TU FU AND HIS NINETEEN HEPTA-
SYLLABIC REGULATED VERSES

By

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ABSTRACT

Though Tu Fu was one of China's most prolific poets, his accomplishments and contributions to Chinese poetry were not widely or fully recognized by contemporary writers and scholars during his life time.

This thesis provides a detailed study of a manageable portion of Tu Fu's work—nineteen poems—related by their form, which is hepta-syllabic regulated verse, their period, approximately two years in the author's life, their theme of nostalgia, and by three poetic techniques.

Chapter one presents a biographical sketch of Tu Fu; it focuses on those aspects of his life and historical context which bear directly on an understanding of the poetry he wrote in K'uei-chou in 766 and 767 A.D. In chapter two I review past criticism of Tu Fu's works from the 12th century to the 19th century and summarize the three major approaches which have characterized past scholarship. In this chapter I also discuss my own approach to Tu Fu's poetry, an approach which is based on the assumption that his works are perhaps best considered in terms of theme and poetic techniques. In the nineteen poems which I analyse, Tu Fu expresses his deep sense of nostalgia toward Ch'ang-an and, insofar as they are thematically connected, I believe there is much to be learned from taking these poems
and analysing the three poetic techniques—association of one time with another, association of one place with another, and transformation of the external world informed by the subjective world, which Tu Fu uses to express the theme of nostalgia.

Chapter three is a study of Tu Fu's nineteen heptasyllabic regulated verses written in K'uei-chou in 766 and 767 A.D. In this chapter, I cite each poem in translation; then I discuss the imagery, meaning, and poetic technique of each poem.

In chapter four I summarize Tu Fu's poetic techniques employed in these poems. I conclude that Tu Fu expresses his spiritual torment eloquently and gracefully, and that his poetic techniques are as impressive and innovative by the standards of today as they were in his own time.
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CHAPTER ONE

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A study of Tu Fu's life is helpful in elucidating the nature of his poetry—and the particular ideals, frustrations and disappointments which informed it. Of central importance to Tu Fu's writing was his longstanding desire to return to Ch'ang-an—a desire which not only dominated his later life but also constituted the major theme of the nineteen poems which I will analyze in this essay. One of China's greatest poets by the consensus of many scholars, Tu Fu (712-770) wished to serve the state to the best of his ability; however, his political career was less than successful and he failed to realize his life's ideal. The resulting disappointment and frustration exerted a strong impact on Tu Fu. Until his last years, he sustained the dream of returning to the capital in order to serve the state. He expressed his nostalgia in a number of moving, vivid, and eloquent works. The emotion and the artistic techniques employed in his poems are compelling and impressive. But in order to understand these poems, it is helpful first to review the historical context and the relevant events of Tu Fu's life and political career.
II. TU FU'S LIFE AND HIS POLITICAL CAREER

Tu Fu was born in 712, though his place of birth is uncertain. In any event, it seems that Tu Fu thought of Ch'ang-an as his home because he consistently refers to himself as Tu Fu of Ching-chao and an old rustic of Tu-ling or Shao-ling.

A. EARLY YEARS (From 712 to 745)

We learn from Tu Fu's own writings that the early years of his life were generally happy. In a long poem entitled "Young Adventures," Tu Fu records many reminiscences of his youth. He says in the poem that when he was seven years old, his thoughts were heroic; that his first song was concerned with the fabulous phoenix; and that when he was nine years old, he began to practise calligraphy. He recalls how his writings "filled a bag," and how when he was between fourteen and fifteen, he had already appeared in the literary arena. He also recalls Ts'ui Shang and Wei Ch'i-hsin, two famous writers of the time, who remarked that Tu Fu's literary skills resembled those of Pan Ku and Yang Hsiung--the greatest literary masters of antiquity. From 731 to 735, when Tu Fu was in his late teens and early twenties, he began to travel extensively, crossing the Yellow River and visiting Su-chou, Hang-chou, Yueh-chou, and T'ai-chou. In 735, he returned to Ch'ang-an and took the
"Presented Scholars" Examination. Unfortunately, he failed. Although he suffered a setback, it seems that he recovered his spirits quickly because he started to travel again. This time he journeyed to various areas around Yen-chou, Ch'i-chou, and Chao-chou. Apparently he enjoyed this period of his life, for in "Young Adventures," he recalls how he shot birds, chased wild animals, and went hunting.

We see in Tu Fu's early years his pleasure with writing, evidence of his skills, and the beginning of his career disappointment which would later affect him so greatly.

B. LATER YEARS AND HIS POLITICAL CAREER (From 746 to 770)

From 746 until his death in 770, Tu Fu struggled to make ends meet, and since it bears more directly on his later poems, I will discuss this period of Tu Fu's life in greater detail. The peaks of his political career came in 751 when Hsüan-tsung recognized his literary ability, and in 757 when Su-ting, Hsüan-tsung's successor, appointed Tu Fu Left Reminder.

In 746, Tu Fu returned to Ch'ang-an from Ch'i-chou. In the same year, Emperor Hsüan-tsung offered those who had previously failed the "Presented Scholar" Examinations another chance; however, he was failed again though perhaps only because of the corruption of Li Lin-fu, the Grand
Councilor.' In any event, Tu Fu's dream to serve in the civil service was shattered once again.

From 747 to 750, Tu Fu stayed in Ch’ang-an and was travelling back and forth between the capital and Lo-yang in 749. Then in 751, he had an opportunity to advance his career. He presented three fu to Emperor Hsüan-tsung. In "Young Adventures," Tu Fu mentions that Emperor Hsuan-tsung was impressed. The fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh lines of this poem read:

I presented the fu in the Imperial Palace.  
The emperor stopped taking his meal and sent me a summons.

In the second and third lines of another poem entitled "Do Not Suspect Me," (莫相疑行) Tu Fu also describes this incident. The lines read:

I remember when I presented the three fu in the P’eng-lai Palace,  
Even I was astonished to find myself famous overnight.

Hsüan-tsung made Tu Fu an awaiting Edict Attendant of the Academy of Scholarly Worthies, but he was not assigned any post; he had to await further orders.

In 752, Hsüan-tsung ordered Tu Fu to take another examination. This time his examination was apparently satisfactory because Tu Fu was asked to wait for his turn to be given a job. That autumn, Tu Fu was still waiting to be given a post. Perhaps he was desperate, for in 753 he sent to a prominent general a poem entitled "Twenty Rhymes
sent to General Ko-shu Han."

In the last two lines of the poem he hints that he would like to work for the general, but Ko-shu Han did not reply. Tu Fu had to wait.

In 755, Tu Fu returned to Ch’ang-an, leaving his family in Feng-hsien. In spring 755, Ko-shu Han arrived in the capital, but he requested an indefinite leave of absence from his post because of ill health. Tu Fu’s hope of getting employment was disappointed once again. Later in 755, Tu Fu was finally offered a posting as Commandant of the District of Ho-hsi, whose chief duty was to administer whippings to draft evaders and tax delinquents. The T’ang system permitted an appointee to refuse an unsuitable appointment, and Tu Fu declined the offer. Under the title of the poem "To Tease Myself After I Was Appointed," Tu Fu appended this note: "At this time I was released from the post of Commandant of the District of Ho-hsi and was assigned as the Administrator in the Right Commandant’s Office of the Helmets Section." His duties were to look after the weapons, armour, and keys. Although this was not the kind of job Tu Fu desired, he accepted the assignment and left Ch’ang-an for Feng-hsien to visit his family. But there was to be no celebration upon his return home, for he arrived only to learn that his young son had died of hunger in his absence. In the poem "Five Hundred Words from Ch’ang-
Tu Fu tells of the agony this caused the Tu family. The latter part of the poem reads:

I have left my wife in a strange district.
Natural disasters separated our household of ten.
Who can leave them any longer without care?
I have come to share their hunger and thirst.
Wails rise when I enter the house.
My infant child has died of hunger.
Why should I suppress my grief,
That even the neighbours in the village also weep for us?
I am ashamed of being a father;
So poor that caused his son to die for lack of food.
How would I know that the good harvest of autumn;
Still could not relieve the poor from suffering such a misfortune?
I am already one of the privileged,
Free from taxation and draft.
If my life is bitter,
Then the life of a common man must be worse.
When I think of those who lost their property,
And of those recruited and stationed at the far frontiers,
My worries and anxiety rise as high as the Southern Mountains,
Like mad swells impossible to subside.

Here, we glimpse not only Tu Fu’s sorrow, but also his sympathy for the wretchedness of the poor. Just as the tide seemed to be turning in Tu Fu’s favour, he lost his son, a terrible and shattering experience. But it is remarkable to see that Tu Fu’s grief extends beyond his own loss, for he laments more for the less fortunate and the impoverished, and tries to comfort himself with the knowledge that his life is not the worst.

At the end of 755, the An Lu-shan Rebellion broke out.
An’s troops overtook the imperial forces. Later T’ung-kuan fell, the rebels captured the two capitals, and Emperor Hsüan-tsung, Kuei-fei, and Yang Kuo-chung fled to Shu. Before T’ung-kuan fell, Tu Fu was visiting the District of Po-shui. Because of the rebellion, the roads were closed and Tu Fu could not get back to Ch’ang-an. From his poems, we know that in 756 Tu Fu settled his wife and children in the Ch’iang Village, a district of San-ch’uan of the Prefecture of Fu-chou.11

After settling his family, Tu Fu set off to join the exiled court when he heard that the crown prince, later known as Su-tsung, was declared emperor at Ling-wu. On the way to join the emperor, Tu Fu was captured by the rebels and brought back to Ch’ang-an.12 Ch’ang-an was not the old and beautiful capital he remembered but a devastated ruin. The palace was burned and the lives of the people were more wretched than ever.

In 757, Tu Fu was able to slip away and soon after arrived at Feng-hsiang where Su-tsung was residing.13 Because of Tu Fu’s loyalty, Su-tsung appointed him Left Reminder, a remonstrance official, an appointment which greatly pleased Tu Fu. As an adviser, his duties were to remind His Majesty of errors of substance or style in state documents and to mend His Majesty’s breaches in statecraft.

However, Tu Fu’s appointment proved short-lived. In
757, he became involved in an incident which earned him the emperor's displeasure. That year Emperor Su dismissed Fang Kuan, who had led unsuccessful attempts to recover the capital and was later again defeated by rebels, from his seat in the state council, using a bribery charge as an excuse. For this, however, Tu Fu admonished Su-tsung, arguing that a state minister should not be dismissed on a petty offense. Su-tsung, who was furious, ordered Tu Fu to be placed under arrest and to be tried by the Three Judicial Agencies, the chief officials of which were Wei Chih, Yen Chen-ch’ing, and Ts’ui Kuang-yüan. Wei Chih reported that though Tu Fu was too free with his words, he was faithful to his duties. But the emperor was still not appeased. The Grand Councilor, Chang Hao, advised the emperor to be magnanimous, and finally Tu Fu, who might have been sentenced to death, was pardoned. After this incident, Tu Fu was allowed to go back to Fu-chou to visit his family.

In late 757, An’s troops suffered a decisive defeat near Ch’ang-an. Soon, the imperial army forces recaptured the two capitals. Su-tsung and Hsüan-tsung returned to Ch’ang-an in 758, and the same year, Tu Fu also went back to the capital, where he continued to work as the Reminder. He still took his duties as a Reminder very "seriously" even after his precarious experience. From the poem "Overnight in the Spring at the Eastern Division," (春宿左省) we
learn that Tu Fu worked the whole day and stayed overnight writing a memorial to the throne. In one of the poems written by Ts’en Shen and addressed to Tu Fu, Ts’en Shen gently advised Tu Fu that perhaps it would be best to remonstrate less frequently, but Tu Fu obviously did not take Ts’en’s advice. From the poem "Drinking by the Crooked River" (曲江對酒) we know that the poet was not very happy about his post. The last four lines of the poem read:"

I indulge myself in drinking; for a long time I have given up my possessions, and I do not care if all people abandon me.
I am lazy to attend to court; I am really incompatible with this world.
As a mundane official, I feel that the fairyland is further away.
I am too old to regret not being a recluse.

In mid 758, Fang was demoted to the position of the prefect of Pin-chou, and Fang’s friends, Yen Wu, Liu Chih, and Tu Fu were also banished. Tu Fu was sent to Hua-chou, about sixty miles east of Ch’ang-an, to be the Administrator of Hua-chou, in which capacity he was to look after schools, temples, examinations, ceremonies and so forth. From that time on, Tu Fu never again had the chance to go back to Ch’ang-an.”

In 759, Tu Fu wrote "Day after the Autumn Equinox." (立秋後題) In this poem, he says that he intends to
give up his post as Administrator. The poem reads:

Time does not make allowances.  
Another season succeeded since last night.  
Dark cicadas do not stop buzzing.  
Autumn swallows are like fluttering guests.  
Throughout my life I always wanted to be independent.  
I am approaching fifty sadly.  
I am free to quit working as an official.  
Why do I force myself to be burdened with trivial tasks?

In the last line of this poem, Tu Fu expresses his frustration and dismay with the bureaucratic nature of his job. Later he did give up his post and moved to Ch’in-chou.

In autumn 759, Tu Fu arrived at Ch’in-chou where he stayed for a month and a half, and there he wrote many poems. In late 759, he went to T’ung-ku and then on to Ch’eng-tu. From the poem "Cousin Wang, the Governor General’s Officer, Comes Out of the City to See Me and to Bring Me Money for the Construction of my Thatched Hut," we learn that with the generosity of his cousin in Ch’eng-tu, Tu Fu was able to purchase some land and to build a thatched hut near the Flower Washing Stream. He remained in Ch’eng-tu from 760 to 762.

In 762, Tu Fu’s friend, Yen Wu, was assigned as the governor general of Ch’eng-tu, and although Tu Fu was not officially employed, Yen asked Tu Fu to work for him. In 762, Tu Fu wrote a memorandum "On Drought" to Yen, which is collected in his prose works. Since
November of the previous year, there had been no rain or snow and as a result, people were suffering from a drought. According to Confucian traditions, heaven sent natural disorders to a government to express disapproval. Tu Fu advised Yen Wu to take the drought as a sign of heaven's disapproval concerning some maladministration of justice. Tu Fu admonished Yen Wu to order a speedy adjudication of all criminal cases. In summer 762, both Hsüan-tsung and Sutsung died, and Yen Wu was summoned to Ch'ang-an. Since he worked for Yen Wu, Tu Fu thought that he might also be recalled to Ch'ang-an, and thus his hope of going back to the capital revived. The seventeenth and eighteenth lines of the poem entitled: "Ten Rhymes to Send His Excellency Yen to return to Court" (十韻送嚴公入朝十韻) read:

Is this body of mine to be staying in Shu for good? If I did not die, I might be able to go back to Ch'ang-an.

