A RE-EVALUATION OF THE LIFE AND WORKS OF
WEI YING-WU (c.737—?)

by

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, when critics mention Wei Ying-wu, they like to quote the T'ang dynasty scholar, Li Chao's praise of Wei from the T'ang Kuo-shih Pu. Li describes Wei as having lofty and pure character, a meagre diet and few desires, he also says that Wei burned incense and swept the floor wherever he lived. Wei is usually praised merely for the style of his five-character verse which is described as calm, lucid and leisurely. In addition to discussing the traditional criticism of Wei's character and poetry, this dissertation emphasizes the phases of his personal and literary development that are often overlooked by scholars. My intention is to present a true picture of Wei's personality and also give a fair and just appraisal of his poetry. This dissertation should make it clear that Wei was not a man who spent his entire life merely burning incense, sweeping the floor and turning his back on reality to live in peace. The fact that his life was much more varied than it is usually portrayed is probably the reason he became such a versatile poet.

Although many people have written biographies of Wei, it is difficult to find one without errors. Therefore in chapter one I have compared the biographical research of different scholars in order to determine the facts of Wei's life. However, there are still some errors common to all his
biographers. In these cases I have given my own suppositions together with the evidence to support my views.

In chapter two, I have paid more attention to the literary achievements which others have overlooked rather than to traditional criticism of Wei's poetry. Nevertheless, I have also endeavoured to give examples to support those instances of traditional criticism that, in my opinion, are accurate.

In chapter three, after discussing Wei Ying-wu's personality, I have analysed Wei's political opinions. This had never been done by previous scholars. Furthermore, I have analysed his attitudes towards society. Only by examining such a broad range of Wei Ying-wu's life and thought can one hope to adequately understand the poet's literary significance.
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CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY OF WEI YING-WU

(a) Wei's Lineage and Wei Ying-wu's Year of Birth

Wei Ying-wu was a famous poet of T'ang dynasty. Unfortunately, his biography does not appear in the two official histories of the T'ang dynasty, the T'ang Shu and Hsin T'ang Shu. As a result, we do not even know what his other names were. However, Wei Ying-wu is mentioned briefly in the "I-wen Chih" of the Hsin T'ang Shu. "As for Wei Ying-wu, Shen Ya-chih... they all have extant writings; but historians have lost their life stories, so they cannot be mentioned."

Wei Ying-wu has been known as Wei Su-chou or Wei Chiang-chou due to his having served as prefect of Su Prefecture and Chiang Prefecture.

1. According to Chinese tradition, other than the given name, one usually has two other names, known as tzu [子] and hao [號].


Wei Ying-wu's native home was at Tu-ling which was under the jurisdiction of Wan-nien Subprefecture of Ching-chao Superior Prefecture. Tu-ling was twenty li southeast of Wan-nien Subprefecture.

According to Yuan-he Hsing-tsuan and Hsin T'ang Shu, the Wei clan moved there in the Han dynasty.

The following Chart is Wei Ying-wu's lineage taken from "Tsai-hsiang Shih-hsi Piao" in the Hsin T'ang Shu.


6. Ou-yang Hsiu, op. cit., chüan 74, pp.219-221.
(1) Wei Ch'ung, Duke I-feng. President of the Ministry of Finance in the Sui dynasty [Sui Hu-pu Shang-shu I-feng Kung]. Wei Ch'ung's son was Wei T'ing.

(2) Wei T'ing. Prefect of Hsiang Prefecture [Hsiang-chou Tz'u-shih]. Wei T'ing's son was Wei Tai-chia.

(3) Wei Tai-chia. Vice-president of the Department of State Affairs of the Right [Wen-ch'ang Yu-hsiang] during the reign of Empress Wu. Wei Tai-chia's sons were Wei Ling-i and Wei Lieh.

(4) Wei Ling-i. Vice-president of the Office of Imperial Family Affairs [Tsung-cheng Shao-ch'ing]. Wei Ling-i's second son was Wei Luan.

(5) Wei Luan. His official title is not mentioned in the Hsin T'ang Shu. In the T'u-hui Pao-chien, under the name of Wei Yen, it states, "His father, Wei Luan, whose highest official position was Assistant Director of Imperial Workshops [Shao-chien]." Wei Ying-wu was the son of Wei Luan.

(6) Wei Ying-wu. Prefect of Su Prefecture [Su-chou Tz'u-shih]. Wei Tai-chia, the great grandfather of Wei Ying-wu, served Empress Wu as Vice-president of the Department of State Affairs of the Right. It was Empress Wu who changed the name of the Shang-shu Sheng to Wen-ch'ang T'ai.

the ninth month of the Kuang-chai era (684)\(^8\). Thus, the Tso Yu P’u-yeh was called the Wen-ch’ang Tso Yu Hsiang. The Biography of Wei Tai-chia appears in the T’ang Shu, and also in the Hsin T’ang Shu.\(^9\)

Nielson, in his *The T’ang Poet Wei Ying-wu and His Poetry*, is mistaken when he says that Wei Tai-chia served the Sui dynasty (581-618) as prime minister.\(^{10}\) This opinion may be based on Shen Tso-che who, in his "Supplement to The Biography of Prefect Wei", states incorrectly that Wei Tai-chia served the Sui dynasty as the Tso P’u-yeh.\(^{11}\)

Having observed the above-mentioned lineage, we know that Wei Ying-wu came from a rather noble family. Even so, there is no record concerning the year of his birth; but there is a line in one of his poems which mentions his having reached 'adulthood' [jo-kuan. 弱冠]

*When I reached adulthood, I encountered a period of anarchy.*\(^{12}\)

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12. *Ch’uan T’ang Shih* [全唐詩], hereafter CTS, 1703 [康熙四十二年]. Han 3, Ts’e 7, Wei Ying-wu chüan 3, P. 5. The translation is Nielson’s *op. cit.*, P. 35.
According to old Chinese tradition, a young man was addressed with the expression 'jo-kuan', when he was about twenty years old. Therefore, when the Empire was thrown into anarchy by the rebellion of An Lu-shan, Wei was about the age of twenty.

Since the rebellion began in the eleventh month of the fourteenth year of the T'ien-pao era (755 A.D.), therefore, Nielson states in his thesis, "If it is assumed that Wei was twenty years old at the time of the rebellion, his date of birth would be 736."\(^\text{13}\)

According to the traditional method of calculating age in China, an individual is one year old as soon as he is born; he is then considered two years old when he passes through the first lunar new year after his birth. Thereafter, one year is added with the passing of each lunar new year. When the date of birth is not given but the subject's age at a later date is known, the year of his birth may be determined by subtracting the given age from the year and then adding one additional year.

Holding a slightly different opinion, Lo Lien-t'ien regards 'a period of anarchy' as referring to the year when An Lu-shan's rebel army captured the capital Ch'ang-an, and Emperor Hsüan-tsung fled to Ch'eng-tu in Shu (Sze-chuan). This incident happened in 756\(^\text{14}\), which extended from the fifteenth year of the T'ien-pao era to the first year of the

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13. See Nielson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.4-5.
Chih-te era. For this reason, Lo Lien-t'ien suggests that Wei Ying-wu was born in the year of 737, one year later than Nielson's conjecture.

As a matter of fact, 'jo-kuan' can cover the years immediately preceding and following a young man's twentieth birthday. Furthermore, in Chinese five-character poetry, as in the lines quoted above, because of the restriction of the number of characters in each line, the poet cannot always be precise in recording numbers.

Due to these facts, we can only say that when Wei Ying-wu reached adulthood, he was around the age of twenty. So his year of birth could probably be 737, or 736 or even two or three years earlier or later than these.

(b) A Young Palace Guard and a Student of the T'ai-hsüeh

Neither his poetry nor the interlinear commentaries, which are believed to have been written by Wei Ying-wu himself, reveal any facts about his childhood. However, there are some

15. In the Seventh month of the fifteenth year of the T'ien-pao era, Li Heng 李亨, the third son of Emperor Hsüan-tsung came to the throne, he immediately changed the name of the era to Chih-te. See Ou-yang Hsiu, op. cit., ch'ian 6, P. 21.


poems that describe his joining the palace guard. He was already fifteen years old at that time.

Feasting with Li, the Clerk of the Court
I served at the emperor's court with you at fifteen years of age.
Where mornings we passed through heavy incense and ascended vermilion stairs.
Flowers bloomed in the Imperial Garden where we passed by;
Snow fell on Mount Li, where we bathed.
Those who served close to the emperor are scattered, but are still alive,
The emperor is roving as an immortal, nowhere to be met.
Meeting you this day we recall old times;
In this cup of wine is happiness— and sadness. 18

As a favourite guard of Emperor Hsüan-tsung, Wei Ying-wu always followed the emperor and his Precious Concubine, Yang Kuei-fei whenever they went to the hot spring at Hua-ch'ing Palace on Mount Li. Here is a poem describing one such excursion.

18. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 1, p.4. Except for the title and lines 5 and 6 which incorporate my own interpretation, the translation follows Nielson, op. cit., pp.9-10.
Warm Springs

How many years have passed since I began serving in the T'ien-pao era,
Obtuse as hammer-head, my destiny is paper-thin.
Being untalented as an official I can only return home;
I am but a common man of Tu-ling.
In the bitter north wind I head towards Warm Springs,
And abruptly remember the former emperor's imperial excursions.
Riding a palace horse, holding the emperor's insignia,
I entered straight into Hua-ch'ing Palace and stood in rank before the throne.
The white-jade trees and snow covered the whole of cold mountain.
We ascended to the far pavilion and roamed in crimson mists.
At dawn I stood guard while all nations came to court;
Horses and carriages crushed into the land surrounding the palace.
Due to the emperor's kindness, I often bathed in the Hua-ch'ing Palace Pool;
And when in the hunting retinue we could not 
trample fields north of the Wei River.

Having no troubles with which to cope, the entire 
court feasted gaily,

With beautiful women and music from the ninth 
heaven.

One day when the Emperor went to heaven,
I grasped the whiskers of the dragon, till broken,
but I could no longer follow him.  

Now, when I come back, it is bleak and desolate,
and all the houses are empty,
The only visible activity is the mist rising around
the blue mountain.

Being poor, I fell and was lost in the turmoil,
I raise a cry to heaven, but to what avail?
My emaciated horse and I, my clothes torn, were
about to freeze to death.

19. Here Wei Ying-wu uses an allusion from Shih Chi; 
The Yellow Emperor or Huang-ti mined copper at Mount Shou[\(\text{山}\)], and cast a bronze tripod under Mount Ching[\(\text{山}\)]. when the tripod was ready, a dragon with whiskers came down to welcome the Yellow Emperor, and the Emperor mounted the dragon followed by more than seventy concubines and vassals. When the dragon rose, the other followers were unable to accompany him, so they grasped the whiskers of the dragon. Unfortunately, the whiskers came out by their roots. See Ssu-ma Ch'ien [\(\text{史記}\)], "Feng-shan Shu" [封禪書] in Shih Chi [史記]. Hongkong: Wen-hsueh Yen-chiu-she [文獻研究社], 1959 ed., chüan 28, P.117.
But fortunately I met you whose wine cups are full.  

During his service as a favourite guard, he was carefree and sometimes even a trouble maker.

Meeting Colonel Yang

In my youth I served Emperor Wu,  
A young rascal I relied on him for personal favour.
I was a trouble maker in my neighbourhood.
And sheltered ruffians in my home.
Mornings I kept on gambling,
Evenings I sneaked over to the beautiful girl of my eastern neighbour.
Police constables dared not arrest me,
Because I was a guard of the White Jade Palace.
I spent windy and snowy nights at Mount Li,
And carried the Emperor's arrows when hunting at
Ch'ang-yang.
I did not know even a single written word.
Drinking wine I disclosed my asininity.
When the Emperor became an immortal,
People took advantage of my plight.
It was too late to get an education,
So I took up the pen and learned to write poetry. 23

... 

The above poem describes how Wei Ying-wu behaved when he was a young palace guard, gambling, philandering, drinking wine, making trouble, sheltering ruffians, doing all sorts of bad things. Observing his words "did not know even a single written word," we know that when he first joined the palace guard, he must not have studied at T'ai-hsueh yet. For this reason, it seems difficult to believe that Wei Ying-wu had studied at the T'ai-hsueh before he became a palace guard, as Nielson states. 24 In "Supplement to the Biography of Prefect Wei ", although Shen Tso-che does not mention the

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23. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, P. 14. Except for the title and lines 1, 2, 5-8 and 11, the translation appears in Nielson, op. cit., pp. 32-33.
years Wei Ying-wu studied at the T'ai-hsüeh, according to the order of the events occurring in that biography, it seems that Shen Tso-che also wrongly regards this event as occurring before Wei Ying-wu became a palace guard. However, according to a poem that Wei Ying-wu sent to an old friend, we know that he was a youngster when he was a student at the T'ai-hsüeh.

To An Old Friend

When young, I studied at the T'ai-hsüeh,
I arrogantly sneered at the other students.
Thirty years have wasted by,
Now I have to go to the coastal region.

The evidence of the above poem clearly shows that Wei Ying-wu had not entered the T'ai-hsüeh before he was a palace guard; but he did study there when he was young. So we must try to discover under what conditions and during which years he studied there.

With reference to the above poem, the coastal region referred to is presumably Su Prefecture. That is to say, Wei Ying-wu went to take up the appointment as prefect in Su Prefecture about thirty years after he and his old friend had studied at the T'ai-hsüeh.

26. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, P. 10. Except for lines 2 and 4, the translation appears in Nielson, op. cit., P. 14
Wei Ying-wu served as Prefect of Su Prefecture from the fourth year of the Chen-yüan era (788).\textsuperscript{27} This probably is the reason why Lo Lien-t'ien suggests that Wei Ying-wu entered the T'ai-hsüeh in 758, when he was about twenty-two years old.\textsuperscript{29}

T'ai-hsüeh, Kuo-tzu-hsüeh, and Ssu-men hsiieh, were all under the jurisdiction of the Kuo-tzu-chien during the T'ang dynasty. The " Li-i Chih " in the T'ang Shu states:

"In accordance with a former rule, there were over two thousand students in the Kuo-tzu-chien in both capitals .... They all received grants-in-aid from the government. In the fifteenth year (of the T'ien-pao era i.e. 756) as the main Capital fell into the hands of the enemy, this practice was discontinued. Since the war had not ceased by the first year of the Ch'ien-yüan era (758), the emperor by proclamation halted all the study in prefectural and subprefectural schools until the next bumper year ...." \textsuperscript{30}

"... from the Chih-te era (756-758) onwards,

\textsuperscript{27} See part (e) in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{28} See Lo Lien-t'ien, \textit{op. cit.}, P. 14.
\textsuperscript{29} The ages given in this paper are according to the Chinese method of calculation and it is assumed that Wei Ying-wu was born in 737 A. D.
\textsuperscript{30} Liu Hsü, \textit{op. cit.}, chüan 24, P. 107.

Two Capitals are referred to Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang; the main Capital being Ch'ang-an.
war never ceased. Hence, as the students of Kuo-tzu-chien could not get grants-in-aid from the government, they all dispersed. The school buildings fell into ruin and the government repeatedly allowed soldiers to live in them .... “

From these records, we know that beginning from the fifteenth year of the T'ien-pao era (756), throughout the years of the Chih-te era, Ch'ien-yuan era and thenceforth, the T'ai-hsüeh was not in operation. For this reason, the suggestion that Wei Ying-wu enrolled in the T'ai-hsüeh in the first year of the Ch'ien-yüan era (758) can scarcely compel our agreement.

During the subsequent Kuang-te era (763-765), there was some improvement in educational affairs. In the second year of the era (764), the emperor proclaimed,

"In ancient times, the T'ai-hsüeh was established to educate the heirs of the nobility; even in years of bad harvest or in war time, the affairs relating to sacrifices were never discarded. In recent years, war has broken out from time to time, and the students have ceased to attend the lectures. Now it is a suitable time to call the students back to schools to study. The government should estimate their expenditures and provide their living expenses." 32

This constitutes clear evidence that the T'ai-hsüeh was reopened in the second year of the Kuang-te era and also supports Yao K'uan's opinion that Wei Ying-wu entered the

31. Same as footnote 30.
32. Ou-yang Hsiu, op. cit., chüan 44, P. 111.
T'ai-hsüeh two years after the death of Emperor Hsüan-tsung. 33
Emperor Hsüan-tsung died in the fourth month of the
Yüan-nien (762). 34 Two years later fell in the second year
of the Kuang-te era. Since in the first year of the Kuang-te
era (763), Wei Ying-wu had already been appointed as Assistant
Subprefect of Lo-yang, 35 it would have been impossible for him
to attend the T'ai-hsüeh at the same time. Moreover, from the
lines of his poem we have mentioned above:

"When the emperor became an immortal,
People took advantage of my plight,
It was too late to get an education,
So I took up the pen and learned to write
poetry." 36

It seems that Wei Ying-wu never returned to the T'ai-
hsüeh after the death of Emperor Hsüan-tsung.

33. Yao K'uan [姚覲], "Shu Ke Fan Chiao Wei-chi Hou"]
[in Wei Chiang-chou Chi [歸江州陳]], p.65,
Ssu-pu Ts'ung-k'an lst ser., op. cit.

34. See Liu Hsiü, op. cit., chüan 9, p.13, also
Ou-yang Hsiu, op. cit., chüan 5, p.20. Yüan-nien [元年] was the
name given to the period between the Shang-yüan [上元] era and
the Pao-ying [寶應] era of Emperor Su-tsung. See Ch'en Yuan [陳
垣], Erh-shih Shih Shuo Juen Piao [二十史時点], Peking:
Ku-ch'i Ch'u-pan-shè [古籍出版社], 1956, ed., p.98. T'ang Hsüan-
tsung died on the fifth day of the fourth month of the Yüan-
nien era. On the fifteenth day of the same month, the name of
the era was changed to Pao-ying.

35. See p.20
Taking into consideration the condition and environment of Wei Ying-wu, it seems that the time he was admitted as a student in the T'ai-hsueh must be the time he was still a palace guard before the rebellion of An Lu-shan. The record in the "Hsüan-chü Chih" gives us quite clear evidence:

"... on the days when the guards known as *San-wei* were not on duty, they could be admitted to study in the Kuo-tzu-hsueh, T'ai-hsueh, and Lü-kuan if they liked ...." 37

Since Wei Ying-wu was a palace guard, he was qualified to enrol at T'ai-hsueh when he was not on duty.

According to the rule established in the eleventh year of the K'ai-yüan era (723), each year a guard served a tour of six months. That is to say, every guard needed to take up his duty for six months in each year. Here is the rule:

"On the twentieth day of the eleventh month of the eleventh year (K'ai-yüan era), the President of the Ministry of the Army [Ping-pu Shang-shu 兵部尚書] Chang Yüeh 張曙 established one hundred thousand permanent guards in the Barracks of the South [Nan-ya 南衛] for the emperor. He selected these from militia and ordinary citizens in Ching-chao [京兆], P'u [蒲], T'ung [同], Ch'i [岐] and the other prefectures, with the standard height of (five) feet eight. The guards were divided into two tours of duty each year and they were...

38. A character 'five' is missing before feet. See Wang Ch'in-jo [王欽若], "Hsiu Wu-pei "[修武備], Ts'e Fu Yuan Kuei [冊府元龕]. Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chu [中華書局], 1960 ed., chüan 124, p.1490.
not allowed to serve for the prefectures or subprefectures...."\(^{39}\)

According to the emperor's order in the seventh year of the T'ien-pao era (748), the emperor's bodyguards were divided into six groups, and they served by turns.\(^ {40}\)

Taking into account the above-mentioned tours of duty for the guards, we can see that there would have been ample time for Wei Ying-wu to study at the T'ai-hsüeh when he was not on guard if his tour of duty was not different from what is stated above.

As a favourite guard of the emperor, we should not be surprised to learn that while he was studying at the T'ai-hsüeh, he arrogantly sneered at the other students.\(^ {41}\)

Wei Ying-wu does not say in which year he entered the T'ai-hsüeh and how many years he spent there; but we have already learned that from the fifteenth year of the T'ien-pao era (756) to the first year of the Kuang-te era (763), the T'ai-hsüeh was not functioning. For this reason, certainly, the date that Wei Ying-wu left the T'ai-hsüeh should not be later than the fifteenth year of the T'ien-pao era when An Lu-shan captured the capital Ch'ang-an. Again, when we refer to the verse "Thirty years have wasted by. Now I have to go to the coastal region.", it does not mean that 'thirty' represents an exact number of years, it only means approximately thirty


\(^{40}\) Wang P'u, *op. cit.*, chüan 72, p.1293.

\(^{41}\) See Wei Ying-wu's poem, *supra*, p.12.
years long. In fact, thirty-two years elapsed from the year he left the T'ai-hsüeh to the year he went to Su Prefecture.

Where Wei Ying-wu went after he left the T'ai-hsüeh, he himself does not mention. Lo Lien-t'ien supposes that since he was a palace guard, in the fifteenth year of the T'ien-pao era he followed Emperor Hsüan-tsung in his flight to Shu, but Lo Lien-t'ien gives no evidence to support this.

