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A Translation of Texts from *Shijing Pingshi* 詩經評釋

and *Shifa Tongwei* 詩法通微

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1. Original text and translation of the text from *Shijing pingshi* (Preface)

1.1 Original text – Part I 詩之來源 A

詩之肇始，蓋有文字之先，情動口號而已。故沈約宋書謝靈運傳論曰：「然則歌詠所興，宜自生民始也。」是詩者，言志者也。虞書曰：「詩言志，歌永言。聲依永，律和聲。」說文曰：「詩，志也，從言寺聲。古文作，從言之聲。」釋名曰：「詩，之也，志之所之也。」詩大序曰：「詩者，志之所之也，在心爲志，發言爲詩。」文心雕龍明詩篇曰：「詩者，持也，持人情性。」是詩之爲作，乃情感之所之也。故詩大序又曰：「情動於中而形於言，言之不足，故嗟歎之。嗟歎之不足，故永歌之。永歌之不足，不知手之舞之，足之蹈之也。」

1.2 Translation of Part I

At the beginning, poetry was spoken to express the emotional and rational feelings of people before the Chinese characters were created. One of the main editors for *the Book of Poetry*, Shenyue 沈約, commented in the biography of Xie lingyun 謝靈運 that the rise of singing should be there only when there are people. Therefore, poetry is the presentation of people's spiritual and emotional world. There is a comment in *Yushu* 虞書, one of the chapters of

Classic of History 尚書, that poetry provides a space to present one's inner world, and the song is the way to sing the poetry; pentatonic scale are used for singing and six pitches are used to balance the pentatonic scale. In *Shuowen Jiezi*, the character Shi 詩 is defined as one's acts of emotion and thoughts, comprised of its radical Yan 言 as the pictograph and Si 寺 as the phonetic. The ancient version of Shi is 詒, which is comprised of its radical Yan 言 as the pictograph and Zhi 止 as the phonetic. Also there is a definition about the character Shi 詩, Poetry, in *Shiming* 釋名 that poetry is a special space, in which one releases feelings and thoughts. According to the saying of preface in *Maoshi* 毛詩, Poetry is where thoughts and feelings gallop (or run free), stirring in mind as the idea, expressed as poetry. In the chapter Mingshi of *Wenxin Diaolong* 文心雕龍, Poetry is annotated as appeasing, to appease one's feelings of emotion and rationality. Hence, Poetry manifests the feelings and thoughts in the mind. There is also a saying in the preface of *Maoshi* 毛詩 that feelings and thoughts flow within and take on form by poetry. When putting them in a poem and it is not enough to convey the message, one expresses them with a sigh. When sighing does not explicitly convey, one shows them by singing. When singing does not satisfy, one unconsciously dance with the hands and taps with the feet.

1.3 Original text – Part II 詩之來源 B

朱熹詩集傳序曰：「人生而靜，天之性也。感於物而動，性之欲也。夫既有欲矣，則不能無思。既有思矣，則不能無言。既有言矣，則言之所不能盡，而發於咨嗟詠歌之餘者，必有自然之音響節奏（奏）而不能已焉，此詩之所以作也。」然則詩之爲作，由情而發，由言而現，由永歌韻律而成，至於手舞足蹈而爲之象。是知古之詩也，可

低詠長嘯，可扣絃高歌，亦可依聲和律，頓足起舞者也。其爲至情之表現，人性之流露，而生活之寫照乎！至其激發，或緣於苦楚，或緣於激憤，或緣於喜怒。皆爲情之所觸，意之所之，而宣之於詞也。

1.4 Translation of Part II

People are born with harmony and peace as their natural instincts; they will become active when responding to objects and desires emerge from their Nature. Since the desires rise, thoughts are grown. Since thoughts are emerged, then speeches are unstoppable. The languages continuously develop, sometimes when thoughts still cannot be covered by words, one will express them by singing and sighing, and then the music tone and rhythm spontaneously appear. This is how poetry is formed. Poetry arises naturally as art work, starting from the feelings when responding to objections, shown by language, form from tune and rhythm, and then one sings that with a dance. Therefore, it is evident that the ancient poetry can be crooned and intoned, or sung while playing musical instrument. People also can dance them out with waving hands and tapping feet in musical tune and rhythm. Truly, poetry is the expression of pure feelings, revelation of humanity and reflection of the reality of life. For the inspiration, it may be sparked by the experiences of misery, indignation or pleasure and anger, the reason for this is that the pure feelings are aroused and desired to express by words.

