

Tang Music and music of the Song dynasty

Lectures for SNU

Laurence Picken

(Cambridge大 丑午)

With the publication of Fascicle 6 of our series: Music from the Tang Court, my former doctoral pupils and I will have completed our transcription and, together with Professor Noel Nickson, our preliminary study of the first mode-key group of that portion of the repertory of Japanese Court Music known as Tōgaku/Tangyue (唐樂) — 'Tang Music' in the sense of the tunes revealed on transcribing the oldest scores for mouth-organ, zither, and lute.

It is necessary to use a term such as 'mode-key' since the Chinese term diao 'system' (調), and in particular the 28 diao of the Tang, comprised four different heptatonic octave-species, or note-sets, each in seven different keys.

This first mode-key group, known to the Japanese as Ichikotsu-chō, (一越調), was known to the Chinese simply as Yuediao (越調). I suggest that the '1' crept into the name of the mode-key because the Yuediao was the first mode in the system of Tang.

This first mode-key group consists of 31 items. 21 of these are regarded by Fujiwara no Moronaga (藤長師), in his vast collected scores for zither and lute, as belonging to the Ichikotsu-chō group, while the remaining 8 pieces are classed as Sada-chō (沙陀調). The note-set of the previous group is Mixo-Lydian in the mouth-organ versions: D E F# G A B C#, but the latter group, according to the sources, were originally in the Lydian mode: D E F# G# A B C#. The fact that Moronaga had all the string-versions written in tablature as if the originals were in the Lydian mode, may have been due to his thinking that any mode that began on the fundamental of the entire modal system, on the Huangzhong note (黃鍾), must be in the basic mode of the Chinese system: Lydian on D. The mouth-organ scores, and the Chinese sources, show however, that the Yuediao was a Shang (商) mode.

All Moronaga's string tablatures for zither (箏) and lute (琵琶) have been transposed

from the Shang mode(商) mode(Mixo-Lydian, with flattened seventh), to the Gong(宮) mode (Lydian with sharpened fourth and sharpened seventh).

These 31 items include suites of several movements, as well as single movements. All were at one time danced by dancers costumed for that piece and for that dance. Many were formerly songs, and their words have been preserved in some instances, though none are now sung in Japanese performance.

The total number of individual movements in this set of 31 items is 43, without counting major variants. The Preludes to the Large Pieces(the Daqu) are unmeasured in these two modekeys They are unmeasured, but are composed of binary units, and are to be performed in strict time, with a steady metre of 2 beats throughout.

The small pieces (小曲) and what the Japanese call 'middle-sized pieces' (中曲) suites of two or three movements only, are all measured/barred movements. All the movements of Tang Music still in the repertory are single movements, and all are measured. They are movements in bars of 2/2 or 4/2, and these will be my chief concern today.

I use these time-signatures, rather than 4/4 or 8/4, because, in the light of prelude-structures, the binary unit of two beats, in dance-terms the step, is the fundamental metrical unit in the Tang-Music repertory as reflected intablatures and notations of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Only in the Large Pieces, in the Daqu, do movements in 3/2 occur in this mode-key group. Only one movement in 3/2 appears in the printed scores from the Meiji Restoration (scores for winds only), and that is a movement from a Daqu with a title well-known in Korea: 春鶯囀.

Of these tunes, no example is shorter than 8 bars: either 8 bars of 2/2 or 8 of 4/2. None is longer than 20 bars of 2/2 or 4/2. No single movement of 7 bars of 4/2 occurs, but tunes of 14 bars in two symmetrical halves of 7 bars are known. 14 bars of 2/2 are assembled, in one instance, where an opening 4 bars are repeated following a unit of 6 bars, making $4 \times 2 + 6 = 14$ in all. However, 14 bars without an internal repeat may also occur. A 20-bar tune in 4/2 may result from repetition of a 10-bar structure, each 10 consisting of 5 units of 2 bars. It came as a surprise to discover no less than 6 pieces, in this group of 31, each of 10 bars of 4/2. Finally there are a number of movements

that consist of 8 or 16 bars, both of 2/2 and 4/2.

All these musical forms are forms proper for Tang song-texts. In recent years, I have made a particular study of that greatly neglected and undervalued work: 樂府詩集 While it is a source much used by those interested in Chinese poetry from Han times onwards, its musical importance has never, in my opinion been recognised. In a paper to be published in a forthcoming volume of *Musica Asiatica*, edited by my former pupil, Professor Rembrandt Wolpert, I have offered a brief survey, showing the musical importance of the contents, and of the immensely informative classification devised by the compiler, Guo Maoqian(郭茂倩).

