

A Hypothesis on the Origin of Heptasyllabic Poetry: “Yange xing”,
Celestial Master Daoism Poems, and Suburban Sacrifice Songs in

the Han Dynasty

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis hopes to propose a new hypothesis about the origin of Chinese heptasyllabic poetry. Although there are numerous academic discussions in the existing poetic narrative, few of them have noticed the possible effect of the Celestial Master Daoism. Based on the literary analysis and formal comparison, this thesis first finds that, during the time Cao Pi 曹丕 created his “Yange xing,” the first literati heptasyllabic poem, “cypress beam genre” (*bolian ti* 柏梁體) poetry – the earliest form of heptasyllabic poetry – was already a normal, fixed, and mature poetic form within the community of Celestial Master Daoism. Therefore, Celestial Master Daoism’s mastery of *bolian ti* poetry and their intensive and frequent composition highly likely motivated Cao Pi, the new Wei ruler who took over the populace of Celestial Master Daoism and had a close relationship with Zhang Lu’s 張魯 family, to learn and introduce this poetic form into his own poetic creation. Then, this thesis also traces this poetic form back to suburban sacrifice songs in the Han dynasty. During the reign of Emperor Wu, the prototype of *bolian ti* poetry appeared in suburban sacrifice songs created to express worship to heavenly and earthly deities. Hence, when the Celestial Master Daoism became the inheritor of regional power (mainly in Sichuan, Chongqing, and Shaanxi of today’s China) of the Han empire and hoped to establish their own regime, they created their own ritual texts by modeling after Han suburban sacrifice songs. In so doing, they demonstrated their legitimacy and exclusivity by connecting the regime itself with Dao.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Cao Pi's 曹丕 "Yange xing" 燕歌行¹ is the first literati heptasyllabic poem in Chinese poetic history.² Its unique aesthetic appeal, which enjoys a supreme literary status and receives everlasting praise³, depends highly on its mature and developed formal artistry. Therefore, it is hard to imagine that Cao Pi invented a new genre without some impetus and even perfected it without learning and imitation. Based on this confusion, our academia has always been discussing if there exists any possible precedent of "Yange xing," or more generally, of the heptasyllabic poetry. So far, we have had countless academic writings directly discussing the origin of heptasyllabic poetry, by which we can roughly summarize more than a dozen of hypotheses. Regretfully, none of them can be enough to convince others.⁴ Also, this paper does not hope to solve such a sophisticated issue. What we want

¹ We do not translate "Yange xing" 燕歌行 as "Banquet song". As for the reason, please refer to the Appendix.

² This should be a consensus in today's scholarship. One of relative typical discussions could be found in Wang Li's *Gudai hanyu* 古代漢語, in which he mentioned: "Our country's first extant and complete heptasyllabic poem created by the literatus is Cao Pi's Yange xing in Wei dynasty 我國現存的第一首文人創作的完整七言詩是魏曹丕的燕歌行." Refer to *Gudai hanyu* 古代漢語 (Zhonghua shuju, 2005), 1516. More importantly, fifteen centuries ago, Xiao Zixian's 蕭子顯 "discourse of literati biography" 文學傳論 in the *Book of Southern Qi* 南齊書 had clearly pointed out: "For this beautiful writing of Emperor Wen of Wei, if we talk about the writing of heptasyllable, what can be the precedent except this one 魏文之麗篆, 七言之作, 非此誰先?" Furthermore, in Xiao Difei's 蕭滌非 *Hanwei liuchao yuefu wenxue shi* 漢魏六朝樂府文學史, he further argued that Xiao Zixian was able to read Wei literature as much as possible. Hence, if Xiao Zixian believed that there is no earlier heptasyllabic poem before Cao Pi's "Yange xing", this judgment should be reliable. Refer to Xiao's *Hanwei liuchao yuefu wenxue shi* 漢魏六朝樂府文學史 (Taipei: Chang'an chubanshe, 1981), 123.

³ For instance, Xiao Difei 蕭滌非 once highly evaluated Cao Pi's "Yange xing" as "not only create a new form of genre for Music Bureau Poetry, but also establish a new era for Chinese poetics 不僅為樂府產生一新體制, 實亦為吾國詩學界開一新紀元", refer to Xiao's *Hanwei liuchao yuefu wenxue shi* 漢魏六朝樂府文學史 (台北: 長安出版社, 1981), 122.

⁴ A sort of further endeavor to deal with the various opinions is to combine some of different hypotheses. For instance, based on two different discussions: *Chuci* 楚辭 as the origin or folk songs as the origin, Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈 suggested that both of them had their own function. Refer to his *Zhongguo wenxue gailun* 中國文學概論 (Hongkong sanlian shudian, 1990), 157. However, this kind of combination, as an academic conclusion, is more like an expediency.

to do, nevertheless, is to introduce a new perspective to recomb a new possibility, a more direct possibility.

To give an elementary and brief overview: although the existing hypotheses about the origin of heptasyllabic poetry are various, their internal logic is the same: to seek the formal similarity between pure heptasyllabic poems in later generations and their hypothetical referent. For instance, scholars holding that heptasyllabic poetry should originate from *Shijing* 詩經 tended to deliberately mold some heptasyllabic poetic lines by combining two separate lines, like “交交黃鳥止於桑.”⁵ Researchers preferring *Chuci* 楚辭, on the other hand, would argue that heptasyllabic poetry is developed from seven characters such as poetic lines in *Chuci*, like “若有人兮山之阿” or “夕餐秋菊之落英.”⁶ Indeed, we cannot deny that every poetic line above has the possibility to influence the formation of heptasyllabic poetry. Nevertheless, these traditional hypotheses, by nature, seem more like a far-fetched association to seek which poems adopt the syntax, precisely incorporating seven characters, accidentally and partially.⁷ Therefore, we also cannot wholly admit that these sorts of coincidences can have some immediate influence on the genuinely developed heptasyllabic poems like Cao Pi’s “Yange xing”.

⁵ This line should essentially be two consecutive lines: “交交黃鳥，止於桑。” As Zhao Minlin 趙敏俐 mentioned, such an inference is a product of simplification, refer to Zhao’s “Lun qiyán shī de qiyuan jīqī zài handai de fazhan 論七言詩的起源及其在漢代的發展”, *Wen shi zhe* 文史哲(2010, 03), 25.

⁶ However, As Yu Guanyin 余冠英 already pointed out, these poetic lines in *Chuci* are completely different from heptasyllabic poetry in terms of caesura (*yinbu* 音步), refer to Yu’s *Hanwei liuchao shi luncong* 漢魏六朝詩論叢 (Shangwu yinshuguan, 2010), 98.

⁷ As Ge Xiaoyin 葛曉音 said, these discussions focus mainly on “debating which poem’s syntax and structure can totally conform with the norm of heptasyllabic poetry 辯論哪一篇詩的句式和篇制完全符合該種體式的規範.” See “Zaoqi qiyán de tishi tezheng he shengcheng yuanli” 早期七言的體式特徵和生成原理, in *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學 (2007, 03).

Compared with previous discussions emphasizing the relationship between ancient poems and general heptasyllabic poetry, this paper suggests that, based on the uniqueness of Cao Pi's "Yange xing," they could be the most suitable center of our research. In other words, now that seeking and comparing the formal similarity has been an inevitable methodology, we can adjust the referent from general heptasyllabic poetry to "Yange xing" itself. After all, as the earliest literati heptasyllabic poems, apart from the apparent commonality of seven syllables, "Yange xing" still shows some special features beyond regular heptasyllabic poetry in later dynasties, such as its rhyming regulation and quantity of lines. These specialties, instead of commonality, would be more meaningful to reveal if there really were some precedents that inspired Cao Pi to learn and imitate. That is to ask if there was a new poetic genre in Cao's time which could impel him to think: I can create something better in this new form. Following this logic, we found our potential target, which shows the striking and extreme formal similarity with "Yange xing," should be poetry in Celestial Master Daoism.

In fact, this similarity has already been realized by some western scholars. Stephen Bokenkamp, Paul Kroll, and Terry Kleeman all noticed the formal characteristic of the critical Daoist poem: "The Teaching of the Celestial Master (*tianshi jiao* 天師教)." Bokenkamp clearly analyzed this poem's rhyming mode and dating;⁸ Kroll had conjectured that "Cao Pi was influenced by the use of this form in the Tianshi community;"

⁸ Refer to Stephen Bokenkamp, "Tianshi Jiao: The Teachings of the Celestial Master and Seven-character Rhyme in Early Daoist Texts". This paper is first presented as "The Heptasyllabic Poetry of the Celestial Masters" in International Conference on the Texts of Early Heavenly Master Taoism, Department of Religion, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 3-4 November, 2001. Its main idea was also summarized in Franciscus Verellen's "Zaoqi tianshi dao jingdian guoji xueshu yantao hui jiyao '早期天师道经典' 国际学术研讨会纪要"(translated by Lü Pengzhi 呂鵬志), *Daojiao yanjiu* 道教研究 (2002, 04).

⁹ and Kleeman also pointed out that “The seven character verse form, with each line rhyming, is a distinctive genre, closely associated with the Celestial Masters.”¹⁰ Indeed, if we can say that *Chuci* or folk songs are similar to heptasyllabic poetry in some respects, the extent of similarity between “Yange xing” and poems in Celestial Master Daoism, like “Tianshi jiao”, could be viewed as the exact same. In sum, on one hand, the utter similarity in poetic form between “Yange xing” and Celestial Master Daoism poems, which we will articulate below, is far more than a coincidence. On the other hand, the close relationship between Zhang Lu’s 張魯 family and Cao’s family also guarantees the practicability that Cao Pi could confront and read Celestial Master Daoism texts¹¹. Hence, we infer that, after Cao Pi was fully exposed to poems of Celestial Master Daoism, he tried to adopt this new form into his creation of traditional literati poetry, and then created two “Yange xing.” Thereafter, because of the exemplary impact of “Yange xing,” the original poetic form from Celestial Master Daoism indirectly impelled the emergence of literati heptasyllabic poetry. Gradually, in later centuries, heptasyllabic poetry becomes mainstream in Chinese poetic history.

⁹ Paul Kroll, “Daoist verse and the quest of the divine”, in *Early Chinese Religion*, edited by John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi 呂鵬志 (Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands, 2010), 962.

¹⁰ Terry Kleeman, *Celestial Masters: History and Ritual in Early Daoist Communities* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2016), 143.

¹¹ There are plenty of academic writings discussing the relationship between Cao’s family and Zhang’s family. For example, refer to Stephen Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scripture* (University of California Press), 149-150.

CHAPTER 2

“YANGE XING” AND ITS FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS

Before our discussion begins, to be more precise in diction, we hope to introduce a new terminology, “cypress beam genre” (*bolianq ti* 柏梁體)¹², to supersede the conventional “heptasyllabic poetry.” Briefly, “heptasyllabic poetry” is more suitable to indicate those later and regular poems in Tang dynasty. As Stephen Owen mentioned, “it was in the Early Tang that the heptasyllabic song attained the characteristic themes, diction, and syntactic conventions which were handed down to the poets of the eighth century.”¹³ Poems like “Yange xing” and “Tianshi jiao”, however, have a more special formal feature that is so different from regular heptasyllabic poetry. Moreover, “cypress beam genre” is also a more historical and authorized terminology to name poems in the formal characteristic of Cao Pi’s “Yange xing.” For instance, Wang Li 王力 explicitly concluded that “(Yange xing) is a typical ancient heptasyllabic poem that rhymes in every line. Later generations call this kind of heptasyllabic poetry as Cypress beam genre (燕歌行) 是一首典型的句句用韻的七言古詩，後人把這種七言詩叫做‘柏梁體’。”¹⁴ In light of that, we will

¹² The earliest source of the terminology 柏梁體 may be traced back to “bolianq tai lianju” 柏梁臺聯句. However, the authenticity of this poem is questionable. In short, scholars including Fang Zushen 方祖燊, Ding Fubao 丁福保, Yu Guanying 余冠英, and Lu Qinli 逯欽立 believe this poem should be authentic, while Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, Luo Genze 羅根澤, You Guoen 遊國恩 presume this poem was fabricated. Since this problem is actually beyond our discussion and we only use this term to point to heptasyllabic poetry in line-rhyming mode, we will not discuss this poem’s reliability.