1.5 Original text – Part III 詩之名稱 A

詩經一詞，古無之，古惟稱之曰詩。論語陽貨篇曰：「詩，可以興，可以觀，可以群，可以怨。」又季氏篇曰：「不學詩，無以言。」又述而篇曰：「子所雅言，詩、

書、執禮，皆雅言也。」或稱詩三百者，言其數目也。論語爲政篇曰：「孔子曰：

『詩三百，一言以蔽之，曰：思無邪。』」又子路篇曰：「誦詩三百，授之以政，不達。使於四方，不能專對，雖多，亦奚以爲。」或稱之爲毛詩，緣毛公而得名，蓋與齊、魯、韓三家詩同以傳人稱。是在詩之上注以傳人，仍爲詩而已。詩始稱爲經，當起於戰國晚年。禮記經解篇曰：「入其國，其教可知也。其爲人也，溫柔敦厚，詩教也。」是以詩爲經。

1.6 Translation of Part III

The word *Jing* (classic) of Poetry was not used in ancient times, it was only known as Poetry at the time. The Yanghuo chapter of *the Analects* says: “Poetry can serve a multitude of purposes. It can kindle one’s aspiration, guide observations of the world, teach the ways of sociability and show how to let go of resentment.” The Jishi chapter also states that those who do not learn poetry will be incapable of proper speech. Again the Shuer Chapter explains: “Confucius recited Poetry, the *Classic of History* 尚書, and implemented the rules of propriety in the official language.” Some think the three hundred pieces of poetry indicate the quantity of poems, but in the Weizheng chapter, Confucius said that the purpose of the three hundred poems in the *Book of Poetry* is for the teaching of having no impure thoughts. Regarding this, chapter Zilu says: “If one is able to recite the three hundred poems, but when assigned governmental duties, he cannot perform properly; when sent to any quarter to carry out a task, he cannot handle it independently, then what would be the use of his broad knowledge.” Poetry was also known as *the Poetry of Mao* (毛詩) because of scholar Mao Heng. All poems written by poets from the states of Qi, Lu, Han will have the author’s name placed in front of the poetry. Poetry from this period of time will add the author’s name as a prefix to the title of the poem. Poetry was first addressed as *Jing* (classic) in the late Warring

States period. It can be found in the Jingjie chapter of *Liji* that when one visits a state, one can know the kind of teaching its people have been receiving; if their characters are gentle, honest and sincere, then one can confirm that they have been taught by *the Book of Poetry*. So this is the reason for poetry to be regarded as *Jing* (classic).

1.7 Original text – Part IV 詩之名稱 B

莊子天運篇曰：「孔子謂老聃曰：『丘治詩、書、禮、樂、易、春秋六經。』」而莊子天道篇又有「十二經」之言。禮記經解，與莊子天運、天道，不知究竟作成何時，約而言之，天運、天道，最早不能超過戰國晚年，而經解一篇，則十之八九為西漢初年作品。於此，知詩之被稱為經，當在戰國之世，不應後於墨經與孝經之稱為經。莊子天下篇論別墨曰：「俱誦墨經，而倍譎不同。」呂氏春秋察微篇曰：「孝經云：『高而不危，所以長守貴也。』」就天下篇敘述各學派，尚無秦漢間色彩，可證知彼篇之著成，當在戰國晚年。