Unfortunately, during this time, General Hsü Chih-tao initiated a rebellion. Tu Fu fled to Tzŭ-chou, and later returned to Ch'êng-tu.²⁰

In 764, Yen Wu returned from Ch'ang-an. He was appointed Military Commissioner of the whole Chien-nan area. Tu Fu then went back to Ch'êng-tu. Yen wrote a memorandum to court recommending that Tu Fu be made his military counselor. In response to Yen's request, the court conferred on Tu Fu the title of Acting Vice-Director of the Ministry
of Public Works. He was entitled to wear robes in green but was also granted the privilege of wearing the red robe with the red bag containing a silver fish-tally, the decorative honour of officials. This was an honourary title, although Tu Fu’s rank did not change. However, in the poem entitled "Do Not Suspect Me," Tu Fu expresses dismay over working in Yen’s office because some young colleagues were jealous of him. The poem reads:

A man like me achieves nothing even when his hair grows white. 
Oh! What a pity! My teeth are about to fall out. 
I remember when I presented the three fu in the P’eng-lai Palace, 
Even I was astonished to find myself famous overnight. 
The erudite men of the Academy of Scholarly Worthies surrounded me like a wall, 
And watched me write in the Hall of the Secretariat. 
In those days my writings could move the emperor. 
But now hunger and cold have driven me to the street. 
In my late years, I have to seek the friendship of the young. 
They compliment me in my presence but mock me behind my back. 
Let me send an apology to you all, people of the smart world: 
I do not like to compete. Do not suspect me!

In the poem "Twenty Rhymes to Expel Despondency: Presented to Yen Wu" 遣閭奉呈嚴公二十韻 ) the poet asked Yen Wu to let him spend more time in his thatched hut. The last two lines of the poem read:

I hope you will consider my nature, 
And grant frequent leaves to enable me to lean against the firmiana tree.
In the early spring of 765, Yen Wu finally granted Tu Fu the time off he had requested in the previous year. Later Yen Wu died, and Tu Fu felt he had lost a friend. After Yen's death, Tu Fu wandered about, going to Chung-chou from Jung-chou and finally arriving at Yün-an. In the first two lines of the poem "Moving to live in K'uei-chou City" ( двигаться к кёй-чоу), Tu Fu tells the reader that he was detained in Yün-an by illness. The lines read:“

I was lying in bed in Yün-an.
I have moved to live in White Emperor City.

In spring 766, Tu Fu recovered, and so from Yün-an, he went to K'uei-chou City. He and his family lived in Jang-tung until the autumn of 766. From then until the spring of 767, Tu Fu stayed in West Chamber for the most part, leaving his family in Jang-tung. Between then and the spring of 768, Tu Fu bought property in Jang-hsi and East Village and moved back and forth between these two places.

The following is a short summary of Tu Fu's physical health, assets, work, social life, and emotional well-being during the one-year and ten-month period which he spent in K'uei-chou.

I. PHYSICAL HEALTH:

In the poems which Tu Fu wrote in K'uei-chou between 766 to 767, he describes his failing physical health,
reporting that he is fragile and sick, has weak lungs, malaria, rheumatism, and deafness in his left ear.

In the poem "Old and Sick," Tu Fu describes his failing physical condition.  

I am old and sick in the Wu Mountains,  
Detained among the travellers in Ch’u.  
Some old medicines are left from the other days;  
Flowers bloom again on last year’s bushes.  
The rain last night seeped through the beach.  
The wind in spring is against the current of the stream.  
Had I been in Ch’ang-an, I would have been given two writing brushes.  
However, I am only a thistledown flying in the wind.

In the first three lines of the poem "Autumn Clearness," Tu Fu mentions that he has weak lungs. The lines read:

At the peak of autumn, the discomfort of my lungs is relieved.  
I am able to comb my white hair.  
I hate to increase or to reduce the dosage of medicine.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth lines of the poem "Send to Hsieh Chü," Tu Fu mentions that he has been suffering from malaria. The lines read:

I fell sick in the Gorge.  
I was suffering from malaria all winter and spring.

In the third and fourth lines of the poem "Urging Tsung-wen to Set Up the Hen Coops," Tu Fu mentions that he has rheumatism. The lines read:
The meat of black hens is said to be good for rheumatism.
The eggs which are laid in autumn are good to eat.

In the last two lines of the poem "Cloudy Again," Tu Fu says that his left ear is deaf. The lines read:

Don't you see that the old man from Tu-ling staying in K’uei-chou,
Is a man whose teeth are half gone and his left ear is deaf?

From the five poems cited above, one may see that Tu Fu was quite fragile and sick during 766 to 767.

II. ASSETS:

From some of the poems, we also know that from spring 767 to spring 768, Tu Fu managed to buy property in Jang-hsi and East Village perhaps with the help of Po Mao-lin, for in the end of the second poem of "The Mouth of Ch’ü-t’ang Gorge," Tu Fu appended a note saying that Governor Po had frequently shared his monthly salary with the poet. From the poems "Climbing to the Hall in Jang-hsi at Dusk," "The Garden," and "About to Depart from the Wu Gorge, I present Nan-ch’ing hsiung the six-acre Jang-hsi orchard," we know that toward the end of 767, Tu Fu bought a house, a spacious old hall south of it, a small flower and vegetable garden next to the house, and a six-acre orchard. In another poem
entitled "In the Autumn I sent Chang Wang to Supervise the Weeding on the Rice Fields in the East Village. The Work is Almost Finished. Early in the Morning, I Sent the Female Servant, A-chi, and the Boy Servant, A-tuan, to inquire about it," (秋晨遣女奴阿欽稲向是早 晚遣男奴阿箋稲向事) we know that he acquired rice farms, a house, and two servants, and from the poems "To Chop Wood," (課伐木) "Hsin-hsing Went to Repair the Water Pipes Far Away," (信行遠修水筒) and "To A-tuan" (示獠奴阿段) we know that Tu Fu also had three other servants—Po-i, Hsin-hsiu and Hsin-hsing.

From the above, we see that despite some health problems Tu Fu was quite well off and certainly had material comfort and security by 768.

III. WORK:

During the one year and ten-month period which Tu Fu spent in K'uei-chou, he was engaged in writing poetry and farming. Altogether, he wrote about four hundred poems which survive in the extant collection. On average Tu Fu wrote close to twenty poems a month. From the four poems "To Grow Lettuce," (種莴苣) "The Bound Chickens," (縛鷄行) "The Garden," and "To Chop Wood," we know that Tu Fu tried to grow vegetables, raise chickens, mend fences, and chop
wood. In another poem entitled "In the Autumn I sent Chang Wang to Supervise the Weeding on the Rice Farms in East Village. The Work is Almost Finished. Early in the Morning, I sent the Female Servant, A-chi, and the Boy Servant, A-tuan, to inquire about it," we also know that he directed his servants to plough fields, plant, weed, irrigate, and harvest.31

Tu Fu became a gentleman farmer during this period. On the surface, his life seemed to be well settled here.

IV. SOCIAL LIFE:

Among the four hundred poems which Tu Fu wrote in K’uei-chou and which survive in the extant collection, seventy of them are addressed to his friends, thirteen to his relatives, and twenty one to his old friends. Altogether, these poems amount to one quarter of the total. From these poems, we know that Tu Fu had many friends. In numerous poems, he mentions that he goes out and drinks wine with his friends. In the second poem of "From Jang-hsi I Moved to Stay Temporarily in the Thatched Hut in East Village," (four poems) (自漉西荆扉且移居来茅屋四首) however, Tu Fu did not quite enjoy the conversation with some of his visitors. He prefers solitude. The poem reads:32

In East Village or in Jang-hsi,
We live close by the same kind of clear stream.
I go back and forth to both thatched huts. 
I stayed for a while to look after the rice fields. 
It was close to the noisy market and was convenient to make some profits. 
In the secluded woods here, one can hardly find a path. 
If visitors come and try to talk to the fragile old man, 
They will get lost and give up the effort.

Tu Fu also went out sightseeing. He went to visit the Temples commemorating Chu-ko Liang, Kung-sun Shu and Liu P’ei, the Eight Battle Dispositions, the Old Cypress, the White Salt Mountains, Yellow Grass Gorge, and to watch the sword pantomime dance of the pupil of Madame Kung-sun First. On the surface, it seems that Tu Fu had a busy social life.

V. EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING:

In many poems and particularly the ones which we will study in Chapter Three in greater detail, Tu Fu portrays himself as a sad and lonely man. In the last poem of "Late Spring I inscribed on the Wall of the Newly Rented Thatched Hut in Jang-hsi (five poems)," Tu Fu expresses his sadness at being too old to serve the court. The poem reads:

I want to present a proposal to save the country. 
However, I am only an aging official in the Department of State Affairs. 
The rebels are fighting endlessly. 
I am ashamed to join the flocks of ducks and egrets. 
The times are dangerous; human relations are tense. 
The headwind blows; the feathers of a bird are hurt. 
The sight of the setting sun over the river is sad. 
I weep till midnight, and my bed is wet with tears.
In the third and fourth lines of the poem "Winter Solstice," Tu Fu depicts how alienated he feels. The lines read:

Of all the people on the river, I am the only one whose countenance looks old.
At the world's end the customs please all but me.

In the last two lines of the same poem, Tu Fu describes how much he misses Ch'ang-an. The lines read:

My heart is broken into pieces of less than an inch.
The road ahead is blurred and I am lost. Where is Ch'ang-an?

Tu Fu feels too old to serve the court, out of place in K'uei-chou, and he yearns to go back to Ch'ang-an.

All in all, although Tu Fu's physical health was failing, on the surface his life was fairly well-settled. He was a gentleman farmer who was able to purchase some property and to hire servants to help him do the chores. In his leisure time, he attended social functions, wrote poetry, and went sightseeing. However, sometimes he was consumed by nostalgia, feeling lonely, alienated, and distressed by the fact that he could not serve the court.

In spring 768, Tu Fu decided to leave in order to meet his brother, Tu Kuan. In early 768, he went to Chiang-ling, then Yo-chou, and finally T'an-chou. In 770, he travelled to Heng-chou because of the outbreak of a
rebellion." After that, he intended to go to Ch'ên-chou where Tu's maternal uncle, Ts'ui Wei, was living, but after sailing about a hundred miles, he was detained by heavy rain. Later in 770, the poet died of sickness, with his desire to return to Ch'ang-an never fulfilled.

Throughout his life Tu Fu had an unsatisfying political career and was struck by bad luck. In 735, he failed the "Presented Scholar Examination," and in 746 when Tu Fu had a chance to write another examination, he was not chosen again. Even though he mentions that the emperor was impressed by the fu he presented in 751, Tu Fu was not assigned any post until 755. He was finally assigned as the Commandant of the District of Ho-hsi whose chief duty was to administer whippings to draft evaders and the tax delinquents, but the post was so unsatisfactory to him that he declined the offer. The court then re-assigned him as the Administrator in the Right Commandant Office of the Helmets Section whose duties were to look after weapons, armour, and keys. Though the job seems not to have been very fulfilling, he accepted the offer. However, when he went to Feng-hsien to tell his family, he found out that his son had died of hunger. When the An Lu-shan Rebellion broke out in 755, the two capitals were captured, and later when he went to Ling-wu to join Su-tsung, he was captured and brought back to
Ch’ang-an. Although in 757 Tu Fu was able to join the exiled court and was appointed as Left Reminder, a more satisfying and challenging post, he stayed in this post for only about a year and was demoted to Administrator of Hua-chou whose duties were to look after schools, temples, examinations, and ceremonies. Later he gave up this post and moved to Ch’in-chou. Subsequently he went to Ch’eng-tu. In 762, Yen Wu asked Tu Fu to work for him; however, Yen Wu was summoned back to Ch’ang-an in the summer. When Yen came back, although Tu Fu was appointed as the Acting Vice-Director of the Ministry of Public Works, an honorary title, whose duties were to give Yen military counsel, he discovered that young colleagues were jealous of him and felt so ill at ease that he requested Yen to grant him frequent leaves. After Yen died in 765, Tu Fu wandered around. Although he bought some property in K’uei-chou and on the surface was fairly well-settled there, in various poems he portrays himself as an old, fragile, lonely, and unhappy man. He left Ch’ang-an in 758 and until his very last day in 770, he still wanted to return.
ENDNOTES:

1. Some suggest that Tu Fu was probably born in Yen-shih, about three hundred miles to the east of Ch’ang-an, since Tu Fu’s grandparents and his ancestor, Tu Yu, were buried at the foot of the Shou-yang Hills, and in 813, Tu Fu’s grandson, Tu Ssu-yeh, brought the remains of Tu Fu to the family graveyard in Yen-shih for burial.

   The Old T’ang History and the New T’ang History, however, say that Hsiang-yang is the native land of Tu Fu, even though in his poems Tu Fu never mentions Hsiang-yang as his home.[Liu Hsü, Old T’ang History, reprint, (Shanghai: Chung Hua Book Co., 1975), chuan 190 p.5055; Ou-yang Hsiu & Sung Ch’i, New T’ang History, reprint, (Shanghai: Chung Hua Book Co. 1975), chuan 201, p.5736.]

   Many scholars regard Kung, a place close to Yen-shih, as his birthplace probably because Tu Fu’s great-grandfather was the magistrate of Kung, and so the family continued to live there for quite some time. However, Tu Fu makes no mention in his writings of Kung as the place of his birth.

2. Ching-chao was the first prefecture of the T’ang Empire, encompassing Ch’ang-an and some twenty districts. The first of these districts was Wan-nien, which also included Tu-ling. Tu-ling was only a few miles to the south of Ch’ang-an. [William Hung, Tu Fu: China’s Greatest Poet, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1969), p.19.]

3. Li Lin-fu, the Grand Councilor, feared some candidates might use the examinations as a forum in which to voice their criticisms of him to the emperor, so he persuaded His Majesty not to conduct the examinations in person but instead to appoint some officials to examine the candidates. Li later reported to the emperor that all the candidates had failed and that he should congratulate His Majesty for having already discovered all the talents in the empire. [Ssu-ma Kuang, Tzu Ch’ih T’ung Chien, reprint, (Hong Kong: Chung Hua Book Co., 1976), vol.3, chuan 215, p.6876.]