¹³ Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of the Early T'ang* (Yale University Press, 1977), 122.

¹⁴ Wang Li 王力, *Gudai hanyu* 古代漢語 (Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2005), 1516. Certainly, this terminology appears more earlier. The earliest extant literature using this terminology as a poetic conclusion probably is Ouyang Xun’s 歐陽詢 *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 in Tang dynasty. Thereafter, almost all of literature adopted *bolianq ti* to name poems in Yange xing’s formal feature, instead of *qiyan shi* 七言詩 (heptasyllabic poetry). Nevertheless, according to the record of *Yiwen leiju*, consciously adopting this title and its corresponding form to compose poems appeared in Southern Song dynasty, which is “Song xiaowu di hualin duting qushui lianju xiao bolianq ti 宋孝武帝華林都亭曲水聯句效柏梁體”. See Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢, collated by Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹, *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1965), 1004.

consistently use “cypress beam genre” or *bolian g ti* 柏梁體 to indicate heptasyllabic poems which adopt the line-rhyming mode in this whole paper.

Then, we first translate and analyze Cao Pi’s “Yange xing” below:

燕歌行·其一	Yange xing (I)
秋風蕭瑟天氣涼。	The autumn wind is desolate and mournful, and the and the heaven’s breath is chilly.
草木搖落露為霜。	Grass and trees become withered, and the dew has turned to frost.
羣燕辭歸鵠南翔。	A flock of swallows leaves for returning, and swans fly southward.
念君客遊思斷腸。	Remembering that you are traveling as a guest, and I miss you so much my insides churn.
慊慊思歸戀故鄉。	You should be joyless and hope to come back, missing your hometown.
君何淹留寄他方。	Why you are still lingering and living in another place?
賤妾榮榮守空房。	I am a lowly concubine who is lonely and staying in an empty house.
憂來思君不敢忘。	When the melancholy comes, I miss you, and I dare not to forget you.
不覺淚下沾衣裳。	Without awareness, my tears drop down and damp my clothes.
援琴鳴弦發清商。	I take the zither and sound the chords to play the clear <i>shang</i> .
短歌微吟不能長。	My short song and slight chanting cannot be long.
明月皎皎照我牀。	The bright moon is clear and luminous, illuminating my bed.

星漢西流夜未央。	The starry river flows eastward, and the night still not ended.
牽牛織女遙相望。	The herdboy and the weaving maid gaze at each other distantly.
爾獨何辜限河梁。	What are you guilty of? To be separated by this river-bridge? ¹⁵

燕歌行·其二¹⁶

Yange xing (II)

別日何易會日難。	The Day of parting comes easily, while the day of meeting is hard to wait.
山川悠遠路漫漫。	Mountains and rivers are far away, and the road seems distant and endless.
鬱陶思君未敢言。	With melancholy, I miss you, but I dare not to tell you.
寄書浮雲往不還。	I have sent a letter to you by the floating cloud, which went but did not return so far.
涕零雨面毀容顏。	Tears fall upon my face and disfigure my appearance and complexion.
誰能懷憂獨不嘆。	Who can embrace the melancholy without sighing?
展詩清歌聊自寬。	I read a poem and sing unaccompanied to relieve myself.
樂往哀來摧肺肝。	Pleasure leaves, and grief comes, which destroys my heart and liver.
耿耿伏枕不能眠。	Always being anxious, I lie on my pillow but cannot sleep,

¹⁵ This line is an implicit self-expression. Seemingly, the persona is caring about the predicament of herdboy and weaving maid. Actually, she is trying to ask: "Why we have to be separated, like herdboy and weaving maid, and cannot get together?"

¹⁶ This poem has different versions with various variants and lines. Here we use the version of *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集, compiled by Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩, (Zhonghua shuju, 1979).

披衣出戶步東西。	¹⁷	I put on my clothes, go out the door, and pace eastward and then westward.
仰看星月觀雲間。		Looking up at the moon and stars, I gaze among the clouds.
飛鶴晨鳴聲可憐。		A flying bird chirps in the morning, but its voice is pitiful.
留連顧懷不能存。		I linger on, missing you, and cannot take care of myself.

Apart from the most manifest feature that every poetic line consists of seven characters, there are two more important specialties shared by these two poems. The first is their unique rhyming style. Unlike the orthodox mode in regular Chinese classical poems that rhymes in every couplet, or, in every two lines, “Yange xing” rhymes in every line. Indeed, almost all kinds of poetic genres, or, in traditional Chinese terminology: rhyming proses (*yunwen* 韻文), including works of *Shijing*,¹⁸ *Chuci*, *yuefu* 樂府, and *fu* 賦, are primarily rhymed in couplets.¹⁹ As an exception, continuously rhyming in two consecutive lines normally appears in the opening couplet of a poem or a couplet indicating rhyme switch, as a sign or reminder to emphasize the rhyme. Take the notable Han poems *Xingxing chong xingxing* 行行重行行, the first poem from Nineteen Old Poems, as an example, the couplet “相去日已遠，衣帶日已緩 (Day by day our parting seems more remote, Day by day robe

¹⁷ The rhyming of 西 is more complicated than other characters. Cao Daoheng 曹道衡 also discussed some other cases to prove that, in Han and Wei dynasties, 西 could be compatible with rhyme categories like 真, 文, 寒, and 刪. Refer to Cao Daoheng 曹道衡, “Guanyu yuefu shi de jige wenti” 關於樂府詩的幾個問題, *Qilu xuekan* 齊魯學刊 (1994, 03).

¹⁸ The situation of *Shijing* is more complicated. As the genesis of Chinese classical poetry, some poems from *Shijing* already adopted the line-rhyming mode. Nevertheless, most of works were still rhymed in couplets. For more details, refer to Wang Li 王力, *Shijing yundu* 詩經韻讀, (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 53-65.

¹⁹ I think it is not necessary to list numerous works to prove this convention here. If needed, Cai Zong-qi 蔡宗齊 once clearly mentioned that “Rhyme usually occurs at every other line—in other words, at the end of the closing line of each couplet” in his discussion of pentasyllabic poetry in *How to read Chinese Poetry* (Columbia University Press, 2008), 103. In fact, other poetic genres also obey this regulation.

and belt grow looser)” are continuously rhymed in two contiguous lines. But this is the only case in this whole poem since this is a sign that, beginning with this couplet, the second half of the poem switched its rhyme.²⁰ Likewise, in the earlier case of *Chuci*, the fifth couplet “駕飛龍兮北征，遭吾道兮洞庭 (I ride my flying dragon to journey to the north, and steer my way in Dongting Lake)” in “The lord of the Xiang River (*Xiangjun* 湘君)” also shows the same situation in which these two rhyming characters 征 and 庭 become abruptly different from above rhyme²¹. In sum, consistently rhyming in every line in one poem should not exist in the poetic mainstream. The only orthodoxy of rhyming mode in Chinese classical poetry, beginning with the time of *shijing*, was rhyming in every couplet.

However, far from following such a poetic orthodoxy, Cao Pi deliberately adopted a new mode of rhyming in every line in his creation of “Yange xing”. Moreover, we even can presume that, in Cao Pi’s consciousness, rhyming in every line is a necessary poetic requirement for the creation of heptasyllabic poem, if we refer to his other poetic writings. Indeed, apart from these two heptasyllabic poems named as “Yange xing,” Cao Pi also created lots of tetrasyllabic poems, pentasyllabic poems, and miscellaneous syllable poems (*zayan shi* 雜言詩). But, apparently, each of these poems rigorously conforms to the traditional rhyming mode, rhyming in the ending characters of couplets instead of lines. Take a short tetrasyllabic poem here as an example:

丹霞蔽日行	The Song of Cinnabar Glow Covering the Sun
丹霞蔽日，采虹垂天。	The cinnabar glow is coving the sun, while the

²⁰ The preceding rhyming characters in this poem are 離, 涯, 知, and 枝.

²¹ The rhyming characters above are 洲, 舟, and 流.

谷水潺潺，木落翩翩。	colorful rainbow is falling from the sky. The valley water is gurgling and murmuring, while the leaves are falling lightly and gracefully.
孤禽失群，悲鳴雲間。	A lonely bird loses its flock, sadly singing among the clouds.
月盈則沖，華不再繁。	When the moon is full, it will wane; the blossom cannot flourish again.
古來有之，嗟我何言。	This has been the situation from the past, Ah! What can I say?

This poem shows a representative form of Cao Pi's conventional poems, which should be enough to prove that Cao Pi is a poet who consciously obeys the preceding poetic tradition. This preservation in writing practices, in fact, is also in perfect accordance with his sensitiveness to genre difference, such as his notable literary concept mentioned in "A Discourse on Literature"(典論·論文):

夫文本同而末異。蓋奏議宜雅，書論宜理，銘表尚實，詩賦欲麗。此四科不同。

Literature is the same at the root, but differs in its branches. Generally speaking, memorials and disquisitions should be elegant; letters and discourses should be rational; inscriptions and eulogy value the facts; poetry and rhapsody aspire to beauty. These four categories are different.²²

Regretfully, Cao Pi did not leave more detailed discussion about different subgenres of poetry behind. According to his writing practices and literary thought, however, it should be rational to assume that Cao Pi had explicit judgment about different aesthetical style and formal requirement of various poetic genres. Here we need to reiterate the key

²² This translation refers to Stephen Owen's *Reading in Chinese Literary Thoughts* (Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1992), 64.

difference again: Cao Pi adopted the traditional couplet-rhyming mode in his every tetrasyllabic poem, pentasyllabic poem, and even miscellaneous syllable poem. Only for these two heptasyllabic poems, by contrast, he identically employed the special line-rhyming mode. It is unlikely to be a coincidence.

Hence, we prefer to propose a hypothesis: now that Cao Pi would consciously adopt the standard rhyming mode (rhyme in couplets) when he wanted to compose a tetrasyllabic or pentasyllabic poem. Accordingly, when he tried to create a heptasyllabic poem, he also probably followed the rhyming mode of heptasyllabic poetry. That is to say, it is possible that rhyming in every line, like the case of “Yange xing”, is not an abrupt or casual innovation from Cao Pi himself. In Cao’s own day, conversely, there was already a definite norm stipulating that heptasyllabic poetry, in terms of formal characteristic, should rhyme in lines, not couplets.

Before we start to discuss if there existed such a rhyming mode of heptasyllabic poetry to which Cao Pi can refer, we will continue to introduce the second formal feature of “Yange xing” here: the number of poetic lines. And it is worth noting that this feature is still closely related to the rhyming mode. Briefly speaking, from the time of *Shijing*, Chinese poetry was composed of poetic couplets, which means that every poem, in normal situations, should consist of even poetic lines. However, Cao Pi’s two “Yange xing” thoroughly subverted this tradition and adopted a new poetic structure of odd lines. His first “Yange xing” consists of 15 poetic lines, while the second comprises 13 poetic lines. Also, we tend to assume that this phenomenon is not a coincidence.

More importantly, this change is far from only a casual increase or decrease of poetic lines in poetry creation. It actually reflects an intrinsic transformation of poetic conception and relative rhetorical expression. With regard to those normal poems composed of even lines, their basic meaning unit, by nature, is established by couplets. That is to say, normal Chinese classical poetry needs to rely on two consecutive poetic lines, as a complete meaning unit, to express. A single poetic line usually just plays the role of half a sentence. Below we will give some specific examples before Cao Pi's time:

關關雎鳩，在河之洲。 Kwan-kwan go the ospreys,
on the islet in the river.²³

所謂伊人，在水一方。 The person of whom I think,
is somewhere of the water.²⁴

我有嘉賓，鼓瑟吹笙。 I have admirable guests,
the lutes are struck, and the organ is blown.²⁵

豈余身之憚殃兮，恐皇輿之敗績。 Am I fearing for the peril of my
own body?
I fear for the failure of my lord's
chariot.

寧溘死以流亡兮，余不忍為此態也。 I would rather quickly die or be
exiled,
I cannot stand to act like their
behavior

日出東南隅，照我秦氏樓。 The sun rises from the southeast corner,
illuminating my loft of Qin clan.