According to the records in the T'ang Hui Yao, at the end of the T'ien-pao era, Emperor Hsüan-tsung de-emphasized military matters and hence people looked on military men and even the palace guards with contempt:

At the end of T'ien-pao (742-56), because there was great peace in the Middle Plain, the emperor cultivated the arts of civilization and abandoned military preparation. He had the spear and arrow points melted down in order to weaken the valiant knights of the empire. Thereupon anyone who carried warlike arms was punished and anyone who kept prophetic books was executed. Anyone who practised archery committed a crime. When worthless youths became soldiers their elders repudiated them and would not associate with them. Only in the frontier districts were large bodies of troops maintained. In the Middle Plain arms and weapons were stored away to show that they would never again be used. Men grew to old age without hearing the sound of war. The men of the Six Armies [an old expression for the emperor's armies] and all the guards were all 'white-clothed' fellows from the market place. The rich carried on trade in coloured silks and lived on fine food. The robust played the 'horn game', at tug-o'-war, at lifting poles and iron weights (?) and day after day neglected the arts of war. When an emergency arose their knees shook and they were incapable of carrying arms. It was no mere case
of ill-fortune that after this rebels took advantage of the situation to revolt. \(^{42}\)

Although we have no evidence as to the date when Wei Ying-wu left the post of palace guard, under such circumstances, it is most likely that by the end of the T'ien-pao era, he was no longer holding the post. Perhaps, he was concentrating on his study at the T'ai-hsueh at that time. Thereupon, when Ch'ang-an fell to the rebel army, it does not seem that Wei Ying-wu followed the Emperor Hsüan-tsung to flee to Shu. There were only one thousand guards who followed Emperor Hsüan-tsung to flee to Shu, and less than hundred guards who followed Su-tsung to Ling-wu. \(^{43}\)

None of Wei's poems mentions a flight to Shu, also, in his writings, he makes no special mention of any place in Shu or any familiar thing connected with Shu that he had experienced. Probably he never visited Shu in his entire lifetime.

As for the period when An Lu-shan was in control of the capital Ch'ang-an, Wei possibly fled somewhere else. After that, he went into seclusion at Pao-i Temple in Wu-kung Subprefecture, which was one hundred and forty li west of Ching-chao Superior Prefecture. \(^{44}\) Here he lived and studied

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\(^{43}\) See Ou-yang Hsiu, *op. cit.*, chüan 50, p.126.

\(^{44}\) See Li Chi-fu, *op. cit.*, chüan 2, p.6.
for while. Some years later, when he visited the place again, he wrote:

Up to the Old Roaming Place Pao-i Temple

Green range and the temple protrude high into the sky.
In fair weather the plain is crowded by myriad houses, and mist-laden trees.
Monks and I do not know each other because they came to live here only recently.
I sit down and listen to the soft bell and think of the years past.

(c) An Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang

After several years of self-education in Pao-i Temple, Wei Ying-wu met an opportunity to take up a position in the bureaucracy, that of Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang in the Kuang-te era (763-765). At the time Wei Ying-wu was around twenty-seven years old.

45. Commentary: "The temple is in Wu-kung, the writer once lived here."
47. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 7, P.1.
48. Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang [Lo-yang Ch'eng].
Written in Lo-yang in the Kuang-te Era

I was born and grew up in peaceful days,
Yet, I did not realize the happiness of peaceful times,
As I am returning to Lo-yang,
I deeply feel how precious peace is, and my heart is overcome with bitter suffering.
One takes medicine to cure disease;
But, unexpectedly, it may poison the stomach and injure the one who takes it.
When the government forces came across the Yellow and Lo Rivers,
They damaged both the jade and the stone. \[49\]
Time has passed without ceasing,
Only the river winds around forever and the mountain still appears green.
Lonely and desolate, there is not even a single line of smoke.
When the sun has set, the empty city is filled with cold.
Like a lame horse, I am unable to run fast. \[50\]
In my low government position, I merely pick up loose ends.

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\[49\] Indiscriminate destruction of good and bad alike.
\[50\] Metaphorically, it means unfit to serve as a high officer.
Longing for the Hsien-yang highway to the west,
My heart loiters restlessly.  

The government forces referred to are the allied
forces of Shuo-fang [朔方], Shen-ts'e [神策] and Uighurs [回紇].
When those forces recaptured the Eastern Capital (Lo-yang)
in late 762, they looted and made a clean sweep of almost
every house and killed thousands of people. As a result,
the inhabitants of Lo-yang were reduced to wearing paper
instead of clothes.  

Soon afterwards, Tibetans seized Ch'ang-an, and
Emperor Tai-tsung fled to Shan Prefecture [陝州]. As
Wei Ying-wu does not mention that incident in the poem
above, it seems that he left Ch'ang-an to take up the post in
Lo-yang before the Tibetans captured Ch'ang-an.

In the poem he sent to his younger brothers Tuan, Wu
and others at the capital on new year's day, he says," In
youth I served in the government at Ho-yang Superior Prefecture
[Ho-yang Fu 何陽府]". Here he obviously refers to this post. 

51. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 6, p.11.
52. See Ssu-ma Kuang, op. cit., chüan 222, p.7135.
53. Ch'ang-an was seized by the Tibetans in the tenth
month of the first year of the Kuang-te era (763). See Ssu-ma
Kuang, op. cit., chüan 223, p.7150-52.
54. Thomas Nielson and Shen Tso-che both assume that
Wei Ying-wu served in Ho-yang Subprefecture. If this were so,
Wei Ying-wu would use "Ho-yang Hsien 何陽縣" instead of
"Ho-yang Fu 何陽府". Lo-yang was under the jurisdiction
See Li Chi-fu, op. cit., chüan 5, pp.1-2, also Nielson, op. cit.,
p.21 and Shen Tso-che, op. cit., p.68. Wei's poem is in CTS 3/7/
Wei Ying-wu 3, p.8
During the T'ang dynasty, an Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang merely belonged to the upper division of the deputy class in the seventh degree,\(^{55}\) hence, the rank was rather low.

In the Yung-t'ai era (765-766), while Wei Ying-wu was still serving as Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang, he punished some soldiers and was summoned to court by the prefect of Ho-nan Superior Prefecture. At the same time, his nephew Wei Pan was also summoned to the court for his over-zealous administration of the law. At this time, Wei Ying-wu wrote the following poem with preface referring to both of these incidents:

Presented to My Nephew Pan the Chief Clerk of Ho-nan

[Preface] In the Yung-t'ai era, because I punished cavalrymen when I was the Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang, and at the same time, because my nephew Pan, Chief Clerk of Ho-nan, was also firm and honest in administering the law, both of us were summoned to the court by the Prefect. I express my feelings with this poem and ask my friends in the Superior Prefecture and Subprefectures not to look lightly upon it.

I have always upheld plain, honest administration,  
And you have preserved justice.

Both of our horoscopes contain the Chu-niao\textsuperscript{56}  
vanquishment,  
And we invited the slander of petty men.

In carrying out our administration, we sought to use  
the scales of justice,  
But making decisions is like butting a fence.\textsuperscript{57}

Not being able to retire to the mountains,  
I can do nothing but hope for the Prefect's  
kindness.\textsuperscript{58}

Not long after these incidents, Wei Ying-wu took  
leave from the post of Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang and  
shut himself up in the T'ung-te Temple east of Lo-yang.  
According to the rule promulgated on the nineteenth day of  
the fifth month in the first year of the Pao-ying era (762),  
the term of an assistant subprefect was three years; however,  
in the case of no replacement, the appointment could be extended

\textsuperscript{56}Chu-niao[朱鳥], God of South, who metes out  
punishment if propriety is violated. See Ssu-ma Ch'ien, \textit{op. cit.}, chüan 27, p.110.

\textsuperscript{57}Butting a fence is an allusion from \textit{The Book of Changes}[易經]: A ram butts against the fence, it is neither  
able to retreat nor to advance. It means that one is in a  
dilemma. See "Ta-chuang San-shih-ssu" [大壯三十四],  
Chou-i Ku-ching Chin-chieh[周易古經今解], Commentary by  
Kao Heng[高亨]. Hongkong: Chung-hua Shu-chü[中華書局],  

\textsuperscript{58}CTS 3/7/\textit{Wei Ying-wu} 2, p.1-2. Except for the pre-  
face and line 1 of the poem, I follow Nielson's translation,  
\textit{op. cit.}, p.24.
for another year. Therefore, we know that Wei Ying-wu held the post no longer than four years.

In the following poems he claims sickness as an excuse for secluding himself in T'ung-te Temple. As a matter of fact, the unfortunate incident concerning the soldiers might be the real cause. The two poems below were written after his retirement from the post of Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang.

Taking Leave from the Lo-yang Assistant Subprefectural Office

A square hole cannot take a round peg,
A straight stick cannot be made into a wheel.
Upon examination, all matter has its particular use,
Going contrary to true nature begets suffering.
Bowing and scraping are not for me.
I drink water but am not destitute.
Taking leave, I rest in the empty room,
To recuperate, I cut myself off from the clamor and dust.
Fish instinctively swim in schools,
Even wild birds have their flock.
My house and yard are at Tu-ling,
For years and years my heart has longed for them.

Mount Sung stands high under clear skies,
Following winter snows, spring arrives along the
Yellow and Lo Rivers.
The lofty trees do not yet have flowers.
Everyday the grass becomes greener.
Why should I keep on with my writing?
I should weed in the East Fields.

Sent to the Official of Ho-nan East Bureau
of Military Affairs While Convalescing
at T'ung-te Temple

I am resting leisurely here towards the east of
the city,
Where in the cold the shuang trees are deep
green.
A brilliant moon drifts over the spacious
courtyard.
A light coat of frost covers the lofty pavilion.

60. "East Fields" is an allusion referred to the
hermit Wang Chi [王維] who called himself 'Master of East
Fields' [Tung-kao Tzu 東皋子]. See Ou-yang Hsiu, op. cit.,
The translation except lines 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, is Nielson's,
op. cit., pp.71-72.

61. Shuang tree [雙樹], generally known as 'p'o-lo'
[娑羅]. See Fa Yün [法雲], Fan-i Ming-i Chi [翻譯名義集].
Ho-fei K'uai-shih Tai-keng Ts'ao-t'ang [合肥愷氏待耕堂].
I have shut myself up here not to nurture my original nature,
But, because of sickness, I cannot come to your party,
There are certainly other people here,
But I think of you through the changing years.
I was truly embarrassed to be above you in office,
When confronted with your talent my past performance shames me.
I had not thought that day and night
Would follow one after another without seeing you.
I sent this verse to ask about you,
Your reply will certainly be florid exquisiteness.62

(d) The Director of the Department of Merits and Subprefect

After his retirement from the post of Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang, presumably, Wei Ying-wu was out of office for quite a long time.

Then he was assigned as a director in the Department

of Merits in Ching-chao Superior Prefecture, which controlled twenty-three subprefectures around the area of the Capital Ch'ang-an. A director in the Department of Merits in Ching-chao Superior Prefecture belonged to the lower division of the principal class in the seventh degree, a higher rank than Wei's previous position as an Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang.

As a director in the Department of Merits in Ching-chao Superior Prefecture, he sometimes needed to go out to inspect the subprefectures which were under the jurisdiction of the Ching-chao Superior Prefecture. For example, in later years, when he arrived back in Fu-p'ing Subprefecture after being out office, he recalled his earlier experiences in the following lines: "In earlier days, when I worked in a government office, I had always

63. Director in the Department of Merits [Kung-ts'ao (ts'an-chün-shih)]. The evidence that Wei took this post is to be found in the commentaries on his two poems with titles "Reply to Graduate Li Feng" and "Reply to Liu, the Judicial Officer." See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.4. In the interpretation of Hsi-ts'ao[司法], I follow Wan Man who takes it as identical to Fa-ts'ao[司法], the Judicial Officer. See Wan Man, "Wei Ying-wu Chuan" [巋應次傳] in Kuo-wen Yueh-k' an[國文月刊], 60. Shanghai: Kuo-wen Yueh-k'an-she[國文月刊社], 1947, p.20.

64. See Li Chi-fu, op. cit., chüan 1, pp.1-2.

65. A director in the Department of Merits, lower division of the principal class in the seventh degree[正三 marriage]. See Li Lung-chi, op. cit., chüan 30, p.502.
to rush about inspecting the subordinate towns." 66.

At one time, when he went out to investigate the
damage caused by a flood in Yün-yang Subprefecture, He Wrote:

Early in the morning, I start on a journey, on
order from the Superior Prefecture,
I have no time to rest though the weather is hot.
Since I have to go to Yün-yang, a hundred li away,
To make inquiries about the inhabitants suffering
from the flood. 67

...

The flood referred to was presumably the one which
occurred in the twelfth year of the Ta-li era (777). In the
tenth month of that year, Li Kan, who was the Prefect of
Ching-chao Superior Prefecture [Ching-chao Yin], made
a report to the emperor and stated that the flood had damaged
thirty-one thousand ch'ing of agriculture land. 68

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Fu-p'ing was a Subprefecture one hundred and fifty li northeast of Ching-chao Superior Prefecture. See Li Chi-fu, op. cit., chüan 1, P.7.
67. See "Sent to the Officials in the Office of the Superior Prefecture on Envoy to Yün-yang." CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 2, P.5. Yün-yang was one hundred and twenty li northeast of Ching-chao Superior Prefecture. See Li Chi-fu, op.cit., chüan 1, P.8.
68. Liu Hsu, op. cit., chüan 11, P.39.
From the following poems of Wei Ying-wu, we know that Li Kan, Duke Shou-ch'un, was Wei Ying-wu's superior during the time Wei served as a director in the Department of Merits in Ching-chao Superior Prefecture.

Written on the Journey Back from Autumn Country Fair, Respectfully Submitted to Li, Duke Shou-ch'un

Your subordinate came from an ordinary family,
Obeying the order, I administer the Imperial Precincts.
Your Excellency, you bend your discerning intelligence,
And recommend my goodness while forgetting my defects....
Early in the morning, when the door of your office was opened,
I was able to pay my respects to you. 70

Arriving the Former Residence of Duke Shou-ch'un in K'ai-hua Li 71

Do you know the official who once served in your

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70. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 2, p.8.
71. K'ai-hua Li was located directly south of the Imperial City in Ch'ang-an. See Takeo Hiraoka, "Map One, Ch'ang-an City", "Map One, Ch'ang-an City", Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang (maps). Kyoto: Jimbunkagaku Kenkyusho, Kyoto University, 1956 ed.
office,
Now walking to and fro in your former residence?
When I mount your stairs, I still feel my former
respect for you,
When I gaze at your divine tablet, my tears fall
down in my lingering sorrow.
The abandoned well is covered by grass,
The shaded windows are covered by moss.
The carriages have disappeared from your door,
Nothing looks the same as the last time I came. 72

The first poem was written when Li Kan was still the
Prefect of Ching-chao Superior Prefecture; and the second one
was written after Li Kan had been put to death.

Li Kan had served as the Prefect of Ching-chao
Superior Prefecture twice. His first appointment began from
the first year of the Yung-t'ai era (765), and probably ended
before the post was taken by Li Mien 73 in the fourth month
of the second year of the Ta-li era (767).

As Wei Ying-wu took up the post as an Assistant
Subprefect of Lo-yang in the Yung-t'ai era, 74 he would not
have been able to serve in Ching-chao Superior Prefecture
when Li Kan took his first appointment as prefect there.

Li Kan's second appointment as the Prefect of Ching-
chao Superior Prefecture was in the period from the ninth year

72. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 6, p.81.
73. See Liu Hsü, op. cit., chüan 11, pp.36-37
74. See part (c) in this chapter.
of the Ta-li era (774) to the fourteenth year of the same era (779); then, the post was taken by Yen Ying. 75

Certainly, Wei Ying-wu's service as a Director in the Department of Merits occurred during Li Kan's second appointment as the Prefect of Ching-chao Superior Prefecture. From the poem quoted above which was written when he went to investigate the damage caused by flooding in Yün-yang, and the report of Li Kan after the flood, we know that Wei Ying-wu took up his post as a Director in the Department of Merits in Ching-chao Superior Prefecture not later than the twelfth year of the Ta-li era (777).

Obviously, Thomas Nielson and Shen Tso-che are mistaken in regarding the date that Wei Ying-wu served as a Director in the Department of Merits as earlier than his appointment as an Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang. 76

Not very long after he took up the post as a Director of the Department of Merits, he was simultaneously appointed Subprefect of Kao-ling, which was located eighty li northeast of Ching-chao Superior Prefecture. 77

The following poem was written at the time when he was ready to go to take up this concurrent position.

75. See Liu Hsü, op. cit., chuan 11, pp.38 and 40.
76. See Nielson, op. cit., p.22 and Shen Tso-che, op. cit., p.68.
Parting from the Venerable Tzu-hsi at T'ien-ch'ang Mountain Temple

Taking this position is contrary to my doltish nature,
But how much worse it is to be separated from a friend!

Resignedly, climbing up to this monastery,
I take you by the hand, cherishing this morning.
High and open, beyond the dust of the earth,
We wander light heartedly, cleansing our spirits.
The green mountain faces the fragrant garden,
Rows of trees surround the ferry-crossing.
Horses and carriages never cease coming and going.
This traveler is weary of the journey's grime.
I should go down the road now,
But I halt here, how can I express my feelings?
I will hold fast to pure intentions,
With this to encourage and comfort you who are close to my heart.

78. The Commentary beneath the title states, "The writer was appointed as a Director of the Department of Merits in Ching-chao Superior Prefecture, simultaneously being the Subprefect of Kao-ling. The poem was written to Lu K'ang [盧康] the Director of the Department of Agriculture [T'ien-ts'ao (ts'an-chün shih)] and Han Chih [韓質], the Director of the Department of Finance [Hu-ts'ao (ts'an-chün-shih)]."

79. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 4, P.6. Except for the title and lines 7, 8, 13 and 14, the translation is Nielson's, op.cit., P. 22.
When Wei Ying-wu arrived in Kao-ling, he had many difficulties to cope with. There was no time even to read a book. Under such circumstances, once again, he thought about retiring from office.

An Expression of My Feelings in Kao-ling,

Sent to Lu, the Chief Clerk of San-yüan

Being just and upright, I am unlikely to get a promotion,
I am merely able to hold this lowly position.
Opening a book, I never have time to read it,
Because I am swamped in legal cases and correspondence.
Wars and years of famine follow one on the other,
The problems of forced labour and taxes leave me without a moment’s leisure.
If I stick too fast to the rules, the people’s condition will be heart-rending.
If I am too lenient, I will get myself into trouble.
Day and night, I plan to beat a retreat.
When I go outside, I always gaze at the mountains of home.

80. Lu, the Chief Clerk [Lu Shao-fu]. Shao-fu is a different name given to Hsien-wei. See Lu Fei-kuei, op. cit., p. 954. San-yüan Subprefecture was under the jurisdiction of Ching-chao Superior Prefecture and one hundred and ten li northeast of it. See Li Chi-fu, op. cit., chüan 1, p. 6.
If you feel so too, we had better go back hand in hand.81

Nevertheless, he was transferred to Hu Subprefecture to be the Subprefect there 82 before he retired.

In the fourth year of the Ta-li era (779), Wei Ying-wu was transferred to Li-yang83 from Hu to take the post of Subprefect of Li-yang. According to the commentary on the following poem, he resigned from the post on ground of illness. Then, he went to live in Shan-fu Temple on the bank of the Feng River. 84 At that time he was about forty-three years old.

81. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 2, P.1.
82. Hu Subprefecture [邯] was under the jurisdiction of Ching-chao Superior Prefecture and located sixty-five li southwest of it. See Li Chi-fu op. cit., chuan 2, P.4. The Subprefect of Hu belonged to the upper division of the principal class in the sixth degree [正六品上]. See Li Lung-chi op. cit., chuan 30, P.515.
83. Li-yang[譲陽], was under the jurisdiction of Ching-chao Superior Prefecture and located one hundred li northeast of it. See Li Chi-fu, op. cit., chuan 2, P.2.

Wan Man[萬年] and Lo Lien-t’ien regard Li-yang as belonging to Hua Prefecture [華州]. However, it was not until the 3rd year of the T’ien-yu era (906) that Li-yang was assigned to Hua Prefecture from Ching-chao Superior Prefecture. See Ou-yang Hsiu, op.cit., chuan 37, P.93, and also Wan Man, op.cit., P.26; Lo Lien-t’ien, op. cit., P.30.

84. Feng River[潯水], a tributary of Wei River [渭水]. It was twenty-eight li east of Hu. See Li Chi-fu, op. cit., chuan 2, P.4.
36

After Resigning as Subprefect of Li-yang and Returning to the Western Suburbs to Live
I Sent This Poem to My Friend upon Parting

Since youth I have served in the prefectures and subprefectures,
And have wasted my time writing government documents.
My ambition to soar through the clouds has come to naught,
For how can I acquire the wings of flight?
Fortunately it is now a time of brilliance and prosperity,
When everything is allowed to grow and develop;
But I am alone here, afflicted with sickness.
Worthless, I resigned from this post. 85
The events of the world move steadily on.
I long to get rest in the suburban gardens.
We tarried in happiness,
Your high spirits knew no bounds.
We drank cup after cup until suddenly the time had gone,
Your elevating discussions were truly profound.