4. The three fu were to commemorate three stately ceremonies—sacrifices offered by the emperor on specially chosen dates in 751 to the Temple of Lao-tzu, to the Imperial Ancestral Temple, and to the Altars of Heaven and Earth. In the three fu Tu Fu tells His Majesty that he is in his fortieth year; that since his late teens he has
travelled far and has lived humbly; that while making a meagre living in the capital through selling herbal medicines and through the generosity of his friends, he has had the unusual opportunity to witness and record these wonderful ceremonies.

5. The Chinese text reads:
   奏賦入明光，天子發食品。

6. The Chinese text reads:
   懷獻三賦蓬萊宮，自怪一日聲輝赫。

7. The fourth, fifth, and sixth lines of "Do Not Suspect Me" read: The erudite men of the Academy of Scholarly Worthies surrounded me like a wall,
And watched me write in the Hall of the Secretariat. In those days my writings could move the emperor.

集賢學士如塔牆，觀我落筆中書堂。
往時文采動人主。


9. The Chinese text reads:
   時免河西尉為右衛率府兵曹。

10. The Chinese text reads:
    老妻寄驪縣 姑往共饑渴
    岁寧捻一衣 入門聞號咷
    無食致大折 賢窮有食幸
    十口隔風雪 誰能久分顧
    幼子餓已卒 豈知秋禾登 貧富有命乎

12. Ibid., p.39.

13. Ibid., pp.42-43.

14. Fang had volunteered to lead an army to recover the capital, but the battle at Ch'en-t'ao was a great disaster. [From Tu Fu's poem "The Tragedy of Ch'en-t'ao" (悲秋), we know that the casualties were over forty thousand.] Later, Fang fought again and was once more defeated by the rebels.

15. The Institute of Literature and History of Ssu-chuan, A Biography of Tu Fu, pp.43-44.

16. The Chinese text reads:

17. Ibid., p.49.

18. The Chinese text reads:

19. The Chinese text reads:

21. The Institute of Literature and History of Ssu-chuan ed., *A Biography of Tu Fu*, p.84.

22. The Chinese text reads:

男兒生無所成頭皓白
憶獻才賦蓬萊宮
集賢學士如堆牆
往時文章動人主
晚年飢寒託斗笠
喜謝悠悠世上兒

23. The Chinese text reads:

禽命含句色時放侖梧桐

24. The Chinese text reads:

伏枕雲安縣蔓延白帝城

25. The Chinese text reads:

老病巫山裏栖留楚客中藥淺他日裏
花發去年裏欲上釣沙而春多逆水風
合兮雙貢筆獨作一飄蓬

26. The Chinese text reads:

高秋疏肺氣白髮自能梳藥餌增加減
27. The Chinese text reads:

峡中一卧病 魂随终冬春

28. The Chinese text reads:

愈风传鸟鸣 欲御方漫暖

29. The Chinese text reads:

君望先爱子之国 陆陵翁 手齿半落大早黧

30. The note in Chinese reads:

主人拍中丞频分月俸

31. The poem reads:

In the East Village, the rain is plentiful by now.
I stand here and await the fragrant smell of rice.
Heaven up above does not practise favouritism.
Both reeds and weeds will grow.
People consider these plants not to be good,
And are afraid that they might spoil the work of farming.
No effort will be spared.
We pull up the weeds and put them by the side of the river bank.
The grain is the root sustaining life.
How will a traveller forget this?
In the spring, the farms were attended.
They were thoroughly ploughed according to rule.
The water buffaloes were strong and easy to manage.
We drove them over the fields.
Rich stalks had begun to bear.
Rain fell and formed square pools in the fields.
Everything that grows will come out.
This required care.
It is not that I did not have a supervisor
to supervise the works systematically.
In Ching and Yang, the climate was warm.
While I was waiting for a slight frost,
I was still afraid that the keeper might be slack,
and would not be vigilant enough.
So on a clear morning, I sent my maid and servant,
to convey my message over the high ridges.
After the harvest, I would give away some of what I had collected.
The Chinese text reads:

束緇如今足 伶聞採彩香  上天無偏頗
落闌各自長 人情見非類  田家戒其荒
功夫競損損 除草置岸傍  故若命之本
客居安可忘 青春具所務  勸懸見亂常
吳牛何容易 並駕紳遊場  豊苗亦已概
雲水照方塘 有生因蔓延  靜一資堤防
督領引無人 提携頑在紆  荊揚風土暖
肅肅候微霜 尚恐主字疏  用心未甚藏
清朝遣俳僕 吟詠臨崇閤  則成聚必教
3. 獨陵我念

32. The Chinese text reads:

束緇復漢西 一種住清溪  来往兼茅屋
淹留為談話 市井宜近利  林僻此無蹊
若訪袁翁説 仍令騰客迷

33. The Chinese text reads:

欲陳濟世策 已老尚書郎 3 息射狼閣
34. The Chinese text reads:

江上形容吾獨老 天涯風俗自相親

35. The Chinese text reads:

心折此時無一寸 路迷何處是三秦


37. Ibid., p.141.


39. "Sick with Fever on the Boat: I Wrote These Thirty-Six Rhymes in Bed to Present to Relatives and Friends in Hu-nan" (風疾舟中 伏秋書懷三十六首 未呈湖南親友 ) is the last poem in Tu Fu’s extant collection. Probably, as Hung and The Institute of Literature and History of Ssu-chuan suggest, Tu Fu might have died of this fever. (The Institute of Literature and History of Ssu-chuan ed., *A Biography of Tu Fu*, pp.144-145; Hung, *Tu Fu: China’s Greatest Poet*, p.278.)
CHAPTER TWO
GENERAL REVIEW OF PAST CRITICISM AND STATEMENT OF MY APPROACH

A. INTRODUCTION:

Tu Fu's poetry was not widely or fully appreciated by contemporary writers and scholars during his lifetime. Yüan Chen was among the first to discern the greatness of Tu Fu's contributions to Chinese poetry. In the latter part of the fourteenth line of "Funeral Inscriptions, of the Deceased Acting Vice-Director of the Ministry of Public Works (with preface)," (唐故檢校工部員外郎杜君墓係銘碑序) Yüan Chen writes:

He (Tu Fu) attained all the styles of scholars of antiquity and captured the unique and distinctive characteristics of men of letters of the present.

As Yüan Chen and poets like Han Yü began to promote Tu Fu's poetry, more scholars studied his work and wrote commentaries; some even tried to imitate Tu Fu's style. Thus, only after his death did Tu Fu become a towering figure in Chinese poetry.

The criticisms of Tu Fu's works are varied and extensive. Nine noted scholars, Wang Chu, Sung Ch'i, Wang An-shih, Huang T'ing-chien, Hsieh Meng-fu, Tu T'ien, Pao
Piao, Shih Yin, and Chao Yen-ts’ai wrote commentaries on Tu Fu’s poetry from the eleventh to twelfth centuries. The views of these scholars, popularly known as the Nine Commentators, were compiled by Kuo Chih-ta in 1181. In 1645, Wang Ssu-shih, a Ming dynasty scholar wrote _Tu I_ (The Feelings of Tu Fu), a commentary on Tu Fu’s poetry. In 1667, Ch’ien Ch’ien-i, an ardent historical researcher, published his commentary _Ch’ien Chu Tu Shih_ (A Commentary of Tu Fu’s Poetry by Ch’ien) on Tu Fu’s poems. In 1703, Ch’iu Chao-ao compiled his and previous commentators’ comments in a book called _Tu Shih Hsiang Chu_ (A Detailed Commentary of Tu Fu’s Poetry). In 1724, P’u Ch’i-lung published his interpretations on Tu Fu’s works in _Tu Tu Hsin Chieh_ (An Interpretation of Emotions of Tu Fu’s Poetry), and in 1792, Yang Lun published _Tu Shih Ching Ch’uan_ (Reflections and Evaluations of Tu Fu’s Poetry). In 1870 Shih Hung-pao released his commentary entitled _Tu Tu Shih Shuo_ (A Commentary of Tu Fu’s Poetry) in response to Ch’iu Chao-ao’s comments. The comments made by these critics, though varied, tend to follow three consistent approaches. I will summarize their methodology as follows.

**B. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF PAST CRITICISM (FROM 12TH CENTURY TO 19TH CENTURY)**

Many of Tu Fu commentators tend to adopt a line-by-line
textual analysis of the poems. The Nine Commentators employ such a method. For instance, in "Autumn Meditations II" (秋興第二首) Chao Yen-ts’ai points out that the second line of the poem should read: "Each night guided by the Small Dipper, I gaze toward the capital." Shih Yin, however, argues that it should read: "Each night guided by the Big Dipper, I gaze toward the capital." Shih points out that Ch’ang-an is north of K’uei-chou, and the Big Dipper is overhead in Ch’ang-an. As for the remarks of the third and fourth lines, one of the commentators explains two allusions which Tu Fu employs. One of the commentators elucidates the sources of "gibbons cry" and "Chang Ch’ien’s mission to the West." Chao discusses the use of the incense burners of the State Affairs Building which Tu Fu uses in the fifth line, and also points out that "the turrets against the hills" expressed in the sixth line is a reference to the White Emperor City. Chao comments on the last couplet, arguing that since ivy grows in summer and reed blossoms bloom in autumn, the poet must be riding in a boat and describing the scenery of the changing of seasons from summer to autumn.²

Secondly, some critics, Ch’ien Ch’ien-i in particular, concentrate on the historical significance of images. Ch’ien explains the history of certain places, allusions, historical figures, and incidents in great detail. For
instance, in "Autumn Meditations V," Ch’ien explains how and when the palace was built, and describes its beauty in great detail. He suggests that in this first line, the poet recalls the time and the place he presented the three fu to the emperor in 751. Ch’ien also says that the "Queen Mother," a Taoist figure, is a reference to Yang Kuei-fei, and explains how Yang Kuei-fei, once a Taoist nun, later became Hsüan-tsung’s favourite concubine. Both the Queen Mother and Yang Kuei-fei, he argues, have something in common. Ch’ien also points out that the poet alludes in the fourth line to Hsüan-tsung, and to his interest in Taoist superstitions during the later part of his reign, an interest which distracted him from properly managing affairs of state. Ch’ien goes on to explain the reference to "pheasant-tail screens" in great detail. He explicates how the "pheasant-tail screens" were used during the late reign of Hsüan-tsung. In the fifth and sixth lines, he says Tu Fu describes the ceremonies he saw in court as well as his presentation to Hsüan-tsung as a commoner. In the last couplet, Ch’ien thinks that Tu Fu recalls and laments the short time when he was the Reminder during Su-tsung’s reign.

Finally, some critics adopt a more interpretive approach, concerning themselves with how the poems’ images are best understood. Though these critics attempt to throw
light on the thoughts and feelings of Tu Fu, their analyses frequently seem to be based on the individual critic's personal interpretation of a poem rather than on a rational and logical framework. Sometimes they concentrate on matters which do not directly contribute to a better understanding of Tu Fu's poetic techniques and sometimes what they argue is difficult to verify. Wang Ssu-shih, Ch'iu Chao-ao, P'u Ch'i-lung, Yang Lun, and Shih Hung-pao are representative of this approach, and in order to elucidate the character of that approach, I will cite an example from the commentary of each.

Wang Ssu-shih points out that Tu Fu's emotion expressed in the second line of "Autumn Meditations II" is very sad because the poet's homeland is in the capital, and yet he can only gaze at it but cannot go back. Wang also says that the third line conveys the poet's actual experience, that Tu Fu is moved by the cries of the gibbons and he sheds his tears. He notes that in the fifth and sixth lines, the poet tells the reader that he refused to take the assignment because of illness. In Wang's opinion, "the mournful bugles" in the sixth line are an allusion to war. Wang also remarks that the last two lines refer to the swift passing of time, and that the poet feels old but as though he has accomplished nothing.

Commenting on "Autumn Meditations VII," Ch'iu Chao-ao
claims that Tu Fu is expressing his nostalgia for Lake K’un-ming, and laments that he is too far away to be able to see the lake. Concerning the first two lines, Ch’iu says Tu Fu is comparing Han with the T’ang Empire. Ch’iu argues that Hsuan-tsung built his ships in the lake. He substantiates his claim by citing two lines of the poem, "Fifty Rhymes sent to Mr. Chia Chih, the Adjutant of Yo-chou, and Mr. Yen Wu, Prefect of Pa-chou" which read: "The Imperial regalia no longer can be seen/ Our fleet remained useless." Ch’iu thinks that in the third and fourth lines, the poet depicts the grandeur of the lake he remembers and in the two lines that follow, describes its distressing scenery. In the last two lines, Tu Fu compares himself to a fisherman and laments that he does not know when he can go back to the capital.

P’u Ch’i-lung comments that in the first line of "Autumn Meditations I" Tu Fu depicts the autumn scenery, and in the second line describes K’uei-chou. "River banks" and "above the passes" are the poet’s references to K’uei-chou, and "waves rage up the the sky" and "shadows of the clouds" are the descriptions of the autumn scenery. The fifth and sixth lines are the poet’s general descriptions of his thoughts. P’u points out that the poet elaborates "other days" in the following seven poems, and that by "other days"
he refers to the time he spent in the State Affairs Building, the time he remonstrated with the throne, the period of Ch’ang-an’s instability, the hundred years’ of past events, the time he answered the court by the blue-chained patterned door, the time of the beautiful palace he saw, the banners he remembered, and the time he presented his fu to the emperor. P’u further remarks that the poet also elaborates "his home" in the following poems: the Big Dipper, the Five Tombs, Ch’ang-an, the mansions, P’êng-lai Palace, the Crooked River, Lake K’un-ming, and Lake Mei-pei. P’u perceives that when the poet thinks of his past, he sheds his tears. Although P’u expounds "the other days" in detail, he does not explain what criteria he uses to draw such a conclusion.

Yang Lun points out that in "Autumn Meditations V" the poet misses the Crooked River and laments the devastation of the empire. Yang disagrees with Wang Ho who thinks that "imperial resplendence came" is a reflection of the intimate relationship between the emperor and his brothers. Yang thinks that the line only demonstrates the emperor’s route to the Crooked River. Yang finds that in the third and fourth lines the poet hints that indulgence in materialistic pleasures is the cause of the empire’s downfall, a thought which the poet expands in the following lines. Yang also deems that in the fifth and sixth lines, the poet recalls
the beauty of the Crooked River in the past, and in the last two lines, he laments the fact that pleasures bring forth destruction.