驅車上東門，遙望郭北墓。 I drive my carriage to the East Gate,
distantly gazing at the grave on the north of

²³ Translated by James Legge, in his *The She King or The Book of Poetry* (Taiwan: SMC Publishing Inc., 1991), 1.

²⁴ Refer to James Legge's translation, *The She King or The Book of Poetry*, 195.

²⁵ Refer to James Legge's translation, *The She King or The Book of Poetry*, 245.

the wall.
人生天地間，忽如遠行客。 Humans are born between the heaven and
earth,
suddenly, they are like travelers taking a
long journey.

Above we listed some typical poetic couplets from *Shijing*, “On Encountering the Suffering” (*Lisao* 離騷), Music Bureau Poetry in the Han dynasty (*Han Yuefu* 漢樂府) to the “Nineteen Old Poems”, which clearly show that the normal poems, indeed, depend on couplets, or two consecutive lines, to express complete meaning. Two lines of a couplet either have an indivisible logical relationship, or share same subject or verb. When every couplet ends, author’s intention is fully expressed in stages. In this situation, the function of rhyme could also be considered as a sign of the end of meaning unit. Consequently, rhyme appears at the end of every couplet instead of every line. In other words, rhyme, in Chinese classical poems, functions as a period in prose, signifying an ending of a meaning unit. As Wang Li 王力 pointed out:

原來韻文的要素不在於“句”，而在於“韻”。有了韻腳，韻文的節奏就算有了一個安頓；沒有韻腳，雖然成句，詩的節奏還是沒有完。²⁶

Originally, the key element of rhyming literature is not based on “line”, but on “rhyme”. When it has rhyme, the rhythm of rhyming literature could be considered as having a settlement; without rhyme, although there is a poetic line, the poetic rhythm has not finished.

Then, in the case of “Yange xing,” or in all *Boliang ti* poems, the brand new line-rhyming mode not only means that rhyme appears more frequently, but also signifies that their meaning units are no longer established by poetic couplets, but by poetic lines. These poetic

²⁶ Wang Li 王力, *Hanyu shilv xue* 漢語詩律學 (Shanghai: Xin zhishi chubanshe 新知識出版社, 1958), 16.

lines comprised of seven characters become relatively independent, being able to express complete meanings or emotions, just like whole sentences in prose. This contrast could be more obvious if we briefly retrospect the opening lines in two “Yange xing”:

秋風蕭瑟天氣涼。 The autumn wind is desolate and mournful, and the
and the heaven’s breath is chilly.

草木搖落露爲霜。 Grass and trees become withered, and the dew has
turned to frost.

別日何易會日難。 The Day of parting comes easily, while the day of
meeting is hard to wait.

山川悠遠路漫漫。 Mountains and rivers are far away, and the road
seems distant and endless.

Apparently, unlike couplets in tetrasyllabic poems and pentasyllabic poems, here, the two consecutive lines become relatively separate. Although there is inevitably logical relationship between them, their referents are totally different. Even, omitting any line will not affect the meaning of the rest line. In a word, the function of poetic couplets in *bolian* poems disappears, or, more precisely, is superseded by poetic line. After all, the English terminology “couplet” is used to translate the Chinese terminology *lian* 聯, which signifies a meaning unit including an opening line (*chuju* 出句) and a responding line (*duiju* 對句). Nevertheless, because of the change of rhyming mode and expressive style, the concept of *lian* 聯 itself does not exist in *bolian* poems.

Furthermore, it is also worth noticing that this transformation in poetic expression was very likely to be realized by poets themselves. Apart from the uniformity shown by Cao Pi’s two “Yange xing,” Cao Rui 曹叡, son of Cao Pi, also wrote a poem named “Yange xing,”

which proves that they were conscious that *bolian* *ti* poems should be established by lines, rather than couplets.

燕歌行

Yange xing

白日晼晼忽西傾。

The white sun, approaching the sunset, suddenly declines westward.

霜露慘淒塗階庭。

Frosty dew is miserable and dreary, daubing the steps court.

秋草捲葉摧枝莖。

The autumn grass revolves the leaves and breaks branches and stalks.

翩翩飛蓬常獨征。

The light flying tumbleweed always goes on a journey lonely.

有似遊子不安寧。

It resembles traveling people who have no calmness.

It is clear that, in this poem, Cao Rui wrote five separate poetic lines to establish his work. Except for the last line that could be considered as the poetic motif, the preceding four lines respectively delineate four different scenes, including the sunset as an entire milieu, the court as a particular surrounding, as well as the grass and the tumbleweed as the detailed imageries. These lines all possess independent significance, and they do not rely on each other to finish the meaning expression. Even we can prefer to believe that, from the beginning of conceiving, the author had already realized that the writing mode of *bolian* *ti* poetry should be based on separate poetic lines instead of couplets, which is completely different from the traditional tetrasyllabic poetry and pentasyllabic poetry.

Certainly, we should further explain that, although these three “Yange xing” are all comprised of odd lines (15 and 13 lines for Cao Pi’s poems and 5 lines for Cao Rui’s poem), we do not argue that *bolian* *ti* poetry has to be composed by odd lines. It is just because

bolian *ti* poetry broke through the traditional couplet-rhyming mode and created the new line-rhyming mode. In reality, *bolian* *ti* poetry could be composed of any number of lines, not necessarily odd lines. After all, beyond the restriction of the couplet, no matter even lines or odd lines, the increase or decrease of a single line do not affect the expression in content, or rhyming in form. Hence, it is possible that Cao Pi and Cao Rui both organized their poems in odd lines deliberately since they sensitively noticed this interesting difference between *bolian* *ti* poetry and normal poetry. In other words, it is not that *bolian* *ti* poetry's formal requirement itself asked that these poems should consist of odd lines, but Cao Pi and Cao Rui themselves wanted to show that they had already mastered such a new poetic genre by voluntarily organizing their works in a unique form of odd lines.

As the real leader of Jian'an literature,²⁷ also because of Cao Pi's political status and literary talent, his works undoubtedly affected ensuing poets. Among all of Cao Pi's works, this singular masterpiece, "Yange xing," (normally refer to the first one) especially give birth to many imitations in later generations. Apart from his son, Cao Rui, we discussed above, Lu Ji 陸機, Xie Lingyun 謝靈運, and Xie Huilian 謝惠連 all adopted the same writing mode, *bolian* *ti*, to create their own "Yange xing." Thereafter, Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯 and Xiao Yi 蕭繹 introduced new changes. They continued to compose poems by using the title of "Yange xing" but adopting the traditional couplet-rhyming mode, which may be influenced by Bao Zhao's 鮑照 heptasyllabic poems. Then, the heptasyllabic poetry,

²⁷ Some scholarship may view Cao Cao 曹操 as the leader of the group of Jian'an literati. However, Cao Pi in fact had more communication and interaction with Jian'an literati. To borrow Zhang Xinjian's 章新建 words, "Cao Pi was the real leader of Jian'an literati 曹丕是建安文學實際上的領導人," see *Cao Pi* 曹丕, (Huangshan shushe 黃山書社, 1985), 29.

discarding line-rhyming mode but borrowing traditional couplet-rhyming mode, gradually became the mainstream in Chinese poetic history.

To put it simply, Cao Pi's "Yange xing", representing the earliest style of heptasyllabic poetry, is not a result of a teleological process of development by which two characters were simply added to every line. Its line-rhyming mode and expressive mode of setting line as the basic meaning unit both symbolize that the form of "Yange xing" probably originated from a peculiar but completely mature poetic form at that time. Therefore, the following discussion will focus on what could be the precedent of "Yange xing," or what made Cao Pi do such a conscious trial?

CHAPTER 3

“TIANSHI JIAO” AND OTHER BOLIANG TI POEMS IN CELESTIAL MASTER

DAOISM

In the foregoing, we have mentioned that Stephen Bokenkamp, Paul Kroll, and Terry Kleeman had provided insight into the extreme formal similarity between Cao Pi’s “Yange xing” and the famous Daoist poem “Tianshi jiao”. Certainly, if we only have this poem as a sole case, it is impossible to prove that “Tianshi jiao” would have some impact on Cao Pi’s literary composition. However, the reality is that Celestial Master Daoism possessed numerous poems, as same as “Tianshi jiao”, obeying the formal requirement of *boliang ti* poetry. Hence, it should be irrational if we believe that such a vast literary phenomenon would be ignored by Cao Pi, the new ruler who took over the populace of Celestial Master Daoism. In the following part, we will begin our discussion by reading some poems from early Celestial Master Daoism.

In the first place we will discuss the famous poem “Tianshi jiao” which was narrated from the perspective that an instructor was giving his disciples guidance. And according to the context above this poem, this instructor’s identity is likely to be the Celestial Master.²⁸

今故下教作七言。	Today I descend to teach, composing a heptasyllabic poem.
謝諸祭酒男女民。	I greet the libationers, and male and female populace.
天地混籍氣如烟。	The heaven and earth are muddy and disordered,

²⁸ As Terry Kleeman had pointed out, this poem is “closely associated with the Celestial Masters.” Refer to *Celestial Masters: History and Ritual in Early Daoist Communities* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2016), 143. Stephen Bokenkamp also definitely explained that “speaker of the poem is a god, perhaps the Celestial Master himself or the third Celestial Master 张鲁, who by this time has ascended. Whatever the case, the speaker in the poem speaks for the Dao.” See “Tianshi Jiao: The Teachings of the Celestial Master and Seven-character Rhyme in Early Daoist Texts”.

四時五行轉相因。	and their pneumas are like smog. The four seasons and five phases rely on each other in turn.
天地合會無人民。	When Heaven and Earth integrate, there is no people.
星辰倒錯為人先。	Stars and asterisms fall into disorder as a precursor of the populace. ²⁹
二十八宿畢參辰。	At the time when the stars, <i>bi</i> and <i>shen</i> of the twenty-eight <i>Xiu</i> , appear. ³⁰
熒惑太白出其間。	The sparkling deluder and grand white emerge among them.
若有改變垂象先。	If there is any change, the images will be descended in advance.
太平之基不能眠。	The foundation of the Great Peace cannot take a rest.
是令輶軒不可言。	This makes the teaching arduous and cannot be expressed.
發言出教心意煩。	To speak and to teach make my mind troubled
走氣八極周復還。	I walk with pneumas to the eight extremes around, and then go back.
觀視百姓夷胡秦。	I observe and inspect the populace, and treat barbarians and Chinese equally.
不見人種但尸民。	I see no human seeds, only corpse people.
從心恣意勞精神。	I loose my heart, release my will, and exhaust my essence and spirit.
五藏虛空為尸人。	My five viscera remain empty and there are only corpse people.

²⁹ This line refers to Stephen Bokenkamp's translation.

³⁰ According to Qutan xida's 瞿曇悉达 *Kaiyuan zhanjing* 開元占經, the heavenly region of *bi* 畢 and *shen* 參 is a reflection of Wei kingdom. Stephen Bokenkamp believes that they mark the western extremities.

命不可贖屬地官。	Their life cannot be redeemed because they belong to the Earth Officials.
身為鬼伍入黃泉。	They are placed in squads of demons and have to enter the Yellow Springs.
思而改悔從吾言。	Contemplating this, reform and repent; follow my utterance.
可得升度為仙人。	You can ascend and become a transcendent.
節慎陰陽保愛神。	You should also carefully restrain <i>yin</i> and <i>yang</i> , and preserve and cherish your gods.
五藏六府有君臣。	In your five viscera and six organs, there are lords and vassals,
積在微微為真人。	Accumulating them from the tiny, you will become the perfected.
神思愁慘不能眠。	The spirits' concerns are mournful and dire; they cannot sleep. ³¹
遊戲百姓五藏間。	They can entertain themselves amidst the five viscera of the populace.
還與真人共語言。	They return to speak with the perfected.
心中真人來上天。	When the perfected in your mind can come and ascend to the heaven.
絳黃單衣三縫冠。	He will be dress in a singlet of scarlet yellow, and wear a three-weaved cap.
佩天玉符跪吾前。	With a heavenly jade talisman, he will kneel in front of me.
陳說百姓道萬民。	We explain to the populace and speak to myriad people that:
功過進退有明文。	About merit and fault, promotion or demotion,

³¹ This line is a little bit abrupt in literal meaning according to the context. I am still not affirmative about how to understand and translate it. Hence, this line completely adopts Stephen Bokenkamp's translation.

we have explicit texts.