1.8 Translation of Part IV

Chapter Tianyun of *Zhuangzi* states that Confucius once said to Lao Dan that he spends most of his time studying the six classics, namely the Book of Poetry (詩經), the *Classic of History* (尚書), *Liji* (禮記), *Yueji* (樂記), *the Book of Changes* (易經) and *Chunqiu* (春秋). However, Tiandao chapter of *Zhuangzi* talks about twelve classics instead. It is difficult to know the precise time at which the Jingjie chapter of *Liji* and the Tianyun, Tiandao chapters of *Zhuangzi* were written, but it can be estimated that Tianyun and Tiandao were finished during the late Warring States period at the earliest, while the work of Jingjie

was from around early Western Han Dynasty. Therefore, poetry should have already been recognised as *Jing* (classic) in the Warring States period, before *Mojing* (墨經) and *Xiaojing* (孝經) were regarded as *Jing* (classic). Tianxia chapter of *Zhuangzi* discusses the difference in Mohism by stating that many may have read *Mojing*, but their comprehension of it can differ vastly. Chapter Chawei of *Lüshi Chunqiu* (呂氏春秋) says: “those with high status without peril can maintain their wealth and rank.” In the discussion of the various Schools in Tianxia chapter, writing styles of Qin and Han dynasties cannot be found anywhere; hence this proves that the work of this chapter was completed in the later years of the Warring States period.

1.9 Original text – Part V 詩之名稱 C

而呂氏春秋，則作成於秦八年。據此記載，知子書如墨子，而孝經為傳紀之書，漢志列於論語之後，小學之前，在戰國晚年或秦初，皆已有經尊稱。至高文典冊之詩、書、易之稱為經，當不後於此。是以荀子勸學篇曰：「學惡乎始？惡乎終？始乎誦經，終乎讀禮。」此所謂經，當指詩、易而言。惟將經字與詩連在一起，最早為司馬遷史記儒林傳之「申公獨以詩經為訓以教。」至正式連屬為書名，以宋人廖剛之詩經講義為最早，約為南宋初年。而漢志云：「詩、易經」云云，經字應屬下讀。

1.10 Translation of Part V

Lüshi Chunqiu (呂氏春秋) was authored in the eighth year of Qin dynasty. According to this record, Mozi belongs to philosophical works, and *Hanshu Yiwen Zhi* (漢書藝文志) places the time of the biographical book, *Xiaojing*, before the period of primary learning (小學) and after *the Analects*. In late Warring States period and early Qin Dynasty, the respectful expression of *Jing* (classic) was already given to *Mojing* and *Xiaojing*. But the most revered classics of *the Book of Poetry*, *the Classic of History* and *the Book of Changes* were recognised as *Jing* (classic) before them. Quanshu Chapter of *Xunzi* says: “How should one begin to learn? How does it end? Learning should begin with the recitation of the classics, and end with the study of *Liji*.” The classics mentioned in this verse are *the Book of Poetry* and *the Book of Changes*. A connection between poems and *Jing* (classic) first appeared in Sima Qian’s (司馬遷)*Shiji* (史記), its chapter Rulin recorded that Shen Gong (申公) taught his disciples *the Book of Poetry* as a classic. In the early years of the Southern Song Dynasty, the word *Jing* was used as part of a book title in Liaogang’s *Commentary of Shijing* (詩經-*Book of Poetry*). However *Hanshu Yiwen Zhi* (漢書藝文志) mentioned poetry and *the Book of Changes* (易經 -*Yijing*), notice here that the word *Jing* was not attached to poetry.

2. Original text and translation of the text from *Shifa tongwei* (Part of Chapter Two)

2.1 Original text – Part I

詩有三超。識見宜超，氣象宜超，語意宜超，惟胸次高曠者能之。詩有四高。格宜高，興宜高，地步宜高，手眼亦宜高，而皆求諸修養。詩有四近。宜近情，宜近理，

宜近風雅，宜近畫圖。情理得之於學問，風雅得之於《詩》、《騷》，而畫圖則取助於江山。詩有三深。情宜深，意宜深，味宜深。皎然曰：「氣象氤氳，由深於體勢；意度盤礴，由深於作用；用律不滯，由深於聲對；用事不直，由深於義類。」此說甚精，特深作熟解，不與淺對耳。