Shih disagrees with Ch’iu’s ideas about the "hundred years" in "Autumn Meditations IV." Shih regards the phrase as only a general rough estimate of time which should not be taken too literally. Shih argues that if we take it literally, then the reigns of political unrest of Ch’ang-an cannot be applied to the times of T’ai-tsung and T’ai-tsung’s father. Shih also disagrees with Wang Ssu-shih and Shao Ch’ang-heng who think that the third line is a reference to the improper promotion of civil and military officials. Shih cites the lines of other poems in which the poet also mentions "caps and robes." Shih concludes that since in those poems the phrase consistently refers to officials who are properly chosen, the poet could not mean otherwise in this poem. Shih also disagrees with Ch’ien who thinks that the third line is a satire on Hsüan-tsung’s and Su-tsung’s miscalculated trust. Shih argues that those warriors who were of foreign blood employed by the T’ang court did wear the same kind of caps and robes as others when they served the empire. He sees the third line as a reference to young and inexperienced officials and seems to suggest that in the third and fourth lines the poet mourns the changes which had taken place; he does not think that
Tu Fu refers to a particular group of people.

Given this long tradition of criticism, it is not surprising that discussions of Tu Fu’s poetry are sometimes controversial. For instance, Chao Yen-ts’ai points out that the "turrets against the hills" in "Autumn Meditations II" is a reference to White Emperor City. Yang Lun and Chang Ts’ung, however, think that it is a reference to West Chamber. Wang Ssu-shih thinks that the "futile mission" in the same poem, is a reference to the work in the Personal Evaluation Section assigned to the poet by the court in 763. Ch’iu and P’u, however, think that it is a reference to the post of Counselor Acting Vice-Director of the Minister of Works assigned to the poet by Yen Wu in 764.

The traditional criticism of Tu Fu’s poetry undoubtedly has great value. These commentators had read Tu Fu’s poetry thoroughly and were very knowledgeable about the historical figures, incidents, and places which Tu Fu mentions in his poems. In their commentaries, they assiduously elucidate the allusions employed by Tu Fu and also explain his references. Some of the ground-work established by these critics is useful and makes reading Tu Fu’s poetry easier to understand. However, from a modern perspective, much of the commentary lacks force and seems to fall short of perceptive and convincing analyses. More often than not,
these critics simply provide a statement of opinion concerning the images without offering explanations. They tell us little about the artistic qualities and achievements of Tu Fu’s works. Modern criticism should be more impartial and analytical.

Tu Fu’s poetry is perhaps better considered in terms of theme and his poetic technique. During the one-year and ten-month period that Tu Fu resided in K’uei-chou, he wrote 55 hepta-syllabic regulated verses. These were concerned with a great variety of themes. In 36 of them, Tu Fu addresses friends, generals, relatives, and a servant. He also expresses reflections on historic sites, rain, floods, eagles, a pavilion, spring, his sickness, and his concern about the lives of people besieged by rebels. But in about one third of these verses (nineteen poems), Tu Fu expresses a similar theme—his deep sense of nostalgia toward Ch’ang-an. There is, I believe, much to be gained from taking these poems as a group and analysing the specific technique Tu Fu employed to express the theme of nostalgia, which dominated so much of his poetic endeavour.

What is most striking about Tu Fu’s nostalgia poems is their common reliance upon three particular poetic techniques. These are the association of one time with another, the association of one place with another, and the
reflection and transformation of the external world described in the poems as he informs it with his own thoughts and feelings about his unfulfilled career and his nostalgia for Ch’ang-an. These three techniques are not used uniformly throughout all nineteen poems. However all three are used together in a manner which makes the expression of nostalgia most effective.

1) Association of Past and Present:

Scenery which Tu Fu sees in K’uei-chou incites him to think of the past. Memories of the past simultaneously occur in the poet’s mind when he sees the scenery before his eyes. Throughout the poems Tu Fu uses this "flash-back" technique to associate the past with the present and to correlate the present with the past.

2) Association of One Place with Another:

Tu Fu diminishes the physical barrier between Ch’ang-an—where he wants to be and K’uei-chou—where he actually is. He associates the things he sees or the sounds he hears in K’uei-chou with what he saw or what he heard when he was in the capital. What he sees and what he hears in K’uei-chou is also what he visualized and what he heard in Ch’ang-an. The things that he sees and hears in K’uei-chou also serve as vehicles to take him back in memory to Ch’ang-an.
3) Transformation of the External World Informed by the Subjective World:

In thirteen of these poems Tu Fu reflects and transforms the external world described in the poems with his own thoughts and feelings in a manner described by Chung Hung (700–518 B.C.) in his *Grades of Poetry*. (詩之志) Chung Hung defines poetry as a product of genuine feelings arising from the response of mind to nature and human experiences. In his preface, he says: "Ch'i (spirit) touches matter, and matter moves men, thereby stirring up feelings which are then manifested in song and dance."

In another part he elucidates the meaning of "matter." He writes: 

The birds and breezes of spring, the moon and cicada of autumn, the clouds and rains of summer, the chill of the winter season—these are the four seasonal aspects that move the poet. At festive gatherings he turns to poetry to express his feelings of intimacy; at separations he expresses his grief in verse. The exiling of the minister of Ch'u, the Han concubine taking leave of the palace, or skeletons spread out over the northern wildness, or the soul flown away among the tangled grasses, or spears carried to the far-flung regions, the spirit of combat flooding the borderlands, the traveller on the frontier with clothes too thin, the lady in her chamber with tears run dry, or the scholar-official who gives up his office and takes leave of the court with no thought of ever returning, or the woman who wins favour by the raising of a brow, and topples a kingdom with a mere second glance—all these things touch the heart and stir the soul. How else can one give vent to these feelings than by expressing them in poetry? How else can one give free reign to his emotions than through the Long Song?
Tu Fu is moved by the natural scenes which he sees and he is overwhelmed by his unfulfilled career and his nostalgia toward Ch’ang-an in a manner which exemplifies Chung’s ideas.

Chung suggests that the modes of expression used to portray the close relationship between poetry and season, scene and life experience are the use of evocative imagery (hsing) and comparison (pi). These are primarily based upon immediate response of mind to matter and direct description which is based upon factual narration and straightforward depiction."

Tu Fu describes and narrates the natural scene and his life experience in a manner which makes evident his own response to them. The world and experience so described and narrated in Tu Fu’s poems are transformed by Tu Fu’s thoughts and feelings. They are actively involved in achieving a transformation of what he hears and what he sees through the filter of his thoughts and feelings about his unfulfilled career and nostalgia for Ch’ang-an.

In conclusion, the scenery before Tu Fu’s eyes provokes him to think of the past and the place where he wants to be. Tu Fu uses his grief and nostalgia to create a backdrop informed by his thoughts and mood. It is the use of these techniques, I believe, which constitutes one of the sources
of Tu Fu’s poetic brilliance. They coincide with the theme of nostalgia, and are in fact inextricably bound to it; structure reinforces and helps to create theme and form; it coincides with the content. Thus, insofar as technique and theme are meshed in Tu Fu’s nineteen nostalgia poems, they are best comprehended in terms of their common theme and the technique Tu Fu uses to express it.
ENDNOTES:

1. The Chinese text reads:

蓋得古人之體勢
而兼今人之所獨貴


5. The Chinese text reads:

無復雲臺仗
虛修水戰船


The text in Chinese reads:

氣之動物，物之感人，故搖蕩性情，形諸歌詠。

12. Ibid., p.17.
The text in Chinese reads:

若乃春風春鳥，秋月秋蟬，夏雲雲雨，冬月霜
寒，斯四時之感致詩者也。嘉禽奇詩以親，
離群託詩以怨。至于楚臣去境，漢客辭第。
或骨橫朔野，或魂逐蓬蓬。或負戈外戍，
殺氣雄邊，塞客衣單，霜聞淚盡。又士
有解佩出朝，一去忘返。女有揚蛾入
罷，再盼傾國。凡斯種種，感蕩心靈，
非陳詩何以表其義？非長歌何以
騁其情？
CHAPTER THREE

A STUDY OF TU FU'S NINETEEN HEPTA-SYLLABIC REGULATED VERSES WRITTEN IN K’UEI-CHOU IN 766 AND 767 A.D.

This chapter will demonstrate how Tu Fu uses the three poetic techniques in the nineteen hepta-syllabic regulated verses which he wrote in K’uei-chou in 766 and 767 A.D. A translation of each poem is given first; then I discuss the imagery and meaning of each poem, referring where helpful to comments made by those critics whom I consider representative of past Tu Fu scholarship.

The text of the poems on which the translations are based are the conventional versions which many commentators, such as Ch’ou Chao-ao and Yang Lun, have used. There are many different versions and some discrepancies among them. I do not want to use too much space discussing them. The poems cited and analyzed are arranged in chronological order.

The poems are translated in a manner which I think best reveals the poet’s intention. A caesura is a rhetorical and extrametrical pause or phrasal break within the poetic line.¹ These caesuras cause the reader to pause and think, to take a moment to contemplate and better appreciate the poet’s meaning. This has prompted me to arrange the lines in an unconventional manner to reflect how a poem is read.
Where possible, I try to convey the ambiguity of the poet’s meaning in the translation and where differences in the grammatical requirements of the English language and the Chinese language do not allow this, I will include an endnote to suggest different interpretations.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 766: Nos. 1 to 15

1. The Highest Tower Of White Emperor City (白帝城最高樓)

1 From the pointed ramparts
   the paths narrow
   the banners are sad.

2 Standing alone
   on the lofty tower
   I gaze at the sights,
   far off
   indistinct.

3 The Gorges seem torn;
   the clouds are dark,
   like sleeping dragons
   and tigers.

4 The river
   embraced by the sun
   looks clear;
   large turtles and
   water lizards are drifting.

5 The Fu-sang Tree,
   its western branch pointing,
   faces the broken cliffs.

6 The Weak Stream
   of the east
   is flowing into
   the big river.

7 Who is it that holds a walking-stick
   laments
   the world,

8 Weeps
   blood
   strikes at the air
   and shakes
   his
   white
   head?
In the first four lines, the poet describes where he is and what he sees from his position. In the description of the scenery Tu Fu transforms the objects which he describes around him, informing them with his own feelings. We see in the last two lines that the poet is old, sick, laments the world, weeps blood, strikes at the air, and shakes his head. The world around the poet seems also informed with the poet's uncertainty, fear, and sadness. The pointed shape of the ramparts and the narrowness of the paths described in the first line portray a jagged and cramped image. The banners "are sad" and the view as a whole is "far off" and "indistinct."

The dark clouds and perhaps rocks cover part of the gorges, making the gorges look torn. From a distance the dark clouds also look like sleeping dragons and tigers. The expressions "the gorges seem torn," "the dark clouds," and "sleeping dragons and tigers" give the reader a sense of
strain, unease, and foreboding. The phrases are connected with and develop the cramped feeling conveyed in the first line.

The fifth and sixth lines suggest the poet's vast and extensive imagination. The western branch of the Fu-sang Tree, a legendary mythical tree, grows in the place where the sun rises. The Weak Stream is a legendary mythical stream which originates from a place very far away. It seems that the poet implies that the gorges are so tall that the broken cliffs face the western branch of the Fu-sang Tree, and that the river flows so far that the Weak Stream merges with it. These two lines, exaggerated as they may seem, are important in preparing for the climax revealed in the last couplet--expressions of an immediate scene. The poet is standing alone on a very high tower, gazing at sights far off and indistinct. The drama of the physical setting embodies the dramatic proportion of the poet's thoughts and feelings.

The poet's distressed frame of mind is shown clearly in the description of himself in the last two lines. It is an intense and powerful description of a man whose dramatic emotions are the energy source in this vista from which its character is derived. When Tu Fu, an old man, looks back on what has happened, he has reason to be passionate, to be angry and sad, either with his own life, the circumstances
of the world, or both. Certainly it is not what he observes immediately which brings him to this state of mind. Perhaps scenes of the past—the sufferings of the people, the golden age and the downfall of the T’ang Empire, the poet’s unsuccessful political career, and his home near Ch’ang-an—unfold in his mind.

2. Overlooking Scenery Of The Gorge (峡中览物)
1 Once as an official
   I journeyed in haste to San-fu.
2 I recall in T’ung Kuan
   I was inspired to write many poems.
3 Looking at the Wu Gorge
   I suddenly
   behold Mt. Hua
4 Gazing at the river of Shu
   I see
   the Yellow River.
5 Falling ill on the boat
   I moved
   my bed to the land.
6 I passed the spring in the grotto
   a place lush with figs and ivy.
7 The sights are beautiful but
   the customs
   and the climate
   of the place
   displease me.
8 When will I return
   and sing my songs
   aloud?

曾为役吏趍三韩, 念在潼闉诗兴多
巫峡忽如瞻华嶽, 荆江犹似是黄河
舟中得病移蓑枕, 洞口经春长薜荔
形胜有时风土恶, 几时回首一高歌
Tu Fu begins by reminiscing about the time when he was in T'ung-kuan, a place of inspiration for him. The poet thinks that he will not be able to write as many poems in K'uei-chou as he did in T'ung-kuan, though his extant collection shows that he was wrong. K'uei-chou was in fact a place of stimulation.

In the next two lines, Tu Fu continues to reminisce. He associates the scenery before his eyes with the scenery of the north which he misses. The Wu Gorge and the river of Shu suddenly and immediately become Mt Hua and the Yellow River, showing the power of Tu Fu's thoughts over his perception. These two lines show that the poet is lost in thought—thinking of the time when he was in the north and merging that time past with his present reality.

In lines five and six the poet comes back to the present. Tu Fu explains why he landed, where, how long he stayed, and what he saw.

In the last two lines, Tu Fu states his wish to return to the north. Although Tu Fu admits that K'uei-chou is perhaps more beautiful than the north, the place, with its bad climate and unpleasant customs, does not appeal him. His home-town outshines K'uei-chou in his mind.

In this poem the poet shifts his focus between time and space, associates the present with the past, and the
natural scenes before him with scenes he remembers from places he has been before. In the first two lines, Tu Fu reminisces about the past. In the third and fourth lines, he associates the scenery before his eyes with the scenery of the north he misses. In the fifth and sixth lines, the poet comes back to the real world, and in the last two lines, expresses his wish to go back to the place where he was and perhaps wishes to return also to his past experience.

