THE STUDY OF WANG CHANGLING'S
SEVEN-CHARACTER QUATRAIN

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ABSTRACT

Wang Changling, though not a major poet in Chinese literary history, is considered the grand master of a major poetic form, qijue jueju. His achievement in qijue consists in his craftsmanship in writing the form and his contribution in establishing the aesthetic criteria for the later generations to follow. In order to present Wang Changling's poetic achievement in qijue, this thesis constructs a historical framework to examine the evolution of the qijue form from its beginning up to the poet's times, focusing on thematics and formal techniques.

Chapter I defines Wang Changling's historical situation. Since only fragmentary information is extant regarding the poet's life, it is impossible to reconstruct his personal history in detail. Nevertheless, this limited information is sufficient to place the poet within the historical framework of the qijue development. Wang Changling was active as a poet in the first half of the eighth century, and thus represents the mature stage of qijue development.

Chapter II examines the definition and the origin of qijue. Following our knowledge of Wang Changling's time, the discussion of this chapter focuses on the evolution of the poetic form from the mid-fifth century to the seventh century, the time before Wang Changling was born. During these two centuries, qijue and its prototype seven-character quatrains were overshadowed by the then-dominant five character poems. Only a small number of qijue were composed, and most of these poems were written under the strong influence of the folk-song tradition and ornate palace-style poetry. Hence, most qijue in this time were written simply as a rhetorical exercise to show off the literary ability of the poets and their lords.

Chapter III reviews critical opinion of Wang Changling's qijue and offers my approach in examining his poems. Here I divide the critical comments of Wang Changling's poems in two categories: the canonization of his poetic accomplishment, and concrete observations about his poems. My approach is to examine Wang's qijue in two ways, to identify the tradition he inherits from his predecessors, and further to analyze how he breaks away from the tradition and establishes his own unique style. The poet adopts themes and methods of description from
the poets of previous periods while demonstrating personal and emotional complexity through the poetic form, a feature which is absent in the works of his predecessors. He achieves this by correlating imagery of nature and his personae's feelings through the use of implications.

Chapter IV interprets thirteen of Wang Changling's qijue in the context of the theoretical and historical framework of the previous chapters. It highlights the innovative poetic techniques the poet employs when adopting both traditional and contemporary themes and using natural descriptive manner. Wang's ability to use implications to convey the complexity of emotions and events makes his poems rich with inexhaustible meanings.

Chapter V concludes that Wang's achievement in the qijue lies in his ability to integrate tradition with his own restrained style. Because of his success in the form, the aesthetic criteria for qijue since his time have been those of emotional profundity and implication. Hence, Wang Changling's importance in qijue is not only due to his masterly craftsmanship in writing the form, but also because he opens up a new way of writing the form for later generations to follow.
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CHAPTER 1

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF WANG CHANGLING

I. Introduction

The task of this chapter is to describe the life and social experience of Wang Changling. In order to understand the personal and historical background to his poetic achievement, three primary sources are particularly important for the research. The poetic anthology, *The Handsome Spirit of Mountains and Rivers* (*Heyue yingling ji* 河嶽英靈集, hereafter, HYJ), edited in 753 when the poet was alive, records contemporary views of his life experience and literary achievement.¹ Two official historical records of the Tang dynasty, *Old Standard History of the Tang* (*Jiu Tang shu* 唐書; hereafter, ITS) and *New Standard History of the Tang* (*Xin Tang shu* 新唐書; hereafter, XTS), also briefly outline the poet's life.²

Since only fragmentary information exists regarding to the poet's life, it is impossible to reconstruct his personal history in detail. In order to achieve a basic understanding of Wang Changling's life, I shall focus on four major issues: the date of his birth, his official career, his friendship with other poets and his death.

II. Origin

Before the twentieth century, we find no specific information regarding the poet's birth year. However, the modern scholar Wen Yiduo 魏一多 (1899-1946) and his contemporaries

Lu Kanru 鲁侃如, Feng Wanjun 冯燕君 dated the poet's year of birth as 698. The date is thus followed by most scholars.\(^3\)

Just like his birth year, Wang Changling's origin, and his home county are also unclear. Due to conflicting information in various sources, three places have been proposed as the poet's home town: Jiangning 江宁 (present Nanjing), Taiyuan 太原 (in present Shanxi province), and Changan 长安 (in present Shaanxi province).\(^4\)

\(^4\)XTS indicates that the home town of Wang Changling is Jiangning. This theory is probably based on the fact that some contemporary sources refer to the poet as "Wang Jiangning". A good example of this tendency is found in a preface of a poem written by his fellow poet Wang Wei 王维 (700?-760). The poem, "On the gathering at Monk Tanbi's courtyard in the Green Dragon Monastery" (Qinglong Si Tanbi Shangren xiong yuan ji 青龙寺堂僧院集), is written about a friendly gathering in a Buddhist temple.\(^6\) In its preface, Wang Wei writes the following:

At that time, my elder brother, Jiangning the first... ordered me to compose a preface to [the poems we wrote on the occasion].

\(^3\)Although Wen Yiduo 温一多 dated Wang Changling's birth year as 698, he did not mention evidence or sources for his statement. See Wen Yiduo, "Tang shi da xi 唐诗大系," in Wen Yiduo quan ji 温一多全集, edited by Zhu Ziqing 朱自清 et al. (1949, reprint, Kowlong: Nanguo tushu, 1976), vol. 4, p. 198. This date is also recorded in Zhongguo wenxue shi jian bian 中国文学史简编, by Lu Kanru 鲁侃如, and Feng Wanjun 冯燕君 (Shanghai: Kaiming, 1949), p. 59. The above two sources are quoted by Tan Youxue 谭优势, in "Wang Changling xing nian kao 王昌龄行年考," Tang ren xing nian kao 唐人行年考 (Sichuan: Renmin, 1981), p. 91.

\(^4\)The issue was raised by Wang Yunxi 王運熙, in "Wang Changling de jiguăn ji qi shìtì shí de wènti 王昌龄的籍貫及其生平事的問題," in Guang ming ri bao 光明日報, 25 Feb. 1962: 8; quoted by Tan Youxue, Tang ren xing nian kao, p. 118.

\(^5\)XTS, juan 203, p. 5780.

\(^6\)The preface of the poem is quoted by Fu Xuancong as a piece of evidence to indicate that Wang Changling is older than Wang Wei. This may no be the case since it is common social courtesy for a Chinese to address his associates as "older brother" regardless of their age as a means to show his respect. The poem is recorded in Quan Tang shi 唐诗全集, compiled by Peng Dingqiu 樊定求 (1645-1723), et al., juan 127 (reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979; hereafter, QTS), pp. 1290; quoted by Fu Xuancong in "Wang Changling shiji kaolüe 王昌龄事迹考略," Tang dai shi ren cong kao 唐代詩人叢考 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980; hereafter CK), p. 113. The passage is translated by the author.
In the above passage, we see clearly that Wang Wei refers to the poet as "Jiangning." Two other Tang scholars, Li Zhao 李肇 (c. 824) and Pei Jing 裴寂 (c. 843) also called Wang Changling "Wang Jiangning." Some later scholars have accepted this theory, and have considered the poet to be from Jiangning.

However, the anecdotal writer Xin Wenfang 辛文房 (fl. 1300) has challenged this theory. He contends that Jiangning was the official posting in which the poet once served, instead of being his home town. The modern scholar Wang Yunxi 王云熙 elaborates on this theory by further suggesting that it was the fashion in the Tang dynasty to address poets by their official titles. For example, when listing the prominent poets during 710-730 in his Supplement to the History of the Tang (Tang guo shi bu 唐國史補), Li Zhao called Li Yong 李邕 "Li Beihai 李北海" because Li once served as the magistrate of Beihai (in present Shandong province), and Du Fu 杜甫 "Du gongbu 杜工部" since he was once honoured as a member of the Ministry of Works. Apart from the above source, Cen Shen 孫 (d. 770), a poet, was known to his contemporaries as "Cen Jiazhou 孫嘉州" since he once served as the prefect of Jiazhou. We can deduce from the above examples that Jiangning

7 Li Zhao 李肇 (c. 824), Tang guo shi bu 唐國史補, juan 3 (reprint, Shanghai: Gudian wenxue, 1957), p. 53; Pei Jing 裴寂 (c. 843) "Hanlin xueshi Li gong mu zhi bei gudian xueshi 翰林學士李公墓志碑," Qinding Quan Tang wen 鉅定全唐文, edited by Xu Song 徐松 (1780-1848), juan 764 (reprint, Taipei: Huiwen, 1961; hereafter, QTW), pp. 10044b-10045b.
9 Although Xin辛文房 suggests that Wang served as the magistrate of Jiangning district (Jiangning ling 江寧令), Wang's post in Jiangning was most probably that of the district assistant (Jiangning cheng 江寧丞). See a more detailed discussion in the latter part of the chapter. Xin Wenfang, Tang caizi zhuang 唐才子傳, juan 2 (reprint, Shanghai: Zhonghua, 1965), p. 22; quoted by Wang Yunxi, "Wang Changling de jiguang ji qi shiti shi de wenti," in Guang ming ri bao.
10 Cen Shen 孫 had a literary collection edited in his time which was called Cen Jiazhou ji 孫嘉州集. Although the collection has been lost, its preface, written by his contemporary Du Que 杜牧 (d. 799), exists. See Du Que, "Cen jiazhou ji xu 孫嘉州集序," QTW, juan 459, pp. 5933b-5934a. The source is quoted by Shi Moqing 史墨卿, Cen Shen yanjiu 孫研究
was most probably Wang Changling's official title, not his home town.

Instead of proposing Jiangning, Xin Wenfang suggests that Wang Changling was from Taiyuan. His theory is probably based on HYJ. In this poetic anthology, the editor Yin Fan refers to the poet as "Taiyuan Wang Changling." However, it was a common practice for Tang men to claim to be members of famous ancestral seats of distinguished families, or junwang 郭望. In Wang Changling's case, he might have claimed to be a member of prestigious Wang clans such as Langya 郭 or Taiyuan, without having an actual connection to either of the two famous lineages bearing the name. Xin Wenfang's suggestion is confirmed by the modern scholar Fu Xuancong 傅聰, who points out that in HYJ, poets are commonly referred to by their junwang. Hence, Taiyuan is probably Wang Changling's junwang.

The third suggestion about Wang Changling's home town is that it was the then capital Changan. ITS first refers to the poet as "Wang Changling from the capital" (Jingzhao Wang Changling 京兆王昌齡). Fu Xuancong strengthens the theory by pointing out evidence in Wang Changling's poems. For example, in the poem "Farewell to Li Pu heading to the capital" (bei Li Pu zhi jing 别李浦之京), the poet states in the first line that he had lived in the suburb of Changan early in his life:

11 Yin Fan, HYJ, juan 2, p. 98.
12 For a detailed discussion of the matter, see Patricia Buckley Ebery, The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China (London: Cambridge University, 1978), p. 11.
13 The most obvious evidence is that the Tang anthologist Yin Fan refers to Chu Guangxi 高光西 by his junwang as "Luguo Chu Guangxi 魯國 高光西," in HYJ while he includes Chu in his other literary work Danyang Ji 丹陽集, a poetic anthology composed of works of poets from the same origin Danyang (in present Henan province). See HYJ, juan 2, p. 98; Danyang ji (reprint, Taiwan: Shangwu, 1975). The sources are quoted by Fu Xuancong, CK, p. 108.
14 Although Wang Yunxi suggests that Wang Changling is a native of Taiyuan, since we do not know the lineage of the poet, the poet's actual relation to Taiyuan remains uncertain. See Wang Yunxi's theory in "Wang Changling de jiguan ji qi shiti shi de wen ti," in Guang ming ribao.
15 ITS, juan 190, p. 5050.
16 The following discussion is based on that of Fu Xuancong. See Fu Xuancong, CK, pp. 109-110.
17 OTS, juan 143, p. 1448; the following line is translated by the author. The person suggested
My old home is in the west of Baling.

Baling is located in the east of Changan. The poet also discusses his original home when recollecting his early life before the official career in the poem "To Feng the sixth and Yuan the second, when lodging at Senior Tao's house in the Zheng District" (Zheng xian su Tao taigong guan zhong zeng Feng liu Yuan er 郑县宿陶太公馆中赠冯六元二):19

Originally I lived at the foot of Lantian,
Not because I wanted to fish or hunt.
I took up farming because I had no other skills,
Yet all the while I sought to gallop on the high road.

(3-6)

Lantian was a suburban district south-east of Changan. From these two poems, we may surmise that the poet probably came from a suburb of Changan, or at least stayed there during his early life.

In the above poem, Wang Changling reveals the poverty he experienced when he was young: "I took up farming because I had no other skills." That the poet lived in privation in the early stages of his life is further indicated in his letter to an official named Li, then the Vice
Minister of Personnel (lihu shilang吏部侍郎).\textsuperscript{21} At the end of the letter, the poet mentions that taking the recruitment examination is his only chance to escape from the poverty of his current environment, which he describes as follows:

Changling has long lived in poverty; therefore, I know a great deal about adversity...Whenever I think of doing my best yet am unable to support my family, I absently sit alone and am saddened with tears...

\begin{quote}
晶龄久於貧賤, 是以多知危苦之事...苦思力養不給，
則不覺獨坐流涕...
\end{quote}

Wang Changling may have written this letter before he became a government officer. Hence, the above passage indicates that the poet lives in poverty in his youth. Although we know little of Wang Changling's origin, the above discussion shows that the poet possibly grew up in the suburb of Changan in a poor family.

From Wang Wei's calling him "Jiangning the first", we know that Changling was possibly the eldest son of his family, since "the first" refers to the birth order.\textsuperscript{22} We know few details of Wang Changling's family. One of his family members is indicated in his poem "Farewell to Li Pu heading to the capital."\textsuperscript{23} In the third line of the poem, the poet states that he has a younger brother:

\begin{quote}
My younger brother is still fishing and hunting in the neighbouring village.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
小弟郎在尚流涕
\end{quote}

Here, Wang Changling indicates that he may have had at least one younger brother who is hunting and fishing at a village near Changan. Yet, the name of his younger brother is

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{21}] Wang Changling, "Shang Li shilang shu 上李侍郎書," \textit{QTW}, juan 331, pp. 4241a-4242a; quoted by Fu Xuancong, \textit{CK}, pp. 114-115. Fu Xuancong suggests that the content of the letter indicates that the Vice Minister Li was superintending the official recruitment examination, and thus the poet wrote the letter calling for his attention. Fu also suggests that Officer Li is Li Yuanhong 李元巖 (c. 725). If this theory is true, the letter may have been written before 725, when Wang obtained his Presented Scholar degree (jinshi進士).
\item[\textsuperscript{22}] The line is contained in the preface of Wang Wei's poem, "On the gathering at Monk Tanbi's courtyard in the Green Dragon Monastery" (Qinglong Si Tanbi Shangren xiong yuan ji). See \textit{OTS}, juan 127, p. 1290; see also p. 3 of this chapter.
\item[\textsuperscript{23}] \textit{OTS}, juan 140, p. 1423; translated by the author.
\end{itemize}
unknown. In addition, four of his poems show that he might have had other relatives. For example, he addressed people such as Wang Yu 王Yu and Wang Yue 王越 as his younger brothers. Since it was common for men in the Tang dynasty to address their associates with the same surname as "brother", just as Wang Wei refers to Changling as his elder brother in the preface discussed above, we cannot be sure how close the kinship of these people was to the poet.

III. Official Career

Born as the eldest son of a poor family, Wang Changling managed to advance himself to the status of a member of the prestigious elite through his literary talents. The poet started his political career by passing two examinations, one being the Presented Scholar (jinshi 进士), and the other the Erudite Literatus (boxue hongci 博學宏辭). These two examinations are significant in two ways: first, they were the most prominent national examinations of that time; secondly, the dates the poet passed them are the only specific biographical evidence we have to reconstruct his biography.

The Presented Scholar degree, often compared to the academic doctorate in the modern West, emphasized talent in literary composition. In the early eighth century, the degree not

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24 Fu Xuancong identifies four poems which suggest Wang may have had some relatives. The first poem is "Presenting to my uncle, the magistrate of Tongzhou" (shang Tongzhou shijun bo 上同州使君伯). The title of the poem suggests that the poet may have had an uncle who served at the same time as a State Magistrate (shijun 使君). This poem is recorded by Kukai 空海, Wenjing mifu lun jiao zhu 文鏡秘府論校注, edited by Wang Liqi 王利器, juan 2 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 1983), p.120. Three other poems suggest that Wang may have had brothers: "Presented to the Censor, my older brother the seventh" (shang shiyu qixiong 上寄御七兄), in Wenjing mifu lun jiao zhu, p.120); "To younger brother Yu, the Censor when lodging at Bashang" (su Bashang j shiyu Yu di 宿灞上寄御御弟, QTS, juan 143, p. 1447); "To younger brother Yue from the West River" (Xi jiang j Yue di 西江寄越弟, QTS, juan 143, p. 1447). For a detailed discussion, see Fu Xuancong, CK, p.115.

25 OTS, juan 190, p. 5050.

only provided a chance for a commoner to participate in further examinations for government recruitment, but was a powerful indicator of social status.\textsuperscript{27} For example, a prime minister Xue Yuanchao 薛元超 (622-683), once said that not having a Presented Scholar degree was his deepest regret in life.\textsuperscript{28} Wang Changling’s obtaining the Presented Scholar degree shows that his literary ability was widely acknowledged by his contemporaries.

Conflicting information exists concerning Wang Changling’s passing the Presented Scholar examination. First of all, the sources give two different dates regarding the year in which the poet passed the examination. One is 726, given by Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (d. 1261),\textsuperscript{29} and the other is 727, recorded by Wang’s contemporary Gu Kuang 郭侃 (724-815).\textsuperscript{30} Since Gu Kuang lives at the same time as Wang Changling did, his record of the date may be more credible than that of Chen Zhensun. Second, after Wang Changling passed the Presented Scholar examination, both XTS and ITS suggest that the poet served in the government.\textsuperscript{31} During the Tang, the Presented Scholar was an examination which qualified one for further recruiting examinations and could not, in itself, lead directly to an official appointment.\textsuperscript{32} It is uncertain in what circumstances Wang Changling did serve in the government right after he passed the Presented Scholar examination, as indicated by both official history records.

\textsuperscript{27} For a detailed discussion of the jinshi examination, see Tang dai keju yu wenxue 唐代科舉與文學 by Fu Xuancong (Shanxi: renmin, 1986; hereafter WX), pp. 162-164.

\textsuperscript{28} Liu Su 劉綱 (fl. 742-755), Sui Tang jiahu 唐唐嘉話, juan 2, Baibu congshu jicheng 百部叢書集成 (reprint, Shanghai: Gudian wenxue, 1957), p. 17; quoted by Fu Xuancong, WX, p. 142.

