

The Sanskrit Origins of Recent Style Prosody'

The purpose of this paper is to show that the origins of the tonal patterns of Chinese Recent Style poetry are to be found in Sanskrit prosody and poetics. "Recent Style poetry" refers to the eight-line regulated verse and the four-line quatrain. Displayed below is the tonal prosody of one of the earliest examples of regulated verse, poem written sometime before 551 by Yü Chien-wu (? --550), the father of the great poet Yü Hsin.

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酒道逢将圣	D D L L d	O A O B x1	A = Deflected
飞觞属上贤	L L D D L	O B O A y(R)	B=Level
仁风开美景	L L L D r	O B O A x2	O = Optional
瑞气动非烟	D D D L L	O A O B y(R)	R=Rhyme
秋树翻黄叶	L D L L e	O A O B x3	x1 = d= departing x2 = r = rising
 寒池堕黑莲	 L L D D L	 O B O A y(R)	 x3 = e = entering d, r, e are Deflected
承恩谢命浅	L L D D r	O B O A x2	
念报在身前	D D D L L	O A O B y(R)	y=Level

The last four lines repeat the tonal patterns of the first four. This is the defining prosody of regulated verse. A quatrain would have the same tonal patterns as the first or last four lines. In this particular poem, B's and y's are level, A's and x's are deflected. In general, A's and B's are opposite with respect to the level / deflected distinction; so are x's and y's.

The tonal patterns of Recent Style poetry are constituted by individual tonal rules, which can be correlated with the tonal defects in the traditional list of "Eight Defects." In the *Bunkyō hifuron* (819) of Kūkai (774--835), there are detailed explanations of these defects as well as statements concerning tonal rules operative in Recent Style prosody not mentioned in the traditional list. Leaving out two of these rules in this account, we will list the rest according to their traditional names and their definitions given in the *Bunkyō hifuron*.

1. Level Head: OAOOO/OBOOO.

In five-syllable verse, the first and sixth syllables should not share the same tone, nor should the second and seventh syllables share the same tone.

2. Raised Tail: OOOOx/OOOOy.

In five-syllable verse, the fifth and tenth syllables should not be in the same tone.

3. Crane's Knee: OOOOX1/OOOOO // OOOOX2/OOOOO.

In five-syllable verse, the fifth syllable should not be in the same tone as the fifteenth syllable. (We use different indices to indicate that x1 and x2 are different in tone).

4. "2--4 rule": For all five-syllable lines, OAOBO.

Moreover, if the second and fourth syllables are in the same tone, that also cannot be considered good. Although there is no name for it at present, it is more important than Wasp's Waist.

There are two features in the development of tonal prosody which led us to suspect that some outside influence was responsible.

The first is the speed of the development. As is well known, Shen Yüeh (441--513) issued his famous manifesto on tonal prosody in 488, in the afterword to his biography of Hsieh Ling-yün. He and his followers then began experimenting with tonal prosody. By 551, when Emperor Chien-wen of Liang was murdered by Hou Ching's men, regulated verse had already emerged as a new prosodic form. Two types of evidence support this conclusion. First, there are three examples of regulated verse written before 551, and twenty-eight before the T'ang dynasty. Second, the

Japanese scholar Takagi Masakazu has broken down the tonal patterns of Recent Style poetry into individual rules, and for each rule, determined the time of its emergence. He did this by sampling the poetry of the Six Dynasties in chronological order, and for each poet, analyzing the percentage of lines or couplets in his sample which conform to a particular rule. The conclusion he drew is that almost all the individual rules of Recent Style poetry had been established before 551. Putting these two types of evidence together we may say that some sixty years after Shen Yüeh issued his manifesto the development of Recent Style prosody was for all practical purposes complete. For such a major change, sixty years is a very short period of time indeed.

The second feature is the radical nature of the new prosody. Before the time of Shen Yüeh (441--513), and certainly by the fourth and fifth centuries, five-syllable verse was the dominant form of poetry. The prosodic requirements of this verse form are very simple: 1) every line has five syllables; and 2) place the rhyme at the end of even-numbered lines. By 551, five-syllable verse had acquired an intricate tonal prosody. Let us compare the two.