2.2 Translation of Part I

Poetry should have three superb elements: excellence in rich knowledge, in the atmosphere of the poem and in the expression of language. Only those who are broad-minded and open-hearted can achieve this. Poetry requires high standards in the four areas of style, taste and interest, depth, and scope. All of which depend on one's level of self-cultivation. Poetry should also have four attachments. It should be in touch with feelings and sense, be within reason, be attached to elegance and image. The attainment of sense and reason is a result of knowledge; elegance comes from the learning of *the Book of Poetry* and *Li Sao* (離騷); image is created by the poet's understanding of natural landscape. Three aspects of poetry require profoundness; they are sentiment, meaning and significance. Jiaoran once said: "The vivid atmosphere is the effect of thorough understanding of structure; the grand conception of the poem is expressed with skilful techniques; the rhythm is fluent because of the poet's knowledge in phonology; description of content is tactful due to the skilful use of language." This statement is very insightful. Those techniques refer to the proficiency of skills, rather than the depth of understanding.

2.3 Original text – Part II

詩有三淺。意宜深而語宜淺，鍊宜精而色宜淺，學宜富而用事宜淺，所謂深入而淺出也。詩有三嚴。紀律宜嚴，對章宜嚴，棄取宜嚴，不嚴則懈而滑矣。詩有三寬。

聲病無礙者宜寬（如八病中後四病之類），俗論太刻者宜寬（如論杜詩每聯上句第七字上去入間用之類），瑜多瑕少者宜寬。寬者寬之，嚴者嚴之，而詩律工矣。詩有三留。留好意以待發揮，留好字以助警策，留好韻以助精神。建安盛唐多好意，太康、中唐多好字，永明、大曆多好韻，唯大家爲能兼之。

2.4 Translation of Part II

Poetry requires three aspects of simplicity: profound meaning is conveyed through simple language, eloquent writing with the least amount of hard and rare words, showing profound erudition but only citing classic stories that are easy to understand. Furthermore, stringency needs to be considered in the rules for writing, rhythm and the choice of suitable words. If careful thought is not given to those three features, then the quality of the poem will decline. However, sometimes leniency needs to be placed in three areas. There should be leniency if there are no evident faults in the rhythm (such as the latter four faults among the eight faults in poetry writing: 平頭、上尾、蜂腰、鶴膝、大韻、小韻、旁紐、正紐); the public's excessive criticism on the form of poetry should be relaxed (for example, some comment on Du Fu's poetry that his seventh character of each verse should alternatively use the tones of shang (上), qu (去), ru (入)); one should not be so critical if the poem has more fine points than flaws. If leniency and stringency are applied appropriately, then the rhythm and form of the poem can be considered near perfection. Good poetry should pass down three kinds of asset. Leaving exquisite thought and ideas for further imagination and elaboration; imparting words of wisdom to inform and to inspire; offering beautiful rhythm to stimulate the mind and spirit. During Jiankang of early Tang Dynasty, there appeared much exquisite thought and ideas in poems; in Mid-Tang Dynasty (Taikang), poems convey much words of wisdom; and in Yongming and Dali period, many beautiful rhythms emerged. Only the greatest poet can accomplish and pass down all three assets.

2.5 Original text – Part III

詩有四不可。骨不可露，氣不可浮，情不可過，意不可偏。皎然曰：「氣高而不怒，怒則失於風流；力勁而不露，露則傷於斤斧；情多而不暗，暗則蹶於拙鈍；才贍而不疏，疏則損於筋脈。」兩說可以相輔，而宋賢多犯此病。（失於風流，言不風流也。）詩有四勿傷。鍊勿傷氣，曲勿傷意，淡勿傷味，瘦勿傷神。前賢如張景陽能不傷氣，杜子美能不傷意，陶淵明、孟山人能不傷味，王右丞、劉文房能不傷神。