The focus of this poem is the question Tu Fu asks at the end: when will he return to sing his songs aloud? He contrasts the inspiration of T'ung Kuan with the customs and climate of K'uei-chou, which he dislikes, and where, rather than being full of life in the creation of poetry, he was ill. The scene before him of the Wu Gorge and the river of Shu bring Mt Hua and the Yellow River to mind. This merging and floating of associations between where he is and where he has been, between past and present, and between one scene and another combine to give a vivid image of the poet's mind. While he is physically present in K'uei-chou, emotionally he is in Ch'ang-an.
3. At Night (夜)

1. The dew forms below
   the sky is overhead
   and the autumn air
   is clear.

2. Alone in the empty
   mountains
   the startled traveller
   cannot sleep.

3. Scattered lights are dim
   the forlorn sail is hoisted.

4. The new moon
   is still
   hanging
   and two pestles
   beat.

5. The sick man is lying down
   in the south he saw
   the chrysanthemums
   bloom
   for the second
   time.

6. Unsympathetic geese
   bring no letters
   from the north.

7. The traveller walks
   under
   the eaves
   leaning against his walking-stick
   gazing at the Ox
   and the Big Dipper.

8. The Milky Way should be able to reach
   the Phoenix Capital
   from
   afar.
The technique of transforming objective reality, informing it with the poet's own feelings is also evident in this poem. We are told in line two that the poet, who is travelling, is startled, in line five that he is sick and in line seven that he is old and sick. The poet, who is in such a state, creates a solitary and foreboding atmosphere in the first four lines. The first line establishes a quiet, solitary mood which contrasts with the second in which the traveller is "startled." The mountains are "empty," the poet "alone;" lights are few, "scattered" and "dim," the hoisted sail "forlorn," and the moon hangs in the sky. Like the mountains, the lights, the boat, the moon, and the sounds of the pestles he hears, the poet feels isolated and alone and like the first line of the poem "The Highest Tower of White Emperor City"—"From the pointed ramparts the paths narrow, the banners are sad"—the second line of this poem gives the reader a sense of unease and foreboding which Tu Fu expounds in more detail in the latter lines.

In the fifth and sixth lines, Tu Fu reveals why he feels so ill at ease. Here he associates past with present and where he is with where he has been. He tells the reader that he sees the chrysanthemums in the south bloom for the second time. The chrysanthemums that he sees remind him that he is not at home. He expresses his dismay. Even the geese flying by from the north are indifferent to his hope and
feelings because they bring him no news from the north. Again, the poet transforms the external world informed by his subjective world. The poet has not heard from home for quite some time. The world is unkind, even unsympathetic. The fact that he has heard nothing from the north makes him feel abandoned and forlorn.

In the last two lines, the poet gazes at the stars which also shine on the capital and for him serve as an imaginary link with or a vehicle to take him to Ch’ang-an. This connection, however, is nebulous and insubstantial and only underscores his helplessness and the pain which the distance between Ch’ang-an and K’uei-chou causes him.

The following poems, nos.4-11, are a series of eight poems written under the same title "Autumn Meditations" in which Tu Fu expresses his nostalgia for Ch’ang-an.

4. Autumn Meditations I (秋興 第一首)
1 Dew-drops
   wilt
   and wound
   the maple trees
   in the wood.
2 A sombre
   desolate atmosphere
   is spreading
   from the Wu Mountain
   and the Wu Gorge.
3 The waves on the river banks rage up
   to the sky.
4 Above the passes
the shadows of the clouds in the wind
converge
on the ground.

Clustered chrysanthemums
have bloomed
twice
they bring me
tears
of other days’ memories.

To a
lonely boat
I tie
my homeward
thoughts.

Everywhere
winter clothes urge on the scissors
and rulers.

How rapidly
the people
pound their laundry mallets
in White Emperor City
in the evening!

In the first four lines of this poem, Tu Fu describes
the gloomy, sombre, and desolate scenery which matches his
own feelings revealed in the second half of the poem. In the
first line, Tu Fu uses "wilt" and "wound" to describe the
damaging effect of dew-drops on the maple trees. By contrast
"dew" normally symbolizes grace or a kind of divine elixir that can extend one's life. The unusually negative sense of this symbol exemplifies the extent to which Tu Fu's perceptions are affected by his feelings. The depiction reinforces the impending disorder in the two lines that follow. The descriptions of lines three and four portray a lack of order and a threatening image. In line three the earth appears to invade the sky as the waves rage up to the sky and in line four the shadows of the clouds converge on the ground. This confusion of the natural order gives the reader a sense of apprehension. As we shall see the descriptions of the damaging effect of the dew-drops and the waves highlight the impending disorder but also convey a sense of lifelessness, disarray, and heart-break.

In the second half of the poem, Tu Fu reveals his own feelings. In the fifth line he associates the clustered chrysanthemums with his past in another place. He recalls when he saw the chrysanthemums bloom in a previous year. The flowers remind him that he is not in Ch'ang-an but is still wandering. In line six, the poet transforms the boat, informing it with his own feeling of loneliness. He expresses his hopelessness along with his strong wish to return. He cannot ride on the boat back to the capital, so he ties his thoughts to it.

In the last couplet the poet is back in the real world.
He shows his feeling of impending threat—"everywhere winter
clothes urge on the scissors and rulers" and the people are
"rapidly" "pounding" their laundry mallets. The words
"urge," "rapidly," and "pounding" portray an uneasy and
intimidating atmosphere. The sounds that Tu Fu hears,
perhaps, further weigh down his anxiety.

The poet's focus shifts from a description of the
surroundings which are transformed by his own feelings. In
the first four lines, he depicts the scenery before him, a
portrayal which gives the reader a sense of unease, a lack
of order, and a threatening image. In the fifth and sixth
lines, the clustered chrysanthemums bring his past to mind
and his loneliness for his home. In the seventh and eighth
lines, he is back to the present again as he describes what
he hears and yet he expresses his feelings of impending
unhappiness and solitude.

5. Autumn Meditations II (秋興第四首)

1  On the
   solitary
city walls of K'uei-chou
slant
the rays of the
setting sun.

2  Each night
   guided by the Big Dipper
   I gaze toward
   the capital.
3 True to the old song
we shed our tears
when we hear
the gibbons cry
thrice."
4 My mission
of drifting
on the raft
which came by in the eighth month
was futile."
5 Incense burners
in the painted halls of the State Affairs Building
are distant
from the sick-bed.
6 The sound of the mournful bugles
drifts
vaguely
from the white-washed parapets
of the turrets
against the hills.
7 Behold!
The moon that lit the ivy on the rocks
8 Is now shining
on the reed blossoms
by the shores of the isle.

The second poem is a continuation of the first in which Tu Fu discloses his feelings toward Ch’ang-an in a deeper fashion.

Tu Fu first describes the evening scenery before his eyes in a manner that informs it with his own feelings. He
finds the city walls solitary, corresponding exactly with the way he feels. Line two shows how ardent and anxious Tu Fu is. Instead of going to bed, he stays up and waits to watch the stars every night. By gazing at the Big Dipper, he seems to be able to see Ch’ang-an in his mind. The Big Dipper, an unearthly body like the Milky Way in the poem "At Night," becomes a vehicle which can take him where he wants to go, the link with Ch’ang-an about which he is lost in thought.

In line three Tu Fu is back to the real world, the cries of the gibbons having awakened him. He hears the gibbons cry and he has reasons to cry too. What those reasons are he reveals in the fourth line. As mentioned in the end-note to this line, Tu Fu employs two allusions: Chang Ch’ien’s mission to the west and a man’s riding on a raft. These two allusions can be taken as reference to his service to Yen Wu. "The mission" can be taken as a reference to the military counselor post assigned by Yen Wu in 764 and the "raft," the means to take him back to the capital. Perhaps, Tu Fu thought that by working with Yen Wu, he might eventually be summoned back to the capital. "The mission of drifting on the raft" proved futile because Yen Wu died in 765.

In line five the poet contrasts his past with his present. He recalls what his life was like when he served
in Ch’ang-an as the Left Reminder. In those days, incense burned all night long as Tu Fu stayed up to write memorials to his superior. Tu Fu mentions that the incense burners, an allusion to his service in the Secretariat, are far away from K’uei-chou, a place where he is now sick. In line six the poet is back in the present. He is awakened by the sound of bugles. This line contrasts with the previous one as he mentions that the incense burners are far away from him and yet he can hear the sound of the bugles. The sound of the bugles corresponds to his emotions. We can envisage the poet, an old, sick, and lonely man in a strange and forlorn city, watching the stars every night, reminiscing about his past, torn by the thought that he may not be able to return to his home.

In the last two lines time has passed unnoticed and Tu Fu is surprised at the quick passage of time. The moon has come out and is shining on the reed blossoms.

In this poem, as in the previous examples, the poet blends different times, spaces, and emotions. In the first two lines, he describes the world around him transformed by his own feelings. In the third and fourth lines, he associates what he hears with his past experiences. In the fifth line, he contrasts the past with the present, and in the sixth line, describes the music he hears in the present
that corresponds to his emotions. He ends the poem by
describing the scenery he sees in the present, a time
different from that of the beginning of the poem. The
scenery he sees makes him realize the quick passage of time.

6. Autumn Meditations III (秋興第三首)
1 A thousand village houses
   on the hills are standing
   quietly
   in the morning light.
2 Day
   after day
   on the veranda
   by the river
   I sit amid
   nature’s brilliant greens
   and blues.
3 The boats
   where the fishermen slept for two nights are still
   bobbing
   on the waves.
4 In the cool autumn
   swallows are still
   flying
   to and fro
   as usual.
5 Like K’uang Heng
   I also
   remonstrated with the emperor but
   my fame
   is meagre. "
6 Like Liu Hsiang
   I wanted to promote learning but that
   too
   failed
   to materialize."
7 Most of my school-mates from childhood are now
   prominent.
8 In the neighbourhood of the Five Tombs
   they ride their sleek horses
   in light cloaks.
In the first couplet on the surface the poet depicts the peaceful and serene scene which he sees. However, the phrase "day after day" suggests the poet's idleness and his sense of futility. Like the use of the words "each night" in the second line of the previous poem, he has nothing to do but to sit on the veranda every day and at night he gazes at the stars. Both activites buttress the theme of nostalgia. The poet sits idle all day and all night, thinking of nothing but the capital. It is as though he has ceased to live in the present world and the focus of his life is centred on recollections of the past. He ponders and observes what is around him in a manner which reveals his nostalgia and sadness. As often happens in these poems the boundary between past and present seems to dissolve for Tu Fu.

This is demonstrated again in lines three and four. The
description of "bobbing of the boats" and birds still "flying to and fro" are the effect of the uneasiness and unsettled condition of the poet himself. Painful memories expounded in the following lines are just below the surface. He moves easily and noticeably from the present which he sees through the lens of these memories to the memories themselves in the remainder of the poem.

In lines five and six Tu Fu compares his service to the emperor with that of K’uang Heng. He wonders why he was reprimanded and yet K’uang Heng was promoted and why his efforts to promote learning failed to materialize while Liu Hsiang succeeded. In lines seven and eight he thinks of his class-mates who are now prominent and are enjoying life in Ch’ang-an while he has accomplished nothing and struggles to make ends meet. There is, however, something rather ghostly about this last image read in the context of the poem, rather like a person who looks at the sunny sky from a dark room.

Tu Fu’s observation of the present are transformed by his thoughts and emotions related to his past in Ch’ang-an. His thoughts drift from the past as though he barely distinguishes one from the other.

7. Autumn Meditations IV （秋興第四首）
1 It is said that Ch’ang-an is like a chess-board.
For a hundred years
the events have been too sad
to recall.
The manors
of princes and nobles from the olden days
all have
new masters.
The caps and robes
of the civil and military officials
are different from those of old.
Straight north on the mountain passes
the gongs and drums
rumble.
To the chariots and horses
campaigning in the west
feathered dispatches are rushed.  
Fish and dragons are
quiet
in the cool autumn river.
The peaceful times
of my old native country are
always
in my thoughts.

The linking of the past with the present is a central part of the aesthetic beauty of this poem. The connection is close and constant. The boundary blurs. In the first two
lines the history of Ch’ang-an is referred to in discussion and recalled in the present. Events of the past hundred years are recalled by the poet and are part of the consciousness he observes in the present society. Princes and nobles of old are juxtaposed with new masters of the manors of the city as though from the past they look over their descendant’s shoulders. The clothing of the day is viewed by the standard of the past. In lines five and six the boundary between past and present dissolve completely. He listens to the rumble of gongs and drums and the rushing chariots and horses as though he actually hears them yet these are actually references to the distant past. Simultaneously he listens to the cool autumn river.

Tu Fu begins by describing Ch’ang-an with the metaphor of a "chess-board" to describe the many changes which have occurred there and the uncertainty and danger which Ch’ang-an and its people have had to face during the victories and defeats of the struggles for power throughout its history. Ch’ang-an, once a bustling, thriving, beautiful, and peaceful city, was later devastated by the An Lu-shan’s Rebellion and the invasion by the Tibetans when it was burned and its people slaughtered. The third and fourth lines further elaborate the many changes which Ch’ang-an has undergone. To the poet, it seems that everything in Ch’ang-an and in the court has changed.
In the last couplet Tu Fu returns from his reminiscences of Ch’ang-an’s painful past as he listens to the cool autumn river and states the peaceful time of his native country is always on his mind. It is, perhaps, not accidental that Tu Fu sees the past as a golden age which has been lost. This nostalgia corresponds with the chronology of his own life. It may be that his view of his own misfortune has similarly affected his view of the history of the city with which his personal life has been so closely intertwined.

8. Autumn Meditations V (秋興第五首)

1. The P’êng-lai Palace faces the Southern Mountains.
2. The golden pillars that collect dew rise into the Milky Way.
3. Looking westward one recalls the Queen Mother descending from the Jasper Lake.¹²
4. Looking eastward a purplish haze fills the Han-ku pass one recalls the coming of Lao Tzu.¹³
5. Like moving clouds the pheasant-tail screens are fanned.
6. I recognized His Majesty at sunrise in his embroidered robe of dragon-scales.
7. I lie down by the river; when I wake up I realize how late the time is.
8. How many times did I answer the roll of court
Tu Fu begins this poem by describing the P'eng-lai Palace, the very first image that occurs in the poet's mind when he thinks of Ch'ang-an. The poet has very fond memories of the P'eng-lai Palace, not just because it is in the capital and the dwelling place of the emperor, but perhaps also because it was the place where he impressed Hsüan-tsung when he presented his fu to the emperor and the place where he attended court, particularly during the time when he was the Left Reminder. It is also a symbol for Tu Fu of his success in the past. The description of the palace with reference to grand myths exemplifies the transformation of reality as the poet informs it with his own thoughts and feelings. The P'eng-lai Palace is said to be situated in such a lofty place that it faces the Southern Mountains. "The golden pillars that collect dew" in line two refers to golden pillars built by Emperor Wu of Han to hold the
platters that collect dew which he would drink to extend his life. They are described as so high that they "rise into the Milky Way." The mythological flavour is even more evident in the third and fourth lines: the Queen Mother, a Taoist figure, descends from the Jasper Lake and Lao Tzu, another mythological figure, appears amid a purplish haze. Tu Fu’s depiction of a fairy palace, that one may see in a dream, a palace which is so magnificent, grand, and beautiful as if it were a dwelling place for the immortals instead of anything real, seems motivated by memories of his success in the past. His success was perhaps also as short-lived and ephemeral as this dream-like palace. Lines five and six contain a more realistic reminiscence of his time in the imperial court and of what he saw then. They provide a description of the grand palace and of the time when the poet actually saw the emperor when court was in session during his service as the Left Reminder in the early part of Su-tsung’s reign.