\textsuperscript{29} Chen Zhensun, Zhizhai shulu jieti, juan 19, p. 559.

\textsuperscript{30} Gu Kuang 郭侃, “Jiancha yushi Chu gong ji xu 監察御史初分集序,” OTW, juan 528, p. 6805a; quoted by Fu Xuancong, CK, p. 116.

\textsuperscript{31} There is conflicting information about the post Wang Changling served in after he passed the jinshi examination. In ITS, he is recorded to have served as an editor of the Imperial diary in the Palace Library (mishusheng jiaoshu 秘書省校書); in XTS, he is recorded to have served as the assistant in the same institute (mishu lang 秘書郎). In the Tang caizi zhuan, however, he is recorded as to be posted as the commandant of Sishui (Sishui wei 水尉). See ITS, juan 190, p. 5050; XTS, juan 203, p. 5780; Tang caizi zhuan, juan 2, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{32} Fu Xuancong gives a detailed discussion of the regulation of the national examinations of the Tang in WX, p. 492.
Unlike the Presented Scholar examination, the examination of Erudite Literatus was certain to have an effect on appointment to a government post. The Erudite Literatus examination was held for men of extraordinary literary talents. The examination was held regularly by the Ministry of Personnel as a means of recruitment, and occasionally it was the subject of the Decree Examination (zhike 制科), held irregularly to promote the talents of all literary men in or out of officialdom. The latter type of examination was hosted by the emperor, and held in the imperial hall with the aid of high ranking officials; it was considered by people in the Tang dynasty to be one of the most prestigious examinations one could take. In his poem, "A Carefree Song" (fang ge xing 放歌行), Wang Changling describes an examination scene in the following lines:

An imperial decree seeks out men from the marshes;  
In humility, I offer my stratagems.  
Dignitaries are as many as stars in the sky;  
Greeting me are ministers and generals.

(11-14)

The scene depicted in the above four lines matches our knowledge of the zhike examination. Interestingly, in the same poem, the poet describes the fact that he passed the examination and became an official;

Luckily I am acknowledged by the superior.  
Thus able to shed my commoner's dress.  
Now I sing a carefree song.

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33 Fu Xuancong, WX, p. 138-147.  
To ease my frustration in seeking a political career.

(17-20)

The fact that an official appointment was a direct result of the examination further confirms our knowledge of the nature of the zhike examination. However, the relation between this examination and the Erudite Literatus Wang passed is uncertain.

According to The study of the List of Degree Holders (Deng ke ji kao登科記考), Wang Changling passed the examination of Erudite Literatus twice: once in 731, and again 734. Yet, as its footnotes show, these two dates are based on different sources; the former date is quote from Biography of Tang Geniuses (Tang caizi zhuan唐才子傳), while the latter date is based on ITS. It is quite uncommon, though possible, for Tang men to have passed this examination twice.

On the other hand, since the present editions of Tang caizi zhuan and ITS do not have the date of the examination, Chen Zhensun's Zhizhai's Annotation of Bibliography (Zhizhai shulu jieti直齋書錄解題) seems, in fact, to be the only original source quoted by Xu Song specifying the date of the examination as 734. In addition, while stating nothing on the date of 731, Xu Song records the specific work Wang Changling wrote for the examination in the year of 734, "Writing after "The prose poem on the East Pavilion" of Gongsun Hongkai" (Gongsun Hongkai dong ge fu公孫宏開東閣賦). The evidence above shows that the

35. Xu Song徐松 (1780-1848). Deng ke ji kao登科記考 (Taipei: Jingsheng wenwu, 1972), p. 482 and p. 494; quoted by Fu Xuancong, CK, p. 120.
36. According to ITS, Xiao Xin習昕 (c. 731) passed the Erudite Literatus twice. See Liu Xu, ITS, juan 146, pp. 3961-3962; mentioned by Fu Xuancong, WX, p. 495.
38. Xu Song, Deng ke ji kao, juan 8, p. 494. Wang Changling's prose poem is recorded in QTW, edited by Xu Song, juan 331, pp. 4239a-4239b.
poet may have taken the Erudite Literatus examination at least once, perhaps in the year 734.

Because of his literary talent, the poet was able to pass the two prominent national examinations, and start his official career. His first two official posts were perhaps Editor of the Imperial Diary (jiaoshu lang校書郎), and the commandant of Sishui (Sishui wei汜水尉; Sishui is in present Henan province). However, his literary talent did not help him succeed in his official career. Throughout his life, he was never able to serve in any important post. Instead, for obscure reasons, the poet was demoted later in his life.

IV. Wang's Demotion and His Friendship with Other Poets

According to the extant poems written by Wang Changling and his fellow poets, the poet seems to have had an active life in terms of associating with poets of his time. Famous poets such as Li Bai, Meng Haoran, and Cen Shen are among those whom Wang Changling exchanged poems with. Some of these poems are especially important to the study of his biography. Since little information regarding Wang's political career remains, most of the surviving sources are poems written by himself and his fellow poets. In accordance with the contents of these poems, I shall discuss, in the following section, Wang's banishment as well as his association with contemporary poets.

All of the three original sources extant, XTS, JTS, and HYJ, indicate that Wang Changling was demoted several times in his political career. However, the cause of the demotions, their frequency, and the places of banishment are uncertain. I shall discuss here

39The following is a list of eight contemporary poets that appeared in the title of Wang Changling poems in QTS:

Liu Shenxu 利申虞 (QTS, juan 140, p. 1428);
Li Qi李欣, Qi Wuqian 欽無涓 (QTS, juan 140, p. 1427);
Cen Shen 未參 (QTS, juan 140, p. 1425);
Cui Guofu 崔固甫 (QTS, juan 140, p. 1425);
Wang Wei 王維 (QTS, juan 142, p. 1441);
Li Bai 李白 (QTS, juan 143, p. 1449);
Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (QTS, juan 141, p. 1437).
three possible places to which Wang may have been demoted: Lingnan (around present Guangdong and Guangxi provinces), Jiangning, and Longbiao (in present Hunan province).

Wang Changling's demotion to Lingnan was recorded in the title of a poem written by his fellow poet, Meng Haoran (689-740). The title of the poem "Seeing off Wang Changling to Lingnan" suggests Wang Changling once made a trip to the south. In the poem, Meng states that this particular trip is the result of demotion:

You are already burdened by a chronic illness;
Now additional troubles come from ogres and demons.

(7-8)

According to these two lines, Wang Changling seems to have suffered from ill-health when the banishment occurred, and the banishment seems to have been caused by false accusations. Because Meng Haoran died in the year 740, this poem must have been written before that year. Hence, Wang Changling's demotion to Lingnan occurred most probably before the year 740. In this farewell poem, Meng also touches upon his friendship with Wang Changling:

For several years we shared brush and ink-slab;
From this night on we shall live apart.

(9-10)

41 Wang Shiyuan 王士源 (c. 740) states the date of death of Meng Haoran in his preface for Meng Haoran's literary collection. See "Meng Haoran ji xu 孟浩然集序," OTW, juan 378, pp. 4855b-4856b. Also see Meng Haoran shi ji jiao zhu 孟浩然詩集校注, edited by Li Jingbai 李景白 (Sichuan: Bashu, 1988), p. 555. The discussion is based on Tan Youxue's, Tang ren xing nian kao, p. 106.
The friendship between the two poets, according to the modern annotator Zhan Ying 真瑛, may have started between 720 to 730 during the time at which Wang Changling took the national examinations. Their friendship seems to have flourished over time, since apart from the above poem, Meng Haoran wrote three poems recording his outings with Wang Changling and celebrating their friendship. During the last days of Meng Haoran's life, Wang was with him in his home in Xiangyang 襄阳 (in present Hunan province).

The next possible location of Wang Changling's banishment is Jiangning. Wang Changling may have served in Jiangning, as we discussed in the previous section regarding his home town. The date of this demotion is uncertain. According to two poems by his contemporary, the poet Cen Shen, Wang's serving in Jiangning was possibly a demotion. The first is "Seeing off Wang Changling to Jiangning" (song Wang da Changling fu Jiangning 唐王大昌齡赴江寧),

Facing the wine we are speechless

Feeling lost, I bid you farewell.

Not appreciated in this great age,

42 Zhan Ying 真瑛 suggested that Meng, at the age of forty, went to the capital and met Wang Changling. See Zhan Ying, "Li Bai shi wen xinian 平白詩文集年," in Li Bai shi lun cong 李白詩論叢 (Beijing: Zuojia, 1957), p. 9.

43 These three poems by Meng Haoran are: "Seeing off the Editor Wang the first" (song Wang da jiaoshu 唐王大校書, OTS, juan 160, p. 1642); "Sitting in an inn in the evening thinking of the Editor Wang the first when I first travel out of the Pass" (chu chu Guan lüting ye zuo huai Wang da jiaoshu 初出關旅亭夜坐懷王大校書, OTS, juan 160, p. 1637); "Together with Wang Changling having a banquet in the house of Wang, the Taoist priest" (yu Wang Changling yan Wang Daoshi fang 與王昌齡宴王道士房, OTS, juan 160, p. 1622).


45 Two scholars, Zhan Ying and Tan Youxue, proposed two different dates for this demotion, 739 and 742 respectively. However, both dates are speculative, neither scholar giving solid evidence. See Zhan Ying, Li Bai shi lun cong, pp. 21-23; Tan Youxue, Tan ren xing nian kao, pp. 106-108.

In vain, you study literature as your hair turns grey.
Taking up post where rivers and lakes abound,
You are going to travel on water thousands of miles away.
The notables are crowded in the imperial palace,
You alone heading to the other side of the Huai River.

(1-8)

The tone of voice of the above lines manifests the then young poet Cen Shen's sympathy towards Wang Changling. After expressing his sadness at the farewell occasion, Cen states that Wang Changling's literary excellence has not helped his official career. While other officers are close to the political centre, Wang has been appointed to a far away post in Jiangning. According to the content of the poem, we see that Wang's heading to Jiangning is due to demotion.

Wang Changling's frustrated political career and his demotion to Jiangning is further confirmed in another poem written by Cen Shen. Two lines in the poem, "A letter to Wang Changling the first when seeing off Xu to Jiangning to visit his parents after obtaining the jinshi degree" (song Xuzi zhuodi gui Jiangning bai qin yin ji Wang da Changling 送徐子握第歸江寧拜親因寄王大昌齡), clearly indicate that Wang’s post to Jiangning was a demotion.47

47The title of the poem is in QTS, juan 198, pp. 2031-2032.
Brother Wang is still demoted,
And is constantly encircled by disturbance.

(37-38)

王兄尚謫宦
屡見秋雲生

The "disturbance" seems to be the central theme in Wang Changling's political career since his earlier demotion to Lingnan. After his demotion to Jiangning, Wang Changling was again banished.

The third location of Wang's banishment was Longbiao (in present Hunan province), where he served as the local commandant (Longbiao wei 龍標尉). The cause of this banishment, according to Yin Fan, was due to his controversial personal behaviour. Again, the reasons for misconduct remain obscure. In addition, the description of the event in XTS suggests that Longbiao wei was the last post Wang Changling served in before his death.

Two poems confirm Wang's demotion to Longbiao. One is written by Li Bai (701-762), "Hearing Wang Changling's demotion to Longbiao, I send this poem from afar" (wen Wang Changling zuoqian Longbiao yiao yu ci ji 聞王昌齡左遷龍標遂有此寄). The title alone shows that Wang Changling's demotion did indeed occur. This demotion is further substantiated by one of Wang Changling's own poems "Picnicking in Longbiao" (Longbiao ye yan 龍標野宴):

Do not think that we are singing the sad tune of exile;
for mountains and the bright moon have never failed our expectation.

(3-4)

異道悲歌頌遺詞

48XTS is perhaps the earliest original source to specify that the poet was banished to Longbiao as commandant. See XTS, juan 203, p. 5780.
49According to Yin Fan, Wang Changling's banishments seem to have been caused by scandals related to his own misconduct. However, the precise nature of Wang Changling's misconduct is unknown. See Yin Fan, HYI, juan 2, p. 99.
50OTS, juan 172, p. 1769.
51OTS, juan 143, p. 1447.
While Wang Changling was unsuccessful in his political career, his poetic talent was highly regarded by his contemporaries. He was honoured as "the master of poetry" in his time. A good example of this is Yin Fan's including sixteen of Wang's poems in his poetic anthology HYJ. Not only does the amount of Wang Changling's poems surpass that of other poets in this collection, but his poetic style is highly praised by Yin as a feature that makes the poet the successor of the great poets of the third century. In his introduction to the poet, Yin Fan ends his description of Wang's life with the last banishment. It is thus likely that Wang Changling was alive when the anthology was edited in 753.

V. His Death

According to XTS, Wang Changling was killed during the An Lushan 安禄山 rebellion (755-757). An Lushan, a Turkish general in command of the imperial forces in the north-east, rebelled in 755. Because of the seriousness of the disturbance, the emperor Xuanzong 太宗 (reign 713-755) was forced to abandon the capital Changan and abdicate from the throne.

Some time after the An Lushan rebellion started, Wang Changling set off from Longbiao to join his family in Jiangning. Before he reached home, he was killed by a military commander Lüqiu Xiao 鬼丘小 .

Wang Changling's death seems to have evoked sympathy from his contemporaries. XTS records at the end of the poet's biography that when Lüqiu was about to be executed for dereliction of duty, he pleaded for mercy because he had a family to support. The executioner replied, "And who will take care of Wang Changling's family?" 54

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52Ji Yougong, "Tang shi ji shi jiao jian, juan 24, p. 631.
54XTS, juan 203, p. 5780.
The date of Wang Changling’s death is uncertain. However, Lüqiu Xiao is recorded to have died in 757.\(^5\) If XTS is correct, the death of Wang Changling would have occurred between 755, when the An Lushan rebellion started, and 757, when Lüqiu Xiao died.

VI. Summary

In above discussion, we have established the framework of Wang Changling’s biography, and described some of his experiences. The information might be gathered together in the summary below.

Wang Changling, or Wang Shaobo 王少伯, lived approximately from 690 to 760. He was perhaps the eldest son in a poor farming family in a suburb of the capital city, Changan. Around 726, the poet passed the prestigious national examination of Presented Scholar. Within eight years, he had passed another examination, the Erudite Literatus. These two examinations enabled him to serve in his first two official posts, possibly as editor in the Imperial Library, and commandant of Sishui. However, his later political career was marked by a series of demotions. Places he was most probably exiled to were Lingnan, Jiangning, and Longbiao. Finally, he died some time before 757, during the An Lushan rebellion.

Despite his misfortunes in politics, Wang Changling flourished as a poet. Before he died, he was considered one of the best poets of his age by his contemporaries. However, it was his qiyan jueju poems 七言绝句 (i.e., seven character quatrain; hereafter qijue) which have been highly acclaimed by critics and readers of later generations. Before examining his

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\(^5\)The place where Wang Changling was killed is uncertain since Lüqiu Xiao’s posting is unknown. Three different locations where Lüqiu may have served have been suggested by different sources. XTS indicates that he served as the prefect (cishi 刺史) in Hao zhou 滑州 (in present Anhui province); Zizhi tongjian 资治通鑑, on the other hand, states that he was the magistrate of Qiao Jun 築郡 (in present Henan province), while according to Hu Sanshin 何三省 (1230-1302), the editor of Zizhi tongjian, Lüqiu may have been the prefect of Bozhou 凤州 (in present Anhui province). See XTS, juan 203, p. 5780; Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086), Zizhi tongjian, edited by Hu Sanshin, juan 220 (reprint, Beijing: Guji, 1956), p. 7039.
qijue poems, we shall first take a look at the development of this particular poetic genre before his time, in order to delineate the background against which his literary achievement can be understood.
CHAPTER TWO
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE QIYAN JUEJU
BEFORE WANG CHANGLING

I. Introduction

During the Tang dynasty (618-905), the development of the qi jue reached its pinnacle. The critic Song Luo 宋LayoutInflater(1634-1713) observes the excellence of the qi jue in the Tang dynasty as follows:

Poetry when it came to the qi jue of the men of Tang achieved the utmost in fineness and beauty.1

As Song indicates, there are many excellent qi jue works produced in the Tang dynasty. Among them, many of Wang Changling’s poems have been acknowledged as the classic.

Since during the Tang dynasty, the development of the qi jue went through several different stages, our focus of this chapter shall center on the development of the qi jue before the eighth century, when Wang Changling became active as a poet. By establishing the historical framework of the development of the qi jue before Wang made his contribution, we can understand the significance of Wang Changling’s achievement in the qi jue form.

The following discussion is followed by a chronological order. Three principle issues are the focus of this chapter: the definition of the poetic form qi jue, the origin and prototype of the form, and the manner in which it developed before Wang Changling’s time.

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1Song Luo 宋LayoutInflater(1634-1713), Man tang shou shi 漢堂詩 in Qing shi hua 清詩話, edited by Ding Fubao 丁福保 (1874-1952) (reprint, Shanghai: Guji, 1982), p. 419.
II. The Definition of the Qijue

The qijue is a sub-genre of the jueju, and is defined by two poetic elements, qiyian 七言 (seven-character) and jueju 绝句, four-line poetic form. Two theories regarding the origin and history of the jueju form have been proposed by critics over the centuries. The first view, represented by Fu Yuli (1304-1343), regards jueju as a shortened form which is "cut off" from the tone-regulated eight-line verse, lishi 律诗. This theory is based on his observation that the two forms share similar tonal and grammatical structures. The second theory, expounded by Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), however, challenges the above theory by suggesting that jueju takes shape long before lishi and can be traced back to the short old-style poetry of the second century.

According to the first theory, the jueju would have appeared during the seventh century.

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2 The following discussion of the two opinions regarding qijue is based on the article "jueju" by Richard Bodman and Shirleen Wong, in The Indiana Companion To Traditional Chinese Literature, edited and compiled by William H. Nienhauser (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, hereafter, ICTCL), p. 687.