I have examined, page by page, the entire work. In the Tang, song-texts from all the many categories distinguished by Guo Maoqian consist, almost invariably, of an even number of lines, all of the same number of characters(字). That is to say, the vast majority of Tang song-texts are in isometric verse-the lines are all of the same length in terms of monosyllabic words. We find then, songs of the following numbers of lines: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, and even higher even numbers. Note that the line-increments are always by units of 2 lines, in this sequence. This means that the couplet-the unit of two lines-is of major structural importance.

A very small number of song-texts with an odd number of lines is present: 5, 7, 9 per song; but the vast majority are songs of 8, 12 or 16 lines. In the Tang, as compared with preceding dynasties, songs of 10 lines become common; and in our relatively small sampled of Tang Music tunes in the first mode-key group, 6 are tunes with 10 musical lines, each consisting of two 4/2 bars.

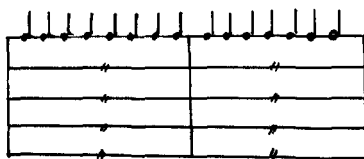
A diagram, prepared by Professor Noel Nickson, my co-editor, sets out 6 such tunes, each of 10, 4/2 bars, their notes on successive beats in vertical alignment. These are unchanged mouth-organ versions of the tunes.

You will observe that the tunes proceed largely in notes of crotchet-duration(♪). There is little quaver-movement (♫); but minims (♩) occur regularly on cadences at the ends of 2-bar phrases in 3 out of the six tunes. It is possible that the fact that these melodies are no longer sung has led to cadences being 'played through' by instrumentalists in the interests of a more flowing melody. If we imagine sound a 10 measure

**Interlude: six movements in ten measures in the first mode -
a summary of findings**

The musical score is presented in six staves, each corresponding to an instrument. The instruments are labeled on the left: *Shō-ō-raku*, *Ichirōraku*, *Ikinraku*, *Shōwaraku*, *Kusuraku*, and *Katen: Broaching*. The score is divided into ten measures, numbered 1 through 10 at the top of each measure. Vertical lines separate the measures into six distinct movements. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of a sequence of notes and rests, with some measures containing accidentals (sharps and naturals). The overall structure is a summary of findings for six movements in ten measures in the first mode.

tones, written due in 2 bar phrases, with cadences aligned, the structure will be: (Score I)



This would be a tune suitable for 'seven-word lines'—(七言). But looking at the diagram again, we see many instances of repeated notes. In a vocal version, these might all be sung as notes of minim-duration. In the simplest case of a one-note-to-one-字 type of song, the first two measures of the first tune Shō-ō-raku(韶應樂) the first two measures might serve for the singing of three text-lines (句) of 5, 3, and 6字 respectively.

That is to say these 6 tunes, in 10, 4/2-bars, might serve as melodies for heterometric lyrics—for lyrics with lines consisting of different numbers of monosyllabic words. Indeed, there is not one of these six tunes that demands a strictly isometric lyric, with all text-lines of the same length, if we regard repeated crotchets as evidence for the sometime presence of a sung minim.

This means that these same tunes are suitable for the singing of verse of the pre-ci (詞) type. The consequence of that type of verse-structure is that each ju(句) may have a different rhythmic structure; and yet they all fit into a regular, 'square' metrical pattern.

I believe that the 'small tunes' of the Tang-Music repertory confirm what I have long held probable: that the forms of early Chinese song Song, Tang, and thence backwards to Han and Zhou, were predominantly 'square,' and that they were composed in metres that were most commonly whole multiples of 2. A 句 of 3 字 was almost invariably treated as a rhythmic unit of 4: | ♩ ♩ ♩ | lines of 5 and 6 字 were similarly treated, always within a binary framework.

The patterns will vary according to the semantic stress required by the Chinese language. I think it no accident that of 430 xing (行) in 樂府詩集 (excluding the two sections of most recent date) 88 percent are in isometric verse of 5 字 to the text-line. What can this term have signified that led to its being used for so vast a number of song-texts? An army on the march was referred to as xingjun (行軍), and I suggest that the term signified a song-text in ahythm suitable for marching to tunes in three alternative rhythmic patterns: ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ |

the use of each of these would be determined by sense, by the semantic weight of the words of the *ju*. It has been widely accepted, certainly among Western Sinologists, that a Chinese song-text that consists of a sequence of text-lines of different length, demands a non-metrical, rhythmically-free, musical line. Some 40 pieces from the Tang-Music repertory have shown us, in their rhythmic and metrical structure, that this view is not necessarily correct.