85. The interlinear commentary here states, "On the twenty-third day of the sixth month in the fourth year of the Ta-li era, after having moved from the office of Hu Subprefecture to be the Subprefect of Li-yang, the writer resigned from the post and returned to live in Shan-fu Temple because of sickness. This poem was written on the twentieth day of the seventh month."
You stroll on the Imperial Palace grounds,
And enjoy the breeze beside those select trees;
Morning, I ascend the Western Suburb roads,
Where the fields are distinctly divided by
different types of millet.
I am content as were men in the age of T'ao-t'ang, 86
As I put forth my feeble ability to labour.
I stand here thinking of you all arrayed on the
royal steps;
You in the service, I in retirement, we both are
content. 87

(e) From the Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of
Judiciary Control to the Prefect of
Su Prefecture

In less than two years after Wei Ying-wu resigned
from office and lived quietly in Shan-fu Temple, he was
reappointed as the Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of

86. T'ao-t'ang (Shih)[
87. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 4, p.8. Except for lines 8, 10, 18 and footnotes, the translation is Nielson's, op. cit., pp.27-28.
Judiciary Control in the Department of State Affairs in the fourth month of the second year of the Chien-chung era (781). The Bureau of Judiciary Control was a subdivision of the Ministry of Justice. Although the rank of his post was no higher than upper division of the deputy class in the sixth degree, Wei Ying-wu seemed very happy because in this post he was a directly attached to the Central Government in the capital. He wrote the following poem upon leaving Shan-fu Temple to take up this new appointment:

Leaving the Shan-fu Temple to Take Office as Shang-shu-lang

Being plain and unadorned I am not a useful instrument;
I have thrown myself in with the grass and trees.
I stroll leisurely around the temple grounds,
And drink wine to my heart's content.
I comb my hair but once in several days,
And am often reluctant to pore over books.
On the festivals, I with my elderly friends,

88. Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Judiciary Control in the Department of State Affairs [Shang-shu Pi-pu Yüan-wai-lang], upper division of the deputy class in the sixth degree. See Li Lung-chi op. cit., chüan 6, P.114.

89. Commentary : On the nineteenth day, fourth month, second year of the Chien-chung era (781), the Writer who was the former Subprefect of Li-yang, took office as Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Judiciary Control in the Department of State Affairs.
Wander at will enjoying the mountains and rivers.
In these great times officials are being selected.
And handsome salaries come out of the court.
My appointment arrived unexpectedly,
Whereupon, I don the robes of office,
I am ashamed to take this secretarial office,
And have no right to receive the rank.
My official hat tassels swing as I greet to visitors,
And my light-wheeled carriage soars in the wind.
As I prepare to leave my loved ones,
A tremendous feeling for the bank of West Stream sweeps over me.
The distant peaks reflect brightly in the twilit river,
And after the warm rainfall, a blanket of green spreads forth.
A swift wind blows down the country road,
I look back, but I can stay no longer.
But tomorrow morning, as I descend the misty pavilion,
I will surely think of the white clouds lying in the quiet valley.\(^{90}\)

This appointment was very short. In the next year

\(^{90}\) CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 4, pp.8-9. Except for lines 2, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21 and 24, the translation is Nielson's, op. cit., pp.30-31.
(782), Wei Ying-wu was assigned as the Prefect of Ch’u Prefecture. Ch’u Prefecture was a lower class prefecture in the south; although the rank of this post was lower division of the principal class in the fourth degree, a higher rank than his former post, the appointment presumably upset him. So he wrote:

... Just as I concluded serving at the two superior prefectures. I was undeservedly recommended to the Department of State Affairs. Being untalented I was naturally not received, But was sent out to the provinces to care for those who are lonely and desolate.

... On arriving in Ch’u Prefecture, he wrote a poem to his younger brothers:

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91. Ch’u Prefecture was a lower class Prefecture. See Liu Hsü, op. cit. chüan 40, P.167.

92. A prefect of lower class prefecture, lower division of the principal class in the fourth degree. See Li Lung-chi, op. cit., chüan 30, P.510.

93. Two superior prefectures are referred to Ho-nan and Ching-chao. Wei Ying-wu had served as an Assistant Subprefect in Ho-nan and Director of the Department of Merits etc. in Ching-chao.

94. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, P.14, titled "Meeting Colonel Yang". Except for the title, line 22 and the last line, the translation is Nielson’s op. cit., P.33.
Sent to My Younger Brothers on Hearing the Chirp of the Cicada in the Suburban Gardens

Last year after I parted from you in the suburban gardens,
I heard the cicada's chirp at the Department of State Affairs,
This year when I sleep here in Nan-chiao, I hear the chirp of cicada again, but the way back is so far away.
The chirp rises from the valley at evening,
And the melancholy spreads widely in the autumn atmosphere.
I enclose this to describe what is going on here—My heart is still disquieted.

In the fourth year of the Chien-chung era (783), one year after Wei Ying-wu arrived Ch'u Prefecture, the soldiers of Ching Prefecture and Yüan Prefecture received orders from Emperor Te-tsung to fight against the insurgent Li Hsi-lieh [李希烈] . They were led by the Military Governor of Ching-yüan, Yao Ling-yen[姚令言] . When they arrived Ch'ang-an, the government supplied them with bad food, and the soldiers revolted. In the tenth month of that year, Emperor Te-tsung fled Feng-t'ien, one hundred and sixty li northwest of

95. Nan-chiao[南郊], the former name of Ch'u Prefecture. See Liu Hsu, op. cit., chüan 40, p.167.
96. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, p.2.
Ching-chao Superior Prefecture,\textsuperscript{97} for refuge.

Not knowing the fate of the emperor and his own relatives, Wei Ying-wu immediately sent a messenger to make inquiries. The messenger returned in the fifth month of the following year, thereupon, Wei Ying-wu wrote a poem to his younger brothers to describe his feelings upon this event.

\textbf{To My Younger Brothers}\textsuperscript{98}

Late in the year, troops at the capital revolted,
I secretly sent a letter inquiring about your fate.
Unexpectedly a return letter dropped from the heavens,
I only know that tears are streaming down all our cheeks.\textsuperscript{99}

Soon after that, Wei Ying-wu was released from Prefect of Ch'\textsuperscript{u} Prefecture. During this period of leisure, he wrote:

\ldots

At Nan-yen Temple, I listen to the soughing of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{97} Feng-t\textquotesingle ien[\textasciitilde], See Li Chi-fu, \textit{op. cit.}, ch\textsuperscript{\textvisiblespace}uan 1, p.7.
\item \textsuperscript{98} Commentary: "On the third day, tenth month, fourth year of the Chien-chung era, when the troops revolted at the capital, the writer dispatched a messenger from Ch'\textsuperscript{u} Prefecture to make inquiries secretly. This poem was written the following year when the messenger returned on the ninth day, fifth month of the Hsing-y\textsuperscript{\textvisiblespace}uan era (784)."
\item \textsuperscript{99} CTS 3/7/\textit{Wei Ying-wu} 3, p.6. The title and line 1 are reproduced from Nielson, \textit{op. cit.}, p.36.
\end{itemize}
At West Stream spring I view the moon.
Being unskilled in government,
I should be rebuffed, what hope can there be promotion?
Eventually, I will put my original baggage in order,
And return home to plow the fields of Tu-ling.  

However, before Wei Ying-wu put his original baggage in order and returned home to plow the fields of Tu-ling, he was assigned as Prefect of Chiang Prefecture. In spite of the fact that Chiang Prefecture was even further south than Ch’u Prefecture along the Yang-tzu River, it was a middle class prefecture. The rank of its prefect was upper division of the principal class in the fourth degree, a bit higher than Prefect of Ch’u Prefecture was. When Wei Ying-wu was in Chiang Prefecture, he wrote:

100. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, pp.8-9, titled "Sent to My Younger Brothers Tuan, Wu and Others at the Capital on This New Year’s Day." Except for lines 1 and 4 of the excerpt above, the translation is quoted from Nielson, op. cit., p.37.


102. The prefect of middle class prefecture, upper division of the principal class in the fourth degree. See Li Lung-chi, op. cit., chüan 30, p.509.
Sent from the Prefectural Pavilion to My Younger Brothers at the Capital and My Juniors at Huai-nan

No sooner was I released from the Yung-yang government,
Than I was resting at Hsun-yang Pavilion. Flurries of cold rain blow around the high railings,
The river water presses upon the high battlements.
Listening to the wild goose this night,
I remember anew the autumn we parted.
I can but fill the cup with wine,
To repress this intense grief. 105

When the term of office as the Prefect of Chiang Prefecture expired, Wei Ying-wu was appointed as First Secretary of the Left Bureau in the Department of State Affairs at the

103. Yung-yang was the name given to Ch'u Prefecture in the first year of the T'ien-pao era (742). It was renamed Ch'U Prefecture in the first year of the Ch'ien-yüan era (758). See Liu Hsü, op. cit., chüan 40, p.167.

104. Hsun-yang was the name given to Chiang Prefecture in the first year of the T'ien-pao era. It was renamed Chiang Prefecture in the first year of the Ch'ien-yüan era. See footnote 103, T'ang Shu, chüan 40, P.170.

105. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, P.9. Except for the title and lines 3 and 4, the translation is Nielson's op. cit., P. 38.
capital with the rank of upper division of the deputy class in the fifth degree. In this post, again, he was able to serve in the capital. Therefore, when he later became the Prefect of Su Prefecture, he wrote, "Having twice served at the Department of State Affairs, I spent about ten years along the Yang-tzu River and the sea-coast."  

Wei Ying-wu’s appointment as the First Secretary of the Left Bureau was rather short. One year later, he was appointed as Prefect of Su Prefecture with the rank of deputy class in the third degree because Su Prefecture was an upper class prefecture. Here are four lines abstracted from his one poem concerning his transfer. "Last year while serving in Chiu-chiang, I was summoned to the capital by his majesty; " "Today serving at Wu, my thoughts go on and on

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106. First Secretary of the Left Bureau [左司郎中], upper division of the deputy class in the fifth degree [從三品]. See Li Lung-chi op. cit., chuan 1, P.14.

107. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 4, P.12, titled "Sent to the Chief Clerk of Yün-yang, Chou Ju-li, on His Return to the Capital." Wei Ying-wu served at the Department of State Affairs twice; first time as the Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Judiciary Control and second time as the First Secretary of the Left Bureau. His service in places near to the Yang-tzu River and the sea began in 782 as the Prefect of Ch’u Prefecture.

Wei Ying-wu does not mention in which year he took up the post as the Prefect of Su Prefecture. The Topography of Ku-su only states that Wei Ying-wu's appointment was early in the Chen-yüan era. But according to the statement of the other famous T'ang poet Po Chü-i, who went to take up the same post in Su Prefecture and on the twentieth day in the seventh month of the first year of the Pao-li era (825), had engraved on stone a poem of Wei Ying-wu titled "Feasting with Several Scholars in the Prefectural Residence During a Rainy Day," Wei Ying-wu was the Prefect of Su Prefecture thirty-seven years earlier than Po Chü-i was. This means Wei was serving in Su during the fourth year of the Chen-yüan era (788).

109. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.12, titled "Repying to a Poem Written by Li Shih-sun of Ho-nan about Mount Hsiang Temple." Except for line 2, the translation is Nielson's, op. cit., pp.39-40. Chiu-chiang was the name given to Chiang Prefecture in the Sui dynasty and Wu was the name given to Su Prefecture in the Sui dynasty and in the first year of the T'ien-pao era (742) in the T'ang dynasty. Wu was renamed Su Prefecture in the first year of the Ch'ien-yüan era (758). See Liu Hsü, op. cit., chuan 40, pp.168 and 170.

110. See Wu K'uan and others, Ku-su Chih [姑蘇志]. Taipei: Taiwan Hsüeh-sheng Shu-chü [台灣學生書局], 1965 ed., chuan 2, p.27.

The T'ang Shu states that in the seventh month of the fourth year of the Chen-yüan era, Sun Sheng, the Prefect of Su Prefecture was transferred to take a new appointment in Kuei Prefecture. It seems that Wei Ying-wu was probably the prefect who went to replace Sun Sheng as the Prefect of Su Prefecture at that time.

After Wei Ying-wu arrived Su Prefecture, the Prefect of Hsin Prefecture Liu T'ai-chen saw Wei Ying-wu's poem (the one which was engraved on the stone by Po Chü-i) and he wrote a poem together with a letter to Wei Ying-wu and praising his poem highly, also asking Wei Ying-wu to reply to him with a poem.

Wei Ying-wu did return him a poem which is found in chüan 5 of his collection.

Liu T'ai-chen was degraded from the Vice-president of the Ministry of Rites to the Prefect of Hsin Prefecture in the third month of the fifth year of the Chen-yüan era (789) and he died there before long. The evidence above

112. See Liu Hsi, op.cit., chüan 13, P.45.
114. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, P.10, titled "Return to Prefect Liu". Commentary: "Liu T'ai-chen."
115. See Liu Hsi, op.cit., chüan 13, P.45 and chüan 137, P.395. Vice-president of the Ministry of Rites [Li-pu Shih-lang 樱部侍郎].
shows that Wei Ying-wu began to take up the post as the Prefect of Su Prefecture after Sun Sheng in 788. At the time he was fifty-two years old. Therefore, we know that Shen Tso-che, who fixes the date Wei Ying-wu went to take up the post in the second year of the Chen-yuan era (786) and Thomas Nielson who opts for in 787 are, in fact, both wrong.

Probably, Wei Ying-wu's appointment as Prefect of Su Prefecture did not last very long, as in the second month of the eight year of the Chen-yuan era (792), a later Prefect of Su Prefecture, Ch'i K'ang, had already ended his term and been transferred to T'an Prefecture. Ch'i K'ang must be the one who went to replace Wei Ying-wu as Prefect of Su Prefecture. Although there is no record of the date Wei left the office, according to a rule promulgated in the seventh month of the first year of the Kuang-te era (763), the term for each prefect was three years. Therefore, their possible terms might be as below:

Wei Ying-wu 788, 789, 790 A.D.
Ch'i K'ang 790, 791, 792 A.D.


118. See Liu Hsù, op. cit., chüan 13, P.46.
After Wei Ying-wu was released as Prefect, he moved with his family to the Yung-ting Temple in Su Prefecture, where he rented two "ch'ing" of land nearby to cultivate.

Dwelling in the Yung-ting Temple

Being a clumsy administrator, I am happy to be out of office,
I leisurely begin to look after my livelihood.
My family being poor, we cannot leave,
Yet I dream of being at the capital.
During cold months I have been in this mountain temple,
Now the farmers at work remind me I am living abroad.
For the time being I rent two ch'ing of land,
And exhort my juniors to plough.
I am losing my sight so discontinue writing;
This leisure allows me to be well versed in true nature.

Being beyond the reach of man,

How can I be entangled by right and wrong?

The last available record of Wei Ying-wu's activity is incorporated in his poem to Ling-hu Huan to comfort him upon his third degradation and departure to take up the post

120. Commentary: "The Yung-ting Temple is in Su."
121. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, pp.4-5. Lines 7, 8 and 10 include revisions of Nielson version, op. cit., pp.42-43.
of Assistant Officer\(^{122}\) in Ch'ü Prefecture [葉村]. That poem was his response to the verse sent to Wei Ying-wu by Ling-hu Huan while on his way to Ch'ü Prefecture.\(^{123}\)

Ling-hu Huan stayed in Ch'ü Prefecture for ten years. He was ordered to return to the capital when Emperor Shun-tsung came to the throne in 805. Therefore, we know that the time he went to Ch'ü Prefecture was around 795; at that point, Wei Ying-wu was fifty-nine years old. He probably died some years after that.

The man who was recommended by Liu Yü-hsi to replace him as Prefect of Su Prefecture in the sixth year of the T'ai-he era (832) was also called Wei Ying-wu, but he was another Wei Ying-wu and not the famous poet who concerns us here. This has already been proved by many scholars (Lo Lien-t'ien amasses all the evidence in his "Wei Ying-wu Shih-chi Hsi-nien"). Hence, it is not necessary to repeat the argument here.

In order to make this biography simpler and clearer, the following chart illustrates the government posts held by Wei Ying-wu.

\(^{122}\) Assistant Officer[葉村]. The biography of Ling-hu Huan see Ou-yang Hsiu, op. cit., chuan 102, pp.292-293.

\(^{123}\) The poem Wei Ying-wu sent to Ling-hu Huan see CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.10, and Ling-hu Huan's poem he sent to Wei Ying-wu is found in Lu Wen-ch'ao, op. cit., p.10.

\(^{124}\) See Lo Lien-t'ien, op. cit., pp.57-61.
### Wei Ying-wu's Curriculum Vitae (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>737</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tu-ling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>751-756</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>Ch’ang-an</td>
<td>Palace Guard Student T’ai-hsüeh</td>
<td>Upper Division of the Deputy Class in the 7th Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>763-765</td>
<td>27-29</td>
<td>Lo-yang</td>
<td>Assistant Subprefect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>774-777</td>
<td>38-41</td>
<td>Ch’ang-an</td>
<td>Director of the Department of Merits</td>
<td>Lower Division of the Principal Class in the 7th Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>778</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Ch’ang-an</td>
<td>Director of the Department of Sub-merits</td>
<td>Lower Division of the Principal Class in the 7th Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Subprefect of Kao-ling</td>
<td>Upper Division of the Principal Class in the 6th Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>779</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Hu</td>
<td>Subprefect</td>
<td>Upper Division of the Principal Class in the 6th Degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wei Ying-wu's Curriculum Vitae (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>781-782</td>
<td>45-46</td>
<td>Ch'ang-an</td>
<td>Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Judiciary Control</td>
<td>Upper Division of the Deputy Class in the 6th Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>782-784</td>
<td>46-48</td>
<td>Ch'u Prefecture</td>
<td>Prefect</td>
<td>Lower Division of the Principal Class in the 4th Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>785-787</td>
<td>49-51</td>
<td>Chiang Prefecture</td>
<td>Prefect</td>
<td>Upper Division of the Principal Class in the 4th Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>787-788</td>
<td>51-52</td>
<td>Ch'ang-an</td>
<td>First Secretary of the Left Bureau</td>
<td>Upper Division of the Deputy Class in the 5th Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>788-790</td>
<td>52-54</td>
<td>Su Prefecture</td>
<td>Prefect</td>
<td>Deputy Class in the 3rd Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>790-</td>
<td>54-</td>
<td>Su Prefecture</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Locations of Wei Ying-wu's Government Service and Residence
(f) Wei Ying-wu's family

In the "Tsai-hsiang Shih-hsi piao" it is recorded that Wei Ying-wu had two sons, Ch'ing-fu and Hou-fu, but there is no mention about other members of his family.

From his nineteen mournful poems on the death of his wife, we know that Wei Ying-wu and his wife were an affectionate couple. From his poem titled "Mourn for the Dead" among those nineteen poems, we know that his wife died after they had been married for twenty years. Another poem in the same group with the title "Arriving at the Old Residence in Chao-kuo-li" mentions that he came to pick up the things which his wife left in the eastern room of their house in Chao-kuo-li. It seems that the death of his wife occurred during their residence in Chao-kuo-li when Wei Ying-wu was around forty years old and was the Director in the Department of Merits in Ching-chao Superior Prefecture. Therefore Wei Ying-wu appears to have been married when he was around twenty years old.

Not less than ten years after the death of his wife, Wei Ying-wu married again when he was the Prefect of Su Prefecture. The evidence comes from the following poem:

125. cf. P.2.
126. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 6, pp.6-10.
128."Arriving the Old Residence in Chao-kuo-li". See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 6, P.8. Chao-kuo-li was located southeast of Imperial City. See Takeo Hiraoka, op. cit., Map one of Ch'ang-an city.
Seeing Ch'in Hsi\textsuperscript{129} off to Juen Prefecture
Since I have been married recently, I plucked out my white whiskers,
I always bring my old book along in my blue shirt.
Moreover, I would like to accompany you to the Hu-ch'i\text{\textquoteleft}u Temple.\textsuperscript{130}
Gazing after your setting sail, I forget what it means to be prefect.\textsuperscript{131}

As for his daughters, from a poem and its interlinear commentary which he wrote to one daughter on her marriage to a certain Yang, we know that Wei Ying-wu had at least two daughters by his first wife.\textsuperscript{132}

According to the \textit{Ch'\textquotesingle uan T'ang Shih}, there was a dancing-girl, a daughter of Wei Ying-wu by his concubine, who met Li Ao, the Regional Supervisor \textsuperscript{[Kuan-ch'a Shih 觀察使]} of Hu-nan in Ch'ang-sha. Li Ao felt pity for her position and, as a result, he acted as a match-maker and arranged her marriage with an official. For this reason, she wrote a poem to thank

\textsuperscript{129. Ch'in Hsi[秦系] was a hermit. His biography is found in Ou-yang Hsiu, "Yin-i Lieh-chuan "[隱逸列傳], in \textit{Hsin T'ang Shu}, op. cit., ch\'\text{\textquoteright}uan 196, P.461.}

\textsuperscript{130. Hu-ch'i\text{\textquoteleft}u Temple[虎丘寺] is on Mount Hu-ch'i\text{\textquoteleft}u in Su Prefecture. See Li Hsien[李賢] and others, \textit{Ta Ming I-t'ung Chih[大明一統志]} Kao-hsiung Pai-cheng Shu-chi[百成書局], 1965 ed., ch\'\text{\textquoteright}uan 8, P.666.}

\textsuperscript{131. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 4, P.13.}

\textsuperscript{132. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 4, P.10, titled "To My Daughter on Her Marriage to Yang"[送楊氏女].}
Li Ao and Li Ao replied to her with a poem.\textsuperscript{133}

Li Ao went to take up the post as the Prefect of T'an Prefecture and the Regional Supervisor of Hu-nan in the seventh year of the T'ai-he era (833).\textsuperscript{134} This was over forty years after Wei Ying-wu had retired from service. If the account given in the \textit{Ch'üan T'ang Shih} is to be believed, then we know that Wei Ying-wu had at least three daughters, in contrast to Lo Lien-t'ien who maintains he had only one.\textsuperscript{135}

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\textsuperscript{133} See "Wu Che-chih Nü" [舞柘枝好], P.2, under the item "Chi Nü" [柘枝] in \textit{Chüan T'ang Shih}, Han 11, Ts'\textsuperscript{e} 10, 1829 ed.

\textsuperscript{134} See Liu Hsü, \textit{op. cit.}, chüan 160, P.441.