After the first two lines that function as a lecture opener, this poem provides further information about specific teachings. It first introduced the religion's philosophical background and its cosmology. And then, the Celestial Master also introduced his initial actions: walking around the world and inspecting the populace, as well as his judgment of the contemporary populace: although he has rightly investigated different races, he cannot find seed people among them. Subsequently, this poem also instructs its audiences on how to change their fate, become transcendents, and go on to be the perfecteds. Finally, as the ending of this teaching, the Master was teaching his disciple, a new perfected who just ascended to the Heaven, how to dress up and how to take up his new duty.

Obviously, this poem does not provide us with some outstanding aesthetic appeal. It is also not a conventional literary masterpiece. However, this poem precisely shows a deserved appearance, as a product in the earliest period of a certain culture. Indeed, those poetic works focusing on expressing personal thoughts and emotions are products when the poetry has developed into an advanced stage. However, the poems in earlier stages should be aimed at practical purposes. As Luo Zongqiang 羅宗強 had related, “(in the primary phase), poetry is not be considered as literary works being appreciated, but as the criterion of behavior being used to guide the thought 詩不是被當作文學作品鑑賞，而是被當作行為規範，指導思想應用。”³² Indeed, every line, every diction, and every detail in “Tianshi jiao” were apparently created to instruct Daoist disciples' thought and behavior. Meanwhile, it is worth further explaining that such an unvarnished poem, which represents

³² Luo Zongqiang 羅宗強, *Daojia daojiao guwen luntanpian* 道家道教古文論談片 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1994), 120.

the primary level of poetic development in terms of literary expression, surprisingly but flawlessly adopted the highly demanding formal requirement of *boliang ti* poetry. Indeed, “Tianshi jiao,” as same as Cao Pi’s “Yange xing,” is in perfect accordance with the rigorous formal requirement of *boliang ti* poetry. Even, its more lines and rhymes make it more complicated than “Yange xing,” from the perspective of composing.³³

What does it mean when “Tianshi jiao,” which by nature is just a religious text in the early phase of Celestial Master Daoism and not composed by an accomplished poet, can perfectly master an unusual poetic genre? A possible hypothesis, in our view, is that the so-called *boliang ti* poetry’s form is precisely a conventional pattern to which the Celestial Master Daoism were used. “Tianshi jiao” is most likely not the first poem in the form of *boliang ti*, but just one of many poems adopting this form. That is to say, this kind of heptasyllabic poetry with line-rhyming mode, which was named as *boliang ti* poetry by later literati, was already a standard, fixed, and even fully grown form in the society of Celestial Master Daoism before it entered the literati’s vision.

For proving that, and before the further discussion starts, we hope to introduce more poems from the early texts of Celestial Master Daoism. For instance, there are more than a dozen of poems in chapter 5 of *Demon Statutes of Lady Blue* (*Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律). And it is

³³ The situation about rhyming in “Tianshi jiao” is also more complicated because of the amount of rhymes. Briefly speaking, if we refer to *Guangyun* 廣韻, Tianshi jiao’s rhyme characters belong to seven categories, 元, 真, 先, 山, 刪, 桓, 仙, and 文. However, with plenty of reliable rhyme reconstruction today, it is clear that, in the rhyme system of Han, Wei, through Three Kingdom, 元, 先, 山, 桓, 山 belong to 寒 category, while 真 and 文 belong to 真 category. Still, 寒 and 真 categories were compatible at that time in most situations. Refer to Yu Anlan 于安瀾, *Hanwei liuchao yunpu* 漢魏六朝韻譜 (Henan daxue chubanshe, 2015), and Zhou Zumo 周祖謨, *Weijin Nanbeichao yunbu zhi yanbian* 魏晉南北朝韻部之演變 (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi 東大圖書公司, 1996).

easy to find that these poems all adopt the form of *bolian ti* poetry.³⁴ Take the last poem as an example:

有心相遇世道清。 ³⁵	People who have the will to meet with purity of the worldly way.
遠惡從善不求榮。	Should keep away from the evil and follow the good, and not pursue glory.
塵垢之衣以蔽形。	The garment with ash and dust is used to cover your shape.
心在太一詠誦經。	Your heart should exist in the Grand One, chanting and reciting the scripture.
白日修善暮守生。	Practice the good during the day and keep the life during the night.
被髮而行在黃庭。	With disheveled hair, you pace in the yellow court.

Above should be the first paragraph of this poem. The author is playing the instructor to guide his disciples to keep benevolence, overlook worldly value, scrutinize scriptures, and practice properly for the purpose of encountering a clear and pure world.

上啟太上道姓名。	I state upward to the Grand Upper to speak your first name and surname.
一出玄都入太清。 ³⁶	Once I go out of Mystic Capital, I can

³⁴ In the version of *Zhonghua daoang* 中華道藏, all of poems in chapter 5 were only divided into seven separate poems. It seems that the editor segmented these texts according to his understanding of content but ignored their formal regulation. Hence, if we re-segment these texts based on the expected line-rhyming mode. Based on my rough scan, there should be at least twelve separate poems. See *Zhonghua daoang* 中華道藏 (Huaxia chubanshe, 2004), Vol.8, 607-608.

³⁵ There are three more lines as the beginning of this poem, “切切天下真欲弊。庚子之年其運至。千無一人可得脫。” in the version of *Zhonghua daoang* 中華道藏. According to the line-rhyming mode of rest poems, these three lines should belong to another poem. See *Zhonghua daoang* 中華道藏 (Huaxia chubanshe, 2004), Vol.8, 608.

³⁶ Terry Kleeman believes that “(Lady Blue) is associated with the Mystic Capital 玄都”. Based on that, maybe the subject in this part who goes out of Mystic Capital could be Lady Blue herself, instead of an anonymous instructor. But Kleeman do not provided further evidence about why he gave such an argument. See Terry Kleeman’s *Celestial Masters: History and Ritual in Early Daoist Communities* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2016), 147.

口授異訣過災殃。	enter the Grand Clarity. I will teach you the singular instruction orally, helping you to overcome the calamity and disaster.
念世愚子不知生。	Because I consider that silly people in the world do not understand the life.
何當合會隨邪靈。	They are possible to gather and follow the evil spirit.

These five lines are the second paragraph. The subject changes to the instructor himself, who can enter the Grand Clarity and then teach the instruction to his disciples by implying that he can help disciples to overcome the calamity and protect them from following evil spirit wrongly.

太一來下條姓名。	When the Grand One descends and lists your first name and surname.
恐子一身不久停。	I am afraid that your body cannot stay for long.
發願不死從吾經。	You should swear that you will comply with my scripture as long as you do not die.

These three lines are the final part, again, admonishing disciples that the perseverance in complying with Daoist scriptures is the most critical duty until their death.

Although we cannot figure out the explicit dating of *Nüqing guilü*, the reliable argument made by Yu Wanli 虞萬里 had dated it back to the third century, which is close to the time of “Tianshi jiao.”³⁷ As for the text itself, this poem was also designed in a perspective of the instructor, aiming at guiding the disciples how to practice within the Daoist norm. And

³⁷ Refer to Yu Wanli 虞萬里, “*Huang tingjing xinzheng* 黃庭經新證”, in *Yufang zhai xueshu lunji* 榆坊齋學術論集 (Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2001), 536.

as we expected, the poem's formal characteristic also strictly conforms to the pattern of *bolian ti* poetry, successfully grasping this special line-rhyming mode.

In addition, we will still continue to introduce another early classic of Celestial Master Daoism: *Scripture of the Outer Phosphor of the Yellow Court* (*Huangting waijing jing* 黃庭外景經).³⁸ In fact, this scripture may be more compelling than any other early Daoist scripture in terms of poetic research because it is completely written in *bolian ti* poems, without any prosaic narrative.³⁹ Here we will introduce the first and the final as below:

太上閑居作七言。	The Most High lives leisurely and compose this seven characters poem.
解說身形及諸神。	It explains and illustrates the body and its various deities.
上有黃庭下關元。	Above there is the yellow court, and below there is the pass primal.
後有幽闕前命門。	Behind there are the deep gate-towers, and before there is the gate of life.
呼吸廬間入丹田。	Exhalation and inhalation, in the cottage, ⁴⁰ can enter your cinnabar field.
玉池清水灌靈根。	The jade pond's clean water can irrigate your spiritual root. ⁴¹
審能修之可長存。	Contemplate and be able to practice them, you

³⁸ According to Yu Wanli's research, the author of *Scripture of the Outer Phosphor of the Yellow Court* should be Zhang Lu 張魯 himself, or, at most, his libationers. See "Huang tingjing xinzheng 黃庭經新證", in *Yufang zhai xueshu lunji* 榆坊齋學術論集 (Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2001), 514.

³⁹ Texts in this scripture were divided into twenty-four different poems by Qing Daoist priest Li Xiyue 李西月. Regrettably, Li also did not realize these poems' formal characteristics. Hence, some of his segments were operated incorrectly.

⁴⁰ According to Tang Daoist priest Liangqiu zi's 梁丘子 commentary, the character 廬 here refers to people's nose. See *Zhonghua daoang* 中華道藏 (Huaxia chubanshe, 2004), Vol.19, 1033, b.

⁴¹ Liangqiu zi believed that jade pond and clean water both represent people's saliva, and spiritual root indicates the tongue.

can live everlastingly.⁴²

This is the first poem in *Scripture of the Outer Phosphor of the Yellow Court*, also created from the instructor's perspective. Nevertheless, unlike “Tianshi jiao” or *Nüqing guilü*, which do not provide the specific identity of instructor, this poem definitely attributes its author to the Grand Upper, namely, the Lord Lao⁴³. Because of the change of instructor, the expected recipients also seem different. If we can roughly conclude that “Tianshi jiao” and *Nüqing guilü* focused mainly on teaching their expected recipients how to practice the Daoist rules and statutes so that they can get rid of calamity or keep away from the evil, this poem is obviously inclined to explain the more important principle and method of being immortal. In other words, the expected recipients for this poem seem to have a higher level than ordinary laymen or novices. If the instructor and student are Celestial Master himself and novice respectively in “Tianshi jiao” and *Nüqing guilü*, while, in this poem, they seem to become the Lord Lao and Celestial Master.

頭戴白素足丹田。⁴⁴

Wear white silk on your head and pace the
cinnabar field.

沐浴華池灌靈根。

Shower in luxuriant pond and irrigate your root.

三府相得開命門。

When three offices get each other, you can open
your life gate.

⁴² Given the different meaning of 審, this line could also be translated as “If you really can practice them, you can live everlastingly.” And this understanding, viewing 審 as an “empty word 虛詞,” seems more reasonable in the expression of “審能”.

⁴³ In the version of *Huangting waijing yujing zhu* 黃庭外景玉經注 (annotated by Liangqiu zi 梁丘子), this line is directly recorded as “老子閒居作七言”. See *Zhonghua daoze* 中華道藏 (Huaxia chubanshe, 2004), Vol.19, 1033, a.

⁴⁴ In Li Xiyue's 李西月 *Huangting waijing jing zhu* 黃庭外景經註解, the first four lines (from 頭戴白素足丹田 to 五味皆至善炁還) belongs to previous poem, the 23rd poem in his segment. In Liangqiu zi's 梁丘子 version (actually punctuated by Zhang Zhaoyu 張兆裕), this line is connected to the previous line “服食靈芝與玉英.” However, according to the manifest rhyme change happened from this line, we believe that, beginning with 頭戴白素足丹田, this seven lines should be a separate poem, and also the final poem in *Huangting waijing jing*.