(1) Before Shen Yüeh	(2) After Shen Yüeh	(1) New Features
O O O O O	O A O B x1	O A O B x1
O O O O y (R)	O B O A y(R)	O B O A _
O O O O O	O B O A x2	O B O A x2
O O O O y(R)	O A O B y(R)	O A O B _

What is new in the emerging prosody? First, the most radical departure is the bifurcation of the four tones into two prosodic categories. Secondly, in the Chinese prosodic tradition up to the time of Shen Yüeh, nothing whatsoever was required of the internal syllables of a line. With the rise of tonal prosody, restrictions were placed upon the internal syllables of a line, and on the matching middle syllables belonging respectively to the two lines of a couplet and the two couplets of a quatrain. Therefore, if we define meter broadly as the obligatory, rhythmic repetition of prosodemic features across all syllables within a certain domain, then Recent Style poetry may in a sense be said to have meter or meter-like features. Thirdly, the tonal patterns were predetermined and defined over either four lines or eight lines. Four lines was the minimum for embodying a complete cycle of tonal rules. This is another meter-like feature of Recent Style prosody.

Radical change accomplished within a short time suggests that outside influence was operative. The Chinese were clever, but they were not so clever as to be able to invent something out of nothing. The most important foreign influence at work during the fifth and sixth centuries in Chien-k'ang, the capital of the Southern dynasties, was Buddhism. To be sure, the great Chinese historian Ch'en Yin-k'o (1934) called attention to a possible connection between the spread of Buddhism and the rise of tonal prosody, though he mistakenly placed the emphasis on the origin of the four tones. He pointed out that when tonal prosody was being invented, Shen Yüeh and his followers were in close contact with foreign monks gathered at Chien-k'ang. Many of these monks were Central Asians with native training in Sanskrit and Buddhist psalmody. We also know that slightly earlier, in the beginning of the fifth century, Kumārajīva (344-413) and his disciple Hui-jui had discussed the importance of using śioka and gātha in hymns praising the Buddha and the king. We suspect that one of the initial motives for developing tonal prosody, under the imperial patronage of the Buddhist kings of the Ch'i and Liang dynasties, was to enable the Chinese to sing praise to the Buddha and the king in metered chant--as it was done in Buddhist India.

It is at this juncture that the two authors of this paper joined forces. One of us, Tsu-Lin Mei, in the process of directing Richard Bodman's (1978) thesis on the Bunhyō hifuron, surmised that Sanskrit influence must somehow be responsible for the rise of Recent Style prosody. He then turned to Victor Mair, a specialist in Tun-huang literature, and expert in Buddhology and Sanskrit, and asked him to pinpoint the specific Sanskrit influences. A full presentation of our findings will be published in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*.

The main results are these. First, the concept of poetic defect in the traditional formula "Four Tones and Eight Defects" (*ssu-sheng pa-ping*) came from Sanskrit poetics, specifically from the notion of *dosa* (fault, vice, deficiency) and *yamaka* (repetition of words (or syllables, or sounds)). Secondly, Sanskrit meters are based on the opposition between long and short syllables, called *laghu* (light) and *guru* (heavy) for the purpose of prosody. Shen Yüeh used *ch'ing* (light) and *chung* (heavy) as translation loans in his famous statement "within a couplet, light and heavy

sounds must be entirely distinct." This indicates that the bifurcation of the four tones into two prosodic categories was inspired by the opposition between light and heavy in Sanskrit prosody. Thirdly, in all the Sanskrit texts translated into Chinese between 450 and 550, the most common meter is the śloka, which in Sanskrit means "hymn of praise or glory." It is the śloka and other Sanskrit meters that stimulated the development of meter-like features in Recent Style prosody.

Now let us consider some of the specific arguments.

1. *The rise of meter-like features in Chinese prosody.* The basic scheme of the śloka, as set forth in Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary, is as follows:

Odd pāda: xxxx (-) (-) (✓)

Even pāda : x x x x ✓ - ✓ x

The śloka consists of four pāda or quarter verses of eight syllables each, or two lines of sixteen syllables each, each line allowing great liberty except the fifth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth syllables, which should be unchangeable as in the above scheme, the x's denoting either long or short, the bars long, and the breve signs short.