3 As Fu points out, the basic elements of jueju consist of either parallel couplets or non parallel couplets, both of which are essential in the lishi form, whose basic structure is to have one non-parallel couplet at the beginning of the poem and one at the end with two parallel couplets in the middle. See Fu Yuli, Shi fa yuan liu 詩法源流 (reprint, Taipei: Guangwen, 1973), p. 38. Quoted by Luo Genze, in Zhongguo gudian wenxue lunji 中國古典文學論集 (1962, Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1982), pp. 28-29. The modern scholar Wang Li 王力 henceforth rigidly defines the term jueju as those five or seven-character quatrains which adhere to the standards of regulated tonal patterns and discards the unregulated ones. See Wang Li 王力, Hanyu shilü xue 漢語詩律學 (Shanghai: Jiaoyu, 1979), p. 41. Wang's theory, in my view, fails to define the poetic genre of jueju. Besides the regulated ones, non-regulated quatrains composed after the Tang Dynasty have also been considered jueju by most anthologists. For example, when the Song anthologist Hong Mai 洪邁 compiled the jueju in Tang, he included both the regulated and non-regulated poems and only grouped them according to the number of the characters, i.e. five-character and seven-character. See Hong Mai (1123-1202), Wan shou Tang ren jueju 萬首唐人絕句 (reprint, Taipei: Changge, 1986). The same categorization is also seen in another poetic anthology, Tang shi pin hui 唐詩品汇, edited by Gao Bing 高棅 (1350-1423), in Siku quanshu zhenben liuji 四庫全書珍本六集 (reprint, Taipei: Shangwu, 1976).

4 Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), Jiangzhai shihua 建齋詩話, juan 2, in Qing shi hua 清詩話, edited by Ding Fubao, p. 18.
when the term "lüshi" came into use. However, this theory is contradicted by the fact that the term jueju appears earlier than lüshi. In the sixth century anthology The New Songs of the Jade Terrace (Yu tai xin yong 玉臺新詠), jueju is used to describe the five-character four-line poems.

Although its term appeared in the sixth century, the jueju did not become an independent poetic form until the Tang dynasty. It is during the Tang period that the jueju has fully developed to its defined form. Hence, scholar of the later generations define jueju as the four-line verse written after the year of 618, the establishment of Tang.

The form of jueju consists of three basic elements. First, the poem has to be written in four lines, each with the same number of syllables. Secondly, because Chinese is a tonal language, jueju is governed by a set of tonal regulations. In addition, the rhyming pattern also plays an essential part in the form of jueju.

As indicated above, jueju has to be written in the four-line form. According to syllables in each line, jueju can be further classified into two categories, five syllable jueju and seven-syllable jueju. Since in the sixth century, only a few five-syllable quatrains were called jueju, the seven-syllable quatrain may have been included in the jueju genre only after the Tang Dynasty due to its sharing a four-line format with five-syllable jueju.

The tonal pattern is one of the fundamental elements of regulated jueju. Since the fifth century, the ancient Chinese language has been classified into four tonal patterns: level (ping 平), rising (shang 上), departing (qu 去), and entering (ru 入). This tonal variations play

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5 According to JTS, the term "lüshi" appeared in the seventh century. See JTS, p. 5056.
6 Xu Ling 徐陵 (507-583) comp., Yu tai xin yong jianzhu 玉臺新詠箋注 annotated by Wu Zhaoyi 吳兆宜, juan 10 (reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1985), p. 469. For a detailed discussion of the sources and the content of the poems related to jueju during this period, see Luo Genze, pp. 31-37.
7 See the discussion in Shi Fengyu 施逢雨, Li Bai shi de yishu chengjiu 李白詩的藝術成就 (Taipei: Da'an, 1992), 282-283.
8 This discussion is based on Wang Yunxi 王運熙, "Qiyan shi de fazhan yu wancheng 七言詩的發展與完成," Fudan xuebao 復旦學報, 2(1956): 70.
9 The latter three tones, rising (shang 上), departing (qu 去), and entering (ru 入) are further
an important part in the make up of the *jueju*. Based largely on the differences in the variation of tonal pattern in *jueju* works, later scholars generally divide *jueju* into two major categories: modern style for those which match the regulated tonal pattern, and ancient style for some of those which do not. To complicate matters even further, some *qijue* poems that belong to the modern style yet do not precisely accord with the regulated tonal pattern are called awkward-sounding style (*aoti* 抨體) poems.

Thirdly, a *jueju* has to contain a single rhyme which appears at the end of every even-numbered line. The rhyming syllables in regulated *jueju* are usually in the level tone. This feature of rhyme regulation is particularly important for the seven-syllable *jueju*. The folk-songs before the seventh century usually rhyme at the end of every line, and sometimes each couplet has different rhyming sounds. The rhyming regulation of *jueju* separates the

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10Using "." to represent the level tone, "1" to represent the deflected tone, and "*" to indicate that both tones are accepted, we show in the following table the four regulated tonal patterns of *jueju*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Seven-syllable</th>
<th>Five-syllable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>*1 1 - - - 1</td>
<td>*1 1 - - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>*1 1 - - 1 1</td>
<td>*1 1 - - 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>*1 1 * - - 1</td>
<td>*1 1 - - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>*1 1 - - 1</td>
<td>*1 1 - - 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


11The four modern style poetic forms are: five-character regulated eight-line verse (*wuyan liishi* 五言律詩); seven-character eight-line verse (*qiyan liishi* 七言律詩); five-character quatrain (*wuyan jueju* 五言絕句); *qiyan jueju*. The distinction between the "modern style" and "ancient style" (gutishi 古體詩) is that the former imposes strict regulations on tonal pattern and rhyme scheme. See Shi Zhecun 施蜇存, *Tang shi bai hua* 唐詩百話 (Shanghai: Guji, 1987), p. 82.

12This classification is adopted from Guo Xiliang's 郭錫良 *Gudai Hanyu* 古代漢語 (Tainjin: Jiaoyu, 1982, pp. 1080-1086), and is strictly linguistic in perspective. Shen Zufen also divides *qijue* into similar categories. See Shen Zufen, *Tang ren qijue qianshi*, pp. 12-17.

13In *qijue*, as Wang Li points out, the first line usually rhymes with the other two lines. However, there are few exceptions. See Wang Li, *Hanyu shiliu xue*, p. 39.


15Shen Zufen, *Tang ren qijue shi qianshi*, p. 4. For a parallel discussion in English see Zhou
form from the four-line verses in seven-syllable meter in ancient folk-songs.

Being a sub-genre of jueju, qijue encompasses the same criteria. The term qijue only refers to seven-character quatrains written after 618, the year when the Tang Dynasty begins. The form has to be written in four lines, with seven characters in each line while following the rule that a single rhyme must appears at the end of every even-numbered line. Although the qijue shares some similar composition characteristics with the five-syllable jueju, it has its own origin and unique course of development.

III. The Origin of the Qijue

Tracing back the origin of qijue, some scholars suggest that proto-qijue appeared as early as the mid-fifth and sixth centuries. Because these poems do not fit the strict definition of qijue, especially in terms of time of composition, we shall call them seven-character quatrains hereafter. In the following, we shall examine some of the poems written in the seven-character quatrain form during this period.

In the sixth century, the seven-character quatrain was "used to designate short song stanzas, and so constituted a sort of yuefu [ie. folk-songs] with no formal restrictions implied other than line and stanza length." Because of their close connections to folk-songs, the structure of the seven-character quatrains of the sixth century followed the regulations of specific musical tunes.

The earliest seven-character quatrain considered a possible ancestor of the qijue is "The

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String Melody on Autumn" (qiū sì yín 秋思引). This poem shows a close association with the folk-song in its musical title, as well as in its content:

In the lingering chill of Autumn, the wind brushes over the river.

Through the bleak scene covered by the white dew run the waves of Dongting Lake.

Missing you, when the light shines on the tree top and now the light has disappeared,

Still, I sadly gaze without avail into the indistinct distance.

秋寒依依風過河
白露蕭蕭洞庭波
思君未光光已滅
渺渺悲憤如思何

This poem is written in the fifth century by the poet Tang Huixiu 湯惠休. It is considered to be proto-qijue, since its rhyming pattern is identical to that of qijue. This poem features rhymes at the end of the first line, the second line and the fourth line, all using a level tone word. In terms of its content, the subject matter of this poem is a forlorn woman and her longing for love. The plain diction and the fact that the poem's theme is love both indicate the influence of contemporary southern folk-songs. The simplicity of the poem is shown in its imagery. The first two lines set the scene of the poem and express its central image of coldness. The first line points out the chill of autumn. The image "white dew" in the second line parallels "autumn" in the first line, and reinforces the coldness of the surroundings.

Dongting Lake is in present Hunan province. The external "chill" caused by the season is related in the second couplet to the internal bleakness of a deserted woman. The third line describes the woman missing her love both during the day and by night. The last line portrays the persona's desperation in longing for her love so that, even when night falls and there is

19 The title is also written as "Song of Meditation in String Melody" (ge sì yín 歌思引) in Yu tai xin yong, juan 9, p. 450.
nothing that can be seen, she is still looking out and hoping that her love will come back.

The folk-song quality in terms of title, form, and theme in seven-character quatrains remained consistent in the sixth century. A good example is the "Song of the Perching Raven" (wuqi qu 坡樺曲) by Xiao Gang 萧纲 (503-551).21 The title of the poem suggests its origin in the folk-songs of present Hubei province, which are called the Western Songs (xi qu 西曲).22 Xiao's "Song of the Perching Raven" consists of four seven-character quatrains. These four stanzas tell a story of "a wandering male and his love adventure."23 The first stanza describes a traveller who decides not to cross the Yellow River. In the second, he goes into a city to find a place to stay. In the third stanza, the man meets a prostitute in a brothel, and in the last stanza, they spend the night together. For the sake of conciseness, I will only analyze the style and theme of the first stanza:24

Of lotus the boat is made, the ropes are silk.
The Big Dipper is athwart the sky: the moon sinks low.
At the ferry crossing of Caisang, you are obstructed by the Yellow River.25
So afraid you seem of the stormy waves, so long you tarry at the crossing.

夫為作船纔為作作

22 This poem is placed in the "xi qu 西曲" category by Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 (fl. 1300), in Yuefu shiji 邱府詩集, juan 48 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979), p. 695. An explanation of xi qu 西曲 is contained in the preface of the title, see Yuefu shiji, juan 48, p. 689.
23 Hans Frankel, The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady, p. 139.
25 The second word of the line was written as "lian 莲" instead of "sang 桃" by the anthologist Guo Maoqian. Following Guo Maoqian's version, Arthur Waley translated the line as: "It's at the ferry I'm plucking lilies, but it might be the Yellow River." Ding Fubao 丁福保 (1874-1952) disputes Guo's version of the poem and suggests that the "lian" is a mistake of "Sang." "Caisang du tou 采桑渡頭" thus indicates Caisang Jin 采桑津 in present Shanxi Province. See Guo Maoqian, Yuefu shiji, juan 48, p. 695; Ding Fubao ed., Quan Han Sanguo Jin Nanbei chao shi 全漢三國晉南北朝詩 (reprint, Taipei: Yiwen), p. 1109; for Arthur Waley's translation, see Translations From The Chinese, p. 106; for the location of Caisang Jin, see Zhongguo lishi diming cidian 中國歷史地名辭典, edited by Fudan daxue lishi yanjiu suo 華旦大學歷史研究所 (Jiangxi: Jiaoyu, 1986), p. 524.
As the first stanza, this quatrain serves as a prelude to the story. The single objective of the poem is to narrate a situation in which a traveller is afraid of crossing the Yellow River in the early morning. Its subject matter, its close association with the music as is indicated by its title, and the story it tells enable the poem to be composed without any serious purpose.

The simple style of the folk-songs is apparent in this poem in terms of its descriptive manner and its diction. First, the imagery of the poem is consistently detailed and concrete. When describing the boat in the first line, the poet focuses on the details of its manufacture, and the impression it gives him. When pointing out the time, he specifies the position of the stars and moon in the sky. The location and the cause of the event are also written in a specific and straightforward manner. The specific description of concrete objects that exist only in the material, external world makes the poem simple, impersonal, and close to oral tradition.

Secondly, the poem is written in colloquial language without any allusions. The only metaphor in the poem is in the first line where the poet uses "lotus" and "silk" to describe the boat his hero travels in. These two images effectively add a romantic tone to the poem, and make it closer to the folk-song tradition. This poem is also considered a palace-style poem (gongti shi 宫体诗) for three reasons. First, its author Xiao Gang, also known as the Emperor Jianwen of Liang 賚簡文帝 (reign 549-551), was the leader of palace-style literary circle. Second, its lack of personal involvement by the poet and focus on romantic imagery, and well-chosen diction, clearly emphasizes aesthetic beauty over meaning. Third, the entertaining nature of this poem, which includes its adoption of the folk-song theme and the story telling style indicate that this poem belongs to the then dominant palace-style of poetry.

27These three features are based on the analysis of the palace-style poetry by Lin Wenyue, "Nan chao gongti shi yanjiu," pp. 410-411.
Palace-style poetry has two major items of subject matter: the description of a fair lady and the celebration of the formal occasion.\footnote{Lin Wenyue, "Nan chao gongti shi yanjiu," pp. 408-409.} Although most of the seven character quatrains composed at this time are written concerning the fair lady, we still can find, however, the seven-character quatrains written about public occasions. The poet Yu Jianwu's 余肩吾 (487-551) highly ornate "Ode to the candle light reflection on the water on the third day when serving at the royal banquet" (san ri shiyan yong qushui zhong zhu ying 三日侍宴詠曲水中燭影) exemplifies a seven-character quatrain on the theme of the formal occasion:\footnote{Ding Fubao, Quan Han Sanguo Jin Nanbei chao shi, p. 1347.}

\begin{quote}
[Its] layers of flame and fringes of flowers may be compared to a fragrant tree.
Both the blowing of the wind and the movement of the water can hardly stop it.
When the spring branches sweep the banks and bring its shadows upward,
Still it frets at not being able to encircle the guests crossing amidst the light.
\end{quote}

重焰垂花比芳樹
風吹水動俱難住
春枝拂岸影上來
還埀繞客光中渡

Similar to qijue, this poem rhymes at the end of the first, the second, and the fourth lines. However, the rhyming words are in deflected tones, a feature that Wang Li suggests quite common before the seventh century but unusual afterwards.\footnote{See Wang Li, Hanyu shiliu xue, p. 40.}

Written for a royal banquet as the title suggests, the poem wittily uses various images to describe the reflection of the candle light. The first line illustrates the beauty of it by making a simile comparing the shape of the candle flame to that of a flowering plant. The "fragrant" here refers to the scent of flowers. The second line reveals the nature and the strength of the reflection, which wind and the water cannot disturb. It sets up an invincible image for the reflection of the candle light.

The third line, however, shifts the focus from the reflection to the motion of the trees,
"sweep the banks and bring forth the shadows." With such a scenic image, the poet cleverly reveals the only "enemy" of the reflection, the trees. When trees are between the light and the water, they extinguish its reflection on the water. Under this circumstance, the poet humorously personifies the reflection in the closing line to presents a vivid sense of its plight and its perseverance. As the last line portrays the frustration and expectation of the reflection, the poet creates an image that captures a new aspect of the reflection. As the shadows of the trees move back and forth, little bits of the light shed on the water on and off through the branches. This image of the water glistening with the reflection of flickering of light is the main focus in this line. Besides this image, the last line also presents a beautiful scene in which the guests at the party travel on the glistening water because of the on and off the reflection of the candle flame.

The ornate diction and the well-designed imagery show that this poem is far from the folk song tradition of the previous two poems. However, like the other two poems discussed above, this poem also features concrete and detailed descriptive manner, makes no use of allusion, and has an entertaining theme.

In general, in the sixth century, few poets wrote the seven-character quatrain, which may be due to the fact that the dominant poetic form during this period was the five-character poem. Among the few seven-character quatrains extant, however, some appear to have a similar rhyming pattern to that of qijuè. This similarity confirms the theory that the qijuè may have been derived from the seven-character quatrain of the fifth and sixth century. The fact that most of the seven-character quatrains before the seventh century were composed for music shows the strong influence of the folk-song tradition upon this poetic form. Furthermore, because most seven-character quatrain poets of this time belong to the palace-style poetic writing circle, these quatrains exhibit a strong emphasis upon craftsmanship of the style which stresses the detailed description of the material object with almost no allusion employed. Their subject matter focuses on portraying the love affair and the fair lady, and few are written on the themes of celebrating public events.
IV. The Development of the Qijue in the Seventh Century

Since the five-character poem continued to dominate Chinese poetic writing in the seventh century, we can only find a few qijue poems extant from this period. Examining this limited number of qijue works, we can see that the tonal pattern of the poetic genre was being finalized.

The subject matter of the qijue at this time largely focused on celebrating the public events. Although the occasional theme was one of the subjects that belonged to the palace-style seven-character quatrain from the previous century, it was not popular until the seventh century. Indeed, in the early seventh century, the subject matter of love and the fair lady almost completely disappeared, and the dominant theme became the celebration of public events.

The dramatic change of theme can perhaps be attributed to the emperor Tang Taizong (reign 618-627) and his courtiers. During this period, the Tang court consciously opposed

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31 Shi Ziyu has analyzed the poetic works in the QTS. The statistics are based on the works of those poets who are recorded with at least one juan in the QTS. Quoted by Shen Zufen, Tang ren qijue shi qianshi, p. 20. The following table is a list of information from the analysis relevant to my topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poetic Form</th>
<th>618-712</th>
<th>713-756 (Year)</th>
<th>121-122</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five-character ancient style (wugu)</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>1795</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five-character eight-line verse (wulü)</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>1651</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five-character jueju (wujue)</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>279</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven-character jueju (qijue)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>472</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above, we see that the dominant poetic form of the early Tang was the five-character poem. Compared to the large number of five-character poems, the number of qijue was comparatively small.

32 Chen Yixin examines the tonal patterns in qijue works of the seventh century, and finds that the works of the poets of early times, such as Wang Bo 王勃, Lu Zhaolin 盧照鄰, and Luo Binwang 樂賓王 do not match the standard tonal pattern. Only poets who are active after them have written the qijue works that fit the standard tonal pattern. Chen Yixin 陳贻焮, "Sheng Tang qijue chuyi 盛唐七絕詩稿議," Lun za zhu 論詩雜著 (Beijing: Beijing Daxue, 1989), pp. 121-122.

33 The following discussion of this subject is partially based on Qixin其心, "Zhenguan Shifeng ji qian bian 譁觀詩風及其演變," Guang ming ri bao 光明日報, 18 Jan. 1983: 3.
the "palace style poetry," which was obsessed with describing women and love. Instead, they proposed the standard of propriety (zheng 正) and elegance (ya 雅) in literature, emphasizing its political function of celebrating the public event. Burton Watson states the nature of occasional poems at this time in the following passage:

The major poets, nearly all of them bureaucrats, were required to write their share of public poetry, to celebrate imperial outings and auspicious occurrences, [and] to bid farewell to departing fellow officials.34

This change of content turned poetry into a literary sport which bureaucrats played at social gatherings, writing assigned topics in specified rhyme schemes. A good example is the poem "Snow In the Palace Yard, Composed on the Imperial Command" (yuan zhong yu xue ying zhi 紫中遇雪應制) by Song Zhiwen 宋之問 (c. 650-713):35

The Fairy Carriage from the Purple Palace is descending in the early morning:
The blue banner stands near the Terrace of the Spring Lookout.
I did not know that snow had fallen in the Palace yard this morning.
It seems as if the trees have blossomed last night.