五味皆至善炁還。	Five flavors all come, and benevolent qi will return.
大道蕩蕩心勿煩。	The great way is fluttering, your mind should not be annoyed.
被髮行之可長存。	With disheveled hair, you practice it, and you will live everlastingly.
吾言畢矣勿妄傳。	My words are finished, do not propagate them recklessly

Similarly, this poem is also intended to instruct its recipients how to get longevity, rather than simply escaping from the evil. Liangqiu zi 梁丘子 even interpreted this first line as “wearing the moon and pacing the sun, and returning the essence to supplement the brain, which is named ‘refining the body,’ actually is the way of getting longevity without aging 巾月履日，還精補腦，名曰煉形，長生不老之道。”⁴⁵ Therefore, as we inferred, the object of this scripture is most likely not the disciples in lower layers, but those promising higher-ranking practitioners. Certainly, this dimension is beyond our discussion in this paper.

What is more important for this paper is: although these poems were designed in different views, for various audiences, and probably composed by assorted authors, they all, uniformly and consistently, adopted the form of *bolian ti* poetry. Now, it is thus clear that *bolian ti* poetry should be a standard and fixed poetic genre, shared by the entire Daoist community, and Celestial Master Daoism used this form as a teaching tool and mnemonic device.

⁴⁵ Liangqiu zi 梁丘子, *Huangting waijing yujing zhu* 黃庭外景玉經注, *Zhonghua daoang* 中華道藏 (Huaxia chubanshe, 2004), Vol.19, 1041, c.

Furthermore, it is still worth mentioning that the way Celestial Master Daoism called their poems is also meaningful to argue that this community was self-conscious enough about the form they adopted. As we introduced above, the first line of the first poem in *Scripture of the Outer Phosphor of the Yellow Court* is “太上閒居作七言 The Most High live leisurely and compose this seven characters (poem),” which signifies that, in the beginning of composition, the author was assured the genre he would adopt. Likewise, the diction of the first line in “Tianshi jiao” is “今故下教作七言 Today, therefore, I descend to teach, composing a seven characters (poem).” The author, in like manner, expressed that he was definite about the form he would use to preach. Besides, in the *Commands and Admonitions for the Families of the Great Dao (Dadao jia lingjie 大道家令戒)*, we did read such an expression: “三靈七言”, two times, which was used to symbolize and summarize the earlier Daoist scripture.⁴⁶ Since this text was “dated precisely to 1 February 255 C. E.,”⁴⁷ it is quite reasonable to argue that, in the period of 255 C. E., heptasyllabic poetry had become a steady genre of religious writing, even with a definitely given name, *qiyán* 七言. Although they had not articulated that their heptasyllabic poetry should rhyme in every line, it is also easy to prove this principle by our examples above, and also by all the extant sources we have.

Subsequently, after we have clarified early Celestial Master Daoism’s familiarity, adeptness, and consistency in the writing mode of line-rhyming, the core of *bolianɡ ti* poetry, we can retrospect to the topic of the meaning unit in poems again. As we explained

⁴⁶ Yu Wanli 虞萬里 believes that the expression 三靈七言 undoubtedly indicates *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 itself, *Yufang zhai xueshu lunji* 榆坊齋學術論集 (Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2001), 536.

⁴⁷ Stephen Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scripture* (University of California Press, 1997), 3.

before, the line-rhyming mode not only means seemingly more frequent rhymes, but also means the thorough transformation of expressive style in which the more conventional meaning unit based on poetic couplet was superseded by that based on poetic line. As one of the conspicuous results, the poem in line-rhyming mode could break through the normal regulation that poems should consist of even lines and be created in any number of lines. Hence, just in the cases we listed, the “Tianshi jiao” and the poem from *Nüqing guilü* were created in even lines (32 and 14 respectively), while the two poems from *Scripture of the Outer Phosphor of the Yellow Court* were both written in odd lines (7). That is to say, except for the number of character and rhyme, Celestial Daoist Master’s poems also shared the remarkable inside logic with Cao Pi’s “Yange xing”: they rely on poetic lines as the basic meaning unit, not couplets, to express.

At the end of this section, after we have proved the formal similarity between Celestial Master Daoism poems and Cao Pi’s “Yange xing,” there is one more tiny detail to discuss: the caesura, or *yinbu* 音步 in poetic lines. To put it simply, tetrasyllabic poetry, pentasyllabic poetry, and heptasyllabic poetry, as the three basic types of Chinese classical poetry, all have their own latent requirements on the caesura. In terms of character arrangement, it requires that tetrasyllabic poetry should be planned in the caesura of “upper 2 and lower 2 (*shang'er xia'er* 上二下二),” the pentasyllabic poetry should be designed in the caesura of “upper 2 and lower 3 (*shang'er xiasan* 上二下三),” and the heptasyllabic poetry in the caesura of “upper 4 and lower 3 (*shangsi xiasan* 上四下三).” Take some specific poems as examples:

Tetrasyllabic poetry (caesura of “2/2”):

南有/喬木，不可/休息。(Shijing)

In the south there is lofty woods, you cannot take the rest there.

目送/歸鴻，手揮/五弦。(Ji Kang 嵇康)

I see the returning swan off by gazing, my palm flicks five chords.

Pentasyllabic poetry (caesura of “2/3”):

清夜/延貴客，明燭/發高光。(Cao Pi 曹丕)

In the clear night, I invite worthy guests,

the bright candle radiates a great glow.

少無/適俗韻，性本/愛丘山。(Tao Yuanming 陶淵明)

From my youth, I have no demeanor of adapting the vulgar,

My disposition, originally, love the hills and mountains.

Heptasyllabic poetry (caesura of “4/3”):

洞庭水上/一株桐，經霜觸浪/困巖風。(Wu Jun 吳均)

Above the Dongting lake, there is a paulownia,

undergoing the frost and being touched by waves, it gets stuck in the harsh wind.

滕王高閣/臨江渚，佩玉鳴鸞/罷歌舞。(Wang Bo 王勃)

The lofted pavilion of King Teng is facing the river and islet,

(The King Teng) wearing jade (in the carriage with) bell ring (has gone), the singing and dancing of the past were over.

Obviously, the caesura is quite critical in Chinese poetry. It stipulates the poetic syntax, restricts connection between characters, dominates how the different characters work, and even governs the possibilities of parts of speech in a poetic line. In some certain situations, one who cannot identify the caesura will be difficult to understand poems correctly. To put it more clearly, we can take Du Fu's 杜甫 famous poem *henbie* 恨別 as an instance. Its second couplet is:

草木變衰行劍外，兵戈阻絕老江邊。

If we use the normal caesura to understand this couplet, its syntax should be 草木變衰/行劍外，兵戈阻絕/老江邊, which means: grass and woods is becoming withered, but I still bustle outside the Pass of Sword Gate; being obstructed and isolated by armies and weapons, I am aging by the river. However, if in a wrong caesura, like 草木變/衰行劍外，兵戈阻/絕老江邊, the meaning turns to be like: with grass and woods' change, I walk weakly outside the Pass of Sword Gate; being obstructed by armies and weapons, I will absolutely age by the river. Indeed, without the correct caesura, the poem's meaning and emotion will completely differ.

Go back to our topic, when some scholars inferred that the emergence of heptasyllabic poetry like “Yange xing” should be impelled by *Chuci*, Yu guanying 余冠英 had refuted them from the angle of caesura.⁴⁸ Indeed, the poetic lines of seven characters in *Chuci*, in reality, adopted another caesura, or, by nature, another set of syntax and grammar, as below:

帝高陽/之/苗裔兮。	I am the lord Gaoyang's scion.
扈江離/與/闞芷兮。	I dressed in <i>jiangli</i> and <i>pizhi</i> .
思公子/兮/未敢言。	I miss the childe but dare not to express it.

This *Chuci*-style poetic lines have their own expressive system. Just because of arranging seven characters into one line, it seems arbitrary to infer that such lines can have some direct impact on the regular heptasyllabic poetry.

⁴⁸ Refer to Yu Guanying 余冠英, “Guanyu qiyan shi qiyuan de taolun 關於七言詩起源的討論”, *Hanwei liuchao shi luncong* 漢魏六朝詩論叢 (Shangwu yinshuguan, 2010), 119-130.

Conversely, Celestial Master Daoism's poems do share the extreme formal similarities with Cao Pi's "Yange xing," which include not only the evident extrinsic characteristics: syllable and rhyming, but also the intrinsic logic nature: meaning unit and caesura. That is to say, if we can, for a while, technically divide a poem into two different parts: content and form, Cao Pi's "Yange xing" and Celestial Master Daoism's poems adopted an identical formal system. Then, it should be logically authentic to argue that Celestial Master Daoism's poems, which probably appeared earlier than Cao Pi's "Yange xing," was very likely to motivate Cao to try such a brand-new poetic genre. After all, as an eminent poet and conceited poetic critic who believes "only comprehensive talent can possess (all of) genres 唯通才能備其體," Cao Pi had enough motive to learn from a new poetic genre, especially when such a genre intensively appeared around him.

Furthermore, as we mentioned in the first section, beginning with Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯 and Xiao Yi's 蕭繹 "Yange xing", the heptasyllabic poetry, discarding line-rhyming mode but borrowing traditional couplet-rhyming mode, gradually became the mainstream in Chinese poetic history. However, when these literati and poets already neglected the form of *bolian* *ti* poetry of "Yange xing," and started to introduce heptasyllabic poems into regular couplet-rhyming mode, the emerging Daoist branches, the Upper Clarity (*shangqing* 上清) and Numinous Treasure (*lingbao* 靈寶), still kept their poetry composition adopting the pattern of *bolian* *ti* poetry. According to my limited reading, during the Six dynasties, we can find *bolian* *ti* poetry in "Scripture of the Great Grotto of Upper Clarity 上清大洞真經," "Scripture of the Limitless Transformation of Lord Lao 老君變化無極經," "Scripture of the Tablets of Life of the Eight Ways 洞真太上八道命籍經," "Scripture of the Vast

Possessions of Penetrating Prime and Unadorned Spirituality of the Most High 洞真太上
素靈洞元大有妙經,” and “*The Five Talisman, Powerful Treasure of the Most High* 太上
洞玄靈寶五符序,” etc. That is to say, at least, from the perspective of the Daoist
successors, *boliang ti* poetry probably was such a form engraved with the Daoist cultural
heritage.

CHAPTER 4

CELESTIAL MASTER DAOISM POEMS AND SUBURBAN SACRIFICE SONGS IN THE HAN DYNASTY

After we have discussed the possibility that Cao Pi borrowed the form of Celestial Master Daoism poems into his personal poetic innovation to create the eminent masterpiece “Yange xing,” a new question unavoidably appears. Since the form *bolian ti* poetry had been a mature and fixed tradition in Celestial Master Daoism’s writing, as we proved in the section above, then, if there once existed an earlier precedent as the source of the development of this sort of religious poetry? Following this curiosity, we trace it back to the suburban sacrifice songs (*jiaozige* 郊祀歌) in the Han dynasty. To put it simply, during the reign of Emperor Wu, for the purpose of expressing worship to deities, exhibiting feats, and flaunting glory, nineteen suburban sacrifice songs were created. Some of them may have played a role in influencing the Celestial Masters adaptation of this poetic style. For discussion in detail below, we would take one of them as an example first:

景星

The Auspicious Star

景星顯見，信星彪列。

The Auspicious Star becomes visible, the Belief Star (Saturn) is obviously exhibited.

象載昭庭，日親以察。

Images revealing events illuminate the court, the emperor daily investigates it in person.

參侔開闢，爰推本紀。

It is equal to the ancient time when the world was created, and it is also pushed forwards to this era.

汾雎出鼎，皇祐元始。 A tripod emerges in Fensui, which symbolizes
the primary beginning of grand fortune.

五音六律，依韋饗昭。 There are Five tones and Six Norms of music,
which are harmonious, loud, and clear.

雜變並會，雅聲遠姚。 Miscellaneous and mutated music converge
together, the orthodox sound spreads distantly.

空桑琴瑟結信成。 The zither and lyre from Kongsang Mountain
integrate the message.

四興遞代八風生。 Four seasons alternate, and eight winds generate.

殷殷鐘石羽籥鳴。 The voice of bell and stone is ardent, while the
feather-flute plays.

