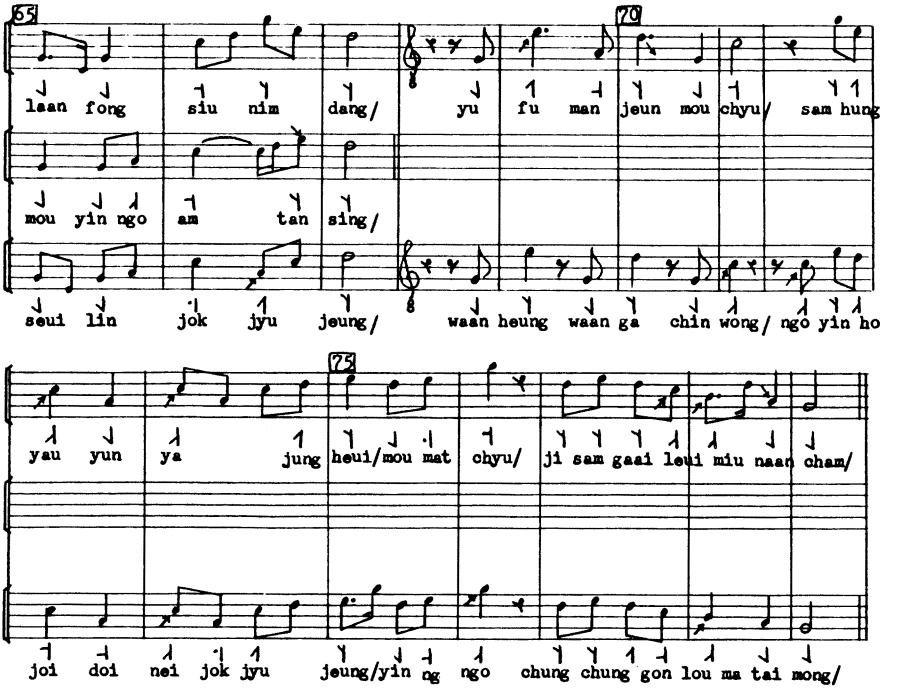
APPENDIX 1

## Three versions of Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake










## APPENDIX 2

### Text of the three versions of Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake

Version A

言 來 卻 是 話 有 因　　惹 起 我 愁 雙
yin loi keuk si wa yau yan / a ye hei ngo sau pan /

his words are meaningful / they stirred up my sorrowful thoughts /

他 那 裡 自 怨 孤 單 嘆 寂 岑　我 亦　有 同 感
ta na leui ji yun gu daan taan jik sam / ngo yik a a yau tung gam /

he is lamenting on his loneliness / I feel the same way /

淒 清 嘆 寂 岑
chai ching taan jik sam /

alone and lonely /

怕是年華容易老，慮渡紅顏緣聲
pa si nin wa yung yi lou / heui dou hung ngaan luk ban /

grieving the passing of time / witnessing the transience of beauty and youth /

眼看有若流水春歸去，他心我意同抱愁和恨
ngaan hon yau yeuk lau seui cheun gwai heui / ta sam ngo yi tung pou sau wo han /

as the river water and the Spring of yesteryear that never shall return /
he and I share the same woe /

怎可以畫訴衷曲，我本出家人
jam a ho yi jeun sou jung kuk / ngo bun cheut ga yan /

but how shall I express myself? / for I have taken my vows /

我要情懷自禁，相公啊你愁思應驅攆
ngo yiu ching a waai ji gam / seung gung a nei sau si ying keui ban /

I must restrain myself / dear sir; away with your sorrowful thoughts /

觀君，觀君，有此好學问，終非久困
gun gwan / gun gwan / yau chi hou hok man / jung fei gau kwan /

look/ look at yourself/ a gentleman with great learning/ you will not be
detained long /

有朝得志步青雲何愁無佳侶
yau jiu dak a ji bou ching wan / ho sau mou gaai leui /

one day when your aspiration is realized, you will walk the clouds /
then you shall easily find a good companion /

為君你伴讀在蘭房，笑拈燈
wai gwan nei bun duk joi laan fong / siu nim dang /

accompanying you while you study / smilingly adjusting the flame of your lamp /

漁父问津無處，深恐有緣也總虛
yu fu man jeun mou chyu / sam hung yau yun ya jung heui /

I'm like a fisherman searching for a river, but not knowing whom to enquire/
if by fate I shall have a companion, will it still come to vain?/

無覓處，知心佳侶渺難尋
mou mat chyu / ji sam gaai leui miu naan cham /

for where shall I look / for such a truly understanding mate? /

Version B

盈 盈 秋 波 似 水 向 郎 凝
ying ying chau bo chi seui heung long ying /

glistening like an autumn lake, my eyes are upon you /

相 思 已 深 夢 亦 成 伴 郎 對 燈 誓 向 天
seung si yi sam mung yik sing / bun long deui dang sai heung tin /

my longing is deep, my dream is coming true / by your side, in front of the lamp, facing heaven I swear /

望 天 心 鑒 愚 誠 願 此 後 隨 郎 姓
mong tin sam gaam yu sing / yun chi hau cheui long sing /

hoping heaven will see my ernestness / I declare from now on I shall take your name /