\textsuperscript{135} See Lo Lien-t'ien, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 7-8.
CHAPTER II

THE ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT AND STYLE OF WEI'S POETRY

(a) Traditional Criticism of Wei's Poetry

(i) The Elegant and Satirical Character of Wei's Verse

The brilliant achievement of Wei's poetry has been praised by many scholars. For example, Liu T'ai-chen, who was contemporary with Wei, once wrote a letter that praised Wei by saying that the style of his poetry could be compared to the famous poets Shen (Yüeh), Hsieh (Ling-yün), Ho (Hsün) and Liu (K'un) of the Six Dynasties.¹

Another contemporary, the Buddhist monk Chiao-jan, wrote a poem praising Wei as a poet who follows orthodox form.²

Po Chü-i, who was about thirty-five years younger than Wei, was a great admirer of him. Once, Po Chü-i wrote a letter to his friend Yüan Chen that states:

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¹ See Chapter I, p.47, footnote 113.
² See Shih Chiao-jan, "Wu-yen Ho Su-chou Wei Ying-wu Lang-chung" in Chiao-jan Chi, chüan 1, pp.3-4, Ssu-pu Ts'ung-k'an lst ser., op. cit.

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"... In recent years, Wei Ying-wu's Ko-hsing verse, in addition to showing brilliant literary talent, also approaches the style of indirect satire. Moreover, his five-character verse is far-reaching, elegant, leisurely and plain. He created his own style. Among the writers of today, who can be compared to him? ..." 3

After examining the whole collection of Wei Ying-wu, we can agree with Po Chü-i's appraisal of Wei's poetry. To support Po Chü-i's critical analysis, I present below several of Wei's poems as examples.

From the following Ko-hsing Poem, we can see how he expresses this brilliant talent:

The Song of Listening to the Orioles

It is almost dawn in the east, the flowers are indistinct,
The orioles singing to each other is pleasing to my ear.
Suddenly they go, suddenly they come, now near, now far.
The sound at first heard from the southern path, now comes from the eastern city.
Speedily, it seems as if they are fluttering from the garden of Shang-lin to that of Hsia-yüan. 4


4. Shang-lin [上林] and Hsia-yüan [下苑], both were famous Imperial gardens in Ch'ang-an.
They twitter softly and affectionately.
As though to sing and yet not to sing, they are so seductive,
Like a youngster of the Ch'iang starting to play his flute, yet not in tune with melody. ¹
The former and the latter tones are not suited to each other,
Like a girl of Ch'in learning to play the harpsichord, but whose fingers are still rough.
After a little while, the wind is warmer, and the sun rises.
The drifting sound becomes as that of various kinds of birds singing together.
I wonder in whose family's a lazy wife has been disturbed from her unfinished dreams,
And from what place a melancholy man is thinking of his native home?
A shrike flies over and calls out a short note,
A hoopoe glides down into the green mulberry-orchard,
But neither of them can compare with the drifting orioles singing in the flowers each day.
The song can pacify the spring ardor of thousands of homes.
There are times when the song seems to discontinue and become inaudible,

¹. Ch'iang [ch'iang], tribes in West China. Their flute was called Ch'iang-ti [ch'iang-ti] and was well-known all over China.
The orioles fly away, and the flower stems are left waving in the wind. They return to their perches in the green trees at the hour when all doors are locked. In spring, the water-clock run dry, they sing a song for the dawn.  

In this poem, Wei uses many repeated characters to portray the sweet song of the orioles. Although my translation is unable to convey the full artistic quality of it, Wei's original poem is very delicate and lively. 

As for the satirical poems, "The Song of the Wine-shop" can be taken as one example. The poem states that there was a wine-shop in Ch'ang-an which was so luxurious and attractive that a lot of people went to drink there. Since the shop became so famous, the owner eventually began to dilute the customers' wine. By the end of this poem, Wei sighs: 

... 

The drinkers only recognize the name but not the taste. At the humble shop where an excellent wine is quietly produced the customers are few, but the rich pure flavor of that wine will not change for a whole year. Even though the drunkards of Ch'ang-an are great in number,

They pass it by along the roadside without notice.  

The poem pours ridicule on those who give attention to a thing according to its reputation but ignore its reality.

Other than "The Song of the Wine-shop", the "Three Miscellaneous Songs on Han Wu-ti", "Five Poems in Miscellaneous Form" and "Summer Ice Song" and so forth, also belong to this category.

With regard to Wei's achievement in the five-character verse form, Po Chü-i praises it as far-reaching, elegant, leisurely and plain. Here is an example:

To the Taoist of Ch'üan-chiao Mountain

This morning the coldness of my study
Suddenly brought to mind the mountain drifter.
Gathering firewood along the stream bed,

7. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 9, p.2.
8. "Three Miscellaneous Songs on Han Wu-ti" see CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 10, pp.3-4; "Five Poems in Miscellaneous Form" see CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 1, p.3-4, and the "Summer Ice Song" see CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 10, p.4.
Then returning to boil white stones.\(^{10}\)
I thought to bring a gourd of wine,
As comfort during evening wind and rain.
But fallen leaves fill the empty mountain;
Where could I find your footsteps?\(^{11}\)

Hung Mai, a scholar in the Sung dynasty, praises this poem by saying:

*It is so subtle and far-reaching, certainly, it is beyond praise. As for the last two lines, they cannot be approached merely by verbal explanation or exhaustive thinking.*\(^{12}\)

If we take into account artistic achievement alone, the excellence of this poem forces us to confess that it reaches an incomparable degree of elegance. Although the language that Wei uses is not so flowery but actually rather

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10. An immortal who boiled white stones as his diet and lived in Mount White Stone was called Mr. White Stone [石先生]. This allusion see Ko Hung[葛洪], "Shen-hsien Chuan"[神仙傳] in Wei Chin Hsiao-shuo Ta-kuan [魏晉小説大觀]. Taipei: Hsin-hsing Shu-chü[新興書局], 1969 ed., p.232, and also "Shen-hsien Lei"[神仙類] in T'ai-p'ing Kuang-chi [太平廣記]. Edited by Li Fang[李昉] and others. Shanghai: Sao-yeh Shan-fang [紡華山房], 1923 ed., chüan 7, p.22. The latter work is the more detailed of the two.

11. CTS 3/7/Nei Ying-wu 3, p.6. Except for lines 2, 6, and 8, the translation is Nielson's, *op. cit.*, p.78.

plain [tan] as Po Chü-i says, the mysterious imagery of the Taoist is vividly set in relief against the background of the obscure, cold and rainy autumnal sky.

In the first two lines of this poem, the poet tells us he was in his study on a cold autumn day. This cold and quiet atmosphere suggests to the sensitive poet his Taoist friend who was living on the mountain. From these two lines, the emotions of the poet are transmitted vividly to the reader and hence, the vitality of this poem is created. The third and fourth lines express the imagination of the poet about the life of his Taoist friend. The poet tries in these two lines to convey the mysterious life and whereabouts of the Taoist on the one hand and, on the other, to describe the hardships the Taoist must endure in such bad weather. In the fifth and sixth lines, the poet says that he wants to bring some wine to the Taoist to comfort him during the evening wind and rain; but the poet expresses his disappointment in the last two lines saying that he does not know where he can find him on this cold mountain covered with fallen leaves. These two lines also transmit a strong emotion to reader, causing him to feel a sense of loss and disappointment.

Another poem which has a similar elegance is the one Wei sent to his friend Ch'iu Tan.

To Yuan-wai¹³ Ch'iu on an Autumn Night

I think of you on this night in autumn,

---

I stroll along and recite poems in the cold weather.
I hear the pine-cones dropping on the lonely hill,
Doubtless the hermit is still unsleeping.  

Wei wrote this poem inspired by the thought of his friend on an autumn night. It was so quiet on the lonely hill where the poet was strolling that he could hear the sound of the dropping pine-cones. Alone he recited poems, and the cool autumn night caused him to feel more lonely. In such surroundings, he wished he could have a friend with whom to talk and stroll together. At that moment, the image of the hermit spontaneously came into his mind. He supposed that the lonely hermit would still be awake as he himself was. But what use is such speculation when the hermit is so far away? This poem also transmits a strong emotion to the reader and evokes in him a sense of loss.

Besides Po Chü-i, Ko Ch'ang-chih also highly valued Wei's five-character verse. He praised it by saying that Wei Ying-wu's five-character verse is beyond ordinary bounds.  

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15. See Ko Ch'ang-chih, Yun Yu Yang Ch'iu, chüan 1, P.7, in Hsüeh Hai Lei Pien, op. cit., Han 12.
(ii) Wei Ying-wu and T’ao Yuan-ming: a Comparison

Su Tung-p’o, a famous scholar of the Sung dynasty, not only praises Wei’s five-character verse, but also classifies Wei’s poetry as in the same school with T’ao Yuan-ming. Su Tung-p’o’s appraisal of Wei’s poetry can be seen from his two poems below:

A little bird in the wood uses only one branch
to build its nest.\(^{16}\)

The recluse and his snail-shell of a house suit
each other.

Lo-t’ien\(^{17}\) has written three thousand poems in
long and short styles,

But I love the five-character verse of Wei better.\(^{18}\)

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17. Lo-t’ien 樂天, the tzu 字 of the poet Po Chü-i.

The mentor was T'ao P'eng-tse,\textsuperscript{19} The successor was Wei Su-chou.

If you want to find Wang Yu-ch'eng,\textsuperscript{20} You will have to look into his five-character verse.\textsuperscript{21}

... 

As a matter of fact, Wei admired T'ao and often imitated T'ao's poems. Some of his poems are written in a style quite close to T'ao's. As a result, not only Su Tung-p'o, but also many other scholars regard the poetry of Wei and T'ao as belonging to the same school.

Chou Tzu-chih, a scholar in the Sung dynasty, comments:

Most of the ancient and modern poets liked to imitate Yüan-ming's style. For example, the poems which follow T'ao's are not few in number, but they might embarrass

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{19} T'ao Yüan-ming [陶淵明] also known as T'ao P'eng-tse [陶彭澤] since he was once the Subprefect of P'eng-tse Subprefecture.

\textsuperscript{20} Wang Wei [王維] was also known as Wang-yu-ch'eng [王右丞] since he was once the Vice-president of the Department of State Affairs of the Right [Shang-shu Yu-ch'eng 尚書右丞].

\textsuperscript{21} See Su Shih, "Tz'u-yün Huang Lu-chih Shu Po-shih Hua Wang Mo-chieh [次韻黃魯直書伯時畫王摩詡], \textit{op. cit.}, chüan 30, p.15. Mo-chieh was Wang Wei's tzu [子].
\end{footnotesize}
Yuan-ming by their vigorous and beautiful expression:

'Frost and dew have faded all the grass,
Only the chrysanthemums are pretty at this time.

If the nature of a thing is like this,
Cold and heat make no difference.
Plucking the flowers and floating them in unstrained wine,
I meet farmers when the sun has set.
All are drunk under the eaves of the thatched house,
Can this happen often in one's life?'

In this poem of Wei Su-chou's, not only is the language similar to T'ao's, the sentiment is alike too. It must have been written on an inspiration of the moment.22

Wei's poem above probably imitates the style of a series of T'ao's poems known as "Drinking Wine", especially the seventh:

The fall chrysanthemums have lovely colors,
I pluck the petals that are wet with dew,
And float them in this Care Dispelling Thing,
To strengthen my resolve to leave the world.
I drink my solitary cup alone,
And when it's empty, pour myself another.
The sun goes down, and all of nature rests.

22. Chou Tzu-chih, Chu-p'o Shih-hua, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936 ed. Wei's poem see CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 1, p.4, titled "In Imitation of T'ao P'eng-tse"
Homing birds fly chirping toward the grove.
I sit complacent on the east veranda,
Having somehow found my life again.23

The expression and style of these two poems are very similar, only the feelings expressed are slightly different as the atmosphere of Wei's poem is a bit more vital. In contrast, T'ao's verse is more solitary, something he might have written to amuse himself and give voice to the realization of the last line.

Tseng Chi-mai, another scholar in the Sung dynasty, mentions:

Formerly, when people talked about poetry, they ignored Wei Su-chou and Liu Tzu-hou.24 When they talked about calligraphy, they ignored Yang Ning-shih.25 It was not until Su Tung-p'o discovered these two unknown facts that Wei and Liu were matched with Yuan-ming, and Ning-shih with Yen, Duke Lu.26 Tung-p'o really did a service to these three persons.27

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24. Tzu-hou [季厚] was the tzu [字] of Liu Tsung-yüan [柳宗元], a famous scholar in the T'ang dynasty.
25. Yang Ning-shih[楊凝式], a calligrapher at the end of the T'ang dynasty.
27. See Tseng Chi-mai[鄭季札], T'ing-chai Shih-hua [齊詩懷], P.10, in Ts'ung-shu Chi-ch'eng 1st ser., op. cit.
Although Tseng praises Su Tung-p'o for relating Wei's poetry to T'ao's school, it must be remembered that Su was not the first to give high appraisal to Wei's poetry. Earlier scholars such as Liu T'ai-chen, Shih Chiao-juan, Po Chu-i and so forth had already recognized the high achievement of Wei's poetry.

_Ssu-k'u Chü'an-shu Tsung-mu T'i-yao_ comments:

(Wei Ying-wu's) seven-character verse is inferior to his five-character verse, his new style poetry is inferior to his old style poetry. His five-character old style poetry, taking T'ao's as its source, and amalgamating the influence of the three Hsiehs, is direct but not rough, elegant but not ornate.  

It is quite right for scholars to put Wei's poetry into the same school with T'ao's and the description given in the _Shih-p'in_ of T'ao's poetic style serves quite well to suggest the style of most of Wei's poems too. For example:

"... his style is sparing of words, and contains scarcely any redundancies. He earnestly conveys the genuine classical style; his words have a delicate and satisfying flavour. When we enjoy his writings, we are conscious of his virtuous character..."  

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(iii) Some Examples of the Beauty of Wei's Style

However, although 'plain and sparing of words' may describe many of Wei's verse, we have already quoted an example of his Ko-hsing verse form that is more beautiful and lively than anything T'ao ever wrote. Even if we take his five-character verse into account, there are also quite a lot of verses characterized by elegant diction. Ko Ch'ang-chih points out the following several lines to exemplify this aspect:

"Cranes in the mist cry over a wilderness of waters.
Without cloud or rain, the sky of Ch'u is empty."  

"In spring the water is mistless,
The bamboo on the deserted hill shades the stones."  

"Matter gives birth to sound,
The great void is forever silent."

30. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 7, p.8, titled "Strolling Around the Stream"[遊溪]. The sky of Ch'u refers to the sky of the area along Yang-tzu River which belonged to the State of Ch'u in the Chou dynasty (1122-249 B.C.).

31. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 7, p.12, titled "Strolling Around the South Study"[遊南齋].

32. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8,p.1, titled "Sound"[聲音]. The translation for these two lines and the title is from Nielson, op. cit., p.127. Ko Ch'ang-chih essay see Ko Ch'ang-chih, op. cit., chuan 1, p.7.
Ssu-k'u Ch'üan-shu Tsung-mu T'i-yao praises the two lines:

"The tall trees bring forth the cool of summer,
The floating cloud discloses the brilliant moon."

by saying that T'ao Yüan-ming does not have such a style. 33

Chu Hsi was fond of Wei's verses:

"Cold rain darkens the midnight,
Drifting fireflies cross over the high pavilion." 34

and Wang Kuo-wei quotes "Drifting fireflies cross over the high pavilion" to compare it to the verses of Feng Yen-ssui: "A magpie builds a nest on a tall tree. The setting moon brightens the cold grass." and says that they attain the same level of excellence. 35

In addition to the above-mentioned, I quote some other celebrated verses of Wei here:

33. See Yung Jung, op. cit., chüan 149, p.3134. Wei's verses see CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 2, p.5, titled "After the Rain, Sent to Censor Yüan and Professor Li from the T'ung-te Temple [同德寺雨後寄元侍御、李博士].


"The sound of clubs beating on the laundering stone comes from several houses at the foot of the autumnal mountain.
In the midst of cold rain, the whole county seems only brambles. 36

Cold rain, brambles, the sound of the clubs beating on the laundering stone and the autumnal mountain, all together compose a refined image to evoke in the reader a sense of melancholy. In these two lines Wei moves us with his unsettled and lonely mood.

"Fine rain comes from the empty forest,
The water is covered with rings of ripples." 37

These two lines consist of vivid and subtle words. They present a leisurely elegant picture of the countryside, but compared to the previous couplet, the emotion is not so deeply felt.

"In the spring rain, the bell of the forbidden city sounds softly,
The palace trees blend with the wild mist." 38

These two lines exhibit deliberate parallel

36. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, p.5, titled "On the Pavilion Sent to Mr. Wang" [登樓寄王生揚].
37. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, p.9, titled "The View on the West Stream, Present to Lu Chih" [西瀆即事和盧師].
38. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 4, p.6, titled "Parting with Registrar Wang of Fen-ch'eng" [送王城上官].
construction. Even though Wei does not show strong emotion in them, his description of the soft bell, the spring rain and the palace trees that blend with the wild mist conveys a subtle feeling of the spring season.

"The returning clouds vanish from sight in the boundless wilderness,
The sky is clear, the morning dew fresh.
A cool breeze arrives from the lotus in the pond,
The wu-t'ung outside the window gradually drops its leaves more frequently."^{39}

The background of these four lines is an autumn morning in Ch'ü Prefecture. The clouds that vanish from sight emphasize the vastness of the sky and wilderness. The fresh dew adds to the cool and clear atmosphere we are made to feel this autumn morning. The cool breeze from the pond and the leaves falling from the wu-t'ung tree impress on our mind a vivid and fresh picture of the fine morning weather. Through this description, the sharp powers of observation and emotional sensitivity of the poet immediately are conveyed to the reader. In addition to depicting the clear sky and cool weather of autumn days, these verses also transmit a slightly sorrowful feeling of loneliness to the reader.

"Willows scatter the gentle breeze,

^{39} See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.8, titled "Sent to the Senior Secretary Wang".
After working hard in the office, one walks outdoors to take a breath of fresh air. When he sees the beautiful scenery and inhales fresh air, he will forget his troubled thoughts. Wei applies beautiful diction in these two lines to describe this state exquisitely. His expression achieves a rare delicacy when Wei describes the wind blowing from the willows by saying that it is the breeze that is scattered by the willows not vice-versa. The same beauty is attained when he expresses release from his troubled thoughts through enjoyment of the beautiful scenery by saying that the "azure mountain calms my troubled thoughts."

Certainly, there are many other beautiful lines in Wei's poetry, but they are too numerous to be detailed here. As for the above-mentioned verses, although their artistic beauty is not conveyed by my translation, the reader, by consulting the original text, may appreciate Wei's characteristic style.

(b) Further Criticism of Wei's Poetry

(i) Humourous and Relaxed Poems

Since there are over five hundred of Wei's poems extant, the brief comments above can by no means stand as a comprehensive statement of his achievement in poetry. His

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40. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 7, P.9, titled "East Suburbs"[^1^]. The translation of these two lines is from Nielson, op. cit., P.148.
versatility was great and cannot be described in a single, simple formula. For example, some of Wei's poems have a relaxed manner, an easy style and humourous flavour reflecting his charming personality.

Sending Wine to the Buddhist Monk Liang-shih

In the autumnal mountain, you lie ill and cold,
So I send three or five cups.
Please pour it into your gourd,
And return this gourd to me. 41

Sending More Wine
I again send a full gourd,
And it will very likely return empty,
If I do not break this gourd,
I will soon have wasted my store. 42

In Reply to the Buddhist Monk Liang-shih
When He Returned the Gourd

My gourd arrived today,
But your gourd is probably already empty.
You should drink the cold pond waters,

42. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, p.6. The translation I follow Nielson's, op. cit., p.66
Like Yen Hui of old.\footnote{CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, p.6. The translation is from Nielson, \textit{op. cit.}, p.66. Yen Hui was one of Confucius' disciples. He lived in very poor circumstances and used a gourd for drinking, but this failed to upset him. See "Yung-ye Ti-liu", \textit{Lun Yu Chi-chu} [論語集箋], chüan 3, in \textit{Ssu-shu Chi-chu} [四書集箋]. Commentary by Chu Hsi [朱熹]. Taipei: Taiwan Shu-chü [台灣書局], 1961 ed., p.74.}

Written in Reply to a Letter from Lu Sung Stating He Was Without a Horse and Would Not Visit on Account of the Late Hour

Good times should not be missed,
In a word, I am looking for your coming.
There are still travelers on the southern path,
And in the western wood the sun has not yet set.
With a staff in hand, I wait for you in vain in front of my house,
Alone I keep a wine-jar amid the flowers.
Don't say you have no way of getting here,
I know that you have a short-shaft carriage.\footnote{CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.1.}

In the first three poems, Wei plays a joke with a monk who was his friend. Wei sends him wine saying that if the gourd does not break, his store will soon be depleted. Finally, he advises the monk to drink pond water in order to avoid wasting wine. In the last poem, Wei playfully teases
Lu Sung for making excuses not to come. These poems are plain but lively and interesting.

(ii) Wei's Achievement in Seven-character Verse

The predominant verse-form in Wei's poetry is the five-character old style verse. Looking into the collected poems of Wei Ying-wu in the seventh Ts'e in the third Han of the Ch'üan T'ang Shih, we find that out of the five hundred and sixty-five poems quoted there, there are only eighty-one in the seven-character verse-form. Among these, thirty-six poems are in miscellaneous or Ko-hsing verse forms and these are predominantly but not all in seven-character lines.