河龍供鯉醇犧牲。 The river dragon provides carps, which are
uncontaminated offerings.

百末旨酒布蘭生。 Great wine with a myriad of flower powder is
displayed; its fragrance smells like orchids
blossom.

泰尊柘漿析朝醒。 A grand goblet of sugarcane juice relieves the
morning drunkenness

微感心攸通修名。 I slightly feel that my heart is leisurely and
connected to the fine reputation.

周流常羊思所並。 I wander everywhere and think about being

	concordance. ⁴⁹
穰穰復正直往甯。	Receiving too much fortune, I wish to return to the orthodox.
馮蠡切和疏寫平。	Fengyi (the god of the river) ⁵⁰ , in harmony, dredges for the smoothness.
上天布施后土成。	With the upper heaven's charity and grant, as well as the grand earth's assistance,
穰穰豐年四時榮。	Bloomingly, this year is abundant, and four seasons are flourishing.

Because of the definite record of the background, we can clearly date this song back to the fourth year of *Yuanding* (元鼎) period, 113 B.C.,⁵¹ which is much earlier than the emergence of Celestial Master Daoism. And if we divide this song into two parts according to its formal change, the second half is precisely a pure and complete poem in the *boliang ti* pattern. Especially, this song's inner discrepancy between two different rhyming mode distinctly shows the specialty of *boliang ti* poetry. Its first half was shaped by the form of tetrasyllabic poetry so that it adopted the usual couplet-rhyming mode, while in the second half comprised of heptasyllabic poetic lines, the compelling line-rhyming mode abruptly

⁴⁹ According to Yan Shigu's 顏師古 annotation, this expression 思所並 means "think to be in accordance with the way of deity 思與神道合也." Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書, annotated by Yan Shigu 顏師古 (Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 1065.

⁵⁰ According to Lu Qinli's 逯欽立 commentary, this 蠡 is a variant of 夷. Refer to Lu Qinli, *Xianqin hanwei jin nanbei chao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 (Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 152.

⁵¹ *Hanshu* 漢書 explicitly recorded that this poem was composed in the sixth month of the fifth year of *Yuanding* (元鼎五年六月). However, today's scholarship basically confirms that its dating should be the fourth year. For more details and discussion about the dating of Han suburban sacrifice songs, refer to Zhang Shuguo 張樹國, "Hanwudi shidai guojia jisi de zhubu queli yu jiaosige shijiuzhang chuangzhi shidi kaolun 漢武帝時代國家祭祀的逐步確立與郊祀歌十九章創製時地考論", *Hangzhou shifan daxue xuebao* 杭州師範大學學報 (2009, Vol. 2).

took over this song's formal style, without any exception. Indeed, this fundamental discrepancy of rhyming mode between its upper and lower half should be enough for us to conclude that rhyming modes of tetrasyllabic and heptasyllabic lines should be explicitly restricted. That is to say, it is likely that heptasyllabic poetic lines, as an unusual and incomplete genre at that time though, already needed to adopt the mode of rhyming in every line. And Poems like this one probably played a role of the prototype of *bolian* *ti* poetry.

To show this characteristic more clearly, we can excerpt one more poem from these nineteen songs as below:

天地	The heaven and earth
天地並況，惟予有慕。	The heaven and earth both grant us grace, ⁵² I have admiration for them.
爰熙紫壇，思求厥路。	At the splendid purple altar, I seek the way.
恭承禋祀，縕豫為紛。	Respectfully, I undertake this sacrifice, the nebulous and delightful are various. ⁵³
黼繡周張，承神至尊。	Embroidered textiles are hung up everywhere, for receiving the deity, the ultimate supremacy.
千童羅舞成八溢。	Numerous children dance roundly as the formation of eight files. ⁵⁴
合好效歡虞泰一。	They gather the goodness and offer a joyful performance to delight the Grand One.
九歌畢奏斐然殊。	Nine songs are completely played and the atmosphere becomes more special.

⁵² This 況 is hard to define. According to the context, I prefer to understand it as the variant of 貺, which means to grant, or to bestow.

⁵³ I understand this word 縕豫 as an abbreviation of two binoms 氤氳 (網縕) and 悅豫, so I translate them as nebulous and delightful.

⁵⁴ The character 溢 is a variant of 佻.

鳴琴竽瑟會軒朱。	Singing lyres, clarinets, and harps converge in front of the vermilion palace. ⁵⁵
璆磬金鼓，靈其有喜。	With jade <i>qing</i> and golden gong, the spirit feels happy.
百官濟濟，各敬厥事。	Hundreds of officials seem outstanding and eminent, and carefully treat their own enterprise.
盛牲實俎進聞膏。	With ritual plates full of sacrifice meat, the fragrant incense is offered.
神奄留，臨須搖。	The deity stays, and descends for a moment.
長麗前挾光耀明。	The phoenix glows in the front and its brightness is so dazzling. ⁵⁶
寒暑不忒況皇章。	It never changes no matter in cold or warm times, like the imperial statutes. ⁵⁷
展詩應律銷玉鳴。	We unfold poems according to the rhythm, along with the sounds of beating the jade.
函宮吐角激徵清。	It includes the tones of <i>gong</i> , utters the tones of <i>jue</i> , and the intense <i>zhi</i> is clear.
發梁揚羽申以商。	What twines the beam is the lofty tone of <i>yu</i> , and it is extended with the tone of <i>shang</i> .
造茲新音永久長。	The creation of new songs will last forever.
聲氣遠條鳳鳥鶉。	Its sound and air spread far away,

⁵⁵ According to Yan Shigu's 顏師古 annotation, this 軒朱 is the inversion of 朱軒. But Wang Xianqian 王先謙 believes that this word points to Xuanyuan 軒轅 and Zhuxiang 朱襄. Without enough evidence, we prefer to temporarily follow Yan's understanding. Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書, annotated by Yan Shigu 顏師古 (Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 1058.

⁵⁶ According to Yan Shigu's 顏師古 annotation, "長麗，靈鳥也。" *Hanshu*, 1059. This word was also written as "長離". For example, In Li Xian's 李賢 annotation for the biography of Zhang Heng 張衡傳 in *Hou hanshu* 後漢書, he directly explain it as "長離，即鳳也。" Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou hanshu* 後漢書, annotated by Li Xian 李賢, (Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 1935.

⁵⁷ If we go on to view this 況 as the variant of 既, this line also could be understood as "the cold and the warm (metaphors of *yin* and *yang*) is harmonious, which is a gift the heaven grant to the emperor to prove his worthiness." This is also an explanation Yan Shigu employed. Refer to *Hanshu*, 1059.

like the phoenix flying.

神夕奄虞蓋孔享。

The deity, in this evening, indulged in

pleasure, probably, enjoying this ritual totally.

Seemingly, the formal feature of this poem is more complicated than the previous one. Its rhyme changes, on the other hand, display the uniqueness of *bolian* *ti* poetry in a more conspicuous way. In general, this poem adopted a mode of changing rhyme every two times, which is likely for the purpose of matching with the ritual music. As for the details, its first two couplets rhyme as a unit. And the following two couplets change the rhyme, like the second unit. The ensuing four lines, which may be too short to abstract a definite regulation, are actually two separate units with different rhyme categories (using 質 and 虞 categories, respectively, in the rhyme system). They rhyme in lines and still conform to the previous frequency of rhyme change. Then, the next two couplets within one rhyme category function as a unit again. Subsequently, a heptasyllabic line (盛牲實俎進聞膏) followed by a six syllabic line (神奄留, 臨須搖) comes. According to their same rhyme, we should put these two lines into one unit. The six syllable line “神奄留, 臨須搖”, based on our inference, would be added by an extra pause between two trisyllabic expressions to become an actually heptasyllabic line in recitation or singing. Finally, the remaining part is in the typical pattern of *bolian* *ti* poetry. Indeed, compared to the tetrasyllabic part that all adopts the couplet-rhyming system, every heptasyllabic line in this poem adopts the line-rhyming mode, even for the two separate units, each of which is comprised of only two lines (line 9-10 and 11-12). Hence, again, it is highly likely that, from the time of Emperor Wu, the heptasyllabic poetic lines had already possessed a convention of rhyming in every line.

Certainly, apart from the formal comparison, we also need to pay attention to the content. Nevertheless, before we start the further discussion, it is necessary to introduce further background information about these Han suburban sacrifice songs in more detail. The most important record about them unsurprisingly came from the *Book of Han* (*Hanshu* 漢書), as below:

至武帝定郊祀之禮，祠太一於甘泉，就乾位也；祭后土於汾陰，澤中方丘也。乃立樂府，采詩夜誦，有趙、代、秦、楚之謳。以李延年為協律都尉，多舉司馬相如等數十人造為詩賦，略論律呂，以合八音之調，作十九章之歌。以正月上辛用事甘泉園丘，使童男女七十人俱歌，昏祠至明。

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Emperor Wu established the rituals of urban sacrifice. These would worship the Grand One at Sweet Spring which is located in the position of *qian*, worship the earth at Fenyin, a square hill in a marsh. So, the Music Bureau was established, and the bureau staff collected poems and recited them at night. There are folk songs from Zhao, Dai, Qin, and Chu. Emperor Wu designated Li Yannian as the Director of Imperial Music⁵⁹, elected Sima Xiangru and dozens of other people to compose poems and rhapsodies, and concisely discussed the tuning and criteria to conform to the tone of eight musical instruments and compose the poems of nineteen chapters. On the day of *shangxin* of the first month, they practiced rituals at the Round Mound of Sweet Spring and let seventy boys and girls sang together. This sacrifice lasted from sunset to the next morning.

In the biography of Li Yannian 李延年 in the *Hanshu*, it has a briefer but also similar record:

⁵⁸ Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Zhonghua shuju, 1062), 1045.

⁵⁹ This translation of 協律都尉 adopts Hucker's version in his *Official Titles of Imperial China* () 240. And all of translation of official titles in this paper refer to Hucker's book.

是時，上方興天地諸祠，欲造樂，令司馬相如等作詩頌，延年輒承意弦歌所造詩，為之新聲曲。⁶⁰

At that time, the emperor had just established several temples of Heaven, Earth, and others. He wanted to make music, and asked Sima Xiangru and other literati to compose rhapsodies and eulogies. Li Yannian undertook the emperor's intention to compose music for these poems and sing them, making them become new songs.

The most important information from these two records is that these songs are created to express their worship to heavenly and earthly deities, or, from a more practical standpoint, to prove that they govern the national legitimately, like the ancient aphorism, “The sage use the way of deity to set up teaching, so the people under heaven would be convinced 聖人以神道設教而天下服矣。”⁶¹ Indeed, not only these suburban sacrifice songs of Han, almost all suburban sacrifice songs in various dynasties shared the same inner logic: to achieve legitimacy and exclusivity by connecting the regime itself with the heaven and earth.⁶² Thus, the subject of these songs is often celestial portents that prove these rulers have the “fate endowed by the heaven (*tianming* 天命).” Accordingly, creating, reciting, and performing suburban sacrifice songs became the only, or the most effective at least, method to show such a connection.

Then, now that the writing of bridging human and deity was so indispensable for a legal regime, similar confession was also needed by a religious community, especially for a religious community that did plan to create a real regime. Indeed, by reading the texts of

⁶⁰ Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 3725.

⁶¹ *Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義, annotated by Wang Bi 王弼, subannotated by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 115.

⁶² Refer to Zhang Shuguo 張樹國, “Han zhi Tang jiaosi zhidu yange yu jiaosi geci yanjiu 漢至唐郊祀制度沿革與郊祀歌辭研究”, *Shaanxi shifan daxue xuebao* 陝西師範大學學報 (2008, vol. 3, No. 1), 69.

early Celestial Master Daoism, it is easy to feel their political ambitions. Even until the time of “Commands and Admonitions for the Families of the Great Dao” (*Dadao jia lingjie* 大道家令戒) when their political power had been taken over by Cao’s family, the diction used to describe themselves, such as “to establish twenty-four parishes 立二十四治,” “to distribute pneuma to govern the populace 分氣治民,” and “righteous country 義國,” are still enough to show their past enterprise.⁶³ Therefore, it should be reasonable to hypothesize that Celestial Master Daoism would actively learn from the cultural heritage of Han dynasty, the latest great dynasty they faced, especially in the aspect of shaping political legitimacy. In other words, as an inheritor of regional power (mainly in Sichuan, Chongqing, and Shaanxi of today’s China) of the Han dynasty, Celestial Master Daoism was likely to study and even imitate suburban sacrifice songs of Han dynasty to create their own ritual texts. Then, as we have observed, in terms of literary form at least, the pattern of *bolianqiang ti* poetry shared by both sides could be a kind of product that Celestial Daoism Master learned from the Han empire.