In the last two lines the poet flashes back to the present and to the real world. He realizes where he is and that he has been lost in thought and laments his short service in the court in the past and at the same time, he expresses his longing to return to the capital to serve in the present court.
In this poem Tu Fu's thoughts drift from the imagined past of a fairy palace, to the realities of the imperial court he remembers to the present real world where he is; he realizes that it is late, that the dream is lost, and that past and present are unavoidably and sadly distinct.

9. Autumn Meditations VI

1. The mouth of the Ch'ü-t'ang Gorge and the head of the Crooked River
2. Are joined together by thousands of miles of wind and mist of the pale autumn.
3. Through the walled passageway of the Calyx Chamber the imperial resplendence came.
4. To the small Hibiscus Park the sad news of the frontier arrived.
5. Yellow cranes circled the palace garnished with pearl blinds and painted pillars.
7. One recalls with pity this jolly site of singing and dancing.
8. The Ch'in Region has been the capital of kings and princes since ancient times.
In this poem Tu Fu reminisces about the Crooked River, another place in Ch’ang-an.

In the first two lines, he observes the Ch’ü-t’ang Gorge but is reminded of the Crooked River and that they are joined together by thousands of miles of wind and mist. Wang Chu of the Nine Commentators remarks that although Ch’ü-t’ang Gorge and the Crooked River are far apart, they share the same colours in autumn. It may be this similarity which results in the Ch’ü-t’ang Gorge becoming so closely identified with the Crooked River in the poet’s eyes. The poet reduces or eliminates the distance between where he is and where he wants to be. He is lost in thought in which the distances and differences dissolve.

In lines three and four Tu Fu’s thoughts of the river are like a bridge to the past. As he recalls the beauty of the river, he remembers the emperor’s flight down the river and the painful news of An Lu-shan’s Rebellion that paralyzed the country.

In lines five and six he describes the Crooked River
as he remembers it. The palace was grand and magnificent, garnished with "pearl blinds" and "painted pillars." The boats in the river are embellished with "embroidered cords" and "ivory masts" and the place was also lively as it was visited by "yellow cranes" and "sea-gulls." However, Tu Fu is of the view that the beauty and life of the Crooked River are gone. The flamboyant images and glorious past referred to in the last line are "reminders" of the present devastated state of the place. The more resplendent and beautiful the images of earlier times, the more they contrast with the immediate realities and the more disheartened the poet feels. Again one wonders whether the contrast is so distinct or whether the vista which Tu Fu observes is transformed by his nostalgia about the past.

The poet again moves from the immediate reality of the gorge to the distant Crooked River and without pause to another time from his past. From lines two to six he describes the history and beautiful scenes associated with the Crooked River and contrasts them with its present state. Finally the poet flashes back to the present and expresses his pity about the devastation of the place which he cherishes.

10. Autumn Meditations VII (秋興 第七首)
1 Lake K'un-ming is indebted to the success of the Han Dynasty.
2 The banners
of Emperor Wu
are here
before my eyes.

3 The maid at her loom
stopped weaving
on a beautiful
moon-lit night.

4 The scales of the stone whales
wave
in the autumn breeze.

5 The waves
toss zizania seeds
as countless
as the clouds.

6 The cold of the dew
chills
the lotus,
the red petals
drop.

7 Only birds
can fly over
the pass that reaches
so high.

8 I am only
a fisherman
who roams among rivers
and lakes.

昆明池水漢時功 武帝旌旗在眼中
織女機絲虚夜月 石鱗鱗甲動秋風
波漂菰米沉雲黑 鹫冷蓮房露粉紅
關塞極天唯鳥道 江湖滿地一漁翁

In this poem Tu Fu recalls Lake K’un-ming, another
place in Ch’ang-an which comes to his mind.
In the first two lines the poet describes Lake K'un-ming which was built by Emperor Wu of Han who made Han successful and powerful. When he thinks of the lake, his thoughts drift to the past prosperity of the Han Dynasty. Time boundaries dissolve, for although Han and T'ang are about nine hundred years apart, he thinks of these two dynasties together since they were both strong and powerful for a period of time. Tu Fu's technique of transcending time is clear here for Emperor Wu's banners which flew about nine centuries before are fluttering before his eyes. The subjectivity of this perception is underlined when one recalls that in the poem "The Highest Tower of White Emperor City" the banners he saw he described as "sad." Tu Fu's observations of both past and present seem affected by his own thoughts and feelings and those realities transformed. The fluttering banners of Emperor Wu by contrast symbolize for him success and power. It seems that the poet's feelings about the time and place observed have determined the description of the object.

Scholars' opinions differ concerning what period of time in the lake's history Tu Fu describes in lines three to six. For some, it is a description of the earlier glorious past of T'ang and the beauty of the lake as part of that glory. Wang Ssu-shih writes that Tu Fu describes the abundant past, the grandeur of the lake, and the rich
produce of the region. Ch’ien Ch’ien-i and P’u Ch’i-lung state that he must be describing what he saw at some previous time because he is too far away to be able to see them when he writes. Ch’ou Chao-ao states that in lines three and four, Tu Fu depicts the past grandeur of the lake and in lines five and six, laments the distressing scenery of the lake of the present.

It is my view that Tu Fu describes the lake in the present. In these four lines Tu Fu recalls the maid and the stone whales of the lake. The descriptions seem to be melancholic and depressing, for the poet states that the maid "stopped weaving," "the dew chills," and "petals drop." These images create a desolate and grief-stricken ambience with which the poet identifies as he reveals in the last couplet. These phrases also suggest the end of one time period and the beginning of another. The distressing perception of Lake K’un-ming in these lines contrasts with the symbols of success and power of the distant past in the Han dynasty and of the earlier T’ang history of the past and therefore most likely refer to the present. We have discussed Tu Fu’s nostalgia and present circumstances enough to realize also that these may be as much creations of his own mind as they are observations.

The last two lines exemplify the dissolving time barriers as the poet flashes back to the present. Tu Fu
observes birds flying over a mountain pass and realizes that he cannot follow. He envies the birds which can go where they want to. Although he is not a fisherman, he portrays himself as one to symbolize his solitude, isolation, and his constant search. He regrets that he is roaming among rivers and lakes, a wanderer with no place to go or to settle and that he cannot go back to the capital. The physical separation of K'uei-chou and Ch'ang-an is clear and definite. Birds, like the Milky Way in the poem "At Night," serve as a link or a vehicle by which he transcends that physical separation.

11. Autumn Meditations VIII (秋興第八首)
1   Passing by way of Yü-su the road to K’un-wu was long and winding.
2   North of the Purple Tower Peak is Lake Mei-pei.
3   Pecked from the fragrant rice-stalks by the parrots the grains were dropped.
4   A branch of the green firmiana tree was aged by a perching phoenix.
5   Pretty girls gathered the kingfisher’s feathers and presented them as spring gifts.
6   In the evening we sailed on and on with the immortals in the same boat.
7   My colourful pen which I once played with complimented the beautiful scenery.
Now gazing in anguish my white head droops.

In this final poem of the "Autumn Meditations" series, Tu Fu writes about Yü-su, K'un-wu, the Purple Tower Peak, and Lake Mei-pei which are other places in Ch'ang-an that he misses.

The poet recalls the trip he took years ago to Lake Mei-pei in a manner which exemplifies the extent to which reality is transformed or even transcended. In the first line he remembers that the route past Yü-su, K'un-wu, and the Purple Tower Peak was "long and winding," and in line six he recalls that he and his friends "sailed on and on" as though descending in a sleepy rhythm through a dream. He describes the richness and beauty of the region in a manner which transcends reality--"the fragrant rice-stalks," "the parrots," "the green firmiana tree," "the phoenix," "the
pretty girls," and "the kingfisher's feathers." Images of the extraordinary beauty, life, richness, colour, bounty, and gaiety remind one of the description of the magnificent and beautiful P'êng-lai Palace he described in the fifth poem of the "Autumn Meditations" series. The poet also recalls the pleasure of sailing on and on with his good friends whom he describes as "immortals." These both demonstrate the intensely romantic vision he has of the experience which goes beyond nostalgia and is expressed in the images of fantasy and dream.

This dream includes the perception of those he travelled with as "immortals." He may be referring here to other poets who accompanied him. His memories of that time are not only of its wealth and power but of the ferment of intellectual life expressed by those who, like himself, would be immortalized by work such as that which he says he wrote after the trip.

In the last line Tu Fu awakens from his dream and returns to the real world. The vividness of the dream contrasts with his view of himself as a sad and pathetic old man. The description of the past in this poem might be better said to transcend reality than to transform it and that of himself is perhaps a shadow of reality.

Tu Fu's central concern in each of the eight poems of the "Autumn Meditations" series is to express his deep
longing for the past. In the first and second poems of the series, Tu Fu transforms the external world and informs it with his own nostalgic feelings as he says in the first poem that the boat is "lonely" and clustered chrysanthemums "bring him tears" and in the second poem, that the city walls of K'uei-chou are "solitary." He gives primary attention to descriptions of K'uei-chou in the first three poems of the series but from the fourth poem to the eighth, his focus shifts to Ch'ang-an, which is presented in greater detail. In these five poems he recalls five different famous sites in Ch'ang-an from the past. This structural shift reflects the degree to which the poet's thoughts switch to the past. Tu Fu is continuously transcending time boundaries and moving his focus to the past. He is aware of the present mostly by contrast. He recalls the glory of the past in Ch'ang-an and associates the scenery of K'uei-chou with that of Ch'ang-an. Past and present, though they contrast so dramatically, K'uei-chou and Ch'ang-an, though they are so far apart, are blended together.

12. Sunset (返照)
1 It is dusk
   the setting sun
   is shining
on the north
of King Ch‘u’s Palace.

2 The rain has passed
leaving its traces
on the west
of White Emperor city.

3 The reflection of the setting sun
glows on the river and
deflects off the cliffs.

4 The returning clouds
embrace the trees
and the mountain village
is lost
from sight.

5 I am old
and my lungs are sick
for me
there will be only high pillows.

6 In the remote border lands
I am sad
and I close my doors
early.

7 I cannot stay here long
for the bandits rebel.

8 Truly
there is a soul
which has not been summoned
from the south.

楚王宫北风黄昏 白帝城西遇雨痕
返照入江翻石壁 归云拥树失山村
表斗肺病惟高枕 絶塞愁时早闭门
久可久留射虎乱 南方实有未招魂

In the first half of this poem Tu Fu transforms the
external world and informs it with his own thoughts and
feelings though this is not immediately apparent. The beauty and serenity stand somewhat apart from the sadness and worry of the last four lines. The first four lines depict a glimmering and tranquil evening scene. After a rainstorm the vista glows as the light of the setting sun reflects on the river and deflects off the cliffs, and in the distance the mountain village disappears.

The second half of the poem catches the reader somewhat by surprise. Tu Fu rather abruptly turns to himself and displays himself as a sad, fragile, and perhaps nervous old man who closes his door early and lives in isolation, and whose soul will not be at rest until he is summoned back to the north. He is uneasy about his circumstances and reflects on his ill health, worries, and pending death.

After reading the last four lines one reflects on the effect the poet's perception of himself has on what he is describing in the first four lines. Tu Fu associates the close of the day with the ending of his life. He is an old man and reflects upon the end of his life with a certain sense of resignation, tranquility, and nobility, and later with a trace of unease and disappointment. The sunset after a rainstorm which has left its marks is a fitting symbol for the slow, quiet end of a life, which after years of effort, resulted in failure. The reflection of the sun, clouds embracing the trees, and the disappearing of the mountain
village from sight denote a tenderness of spirit and some inner resolution of Tu Fu's sense of conflict between his ideals and reality. He is at present sick and dying, sad, disappointed, and uneasy and as a consequence the scene, though one of light and beauty leaves a vision that is pale, distant, and hazy. The description of this scene which corresponds with his present state contrasts dramatically with the colour, life, rich detail, and gaiety in the previous poem "Autumn Meditations VIII" which is associated with his own glorious past as he sees it.

13. Flute Playing (吹管)

1 From the mountains someone is playing a flute in the moonlight of this clear and breezy autumn night.

2 Who is playing these heart-breaking tunes so skillfully?

3 The blowing wind and the melodies harmonize with one another and they move me.

4 How many places are brightened by the moon leaning against the mountain pass?

5 The mounted barbarian troops
could not bear
the sorrowful sound
of the music
and at mid-night
they hastened home to the north.

6 The Wu-ling song
makes me think
of the expedition
to the south.

7 The willows at home
are now
withered.

8 Why do they grow
to their fullest
when I am in the midst
of my grieving?

In this poem, the poet eclipses the limits of time and space. In the first four lines Tu Fu listens to the heart-breaking music of a flute across the mountains on a moonlit night above the blowing wind. This brings to his mind the sorrowful bugle music played by Liu K’un about four centuries earlier. Liu K’un played music from the region of his enemies and caused them to lose their will to fight and return home. Then Tu Fu remembers another sad piece of flute music played by Ma Yuan about seven hundred years
earlier. Ma Yüan played because he missed home when he
joined an expedition to a remote place in the south.  

In the final couplet, Tu Fu describes lush willow
branches he sees and remembers those he saw in his home town
which by contrast he thinks at this time of year must be
withered. While he is in the midst of grief the willows
remind him that he is far away from home. The fact that they
are lush makes him even more disturbed and accentuates the
physical separation of K'uei-chou and Ch'ang-an.

One may wonder whether the flute music he hears is
really "heart-breaking" or whether this is his response
tainted by his own thoughts and feelings.