For this reason, most of the critics and scholars of poetry disregard Wei's achievement in the seven-character verse-form. But it is unfair to say that his seven-character verse is not worth our attention. In fact, Wei wrote quite a lot of good poems in this form. Besides the beautiful Ko-hsing "The Song of Listening to the Orioles" which is mentioned above, I quote the following as examples of his excellent seven-character verse:

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45. If we include two tz'u [賦] which are not in CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu but appear in the CTS 12/10/Wei Ying-wu, there are altogether five hundred and sixty seven poems written by Wei according to the editors of the Ch'üan T'ang Shih. In addition, there is a prose-poem [賦] by Wei titled "Ice" [水賦] which is not in the Ch'üan T'ang Shih but is found in the Ch'in-t'ing Ch'üan T'ang Wen, op. cit., chüan 375, p.4819.
West Stream at Ch‘u Prefecture

I love the elegant grass growing on the stream banks,
Above, a mango bird cries amid the dark trees.
Spring tide brings the rain which becomes heavy toward evening,
At the deserted ferry-crossing, a lonely boat drifts by itself. 47

Inspired by the View on Sailing from Kung Lo to the Yellow River, and Sent to My Colleagues in the Prefecture and the Subprefecture

The waterway sandwiched by azure mountains points eastwards,
The large river passes through the great valleys of the southeastern mountains.
The cold trees are as indistinct as if they were beyond the distant sky,
The setting sun appears now bright and now faint in this turbulent stream.

46. West Stream [Hsi-chien河] is also known as Wu-tu River[烏土河], located to the west of Ch‘u Prefecture. See Li Hsien, op. cit., chüan 18, p.1145.

47. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p.9. I follow Nielson’s translation of the title of this poem, op. cit., p.80.

How many years has that solitary village been on the bank of the I River?\(^{49}\)

A wild goose flies down on the northerly wind in the clearing sky.

To notify my colleagues who roam on a bridge over the Lo River,

This loose skiff is drifting like my heart.\(^{50}\)

Visiting Wang, the Censor, on My Day Off and Not Finding Him at Home

Nine days in harness, one day rest,

I come, but find you not, emptily return.

No wonder\(^{51}\) your poetic inspiration is freshening to the bones.

At your door, facing frozen torrent, snow filled mountain.\(^{52}\)

The first poem was written when Wei was the Prefect of Ch’u. It was his first time to have been sent out to the provinces. This poem reflects the calmness and desolation of West Stream. Through it, Wei’s own solitude is immediately transmitted to the reader. The elegant grass grew on the sides...

\(^{49}\) I River, a tributary of Lo River.

\(^{50}\) CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 2, p.3.

\(^{51}\) Kuai-lai = Nan-kuai, i.e. no wonder. See Chang Hsiang, op. cit., p.112.

\(^{52}\) CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.14. Except for the title and line 3, the translation is Nielson’s, op. cit., p.117.
of the remote stream suggesting Wei's own presence in the
distant hinterlands of Ch'u. The cry of a mango bird in the
dark trees, the heavy rain toward evening, and the lonely
boat at the ferry, in a similar way, all emphasize this feeling
of the poet.

This poem has been given an allegorical interpretation
by the Sung critic Hsieh Fang-te. He comments:

Elegant grass growing on the stream banks (symbolizes)
the gentleman (Chün-tzu) in the wilderness (i.e. out of
office). (This is reminiscent of) the Ode "K'ao P'an". 53
The mango bird crying amid the dark trees (symbolizes)
rescals holding (high government) posts. (The line)
"artful speech flows like a stream" 54 (is brought to
mind). Now, tides always move swiftly so that the speed
of a spring tide bringing rain can easily be imagined.
The country is suffering many calamities. The rain which
becomes heavy towards evening (suggests) the country in

53. A poem on the theme of the "Happy Recluse" or
"K'ao P'an" in Shih Ching. See Shih Ching Shih-i. Commentaty by Ch'u Wan-li. Taipei: Chung-hua

54. This is followed by the line "And the speakers
dwell at ease in prosperity" in the poem "Yu Wu Cheng". See Shih Ching Shih-i, op. cit., p.158. For translation see
Legge, op. cit., p.328. Hsieh, by using this allusion, means
to suggest that the second line of Wei's quatrains can be
understood as referring to slander by lesser men which Wei
suffered at court.
peril, the court in confusion, and the decline of the last years of the dynasty into decadence. It is like the last fading of the sun's brilliance with the coming of evening. "At the deserted ferry-crossing, a lonely boat drifts by itself." In the vast expanse of the wilderness on a desolate river-bank—(this suggests that) there is (a man of) genius who can bring the age safely "to shore". The lonely boat drifting by itself at the deserted ferry-crossing (refers) specifically to the fact that Wei's talents were not employed in the service of his ruler. 55

We may not agree to Hsieh Fang-te's interpretation, but we can see that this poem consists of deep emotion and beautiful diction and is one of Wei's best poems.

When compared to the first poem, the second one above is more immediately attractive, especially the first four lines which consist of vivid and brilliant words. However, the emotion in the first poem is more deeply felt and more subtly expressed.

The third poem Wei wrote to his friend Wang, the Censor, on finding he was not at home when Wei went to pay him a visit. It is an ordinary theme, but, standing in front of his friend's house, Wei is seized with poetic inspiration upon looking at the snow mountain which he compares to the style of Wang's poetry. The last two lines contain his striking realization.

(iii) Some Inferior Examples of Wei's Verse

As Wei wrote so many poems, inevitably, there are some which are considered to fall behind the others in quality, although most of Wei's poems are refined literary productions. The least satisfying are perhaps the occasional poems those written solely for purposes of social intercourse, such as: "Reply to Graduate Li Feng"\(^56\), "In Response to the Emperor's Poem upon His Bestowing a Banquet on the Day of the Ch'ung-yang Festival"\(^57\), "Written in Jest to Young Ch'ing-shan, in Reply to a Poem of Senior Officer Chang"\(^58\) and so forth.

Written in Jest to Young Ch'ing-shan, In Reply to a Poem of Senior Officer Chang

Heaven gave birth to his outstanding talents,
He has never ridden a hobby horse.
When he reads a book, he can absorb it without difficulty,
When he takes up his writing brush, the ink flows freely.

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56. "Reply to Graduate Li Feng"\(^56\) see CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.4.
57. "In Response to the Emperor's Poem upon His Bestowing a Banquet on the Day of the Ch'ung-yang Festival (the ninth day of the ninth month)"\(^57\) See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.11.
58. "Written in Jest to Young Ch'ing-shan, In Reply to the Poem of Senior Officer Chang"\(^58\) See 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.12.
A sable robe can be handed down from generation to generation.
A tree of jade\(^{59}\) puts forth a new branch.
What is the harm in attaining a fine emolument at an early age?
Kan Lo\(^{60}\) was a mere boy when he took up a high post.

The content of this poem is no more than a hymn of praise for the youngster Ch'ing-shan. Even though Wei uses metaphorical expression and allusion in order to make it florid, he does not succeed in giving it a very genuine flavor.

(c) Two Different Characteristics of Wei's Poetry

In general, it is reasonable to describe Wei's poems as calm, lucid and leisurely. With regard to this, Po Chü-i says:

I have always loved T'ao P'eng-tse,
As his literary inspiration was so profound.
I am also amazed at Wei Chiang-chou,

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59. A tree of jade (玉樹): metaphorically, a talented or noble man.

60. Kan Lo (甘羅) took a high official post as Shang-ch'ing (上卿) in the State of Ch'in (秦) at the end of "Warring States" period (403-221 B.C.) when he was just twelve years old. See Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *op. cit.*, chüan 75, pp.194-195.
Whose poetic sentiment was so lucid and leisurely.  

... 

Ssu-k’ung T’u also states: 
"...The flavour of (the poetry of) Yu-ch’eng and Su-chou 
is lucid and pre-eminent...."^62 

Chu Hsi once praised Wei’s poetry as ‘leisurely’ [tzu-
tsai \(\text{貼息} \)] and ‘without sound, colour, smell or flavour’. 63

Wang Shih-chen states:

Among poets who had lucid and plain poetic 
sentiment, Wei and Liu should be pre-eminent, 

Their finest passages are mostly to be found in 
five-character verse. 

In understanding how to reveal the subtlety of 
strings and fingers without sound, 

In no way can Liu-chou be compared with Su-chou."^64

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61. See Po Chü-i, “T’i Hsün-yang-lou”[題浮陽樓] in 
Po-shih Ch’ang-ch’ing Chi, op. cit., chüan 7, p.36. Chiang-chou 
was an official title of Wei as he was once the Prefect of Chiang. See Chapter I, p.1.

62. Ssu-k’ung T’u[司空圖], "Yu Wang Chia P’ing Shih" 
[與王鶴詩] in Ssu-k’ung Piao-sheng Wen-chi[司空表聖文集], 
chüan 1, p.8. Ssu-pu Ts’ung-k’an 1st Ser., op. cit.

63. See Chu Hsi, op. cit., chüan 65, p.16.

64. See Wang Shih-chen[王士禎], "Hsi-hsiao Yuan I-shan 
Lun-shih Chüeh-chu Sa-liu Shou Chih-ch’i"[戴笈後山詩集. 2nd 
編. 6] in Tai-ching-t’ang Ch’üan-chi[唐經堂全集]. Ch’i-leh 
Shu-t’ang Chiao-k’an-pen[七略書叢校勘], p.4. Liu-chou 
[柳州] is referred to Liu Tsung-yüan for he was once the Prefect of Liu Prefecture.
The above critical judgements will be more correct if applied primarily to the poems written by Wei when he lived quietly on the bank of the Feng River or after he had adjusted to life in provincial posts away from the capital.

The following poem was written when he lived as a recluse on the bank of the Feng River:

On the Feng River Facing the Moon, I Send This Poem to K'ung, Policy Critic and Adviser

I think of you who are in the capital,
I live plainly in this quiet haven.
Official and recluse—no matter how different,
This bright moon shines on two understanding hearts. 65

When Wei made a leisurely visit to a pavilion in Ch'u Prefecture, he wrote:

Everyday, I ascend this pavilion to gaze into the distance,
Time slips away unawares.
In order to satisfy to the full the Prefect of Huai-nan. 66

Autumnal mountains, numerous red trees. 67

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65. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 2, p.11. For the last line of this poem, I follow Nielson's translation, op. cit., p.91.

66. Huai-nan[À-]], refers to Ch'u Prefecture, since Ch'u was in the area of Huai-nan Circuit[À-]] during the T'ang dynasty. See Liu Hsü, op. cit., chüan 40, p.167.

67. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 7, p.2, titled "Up to the Pavilion". The translation for the last line is Nielson's op. cit., p.159.
The first poem Wei wrote to his friend who took a post at the Imperial palace. The calmness of the night, the brilliant moon and the Wei's own life in seclusion compose a lucid picture in this poem.

Wei wrote the second poem when he found himself comfortable and calm as he enjoyed the beautiful autummal scenery in Ch'ü.

But this characteristic is not consistently applicable to all of Wei's poems, for some are rather restive in expression and shrill in tone, especially those Wei wrote in his earlier life. Even the one he wrote to Colonel Yang on arriving in Ch'ü Prefecture has an atmosphere quite different from the two poems above:

"Being untalented I was naturally not received,
But was sent out to the provinces to care for those who are lonely and desolate."  

In the poem he wrote in Lo-yang during the Kuang-te era, it seems that he was very angry at the ruthlessness and violence of the government forces who damaged the city and looted the inhabitants instead of keeping peace:

"One takes medicine to cure disease,
But, unexpectedly, it may poison the stomach and injure the one who takes it.

68. See Chapter I, p.40.
When the government forces came across the Yellow and Lo Rivers,
They damaged both the jade and the stone."69

In order to match those poems which have been described as calm, lucid and leisurely, we can use 'virile' and 'vigorous' to describe this different category of Wei's poems. Below are some more examples of this 'virile' and 'vigorous' type of poem:

"Both of our horoscopes contain the chu-niao vanquishment,
And we invited the slander of petty men.
In carrying out our administration, we sought to use the scales of justice.
But making decisions is like butting a fence."70

"Now, when I come back, it is bleak and desolate,
and all the houses are empty.
The only visible activity is the mist rising around the blue mountain.
Being poor I fell and was lost in the turmoil,
I raise a cry to heaven, but to what avail?
My emaciated horse and I, my clothes torn, were about to freeze to death.
But fortunately I met you, whose wine cups are full."71

69. See Chapter I, p.21.
70. See Chapter I, p.24.
71. See Chapter I, pp. 9-10.
"I once studied the knowledge of the Tsou-lu\textsuperscript{72} school,
And went to receive commands at court with other officials.
One day, I think I'll give up writing for a military career,
Since this troubled time arouses my feelings."\textsuperscript{73}

The tone of the above poems, at times resentful, at times energetic, is very different from the following:

Facing Flowers of Various Kinds
In the morning their red competes with the beautiful scenery,
In the evening the white of their dew-laden petals curls up.
Their charming appearance seems to express emotion,
The drifting fragrance fills the whole garden.
Alone I reside here holding a post out in the provinces.
All day long my doors have been shut.
If it were not for the flowers keeping me company,
Who would I have to talk to here?\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{72} "Tsou-lu" refers to the school of Confucius and Mencius, for Mencius' native home was in the State of Tsou\textsuperscript{[3]} and Confucius' native home was in the State of Lu\textsuperscript{[3]}.

\textsuperscript{73} See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p.11, titled "On Erecting the Arrow Target"[射負箭].

\textsuperscript{74} CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p.8.
On Shan-fu Temple Pavilion
A rosy sunset shines on this high pavilion,
The green mountain appears beyond the distant forest.
Whenever I come up here in fair weather to gaze about,
My worried heart is uplifted. 75

These poems describe how Wei tries to drive away his sorrow and loneliness by enjoying the pretty flowers and beautiful scenery. His mood is gentle and calm.

Wei Ying-wu was also one of the earliest poets who engaged in writing the tz'u which became popular in the Sung dynasty but was rather new to T'ang poets.

Four of Wei's tz'u are found in the Ch'üan T'ang Shih. Two of them are written to the tune "san-t'ai" 76 and other two to the tune "T'iao-hsiao-ling". 77

In short, Wei can be said to command all the verse-forms current in his day and, in terms of style, his verse is characteristically calm, lucid and leisurely, though occasional examples of a more virile and vigorous style do occur.

75. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 7, p.2.
76. "San-t'ai" [三台], see CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 10, pp.6-7, also CTS 12/10/Wei Ying-wu, under the "Tz'u Erh" [詞苑], p.6.
77. "T'iao-hsiao-ling" [調笑令] see CTS 12/10/Wei Ying-wu under the "Tz'u Erh" [詞苑], p.6.
(d) The Metre of Wei's Poetry

In the T'ang dynasty, although the new style poetry [Chin-t'i Shih 近體詩], which includes the quatrain form [Chüeh-chu 絕句], regulated verse [Lü-shih 律詩] and antithetical verse [P'ai-lù 排律], was popular, old style poetry [Ku-t'i Shih 古體詩] was still common as well.

Wei Ying-wu composed more frequently in the old style than in the new. Of his over five hundred poems, nearly three hundred poems bear no relation to new style poetry as they are not four- or eight-line verse or in antithetical couplets.

The poems Wei wrote in four or eight lines total over two hundred in number, but this does not mean that all of these poems are composed in the quatrain or regulated verse-forms of new style poetry, as most of them do not follow the rules of the new style poetry. Among these two hundred some poems, only ninety-five are really new style poetry as they are written in accordance with the patterns of Chin-t'i Shih. All the others, whether written in four or eight lines, belong to the old style.

The following "Meeting Feng Chu in Ch'ang-an" can serve as an example.

Ch'ang-an Yü Feng Chu  
長安遇馮著
Meeting Feng Chu in Ch'ang-an

A traveler comes from the east,

His clothes are wet with the rain of Pa-ling. 78

I ask him, "For what purpose do you come here?"

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78. Pa-ling was twenty li east of Wan-nien Subprefecture.
See Li Chi-fu, op. cit., chüan 1, p.3
"To buy an axe for opening mountain land."  

In the drizzle, flowers are in full bloom.  

Drifting about, those newborn swallows.  

Our last parting seemed but yesterday; now it is already spring,  

And several strands of white hair have grown at my temples.  

Using 'l' to represent level tones [p'ing-sheng 平聲] and 'd' to represent deflected tones [tse-sheng 反聲], the tonal pattern of the above poem is as below:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
  d & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\
  1 & d & d & 1 & d \\
  d & d & 1 & 1 & 1 \\
  d & 1 & 1 & d & d \\
  l & l & l & d & l \\
  l & l & d & l & d \\
  d & d & 1 & d & l \\
  d & 1 & l & d & d \\
\end{array}
\]

This tonal pattern does not follow either one of the tonal patterns of five-character regulated verse, even taking


80. Ming-ming, drizzly. In this interpretation I follow Yü So, op. cit., p.40  

81. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.13.
into account the deviations permitted on the first and third characters of each line and so forth.\textsuperscript{82}

Furthermore, the middle four lines of this poem do not comprise two couplets of parallel construction such as are compulsory in regulated verse.

Here I take one of Wei's quatrains as another example:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l}
\textbf{Wan} & \\
\textbf{Ying-huo} & \\
shih-chieh & pien & shuai & ts'ao \\
wu & se & chin & hsin & chiu \\
tu & yueh & ying & ts'ai & lien \\
jao & chu & kuang & fu & liu \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Enjoying Fireflies

The fading grass is transformed by the changing season,

The appearance of things indicates the time is approaching autumn.

\textsuperscript{82} For the tonal patterns of five-character regulated verse see Wang Li \textit{Han-yü Shih-lü-hsüeh} [漢語詩學], Shanghai: Chiao-yü Ch'ü-pan-she [教育出版社], 1963 ed., Chapter II, Section 6, p.72.
As they fly across the moonlight, their glow is dimmed,
But when they fly round the bamboo grove, their light flows out again. 83

The tonal pattern of this poem is as below:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
1 & d & d & 1 \\
d & d & d & 1 \\
d & d & d & 1 \\
d & d & 1 & 1 \\
\end{array}
\]

It does not fit either one of the tonal patterns for five-character quatrain verse, even taking into account the deviations permitted in the first and third characters of each line and so forth. 84

According to Wang Li, any four-line verse that does not fit any one of the tonal patterns for quatrain verse has to be classified as old style. 85

The rhyme categories of Wei Ying-wu's old style poetry sometimes appear quite similar to the ancient rhyme categories too. That is to say, he uses the characters which rhymed in earlier days but whose pronunciation had changed so that by the time the Kuang-yün was compiled, they

83. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p.8.
84. For the tonal patterns of five-character quatrain verse see T'ang Shih San-pai Shou Hsien-hsi Compiled by Yü Shou-chen. Hongkong: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1957 ed., p.265.
85. See Wang Li, op. cit., Chapter II, Section 4, p.41.
no longer rhymed. For example, he uses 'chih' [之] to rhyme with 'lai' [來] in one poem. 86 'Chih' [之] is in the rhyme-group 'chih' [之], while 'lai' [來] belongs to the group 'hai' [哈].

According to the Kuang-yün, they cannot be used 'interchangeably' [t'ung-yung 同用] in writing poetry. However, T'ao Ch'ien uses 'chih' [之], 'tz'u' [廩] and 'lai' [來] to rhyme with 'pei' [杯], 'shih' [詩], 'ts'ai' [才] and 'i' [賜] in his poem "Begging for Food". 87 The Kuang-yün, however, places 'lai' [來] and 'ts'ai' [才] in the 'hai' [哈] rhyme-group, 'chih' [之], 'i' [賜], 'shih' [詩] and 'tz'u' [廩] in the 'chih' [之] group, and 'pei' [杯] in the 'hui' [灰] group. The rhymes 'hui' [灰] and 'hai' [哈] are 't'ung-yung', but they are not 't'ung-yung' with the rhyme 'chih' [之] according to the Kuang-yün. 88

Since Wei was born and educated in the Ch'ang-an area, his own speech is unlikely to have differed radically from the pronunciation recorded in the Kuang-yün. We can hence reject the possibility of the influence of a non-standard dialect in his rhyme categories. We must assume, then, that his rhyme categories were influenced by the old poetry of the Six Dynasties period. It seems to me that the latter is a very fair possibility, as we have seen, by examining his poetry.

86. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 9, p.6, titled "Song about the Master of Pao Monastery's White Mynah".
that Wei was rather familiar with and also fond of old style poetry.

In his comments on Wei's poem "Moved by the Mirror", Nielson states incorrectly that "the second rhyme word appears to be out of rhyme". The rhyming characters of this poem are all in the entering tone [ju-sheng 入声]: 'fa'[發], 'mo'[沒], 'fa'[發], 'hsieh'[歎], 'yüeh'[月], 'Fa'[發], 'fa'[發], 'hsieh'[歎] and 'yueh' [月] are in the rhyme-group 'yueh' [月], while the second rhyme character 'mo'[沒] is in the rhyme-group 'mo'[沒] and is not out of rhyme because the rhyme-groups 'yueh' [月] and 'mo'[沒] can be rhymed together for they are designated 't'ung-yung' in the Kuan-yün.

The fact that Wei's poems are written chiefly in the old style and sometimes follow ancient rhyme categories tells us why Ssu-k'u Ch'üan-shu Tsung-mu T'i-yao reserves its highest praise for his old style poetry. And it follows for these same reasons that many scholars have compared him favorably to famous poets before the T'ang dynasty, such as T'ao Ch'ien and the 'Three Hsiehs'.