紫禁仙輦旦來
青幘遙倚紫春臺
不知庭霰今朝落
疑是林花昨夜開

This poem is written on the occasion of an imperial outing. The first line depicts the emperor coming out of his residence and into the yard early in the morning. "The Fairy Carriage" is a euphemism for his majesty's carriage, and "Purple Palace" for the imperial palace. The second line describes the scene of the Terrace of Spring Lookout (wang chun tai 王春臺). 36 The "blue banner" signifies the location of the emperor, since when the emperor

36 The exact location of the terrace is unknown. According to this poem, however, it would be close to Changan.
arrives, his banner is placed at that location. After depicting the emperor's presence and completing the first part of the assigned subject matter, the imperial garden, the poet focuses in the latter part of the poem upon another subject matter, the snow. In order to describe the beauty of the snow scene, he cleverly makes an analogy comparing the snow in the garden to the flowers on the tree.

Many early Tang qijue writers wrote most of their poems about formal occasions. Wang Bo 王勃 (c. 650-676), probably the earliest Tang poet to write in the qijue form, for example, wrote all his works on public occasions. His "Parting on an Autumn River" (qiju jiang songbie 秋江送别) is an example of the emphasis upon propriety and elegance at that time.

Early I met early autumn in a strange land,
By a river pavilion the bright moon was carried on by the river's flow.
I had known that the stream's passage onward wounds thoughts of parting,

But look now how the ford trees hide the boat you leave on.

The poem sets a theme of parting and expresses personal feeling towards the event.

Like Xiao Gang's "Song of the Perching Raven", this poem contains no allusions, and is

37 Although three poets earlier than Wang Bo are recorded to have written seven-character quatrains, these works are controversial. The poet Xu Jingzong 許敬宗 (592-672), claimed by the anthologist Gao Bing, was the earliest poet who wrote qijue. However, the same poem is recorded as lushi in QTS. See Gao Bing, Tāng shì pǐn huì, juan 46, p. 1; QTS, juan 35, p. 467. Another poet Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558-638) has a poem but is recorded as written in the Sui Dynasty, and thus cannot be considered as qijue. See QTS, juan 36, p. 476. Shangguan Yi 上官儀 (608-664) is also recorded to have written a qijue, but according to the footnote in QTS, it may also have been written by Yuan Wanching 元萬頴 (?-689?). See QTS, juan 40, p. 508.
written in an objective and descriptive manner. However, this poem is different from the qijue of the sixth century in many ways. It shows not only a change of theme from that of love to a social event, but also a change of mood from a feminine, romantic, and objective tone to a masculine, proper, and personal one.

Although its tonal pattern does not match that of regulated qijue, the poem has the rhyming pattern and couplet structure that match qijue standards, and may thus be called ancient style qijue. Consisting of a non-parallel couplet followed by a parallel couplet, the poem is noticeable in terms of its use of antithesis and parallelism. In the first couplet, a non-parallel one, the poet employs repetition, the same word appearing in an identical position in the first two lines, creating parallelism. In the second couplet, the poet composes a syntactic parallelism in which the two lines have an identical grammatical structure. The parallelism is further enhanced by the poet's repeated antithetical use of the water and the land in each couplet.

In Wang Bo's time, the concept of qijue was not yet fully developed. When the modern scholar Chen Yixin 陈贻焮 analyzes the qijue of Wang Bo and his contemporaries, he concludes that their works do not yet conform to the regulated tonal pattern. Further evidence to support the theory that the concept of qijue was not yet established then is the fact that Wang Bo refers to his qijue work as "mixed style" (zati 雜體). Evidently, the term jueju was not yet fully applied to the form during this period. Hence, even in the mid-seventh century, the form of qijue was still at an early stage of development.

Most of the qijue works in the seventh century seem to have been composed in the Wu Zetian era (reign 684-701). During this period, the majority of works were composed

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39 The following analysis of the poem is largely based on that of Stephen Owen. See Stephen Owen, The Poetry of the Early Tang, pp. 129-130.
40 Chen Yixin, Lun shi za zhu, pp. 122-123.
41 Wang Bo wrote two qijue under the title of "The Mixed Style on Thinking of a Friend in a cold night" (hanye huaiyou zati 寒夜懷友雜體), QTS, juan, 56, p. 684.
according to imperial command for formal state occasions (yingzhi shi 应制诗). It was in this atmosphere that the tonal requirements for gijue assumed their final shape. Three poets, Shen Quanqi 沈佺期 (c. 650-713), Song Zhiwen, and Du Shenyan 杜審言 (c. 640) are probably the earliest poets writing verses that correspond to the regulated gijue form.

While perfecting the formal aspects of gijue, these poets expand the parameters of the form's subject matter by adding more personal and serious elements to the stereotypical content of the seventh century court verse. Shen Quanqi's "Mang Mountain" (mang shan 山), for example, demonstrates his attempt to integrate craftsmanship and philosophical contemplation:

On North Mang Mountain the tombs and graves are ranged,
For all time, a thousandautumns facing Luoyang. 
Every day and night, songs and bells ring out within the walls;
On the mountain we hear only the sound of wind in the pines.

Mang Mountain, as Stephen Owen points out, is a traditional burial spot close to Luoyang city in present Henan province. Since its subject matter is closely associated with death, the poem presents the mountain by neatly juxtaposing concrete, mortal imagery such as tombs, and pines with the mountain's timeless existence. However, when the poet sets off the mountain against the antagonistic images of noisy, joyful, lively Luoyang city he creates

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43 For a detailed discussion on the subject yingzhi shi, see Stephen Owen, The Poetry of the Early Tang, pp. 256-273.
44 As Chen Yixin points out, the gijue poems written by these three poets; Shen Quanqi, Song Zhiwen, and Du Shenyan; all match the regulated tonal pattern. See Chen Yixin, Lun shi za zhu, pp. 121-122.
46 See Stephen Owen, The Poetry of the Early Tang, p. 349. This discussion is based on his analysis.
another layer of meaning which is greater than mere description of the mountain itself: the contrast between life and death. Hence, in the guise of objective description of its subject, the poem expresses the poet's contemplations on "the foolishness of human life in face of the inevitability of death."47

Du Shenyan, in his poem "On Crossing the River Xiang" (du Xiang jiang渡湘江), expresses, in a rigid structure of antithesis and parallelism, his nostalgia for the capital when relocated to the south.48

On the long spring day amid groves and gardens I grieve for travel past,
But this spring the birds and flowers grieve for the frontier.
Alone, I yearn for capital as I hide out in the South,
I am not like that River Xiang whose waters flow ever northward.

On a structural level, this poem is a classic example of parallelism, consisting of two parallel couplets. In each couplet, the syntactic structure in the first line parallels that of the second line. Each parallel syntactic unit in the couplet contains two antithetical images. This rhetorical technique of parallelism and antithesis, also applied in Wang Bo's "Parting on an Autumn River," shows a popular aesthetic principle of verse in the seventh century.

Nevertheless, unlike the other qijue works of Du's time, which deal only with concrete

48QTS, juan 62, PP. 739-740; revised translation of Stephen Owen, The Poetry of the Early Tang, p. 337. Regarding Du's relocating to the south, the poet is recorded to have been exiled twice in his official career: the first time to Ji zhou 九江 (in present Jiangxi province), and the second time to Feng zhou 峰州 (in present Vietnam). The critic Shen Deqian沈德潜(1672-1769) suggests that this poem was written when Du Shenyan was exiled to Feng zhou. See the poet's biography in ITS, juan 190, pp. 4999-5000; for Shen Deqian's comment, see Tang shi bie cai唐詩別裁, by Shen Deqian, juan 19 (reprint, Hong Kong: Shangwu, 1961), part 4, p. 110.
subject matter, this poem expresses the abstract emotion of nostalgia. Expressing the theme of reminiscence, the poet calls up the past and grieves over the present. Hence, all the imagery of the present in the poem is subjectively associated with the past by the narrator. Emotion is represented by the diction, such as "sorrow" (bei 悲), "agony" (chou 悼), and "pity" (lian 悼). Consequently, the impersonal objective voice common in most qijue is replaced by personal revelation.

From the above two poems, we see Shen's philosophical contemplation and Du's personal emotions break new ground in the use of the qijue form. In the late seventh century, as poets began to integrate personal statements and other serious issues into the form, the thematic scope of qijue enlarged. It was during this time that poems describing things (yongwu 詞物), poems depicting a popular courtly-style poetic subject, made their first appearance in the qijue form in the seventh century. Guo Zhen 郭震 (d. 713) is perhaps the pioneer of this change, consciously employing this particular subject matter in the qijue form. However, unlike the yongwu poems of the palace style, which were written only as rhetorical exercises, his seven yongwu qijue are written using allegory and complex symbolism, which in a witty and direct manner present the image of "the unappreciated man of virtue." [49]

"A Well In the Wilds" (ye jing 野井) is one such poem:

Even though no one draws from it, its taste is fresh and clear,
Its chill soaks the cold sky and the orb of the moon.
But if they had dug it beside some important highway,
For its lord, it might serve to aid the men who come and go. [50]

綿無汲引味清澄
冷浸寒空月一輪
驚處若敦當要路
為君常濟往來人

Like most *qijue* of the seventh century, "A Well in the Wilds" features a strong structure of parallelism without the use of allusion. Unlike Yu Xin's "Ode to the candle light reflection on the water on the third day when serving at the royal banquet" discussed previously, this poem cleverly develops its imagery not only to describe its subject matter, a well, but to evoke an allegorical implication. The gustatory image in the first line illustrates the excellent properties of the well, while the picture of the loneliness in the second depicts its desolation. The assumption of its hypothetical relocation in line four introduces kinaesthetic imagery, using diction such as "for" (wei 當) and "to save" (ji 救). The use of personification in the last line, and its conjunction with the previous imagery, reveal an analogy between the well and a man of virtue. Hence, the various objective descriptions of the well symbolize the poet's subjective contemplation of the situations in which a man of virtue stands.

At the end of the seventh century, two folk-song style *qijue* with love themes were written, in contrast to the formal, highly ornate occasional works. One is attributed to Qiao Zhizhi (d. 697), and the other Wu Zetian. This *qijue* poem, "Breaking off a Willow Branch" (*zhe yangliu 折楊柳*), illustrates the sorrow of an abandoned wife:

How lovely the bare willow branch of spring is.
I pick one and hold it in my delicate hand.
My beauty like the branch shall wither.
How can I expect you to favour me alone forever.

The title of the poem not only is the name of a folk-song, but also represents a

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51*QTS*, juan 81, p. 878; translated by the author. Besides this poem, the poet is recorded to have written three quatrains titled "The agony of Lüzhu" (*Lüzhu yuan 緑珠怨*) in four *jueju* poems by the Song anthologist Hong Mai. See Hong Mai, *Wan shou Tang ren jueju*, juan 1, 12a. The same poems are, however, recorded as one poem with the same title in *QTS*. See *QTS*, juan 81, p. 878.
customary farewell gesture to a departing friend practised since the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) As Hans Frankel notes,

The plucked willow branch was believed not only to have the power to delay the friend’s departure but also to lure him back if sent to him while he was travelling.\(^{52}\)

The willow branch in this poem not only suggests the woman’s being abandoned but also symbolizes the transience of the woman’s beauty and the man’s love. However, despite the fact that this poem is written on the theme of love, the tone of the female voice is objective and distant in manner. This effect arises from the use of concrete imagery throughout the poem, and from the poem’s deductive structure. The first line depicts a willow branch, and the second adds the physical connection between the persona and the branch. The second couplet further associates the beauty of the persona to that of the branch in terms of their transient existence, and then develops a deductive conclusion regarding the woman’s fate of being abandoned. There is no great implication of emotions to enhance the objective nature of the description. With such objective description and logical deduction, the poem is only descriptive, providing a general picture of a fact.

Contrary to the well-controlled, distant poem, "Breaking off a Willow Branch", Wu Zetian’s folk-song style qijue, "The Woman called Ruyi" (ruyi niang 如意娘) focuses on the emotional outburst of a deserted wife:\(^{53}\)

Watching the red turning green my thoughts run wild.
Pallid and disoriented just from missing you.
If you do not believe that lately I have been often in tears,
Just open the chest and examine the vermilion skirt.

看朱成碧思紛紛
顛頓支離爲憶君

\(^{52}\)Hans Frankel, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady*, p. 96.

\(^{53}\)QTS, juan 5, pp. 58-59; translated by the author.
This poem employs an amazingly simple and colloquial approach to illustrate a young woman's longing for her love. Expressed as the monologue of a young woman, the poem establishes its theme directly in the first couplet. The first line begins with the image of the nature through the persona's eye. Nature's colours change from red (the flowers) to green (the leaves) indicating the progressing of time, with spring passing into summer. The time change suggests that the persona has been alone for a while. Yet, the change of season only makes the persona anguish. The second line directly gives reason for the persona's disorientated state of mind, her lovesick. The exaggeration of the persona's physical appearance qiaocui (literally means "pallid") and zhili (literally means "dismemberment") creates an image of the woman's grieving over loss of love.

In line three, the narrator shifts the focus from describing herself to engaging a discourse with the audience. The dialogue, setting by an interrogative sentence challenging any doubts about her agony, effectively involves readers to the persona’s agonizing situation. In addition, the image of tears further conveys her sufferings and prepares readers for the striking image in the last line, the "vermilion skirt" (shiliu qun 石榴裙). The image in the closing line, that one can find traces of tears on the "vermilion skirt", strengthens the persona's irrepressible grief of the loss of her love describing throughout the poem.

The monologue style, exaggerating expressions, and contrasting colors of the poem create a youthful and vital image of the forlorn woman. Moreover, its colloquialism and interrogative device reflect a natural and spontaneous atmosphere close to that of a true folk-song and real-life emotion.
V. SUMMARY

Although it originated in the mid-fifth century, the qijue took its precise form during the sixth and seventh century. A primitive form of this poetic genre may have appeared in the mid-fifth century and was more frequently seen in the sixth century. These quatrains were obviously at an early stage of development because their tonal patterns did not accord with what would later be the regulated form. At this earlier time, the form, without its own name, showed a close connection to the contemporary folk-song in terms of themes and manners of expression.

Since literary trends focused on the palace style poetry, which emphasize precise and detailed description, the seven-character quatrains of the sixth century were characteristically descriptive in a skilful and detailed manner. From the few seven-character quatrains extant from the sixth century, we can see that their themes mainly focused on the folk-song subject matter of female love and sentiment. They were objectively descriptive and rarely used literary allusions. Most of them had strong and entertaining story lines, and were written in a musical stanza form.

In the seventh century after the establishment of the Tang dynasty, the seven-character quatrain finalized its tonal pattern, was termed "qijue" and, was treated as an individual poetic genre. Along with the change in form, its subject matter also changed drastically. Since elegance and propriety became the major concern in composing the form during this time, the theme of love and sentiment was totally replaced by the celebration of the formal occasion. The qijue became a rhetorical exercise produced by courtiers and their lords. In terms of style, they were a continuation of those of the six century.

On the whole, the qijue of the seventh century share some characteristics found in their predecessors. They are generally objective, descriptive, impersonal, and composed only for the purpose of entertainment. They are simple and direct, providing general descriptions without complex literary associations or profound implications. Besides the above qualities,
these qijue show more elaborate craftsmanship in prosodic structures in their use of antithesis and parallelism.

After the mid-seventh century, during the era of Empress Wu, the number of qijue works significantly increased. The form reached a crucial stage of its development in two ways: its tonal pattern was finalized, and its thematic scope expanded. Tonal pattern, a new concept developed in the six century was applied to the qijue by Shen Quanqi and his fellow poets.54

At the same period, expansion of thematic scope started. New themes, apart from just eulogizing the ruler or official events, appeared. The range of the themes was basically revived from that of the sixth century, which include the poems on things (yongwu), and the imitation of folk-song with a theme of woman and love. This is the time when some poets showed interest in exploring the qijue form, and this is also the time when the poet Wang Changling was born.

CHAPTER THREE
THE CHARACTERISTICS OF WANG CHANGLING'S QIJUE

I. Introduction

During the last decade of the seventh century, we see increasing popularity of qijue among poets. Because of the efforts of pioneer poets such as Wang Bo, Shen Quanqi, Du Shenyan, Qiao Zhizhi, qijue in the seventh century had finalized its tonal pattern, while embracing the then-dominant standards of propriety and elegant style, and the theme of celebrating formal public events. Because the dominant poetic form of this century was still the five character poem, few qijue were written.\(^1\) In this literary environment, the poet Wang Changling was born.

Wang Changling was perhaps one of the most productive poets writing qijue poems in his time. Approximately 74 of his qijue survive today.\(^2\) The number of qijue he wrote is significant because it not only almost equals the total, approximately 77, composed by his predecessors in the seventh century, but also makes up a substantial proportion of all of the qijue written in his time.\(^3\) In fact, the poet is one of two poets who wrote more than seventy qijue.\(^4\) On the other hand, Wang's qijue constitute more than one third of the total number of his 181 extant poems.\(^5\) Since the dominant poetic form in the eighth century was the five

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\(^1\)According to Shi Ziyu's statistics, in the 713-765, the total number of five-character poems is approximately 4054, which is triple the total number of seven-character poems, 1301. Among these poems, only 77 of them are written in qijue. See Shen Zufen, *Tang ren qijue shi qianshi*, p. 20.

\(^2\)The figure is based on the record in *QTS*, juan 143-144, pp. 1443-1452.

\(^3\)The total number of qijue written by his contemporaries was approximately 472. Both figures of the seventh century and the Wang's time adopt the statics made by Shi Ziyu, see Shen Zufen, *Tang ren qijue shi qian shi*, p. 20.

\(^4\)Among his contemporaries, Wang Wei wrote 24 qijue (*QTS*, juan 128, pp. 1306-1308), Meng Haoran wrote none, and only Li Bai wrote more than Wang Changling, 80 in total. The number of Li Bai's qijue is based on figure given by Shi Fengyu, *Li Bai shi de yishu chengjiu*, p. 288.

\(^5\)This figure is based on the number in *QTS*, juan 140-143, pp. 1420-1452.
character poem, most of his fellow poets had only a small proportion of qijue in their poetic collections. Thus, the large number of Wang Changling's qijue, and the fact that they make up a substantial proportion of the entire collection of his poetry are particularly noticeable features of his poetic career.