In addition, besides the shared form, the inner logic of their narrative also has something in common. The narrative of “The Auspicious Star” reflects the typical cultural mindset beginning with Emperor Wu’s regime, “Interactions between Heaven and Mankind (*Tianren ganying* 天人感應)”. Under this context, national texts, especially for those ritual writings, will necessarily reveal a kind of hierarchy of trinity in which the highest layer is the Heaven; the lowest is the populace, or the nation where the populace live in; and the middle is the son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子), namely emperor, who acts as the medium

⁶³ These phrases all come from “Dadao jia lingjie 大道家令戒”, *Zhonghua daoang* 中華道藏 (Huaxia chubanshe, 2004), Vol.8, 322.

between the Heaven and populace. As Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 suggested, “only the son of heaven receive the destiny from the heaven, and then the people under heaven receive their destiny from the son of heaven 唯天子受命於天，天下受命於天子。”⁶⁴ Based on such a cultural mindset, these suburban sacrifice songs all represent a similar mode of narrative comprised of three layers of meaning: 1) how virtuous the heaven is or how the heaven show its virtue, 2) how the emperor responds or further propagates heaven’s virtue, 3) what happens when the nation or the populace receive the virtue of heaven. For the convenience of the following discussion, we temporarily call such a three-layers mode as “trinity narrative mode”.

Undoubtedly, “The Auspicious Star” obeys this “trinity narrative mode”. Its first couplet “The Auspicious Star becomes visible, the Belief Star (Saturn) is obviously exhibited 景星顯見，信星彪列” symbolizes that the Heaven was showing his virtue by visualizing some auspicious natural images to commend mankind. And its final four lines, “穰穰复正直往宁。冯蠡切和疏写平。上天布施后土成。穰穰丰年四时荣。 Receiving too much fortune, I wish to return to the orthodox. Fengyi (the god of the river), in harmony, dredges for the smoothness. With the upper heaven’s charity and grant, as well as the grand earth’s assistance. Bloomingly, this year is abundant, and four seasons are flourishing,” are used to conclude the result of receiving the heaven’s virtue, a considerable prosperity or harvest in the human world. Accordingly, the middle part delineates so many details of mankind action, from investigation to performance and sacrifice, to describe how the emperor,

⁶⁴ Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露, annotated by Lai Yanyuan 賴炎元 (Taiwan: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1984), 283.

leading his subordinates, celebrates and responds to the virtue of Heaven. The situation in “Heaven and Earth” is similar. Its first couplet, “天地並況，惟予有慕。The heaven and earth both grant us grace, I have admiration for them,” articulates that the emperor, as the representative of mankind, feels grateful for the heaven and earth’s grant. And the following part, as the main body of the poem, delicately records every activity in this sacrifice, including ritual, music, offerings, and attendants, to present the extremely proactive response of the human world. Thereafter, the part of *bolianqiang ti* poetry expresses the stability, prosperity, and being promising of the human world. The only exception is that this poem added one more line, “神夕奄虞蓋孔享。The deity, in this evening, indulged in pleasure, probably, enjoying this ritual totally,” as the complementary ending by which the author imagined a scene that deities are really appreciating their efforts. Certainly, this single line does not affect the “trinity narrative mode” in the whole poem. Although it is impossible to know when the Daoist practitioners started to contact Han suburban sacrifice songs, the Celestial Master Daoism, in reality, already skillfully exerted such a writing logic into their own poetry composition. Certainly, it is more likely that this kind of logic, by nature, is derived from Daoism itself originally.⁶⁵ Especially, as *Hanshu* recorded in the entry we cited above, Han suburban sacrifice songs actually originated from the need for national sacrifice to the Grand One (*taiyi* 太一). Meanwhile, the Grand One is precisely the Dao itself in the Daoist context.⁶⁶ Hence, the same starting point of expressing

⁶⁵ For instance, Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光 believes that the concept “Interaction between Heaven and Mankind” (天人感應) originally came from the Daoist mindset that “the nature, society and mankind have same origin, same structure, and can interact with each other”(“同源同構互感” in Ge’s words). Han Confucians like Dong Zhongru 董仲舒 just borrowed and remold them and then applied them into political reign. Refer to Ge’s *Daojiao yu zhongguo wenhua* 道教與中國文化 (Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1989), 37-44.

⁶⁶ Refer to Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, “Taiyi yiming de laili ‘太一’一名的來歷”, *Gushi bian zixu* 古史辨自序 (Shangwu yinshuguan, 2011), 237-238; Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, “Zhongmiao zhimen, Beiji yu Taiyi, Dao, Taiji 眾妙之門——北

respect and honor to the Grand One probably become the moment impelling Celestial Master Daoism to learn from these national ritual writings of the Han empire. Nevertheless, due to the specialty of Daoist cosmology, Celestial Master Daoism's hierarchy of trinity is unavoidably different in part than that in Han suburban sacrifice songs, especially for the middle role. From the perspective of empire, the middle role of the hierarchy must be the emperor, the son of heaven. In the Daoist context, however, the role is changeable. Although the middle role in Celestial Master Daoism poems still plays the medium between the heaven and human world, its actual identity could be the Celestial Master, promising libationers, and seed people, etc.

When we retrospect to the “Tianshi jiao,” as expected, we can doubtlessly conclude that its basic structure is also in accordance with the “trinity narrative mode”. The beginning of “Tianshi jiao” focuses on describing the phenomenon of heaven and earth, stars and asterisms, which functions as the first layer of the “trinity narrative mode.” The difference is that Han suburban sacrifice songs, in a standpoint of self-praise, mainly exaggerate how the heaven shows its virtue as a response to human's good behavior, while “Tianshi jiao”, in the position of admonishing his recipients, switched to introduce how the heaven articulate its warning as a reaction to human's bad behavior. Subsequently, the descendent Celestial Master steps forward, playing the role of medium in the second layer of “trinity narrative mode”. He introduced his duties, expressed his dismay at finding no seed people, gave exhortations to those who were exhausting their essence, and also gave guidance to promising recipients about how to become the transcendants. Finally, as the third layer of

極與太一、道、太極”, *Zhongguo wenhua* 中國文化, 1990, Vol. 3. Certainly, as early as Han dynasty, Gao You 高誘 had explained 太一 as 道 (“太一, 道也” in Gao's words) in his commentary of the chapter Five in *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋.

the “trinity narrative mode” that is responsible for weaving a splendid consequence of receiving heaven’s instruction, the Celestial Master portrayed a brilliant scene of becoming transcendent: ascending to the heaven with luxurious garment and adornment.

Next, to further prove the existence of the “trinity narrative mode,” we can take one more poem from *Nüqing guilü* as an example:

日月冥冥恐無光。	The sun and moon are dark and dim, I am afraid there will be no more light.
五穀不生逆鬼行。	Five kinds of grains will not procreate, the adverse demons circulate.
是庚子歲約不亡。	In the year of <i>gengzi</i> , probably the human will not die out.
若有餘人如飛蜂。	If there are survivors, they will like flying bees.
大小更互道相從。	The bigger and smaller will talk to each other and follow each other.
三五相逐一合雙。	Three and five chase each other, the one is counted as two. ⁶⁷
念子一旦不值逢。	I think, one day, you are not worth encountering.
未至此年當死亡。	If you do not make it this year you will die.
百不遺一柰何從。	Less than one percent can survive, how can you do.
天日與月當更生。	The heaven, sun, and moon can be reborn.
唯留下地太平中。 ⁶⁸	Only the lower earth is left in the Great Peace.

⁶⁷ According to Stephen Bokenkamp, these numbers like three and five refer to *heqi* 合氣, but they are coded and we cannot know precisely what it is asking people to do.

⁶⁸ After this line, there are still numerous lines that were attached to this poem in the version of *Zhonghua daoang* 中華道藏. Due to the apparent rhyme change of the next line, “種民在天見母親”, this line “唯留下地太平中” should be the final line of this poem.

If we believe that “Tianshi jiao” still provides his audiences with encouragement or hope after admonishment, this poem from *Nüqing guilü* could be considered as a sort of thorough warning, and even threat. Although the narrative style is drastically changed from the quite positive attitude in Han suburban sacrifice songs, overall, it is also clear that this poem continuously conforms to the “trinity narrative mode”. Its first two lines portray a kind of horrible scene like the end of the world, which functions as the revelation from the heaven, or Dao. The middle part accounts for the possible living situation of the alive people under the heaven’s revelation. And the final two lines reveal the result after the heaven’s revelation has been realized: the calamity is over, and the world will be reborn and enter the era of the Great Peace.

Obviously, the “trinity narrative mode” is shared by Han suburban sacrifice songs and Celestial Master Daoism poems. For the former, as we mentioned above, the elements of the trinity are the heaven’s revelation⁶⁹, the emperor’s response, and the human world’s effect. Similarly, not the same though, in the Daoist context, the elements become heaven’s (or Dao’s) revelation, Celestial Master or other practitioners’ actions, and the human world’s effect. Therefore, based on the same formal characteristics, as well as the similar narrative logic, we suggest that Han suburban sacrifice songs were likely to be the object or precedent from which Celestial Master Daoism learned how to create their own ritual poems.

⁶⁹ Some scholars believe that the emphasis on heaven and earth in Han suburban sacrifice songs is a feature that is special enough because they ignored more conventional and practical Confucian morality to some certain extent. Refer to Luo Hui 羅慧, “Han jiaosige de tiandao guan chanshi 漢郊祀歌的天道觀闡釋”, *Sheke zongheng* 社科縱橫 (2009, 03), 80. In light of that, this is also a possible reason making Celestial Master Daoism feel familiar and intimate with these Han suburban sacrifice songs.

In addition, there is another record about Han suburban sacrifice songs, which is worth noting.

至今上即位，作十九章，令侍中李延年次序其聲，拜為協律都尉。通一經之士不能獨知其辭，皆集會五經家，相與共講習讀之，乃能通知其意。⁷⁰

When today's emperor was enthroned, the nineteen chapters of poems were composed. He asked the Palace Attendant Li Yannian to arrange songs for these poems and designated him as Director of Imperial Music. One who comprehends a single Classic cannot understand poems' words by himself. Only if people who comprehended each of the Five Classics were gathered, and they read together by explaining and learning mutually, they can understand these poems' meaning. On account of the span of time, it is not surprising to find that Han suburban sacrifice songs are difficult to understand. However, when we really started to explain and translate them, their extent of being unfathomable was still far beyond our expectations. The reason became explicable until we noticed this record above. Plainly, this record tells us that Han suburban sacrifice songs were doomed to be so enigmatic based on the Emperor Wu's requirements. Even a professional classicist cannot comprehend these songs himself. It implies that no one can be entitled to have the ability to decipher these songs alone. Indeed, it is purely deliberate to make these texts incomprehensible. With today's hindsight, we know that this is a necessary method to mysticize these songs, by which these artificial texts could be wrapped by a veil symbolizing the unattainable metaphysical power.

In light of that, when we reexamine that incomprehensible diction in Celestial Master Daoism poems with this perspective, at least their authors' intention probably becomes clear. Then, now that Celestial Master Daoism could acquire the formal characteristic and

⁷⁰ Shima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 1177.

narrative logic from Han suburban sacrifice songs, it seems that the method of mysticizing certain wording to provide poems with esoteric and transcendent charm was an intentional behavior Celestial Master Daoism learned from Han suburban sacrifice songs.

In the foregoing we have mainly focused on literary analysis and poetry comparison, without discussing the realistic possibilities from the historical perspective that Celestial Master Daoism truly had the chance to acquire the Han suburban sacrifice songs. Hence, in the final part, we will refer to one more historical record to discuss the realistic possibilities.