As an appendix to this chapter, two poems written by scholars contemporary with Wei are quoted below. These poems compared Wei to Hsieh Ling-yün and Hsieh T'iao.

Meng Chiao states:

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89. See Nielson, op. cit., p.139. Wei's poem is in CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 6, p.12.

Like Hsieh K'e\(^{91}\) when you recite a verse,
It is as if the sense of hearing is purified
as when the frost falls.
Your writing embodies a gentle vitality,
Reverberating lightly through all things.
Fine trees planted where it best suits them,
Will produce not a single crooked branch.
The words of Hsü and Yü\(^{92}\) are no more than dust
and grime,
Your gold and jade-like poems are more comparable
to those of Ts'ao and Liu.\(^{93}\)
Your words have a classic refinement,
The scenery seems to have been refreshed and
brightened by them.
Duckweed is a kind of floating plant,
Aquatic rushes flourish in a corner of the pool.

\(^{91}\) Hsieh K'e\([謝客]\) refers to Hsieh Ling-yün\([謝靈運]\). Hsieh Ling-yün was brought up by Tu Chih\([杜滌]\). When he returned home at the age of seventeen, he was called
guest-boy \([客兒]\) by his family. See Chung Jung, \textit{op. cit.},
chüan shang, p.112.

\(^{92}\) Hsü and Yü refer to Hsü Ling\([徐陵]\) and Yü Hsin
[庾信], both were poets of the Six Dynasties.

\(^{93}\) Ts'ao and Liu refer to the famous poets Ts'ao
Chih\([曹植]\) and Liu Ling\([劉伶]\) in the period of the Three
Kingdoms.
These were celebrated in song by K'ang-lo; \(^94\)
Now you gather his essence.
Despite the poor quality of my poem,
I would wish to have it linked with yours. \(^95\)
Ch'in Hsi, who was also famous for his five-character verse, wrote:

I have long been dwelling in seclusion without schemes in my mind,
All of a sudden, I put on this green robe and the friendly gulls fly away. \(^96\)

---

94. Duke K'ang-lo \(康樂公\) was the title given to Hsieh Ling-yün by the emperor. For his poem describing the duckweed and rushes see Hsieh Ling-yün, "Ts'ung Chin-chu-chien Yüeh Ling Hsi-hsing" [徙佇竹淵越荷賁行], in Hsieh K'ang-lo Shih Chu [謝康樂詩選]. Peking: Jen-min Wen-hsüeh Ch'u-pan-she [人民文學出版社], 1958 ed., p.77.

95. Meng Chiao [孟郊], "Tseng Su-chou Wei Lang-chung Shih-chün" [贈蘇州韋郎中使君], in CTS 6/5/Meng Chiao 6, p.4.

96. The gulls fly away because Ch'in Hsi is now a scheming official. This allusion is from Lieh Tzu: "There was a man living by the sea-shore who loved seagulls. Every morning when he went down to the sea to roam with the seagulls and more birds came to him than you could count in hundreds. His father said to him: 'I hear the seagulls all come roaming with you, bring me some to play with.'

Even though poetic thoughts come to me, I am at a loss,
Because Hsieh Hsüan-hui is in the county.\(^97\)

Wei Ying-wu replied with the following poem:

\[\text{In Response to Ch’in, the Collator}\]^{98}

I learned that you shut yourself in a mountain cottage for thirty years,
The green bamboo tablet ornamented with beards of shark’s skin was abandoned near the bed.\(^99\)
Don’t say that Mr. Hsieh just happens to be in the county.
It’s because of you that I won’t write five-character verse today.\(^{100}\)

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97. See Ch’in Hsi[秦系], "Chi-shih Feng-ch’eng Lang-chung Wei Shih-chün"[即事奉生郎中華使君] in CTS 4/8/ Ch’in Hsi, p.7. The commentary beneath the title states: “At this time, the writer was on probation as a Collator of the Imperial Library.”

Hsieh Hsüan-hui[謝玄暘] was Hsieh T’iao’s tzu[子].

98. Commentary: "Ch’in Hsi.”

99. A tablet was held before the breast at an audience and was formerly used as a writing tablet in China. A mottled bamboo tablet ornamented with beards of shark’s skin was used by a great officer. See “Yü-tsao”[獄藻] in Li Chi Chin-chu Chin-i[禮記今音今譯]. Commentary by Wang Meng-ou[王夢歐]. Taipei: Commercial Press, 1971 ed., chüan 13, p.403.

100. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.11.
It is interesting to see that when Wei Ying-wu met Ch'in Hsi, they admired each other. Although both of them were famous for their five-character verse, on this occasion they hid their speciality, and, instead, exchanged tributes in seven-character verse.
CHAPTER III

THE PERSONALITY AND THOUGHT OF WEI YING-WU AS
EXPRESSED IN HIS POETRY

(a) From Spoilt Youngster to Honest Official

In his youth, Wei served as a palace guard. He was a spoilt youngster and somewhat of a rascal. He made trouble in his neighbourhood and did all sorts of bad things. He confessed his bad behavior in a poem he wrote to his friend Colonel Yang.¹

It takes sincerity and courage for someone to confess his own ill repute to another, especially after one has already become a government official. Wei did not attempt to cover up his bad behavior, but admitted that he had been a rascal. In this way we can see that Wei was a sincere gentleman.

Concerning his student days at the 't'ai-hsüeh', he recalls:

"When young, I studied at the t'ai-hsüeh,
I arrogantly sneered at the other students."²

¹. See Chapter I, pp.10-11.
². See Chapter I, p.12.
His bad conduct probably improved after his mind had matured. In addition, Wei's frequent self-cultivation in Buddhist temples must also have affected his behavior. Firstly, the tranquillity of the Buddhist temples gave him a good opportunity to nurture his inner self; secondly, in that religious atmosphere he made friends with many Buddhist monks and Taoists who must have had a strong influence on his character. In the collected poems of Wei, there are twenty-one which were written directly to Buddhist monks or mentioned his relationship with them, and at least six poems which were dedicated to Taoists.

Below is a poem that describes Wei's roaming with one of his friends who was a Buddhist monk:

An Autumn Night's Wandering in the Western Study with the Monk Shen-ching
In the morning, we ascend the western study to gaze about,
And the evening arrives unawares.
It is just the time of intersection of summer and autumn,
Mist arises from the wilderness.
We sit down and listen to the cool wind that springs up,
While the bright moon lightly dispels the clouds.
Indistinctly, the mountains are still concealed,
Glittering, the rivers are just revealed.
As every thing is so secluded, the night is extraordinary,
Since the environment is so tranquil, our enjoyment overflows.
That I refrain from scheming is not due to contempt for the world,
It is only because of lacking good reputation.
I study the void and set myself in order,
How much more so when I am keeping company with this Buddhist monk.

This poem clearly indicates that Wei had begun to associate with Buddhist monks and if we assume that this association was a product of the poet's own interest in Buddhism, it seems not unlikely to suppose that his behavior had entered a new phase. He was no longer a trouble maker, but a reserved and modest gentleman. His many masterpieces which have a lucid, calm and leisurely style must have been written in this type of tranquil and restrained frame of mind.

But this was not the whole countenance of Wei. He also had a strict and positive manner, especially in administering the law. Wei upheld it frankly and honestly. With reference to the incident in which he punished some soldiers  

3. The void [$k'ung'$] refers to the Buddhist doctrine which regards all things in the world as originally 'empty', 'empty' in the sense of not possessing any ultimate or absolute reality.
4. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 7, p.6.
during his service as Assistant Subprefect of Lo-yang, we can see his sincerity and strictness, and also notice his regard for the importance of the law. Concerning this case, Nielson says that Wei's actions may have been prompted by his disgust for his own behavior during his youth. If this was indeed the reason, then we can also see how Wei deeply repented his past breaking of the law and bringing trouble to others. In the meantime, he devoted himself to legislation designed to prevent the same destruction from occurring again.

"A square hole cannot take a round peg.
A straight stick cannot be made into a wheel."

These two lines of Wei's perfectly describe his straightforward personality.

Wei hated those who broke the law. As an example of this, we have already seen how, when he arrived in Lo-yang to take up the post of assistant subprefect, he expressed his resentment against the government forces who had looted the inhabitants.

Even in his late years, Wei's upright in administration was consistent. For instance, when he was the Prefect of Su, Li Kuan wrote letters to him on behalf

5. See Nielson, op. cit., p.25.
7. See Chapter I, pp. 21-22.
of two men complaining about Wei's strictness. These matters show Wei's sincere, frank personality on one hand and his high regard for legislation on the other.

But Wei Ying-wu was not an official who only knew to oppress others and not bear responsibility. In fact, he was deeply concerned about the masses. He always went out of his way to make inquiries of "the people in distress." When he started to ponder things, the thought of how to settle "disorderly affairs" always came to his mind.

He expressed his pity for the poor people by saying that he "would rather go out of office than dun the people for payment of their taxes." He was ashamed to be

8. See Li Kuan, "Tai I Shang Su-chou Wei Shih-ch'un Shu" and "Tai Li T'ue-nan Shang Su-chou Wei Shih-ch'un Lun Tai Ch'a Shu" in Ch'in-ting Ch'uan T'ang Wen, op. cit., ch'lan 533, pp.6863-6865, also Lo Lien-t'ien, op. cit., pp.51-52 and Yung Jung, op. cit., p.3134.

9. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 1, p.7, titled "Feasting at the Prefectural Pavilion on a Spring Day".

10. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 7, p.1, titled "Written on Looking at Lo-yang City from a Height".

11. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.8, titled "In Response to Ts'ui, the Commissioner of Waterways". 'Ts'ui, the Commissioner of Waterways' refers to Ts'ui Chuo, who was the husband of Wei Ying-wu's younger cousin. Registrar Ts'ui in Chapter II, footnote 34, refers to the same man. See Chao Lin, Yin Hua Lu, Shanghai: Ku-tien Wen-hsueh Ch'u-pan-shu, 1957 ed., ch'lan 6, p.114, also Ts'en Chung-mien, T'ang-shih Yu-shen, Shanghai: Chung-hua Shu-chu, 1960 ed., ch'lan 2, p.115.
exalted since he had "not yet seen the people dwell in peace and comfort."\textsuperscript{12}

In the poem "Sent to Li Tan and Yüan Hsi", he states:

In last year's blooming season I met you and then was forced to leave.

Today the flowers bloom again and one year has already passed.

The affairs of the world are vast and hard to predict,

The melancholy of spring is gloomy, and I sleep alone.

My body is often troubled with ailments, and I think of retirement to the country fields.

There are still homeless wanderers here, so I feel ashamed to receive my salary.

I hear that you wish to come to inquire after me.

But from the western pavilion I have already seen the moon wax fully several times.\textsuperscript{13}

Wei felt ashamed because there were still vagrants in the area he governed. He even thought of quitting office because he was unable to help them settle down. He also

\textsuperscript{12}CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 1, p.7, titled "Feasting with Several Scholars in the Prefectural Residence on a Rainy Day" [都爾雨中與諸文士燕集].

\textsuperscript{13}CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, p.5.
wished to patronize the people under his jurisdiction, especially those who suffered misfortune such as widows and widowers. An example of this attitude can be seen in the last line of a poem which he wrote as an account of his visit to a temple. At the temple he received food from a woman farmer:

Arriving at the West Peak Temple and Receiving Food from a Woman Farmer

Now climbing up a cliff, now following a stream, I eventually arrive at the abode of recluses. The birds chirp, the springs and the valleys are warm, From the soft earth the sprouts spread out. Resignedly, I ascend the stone house to rest, Looking down I enjoy the fish in the pool. A woman farmer gives me a fine present, The remains of her family's New Year's Eve supper. I often wonder why some people throw away their money on drink. It must be because I am far from being an enlightened worthy. But what can I do now to recompense her kindness? I should consider how to help widows and widowers.  


15. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 7, p.11.
Once and again Wei mentions this idea. In the poem titled "Meeting Colonel Yang" 16 previously cited, he mentions his willingness to give assistance to lonely and desolate people. When he arrived at Chiang Prefecture to take up the post of Prefect, he mentions it again in the last two lines of the following poem:

On Just Having Arrived in the Prefecture

P'en-ch'eng17 was a great county in times gone by.
A great river of a thousand li passes through it.
In its lofty places, tall trees grow,
Precipitous mountains surround the high battlements.
The smoke from the inhabitants' kitchen fires appears quite late.
The vegetation in the outskirts is luxuriant.
A great flood destroyed the northern territory,
The lofty southern mountains are covered by lush trees.
Originally the inhabitants here were happy with their lives,

17. P'en-ch'eng[淹城], the name given to the Hsün-yang Subprefecture[新陽縣] in the second year of the Ta-yeh era (605-617) in the Sui dynasty. It was renamed Hsün-yang Subprefecture in the fifth year of the Wu-te era (618-627) in the T'ang dynasty. See Li Chi-fu, op. cit., chüan 28, p. 6.
Why did they finally flee from here?
In the bygone years there was a period of bad harvests.
Back taxes have accumulated like an islet.
It is just over a month since I arrived in this county,
All day long I have to unravel the tangled threads.
I still have no time to entertain my friends and guests.
Since I am exhausted from working on official documents.
The virtuous governors of old spread their lofty idealism here,
I can only uphold it and am ashamed of having no further contribution.
Why should I wait for the war to cease?
At present I ought to comfort the lonely and desolate people.


19. To unravel the tangled threads: metaphorically, to set the complicated affairs or government in order.

20. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, pp. 3-4.
From the above poem, we can also see how Wei made an effort to cope with the affairs of people under his government. A similar attitude is also reflected in his two poems "An Expression of My Feelings in Kao-ling, Sent to Lu, the Chief Clerk of San-yüan" 21 and "Sent to the Officials in the Office of the Superior Prefecture on Envoy to Yün-yang." 22 The second poem will be fully given here for detail:

Sent to the Officials in the Office of the Superior Prefecture on Envoy to Yün-yang

Early in the morning, I start on a journey, on order from the Superior Prefecture, I have no time to rest, though the weather is hot, Since I have to go to Yün-yang, a hundred li away, To make inquiries about the inhabitants suffering from the flood.

Heaven often causes the seasons to be out of their due, Why does it not equally confer the bounty of rain and dew. When I look up at the top of the tall tress, I can still see traces of the torrent.

---

22. Partially quoted in Chapter I, p. 29.
Now the fine young sprouts are no longer drowned, Where once was only wild thicket. Although the ruined walls still fill this old town, The inhabitants return happily for they will be able to settle down. Walking circuitously, I ford the read floods, To go up the steep hill, I follow the watercourse. Since the benevolent worthy worries over these suffering people, I myself am pleased to serve them. You, gentlemen in the court, Are talking and laughing, it makes me desire to see you. 23

From the beginning of this chapter, we have seen how Wei expressed his hatred for oppressors. We have also noted his compassion for the poor. Putting these two feelings together, Wei wrote many poems to reflect the way of life which existed in the society of the T'ang dynasty. Through his poems, we can see that the life of the ruling class was extremely extravagant while the common people suffered bitterly.

23. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 2, p.5.
Summer Ice Song

Down from the deep shaft of a spring. 24
During blazing hot summer days.
Before the dew from heaven has melted—
As the palace gates open— it is given to the noble.
Crushed, like shattered jade, in squares like jade incised.
The whitewashed walls are cool, the exquisite feast mat spread.
The jade water jug and silk fans are also splendid.
Seated are beautiful girls dressed entirely in white.
Cold within such a short distance of heat alters the season.
How do you gentlemen know of the scorching heat just outside your door?
Dulled by rich mutton and sweet wine,
You drink it and are refreshed, but what should you think of?
You should think of the bitter toil of the ice cutters who rush to and fro,

24. Yuán [圆] is given as hsüan [玄] in some other editions. CTS edition uses "yuán" to replace "hsüan" to avoid the taboo of Ch'ing Sheng-tsu [清盛祖] whose name was Hsüan-yeh [玄烨].
When, in the twelfth month, their sweat drops into the deep shaft like rain.  

Gathering Jade

The government conscripted the local swain, 
To gather jade at Lan-ch'i.  
Roofless under the steep cliffs at night, 
He sleeps in the rain, deep among the brambles. 
His lonely wife returns from paying the rice-tax, 
She sobs bitterly in the southern part of her house.

Watching the Field Laborers

In the fine rains the myriad plants grow anew. 
The first spring thunders rumbles at the beginning

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25. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 10, p.4. Except for lines 7, 12, 13 and 14, the translation is Nielson’s, op. cit., p.104.
26. Lan-ch'i also known as Lan-shui, Lan-ku-shui or Mu-hu-kuan-shui. It is a tributary of the Pa-shui. The source of Lan-ch'i is Lan-t'ien Valley in Lan-t'ien Subprefecture which is famous for its beautiful jade. See Lu Fei-kuei, op. cit., p.2529, and also Sung Min-ch'i, Ch'ang-an Chih. Ling-yen Shan-kuan Ts'ang-pan, 1784 ed., chuan 16, pp.2-3, 6.
27. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 10, p.6. Except for the last line, the translation is from Nielson, op. cit., p.97.
Field laborers have a few idle days,
But now the plowing and planting begin.
The hardy males are all in the fields;
Drying yards and vegetable gardens are put in order.
They only return in the late shadows,
Watering their oxen at west stream.
They are not bitter because of the hunger and toil;
In fact, they rejoice because of the moisture.
But there is not one day's food in the granaries,
And government service forced labour continues.
I am ashamed that the salaries of those who do not till,
Comes from the farmsteads.

Wei's admirer, Po Chü-i, was deeply influenced by Wei's compassion for the people. Po also wrote many poems to express his sympathy for the suffering people and to accuse the oppressive ruling class. Po's two poems which

28. 'Excited Insects' [Ching-chih 蛾譜], one of the twenty-four climatic periods [Erh-shih-ssu Chieh-ch'i 二十四節氣] into which the lunar year is divided. The 'Excited Insects' term begins from March the fifth or the sixth.


are quite similar in attitude to Wei's "Watching the Field laborers" are quoted below:

Watching the Reapers Harvest Wheat
Tillers of the soil have few idle months,
In the fifth month their toil is double-fold.
A south-wind visits the fields at night;
The fields are covered with yellow wheat.
Wives and daughters shoulder baskets of rice,
Boys carry flasks of beverages.
Following one after another, they bring them to the fields,
To the hardy males on the southern hill slope.
Whose feet are burned by the hot earth they tread.
Whose backs are scorched by flames of the shining sky.
Tired they toil, caring nothing for the heat,
Grudging the shortness of the long summer day.
Also there is a poor woman,
With an infant held close at her side.
With her right hand she gleans the fallen grain;
On her left arm a broken basket hangs.
Hearing her conversation with others,
The listeners sigh with sadness:
The harvest from her own land has all been used to pay taxes,
She has to glean this grain to feed her hungry stomach.
And I today...[sic] by virtue of what right,
Have I never once tended field or tree?
My government-pay is three hundred piculs,
At the year's end I have still grain in hand.
Thinking of this, secretly I grew ashamed:
And all day, the thought lingered in my head. 31

Watching a Harvest
The labours of the world do not attract me;
I am usually happy and tranquil.
Nights, I go to look at the fields,
And quietly walk alongside village hamlets.
The harvest is piled in the field,
Flocks of sparrows chirp in flight.
How can the year's bounties be only for man?
The sounds of birds and beasts are also joyous.
An old man of the fields meets me and is pleased;
He silently gets up and arranges the wine cups.
Hands reverently drawn in sleeves, he invites me
to partake
Of wine remaining from the autumn sacrifices.
Embarrassed by his diligence and reverence,

My goosefoot walking stick is tarry-calmed.
His words and actions are natural and truthful,
And I am unaware of (any) evils of farmers.
I stop drinking to ask him about ordinary things,
He tills the field and his wife and children harvest.
Their muscular vigors are harassed by toil,
Their clothing and food are often simple and poor:
I feel ashamed that salaried officials,
Never toil in the fields.
Filling themselves without toiling,
How does this differ from the man of Wei's cranes?  

Both poets felt ashamed when they saw the results of the farmers' toil so easily taken away by the ruling class.

32. See Po Chü-i, op. cit., chüan 6, pp.32-33. The translation of this poem is from Howard S. Levy, Translations From Po Chü-i's Collected Works, Vol. 1. New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1971 ed., pp.37-38. The last line of the poem refers to a story in the Tso Chuan [左傳]: The Marquis of Wei, Duke I [衛懿公], was so fond of cranes that he had them carried about in great officers' carriages. In the twelfth month of the second year of the reign period of Duke Min of Lu [魯宣公] (661-659 B.C.), the people of Ti [狄] invaded Wei. Everyone said that the cranes should fight the enemy because they had all the revenues and dignities. See Ch'un-chiu Tso-chuan Chin-chu Chin-i [春秋左傳注釋今譯], Commentary by Li Tsung-t'ung [李宗侗]. Taiwan: Commercial Press, 1971 ed., p.217.
They pitied them for their remarkable diligence and their struggle to get out of destitution.

In the third of his "Five Poems in Miscellaneous Form", Wei describes the unequal distribution of labor and reward in his time. He lamented that the fruits of hardworking people were so easily lavished upon the pleasures of the rich. Po Chü-i also wrote two poems which have a similar mood to this poem of Wei's, namely, "The Red Thread Carpet" and "Liao-ling". To save space, I have only quoted Wei's poem here:

A pair of mandarin ducks on spring silk,
Were sewn by her through cold nights.
Concentrating on the variegated color work,
Her fingers passed over a million threads.
In the rich and noble homes of Ch'ang-an,
Where extravagant beauties are innumerable.
This work of a hundred days sewing,
Was used for only one day's dancing performance.
The dance over, a new one must be sewn,
Who notices the suffering seamsters?  