The poet's devotion to qijue is further shown in his achievement in the form. Wang Changling has most impressed readers throughout the centuries by the aesthetic beauty of his qijue poetry. The success of these literary works has made him one of the most recognized names among qijue poets. In the following, we shall examine Wang Changling's craftsmanship in writing qijue in two ways. In order to understand how readers of later generations received his works, we shall first take a look at critics' views of his verse throughout history. Equipped with a general knowledge of his poetry outlined by those critics, we will then move on to a discussion of the characteristics of Wang's qijue in relation to tradition, as well as his personal innovations.

II. Critics' Views of Wang Changling's Qijue

Wang Changling is probably the earliest poet to be widely acknowledged by critics of many generations because of his qijue works. Critical comments regarding his qijue works can be divided into two categories: first, the canonization of his qijue works, and second, impressions regarding their poetic quality.

A. Canonization

Wang Changling was considered a master of poetic writing by contemporary critics.

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6Compared to a total of approximately one thousand poems, Li Bai's eighty qijue make up only a small proportion of his entire poetic writing.
Critical comments can be traced back as early as the eighth century, when the poet was still alive. Critic and anthologist Yin Fan, for example, claims that Wang Changling, as a poet in general, is a successor of the great poets of the sixth century.\(^8\) Critic Liu Kezhuan 劉克莊 (1187-1269) notes that the poet was called "the emperor of poetry" (shi tianzi 诗天子) by his fellow countryman.\(^9\) Both accounts show the honour and fame as a poet Wang Changling received in his time.

Many critics, further, focus on the pre- eminent stature of Wang Changling's qi jue poems. Theanthologist Gao Bing 高棅 (1350-1423), for example, marks his high esteem for Wang Changling by calling him "the master of orthodox qi jue".\(^10\) Another critic, Wang Shizhen 王士貞 (1526-1590), calls Wang's qi jue "divine works" (shen pin 神品).\(^11\)

Some critics compare Wang Changling's qi jue works to those of Li Bai, and suggest that both poets are the masters of the genre. Ye Xie 耶特 (1627-1703), for example, voices his opinion of the two poets in the following statement:\(^12\)

For qiyan jueju, Li Bai and Wang Changling are the best throughout the time.

七言绝句, 古今推李白王昌龄.

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\(^8\)Yin Fan, HYJ, juan 2, p. 98. Richard Bodman notes that the high regard Yin pays to Wang Changling in his poetic anthology HYJ manifests itself in two ways; one is Yin's defining the poet as a successor of poets of the sixth century in the preface, and the other is the including of more poems by Wang than by any other poet. See Richard Bodman, "Poetics and Prosody in Medieval China", pp. 48-49.

\(^9\)Liu Kezhuan 劉克莊 (1187-1269), Houcun shi hua qianji 蕭村詩話前集, in Houcun shi hua 蕭村詩話 (reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), p. 199. A similar observation is made by Xin Wenfang when he notes that Wang was called "the master of poetry" (shijia fuzi 詩家夫子) by his contemporaries. See Xin Wenfang, Tang caizi zhuang, juan 2, p. 22.

\(^10\)In Tang shi pin hui, anthologist Gao Bing lists 806 qi jue poems by 174 poets of the Tang dynasty, among whom he only considers two poets "the masters of orthodox qi jue 七絶正宗," Wang Changling and Li Bai. See Gao Bing, "Tang shi pin hui xumu 唐詩品彙敘引," in Tang shi pin hui, vol. 1, p. 35.

\(^11\)Wang Shizhen 王士貞 (1529-1590), Quan Tang shi shuo 全唐詩說, in Congshu jicheng chubian 聚書集成續編 (reprint, Shanghai: Shangwu, 1936), p. 3. A similar opinion is expressed by critic Ye Xie 耶特 (1627-1703), Yuan shi wai pian 原詩外篇, juan 4, in Yuan shi, Qing shi hua, edited by Ding Fubao, p. 610.

\(^12\)Ye Xie, Yuan shi wai pian, juan 4, in Qing shihua, p. 610. A similar comment made by the critic Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602). See Hun Yinglin, Shi so nei bian 詩載內編, juan 6, in Shi so 詩載 (reprint, Shanghai: Guji, 1979), pp. 105, 116.
All the above comments indicate the prominent stature Wang Changling's qijue held in Chinese poetic critics' minds. From this consistent critical acknowledgment, we see that Wang's qijue poems are esteemed as masterpieces of the poetic genre throughout Chinese literary history. The critic Song Luo expresses his admiration of Wang Changling in the following passage:

[Among the qijue poets of the Tang dynasty,] Li Bai and Wang Changling are preeminent above the rest. Wang was even esteemed as "the emperor of poetry". Yang Shen [1488-1559] once said, "There is not a single piece of Wang's qijue that is not excellent." It is indeed well said.

This is the comment that I think best describes the critics' canonization and shows the prominent stature Wang Changling enjoys throughout history.

B. Comments On Wang's Craftsmanship

While canonizing Wang Changling's qijue, some critics also note the masterly craftsmanship displayed in his poetry. These critics praise his qijue works for three features: melodiousness, enigmatic complexity and emotional impact.

The musical quality in Wang's poetry was noticed by his contemporaries, and has formed a topic of discussion for later critics. The critic Yin Fan, for example, comments on the poet's masterly techniques in making sound manifest. First, Yin suggests that a characteristic of Wang's poems is that the voice in his poems "ascends to a somewhat loftier height" (sheng jun) and as a result, the poems "startle the ear and surprise the eye" (jing er hai mu). This dramatic sound effect is further noted by critic Hu Yinglin.

14 Yin Fan, HYJ, p. 99; translated by Richard Bodman, "Poetics and Prosody in Medieval
when expressing his admiration of some of Wang's qijue works. Some of Wang's qijue about women and frontier soldiers, Hu notices, possess a "leisurely, gentle, and graceful" (you rou wan li 優柔婉麗) musical quality, which accords with their theme, and makes the poems compelling.\(^{15}\) Qijue of the Tang dynasty is closely related to music, as critic Li Chonghua states:

Qijue are the musical lyrics of Tang.\(^{16}\)

Hence, Hu Yinglin's comment that Wang's poems are "wonderfully matched to musical tunes" confirms the opinion of critics since the Tang that one of the major aesthetic achievements of Wang Changling's qijue is their musical quality.\(^{17}\)

The complexity of Wang's poems has also been noticed by critics over the centuries. For example, \(^{18}\) describes the density and intricacy in his poetry in the following statement:

[In his poems] the thought is meticulous and the theme is clear.\(^{18}\)

The critic Lu Shiyong 魯時雍 (1089-1153) further explains the complexity of Wang's qijue by making an analogy to the landscape:

Among poems, there are the difficult and the easy... Among the wonders of the difficult poems, there is the style which evokes a stream winding through layers of mountains... Wang Changling's jueju are the difficult among the difficult.\(^{19}\)

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\(^{15}\)Hu Yinglin, \textit{Shi so nei bian}, juan 6, p. 117.

\(^{16}\)Li Chonghua 李重華 (1089-1153), \textit{Zhenyi zhai shi hua} 甄一齋詩話, in \textit{Qing shi hua}, p. 925.


\(^{18}\)\textit{JTS}, juan 190, p. 5050.

The critic Zhong Xing 钟惺 (1574-1624), further sheds new light on Wang's complex qijue style. Zhong focuses on the implicitness in Wang Changling's qijue:

Wang Changling's qijue is most intriguing for its stating nothing explicit. However, before one finishes reading [his poems], what is beyond the words and before the eyes can be conceptualized and visualized; yet it still remains ineffable.20

龍鏡七言絕，妙在全不說出．讀未畢，而言外目前，
可思可見矣，然終亦說不出．

The ineffable quality of Wang Changling's qijue, in my view, results in rich meaning, and also generates strong emotional impact.

One feature that many critics notice is the intense emotion expressed in Wang's qijue. The spirit of the emotion manifested in Wang's poems centres on grief and sorrow. The critic Hu Yinglin, for example, describes Wang's poetry as "reaching the acme in expressing emotions (yan qing zao ji 營情造極)."21 Another critic Shen Deqian 沈德潛 (1673-1769) further identifies the feeling expressed in Wang's poems as "well-hidden distress" (shen qing you yuan 深情幽怨).22

The above critical comments are helpful in informing us of the critical success of Wang Changling's qijue throughout Chinese literary history. Commenting on the poetic quality of these qijue, critics express admiration for their melodiousness, intricate elusiveness and the intense emotional impact they have upon readers. These comments provide a general impression of Wang Changling's qijue, but they fail to examine in detail the elements in Wang Changling's poem which contribute to the above impression. Furthermore, although they claim

20 Zhong Xing 钟惺, Tang shi gui 唐詩歸, juan 11, p. 16, Special Collection (Asian Library of University of British Columbia).
21 Hu Yinglin, Shi so nei bian, juan 6, p. 119.
Wang is the master of the poetic genre, these critics do not explain what makes him stand out from his predecessors.

In my opinion, the success of Wang's qijue poems comes from both the qijue tradition he inherits from the previous two centuries as well as his own innovations in the genre. Only by examining Wang Changling's qijue poems in the light of the literary history of qijue can we identify his blend of tradition and innovation which expresses his uniqueness. In order to limit my research, and to give consistency to the thesis, I shall regretfully leave out musical aesthetic achievement in Wang's writing and instead focus on his writing style and theme in qijue. In the following, I shall explore the characteristics of Wang's qijue in general, and examine their relation to the tradition in the sixth and seventh centuries.

III. The Traditional Aspect of Wang Changling's Qijue

Wang Changling demonstrates in his qijue poems his ability to adopt the tradition established by his predecessors. His poems share similarities with those of the seventh century in terms of tonal pattern, and the themes of propriety and elegance. On the other hand, his poems also dramatically diverge from the rigid, formal style of that time. Some of the differences are due to Wang's adoption of the style of the sixth century. Indeed, considering the significant differences in theme and technique between the qijue of the sixth and seventh century, Wang Changling seems to have included the best aspects of both centuries when composing his qijue.
A. Wang's Qijue in Relation to those of the Sixth Century

The most significant feature both Wang Changling and poets of the sixth century share is the theme of woman. Some of Wang's most celebrated qijue pieces are centred on women from the imperial palace, noble boudoir, or ordinary families, commonly subjects of the palace style poetry and the folk-songs of the sixth century. Of all historical figures, Lady Ban, or Ban jieyu, a deserted concubine of Emperor Cheng of Han Dynasty (reign 32-7 B.C.), seems to be Wang Changling's favourite subject.

Lady Ban was the chief favourite of the Emperor Cheng for ten years. When supplanted by a younger rival, Zhao Feiyan, Ban requested to be allowed to retire to the Changxin Palace as a maid of the empress dowager. Known for her literary talents, Lady Ban composed several literary works in her retirement. The tragedy of Lady Ban and her literature attracted the attention of many poets of the sixth century, and was one of the most popular poetic motifs during that time.

Nevertheless, Wang Changling is perhaps the earliest poet to use the traditional subject matter of Lady Ban in the qijue genre. The poet seems to take special interest in the abandonment of Lady Ban. There are seven qijue on this particular subject attributed to Wang, and each of them explores a different emotional aspect of Ban's abandonment.

Besides adopting the motifs of the sixth century, Wang's qijue also integrate the theme and style of sixth century poetry. In the sixth century, it was considered fashionable for literary men to write imitations of folk-songs. As discussed in the previous chapter, the adoption of folk-song element was an aspect of the then popular palace style poetry. Wang Changling wrote qijue imitating folk-songs portraying common working women, a traditional

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25 In Yuefu shiji, there are seven poems recorded with the title of "Agony of Changxin" (Changxin yuan 長信感) written by poets of the sixth century. All of the poems are written as five-character poems. See Guo Maoqian, Yuefu shiji, juan 18, pp. 626-628.
folk-song theme. His "Song of Lotus Plucking" (cai lian qu 棠莲曲), for example, takes a subject popular as a folk-song topic among poets in the sixth century.26 In another qijue poem "The Silk-washing Maiden" (wan sha nu 洗纱女), the poet imitates the colloquialisms as well as the style of the folk-song.27

Most of Wang Changling's qijue make central use of dramatic atmosphere. Wang's dramatic themes include historical events like Lady Ban's story. Consciously or unconsciously, the poet creates drama through various subjects and themes. This kind of dramatic quality can be traced back to qijue written in the sixth century, such as the "Song of the Perching Raven" discussed in the previous chapter.

Another trait which Wang Changling inherited from the sixth century was its objectively descriptive manner. From Xiao Gang's imitation folk-song "Song of the Perching Raven" (wuqi qu 棠楼曲) to Yu Jianwu's highly ornate "Ode to the candle light reflection on the water on the third day when serving at the royal banquet" (san ri shiyan yong qushui zhong zhu ying 三日侍宴詠曲水中燭影), the imagery in most of the qijue written in the sixth century is of concrete, ordinary objects from everyday life.28 Wang Changling, too, integrates this kind of realistic description of concrete and ordinary objects into his qijue poems. As a result, like the works of his predecessors, Wang's qijue feature a sense of realism.

In short, some of Wang Changling's qijue works include themes, stylistic imitation of folk-songs, dramatic effects and a realistic and concrete descriptive manner, all of which come from poems of the sixth century. The latter two features, the modern scholar Fang Rixi 日晰 suggests, are factors that distinguish Wang's works from those of Li Bai.29 Apart from using features of the works of the sixth century, however, Wang Changling also impressively

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26 It was under the title of "Jiangnan nong 江南弄" in Yuefu shiji, juan 50, p. 734.
27 As suggested by Professor Chia-ying Chao Yeh, "The Silk-washing Maiden" does not follow the regulated tonal pattern. It is an ancient style qijue. Its status as qijue is unquestionable for this poem is listed in the qijue category by the Song anthologist Hong Mai in his Wan shou Tang ren jueju, juan 17, p. 2a.
28 For a detailed discussion of these two poems, see chapter 2 of this thesis, pp. 10-14.
integrates some of the best poetic qualities of the seventh century into his qijue writings.

B. Wang's Qijue in Relation to those of the Seventh Century

One of the major achievements in the seventh century regarding qijue was the regulation of the tonal pattern. Wang Changling follows this regulation of the tonal pattern in most of his qijue poems and, as indicated by many critics discussed above, masterfully elaborates the thematic atmosphere through careful tonal arrangement.

Wang Changling also uses subject matter that was most popular in the seventh century. These subjects include the celebration of social outings, and war on the frontier. The latter subject, although it had a long poetic tradition since the Han dynasty, was popular in the seventh century because of current events.\(^{30}\) Since the beginning of the Tang dynasty, Chinese government faced repeatedly military confrontations from its neighboring countries, such as Turks and Tibet. Many scholars served as secretaries for the army and hence experienced the hardships of frontier life. Moreover, the poem about the frontier was made the test subject for some government recruitment examinations.\(^{31}\) Although this subject was a popular one for poetry, no qijue were written about it before the mid-seventh century. Wang Changling's seven "Campaign Songs" (cong jun xing 行) may be among the earliest pieces to integrate this subject matter into the qijue genre.\(^{32}\)

The standards of propriety and elegance in literature proposed in the seventh century

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\(^{30}\)This idea is discussed by He Changqun 賀昌群 in his "Lun Tang dai de bian sai shi 論唐代的邊塞詩," Zhongguo wenxue yanjiu 中國文學研究, edited by Fu Donghua 傅東華 and Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 (1934, reprint, Hong Kong: Longmen, 1968), pp. 1067-1075.

\(^{31}\)As He Changqun points out, Shen Quanqi wrote a five-character poem on the frontier theme, titled "Writing on the test subject "Heading to the frontier"" (beishi chu sai 被試出塞; QTS, juan 96, p. 1034). For a detailed discussion, see He Changqun, "Lun Tang dai de bian sai shi 論唐代的邊塞詩," in Zhongguo wenxue yanjiu 中國文學研究, p. 1067.

\(^{32}\)The anthologist Gao Bing 貴兵 considers Wang Han 王翰 (c. 720), a poet of the seventh century. Hence, Wang Han's qijue with frontier themes "Song of Liang zhou" (Liang zhou ci 涟州詞) may have been written before Wang Changling. See Gao Bing, Tang shi pia hui 唐詩彙編, juan 46, pp. 10a-10b.
had a great effect upon Wang Changling's writing. The best example of this effect lies in his qijue on women. Unlike the sixth-century poems' frequent association of the subject matter with eroticism, Wang's focus on serious exploration of emotional perspectives of his characters through standards of propriety and elegance.

In summary, Wang Changling inherits from seventh-century poetry the tonal pattern, the theme of social issues, and a serious approach to poetic writing. Because of these elements, his qijue show a balance between entertainment and serious contemplation.

IV. Wang Changling's Innovation in the Qijue Genre

While integrating the poetic tradition into his qijue poems, Wang Changling successfully breaks away from the restrictions and formality of the genre which come with the tradition. The poet explores a wide range of subject matter in his qijue, such as the celebration of public events, partings, social gatherings, scenes or music, the frontier, the palace lament, and the imitation of the folk-song. In his works, Wang manages to both write traditional qijue themes with broader application, and to integrate traditional subject with other verse-genres into qijue.

The most noticeable innovative approaches Wang Changling's qijue exhibit are in poetic technique, treatment of themes, and poetic style. More specifically, Wang's qijue works possess three major characteristics: a theme centred on the emotion of the persona, correlation between the external world and inner feelings, and the technique of identification by implication.

A. The Emotion of the Persona as the Central Theme

Although Wang Changling's qijue share their dramatic effect with poems of the sixth century, they also differ fundamentally from these poems. Unlike the poets of the sixth
century, who simply used their poems to tell stories, and to develop plots, Wang Changling often implicitly alludes to a well-known dramatic event to engender the emotional state of his poetic persona. In fact, his poems focus on the spirit of the persona rather than his or her appearance.

The poet is particularly interested in exploring themes involving human suffering. Although this subjective theme is new in the qijue genre, it is deeply rooted in the Chinese poetic tradition. The poetic theorist Zhong Hong 鍾弘 (c. 518) considers subjectivity to be the essence of poetry in his Shi pin 詩品:

At festive gatherings he turns to poetry to express his feelings of intimacy; at separations he expresses his grief in verse. The exiling of the minister of Chu, the Han concubine taking leave of the palace, or skeletons spread out over the northern wilderness, or the soul flown away among the tangled grasses, or spears carried to the far-flung regions, the spirit of combat flooding the borderlands, the traveler on the frontier with clothes too thin, the lady in her chamber with tears run dry, or the scholar-official who gives up his office and takes leave of the court with no thought of ever returning, or the woman who wins favour by the raising of a brow, and topples a kingdom with a mere second glance--all these things touch the heart and stir the soul. How else can one give vent to these feelings than by expressing them in poetry? How else can one give free reign to his emotions than through the Long Song?33

Centred on the personal emotion of the poetic characters, many of Wang's qijue stretch the imagination to create feelings which "touch the heart and stir the soul." Many of his qijue on the folk-song theme are written about the persona's suffering. This subjectivity in expressing troubling emotion enables Wang's qijue to be more than merely entertainment pieces. It also

provides a medium for the poet to voice his insight on issues that also deeply affect his readers.