The most important Indian gift Buddhism brought to China in this connection was the concept of meter, as exemplified in the śloka. That is, acquaintance with Sanskrit meters made the Chinese of the fifth and sixth centuries realize that it is possible to impose predetermined prosodic rules on the internal syllables of a line, for a predetermined number of lines. Other features of Recent Style prosody show a more direct connection with the śloka. They include the imposition of fewer restrictions at the beginning of a line, and the requirement of maintaining a balance in a line and in a couplet between the two prosodic categories. At higher levels of organization, the emergence of the quatrain as a basic module of composition may be mentioned as a feature due to the four-pāda structure of the śloka. To put the issue in historical perspective, we may say that all the various forms of Chinese verse prior to Shen Yüeh belong to the class of syllabic verse, with a fixed number of syllables within the line as the organizing principle. After contact with the Sanskrit tradition, Chinese verse acquired meters or meter-like features.

2. The concept of poetic defect (*wen-ping*). From the very beginning, Shen Yüeh and his associates talked about tonal prosody in terms of *ssu-sheng pa ping* (Four Tones and Eight Defects), for example, "Level Head," "Raised Tail," "Wasp's Waist," "Crane's Knee," "Major Rhyme," "Minor Rhyme," etc. In the Bunkyō hifuron, the original eight defects have been expanded into "Twenty-eight Defects in Poetry." There is no antecedent for the concept of poetic defect in the tradition of Chinese poetics prior to Shen Yüeh. So where did the concept come from?

There is a long tradition in Sanskrit poetics which classifies and analyzes poetic defects, or *dosa* (fault, vice, deficiency). Bechan Jha's *Concept of Poetic Blemishes in Sanskrit Poetics* (1965) is entirely devoted to this topic. The beginning of this tradition may be traced to the *Natyāśāstra* of Bharata, composed sometime between the first century BCE and the first century CE. Though the work as a whole is concerned with dramaturgy, it includes chapters generally recognized as representing the first systematic treatment of prosody. In the chapter on "Verbal Representation and Prosody," the author defines the concept of *yamaka* as "the repetition of words (or syllables or sounds) at the beginning of the feet and at other places," and proceeds to classify this poetic figure into ten types. This line of inquiry was further developed in the *Kāvyaālahkāra* of Bhīmaha and the *Kāvyaadarśa* of Dandin, both seventh and eighth century works which relied heavily on earlier prosodists. It is our thesis that the famous "Eight Defects" of Shen Yüeh and the "Twenty-eight Defects"

of the Bunkyō hifuron (819) were derived from Sanskrit treatises on poetics. In the longer version of our paper, we tried to show that some of the specific defects are identical in Chinese and in Sanskrit, the number and types of defects in the two traditions are comparable, and the presentation follows the same format of defining a specific defect and then citing examples to illustrate it.

3. *The bifurcation of the four tones into two prosodic categories.* There is a famous sentence near the end of Shen Yüeh's afterword to the biography of Hsieh Ling-yün, the passage in which he issued the manifesto on tonal prosody: "Within one line, initials and finals must be completely different; and within a couplet, light and heavy sounds must be entirely distinct. Only those who attain this subtle insight can begin to discuss literature."

The meaning of the sentence "within a couplet, light and heavy sounds must be entirely distinct" is clear enough. The sentence was paraphrased by Li Yen-shou (? --628) in the *Nan shih*

and cited by the T'ang critic Yüan Ching (fl. 661) in a passage preserved in the Bunkyō hifuron. In the *Nan shih*, the paraphrase "within a couplet, *chiao* and *chen* are different" indicates that Li Yen-shou understood "light and heavy sounds" as terms referring to tones. In Yüan Ching's passage, the illustrative examples following the cited paragraph show that the author took "light and heavy sounds" as terms equivalent to level and deflected. Also, in a passage preserved in the Bunkyō hifuron, the T'ang poet Wang Ch'ang-ling (689--?) used *ch'ing* (light) and *chung* (heavy) to refer to the prosodic categories later called "level" and "deflected."