2.6 Translation of Part III

Four mistakes in poetry writing should be avoided. Choice of words should not be too sharp and harsh, atmosphere created should not appear unsettled and flustered, expression of emotion should not be exaggerated, and the meaning of poem should not be biased. Jiaoran once said: “Grand and vigorous atmosphere should not show itself to be rough, elegance will be lost in the roughness; language should be precise but not too explicit, overly sculpted sentences will lose its nice flow; the expression of sentiment should not be vague, otherwise the poem will show dullness and disinterest; the main line of the poem should not be lost in the display of profound erudition, or else the structure falls part like hurting the body’s arteries and veins.” The two statements complement each other, such faults are common in poets from Song Dynasty (the language is lack in elegance). Furthermore, poetry should avoid four kinds of damage. Firstly, the damage of precise language to the formation of atmosphere; secondly the damage of tactful words to the expression of true meaning; then the simple words may cause damage to the profound significance, and lastly concise language can damage the essence and the spirit of the poem. Some past scholars were able to avoid those damages. Zhang Jingyang did not damage the atmosphere in his poetry, Du Zimei was

able to maintain the true meaning, Tao Yuanming and Meng Shanren fully expressed the profound significance in their poems, and the essence and spirit in Wang Youchen and Liu Wenfang's poems were not damaged.

2.7 Original text – Part IV

詩有三盡三不盡。景盡情不盡，語盡意不盡，趣盡味不盡。唐詩中晚以後，往往失之於盡，而宋賢尤鮮餘味。取法乎中，僅得乎下，所以宋詩不宜學也。詩有三可借。故事可借，字意可借，古人句可借。（借句者當注明。）詩有三不欲勝。文不欲勝質，境不欲勝情，情不欲勝理。然五者相濟而不可偏勝。文勝則浮，質勝則俚，境勝則虛，情勝則實，理勝則迂滯而不近風雅矣。

2.8 Translation of Part IV

Three facets of poetry should be completed to the greatest extent, and another three can only be done to a certain limit. Description of the scene can be written to one's heart's content, but it's not possible to fully express the emotion and sentiment in it; all forms of language can be used but the full meaning is not completely told; various interesting facts can be included but the true significance is not entirely communicated. From mid to late periods of Tang Dynasty, poems begin to gradually lose its description to full extent, and scholars from Song Dynasty were only able to grasp some good traits of Tang poets' skills. When only aiming to learn the mediocre level of a method, then only low achievement can be attained; so Song Poetry is not a good example to follow. Three features can be borrowed for poetry. In a poem, classic stories, meaning of words and quotations from ancients (citation is required) can be borrowed. Three areas of poetry should not surpass one another. The demonstration of literary exquisiteness should not surpass the modest essence of the poem,

the formation of atmosphere should not surpass the expression of sentiment, and finally the expression of sentiment should not surpass reasons. The poet needs to seek balance amongst the above mentioned five elements. When literary exquisiteness surpasses, then the poem will seem boastful, but if the modest essence overpowers, then the use of language will seem too colloquial; if atmosphere surpasses, then the content may seem empty, but when sentiment overtakes, the poem will be full of emotion; when there is too much reasoning, then the poem loses its elegance.

2.9 Original text – Part V

詩有五不可失。麗不可失之艷，新不可失之巧，淡不可失之枯，壯不可失之粗豪，奇不可失之穿鑿。李長吉奇而鑿，李山甫壯而粗，姚武功淡而枯，四靈新而巧，香奩、西崑麗而艷，雖復名家，不可訓也。詩有五可五不可。可頌不可諛，可刺不可訕，可怨不可疾，可樂不可淫，可哀不可傷。小人之詩則頌而諛、刺而訕，淺人之詩則怨而疾、樂而淫、哀而傷矣。詩有八能。能放不可不能收，能入不可不能出，能呼不可不能應，能即不可不能離。

2.10 Translation of Part V

There are five surpluses in poetry writing. The words can be beautiful but not gaudy. The structure can be creative but cannot be over modified. The meaning can be plain but not boring. The feelings can be magnificent but not illogical. The subject matter can be interesting but not far-fetched. There are five do's and five don'ts. The poetry can be eulogistic but not adulatory, satirical but not sarcastic, explanatory but not blaming, joyous but not indecent, mournful but not distressing. Poems by meaning are both praising but flattering and satirical but sarcastic. There are eight skills used in writing poetry, making the

meaning of the poems grand but finally focusing on a main point, knowledgeable but straightforward; making the structure logical, which means the beginning and end of the poem echo each other.