B. The Correlation Between the External World and Inner Feelings

The poetic device Wang Changling employs in his qijue to put the emotion of his persona in the spotlight is his transformation of his realistic description of the external world to reflect the inner state of his persona. For example, when describing abandoned concubines and deserted wives, the poet elaborates the setting to parallel or contrast with the sadness of his persona. Whether Wang describes the long night in the cold and decaying autumn in most of his qijue portraying Lady Ban, or the bright day of spring in poems about deserted wives, the persona's state of mind always relates to the material surroundings.

Although description of the exterior world was well developed in qijue before Wang's time, his predecessors often applied it only with decorative purpose. Wang Changling, however, takes the technique a step further, using it not only as a means to create a sense of reality, as his predecessors did, but also as a means of reflecting the narrator's state of mind. By presenting concrete imagery of external settings and the persona's movement, the poet creates complex emotions within his persona.

C. Identification by Implication

Although he makes the emotion of the persona central in his qijue, Wang Changling rarely uses any subjective emotional diction directly. Instead, the poet describes the external world in detail. The means to bridge the gap between the inner feelings of the persona and the solid external world for Wang Changling is his use of implication.

In most of Wang's poems, the identities of characters are usually revealed through implications suggested by their surroundings. In order to achieve this goal, the poet elaborates the connotative meaning of concrete imagery. When portraying the abandonment of Lady Ban,
for example, Wang focuses on describing the season, the interior setting of her room, and her actions. All this imagery seems to be very far from the theme of the poem. Yet, by using material objects, such as the unrolled bead curtains to suggest her isolation, and colourless pillows her loss of favour, the poet succeeds in making grief the central theme of the poem.\textsuperscript{34} The technique of implication enables the poet to turn all the objects in his poems into symbols. Everything in Wang Changling's qijue is not as simple as it seems, and even the theme itself may also be treated as a symbol. Because the poet refrains from stating directly his intention, his poems are thus open to many interpretations, which, in return, add to the richness of each poem.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of Wang Changling's qijue, the technique of implication, unites the simplicity of content with the complexity of meaning. By the interaction of the three key elements in his poetry, Wang is able to pack complex symbols, realistic imagery, poetic techniques, and grammatical patterning into a very few lines without sacrificing depth of thought, thus breaking away from the explicit, straightforward style of qijue written by his predecessors.

V. Conclusion

Wang Changling's success in qijue has been acknowledged by many critics over the centuries. Although these critics show their admiration of Wang's works, their comments are fragmentary and fail to provide an overall picture of Wang Changling's achievement in the qijue genre.

In light of the historical development of qijue, Wang Changling's major achievement in his qijue poetry can be characterized in three ways. As a productive writer of qijue, the poet broadens the thematic scope of the genre that existed before him. Second, he successfully integrates the traditions of the poetic genre from the sixth and seventh centuries, traditions that

\textsuperscript{34}For a detailed discussion of the poems on the subject of Lady Ban, see next chapter.
superficially are not compatible with each other. Third, the poet creates a new style of qijue writing when exploring deeply his character's emotion with his unique poetic techniques. As a result, his qijue poems are rich with intricate layers of meaning and profound emotion, while presenting the appearance of an objective description of the material world.

We not only can identify the techniques and theme the poet takes from the past, but must also see the innovation he contributes to the qijue genre. Only by examining Wang's qijue in a historical context can we further our understanding of his contributions to qijue development.
CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS OF WANG CHANGLING'S QIJUE

I. Introduction

Wang Changling has approximately 74 qijue poems extant. They are written on two major thematic categories, the occasional and folk-song. More than half of Wang's qijue, approximately 45 of them, are written on formal occasions, which include partings and social gatherings. The minority are largely poems of the folk-song theme; approximately 27 poems with this theme are attributed to Wang Changling. Among these folk-song poems, at least seventeen of them are written about women, including eight on imperial concubines, a theme which is also called the palace lament, six on noble ladies, and three on peasant maidens. This group of poems is diverse in content, for the poet tends to write differently according to the different identity of the woman. Besides the theme of women, the poet also wrote approximately ten poems about frontier soldiers, mainly dealing with their hardship on the battlefield.

Wang Changling also wrote a few poems on subjects other than the above two categories. For example, he wrote one poem about contemplating ancient ruins, and several other poems about his religious practice, Taoism. However, these poems are less well-known to readers.

Because of the limitation of my thesis, I will confine my choice of poems to the two major thematic categories, occasional and folk-song. Most of his critically acclaimed works are also written on these two themes. The thirteen poems discussed in the following chapter, four occasional and nine folk-song, are some of the works I think best represent Wang's poetic style. Through detailed examination of Wang Changling's qijue, I hope to further display his achievement in integrating tradition with his own innovative poetic spirit and technique.
II. Occasional Qijue

Among Wang Changling's occasional qijue, with the exception of one written for a formal state occasion, the dominant theme relates to personal events, such as celebrating friendship at partings or gatherings. Consequently, most of these occasional qijue poems convey the poet's personal thoughts or feelings through objective subject matter.

Wang's critically acclaimed qijue "At Hibiscus Inn Parting With Xin Jian" (Furong lou song Xin Jian 芙蓉樓送辛渐) shows the poet's tendency to relate the subject matter of a parting event to personal revelation:

(First of Two)

Cold rain all along the Yangze enters Wu by night.

At dawn, farewell to my guest! The Chu mountain stands alone.

Tell Luoyang friends and relatives who ask you how I am:

"The crystal-like interior inside a jade vase."

Because of the setting of the poem and its content, scholars generally agree that this poem may have been written when the poet was demoted to Jiangning. The Hibiscus Inn

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1"The Royal Wedding In the House of Xiao, the Emperor's Son-in-law" (Xiao fuma zhai huazhu 香駕馬宅花燭) in OTS, juan 143, P. 1446.
2OTS, juan 143, p. 1448; revised translation by Richard Bodman, in "Poetics and Prosody in Medieval China," p. 33.
3This version is according to Li Yunyi, in Wang Changling shi zhu, p. 159. In OTS, there is another version which reads,
"Cold rain covers the sky and enters the lake by night."

寒雨連江夜入湖
平明送客楚山孤
洛陽親友如相問
一片冰心在玉壺

See OTS, juan, 142, p. 1448.
4See Fu Shousun, Qian shou Tang ren jueju 千首唐人絕句 (Shanghai: Guji, 1985), p.96.
(furong lou 芙蓉樓) was located in the Danyang district of present Jiangsu province. Richard Bodman explains the geographical setting of this poem in the following passage:

> From Danyang it is only a short way to Yang Zhou where the Grand Canal meets the Yangze, so we may easily imagine that Xin Jian would have followed the Grand Canal north and west along its entire length to Luoyang. Both Jiangning and Zhenjiang are in the ancient region of Wu, while the border of Chu and the nearest mountains are both towards the south and west.

The above information not only provides a precise setting for Wang Changling's poem but also shows the closeness between Jiangning, to where the poet was once demoted, and Zhenjiang, where the parting takes place. Because of the geographical closeness of the two cities, the poem may have, as critics suggest, been written when Wang was demoted to Jiangning.

In this poem, Wang Changling uses the occasion of a farewell to vindicate his innocence and honour in his political career. The first couplet gives a general survey of the scene of the event. Feelings of regret at parting are manifested through the correlation of these two lines. During the night before the two protagonists part, it is pouring rain on the Yangtze River. Immediately after the depiction of the night, the second line starts with the scene of early morning, and brings forward the theme of parting. The drastic change of time from night to day suggests the brief moment the two friends share before parting. The objective description of overwhelming weather in the first line becomes associated with the emotional content of overwhelming sadness because of the event of parting, and suggests the sleepless night the poet and his friend spend together. The word "alone" in the second line signifies both a realistic description of a mountain and the poet's solitary feelings after parting from his friend. Within the first couplet, the poet displays imagery of the external world, and, through the correlation of this scene and the parting event, he subtly creates a sense of intimacy between the

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5 Zhongguo lishi diming cidian, pp. 387-388.
7 The interpretation is adopted from that of Richard Bodman. See Richard Bodman, "Poetics and Prosody in Medieval China," p. 40.
two friends.

The transformation of the external imagery to reflect the narrator's inner feelings is further deepened in the second couplet. In the third line, the protagonist asks his friend Xin Jian to be a messenger to his friends and relatives in Luoyang, Xin's destination. Serving as a transition, this line uses a dialogue to reinforce the established close friendship between the two friends from the first couplet, while preparing for the shift of focus in the conclusion.

Instead of giving a straight answer to the question set up by the third line, the final line consists of an enigmatic image of a jade vase with a crystal-like interior. This image, according to the modern scholar Shi Zhecun, alludes to a didactic prose poem, "Prose Poem on a Crystal Vase" (bing hu fu 冰壶赋) by Wang's contemporary, Yao Chong 楚壮 (650-721).8

In the preface to the prose poem, Yao uses the image of a crystal vase as a symbol for a bureaucrat who performs official duties in an honest manner:9

The crystal vase is the epitome of purity and cleanliness. When a gentleman faces it, he will never forget its purity. [The vase] is thoroughly transparent without blemish, so clear and empty that one can see its bottom. Among the officials who are clear and plain (candid), are there any comparable to this? Hence, to embrace a crystal-clear purity inside and possess a jade-like smoothness outside is the crystalline virtue of a gentleman.

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8See Shi Zhecun, Tang shi bai hua, pp. 172-173. A more conventional explanation regarding the source of the allusion is that the image alludes to a line from the imitation of folk-song by Bao Zhao 鲍照 (421-446), "Songs of White Heads" (bai tou yin 白头吟):

I am as pure as ice in a jade bowl.

清如玉壶冰

See Yuefu shiji, juan 41, pp. 600-601.

Written in the voice of an abandoned wife of Han Dynasty, Zhuo Wenjun 卓文君, the line describes her spotless virtue. See Fu Shousun, Qian shou Tang ren jueju, p.96. Although the meaning of the above two sources are similar, Yao's prose poem seems to me to be probably the one Wang alludes to for three reasons. First, since Yao Chong died in 721 before Wang Changling obtained his Presented Scholar degree, "bing hu fu" must have been written before Wang's poem was composed. Second, some of Wang's contemporary poets also write on the subject matter in a way which is consistent with Yao's theme. Third, the theme of Yao's prose poem is coherent with that of Wang's poem.

9OTW, juan 206, pp. 2637a-2637b; quoted by Shi Zhecun, Tang shi bai hua, p. 172; translated by the author.
By using the connotations of the solid, yet enigmatic, image of a crystal interior, the poet implies his faithfulness and personal purity. Symbolically, Wang is saying to Xin Jian and his friends in Luoyang, "despite the accusation and demotion, my innocence and purity in character are still as fresh and unsullied as ice and jade." The enigmatic allusion, in contrast with the direct description of the previous three lines, slows down the poetic pace with its allusion in order to draw full attention to the poem's message of the poet's self vindication of his innocence against accusations of misconduct. Furthermore, the revelation of such a personal issue enhances the close friendship between the two friends established in the previous lines.

Correlation between the external world and the feelings of the narrator provides another intriguing perspective on this parting event in the second stanza of the poem:

(Second of Two)\(^{10}\)

South of the Danyang City is the dark autumn sea.

North of the Danyang City are the deep clouds of Chu.

Bidding you farewell on top of the high tower, I am not able to get drunk.

In the heart of the cold silent river is the bright moon.

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\(^{10}\)QTS, juan 143, p. 1448; translated by the author. The tonal pattern of this poem does not accord with the standards of the regulated pattern, and hence is not regulated style qijue. However, its identity as qijue is supported by the fact that the Song anthologist Hong Mai lists it in the qijue category. See Tang ren wan shou jueju, juan 17, p. 4a.
Writing on the same theme as that of the previous poem, the poet successfully avoids redundancy by focusing on describing his feelings of loneliness and sorrow because of the parting. The first couplet depicts information regarding the surroundings, the location, and the time and weather: a gloomy autumn day in Danyang City. The third line expresses the subject matter of poem, the farewell event and an objective description of the poet's state of being. The poet's being "not able to get drunk" may imply that no matter how much he drinks, he is too sad to get drunk, or, alternatively, that he is careful not to get drunk on this occasion. The double meaning of his sobriety, along with the "high tower" at the beginning of this line transforms the objective description of the first couplet into a subjective view of the poet. Hence, the images "deep" and "dark", as well as the autumn season in the first couplet not only describe the objective scene, but also reflect the narrator's melancholy mood.

Indeed, the poet's sobriety reinforces his melancholy mood and his loneliness, and enables him to see his surroundings, which are illustrated in both the first couplet and the last line. The last line presents an image of the moon reflected in the centre of the Yangze river. Due to the syntactic structure of the phrase, semantic ambiguity exists:

silent cold river bright moon heart

ji ji han jiang ming yue xin

寂寂寒江明月心

The ambiguous position of the word "heart" (xin 心) suggests the line may be interpreted in two different ways, either "My heart is like the bright moon in the cold silent river", or "In the heart of the cold silent river is the bright moon." As a descriptive item, the moon indicates a change of time from the first couplet, from day to night. Structurally, the concrete and graphic imagery echoes the objective description at the beginning of the poem, and thus provides a sense of completion and coherence. On the other hand, as an answer to the cause of the sobriety explored in the third line, this conclusion, a seemingly anticlimactic understatement, takes on the significance of the purity and solitude of the settings in relation to the poet's inner world. By the techniques of nuance and implication, the poet transforms the external world
into a reflection of his personal feelings towards the parting, and achieves a sense of fullness and depth in terms of structure and theme in this poem.

The following qijue is another example of the poet imposing his personal testimony on occasional subject matter, in this case, a drinking gathering:

Drinking at the House of Li the Fourth, the Granary Director

On this frosty day, you keep me for a drink for the joy of our old friendship.

By the silver candle and the golden stove, the night is no longer chilling.

If you ask me my thoughts after we parted by the Wu River.

Green mountains, bright moon, I see in my dream.

Recording a drinking gathering with his old friend Li the Fourth, the poet expresses the carefree lifestyle which he desires. The first couplet introduces the setting of the event with simple imagery. The first line describes a cold autumn day on which the poet is invited by his old friend Li to drink at his residence. The feeling of close friendship is reinforced in the second line, which suggests that because of the warm and happy gathering, the cold weather does not seem to exist.

The simple descriptive manner continues in the last couplet as the poet skillfully adds a commentary on his own life. The third line carries on the sense of intimacy established in the first couplet and prepares for the poet’s self-revelation in the last line. The “Green mountain and bright moon” represent a carefree, reclusive lifestyle that contrasts with the poet’s current

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11OTS, juan 143, p. 1447; translated by the author. Li’s identity is unknown. See Li Yunyi, Wang Changling shi zhu, p. 154.
12In QTS, there is another version which reads, “On this frosty day, after you invite me, we enjoy our old friendship.”
Instead of making an explicit statement, the poet transforms an objective description of the external world into a metaphor to convey the lifestyle to which he is looking forward.

A similar kind of transformation of the external world also creates the aesthetic beauty in Wang’s qijue describing a musical piece ‘Listening to the Exile’s "Water Melody" (ting liuren shui diaozi):\(^{13}\)

A lone boat, a slice of moon facing the maple woods--

Entrusted to the music of the zither is the traveler’s heart.

Mountain shades in thousands and ten thousand sheets of rain.

As the last chord fades, the tears fall.

孤舟微月對楓林
分付鳴箏與客心
霜色千重萬重雨
斷絃收及淚痕深

The title of the poem sets its melancholy mood. The music "Water Melody", composed by Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty (reign 605-616), is said to be one of the saddest musical pieces.\(^{14}\) The status of the music player, an exile, suggests misfortune. The combination of the title and player thus prepares the reader for sorrow.

In the first couplet, the poet transforms the sad music and the misfortune of the player into symbols to express his own implicit personal grief.\(^{15}\) Three concrete images from the external world—a lone boat, the dim moon, and maple woods—juxtaposed in the first line, signify two layers of meaning. Literally, the images work as a setting, giving the picture of an objective scene of an autumn evening when the narrator is traveling alone by boat.

\(^{13}\) OTS, juan 143, p.1447; revised translation by Joseph J. Lee in Sunflower Splendor, edited by Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1990), p. 100.

\(^{14}\) Fu Shousun, Qian shou Tang ren jueju, p.98.

\(^{15}\) Critics generally agree that Wang Changling was exiled at the time when he wrote this poem. Fu Shousun suggests that it was written when the poet was demoted to Longbiao while Li Yunyi proposes that it was written when Wang was heading for Lingnan. See Fu Shousun, Qian shou tang ren jueju, p. 98; Li Yunyi, Wang Changling shi zhu, p. 156.
Symbolically, the scene signifies the poet's desolation while traveling alone. By stating the traveler's effort to dispel his loneliness by music, the poet connects the external world, the traveler's feelings, and the music.

These two layers of meaning are further developed in the second couplet. The graphic description of the gloomy weather and the geographical landscape, layers of mountains and heavy rain, echoes the double meaning of the first line, the concrete setting, and the abstract projection of the narrator's desperation at his segregation from home.

The poem concludes when the music ends. "Shou yu" 吞與 (literally, to collect or to end) has the effect of gathering all the symbolism derived from the objective scene of the previous three lines into a forceful metaphor of feelings. It indicates the end of the music, as well as the gathering of feelings of isolation created by the scene of rain and mountains, making them part of the sadness. Since the poet does not specify to whom the "tears" belong, the rich implications of the "tears" may be associated with the sorrow of the player, the agony of the listener, and the sympathy, pouring rain, from heaven. Hence all the imagery of the external world in this poem not only works as an objective setting for the poem, but also expresses the solitary feelings of the narrator, as well as his emotions evoked by the music.