14. A Night In The Chamber (夜)
1 Toward the year's end
   nature's forces
   coerce the short daylight.
2 At the world's end
   the frost and snow
   clear
   the evening is
   cold.
3 The drums and bugles
   of the fifth watch
   sound melancholic
   and forceful.
4 The reflections
   of the Milky Way
   over the Three Gorges
   tremble.
5 In the country-side
thousands of families
weep
when they hear
of the fighting.

Here and there
fishermen and wood-cutters
sing barbarian songs.

Sleeping Dragon—Chu-ko Liang
and the Horse Leaper—Kung-sun Shu
ended
in the yellow dust.

I give up on
receiving
news
of my friends
and kinsmen.

In contrast to the previous poem "Flute Playing" Tu Fu's description of the external in the first seven lines leads almost inevitably to and is driven by the disclosure in line eight that he is despairing, in particular that he has given up hope of receiving news of his friends and kinsmen.

These emotions are the source that transform the world which he describes. The first six lines are a depiction of a tranquil but somewhat disturbing night scene in the remote
place where Tu Fu is staying and where he feels shut off from the familiar world. The year is ending quickly and on a clear cold night the poet stays up. This negative and unpleasant portrayal demonstrates Tu Fu’s despair. Most would view the shortening of the days toward the end of the year as a natural phenomenon. A view of a clear night looking at the reflections of the stars on the Three Gorges and listening to bugles, drums, noises from the countryside, and the songs sung by fishermen and wood-cutters might well be thought inviting and enjoyable. However, Tu Fu finds that nature’s forces coerce the short daylight; the drums and bugles he hears are melancholic, the reflections of the stars on the Gorges tremble; the noises from the countryside are the weeping of families, and the songs sung by the fishermen and the wood-cutters are barbarian. "Coerce," "melancholy," "tremble," "weep," and "barbarian" correspond to his distress, perturbation, alienation, and anxiety that he suggests at the end of the poem.

In line seven, he reflects on what comes to his mind as he visits the shrines of Chu-ko Liang and Kung-sun Shu in K’uei-chou. Both Chu-ko Liang who is upright, loyal, and wise, and Kung-sun Shu who is deceitful, aggressive, and opportunistic share the same destiny despite their different aspirations and behaviours. The tone of the last couplet is one of helplessness and perhaps bitterness. Tu Fu suggests
that somehow it does not really matter whether he is alienated from his friends and kinsmen because one day he will also share the fate of Chu-ko Liang and Kung-sun Shu. He gives up hoping to receive news from home and instead lets things happen in their own course.

15. The Day After The Winter Solstice (冬至)

1 Day
after day
the weather
and the business of men
urge one another.

2 It is the winter solstice
the light is born
and spring is here again.

3 The delicate
five-coloured threads
are added to the embroidery.

4 The sedge-ash
flies
blown from the six jade-pipes.

5 In the twelfth month
the willow buds grow
changing the complexion
of the shoreline.

6 In the hills
the plum trees
brave the cold
wishing to release their blossoms.

7 The weather and sights
are not different but
this is not the country of my home.

8 I tell my sons
to finish off their wine.
The observations of the poet here begin in a most unusual manner. The scene he describes is apparently in the present in K’uei-chou as he writes "spring is here again." To be consistent with his most common perception of present time there one comes to expect descriptions which are apprehensive and gloomy. However the scene Tu Fu portrays is colourful, immediate, and lively, much like the scene on the road to Lake Mei-pei in "Autumn Meditations VIII." Even the expectation is of warmth and beauty. Finally Tu Fu appears to break the constraints which constantly bind his perceptions in the previous poems. Lines one through six would appear even to disprove the proposition that Tu Fu consistently expresses nostalgia for his past glory in Ch’ang-an and despair about the present in K’uei-chou. He seems to see beauty around him. However line seven presents a rather astonishing turn of events. We realize when he says that "The weather and sights are not different" than his experience of both in Ch’ang-an that the description in the first six lines can be and probably is, in the poet’s mind,
a description of both times and places. He has transcended the boundaries of time and space in a manner perhaps more completely than in the previous poems. Finally he lets us know with certainty that his mind and soul will not accept the external world on its own terms. Even in the most extreme circumstances when he sees the same things in one time and place as he has in the other, for him they are completely different. No matter how lovely the sights in K'uei-chou, he says "this is not the country of my home" and he slips into the detachment from it that he insists on.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 767: Nos. 16 to 19

16. Spring Equinox (立春)
1 On the day
of the spring equinox
I eat a platter
of finely
sliced vegetables.
2 Suddenly
I recall
a time
when the plums
were blooming
in the two capitals. 21
3 The wealthy served their guests
with platters
of white jade.
4 The vegetables are cut
and their green slices
served with
delicate hands.
5 How can I endure
looking at
the Wu Gorge
and the cold river?
The grief of the
distant traveller from Tu-ling is
unbearable.
This body of mine
does not know
where to settle.
I ask my child
to find me some paper
to write this poem.

At the beginning of the poem Tu Fu takes part in eating
a platter of finely sliced vegetables on the day of the
spring equinox as is the custom of his time. During the
season it seems likely that plum blossoms bloom, for he
suddenly remembers similar experiences in Ch’ang-an and Lo-
yang. The plum blossoms represent beauty, life, and peace.
Such positive associations seem only to affect Tu Fu when
he relates them to the past, and so, suddenly he is
reminiscing and has shifted focus to the past, to those
places, and to the beauty of those experiences. In line five
he returns to the present. He cannot endure the Wu Gorge and
the cold river. Just as Tu Fu's relentless nostalgia determines what he remembers and how he characterizes the earlier time, so his observations of the present are to the same extent negative by contrast. The poet's grief and loss expressed in line six and seven are a natural result of this contrast and he states clearly in the last line that such grief and loss are his motivation for writing and perhaps the means of his escape.

17. Sadness (秋)
1 The grass growing by the river each day saddens me.
2 There is no comfort in the sound of the spring stream in the Gorges.
3 What do the egrets mean by bathing themselves in the swirling eddies?
4 On a lone tree flowers are blooming making themselves distinct.
5 There has been fighting for ten years in the southern state.
6 Alone in this strange land the old traveller is forlorn.
7 Will he see the River Wei and the mountains of the Ch'in Region?
People are sick; they are tired of the rebels.

In this poem, the reality which the poet observes is transformed by his grief. The first four lines clearly demonstrate that Tu Fu's perception is dominated by his frame of mind as he tells that each day the growing grass saddens him, that the sound of the running water is irritable, and that the bathing of the egrets aggravates him. Even in the flowering tree he sees no beauty but simply states that it contrasts with the others which do not and by implication are not beautiful. "Growing grass," "sound of the spring stream," "egrets," and "flowers" are images which would to most observers denote life and beauty but by contrast the poet finds that they sadden, irritate, and aggravate him.

In the second half of the poem, Tu Fu tells us the source of his overpowering sadness. There is continuous fighting; he is old and lonely, and alienated from home. His
future is uncertain and the area is threatened by rebels. He states explicitly his wish to see, and his doubt that he will ever see, the river and mountains around Ch’ang-an. This poem seems if anything distinguished by the fact that he does not transcend the limitations of time and space through poetic contemplation and expression as he so often does.

18. Climbing on Double Ninth (登高)
1 High in the sky
the wind is howling
and the gibbons are crying pitifully.
2 The sand-bars are clear;
the sand gleams
and birds circle above.
3 In the boundless forests
falling leaves
are rustling
rustling
down.
4 The billows
of the everflowing Yangtze
are surging
surging on.
5 Far away from home
I lament
melancholy autumn
and this
constant travelling.
6 Life is but a hundred years’ span.
I have had many sicknesses
and have climbed this mountain alone.
7 Adversity and affliction
have whitened
the hair
on my temples.
8 Despondent
I have just finished my cup of unsettled wine."

The scene which Tu Fu describes in the first four lines is clearly informed by the thoughts and feelings which he expresses in the rest of the poem. The first four lines depict a downcast and sombre fall scene seen and heard from a high vantage point. The howling of the wind, the mournful cries of the gibbons, the wandering of the birds above the sand-bars, the rustling and the falling of the leaves in the forests, and the surging of the billows portray a gloomy and downcast atmosphere which blends with the "melancholy," "adversity," "affliction," "sickness," and "despondency" that the poet explicitly expresses in the second half of the poem.

Tu Fu also moves across boundaries of space between K’uei-chou and Ch’ang-an. He uses the word "boundless" to depict the expansive scene on one hand, and perhaps on the
other hand he may suggest that by this time of the year falling leaves and the rustling leaves can be seen and heard everywhere, including in Ch’ang-an. He may also use the word to denote the inevitability of time’s passage and his passage in this world. He employs the phrase "everflowing Yangtze" to underscore the distance that the river travels, and "surging, surging on" which we know traverses the distance between K’uei-chou and Ch’ang-an. The Yangtze can take him back to the capital and serves as a link to his past.

19. Impromptu (即事)

1  There is a forlorn thatched hut among the mountains at the edge of the sky.
2  On the river wind and waves are raging rain falls drearily.
3  Two white fish do not take the bait.
4  Large three-inch oranges are still green.
5  I am as sick as Ssú-ma Chang-ch’ing unable to get up for even a day.
6  I am at the end of the road like Juan Chi when
will I become sober?

7 I have not heard whether the soldiers of Small Willow have yet laid down their arms.

8 In Ch‘in Ch‘uan the Ching River flows with dirty water my heart is broken.

天畔羣山孤草亭 江中風浪西冥冥
一雙白魚可受釣 三寸黃柑猶自香
多病長卿無日起 窮途阮籍幾時醒
未聞細柳敕金甲 腸斷秦川流蕩澀

In this poem Tu Fu transforms the objective reality he describes in the first four lines with those he expresses in the last four lines. In line one Tu Fu describes the hut as "forlorn" and like the hut which is located among the mountains at the edge of the sky, he also is at the end of the road which he describes in line six. The depiction of the raging wind and waves and the dreary rain gives the reader the sense of an inauspicious omen. He is close enough to the white fish that they are in clear sight and he is able to see that the bait is in front of them. Yet even in
this seemingly advantageous situation the fish will not bite. The oranges are large and therefore could potentially provide plenty but in the end cannot because they are not yet ripe. The white fish which will not take the bait and the large but as yet unripe oranges are symbolic of the constant struggle of life. These perceptions are clearly connected to his own state of health and mind. He is sick, at the end of his road, his own emotions rage like the wind and water, and his heart is broken.

ENDNOTES:


2. The Fu-sang Tree is a legendary mystical tree. It is said that it grows in the place where the sun rises and that the tree is a few thousand yards tall. [Tung-fang So attributed, Shih Chou Chi collected in Lung Wei Pi Shu, (a photocopy of the original from Taiwan University Library, 1970), pp.60-61; also in Hsü Shên, Tuan Yu-ts’ai ed., Shuo Wen Chieh Tzu Chu, Vol.6, KHCPCS, Wan Yo Wên K’u, (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1937), p.1.

3. The Weak Stream is a legendary mystical stream which is said to be situated at the foothills of Mount Kun-lun; its water is so weak that even a feather cannot float on it. [Ssu-ma Ch’ien comp., Shih Chi, Vol.10, "Tai Wan Lieh Chuan, No.63," (Peking: Chung Hua Book Co., 1962), p.3164; also in Tung-fang So attributed, Shih Chou Chi, collected in Lung Wei Pi Shu, p.4 and in Liu Hsiu, Kuo P’u and Ho I-hsing ed.,
4. Although the poet describes a white-haired man carrying a walking-stick in the third person, he certainly describes himself. Tu Fu himself was old and sick at the time he wrote this poem, just as this white-haired man who carries a walking-stick appears to be. There are many other poems in which Tu Fu describes himself as one who is sick and old, has white hair, and carries a walking-stick: "Overlooking Scenery of the Gorges," "At Night," "Autumn Meditations," "Sunset," "Sadness," "Climbing on Double Ninth," and "Impromptu." In any event, from such a distant physical vantage point, it would seem unlikely that the poet would be able to observe "the old man" in such detail so as to draw conclusions about his emotional state.

5. At the time, Tu Fu was working in the Personal Evaluation Section in Hua-chou. (Ch’ou Chao-ao, Tu Shih Hsiang Chu, Vol.3, p.1289.) San-fu refers to Ching-chao, Fu-feng, and Feng-i, the central part of present day Shensi Province.

6. The fisherman’s song reads: "Of the three gorges in Pa-tong, the Wu Gorge is the longest; when one hears the gibbons cry thrice, one’s clothes are wet with tears." (San-fu refers to Ching-chao, Fu-feng, and Feng-i, the central part of present day Shensi Province.) [Li Tao-yuan, Shui Ching Chu, "Chiang Shui Chu", (Shanghai: Shanghai Kuo Hsueh Cheng Li She, 1936), chuan 34, p.6.]

7. In this line, Tu Fu employs two allusions. Chang Hua’s Po Wu Chih says that in the recent world, there was a man who lived by the sea. On the eighth month of every year, he saw a raft coming by. This man was curious; therefore, he rode on the raft for one year. After riding on the raft for more than ten months, he arrived at a place where there were city walls. Inside the city walls, he saw some weaving maids and a man dragging a cow. He asked the man where he was. The man who was dragging the cow answered: ‘Go and visit Yen Chun-p’ing and you will know.’ The man returned home and went to visit Yen. Yen answered: ‘In a certain month of a certain year, there was a man went to the Milky Way.’ The man later found out the time and year which Yen referred to. To his surprise, it was the same time and the same year when this man arrived at the place. [Chang Hua ed., Po Wu Chi, TSCCCP, Vol. 1342, (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1939), chuan 3, p.19.]
In Tsung Lin's *Ch'ing Chu Sui Shih Chi*, it says that Emperor Wu of Han assigned Chang Ch'ien to go to Tai Hsia (Bactria, now north of Afghanistan) to trace the sources of the river. Chang Ch'ien rode on a raft. After several months, he arrived at a place. However, the present-day version of the *Ch'ing Chu Sui Shih Chi* does not mention that Chang Ch'ien was riding on a raft. [Tsung Lin comp., *Ch'ing Chu Sui Shih Chi*, PPTSCC, Vol. 104, Pao Yen T'ang Pi Chi, (Shanghai: I Wen Publishing Co., p.22.)]

8. "The Biography of K'uang Heng" in *Han Shu* says that shortly after Emperor Yuan had come to the throne, there were sun eclipses and earthquakes. Emperor Yuan asked for an evaluation of his policies. K'uang Heng sent his advice. The emperor was pleased with what K'uang Heng said. The emperor promoted K'uang Heng to be the Duke of Kuoang Lu and also to be the tutor of the crown prince. [Pan Ku attributed, Yen Shih-ku comm., *Han Shu*, (Peking: Chung Hua Book Co., 1962), Vol. 7, chuan 81, "The Biography of K'uang Heng, No. 51" pp.3331-3338.]