我 為 郎 婦 不 變 心 情 愛 當 堅 永
ngo wai long fu bat bin sam / ching oi dong gin wing /

I shall be your woman, never be regretful / my love will be for ever /

失 驚 失 驚 見 奇 情 淫 娃 虧 德 性
sat ging / sat ging / gin kei ching / yam • wa kwai dak • sing /

shocking / shocking / witnessing such a scandal / this wanton woman of no virtue /

郎 拒 相 愛 亦 見 忠 誠 一 陣 黃 梅 風 勁
long keui seung oi yik gin jung sing / yat jan wong mui fung • ging /

my man refuses her love, showing his fidelity / a sudden gust of "yellow plum breeze" of jealousy /

酸 得 我 淚 滿 香 腮 切 齒 痛 恨
syun dak ngo leui mun heung soi / chit chi tung han /

so sour it causes tears to cover my face / with teeth-biting bitterness /

無 言 我 暗 吞 聲
mou yin ngo am tan sing /

I kept silent, swallowing my words /

Version C

路 茫 茫 那 方 往
lou mong mong / na fong wong /

the road is long / where does it lead to? /

方向西東尚未明路徑焉得歸家往，
fong heung sai dung seung mei ming lou ging / yin dak gwai ga wong /

east? west? I don't know which is the right way / how will I ever reach home /

山西阻隔千里外有若雲隔清天朗，
saan sai jo gaak chin lei ngoi / yau yeuk wan gaak ching a tin a long /

one thousand miles separate me from the province of Saansai / like clouds separating me from the clear sky /

水遠復山長閨閣娥媚不知方向，
seui a yun a fuk a saan a cheung / gwai gok ngo mei bat ji fong heung /

the water is far, the mountain is long / this humble and helpless woman is lost, knowing not where to turn /

我跪叩恩公你盼望垂憐作主張，
ngo gwai kau yan gung nei / paan mong seui lin jok jyu jeung /

I kneel in front of you, my benefactor / pray be my master and guide me along /

還鄉還家前往我焉可再代你作主張，
waan heung waan ga chin wong / ngo yin ho joi doi nei jok jyu jeung /

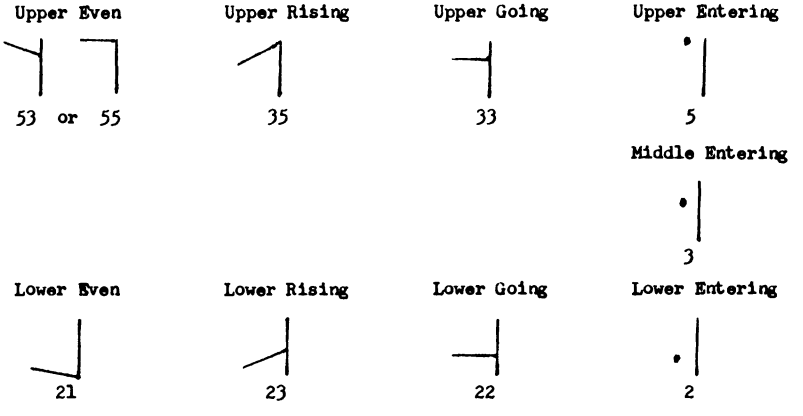
go home, go home / but I can no longer serve as your guide /

延誤我忽忽趕路馬蹄忙
yin ng ngo chung chung gon lou ma tai mong /

the urgent pace of my horse shall not be slackened /

## APPENDIX 3

### Linguistic tones of the Cantonese dialect



## APPENDIX 4

## Glossary of Chinese Characters

### A. Titles of Tunes and Operas

E Ma Yao Ling 餓馬搖鈴
K'ai Hsüan 凱旋
Liu Yao Chin 柳搖金
Ma Ch'e Fu Chih Ko 馬車夫之歌
Nan Pang Tzu 南梆子
Nien Nu Chiao 念奴嬌
Pu Pu Chiao 步步嬌
P'i Pa Hsiang K'ou Ku Jen Lai 枇杷巷口故人來
P'ing Hu Ch'iu Yüeh 平湖秋月
Sai Lung Tuo Chin 賽龍奪錦
Yeh Sung Ching Niang 夜送京娘
Yu Chan Chi 玉簪記
Yu Ta Pa Chiao 雨打芭蕉

### B. Names of performers

Ch'en Chün-ying 陳俊英
Ho Liu-t'ang 何柳堂
Jen Ping-erh 任冰兒
Li Fen-fang 李芬芳
Lin Hsiao-ch'ün 林小群
Lü Wen-ch'eng 呂文成
Lü Yu-lang 呂玉郎
Mai Ping-jung 麥炳榮
Pai Hsüeh-hsien 白雪仙

C. Other Terms

bong wong* 梆黃
chau* (ㄟ) 秋
chau* (ㄧ) 臭
ch'ien tuan 前段
ch'ü 曲
chung tuan 中段
yüeh hu 粵胡
siu kuk* 小曲
t'ien tz'u 填詞
tz'u 詞

*Romanization according to the Cantonese dialect, all others according to the Peking dialect.