When we analyse the incidents which he mentions in the above poems, we find that Wei Ying-wu not only was a compassionate observer of people's suffering, but also...
that he was a capable and diligent administrator.

In addition, Wei was also an honest and frugal official. Therefore, whenever he was out of office, he encountered financial difficulty. Sometimes, he even had to cultivate land to earn his livelihood. Once, he states:

"In my comings and goings, I am one with the common people. I do nothing different from them."³⁵

In order to live thriftily, Wei went to dwell in temples each time he was out of office.

After his term of office as Prefect of Ch' u had expired, Wei stated that he could not return to his native home in Tu-ling due to poverty.³⁶

When Wei was released from his post as the Prefect of Su, it was probably the same problem that forced him to live in the Yung-ting Temple. While living there, he was forced to buy wine on credit,³⁷ and rented land to cultivate in order to solve the problem of his family's livelihood. He states that although he had dreamed of returning to the capital, he could not do so because of his poverty.³⁸

³⁵. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, p.7, titled "In Response to Collator Ch' ang Tang" [答鸞叛書].
³⁶. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, pp.8-9, titled "Sent to My Younger Brothers Tuan, Wu and Others at the Capital on This New Year's Day" [致弟叡、臚諸季叔武等].
³⁸. See Chapter I, p.49.
It was a very rare occurrence for a prefect of deputy class in the third degree such as Wei to be so poor after his retirement. Because of this, Hsia Ching-yen says that Wei Ying-wu was a good and incorruptible official. There is also the praise of Hu Chen-heng:

"The poem of Wang Chi states:

'There are guests discussing names and principles,
But nobody comes to dun for the rent of my land.'

To retire in this manner is appropriate.

The poem of T'ao Ch'ien states:

'Hunger came and drove me out, ...
(I) knocked at a door and fumbled for words.'

To retire in this manner is not easy.

The poem of Po Lo-t'ien states:

'Being in favour, I have been promoted three times,
Though I have only been back at the capital for two years.
There are savings from my emolument in my bag,


40. These two lines of Wang Chi are found in his poem "Tu Tso." See CTS 1/8/Wang Chi, op. cit., p. 6.

41. These two lines of T'ao are found in his poem "Begging for Food." See T'ao Ch'ien, op. cit., p. 116.

The translation is from Hightower, op. cit., p. 62.
With them I buy vacant land outside my garden.\footnote{For these four lines of Wei's poem see Chapter I, p. 49.}

To resign in such a manner is appropriate. The poem of Wei Ying-wu states:

'Being a clumsy administrator, I am happy to be out of office.
I leisurely begin to look after my livelihood...
For the time being, I rent two ch'ing of land,
And exhort my juniors to plough.'\footnote{These four lines of Po Chü-i are found in his poem "Hsin-ch'ang Hsin-chü Shu-shih Ssu-shih Yün Yin Chi Yüan Lang-chung Chang Po-shih" [新昌新昌書肆四十年前曾元郎中張博士]. See Po Chü-i, \textit{op. cit.}, chüan 19, p.104.}

To resign office in such a manner is particularly difficult. From of old Wei and T'ao have been praised together, how could it only be due to the style of their poems?\footnote{Hu Chen-heng [胡震亨], "T'an-ts'ung I" [談矟一], in \textit{T'ang-yin Kuei Ch'ien} [唐音癸箴]. Shanghai: Ku-tien Wen-hsüeh Ch'u-pan-she [古典文學出版社], 1957 ed., chüan 25, p.221.}

\textbf{(b) Wei's Political Opinions and His Positive Attitude}

From the first part of this chapter, we know that Wei was an industrious and honest official. He was always concerned with the livelihood of the people and sympathized with those who were suffering. In addition to this we also know that Wei upheld the law strictly. In this section, I am going to make a further account of the reasons, other than...
his straightforward personality, that Wei was so steadfast to his legal principles. This is his positive political attitude.

Wei mentions his high regard for principles in his one poem:

A piece of jade in the rough of Mount Ching, Pien Ho took it to the court and dedicated it to the king.

The rough jade of Mount Ching did not request of Pien Ho to dedicate it, Ho-shih did not dedicate it for having received any favours.

He only knew that the present was very precious, It is needless to argue about his complete disinterestedness.

I would rather keep silent about right and wrong, Does this principle still exist nowadays?

In order to present a detailed discussion, I here quote from the Han Fei Tzu the whole story concerning the content of this poem:

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46. Pien Ho, sometimes is also given as Ho-shih.

47. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 1, p.3. The fifth of the "Five Poems in Miscellaneous Form".
Once a man of Ch'u named Mr. Ho, having found a piece of jade matrix in the Ch'u Mountains, took it to court and presented it to King Li. King Li instructed the jeweler to examine it, and the jeweler reported, "It is only a stone." The King, supposing that Ho was trying to deceive him, ordered that his left foot be cut off in punishment. In time King Li passed away and King Wu came to the throne, and Ho once more took his matrix and presented it to King Wu. King Wu ordered his jeweler to examine it, and again the jeweler reported, "It is only a stone." The King, supposing that Ho was trying to deceive him as well, ordered that his right foot be cut off. Ho, clasping the matrix to his breast, went to the foot of Ch'u Mountains, where he wept for three days and nights, and when all his tears were cried out, he wept blood in their place. The King, hearing of this, sent someone to question him. "Many people in the world have had their feet amputated — why do you weep so piteously over it?" the man asked. He replied, "I do not grieve because my feet have been cut off. I grieve because a precious jewel is dubbed a mere stone, and a man of integrity is called a deceiver. This is why I weep." The King then ordered the jeweler to cut and polish the matrix, and when he had done so a precious jewel emerged. Accordingly, it was named "The Jade of Mr. Ho." 48

48. See Han Fei [韓非], "Ho-shih" [韓氏] in Han Fei Tzu [韓非子], chüan 4, p. 20. Ssu-pu Ts'ung-k'an 1st Ser., op. cit.

The translation is from Burton Watson, Han Fei Tzu, p. 80 in the Basic Writing of Mo Tzu, Hsün Tzu and Han Fei Tzu, New York: Columbia University Press, 1967 ed.
After giving this story, Han Fei, the great Legalist philosopher, preached the difficulty of convincing a ruler to accept the importance of legislation:

Rulers are always anxious to lay their hands on pearls and precious stones. Though Ho presented a matrix whose true beauty was not yet apparent, he certainly did no harm to the ruler thereby; and yet he had to have both feet cut off before the real nature of his treasure was finally recognized. This is how hard it is to get a treasure acknowledged. Rulers nowadays are not nearly so anxious to get hold of laws and state policies as they are to get hold of Ho's jade, and they are concerned about putting a stop to the private evils and deceptions of the officials and common people. Under these circumstances, if a man who truly understands the Way hopes to avoid punishment, his only resort is simply not to present to the ruler any uncut jewels of wisdom and statecraft.49

Han Fei then emphasized the importance of the legislation by saying that:

If the ruler follows set policies, then the high ministers will be unable to make arbitrary decisions, and those who are close to him will not dare try to sell their influence. If the magistrates enforce the laws, then vagabonds will have to return to their farm work and wandering knights will be sent to the battlefield where they belong to face the dangers of their profession.50

Wei gave a particular account on this story in his

49. Han Fei, *op. cit.*, p. 20. The translation is from Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
poem, obviously, he had a high regard for Han Fei's idea of the value of the establishment of legislation in a country. He paid great respect to Pien Ho, the central figure of this story, who, because he knew the present was very precious, took the matrix to the court without regard for the peril to his own life. Wei hints that most precious legislation should also be presented to the court and established with "complete disinterestedness."

This reminds us of the incident in which Wei punished the cavalrymen. At that time, he wrote:

"I have always upheld plain and honest administration,
And you have preserved justice....
In carrying out our administration, we sought to use the scales of justice,
But making decisions is like butting a fence." 51

From these lines, we can see how Wei expresses his bravery in upholding "complete disinterestedness". Only because the government did not hold fast to the rules, it was almost "like butting a fence". Hence, he bore a grudge against the government that did not uphold policies and use the law to control people who played the bully. Perhaps, like Han Fei, he hoped those recalcitrant soldiers would be sent to the battlefield to guard the country instead of making trouble. He hated the influential people who made

arbitrary decisions.

At that time, some military governors ignored the laws. They allowed their soldiers to run wild. For example, the Military Governor of Huai-hsi [淮西], Li Chung-ch'ên [李忠隱] simply led troops to rob merchants and travelers. 

Wei realized that strict laws were necessary for the government to prevent these people from doing evil. He said that he would rather keep silent on "right and wrong" because the proper "principle" did not exist, and right and wrong had no set standard to be measured against.

In maintaining order as well as avoiding the spread of crime and evil in the country, we can see that Wei's ideas were quite close to those of Legalism in his stress on legislation.

Wei was disappointed in the government because it was unable to put legislation into practice when opposing recalcitrant people. He missed the prosperity of the past. He longed for a brighter future:

Gloomy that mirror in the case,
As it is darkened by dust.
What does its gleam resemble ?
It is as gloomy as the moon overshadowed by black clouds.
The figured mirror is made of precious metal from the south.

52. See Liu Hsu, op. cit., chüan 155, p.431.
Shining together with its large sash.
Now it has but the name of a mirror,
And only causes beauty and ugliness to become confused.
A beautiful lady exhausts her true-heart,
Hoping to reflect her beautiful face in it.
But to what avail, as she is not a mirror-polisher,
She can but sigh in vain day after day. 53

The mirror in this poem is a metaphor which Wei uses for good governmental policy and standards, which have been rendered worthless through disuse (hence "darkened by dust"). The confusion of beauty and ugliness symbolizes the "right and wrong" which have no standard of judgement. In the last four lines Wei emphasizes his sincere wish to restore good governmental policy and standards. His efforts were in vain as he was not an influential official among the ruling class. The beautiful lady is also a metaphor designed to portray Wei's honest character.

After the rebellion of An Lu-shan, the political situation was not very stable. The regional military governors were quite independent in their administration, and frequently did not obey the rules of the central government. Worse than that, they often paid no attention to the central government and refused to submit to taxation. In the biography

53. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 1, p.3, the first of the "Five Poems in Miscellaneous Form".
of Li Huai-hsien, we can see the four arbitrary military
governors: Li Huai-hsien, Hsüeh Sung, T'ien Ch'eng-ssu, and Chang Chung-chih,
each of them controlled "several ten thousands of able-bodied
soldiers,... Although they were called frontier vassals,
actually they were not the subjects of the emperor." 54

The military governors sometimes fought with each
other, and at other times proclaimed war with the central
government. In order to maintain their military power, the
central government and all the military governors had to
recruit a large number of troops and increase taxes.
Wei's own description of the situation was, "Taxes are heavy
due to military operations." 55 In such circumstances, the
burden on the people was very heavy. If there were any
calamity such as flood or drought, it would certainly increase
the misfortune of the already suffering people. Their lives
were very miserable. 56

When Wei was in Ch'u Prefecture, he wrote a poem
describing what he saw:

55. In his poem entitled "Sent to the Senior Secretary
Wang." See Chapter II, p.73, footnote 39.
56. The above-mentioned political situation is based
on Han Kuo-p'än, "Fang-chên Ko-chù te Hsing-ch'eng"
[方鎮割据的形成], in Sui T'ang Wu-t'ai Shih-kang
隋唐五代
[隋唐五代
史綱]. Peking: San-lien Shu-t'ien[三聯書店], 1962 ed.,
Chapter 8, Section 2, pp.191-193.
The inhabitants are destitute and scattered, and the villages look broad and empty. The flourishing trees are all broken and withered. I heave a long sigh in this pavilion. My lamentation causes a cool breeze.  

When Wei arrived in Chiang Prefecture, he included this description in a poem:

...  

Originally the inhabitants here were happy with their lives, Why did they finally flee from here? In the bygone years there was a period of bad harvests, Back taxes have accumulated like an islet.  

...  

Even when he was Prefect of Su, he had "not yet seen the people dwell in peace and comfort."  

Compared to the peaceful and prosperous times before the empire had been thrown into chaos, the livelihood of these

57. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 6, p.3, titled "Ascending the Prefectural Pavilion of Ch'ü on the Day of Double-nine, I Sadly Remember the Ninth Day of Last Year When I Returned to the Banks of the Feng River Where I Attended the Party Given by Ts'ui, the Commissioner of Waterways, and My Younger Brothers" [棗九登濵成樓憶前歲九日歸灘上赴崔都水及諸弟贈集, 懷然懷舊].  
59. See Chapter III, p.106.
days was truly piteous.

Drinking Wine with an Old Villager

His temples and eyebrows are as white as snow, but he is still fond of wine.

His words are honest and simple as the people of old.

The young villagers were born in this chaotic period,

When they hear our conversation about the previous reign, it seems like a dream to them. 60

The young villagers did not know the prosperity and peace of former times because they were so unfortunate as to be born in a chaotic period. To them the happy life of the previous reign was no more than a dream.

Wei hoped that he could see harmony and success return to the empire. It would be a relief for him to find the common people happy once again:

"...

When will the world be at peace,

That I may find contentment farming with the people." 61

---

60. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 1, p.8.

61. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, p.5, titled "Sent to My Younger Brothers When the Troops at the Capital Revolted" [京師叛亂寄諸弟]. The translation is from Nielson, op. cit., p.35.
But the matter did not come out as he wished:

The Cry of the Cuckoo

On soaring trees dripping dew, tranquil summer nights,
In south mountains the cuckoo cries out.
Next door a widow, holding her child, sobs;
I can but toss and turn, when will it dawn?\(^{62}\)

The widow and the mournful cry of cuckoo evoke the distressing circumstances of the chaotic times. The men were conscripted into the army and many of them lost their lives, leaving children and wives to struggle on alone. The cuckoo's cry which sounds like 'pu-ju-kuei-ch'üi'[不如歸去] ('it would be better to come home') and the thought of its name 'tzu-kuei'[土穀] may remind her of the homonym 'tzu-kuei'[土穀], that means 'you return'. Her sorrow was certainly increased on realizing that her husband, the child's father, cannot 'return'. The reason why he cannot return is, of course, that he was killed in warfare. Wei felt pity for these unfortunate people, he could not get to sleep. The last line is actually an allegory. Wei uses it to suggest that he was waiting for the brightness of peace. Then, he hoped, the suffering people he was concerned about might be able to find relief.

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\(^{62}\) CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p.11. Except for the character 'Tzu-kuei'[土穀], which I have translated as cuckoo, the translation is from Nielson, op. cit., p.121.
Wei blamed the selfish military governors for feathering their own nests, injuring the others, taking the fruits of the people's toil, and making trouble for the whole country. Again, using an allegory, Wei cursed the crows for being selfish though they have traditionally been regarded as filial birds.

The Crows Leading Their Fledglings

The sun rises and shines on the eastern city. The spring crows caw and their fledglings answer. The fledglings answer, but their feathers are still short. Their nest is in the dense forest where the spring weather is cold; They lead their fledglings to fly in order to gather at the warmth of the eastern city. Although the fledglings are not yet in full feather, still they look with disdain upon the heights, They spread their wings to fly but fail, and fall into the tangled weeds. Their father and mother fly back and forth trying to lead them again. They call up and down as they are afraid of eagles and hawks.

Hey! You leaders of the fledgling crows, What are you so anxious about? Why do you search every day for the eggs of sparrows to feed your fledglings. 63

63. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 9, pp.2-3.
In the last line of the poem, Wei asks the crows why they are so selfish since they love only their own fledglings but injure the eggs of other birds. The crows symbolize the selfish oppressors, perhaps the egotistic military governors who injure others to benefit themselves.

In the following poem, Wei gives a further description of this phenomenon:

**A Kite Usurps a Nest**

A wild magpie, a wild magpie makes a nest in the tops of a forest,

A fierce kite that relies on force usurps the magpie's nest.

It swallows the magpie's liver and pecks its brain,

It steals both food and dwelling yet is free from harm.

The phoenix with its beautiful colours is the king of all the birds.

If it knows the kite does evil why doesn't it speak out?

A white sparrow-hawk and a wild harrior get the left-over flesh,

They peck that rank smelling meat together and have no intention of driving the kite away.

The piteous small birds scatter in all directions,

Although there is a dense forest, where can they live?^{64}

---

{64. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 9, p.3.}
The phoenix is apparently the emperor, the birds of prey are the oppressive military governors and the small birds are the poor common people. Wei expresses his disappointment in the emperor for being unable to punish the egotistic oppressors who usurped whatever the common people had.

Below is another poem in which Wei uses birds to symbolize certain people:

Evil birds gather around an old house,  
They scream on the withered branches of the trees.  
In the twilight, they peep into the dwellers' room.  
Evil ghosts have come to meet with them.  
The dwellers can't sleep peacefully,  
They wish to attack them now.  
Aren't there any eagles and sparrow-hawks?  
But these birds of prey have already eaten their fill of flesh and are unwilling to fly.  
They have ignored the regulation of chasing birds,  
And are uselessly raised with their lofty manner.  
They are ungrateful for the flesh that has been bestowed upon them.  
How are they any different than the evil owls on the city walls?  

65. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 1, p.3, the second poem of the "Five Poems in Miscellaneous Form".
It is probable that the old house is a metaphor which Wei uses for the T'ang empire. The evil birds symbolize the evil separatists who leered at the empire with covetous eyes, and planned military operations to pursue their private interests. The ghosts symbolize the foreign aggressors who sought the opportunity to invade the empire. The dwellers symbolize the loyal officials and honest people who opposed the separatists and invaders. They put their hopes in certain military governors who outwardly looked like the type of birds of prey that would drive out the evil birds. But unexpectedly, these apparently bold governors, who had been well provided with food and clothing, could do nothing against the rebels and invaders. They could only do harm to the common people. Therefore, Wei said that they are no different than the evil owls on the city walls.

Wei hoped the government would send honest men to guard the frontiers instead of these egotistic separatists. So, when he crossed Han-ku Pass, he sighed:

"If there are no talented and honest men at the frontiers,
To what avail are the metal walls and the scalding moats?" 66

66. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 6, p.4, titled "On Crossing Han-ku Pass" [穿胡關]. Han-ku Pass was in Ling-pao Sub-prefecture [領泡司] which was under the jurisdiction of Shan Prefecture [山州] during the T'ang dynasty. See Li Chi-fu, op. cit., chüan 6, pp.3-4. The metal walls and the scalding moats: metaphorically, an impregnable city.
Wei also opposed those separatists who intended to dismember the empire. They recruited the common people to engage in wars, but sought only their own personal advantage. With this sort of situation as a background, Wei stressed that even heroes were downcast when they heard the sound of war-drums.

The Song of War-drums

The clouds rise where the Huai River meets the sea and assume a sorrowful appearance in the twilight.

On the heights of Kuang-ling city war-drums are beaten in the dark.

The cold rattle of these drums sounds like the wind blowing over the frontiers.

Suddenly, it is as if the city were ten thousand li away from all communication.

In all directions there is no trace of man.

The drums' sound is also like the barbarian cavalry of the north crossing the Liao River.

67. In the first year of the T'ien-pao era (742-756), Yang Prefecture was named Kuang-ling County and it was renamed Yang Prefecture in the first year of the Ch'ien-yüan era (758-760). See Liu Hsü, op. cit., chüan 40, p.167.

With their horses that have not yet grazed
rearing-up and whinnying at the northern sky.

Among the guests in the city there are still
devout warriors from Yen and Chao,\textsuperscript{69}
But when they hear the rattle of the war-drums,
they become silent and completely dejected.

How much more so the widowers and orphans who
haven't even had their breakfast,
And the widows who sob at night over their tax
deadlines.\textsuperscript{70}

Under the extortionate tax policy of the egotistic military governors and the severe central government, bankruptcy was widespread. The wars between the separatists and the central government or among the separatists themselves in addition to causing a lot of strong young men to lose their lives, also left behind many poor old men, helpless widows and starving orphans. But these poor people still had to pay heavy taxes. The sparseness of the population gave many places an appearance of desolation and emptiness as Wei saw when he arrived in Ch'u and Chiang Prefectures.\textsuperscript{71} Therefore, paying heed to their consciences, even brave heroes were dismayed, let alone the miserable people, when they heard the sound

\textsuperscript{69} The warriors from the states of Yen and Chao were said to be brave and skilful fighters.
\textsuperscript{70} CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 9, p.3.
\textsuperscript{71} See Chapter III, p.129.
of war-drums.

From this poem, we can see that Wei expresses his strong objection to the selfish separatists who acted as warlords and engaged in battle. He cursed this kind of war because it only destroyed the society and injured his fellow-countrymen.

But Wei did not object to war against foreign aggressors. On the contrary, he encouraged the fight to resist aggressors in order to unify the country. He reminded the government not to neglect military preparedness. He sighed with regret over the negligence of national defence during the reign of T'ang Hsüan-tsung:

... 

Talented and heroic men worked together and peace prevailed throughout the country,

Since the tribes of Jung and I submitted from fear, the soldiers had never fought a battle.

Because of good harvests, the taxes had not become a heavy burden,

Rare and precious treasures were brought as tribute from far across the seas.

When war arose, however, the civil and military officials were completely at a loss.

72. Jung and I were tribes to the west and the east of China respectively.
After joy and pleasure had reached their peak, the condition of human affairs suddenly changed.  

...  

The background of this poem was the period before and after the An Lu-shan rebellion. Wei describes how the Emperor Hsüan-tsung and his officials, through their pleasure-seeking, neglected the national defence. As a result, the nation was thrown into anarchy. The poet certainly hoped that the government, taking a lesson from this incident, would pay attention to the defence forces.