Until I had transcribed a substantial body of mouth-organ scores of Tang-Music tunes, I had no knowledge of any melodies from the Tang, save the few melodies ascribed to the Tang period by Jiang Kui, Bai shi daoren (姜夔白石道人) in his collected Song-Pieces. It was then, looking back from Song-dynasty musical works, that I first encountered the Tang-Music repertory.

I draw your attention again to the way in which the minim-note cadences act as determinants of the 'square' metrical framework. The barring is made explicit in the Tang-Music scores where the number of bars (expressed as 'beats' 拍子) is stated at the outset; in each column of notation-signs is articulated by marking the note on which the drum-beat falls (as 百 or ○), and by the marking of each beat of the bar, apart from the main drum-beat, by a small dot to the right of the column. Furthermore, preventing any metrical ambiguity, the entire columns of note-signs are segmented into binary units.

Looking again at the first slide I showed in my last lecture, you see the binary segmentation of the columns, the dots marking individual beats, and the position of the main drum-beat. There can be no doubting the reality of the measured framework of the small tunes from the Tang-Music repertory.

The songs of Jiang Kui were mostly written between 1176 and 1196. Structure of Chinese folksong where, for example, a stanza of 5 text-lines may be sung, each line to a bar of eight crotchets, but with markedly different numbers of 字 to each musical line—for example, syllable-counts of 11, 16, 7, 5, and 7, 字 to successive 8-crotchet bars.

In a musical culture where song is measured rather than rhythmically and metrically free and unmeasured, heterometric verse—that is verse in lines of different length—is a necessary consequence of setting words one—monosyllable-to-one-note to a tune in which the metrical framework is filled out with notes of more than one time-value, more than

one duration, distributed in different patterns in each musical line.

On the simplest hypothesis, the flowering of heterometric song-texts in Tang and Song implies the popularity of tunes that were 'heterochronic'—tunes that made use of notes of several durations, and also 'heterorhythmic' in the structure of their musical lines. Neither of these characters disturbed an overall 'squareness' of tune-shape.

I can illustrate this by one of Jiang Kui's songs of the smaller category, known as ling(令). The average number of monosyllabic words in ling is 30—not far from the standard Tang quatrain of 28字. One of Jiang Kui's ling exhibits three lines of 7 zi in its first stanza. With lengthened notes authorised by Jiang Kui at the ends of these three lines, we have already sketched out a probable structure of 4 bars of eight beats to the bar.

I choose first, however, to illustrate 令 structure, a song-text composed by Jiang Kui to a tune not composed by him: a tune composed as he tells us by his friend, the poet. Fan Chengda (known as 'Stone Lake'—Shihu) The tune must have been written before 1193, when Jiang Kui composed the song-text. He entitled the song 'A 令 on Jade-Plumblossom': 玉梅令(高平調). This mode-key was the same as that of the Tang: a Dorian octave on F#—a Yu mode F# G# A B C# D E. I shall play the tune with each note articulated to indicate where a 字 falls. I shall not add the decorative zhezi (折字).

I have always felt special affection for this tune. The two stanzas zhang(章) are linked in that they share musical lines 2 and 3 of stanza 1. The direction of musical movement, of line 4 of stanza 1, in line 4 of stanza 2, gives the entire song a perfect shape

I might add that a Western liturgical melody, in the same mode almost repeats line 4 of stanza 2, changing a single note:

I suggest that here we encounter a most 'Chinese' characteristic of the use of a modal note-set: avoiding repetition of the final at so short a distance from the end of a melody. The tunes from the Tang Music have shown us how in Chinese hands all aspects of a given modal note-set are explored. Modal ambiguity is deliberately practised for the sake of the 'spice' it adds to a musical line.