How did *ch'ing* and *chung* become technical terms referring to tones or prosodic categories? As noted above, Sanskrit meters are based on the opposition between long and short syllables, called *laghu* (light) and *guru* (heavy) for the purpose of prosody. In a passage from the *Vinaya* of Mahīśāsaka, often cited by Buddhologists in their discussion of the language of primitive Buddhism, *laghu* and *guru* were translated into Chinese as *ch'ing* and *chung* (Taishō 22:39c). The translation was done by Buddhajīva of Kashmir at Yangchou in 423--424, some sixty years before Shen Yüeh issued his manifesto. With a large contingent of foreign monks in Chien-k'ang, Shen Yüeh and his followers undoubtedly could have acquired basic facts about Sanskrit language and prosody by other avenues as well. It therefore seems clear that Shen Yüeh's "light and heavy sounds" is a translation loan from Sanskrit. Since *laghu* and *guru* refer to two prosodic categories in Sanskrit, we can now understand why *ch'ing* and *chung* eventually acquired a similar function in Chinese.

We have argued so far that the bifurcation of the four tones into two prosodic categories was inspired by the Sanskrit mode. But the particular method of bifurcation--with the level tone constituting one category by itself, and the other three tones constituting the other category--requires a separate explanation. Several factors are probably involved. First, the text frequency of level tone syllables is between forty and forty-four percent in Middle Chinese, that is, about half. Secondly, the majority of five-syllable poems of the fifth and sixth centuries rhyme in level-tone syllables. For such poems, when the rules prohibiting "Raised Tail" and "Crane's Knee" emerged before 551, there was a *de facto* opposition in the final syllables between the categories of level and deflected. Thirdly, the level tone, called "level," probably had an even contour and hence was prolongable. The other three tones, either contoured or checked, were not prolongable. The opposition between prolongable and non-prolongable seems to have corresponded to the opposition between long and short syllables in Sanskrit.

To conclude: under the influence of the Sanskrit theory of poetic defects, Shen Yüeh and his followers invented tonal prosody in an attempt to reproduce in Chinese the same euphonic effect achieved by meter in Sanskrit. Classical Sanskrit and Middle Chinese are typologically as different as two languages can be. It is all the more surprising, and significant, that the structural principles of Sanskrit meters could be transmitted from India to China via the vehicle of Buddhism.

(梅维恒合著)梵文诗律和诗病说

对齐梁声律形成的影响

从沈约《宋书·谢灵运传论》(488)开始,到庾肩吾死去的550年,汉语诗律引入三个史无前例的演变:(1)四声两元化形成平仄。(2)以前的诗律只管句末的字,也就是押韵的字需要声调相同,而声病之说却兼顾句中的平仄,尤其是五言句里的第二字和第四字。(3)齐梁体有固定的句数,律诗四联八句,后来称为绝句的诗两联四句。

在短短的六十年间产生这样巨大的演变,很可能是受了外来因素的影响。陈寅恪<四声三问>(1934)已指出永明时代梵胡客僧聚集建康,和审音文士沈约、王融、谢朓等交往频繁。

(1)婆罗多《舞论》(二世纪以前)已把诗病(*dosa*)分成十种。

这个观念是沈约“四声八病”中“病”的来源。(2)梵文中的长短音在诗律中叫“轻重音”(梵文 *laghu* “轻”、*guru* “重”)。沈约“两句之中,轻重悉异”的“轻重”相当于后代的“平仄”,来源是梵文诗律里的“轻重音”。(3)齐梁时代的翻译佛经,原文中最常用的音律是 *śloka*,

意译为“颂”，音译“首卢迦”，由四个音步(pāda)组成，每个音步八个音节，一共三十二个音节。这是律诗绝句句数的来源。

* 本文与 Victor H. Mair 合著。原载 *Contacts between Cultures (Eastern Asia: Literature and Humanities, Volume 3)*, 1992 年。