Most of Wang Changling's farewell qijue poems focus on stating his personal feelings. They are thus quite unlike poems expressing eventful narration that we see in the seventh century. At that time, poets would write farewell qijue in a formal fashion and strictly focus on the event itself. Wang's poems, however, fuse all their objective description to project the poet's personal feelings towards the event, and thus generate rich layers of meanings through masterful use of implication. The complex yet intriguing messages of Wang's qijue are even more prominent in his poems written using the other one of his two common examples of subject matter, the folk-song theme.
III. Folk-song Qijue

Some of Wang Changling's most critically acclaimed qijue are those with a folk-song theme. The poet was not the first to write following a folk-song theme. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the folk-song theme was popular among poets of the sixth century. Nevertheless, Wang Changling may be one of the earliest poets to write folk-song themes in the qijue genre.16

Besides being an early example of qijue poems on the folk-song theme, Wang Changling's group of folk-song qijue is particularly interesting because it is open to various and sometimes contradictory interpretations. The modern scholar Burton Watson comments on the poet's motivation in using the folk-song theme, offering insight into the rich interpretations generated by Wang's poems:

Such imitations [of folk-songs] generally had two purposes. One was to express the kind of anger and spirit of protest that had moved the unknown authors of the original ballads and hopefully in this way to gain the ear of the authorities... A second purpose that motivated the poets was the desire to try their hand at a larger variety of subjects and styles than those offered by the ordinary occasional poetry of the times, to test their imaginative power and literary skill by setting aside their own voice and speaking in that of, say an old soldier, a starving peasant, a forsaken wife, or a pampered lady of the harem.17

The implicit style of Wang Changling qijue enabled him to show his strength in both these aspects. As a result, his qijue on folk-song themes have evoked various associations by critics throughout the centuries.

Wang Changling concentrated on two major folk-song themes: the forlorn lady and the frontier soldier. Both themes existed long before Wang Changling's poetry. Poems on

16In Yuefu shiji, many of Wang Changling works are listed as the first qijue written with folk-song titles.
forsaken concubines had a long tradition in Chinese poetry since the Han dynasty, and the topic was one of the most popular in the palace style poetry of the sixth century. The theme of the hardships of soldiers also has a long poetic tradition which begins in *The Book Of Songs* (*Shi jing 詩經*).

These topics, however, also referred to historical events in the eighth century. In Wang Changling's life time, Lady Yang 楊貴妃 was favoured by Emperor Xuanzong. This event may have inspired the poet's choice of the palace lament as a topic. The frontier theme, on the other hand, reflected the constant battles over territory between the Tang government and its neighbors, such as Tibet and Turks. Emperor Xuanzong 元宗 (reign 713-755) was especially aggressive in his frontier policy. Because of this military ambition, Xuanzong was most commonly compared to the Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty 漢武帝 (reign 140-87 B.C.) by his contemporaries. Hence, because of the similarity drawn between past and present historical events, Wang's imitations of the folk-song transform traditional themes to express the historical reality in which the poet lives.

A. Writing on Women

The first two poems we examine belong to a group of five poems written on the theme of Lady Ban, the forsaken courtesan of the Emperor Cheng of Han.

**Autumn Songs Of the Changxin Palace**

*(First of Five)*

*By the golden well the autumn leaves on the pawlonia turn yellow*

*The beaded curtain is not rolled up and the frost comes at night.*

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Censers for her robes, pillows of jade without colour.\textsuperscript{21}
She lies, listens, while from the South Palace the clear dripping of the water-clock stretches on.\textsuperscript{22}

長信秋詞
其一
金井梧桐秋葉黃
珠簾不捲夜來霜
熏籠玉枕無顏色
臥聽南宮清漏長

On the surface, this poem sketches an objective external scene, Lady Ban's sleepless autumn night. However, through the nuance and connotation of diction and imagery, all the external, objective imagery is transformed into an intricate theme that reflects the persona's isolation and immobility.

The first couplet depicts an outdoor setting, a richly-coloured garden scene in the fall. A "Golden well," a well with a finely-decorated metal fence, is often associated with the imperial courtyard. "The autumn leaves on the pawlonia turn yellow" suggests the change of season. The image of an "unrolled curtain" suggests being cut off from the outside world. The "frost comes at night" reinforces the sense of the season, while implying a time change from day to night. In short, the first couplet has two layers of meaning: literally, it depicts a setting, and symbolically, it depicts the persona's chilling isolation.

In the second couplet, the poet shifts the focus to the interior scene, and examines the persona herself. "Censer" is a symbol representing the receiving of imperial love, as described in the \textit{Dong Gong Jiushi 東宮舊事}:\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{21}The diction "
\textit{xun long 煙籠}
" is recorded as "
\textit{jinlu 金爐}
\textsuperscript{22}In \textit{OTS}, the diction "South Palace" (\textit{nan gong 南宫}) is also written as "inside the palace" (\textit{gong zhong 宮中}).
\textsuperscript{23}The text in \textit{Dong Gong Jiushi 東宮舊事} was quoted by \textit{Tai ping yu lan 太平御覽}, edited by Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) et al., juan 711 (reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1960), p.
When the crown prince takes a concubine, she is given five censers, two painted ones for handkerchiefs, three for quilts and three for clothes.

太子納妃，有漆畫手巾熏籠二條，大被熏籠三。

Hence, "censer" and "jade pillow" are personal items that are not only precious in value but also signify the concubine's status. These two items' being "without colour" implies their loss of value and beauty, and most importantly, the loss of imperial favour. These unappreciated treasure further parallels the persona's feelings of abandonment. The final line focuses on relating the persona to her surroundings. The static image of Lady Ban, and her lying awake all night, is reinforced through contrast with the progress of time. Moreover, the presence of Ban, her immobility and insomnia, elucidates the inexpressible melancholy mood of desertion and isolation implied by the previous three lines. The stretching out of time, contrasting with the sleeplessness of the lady in the poem, has the effect of "carrying the persona into the chill isolation and old age associated with autumn". In short, the poem transforms the cold of the autumn, and the bleakness of the Lady's room into a reflection of the bleakness of the persona's inner world.

In the following poem of the same title, the poet presents another side of Lady Ban's tragic fate:

(Third of Five)

She grasps her broom, for at dawn the Golden Hall opens, And now with her round fan she paces up and down.
Her jade-white face is no match for that glossy winter raven
That still carries the daylight from the Palace of Brilliant Sun.

3169a.
25QTS, juan 143, p. 1445; translated by Richard Bodman, "Poetics and Prosody in Medieval China," p. 34.
26In QTS, the diction "Golden Hall" (jin dian 金殿) is also written as "Autumn Hall" (qiu dian 秋殿).
27The diction "together" (gong 共) is also written as "for a short while" (zhan 寄) in QTS.
This poem approaches the forlorn Lady Ban from the perspective of her daily chores as a maid in the Changxin Palace. Through objective description of Lady Ban's actions, the poet presents her agony at having fallen from imperial favour.

The first line starts with Lady Ban's life as a maid, showing that she cleans the palace in the morning. The image of cleaning alludes to Ban's own prose poem, mourning her ill-fated life, in which she describes her desire to retire to the Changxin palace:

I shall serve in the East Palace,
As a minor staff member of the Changxin.
I shall sweep between the curtains
Until the day I die.

(31-34)

Although the first line of Wang's poem is written in a plain and quiet manner, its allusion of the persona's tragic fate creates a strong sense of abandonment in the poem. The second line describes the lady's moments of leisure after cleaning. The image "round fan" alludes to Ban's poem, "Song of Agony" (yuan ge xing 忍歌行). In this poem, Lady Ban makes an
analogy between her fate and that of a fan discarded at summer's end. The sense of abandonment in Wang's poem is further enhanced by the diction "together" (gōng 共). This diction, paradoxical in relation to the solitude of the lady, deepens a sense of loneliness by implying that the round fan is now her only companion. In short, the poet cleverly uses historical allusion to transform the poem's objective description into a reflection of the persona's tragic, desolate fate.

The transformation from reality to the reflection of emotion by implication is again masterfully performed in the second couplet. The third line sets up a paradoxical comparison between the dark raven and the lady's beautiful face. The obvious contrast between the ugliness of the raven's dark colour and the beauty of the lady's face is inverted when the ugly surpasses the beautiful. This compelling irony is made clear in the last line when the poet describes objectively the movement of the raven. On the surface, the last line depicts a raven flying towards the Changxin Palace from the east, carrying the light from the morning sun. The time of this line, daybreak, completes the "dawn" of the first line. However, the ironic comparison of the beauty with the raven becomes logical through the interaction of the puns and connotations of the term "zhāoyáng 昭陽" and "rì 日." The former word means both "the brilliant sun" as well the palace Zhao Feiyan lives, "Zhāoyáng diàn 昭陽殿", while the latter means "daylight" and signifies imperial favour, since "sun" is a common euphemism referring to the emperor. Hence, an objective and ordinary external scene is transformed to reflect the complex agony of abandonment felt by Lady Ban.

In the above two poems, the poet uses a description of the objective, external world as a vehicle to portray the emotional state of the persona. Through the technique of implication, the poet creates a correlation between the external world and the persona's agony as an unappreciated beauty. Furthermore, the abandoned palace lady in Wang's qíjué may symbolize
the poet's own fate as suggested by Burton Watson in the following passage:30

All hope of happiness for the palace lady...hung upon the chance that she might attract and hold the ruler's favour,...Otherwise she was doomed to a life of despair, deprived of all the normal consolations of family, friends, and freedom of movement. The Tang men wrote of her because her plight sincerely moved them, and because, being themselves candidates for public office and hopeful of recognition for their talents, it was in some ways so like their own.

Indeed, Wang's writing on the agony of the unappreciated beauty may symbolize the agony of all men, including the poet himself, who are talented yet unappreciated by the government.

The motif of unappreciated beauty appears in another folk-song qijué, "The Silk-washing Maiden" (wan sha nu 洗紗女).31 This time, the poet portrays a peasant girl:

Who lives by the Qiantang River?
The maiden by the river looks better than flowers.
When King Wu was alive, she could not come out;
Now, publicly she washes silk.

As an imitation of a folk-song, this poem combines simplicity of diction and imagery and complexity in theme. The first couplet simply expresses the colloquial style of the folk-song tradition. The poem starts with an interrogatory line to introduce the persona and the setting of the poem. The second line points out the persona. "Quansheng 全勝" is a contemporary colloquial expression meaning "far better than."32 The first two lines seem to be

30Burton Watson, Chinese Lyricism, p. 115.
31OTS, juan 143, p. 1446; translated by the author. Although this poem is not recorded in the Yuefu shiji, the title is. There are two five-character quatrains recorded with this title. See Guo Maoqian, Yuefu shiji, juan 80, pp. 1128-1129.
32Zhang Xiang 張湘, Shi ci qu yuwen huishi 詩詞曲語文匯釋 (Taiwan: Zhonghua,
an objective and vivid description of a beauty of the South.

The second couplet changes the focus from depicting the girl in the scene to the poet's personal contemplation about the situation of the persona. In the third line, the poet associates the girl's beauty with Xi Shi 西施 (d. B.C. 470), a historical beauty found by King Goujian of Yue 越王句践 by the Roye Creek 若耶溪 while she was washing silk. He sent her to King Fuchai of Wu 吴王夫差, with the intention of distracting him with her beauty and then wreaking vengeance upon him for a previous humiliation. The last line sets the two women apart through the fact that the maiden at present is still washing silk. The word "publicly" (gongran 公然), hinting at both the joy of freedom and regret at being unappreciated by the current king, is the key to the creation of ambiguity in this line. Wang's clever implication of the narrator's bitter-sweet emotion associated with unappreciated beauty turns the simple folk theme into intriguing symbolism.

Apart from creating complex symbolism, Wang Changling also uses his technique of implication to simply depict a scene. A good example is the poem "Song of Lotus Plucking" (cai lian qu 採蓮曲):34

(First of Two)

Lotus leaf and silk skirt of the same colour and shade;
To either side of her face the lotus blossoms.
Blending into the lotus pond, nowhere is she seen;
Only her songs reveal that she is coming near.

其二
荷葉羅裙一色裁
芙蓉向臉兩邊開
亂入池中看不見

33Zhao Ye Yue 趙野 (fl. 40-80), Wu Yue chunqiu 吳越春秋, juan 5, Congshu jicheng chubian, y.3698 (reprint, Shanghai: Shangwu, 1937), p. 187.
34OTS, juan 143, p. 1444; revised translation of Tang Zichang, Poems of Tang, p. 126.
Originating in the sixth century, this poem's theme is to depict the beauty of a lotus-plucking lady. In this poem, Wang, using the voice of an observer, depicts the beauty of a working woman by connecting the persona with her environment.

The first couplet focuses on the similarity between the lotus plant itself and the lotus-picking maidens. The first line associates the colour of the lotus leaves with that of the dresses of the maidens. The big round shape of the lotus leaves changes according to the sun and breeze, providing a vivid comparison to the movement of a skirt. By introducing the colour unity of the first two images with the verb "cai" (literally meaning "to cut and sew"), the poet personifies the lotus plants and creates a pleasant intimacy and unity between the plants and the maiden. By the implication of the juxtaposition of the two images, "lotus leaf" and "silk skirt", the poet introduces the setting and the persona in harmonious visual imagery. The second line further compares the lotus blossoms to the maiden. "Fu rong", another word for lotus blossoms, is used here to avoid redundancy and enhances the beautiful scene. When describing the maiden's moving closer to the plant, the poet uses a personified verb "xiang" to suggest that the plant is drawn to her. It suggests the warm welcome from the lotus to the maiden as the plant makes way for her. On the other hand, the flower may be a metaphor to describe the beautiful color of maiden's cheeks, which is similar to the flower.

The third line enlarges the scene from the plants to the whole pond. The persona and her surroundings are merged through the effect of her entering the pond. Because of the resemblance between the plant and maidens established in the first couplet, the poet is thus able to unite the two. "Luan ru" (literally meaning "to enter in disarray") creates two layers of meaning, one describing the motion of the maiden entering the pond, and the other expressing the bewilderment of the narrator when witnessing the scene. By introducing the image of the pond, the poet cleverly shifts the focus to a larger environment which includes

35 Before Wang Changling, He Zhizhang (659-744) is the only poet recorded to have written one poem under this title in the qijue. See Guo Maoqian, Yuefu shiji, juan 50, p. 733.
both the plants and the maidens. The phrase, "no where is she seen" (kan bu jian 看不見) reinforces the harmony between the persona and the plant, and at the same time effects a suspension of meaning through the confusion of the visual scene. Having closed off the visual images, the poet evokes the woman’s presence by means of auditory language in the concluding line. Her voice, while further enhancing the harmonious picture of nature and humanity, sets her apart from the plants. Thus, the poet creates a beautiful picture of singing in the air. By the use of "shi jue 始覺 " (literally meaning "to sense only then") the poem reveals the presence of the narrator. In this poem, the poet evokes the sublimity of a lotus-plucking scene and an intriguing plot through his use of implication.

Implication is again the major technique Wang Changling uses to portray a deserted wife in the following poem:

The Song of the Green Chamber
(First of Two)36

A white horse, a gold saddle, an outrider to the Emperor Wu.

A hundred thousand flags and pennants bivouac at Changyang palace.

On the high balcony a young woman sets her zither a-twang

As she watches far-away dust rise toward Jianzhang palace.

This poem employs the contemporary folk-song theme of a lonely wife whose husband is away.37 The poet portrays two protagonists in this poem: one is an imperial guard of the

37This poem is recorded in Yuefu shiji under the category of "yuefu zati 楲府雜題 " in the "xin yuefu ci 新 楲府辭." See Guo Maoqian, Yuefu shiji, juan 91, p. 1279.
Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty, and the other, his lonely wife. By juxtaposing the two, each in his or her own setting, the poet uses the traditional theme as a vehicle to implicitly criticize some imperial policies.

The first couplet sets the time as the Han Dynasty, and portrays the majestic appearance of the hero. "A white horse, a gold saddle" alludes to a poem of the sixth century, which portrays a splendid soldier heading for the battlefield.38 The second line sets the location of the poem: Changyang Palace of the Han Dynasty was a place for imperial hunting.39 By placing ten thousand military troops, supposedly for use in war, in the imperial hunting palace, the poet implicitly expresses his disagreement with the extravagance of the ruler in his hunting pursuits.

The second couplet dramatically shifts the focus to the wife of a soldier. The desolate chamber imagery contrasts with the imposing sight of the imperial hunting palace, and creates a solitary image of the woman. This sense of solitude is further enhanced by the image of a young woman playing the zither. This image in Chinese poetic tradition is commonly employed to suggest loneliness.40 The last line relates the two protagonists by portraying a distant picture seen by the young wife. The seemingly objective image "the rolling dust running towards the imperial palace, Jianzhang" in fact reflects the remote distance of the wife

38 The line has its long tradition in the poems on the folk-song theme. It can be traced back to the first line in the poem "On White Horse" (baima pian 白馬篇) written by the poet Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232):

"The white horse adorned with the gold saddle"

白馬飾金鞍

This poem is written about a person who should think of serving his country instead of indulging himself in personal pleasure. See Guo maoqian, Yuefu shiji, juan 63, pp. 914-915. This poem started a tradition in which most of the poems written with this title start with a similar line. The poet Shen Yue (441-513) adopts the theme and the title, and starts his poem with the line:

"The white horse and the purple-gold saddle"

白馬紫金鞍
to portray the majestic imagery of the frontier soldier. See Yuefu shiji, juan 63, pp. 916-917.

39 The Changyang palace was built in the Qin Dynasty (246-207 BC) and was renovated in the Han dynasty (BC 206-24 AD) for imperial pleasure. See San fu huang tu 三輔黃圖, juan 2, Congshu jicheng chubian (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1936), p. 14.

40 For a similar image to portray a lonely woman, see Wang Changling's own poem "Woes from the Green Tower" (qing lou yuan 青樓怨), OTS, juan 143, pp. 1445-1446.
from her husband. The image of a forlorn wife thus reinforces the poet's ridicule of the extravagance of the imperial hunting trip.

In this poem, the poet conveys his disagreement with the policy of imperial hunting by skillfully juxtaposing objective description of the external world in which the two characters live, without explicitly stating his opinion. This restraint of style enables Wang to deliver his criticism through the effect of juxtaposition. He presents two realities and appears to invite his readers to ponder their relationship. As a result, critics have different interpretations of the poem, some suggesting that the theme is to portray the pride and joy of a lady, while others think the poem has an allegorical content which implicitly criticizes government corruption.41

Wang Changling's restrained style of using objective imagery which has implications beyond the material world enables him to express his anti-war attitude in the next poem on a folk-song theme of women's suffering:

A Young Wife's Sorrow42

The young woman of the house, unaware of her longing;
Finely dressed, she goes up to the tower one day in spring.
Suddenly seeing the colour of willows by the roadside,
She regrets letting her man go after titles.