9. "The Biography of Emperor Yuan of Ch'u" in *Han Shu* says that Liu Hsiang was asked by the Emperor Ch'eng of Han to edit the Five Classics. (Ibid., chuan 36,"The Biography of Emperor Yuan of Ch'u, No.6." pp.1928-1929.)

10. Another version reads: "feather dispatches are delayed." (William Hung & others, *Tu Shih Yin Te*, p.468.) This ambiguity arises from the word "ch'ih" which is a homonym in Chinese, with two distinct meanings.  quickly like a galloping horse and  means to delay. The first interpretation would mean that there have been many campaigns. When we look at T'ang history, we will find that this is the case. The latter interpretation can be taken as a reference to corrupt and inefficient officials such as Ch'eng Yuan-chen who did not report to the emperor promptly when the Tibetans invaded Ch'ang-an about two years before Tu Fu wrote the series. As a result, the emperor rushed to leave the palace without much preparation. [Ssu-ma Kuang, *Tzŭ Ch'ih T'ung Chien*, (Hong Kong: Chung Hua Book Co., 1976), Vol.3, chuan 223, pp.7150, 7151, 7155.] Both interpretations are possible, for both can be substantiated by historical evidence.

12. Jasper Lake is said to be situated on Mount Kun-lun where Queen Mother of the West resides. (Ssŭ-ma Ch’ien comp., Shih Chi, Vol.10, "Tai Wan Lieh Chuan, No.63," p.3164, p.3179.) According to Chang Hua’s Po Wu Chih, Emperor Wu of Han loves Taoism. Queen Mother of the West sent a messenger who came to Emperor Wu riding on a white deer and told Emperor Wu that Queen Mother would be arriving soon. On the night of the seventh day of the seventh month Queen Mother of the West came riding on the clouds. [Chang Hua ed., Po Wu Chih, TSCCCP, Vol., 1342, chüan 3, p.17; also in Pan Ku Han Wu Ti Nei Chuan, PPTSCC, Vol.52, Shou Shan Ko Ts‘ung Shu, Vol. 86, pp.1-2.]

13. According to Lieh Hsien Chuan, it says that Lao-tzu left the Pass for the west riding on a green ox-cart. The director of the Pass, Yin Hsi, saw a haze. He knew a sage would come by. He received and welcomed Lao Tzu him and requested him to write two volumes of Tao-te Ching. [Ch’an Hsuan Hsien ed., Lieh Hsien Chuan, TSCCCP, Vol., 3347, (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936), "Lao Tzu," pp.7-8; "The Director of the Pass, Yin," pp.8-9.] Also [Ssŭ-ma Ch’ien (comp.), Shih Chi, Vol.7, "The Biography of Lao Tzu, No.3," p.2141.]


15. William Hung & others ed., Tu Shih Yin Te, p.468.


18. Ch’ou Chao-ao, Tu Shih Hsiang Chu, Vol.4, p.1495.

19. According to Shih Shuo Hsin Yu, Liu K’un was a Prefect of Ping-chou. He was besieged by the mounted barbarian troops. One moonlit night, Liu climbed to a tower and played the flute. The troops heard the music and they sighed. At mid-night, Liu played bugle music. This time when the troops heard the music, they all cried. Next evening, Liu played the bugle music again. When the troops heard it, they fled home. [Liu I-ch’ing, Yang Yung ed., Shih Shuo Hsin Yu Chiao Chien, "Ya Liang No. 6," (Hong Kong: Ta Chung Publishing Co.), 1969, p.291.]

21. Another version reads: "Suddenly I recall a time when the two capitals are at their peaks." [忽憶西京至盛時] (Ch’ou Chao-ao, Tu Shih Hsiang Chu, Vol.4, p.1597.)

22. The other interpretation reads: "Adding to my despondency, lately I have had to quit drinking my cup of unsettled wine." Ch’ou, P’u, and Yang prefer this reading because at the time, the poet was suffering from a weak lung and had to quit drinking. (Ch’ou Chao-ao, Tu Shih Hsiang Chu, Vol.4, p.1766; P’u Ch’i-lung, Tu Tu Hsin Chieh, Vol.3, p.671; Yang Lun, Tu Shih Ching Ch’uan, p.842.) I think in this poem the poet means that he has just finished drinking his cup of wine. It is a custom to carry a bag filled with dogwood and to drink chrysanthemum wine on the ninth day of the ninth month. The line seems to suggest that the poet actually sees the wine residue sinking to the bottom while he drinks.
CHAPTER FOUR
CONCLUSION:

Tu Fu was a prolific poet who wrote about fourteen hundred and fifty poems over a period of approximately forty years. His poetry is widely recognized as innovative in style, form, and its tremendous breadth of content.

I have attempted to provide a detailed and in-depth look at a manageable portion of Tu Fu's work—nineteen poems, related by their form, which is hepta-syllabic regulated verse, their period, about approximately two years in the author's life, and their theme of nostalgia. Tu Fu wrote about 151 hepta-syllabic regulated verses. Of these he wrote the nineteen poems considered here from 766 to 767 A.D. These poems are also closely related in that they are all part of a portrayal of Tu Fu's spiritual being at that time. Tu Fu was approximately fifty-five years old, an old man by the standards of his time and by his own description. Isolated among strangers, he was living in K'uei-chou, which to him was a foreign land. His life and career were at an end, and his isolation all the greater when his present life was compared to his younger days as an official and scholar in Ch'ang-an, the seat of the empire. He had been involved in the political and cultural ferment of that time and place.
which, due to the accidents of fortune and career, had been lost to him. Finally these nineteen poems are also related by the three poetic techniques employed in them. These poetic techniques are the most significant link to these poems and are the subject of this thesis.

1. Association Of One Time With Another:

In the poems in which the poet uses the particular technique of transcending the boundary of time, we find that present reality is of little interest to Tu Fu. He ceases to live in the present world. What he actually sees and hears only remind him of and focus his mind on his past life and on Ch’ang-an in its past. He is aware of the present mostly by contrast.

In "Overlooking Scenery Of The Gorge" the Wu Gorge and the river of Shu before his eyes remind him of Mt Hua and the Yellow River he saw when he was the Administrator of Hua-chou eight years earlier. In "Autumn Meditations I" he associates the clustered chrysanthemums he sees with those he has seen. In "Autumn Meditations II" he relates the cries of gibbons he hears to his futile services to the state and to Yen Wu some years earlier. In "Autumn Meditations III" as he observes the village houses on the hills, the bobbing
of the boats, and the flying of swallows, his thoughts focus only on contrasting his past unfulfilled career with the successes and accomplishments of K’uang Heng, Liu Hsiang, and his class-mates. In "Autumn Meditations IV" he listens to the rumble of gongs and drums and the rushing chariots and horses as though he actually hears them, and yet these are references to the distant past. In "Autumn Meditations VI" his thoughts move from the immediate reality of the Ch’ü-t’ang Gorge to the Crooked River in the past. In "Autumn Meditations VII" time boundaries dissolve, for although Han and T’ang are about nine hundred years apart, he thinks of these two dynasties together. Emperor Wu’s banners which flew about nine centuries earlier are said to be fluttering before his eyes. In "Flute Playing" he associates the flute music he hears with the sorrowful bugle music played by Liu K’un about four centuries earlier and with another sad piece of flute music played by Ma Yuan about seven hundred years before. In "The Day After The Winter Solstice" he transcends the boundaries of time and space more completely than in other poems. He lets us know with certainty that his mind and soul will not accept the world around him, for no matter how lovely the present world is or can be, he says "this is not the country of my home." To him the past in Ch’ang-an is an enchanted place which utterly captivates his mind. In "Spring Equinox" he
associates the plum blossoms and the platter of finely sliced vegetables before his eyes with his similar experiences in Ch’ang-an and Lo-yang in the past.

2. Association Of One Place With Another:

Tu Fu transcends in his thoughts the physical distance between K’uei-chou and Ch’ang-an. What he sees and what he hears in K’uei-chou bring to his mind memories of what he has seen and heard in Ch’ang-an.

In "Overlooking Scenery Of The Gorge" he sees the Wu Gorge and the river of Shu as Mt Hua and the Yellow River. In "Autumn Meditations VI" he observes the Ch’ü-t’ang Gorge but is reminded of the Crooked River. In "Flute Playing" the lush willows in K’uei-chou remind him of the withered ones in his home-town. In "The Day After The Winter Solstice" the spring scene of K’uei-chou brings him memories of a parallel scene he saw in Ch’ang-an. In "Spring Equinox" he associates the plum blossoms and the platter of finely sliced vegetables with his similar experiences in Ch’ang-an and Lo-yang, and in "Climbing On Double Ninth" he implies that the scene of the falling and rustling leaves also reminds him of a similar scene in Ch’ang-an.

Tu Fu also uses moving or connecting objects as symbols
of escape or flight, vehicles through which he can return to Ch’ang-an. In "At Night" the stars, which also shine on the capital, and in "Autumn Meditations II" the Big Dipper, at which he gazes every night, serve for him as imaginary links with Ch’ang-an. In "Autumn Meditations I" the boat serves as a vehicle to which he ties his homeward thoughts. In "Autumn Meditations VII" the birds he observes flying over a mountain pass serve as a link by which he can transcend the physical separation, and in "Climbing On Double Ninth" the Yangtze traverses the distance between K’uei-chou and Ch’ang-an and serves for him as a link to the capital.

3. Transformation Of The External World Informed By His Subjective World:

Tu Fu is absorbed obsessively with his spiritual torment. This emotion dictates what he remembers and how he characterizes the outside world. It is the source that transforms that which he sees and hears and the driving force behind his efforts to escape reality. The present outside world is consistently depicted as negative and unpleasant.

In "The Highest Tower Of White Emperor City" he
transforms the objects which he describes around him and informs them with his own feelings. He describes the banners as "sad." The descriptions of the pointed shape of the ramparts, the narrowness of the paths, the gorges, and the dark clouds portray a jagged and cramped image which gives the reader a sense of strain and unease which correspond to his sadness as he explicitly reveals at the end of the poem. In "At Night" he portrays himself as startled, old, sick, and alone. He describes in parallel the mountains as empty, the lights as few, scattered, and dim, the hoisted sail as "forlorn," and the geese as "unsympathetic" to his hope and feelings because they bring him no news from the north. Although one may consider that dew-drops gathered on the maple trees as a natural phenomenon, in "Autumn Meditations I" he uses "wilt" and "wound" to depict the damaging effect of dew-drops on the maple trees. By contrast "dew" normally symbolizes grace or a kind of divine elixir that can extend one’s life. Such unusually negative usage exemplifies the extent to which Tu Fu transforms the external with his own feelings. The damaging effect of the dew-drops and the impending disorder and threatening images he portrays convey his sense of lifelessness, disarray, and heart-break. He says the clustered chrysanthemums bring him tears, and he transforms the boat and informs it with his own feeling of loneliness. In "Autumn Meditations II" he is idle, lonely,
and forlorn, and he describes the evening scenery before his eyes in a manner that informs it with his own feelings. He describes the city walls he sees as "solitary" and the bugle music he hears as "sad." In "Sunset" he transforms the evening scene and informs it with his own thoughts and feelings though this is not immediately apparent. The scene, though one of light and beauty, is transformed into a vision that is pale, distant, and hazy and corresponds with the description of his own pending death, old age, sense of conflict, uneasiness, and disappointment. In "Flute Playing" his response to the flute music he hears is tainted by his own thoughts and feelings. He grieves for his physical separation from Ch’ang-an, and he describes the flute music he listens to as "heart-breaking." In "A Night In The Chamber" he transforms a serene and tranquil atmosphere and depicts it as a disturbing and irritating night scene because he is distressed, perturbed, and deserted. Another observer might regard a view of a clear night looking at the reflections of the stars on the Three Gorges and listening to bugles, drums, noises from the country-side, and the songs sung by fishermen and wood-cutters as inviting and enjoyable. In "Sadness" his perception is dominated by his frame of mind as he complains that the growing grass, the sound of the running water, and the bathing of the egrets, sadden, irritate, and aggravate him although by contrast
these are the images which would to most observers denote life and beauty. In "Climbing On Double Ninth" he laments that he is far away from home, in poor health, lonely, and that his life is difficult, and he depicts a natural fall scene seen and heard from a high vantage point as gloomy, downcast, and sombre. In "Impromptu" he describes himself as sick, at the end of the road, and heart-broken and paralleling this, he describes a hut he sees as "forlorn," located among the mountains at the edge of the sky, the wind and waves as raging, and the rain as dreary.

The past, by contrast, Tu Fu envisages as glorious, prosperous, exhilarating, and sometimes mythical. In "Autumn Meditations V" the depiction of P'eng-lai Palace with reference to grand myths exemplifies the transformation of reality. The palace, the seat of the T'ang Empire and also a symbol of his success in the past, is characterized as magnificent, dream-like, and resplendent, as if it were a dwelling place for the immortals. In "Autumn Meditations VIII" his recollections of the memorable trip he took years earlier to Lake Mei-pei also exhibit the extent to which Tu Fu's feelings transform reality. The portrayal of the trip is one of extraordinary splendour, life, richness, colour, bounty, and gaiety. He recalls the pleasure of sailing on
and on with his good friends whom he addresses as "immortals." These descriptions both demonstrate the intensely romantic vision of the past that goes beyond nostalgia and is manifested in the images of fantasy and dream. In "Spring Equinox" the positive association of the plum blossoms which represent beauty, life, and peace seem only to affect him when he relates them to the past.

From the analyses of these poems we find that Tu Fu is a poet of contemplation. He transforms external sights and sounds and turns to his inner spiritual self to allow his thoughts and emotions to soar, and then encapsulates their essence in his poems. As a result, his thoughts transcend time and space and his emotions transform the external and inform it with his own thoughts and feelings.

He is also a poet of deep feelings who is endowed with talent and great skill. He crushes his myriad emotions against the tip of his brush as though they are gushing from a spring. His grief flows eloquently and with ease and grace. These nineteen poems express his spiritual torment succinctly with lingering and penetrating mournfulness. The three poetic techniques employed in these poems are arresting, impressive, and ingenious not only considering when they were written but also by the standards of today.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

KHPCPS 国学基本叢書
PPTSCC 自部叢書集成
TSCCCP 叢書集成初編
TSTK 社詩叢刊
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