漢末大亂，眾樂淪缺。魏武平荊州，獲杜夔，善八音，嘗為漢雅樂郎，尤悉樂事。於是以為軍謀祭酒，使創定雅樂。時又有鄧靜、尹商，善訓雅樂；歌師尹胡，能歌宗廟郊祀之曲；舞師馮肅、服養曉知先代諸舞；夔悉領之。遠考經籍，近採故事。魏復先代古樂，自夔始也。⁷¹

The end of Han dynasty was in chaos. Numerous music was lost and mutilated. The Emperor Wu of Wei conquered Jingzhou and got Du Huo who was good at eight musical instruments and used to be the Director of Orthodox Music, and was especially familiar with things about music. Then, Du was designated as the Directorate of military strategy and responsible for creating and determining orthodox music. At that time, there were Deng Jing and Yin Shang, who could interpret orthodox music; Yin Hu, the master of songs, who could sing the songs of suburban sacrifice of ancestor temple; Feng Su and Fu Yang, the masters of dancing, who know assorted of dances in early dynasties. Du Kui totally led them. They investigated classics and books a long time ago and collected past anecdotes recently. So Wei dynasty can recover ancient music of previous dynasties, which started with Du Kui.

⁷¹ Shen Yue 沈約, *Songshu* 宋書 (Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 534.

Due to the lack of the official historical narrative from Celestial Master Daoism itself, we cannot find the most direct evidence about its attitude or experience related to Han suburban sacrifice songs. However, this record above still includes two meaningful details which can help us to hypothesize a kind of logical possibility. Firstly, in Cao Cao's time, there were many professional scholars, musicians, and performers who mastered the Han suburban sacrifice songs but were scattered all over the country. It means that the influential regional regime Celestial Master Daoism, like Cao's government, was also able to search and contact with these kinds of experts, which gave this regional religious community the chance to know, and even study these inaccessible national ritual songs during normal times.⁷²

Secondly, this record also points out that the Wei empire had to depend on the retrieval of these orthodox poems and songs in Han dynasty to create their own national music and songs. Indeed, this is a typical Chinese traditional mindset of honoring the past in which creating new works has to conform to, at least refer to, the previous classic works. Likewise, for the Celestial Master Daoism that really wanted to establish its regime, learning from the previous powerful Han dynasty, especially its songs about the Han empire's self-argument of govern legitimacy, should almost be an indispensable channel. In short, for the purpose of creating own national ritual songs, the Celestial Master Daoism had the same practical foundation, and also the same political motive with the Wei dynasty in learning and imitating Han suburban sacrifice songs.

⁷² Some scholars had already pointed out that, until the Wei dynasty, oral propagation was still the main method for songs or poems being recorded, collected, cited, or studied. Refer to Tang Huixia 唐會霞, *Han yuefu jieshou shilun* 漢樂府接受史論 (Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2012), 3-5, and 60. Hence, if there is a possibility to contact with people who specialize in Music Bureau works would probably decide the likelihood of learning these texts or not.

When we go on to search for further clues about the development of Han suburban sacrifice songs, it is interesting to find another *boliang ti* poetry in Wei dynasty. Although this poem did not belong to suburban sacrifice songs of the Wei empire, as a song of *guchui qu* 鼓吹曲,⁷³ it is also an important work as a national Music Bureau song.

舊邦	Old Country
舊邦蕭條心傷悲。	The old country is desolate and bleak; I feel sorrowful.
孤魂翩翩當何依。	What do these lonely souls rely on?
遊士戀故涕如摧。	Travelling gentleman misses his hometown, crying like he is grieved.
兵起事大令願違。	Raising an army and serving a bigger country make things go contrary to your wish.
傳求親戚在者誰。	Pass the word to seek relatives who are still alive.
立廟置後魂來歸。	Establish a temple, recruit someone to play your descendants, and then call your soul back. ⁷⁴

This poem is composed by Wei literatus official Miao Xi 繆襲 who once was designated to the positions of Imperial Secretary (*shangshu* 尚書) and Chamberlain for Attendants (*guanglu xun* 光祿勳)⁷⁵. Nevertheless, Miao's composition of this poem is essentially under the behest of Cao Pi.⁷⁶ The noticeable thing about this poem is that it is probably the

⁷³ According to Guo Maoqian's 郭茂倩 definition, "*guchui qu* 鼓吹曲" originated from the "*duanxiao naoge* 短簫鐃歌" in Han dynasty, which in fact belongs to national military music. See Guo Maoqian's *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 (Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 223-225.

⁷⁴ The expression 置後 is an allusion from *Liji* 禮記. *Liji* has the phrase "無子則為之置後," Kong Yingda 孔穎達 explained it as "if the dead has no son, we should recruit other person for him to play his son (to host the funeral) 若死者無子, 則為死者別置其後." *Liji zhushu* 禮記注疏, annotated by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, subannotated by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 1355.

⁷⁵ Refer to Chen Shou 陳壽, *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, annotated by Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (Hongkong: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), 620.

⁷⁶ According to the record of *Jinshu* 晉書, Cao Pi 曹丕 asked Miao Xi 繆襲 to modified and created 12 poems to narrate the honor and glories of Wei empire and the legitimacy of Wei superseding the Han dynasty. And this poem "Jiubang" 舊

first national Music Bureau work composed of complete and pure *bolianɡ ti* poetry. Although we mentioned that several Han suburban sacrifice songs had adopted the pattern of *bolianɡ ti* poetry in their whole texts, *bolianɡ ti* poetry did not develop into an independent poetic genre at that time. It is impossible to know if there was a certain deliberate arrangement when Miao Xi chose to compose this Music Bureau song in the pattern of *bolianɡ ti* poetry. However, through almost 300 years of dreariness, during the period of Cao Pi creating his “Yange xing,” the first literati *bolianɡ ti* poetry, the first Music Bureau *bolianɡ ti* poetry emerged simultaneously. As for the reason of such a coincidence, we have no absolute answer so far. The only thing we are fairly sure is that, during the same period, *bolianɡ ti* poems were being intensively and frequently composed in religious activities of Celestial Master Daoism. Hence, we prefer to infer that Celestial Master Daoism’s mastery of *bolianɡ ti* poetry, and their intensive and frequent practical composition help this form develop to a truly independent poetic genre.

邦 is used to record the consequence of the “War of Guandu”官渡之戰 in which Cao Cao 曹操 defeated his main rival Yuan Shao 袁紹. Refer to the chapter of “Yuexia”樂下 in Fang Xuanling’s 房玄齡 *Jinshu* 晉書 (Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 701.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Setting Cao Pi's "Yange xing" as the frame of reference, this thesis reconsiders the perspective of tracing the origin of Chinese heptasyllabic poetry and proposes a new hypothesis that relates its genesis to the poetry of Celestial Master Daoism. Although numerous academic discussions nowadays mention the possible origin of heptasyllabic poetry, few of them have noticed the possible effect of the Celestial Master Daoism. We believe that the unique formal characteristics of *bolianɡ ti* poetry should play a critical role in the early development of heptasyllabic poetry. Hence, based on the literary analysis and formal comparison of *bolianɡ ti* poetry, this thesis analyzes some typical *bolianɡ ti* poems circulating in the community of Celestial Master Daoism. These poems share extreme similarities with Cao Pi's "Yange xing," which include not only the extrinsic characteristics: same syllable and rhyming mode, but also the intrinsic logic: meaning unit constructed by poetic line and normal caesura of 4/3. More importantly, compared to Cao Pi, who composed "Yange xing" occasionally, the extant literature of Celestial Master Daoism clearly proves that *bolianɡ ti* poetry was already a fixed, current, and mature form of religious writing within the community of Celestial Master Daoism. Therefore, we suppose that Celestial Master Daoism's mastery of *bolianɡ ti* poetry and their intensive and frequent composition most likely motivated Cao Pi, the new Wei ruler who took over the populace of Celestial Master Daoism and had a close relationship with Zhang Lu's 張魯 family, to learn and introduce this poetic form into his own poetic creation.

In addition, this thesis also traces this poetic form back to suburban sacrifice songs in the Han dynasty. On the basis of our analysis of "Jingxing" and "Tiandi," it is clear that the

prototype of *bolianɡ ti* poetry appeared in Han suburban sacrifice songs, during the reign of Emperor Wu. Seemingly, these sacrifice songs were created to express humankind's worship to heavenly and earthly deities. Their inner logic, in fact, is shaping the national legitimacy and exclusivity by connecting the regime itself with heaven and earth.

Therefore, as an inheritor of the regional power of the Han empire hoping to establish their own regime, Celestial Master Daoism was quite possible to create their own ritual texts by modeling after Han suburban sacrifice songs, just like the Wei kingdom.

Additionally, Celestial Master Daoism also adopted the same narrative style as Han suburban sacrifice songs, which was named as "trinity narrative mode" in this thesis. Indeed, the same mindset of expressing respect and honor to the Grand One, which was shared by the Han empire and Celestial Master Daoism, probably was the moment impelling the latter to learn from the former's national ritual writings, for the purpose of demonstrating their own legitimacy and exclusivity by connecting the regime itself with

Dao.

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APPENDIX A

THE TRANSLATION OF YANGE XING

“Yange xing” 燕歌行 is usually translated as “Banquet Song” in previous academic writings⁷⁷. Certainly, banquet is also a common meaning of 燕, like “play the banquet music 奏燕樂” or “dance with the banquet music 舞其燕樂” in pre-Qin Dynasty literature⁷⁸. However, almost all extant literature prove that we should understand this 燕 from 燕歌行 as a geographic terminology, not banquet. Huang Jie 黃節 once cited *Yuefu Zhengyi* 樂府正義 to pointed out:

燕歌行與齊謳行、吳趨行、會吟行，俱以各地聲音為主。後世聲音失傳，於是但賦風土。而燕自漢末魏初，遼東西為慕容所居，地遠勢偏，征戍不絕。故為此者，往往作離別之辭。⁷⁹

“Yange xing,” as well as “Qi’ou xing,” “Wuqu xing,” “Kuaiyin xing,” are all about the sounds from different areas. In later generations these sounds lost. Hence, they were only used to describe natural conditions and social customs (of these areas). The area of Yan, from the late Han dynasty and the early Wei dynasty, because of that the east and west of Liao River was occupied by Mu Rong, was distant in geography and limited in power. The marches and garrisons never stop. Hence, one who created “Yange xing” always adopted the diction of farewell.

Likewise, in Yu Xin’s 庾信 “Rhapsody of being sad for Jiangnan 哀江南賦”, we can read an expression of *yange yuanbie* 燕歌遠別. Furthermore, in the biography of Wang Bao 王

⁷⁷ For example, Stephen Owen adopted such translation in his *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 86.

⁷⁸ Refer to *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏, annotated by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, subannotated by Jia Gongyan 賈公彥. Examples are from two entries: “凡祭祀、饗食，奏燕樂”; “凡祭祀、賓客，舞其燕樂.” (Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000) 736 and 740.

⁷⁹ Huang Jie 黃節, *Wei wudi Wei wendi shizhu* 魏武帝魏文帝詩注 (Hongkong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1961), 48. Yu Guanying 余冠英 also has similar argument in his *SanCao shixue* 三曹詩選 (Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1956), 19. In fact, as early in the Song dynasty, Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 had clearly pointed out that, “晉樂奏魏文帝秋風、別日二曲，言時序遷換，行役不歸，婦人怨曠無可訴也。廣題曰：燕，地名也。言良人從役於燕而為此曲。” See *Yufu shiji* 樂府詩集 (Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 469.

褒 in *Zhoushu* 周書, it recorded that “褒曾作燕歌行, 妙盡關塞寒苦之狀, 元帝及諸文士並和之, 而競為淒切之詞,”⁸⁰ which also represents that “Yange xing” was created to describe the natural features of the frontier.

Hence, these records clearly signify that, from the beginning, “Yange” or “Yange xing” should be understood as a Song in the area of Yan, not a banquet song.

⁸⁰ Linghu defen 令狐德棻, *Zhoushu* 周書 (Zhonghua shuju, 1971), 731.