2.11 Original text – Part VI

詩有二不可廢。雖欲廢巧尚直，而思致不得紂；雖欲廢詞尚意，而典麗不得遺。宋人尚意，遺典麗而得枯澀；貫休尚直，紂思致而成口語。詩有四離。雖期道情而離深僻，雖用經史而離書生，雖尚高逸而離迂遠，雖欲飛動而離輕浮。此唯卓然名家者能之，非所期於衆流矣。詩有六至。至險而不僻，至奇而不怪，至麗而自然，至苦而無跡，至近而意遠，至放而不迂。宜於唐賢中求其矩矱，而取則焉。

2.12 Translation of Part VI

Two elements of poetry cannot be abandoned. Although one may wish to use clear and easy language and abandon the art of writing, but this may cause deficiency in the thought expressed; though some words are abandoned so as to only show the true meaning of the sentence, but it is not ideal to lose the elegance. The Song poets preferred the expression of true meaning, so their poems are rather dull than elegant; Guanxiu was known for his use of straightforward language, but his poems sound like spoken language. Poetry should stay away from four elements. When aspiring to express complex sentiment, one should still avoid using uncommon and hard words; when classics and history are used, one should stay away from using them mechanically; the thoughts conveyed can be noble and superior, but they should still be practical; the style of writing can be vivid and expressive but should not be frivolous. Only renowned poets can fulfil those requirements, it is not expected from ordinary poets. Poetry should have six accomplishments. One can be innovative but the content cannot

be too uncommon to everyday life; the topic can be special and unique but should not be peculiar; stunning description should remain relatable to the natural world; words with negative connotation are not used when describing a suffering situation; simple words are used to express profound meaning; and a sense of freedom can be included without being detached to reality. We can find good examples of those accomplishments and learn from the poets from Tang Dynasty.

2.13 Original text – Part VII

詩宜去六迷。以虛誕爲高古如盧玉川，以緩漫爲冲澹如釋齊己，以詭怪爲新奇如李昌谷，以爛熟爲穩約如白樂天，以氣少力弱爲容易，以錯用意爲獨善，時見於晚唐五季諸家，皆無可觀。詩宜去五俗。一曰俗體，二曰俗意，三曰俗句，四曰俗字，五曰俗韻。江湖小說家詩，兼茲五者之病。詩有六忌。語忌直而意忌淺，脈忌露而味忌短，聲韻忌散緩，節奏忌迫促。宋人患脈露而味短，聲韻不講而節奏荒矣。

2.14 Translation of Part VII

There are six false beliefs that should be avoided in writing poetry. Considering absurdity as unadorned antiquity like Lu Yuchuan 盧玉川, considering desultoriness as tranquillity like Shi Qiji 釋齊己, considering grotesque as novelty like Li Changgu 李昌谷, considering acquaintance as standards like Bai Leitian 白樂天, considering weakness as ease and considering the misapprehension as the appropriateness. These mistakes are common in the works from the poets of late Tang Dynasty and the period of the Five Dynasty (the period before Song dynasty), which are unworthy of appreciation. Five kinds of tackiness should be avoided in writing poetry, they are philistine structure, meaning, sentence, words and rhythm.

These are shortcomings shown in the poems concluded by low-brow fictions. Also there are six taboos when writing poetry. The words used should not be too straightforward and the meaning should not be superficial. The structure should not be over-revealing and the significance should not be brief. The tune should not be scattered and rhythm should not be hurried. The poets in Song dynasty valued the structure and significance but neglected the tune and rhythm.

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