A very important musical source of the late Song and early Yuan (元) dynasty is the popular Chinese encyclopaedia: 事林廣記 Two tunes in flute notation in that work are

玉梅令 高平調

石湖家自製此樂，未有譜實之，命予作。石湖宅南，苕河有圃曰范輿。梅開雪霽，竹院深靜。而石湖畏寒不出，故戲及之。

么リカ夕フリ今レヲ フレームフ人多。ハリリハ入フリ今レヲ レーマリマ
疏疏雪片散入溪南苑。春寒鎖舊家亭館。有玉梅幾樹，背立怨東風，高花未吐，暗
レマコ。 カリフマ。少ハレヲ。フレームフ人多。ハリフカハフリムレ
香已遠。公來領客，梅花能勸。花長好，願公更健。便揉春爲酒，剪雪作新詩。
ハフムマハレヲ。拚一日繡花千轉。

踏莎行

自河東來，丁未元日，至金陵江上，感悲而作。

燕燕輕盈，鶯鶯嬌軟，分明又向華胥見。夜長爭得薄情知，春初早被相思染。別

白石詩詞集 歌曲卷二

101

Su - su tsieh p'ien. San ju Hsi-nui Yüan. Chün han so chün chin Ling kuan.
 Yu yih-mei chi shu. Pei li yüan tung fang Kao hua wei 'ü. An tsing i yüan.
 Kung lai ling k'o. Mei hua neng ch'üan. Hun chung hao, yüan Kung k'ang chien.
 P'ien jou chün wei chiu. Chün tsieh tao hsin shih. P'an i jih, jao hun chien chuan.

most helpfully designated as ling and man(令, 慢), respectively. The man, of course, are Jiang Kui's long songs of 50 or more zi as compared with the 30 or so of his ling. The man usually have 8 rhyming zi, while the ling have 4 only.

These tunes in notation from Shilin Guangji are of immense importance, especially the ling, as the following slide shows. We see in use two signs that determine both notation and accentuation.

As you see, the tune consists of four musical lines of eight beats repeated, with a varied first line—the so-called huantou(換頭). This sign is also used in the manuscripts of the Sino-Japanese Tang Music.

At the end of each musical line is a lengthened note. The sign for such lengthening is / -as used also by Jiang Kui. In the first musical line, a second lengthened note is indicated; and the line plainly segments into two groups each of four beats, filled by

PICKEN: *Music and Musical Sources of the Song Dynasty*

The image displays two columns of musical notation. The left column is titled '願成雙令' and the right column is titled '願成雙慢'. Each column contains four staves of music. The notation includes notes, rests, and various symbols such as circles and vertical lines. Chinese annotations are present: '換頭' (huantou) is written at the start of the first staff in both pieces; '尾' (wei) is written at the end of the third staff in both; and '五下' (wuxia) is written at the end of the fourth staff in both. The right piece also has a '換頭' annotation on the second staff.

three notes. This segmentation suggests that the line might better be regarded as consisting of two 2/2 bars rather than of one 4/2 bar.

This view is confirmed by the presence in each of three out of the five musical lines of small circles beside certain pitch signs. These are percussion-indicators. They indicate where a note should be supported by the clash of a clanner or the heat of a drum. They are I believe the source of the circles used in the Sino-Japanese manuscripts of the Tang Music. The use by the Japanese of the *zi* in scores for the strings is due, I suggest, to the fact that the Tang-Chinese pronunciation of 百 and 拍 was almost the same, and by a scribe, 百 could be written very quickly in cursive form. The circles are used for the bass-drum beat in particular in the mouth organ scores.

In general, in the Tang-Music repertory, and in 2/2 bars, the percussive accent falls not on the first beat of the bar—as it does in recent Chinese music—but on the third beat; in 4/2 bars it most commonly falls on the 5th beat but at times on the 7th. In this highly informative ling-score, as you can see, the circles are placed—as they would be in a tune from the Tang Music on each third beat of the structure. This document shows that our barring of small tunes from the Tang Music is justified.

For this ling-tune we can suggest how a Chinese song-text would have to be constructed, in terms of the lengths of each *ju*(句), in terms of *zi*.

line	numbers of 字
1	3 + 3
2	7
3	5 + 4
4	7 (or 3+4)

This means that a total of 29 *zi* would be required as song-text for this ling. This number is close to Jiang Kui's average of 30 *zi* per ling.

The paired man-melody does not show, unfortunately, the circles that indicate a percussive accentuation; but again it would appear to be barred in 2/2 rather than 4/2. It consists of 7 musical lines, and the double structure would amount to 14 musical lines which, as I have stated, is one of the known size-categories for Tang song-texts, as shown by Yuefu Shiji.