He always encouraged his friends to devote themselves to the defence of their country:

...  

A heroic man should devote himself to his own country,

He should oppose the enemy with the strength required to push over a mountain.

What need to serve as a local official,

And let one's hair grow white at the temples?  

In another poem he urges a militant attitude to foreign aggressors:

73. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 10, pp.2-3, titled "The Song of Mount Li"  

74. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 3, p.5, titled "Sent to Ch'ang Tang".
I look forward to your return after having destroyed the Hsiung-nu.\(^{75}\)

Then you will receive a golden seal big as a peck to reward your merit.\(^{76}\)

When Wei passed Sui-yang\(^{77}\) where the hero Chang Hsun had died resisting the rebels, he wrote a long poem to praise Chang's martial spirit. He blamed those opportunistic military officers who hesitated to cooperate with Chang to put down the rebels and unify the country.\(^{78}\)

Wei also had a firm attitude in the matter of border disputes. Therefore, when he saw his friend the envoy Ch'ang Lu off to Tibet, he urged Ch'ang to recover the lost territory and not to shrink from shouldering such heavy responsibilities.

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75. Hsiung-nu, tribes in northern China.

76. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 4, p.14, titled "Seeing Sun Cheng off to Yun-chung". Yun-chung Subprefecture was under the jurisdiction of Yun Prefecture during the T'ang dynasty. See Li Chi-fu, op. cit., chuan 14, p.13.

77. Sui-yang was under the jurisdiction of Sung Prefecture in T'ang times. See Li Chi-fu, op. cit., chuan 7, pp.4-5.

78. For Wei's poem on this incident see CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 6, p.11, titled "Deep Feelings at Sui-yang".
Seeing off Censor Ch'ang (Lu)\(^79\) Who Was
Again Being Sent as Imperial Envoy
to Tibet

After coming back to report to the throne on
your ten thousand li journey,
You are again entrusted with an imperial mandate
to be carried to the Tibetan vassal.
Originally a young scholar engaging in literary
pursuits,
Now you mount a horse to try to quiet the smoke
and dust.
Traveling and lodging at the frontier gates and
along rivers you will encounter evening rain.
In the spring ploughing near the border barricades
you will recognize many of our former countrymen.
You should recover our lost territory on this trip,
Don't resign your position in spite of the constant
comings and goings through the dusty frontier.

As for Wei himself, he was personally dedicated to the
military policies that would bring advantage to the country

\(^{79}\) The character Lu \([\text{卤}^9]\) is not given in the
CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 4, p.9, but it appears in the title-list
of the collected poems of Wei in other editions. For example,
Ssu-pu Pei-yao ed., op. cit., chüan 4, p.3. The record of
Ch'ang Lu \([\text{丈}^9, \text{尺}^9]\) being an envoy to Tibet appears twice in
the T'ang Shu, i.e. in the second and fourth years of the
Chien-chung era. See Liu Hsü, \textit{op. cit.}, chüan 196-hsia (\(\dagger\)),
pp.550-551.
and the people.

"One day, I think I'll give up writing for a military career,
Since this troubled time arouses my feelings."\(^{80}\)

The reason for his thinking of giving up writing for a military career was that he wanted to defend his country and get rid of oppression and calamity.

Wei frequently was quite disappointed that he could not find an opportunity to devote himself to military affairs.

**Shooting Pheasant**

Riding a horse I go up the eastern hill,
The morning sun shines on the uncultivated fields.
There a pair of pheasants fly up,
I swivel to shoot them and quickly whip my horse to turn around.
Although I am unable to hit the target with every shot,
My accomplishment may be able to cause a smile of approval.
The bird's feathers are ruffled, its beautiful breast broken.
Its loose head hangs down beside my embroidered sheath.

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\(^{80}\) See Chapter II, p.88.
I merely rely on this activity to ease my discom­fort at having been sent so far from the capital.

It is not that I want to imitate young people.

I heave a long sigh as I put the bow in its case.

Thereupon, I remember when I was stationed on the outskirts of Pa-ling city. 81

The above poem was written during his government service in the outer provinces. Wei states that he could only shoot pheasants instead of leading troops to fight with the enemy. He recalled the time when he was a palace guard on the outskirts of Pa-ling city. Although he was a military man at that time, he never had the opportunity to fight for his country. How much less so now, when he had taken a post in the south? Therefore, he could only express his grief at the disuse of his military talents.

After he retired from office, he wrote:

... 

Chasing rabbits up to the hill,

Catching fish along the red earth stream.

I still sing in high spirits,

And am accustomed to a meagre living, having to buy wine on credit. 82

...

81. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p.10.

82. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p.5, titled "Living in the Open Country" (葉門). The translation of the last line is from Nielson, op. cit., p.168.
Even at this time he was still busily engaged in hunting. Chasing rabbits and catching fish as he sang "in high spirits" to show his refusal to regard himself as worthless.

(c) Wei's Negative Attitude

From the beginning of this chapter, we have seen that in his early years, Wei was an active young man. He had always worked very hard in office. He also highly esteemed the law. His attitude towards legislation was quite close to that of the Legalists. But in early China, beginning from Han times, there was almost no aspect of scholars' lives into which Confucianism had not penetrated. Wei himself confesses that he had "studied the knowledge of the Tsou-lu school" (i.e. orthodox Confucianism). Certainly, his thought frequently was influenced by Confucianism, either intentionally or unintentionally. His poem "Planting Melons" is a good example of this influence:

Planting Melons

Following my natural disposition, I just behave carelessly,
And am particularly heedless in managing my livelihood.
This year I learned to plant melons,

83. See Chapter II, p.88.
However, my garden is mostly filled with weeds. Although all the plants equally shared rain and dew, my melon-seedlings were particularly luxuriant. Due to the shortness of the spring, the season slipped away before I was able to hoe in time. The farmers laugh at me for having wasted my efforts, as the days and nights proceed, my hopes grow slimmer. Truly, this is not our business, just let me study the books of the ancients. 

Wei's view of husbandry was certainly influenced by Confucianism. In the Analects of Confucius, we can see how Confucius expresses his attitude towards husbandry:

Fan Ch'ih requested to be taught husbandry. The Master said, "I am not so good for that as an old husbandman." He requested also to be taught gardening, and was answered, "I am not so good for that as an old gardener."

Fan Ch'ih having gone out, the Master said, "A small man, indeed, is Fan Hsiü! "If a superior love propriety, the people will not dare not to be reverent. If he love righteousness, the people will not dare not to submit to his example. If he love good faith, the people will not dare not to be sincere. Now, when these things obtain, the people

84. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p.8.
from all quarters will come to him, bearing their children on their backs;—what need has he of a knowledge of husbandry?"  

Mencius, the famous successor of the Confucian school, also said:

"Some labor with their minds, and some labor with their strength. Those who labor with their minds govern others; those who labor with their strength are governed by others. Those who are governed by others support them; those who govern others are supported by them." This is a principle universally recognized.

Confucians disesteem labor and regard the labouring classes as unimportant. They esteem only the intelligentsia which has been created by them. With this kind of Confucian doctrine, we can realize why Wei regarded husbandry as not being his business. Apparently, he had unintentionally accepted the viewpoint of Confucianism concerning this matter, although this poem is quite possibly open to a more humorous interpretation. Wei might well be laughing at himself, together with the farmers, for his incompetence and inexperience in farming.


It seems, nevertheless, that Wei had come to an awareness that this concept was incorrect in his later days. So he was able to say that, "In my comings and goings, I am one with the common people, I do nothing different from them." On another occasion, he rented a piece of land to cultivate with his juniors.

According to the ideas of Confucius, when a man meets with oppression, he must not try to revolt against the ruling authority even if that authority is unjust. Otherwise, he will be regarded as a so-called 'rebellious statesman and bad son' [luan-ch'en tzei-tzu 亂臣賊子]. Under such conditions, the socially acceptable path for him to take is to retreat and not try to get involved with social reforms. This idea of escapism can be seen in the following maxims quoted from Analects of Confucius:

The Master said, "My doctrines make no way, I will get upon a raft, and float about on the sea...."  

The Master said, "With sincere faith he unites the love of learning; holding firm to death, he is perfecting the excellence of his course.

"Such a one will not enter a tottering state, nor dwell in a disorganized one. When right principles of government prevail in the kingdom, he will show

87. See Chapter III, p.119.
88. See Chapter I, p.49.
himself; when they are prostrated, he will keep concealed...." 90

As for Mencius, although he sanctioned the right to replace a leader under certain circumstances on the one hand; on the other hand, he had the idea of escapism too:

The king Seuen of Ts' e asked about the office of chief ministers. Mencius said, "Which chief ministers is your majesty asking about?" "Are there differences among them?" inquired the king. "There are," was the reply. "There are the chief ministers who are noble and relatives of the prince, and there are those who are of a different surname." The king said, "I beg to ask about the chief ministers who are noble and relatives of the prince." Mencius answered, "If the prince have great faults, they ought to remonstrate with him, and if he do not listen to them after they have done so again and again, they ought to dethrone him." ... he then begged to ask about chief ministers who were of a different surname from the prince. Mencius said, "When the prince has faults, they ought to remonstrate with him, and if he do not listen to them after they have done this again and again, they ought to leave the state." 91

"...When the men of antiquity realized their wishes, benefits were conferred by them on the people. If they did not realize their wishes, they cultivated

their personal character, and became illustrious in the world. If poor, they attended to their own virtue in solitude; if advanced to dignity, they made the whole empire virtuous as well." 92

What the Confucians plan to do when their wishes are obstructed is 'to get upon a raft and float about on the sea', 'keep concealed', 'leave the state' or 'attend to their own virtue in solitude'. They intend to avoid real life and keep out of society. The Confucian idea of escapism must also have influenced Wei, since, as we have seen, when Wei failed in his political activities he went to live in seclusion.

In addition, Wei admired the great poet of the Six Dynasties T'ao Yüan-ming who lived in a quiet haven in the time of his retirement. His predilection for reclusion must have been strengthened by T'ao's example. Wei frequently mentions T'ao in his poems. Occasionally he wrote poems expressly to imitate T'ao's poetry. We have already seen one such poem entitled "In Imitation of T'ao P'eng-tse" 93 in chapter II. Another is "In Imitation of T'ao's Style on the Occasion of Drinking Wine with Young Friends in the Country Fields." 94

In the poem "To My Friends While at the West Study

93. See Chapter II, p.67.
94. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 1, p.4.
on the Feng River", he states:

"Like T'ao I have resigned from office,
Imitating Chu I gather firewood." 95

In another poem titled "Eastern Suburbs", he mentions:

"Eventually I will resign and here build a hut,
That this emulation of T'ao may truly be realized." 96

Accepting the Confucian concept on the one hand, and being influenced by the character of T'ao on the other, Wei regarded reclusion as the best way to escape from trouble. As a result, although his attitude was positive at times, there were other times when the negative idea of retirement gained precedence in his mind. There were also times when he felt that being such a lowly official prevented him from serving the people according to his aspirations. In such a position, he could only help the ruler to collect taxes from the suffering people. Meanwhile, he probably thought that reclusion would be the best way to get away from these difficulties:

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95. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 2, p.8. The Translation is from Nielson, op. cit., p.29. Chu refers to Chu Mai-ch'en [朱晏臣] of the Han dynasty. Chu was very poor before he served as an official. He earned his living by gathering and selling firewood. See Pan Ku [班固], Han Shu [漢書]. Hongkong: Wen-hsüeh Yen-chiu-she [文學研究社], 1959 ed., chüan 64, p.229.

If I stick too fast to the rules, the people's condition will be heart-rending, If I am too lenient, I will get myself into trouble. Day and night, I plan to beat a retreat. When I go outside, I always gaze at the mountains of home. If you feel so too, We had better go back hand in hand." 97

"... I would rather go out of office than dun the people for payment of their taxes, Late in this year, I may retire to country fields...." 98.

"Governing this district is contrary to my aspiration, Forcing myself to take this post, I feel ashamed towards the gentlemen of former days...." 99

This escapism of Wei's was rather negative. By withdrawing in such a way, he cut himself off from the masses.

97. See Chapter I, pp.34-35.
98. "In Response to Ts'ui, the Commissioner of Waterways". See Chapter III, p.105, footnote 11.
99. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p.8, titled "Planting Willows at West Stream".
He failed to bring any advantage to himself, the people and his country. But in all justice to the poet, he was at least much better than those avaricious government officials who injured others to benefit themselves.

The period in his later life when Wei was sent out to take up provincial posts was probably the time of his deep involvement with the alchemical Taoists. He evidently thought to calm himself by following the ideas of Taoism. Taoists talk much of freedom of thought and action, but it is a freedom which ignores or transcends the social order. As for alchemical Taoists, they further imagine that through certain practices of asceticism or drug-taking, one can become an immortal, able to transcend this world and coexist with heaven and earth.

In addition, Taoism was highly popular throughout the T'ang dynasty. One of the important reasons for this trend was that Li Erh, who was known as Lao Tzu and was a great philosopher of Taoism, had the same surname as the imperial family of the T'ang dynasty. T'ang Kao-tsung canonized Lao Tzu with the title of 'T'ai-shang Hsuan-yüan Huang-ti'. Later, T'ang Hsüan-tsung established Ch'ung-hsüan Kuan for the purpose of studying the works of Taoism such as Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Wen Tzu, and Lieh Tzu. He gave the title known as 'Hsüan-hsüeh Po-shih' to those who were specialists in the classics of Taoism. During the T'ang era, there were at least six emperors who were enthusiastic about Taoism and
died because of taking drugs prescribed for them by alchemical Taoists. They were T'ai-tsung [太宗], Hsien-tsung [惠宗], Mu-tsung [穆宗], Ching-tsung [敬宗], Wu-tsung [武宗] and Hsüan-tsung [宣宗].

Emperor Hsüan-tsung [玄宗] was himself a devotee of the gods of popular Taoism. Wei mentions such activities on the part of Hsüan-tsung in one of his poems:

Don't you see, the K'ai-yüan era was so full of the civilizing virtues that the emperor 'loosened his robe' (ruled indirectly, passively). He was bored with sitting on the throne and granting audiences to all comers. He went to the holy mountains to inquire into the Way and request the spiritual forefather to appear. Then he bathed in the Hua-ch'ing Palace Pool accumulating auspicious omens in great number.

... Under the great influence of the emperors, many


princesses and imperial concubines retired from palace life to become Taoist nuns. There were also instances of prominent officials who attempted to become Taoists and seek immortality. The famous poets Ho Chih-chang, Li Po and, the prime minister in the reign of Wu-tsung, Li Te-yü are examples in point.

Recognizing the strength of such trends and the lack of success Wei met with in his political career, we should not be surprised to find that the poet was also deeply influenced by Taoism in his later life.

In his poem written on the occasion of seeing off an imperial concubine to become a Taoist nun, Wei shows his sympathy for the woman who had discarded her former status:

Seeing an Imperial Concubine off to Become a Taoist Nun

To discard imperial favour and search for immortality from fear of losing of her beauty.

Without make-up on her face, she bids farewell to the emperor by standing at the court.

102. For the details concerning Li Po's relationship with Taoism see Li Chang-chih, Tao-chiao-t'u te Shih-jen Li Po Chi Ch'i T'ung-k'u Macao: Wen-chi Shu-tien, 1939 ed., Chapters 2-3, pp.19-43.

103. This description of Taoism during the T'ang dynasty is based on Fu Ch'in-chia, Tao-chiao-shih Kai-lun. Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1934 ed., Chapter 11, pp.65-66.
She intends to preserve a youthful appearance forever by depending on the elixir, Her precious mirror need not be used for making up the sloping eyebrows any more. The princess helps her to put the ornamental head-dress aside, The emperor looks at her as she puts on a Taoist's hat. Hitherto, all the imperial concubines envied each other, But whenever they talk about Yao-t'ai, their tears always fall in great number. 104 Wei declares that the other concubines also expressed their sympathy for her instead of expressing jealousy. In attributing to the concubine a certain reluctance to become a Taoist, Wei reveals that he apparently did not believe the absurd theories of the alchemical Taoists when he wrote this poem. It was probably written in his earlier years when he took the post of director in the Department of Merits at the Capital, Ch'ang-an.

When Wei went off to a retreat on the bank of the

104. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 10, p.8. Yao-t'ai[楊台]: the realm of the immortals.
Feng River, 105 he mentioned reading the book of Lao Tzu, but this description did not yet include any of the superstition of the alchemical Taoists.

Staying at the Suburbs on This Spring Day,
I Send This Poem to Chi Chung-fu, the Chief Clerk of Wan-nien, (Yüan) 106 Wei, the Chief Clerk of San-yüan, Hsia-hou Shen, the Collator

A bird in the valley occasionally breaks forth twittering.

105. From the title of the following poem, we know that Wei wrote this poem to Chi Chung-fu and others when Chi was the Chief Clerk of Wan-nien Subprefecture. According to an article of Ling-hu Ch'u, Chi took up the post as the Chief Clerk of Wan-nien around the early years of the Chien-chung era (780-784). See Ling-hu Ch'u [金狐楚], "Pai-yang-shen Hsin Miao-pei" in Ch'ien-ting Ch'üan T'ang Wen, op. cit., chüan 543, p.6988.

106. Yuan [元] is missing before the characters Shao-fu [少府] in CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 2, p.11, but it appears in the title-list of the collected poems of Wei in other editions. For example, Ssu-pu Pei-yao ed., op. cit., chüan 2, p.3. Yüan Wei was a friend of Wei. His serving as the Chief Clerk of San-yüan has been recorded in Yuan-he Hsing-tsuan, op. cit., chüan 4, p.3, also Ts'en Chung-mien [岑仲勉], Tu Ch'üan T'ang Shih Cha-chi [唐文獻通考] in T'ang-jen Hang-ti Lu [唐代人文紀錄]. Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chü [中華書局], 1962 ed., p.220. In the collected poems of Wei, there is another poem which expresses his relationship with Yüan Wei. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 5, pp.2-3, titled "A Night Feast for Yüan Wei on His Passing Lo-yang" [酬元偉過洛陽夜宴].
A spring shower has passed over the fields.
The light, warm morning breeze rustles through
the grove,
And early sun rays shine through the high window.
Alone, I drink stream water,
And recite from the book of Lao Tzu.
At the capital, hustle bustle,
Who remembers this recluse? 107

The fact that he mentions Taoist works indicates
that at this period he was influenced by Taoist philosophy.
The following poem is a further example of this influence.

Jade

There is a quintessence existing in heaven and
earth.
In its unadorned state, it is invaluable.
When it is cut and polished to make mundane objects,
Its true nature is spoiled before long. 108

The jade is invaluable when it is unadorned. Apparently,
Wei felt that things in their natural state should remain
so. He adopted this idea from Taoism. Lao Tzu emphasizes
the importance of nature in the Tao Te Ching by saying that,

107. Except for the title and lines 1, 3, 4 and 6,
the translation of this poem follows Nielson, op. cit., p.88.
108. CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p.1.
"The Way (models) on that which is naturally so" [道法自然].

"Exhibit the unadorned and embrace the uncarved block" [見素抱樸].

Chuang Tzu, the other great philosopher of Taoism, elaborates a fable in the book Chuang Tzu to impress on us the importance of nature and the peril of disrupting her.

The emperor of the South Sea was called Shu [Brief], the emperor of the North Sea was called Hu [Sudden], and the emperor of the central region was called Hun-tun [Chaos]. Shu and Hu from time to time came together for a meeting in the territory of Hun-tun, and Hun-tun treated them very generously. Shu and Hu discussed how they could repay his kindness. "All men," they said, "have seven openings so they can see, hear, eat, and breathe. But Hun-tun alone doesn't have any, let's trying boring him some!"

Every day they bored another hole, and on the seventh day Hun-tun died.

Reflecting on the meaning of this fable, we see that Hun-tun's death was caused by the ignorance of his...
true nature on the part of Shu and Hu. This is also the thought behind Wei’s lines when he says we spoil the natural beauty of jade by cutting and polishing it.

Later, when he took up provincial posts far from the capital, we notice that Wei became involved with alchemical Taoists and read books concerning the methods of seeking immortality:

"With clear wine I cultivate my pure original nature,
With alchemical books I show myself to be a Taoist follower." 112

In addition to reading books, Wei also took the elixir which was made according to the instructions of alchemical texts. By doing so, he imagined that he would be able to live forever with heaven and earth. 113

Moreover, Wei wrote many poems eulogizing immortality such as "Seeking to Become an Immortal", 114 "The Song of Fairy 0 Lü Hua", 115 "The Song of the Fairy Princess", 116

112. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p.4, titled "The Western Study at the Prefecture" [郡中西廊].
113. Evidence that Wei took this kind of elixir can be found in his poem "Taking the Huang-ching Herb"[飲黃精]. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 8, p. 5.
114. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 9, pp.4-5.
115. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 9, p.5.
116. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 9, p.5.
"The Song of the Ma Ming-sheng's Encounter with a Fairy", 117 "The Song of the Fairy of Mount Yüan-t'ou" 118 and so forth.

We are moved to sympathize with Wei, who was overwhelmed by the oppressive social problems of the time. He found no way to fulfill his ambitions and ideals. Thereupon, he turned his back on society and reality and sought for something in which he could forget his disappointment. In such circumstances, he became involved with the superstitions of the alchemical Taoists. But, no matter what the inducement was, to spend a life time in search of the elusive vision of immortality was a tragic waste of talent.

117. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 9, pp.5-6.
118. See CTS 3/7/Wei Ying-wu 10, p.5.
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