闊怨
闊中少婦不知怨
春日塗妝上聳樓
忽見陌頭揚柳色
悔數夫婿覓封侯

41 The former suggestions see Wang Fuzhi, Jiangzhai shihua, juan 1, p. 4. The latter see Pan Deyu潘德典 (1785-1839), Yangyizhai shihua 増一卷詩話, in Qing shihua xubian 清詩話續編 (reprint, Taipei: Yinwen, 1985), p. 2025.
42 QTS, juan 143, P. 1446; revised translation of Joseph Lee, Wang Changling, p. 107. Although this poem is not included in the Yuefu shiji, its subject matter is that of the folk-song poems. My knowledge of the folk-song theme is based on an analysis by Hans Frankel. See Hans Frankel, "The Development of Han and Wei yuefu as a High Literary Genre," in The Vitality of Lyric Voice, pp. 253-286.
Adopting the folk-song theme of the lonely wife whose husband is away at the war, the poet portrays the agony of the endlessly waiting young wife. Through the careful arrangement of objective imagery, the poet uses description of the outer world to convey his concern about social issues.

The first couplet gives an objective description of the youthfulness of the persona. The first line depicts a young wife at an age innocent of sorrow. The image "finely dressed, she goes up to the tower" reinforces the youthful picture of the persona by showing her response to the season of spring. By portraying the persona's appearance and her movements, the poet creates an objective observation of the character.

The second couplet shifts from objective description to the character's personal emotions, using the connotations of external imagery. On line three, the adverb "suddenly", with its implication of the unexpected, evokes a dramatic change in the objective mood, and prepares for the concluding line. By using the connotation of a concrete feature of the external world, the "willow", as the key to the persona's inner feelings, the poet cleverly develops his theme. As noted in the previous chapter, the willow in the Tang was a symbol for parting.

The implication of parting, along with the suddenness, shifts the focus from the persona's appearance to the theme in the last line, the persona's regret in being alone. The phrase "go after titles" suggests the husband goes to war in hope of promotion to the nobility. It reflects the constant wars against other nations, and the fact that some people joined the army in hope of advancing their political careers. In this circumstance, many wives were left alone, living in solitude. The verb "regrets" implies the character's loneliness. The persona's image of agony, which contrasts with that of freedom from care in the first couplet, renders the objective description ironic by suggesting the forlorn state of the lady.

Thereafter, the poem intricately presents a young bride wasting her youth in loneliness, while she should be enjoying innocence and happiness. Through his observation regarding a lonely young wife, the poet interweaves description with criticism of the war policies of his contemporary government.
B. The Frontier Theme

The second major theme in Wang Changling's folk-song qijue is war. Wang Changling wrote approximately nine poems on this subject. All of them focus on the hardships of the soldier's life on the frontier. In most of these poems, the poet expresses his opposition to military policy. In his famous "Campaign Songs" (cong jun xing 徵軍行), for example, Wang adopts an old folk-song theme of the Han Dynasty, the hardship of the soldier's frontier life, to explore various aspects of current frontier life as well as expressing his thoughts on frontier policy. Wang Changling is recorded to have composed a group of seven poems with the same title. Since these poems do not have a sequential order, and, in my view, should be treated individually, the number given before each poem is merely for the convenience of identification.

(First of Seven)

West of the city, beacons are high on top of hundred-feet towers.
At dusk, I sit alone in the autumn sea wind.
The Qiang flute's melody "Moon of Mountain Gate" still plays.
How can I think of the one grieving in her golden chamber, thousands of miles away?

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43Here I leave out the second of two poems "Heading for the Frontier" (chu sai 出塞; OTS, juan 143, p. 1444) because the very same poem is also recorded to be written by another poet, Li Bai, with the title of "Campaign Song" (cong jun xing 徵軍行), OTS, juan 184, p. 1376).
44These "Campaign Songs" are recorded in the Yuefu shiji under the tune of ping diao qu 平調曲, in the category xianghe gezi 相和歌辭. Among Wang's seven poems of the same title recorded in the OTS (juan 143, p. 1444), only the first, second, and fourth are recorded in the Yuefu shiji (juan 33, pp. 487-488.)
46There is another version in the Yuefu shiji which reads, "At dusk, I climb up [the tower] alone."
47The version in Yuefu shiji reads,
This poem describes a soldier's longing for home. The first three lines depict the objective reality of the setting while setting the central mood of the poem, loneliness. The "beacons" and "hundred-feet towers" in the first line economically sketch the frontier war scene and its tension. With climbing motion up the tower, the second line sets the time and introduces the narrator. The fusion of time signals shown by "dusk" and "autumn", and the objective description of the narrator's sitting alone create a sense of loneliness. The contrast between the war scene of the first line and the solitary image of the persona in the second line enables the poet to detach the narrator from his reality, the war, and present his loneliness through his natural surroundings. This is thus a brief solitary moment which the character experiences during the battle.

The sense of solitude further becomes a sense of isolation as the auditory imagery of the flute melody is presented in the third line. "Moon of Mountain Gate" is a musical piece about the agonizing parting of lovers. Hence, by introducing the piece of music, the poet implies the reason for his protagonist's sorrow--the soldier's longing for home and his lover which transforms the material surroundings into a reflection of his loneliness. In the context of homesickness, the objective war scene of the first line suggests the soldier's weariness with constant battle, his climbing up the high tower implies his gazing homewards, and the cold and loneliness associated with the autumn, wind and the hero's physical existence reflects the

"Who can ease the one grieving in her golden chamber, thousands of miles away!"

See Guo Maoqian, Yuefu shiji, juan 33, p. 487.
48See the introduction with the title "Guan shan yue" in Guo Maoqian's, Yuefu shiji, juan 23, p. 334.
bleakness of his inner world.

Centering his poem on a mood of sorrow, the poet abruptly shifts his focus in the conclusion from the lonely soldier to his forlorn wife. Instead of continuing the imagery of personal sadness built up in the previous three lines, the poet concludes with another aspect of loneliness, a scene thousands of miles away from the soldier, in which his wife is agonizing through missing her love. Such change of direction from the soldier to his love, which is consistent with the objective description in the previous three lines, reinforces the deep and solitary sorrow of the narrator. The last line, though it moves away from the hero, implies the soldier's powerlessness to comfort his love's lonely heart, and thus in turn reveals his agony of homesickness.

By the interaction of the war and the soldier's loneliness, the poem reveals the narrator's weariness with the constant wars. The inner reflective reality and restrained style makes the poem rich in emotion and conveys the poet's critical attitude towards the then current frontier policy which kept soldiers from home. The poet explores another aspect of the soldier's longing for home in the following qijue poem of the same title.

(Fourth of Seven)49

Long clouds from the Sea of Kokonor darken the mountain of Snow
The lone fortress I gaze at far away is the Jade Gate Barrier.50
Yellow sands, a hundred battles have pierced our golden armour--
If we do not smash Krorain we never shall go home.51

其四
青海長雲暗雪山
孤城遙望玉門關
黃沙百戰穿金甲

50In OTS, the "Jade Gate Barrier" (yu men guan 玉門關) is also written as "Goose Gate Barrier" (yan men guan 鵝門關). See OTS, juan 143, p. 1444.
51The diction "zhong 終" is also written as "jing 竟"; both words in English mean "after all."
Dealing with the subject matter of a soldier's longing for home, this poem is dense with complex messages regarding the poet's criticism of the endless frontier wars of his time.

The first couplet depicts objective reality. The "Sea of Kokonor" is in present Qinghai province, while the "mountain of Snow" and "Jade Gate Barrier" are both located in present Gansu province. Moreover, the "Jade Gate Barrier" was considered in the Tang to be the border of China's interior. By juxtaposing three distant locations in the first couplet, the poet gives reality to the setting while inviting associations with a massive yet desolate frontier scene. The phrase "I gaze far away" introduces the narrator, and transforms the objective description of reality in the first couplet into a scene that is subjectively perceived by its beholder. Hence, the adjective "lone", in the narrator's eye signifies not only the objective isolation of the fortress, but also his own loneliness. The first couplet, therefore, not only depicts the geographical location of the poem to give it a touch of realism, but also reflects the narrator's inner feelings of desolation and loneliness towards the frontier life.

The second couplet is a commentary from the voice of the narrator, the soldier. The phrase "a hundred battles have pierced our golden armour" suggests the danger, hardship, and the length of time the narrator has endured on the frontier. Furthermore, it also conveys the soldier's weariness with battles. Not only the golden armour, but also the enthusiasm of a young soldier has worn out. The revelation of such weariness reinforces the desolate feelings of the soldier in the first couplet. This building up of the soldier's longing for home is thus intensified by the message of the final line:

If we do not smash Kroraina we never shall go home.

There are two layers of meaning within this line. On the one hand, it appears to be an ambitious vow from the soldiers. Regardless of the hardship of the frontier life, the

52 For a detailed discussion regarding the geographical location and related symbolism of the Jade Gate Barrier, see Dai Shijun 崔世俊 "Lun sheng Tang biansai shi de fanzhan jingshen 论盛唐边塞诗的发展精神," in Shehui kexue yanjiu 社会科学研究 2 (1985): 77.
determination to have a glorious victory creates a brave, energetic, and majestic image for these soldiers. On the other hand, this line may also be interpreted in an opposite way as representing the soldiers’ desperate feeling of never being able to return home. Continuing the previous mood of longing, this line suggests that, regardless of how many battles the soldiers have fought, and how much hardship they have endured, without conquering Kroraina, a neighboring country of China of the Han Dynasty, they can never go home. The final line discloses the narrator’s desperation at the endless battles and his uncertainty about going home. The coexistence of these two layers of meaning, the soldiers' longing for home and their ambition to conquer another country, creates an irony which makes the poem rich with intricacy and complexity.

The powerlessness of the soldier in this poem implicitly raises the poet's criticism of the frontier policy of his time, and probably reflects society's suffering because of the frontier policy. In the following poem, the poet, though writing on another traditional folk-song theme, deals with the same subject matter, the hardships of the frontier life, from a historical perspective.

Over the Border

The moon goes back to the time of Chin, the gates of Great Wall to the time of Han,
Our troops marching ten thousand miles out have yet to return.
If the Lightning General of Dragon City were present,
He would not allow the Hun cavalry to cross Mount Yin.

出塞

秦時明月漢時關

53 This comment is suggested by the modern commentator Liu Baishan. See Tang ren jueju ping zhu, edited by Fu Shousun, p. 26.
54 See Shen Deqian, Tang shi bie cai, juan 19, part 4, p. 117.
56 This line in Chinese is also written as "wan li zheng fu shang wei huan," and both lines share a similar meaning. See OTS, juan 148, p. 1444.
The title "Over the Border" indicates that the theme is adopted from the folk-songs of the Han dynasty about soldiers heading to the frontier for war. By using a traditional theme, the poet contemplates the historical background to the current wars against continuing foreign invasions. However, unlike the previous poems, both couplets in this poem are commentaries.

The first couplet is a commentary on the historical continuity of constant war. The poet begins the poem with an objective description of the frontier scene, while relating its present existence to the past. The moon in the sky is the same moon as in the Qin Dynasty, while the fortress is still the same as that of the Han. By relating the objective scenery of the present to that of the ancient dynasties, Qin and Han, the poet not only presents a historical fact, but creates an image of unending war. The "Qin" and "Han" coordinate with each other to develop the concept of "ancient", and fuse with the present scene to build an image of changelessness and stillness. By stating that the external world is the same from the past to present, the poet maps out a historical framework for his first comments. Through establishing a changeless frontier scene, the poet shifts his focus to the never-returned soldiers, and completes his comment. "Ten thousand miles" suggests the remoteness of the frontier, while the imagery of the unreturned soldiers echoes the long-lasting tragedy endured by the families of the troops. By fusing its depiction of time, place and people, the poem intricately reveals the poet's antagonistic attitude to the current war.

In the second couplet, the poet contemplates a solution to the endless historical tragedy. By a conditional sentence which alludes to a competent general of ancient times, the poet subtly insinuates the incompetence of present-day military commanders. The phrase "Lightning General" alludes to the famous Han general, Li Guang 李廣 (d. 119 B.C.). General Li

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57 This poem is recorded in the category hengchui quci 横吹曲辞 of the Han in Yuefu shiji, juan 21, p. 321.
gained his fame for dealing the Huns a crushing defeat at Dragon City, and henceforth their periodic incursions into North China stopped.58 The Huns nicknamed him "Lightning General" for his miraculous skill and speed in military operations.59 The implication of the conditional sentence in this couplet is that the present dynasty, lacking a general of Li Guang's stature, has an ineffective border defense. A further implication is that since the competent commanders of ancient times no longer exist, the intruders cannot be stopped, showing the incompetence of current military commanders. Hence, the buried theme, that of incompetence of current commanders, reinforces the tragedy in the first couplet, since the soldiers still cannot return home, and the country still has to spend a lot of manpower on the frontier.

Through juxtaposing two historical observations, the poem reveals the poet's frustrations regarding the current frontier policy and the military commanders.

IV. Conclusion

From the above discussion, we see that unlike his predecessors, Wang Changling encompasses various subject matter in his qi jue. His qi jue poems embrace both the occasional theme from the seventh century and the spirit of the folk-song that belongs to the sixth century. In most of his works written in the folk-song manner, Wang integrates themes which are traditionally used in other poetic genres. Besides using traditional subject matter, he also writes of contemporary themes.

One of the most noticeable features of Wang's qi jue is their unconventional approach to the theme. Unlike most of his predecessors, who wrote qi jue only to describe the appearance of an event, the poet centers his attention on exploring the feelings of his personae. The emotions the poet seems to be particularly interested in are those concerning suffering and

58"Dragon city" (longcheng 龍城), as Shi Zhecun suggested, was the capital of the Tartars conquered by General Wei Qing 衛青 (d. 106 BC) of Han, and here refers to the headquarters of foreign intruders in general. Shi Zhecun, Tang shi baihua, p. 148.
59Ban Gu, Han shu buzhu, juan 54, pp. 2443-2444.
abandonment. While employing the dramatic plot and concrete descriptive manner of his predecessors, Wang Changling turns the material world into a vehicle to reflect the complex inner emotions of his characters. This transformation from the outer world to reflect inner feelings enables him to implicitly include his opinion on the issues that evoke the feelings.
Wang Changling was a poet active in the first half of the eighth century. At a time when qijue was not widely written, Wang was perhaps the earliest poet to consciously devote himself to writing the form. In fact, the poet is one of the most productive qijue poets of his time. Furthermore, the poet enjoys a great success in qijue writing that, because of them, he has been esteemed as the master of the form by critics over the centuries. In my view, Wang Changling's success in qijue is due to his integrating the qijue tradition with his innovative poetic style. Hence, the best way to understand Wang Changling's qijue is to examine them in the perspective of the qijue tradition.

Qijue did not take its final form until the seventh century, although the prototype seven character quatrains can be traced back to the mid-fifth century. From the fifth century to the seventh century, since the dominant poetic form was the five-character poem, few poets wrote qijue. In the evolution of the seven-character quatrain to the qijue, the form went through two major thematic periods, those of folk-song, and the celebration of the public occasion. During the sixth century, because the dominant aesthetic taste in poetry stressed precise and detailed description, the seven-character quatrains were written in a detailed manner following folk-song themes. The same descriptive manner persisted in the seventh century. The major innovation in qijue of the seventh century was the establishment of the modern-style regulated tonal pattern. Otherwise, qijue in the seventh century, apart from changing thematically from romantic poetry to occasional verse, remained similar to their predecessors in terms of simple, descriptive form with little use of allusion.

Wang Changling played an important role in writing eighth century qijue. First of all, he is probably the earliest poet to devote himself to qijue writing, even though the form was not popular. Secondly, in his qijue poems, he not only inherited the poetic techniques developed by his predecessors, but he also transformed them to accommodate his own purpose. Wang's
use of detailed descriptive techniques enabled him to create a sense of realism in his poems. His choice of themes were similar to previous poets. Two major themes he wrote about are the folk-song themes and celebrating the public occasion. His qijue poems, like those of his predecessors, use little allusion and are mostly based on concrete events, which makes the poems more accessible.

However, Wang Changling created a new way of qijue writing by combining tradition and his own unique style. Unlike his predecessors, the focus of his poems stresses the complex emotion of the character evoked by an event instead of simply describing the event itself for description's sake. Focusing mainly on the complex emotion of human suffering, Wang's poems turn the concrete and objective description so often used in the sixth and seventh centuries into a vehicle to mirror the emotional state of their characters. Through the contrast or parallelism of carefully chosen imagery, Wang not only creates a sense of realism in his poems but also uses implication to reflect the inner emotion of his characters. Because of their highly suggestive nature, and because of the complex emotions they imply, his poems invite many possible interpretations.

The complexity in Wang Changling's qijue not only exists in the theme but also manifests itself in his descriptive manner. The paradoxical existence of both clear and objective description of the outer world, and obscure, subjective emotional intensity is the key to Wang Changling's success in qijue. The imagery in his poems seems to objectively present an image of the material world just as a camera does. Yet through his arrangement of the objects, Wang implies the complex emotions of his personae. The controlled tone of voice and descriptive manner makes the uncontrolled emotional turmoil and complexity more obvious. This contrast allows the poet to express strong emotions in a restrained manner. The contrast between distant objectivity, and personal, emotional intensity makes the poem intriguing and invites the various interpretations. By focusing on emotion, the poet interweaves a contemporary spirit into the historical events he alludes to, and thus transforms traditional material to express his opinion regarding current issues. The paradoxical elements of his qijue, presenting past and
present, emotion and distance, objectiveness and subjectiveness, result from Wang Changling's merging of the qijue tradition with his own innovative craftsmanship and spirit.

In short, Wang's success in qijue is in his ability to apply his unique poetic technique and serious ideas to its content, while embracing tradition. Through such an expansion of theme and technique, the qijue is no longer confined to mere entertainment. Focusing on the concrete and accessible events, he creates intricate and inexhaustible messages. Since Wang Changling, the aesthetic taste in qijue emphasizes subtlety and profundity in expressing emotions. Hence, Wang Changling's well-structured twenty-eight character poems not only successfully present sublime imagery, but also blaze a new way for qijue.
List of Abbreviations:

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
<th>Chinese Equivalent</th>
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<tr>
<td>CK</td>
<td>Tang dai shiren cong kao</td>
<td>唐代詩人叢考</td>
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<tr>
<td>HYI</td>
<td>Heyue yingling ji</td>
<td>河嶽英靈集</td>
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<td>ICTCL</td>
<td>The Indiana Companion To Traditional Chinese Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>IST</td>
<td>Jiu Tang shu</td>
<td>窮唐書</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTS</td>
<td>Quan Tang shi</td>
<td>全唐詩</td>
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<td>OTW</td>
<td>Qinding Quan Tang wen</td>
<td>钦定全唐文</td>
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<td>XTS</td>
<td>Xin Tang shu</td>
<td>新唐書</td>
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<tr>
<td>WX</td>
<td>Tang dai keju yu wenxue</td>
<td>唐代科舉與文學</td>
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III. Secondary Studies


