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'Lost Music'

An apocryphal saying of Confucius (from *Han History's* Arts and Culture Record) asserts: "If the Rites are lost, seek them in the wilds." (禮失求之野) The same could apply to music, as we see in ethno-musicological field-work and archaeology. Survivals are often persist at the peripheries. Take the case of Tang musical scores (Tôgaku) religiously conserved in Japan. There might have been doubt about their true provenance since no equivalent had ever been found in China. That is until the opening in 1905 of a Buddhist temple archive, at Dunhuáng on the edge of the Gobi desert, with pípá scores jotted on the back of a scroll dated 933. Pan Huáisù published Hayashi Kenzô's decipherment of its pípá notation in 1957 but its unique dance notations remain undeciphered.

Could they ever be made to sing and dance again? The Dunhuáng pípá notations, slightly post-dating the fall of Táng (618-906), matched those kept in Japan, in notes, modes and measures. Neither source appended lyrics, though both attached titles which correspond to lyrics preserved in China from the period. The main difference between the Dunhuáng notations and those from Japan is that the former are relics from an effectively extinct lineage. Those in Japan are part of an on-going, albeit somewhat 'ossified', tradition, which Laurence Picken's disciples in the 'Tang Music Project' continue working to re-interpret. Further, the Tôgaku repertoire of distinct tablatures for several instruments, represent an orchestral ensemble, while the Dunhuáng tablature's twenty symbols mark positions on four frets and open strings of a single instrument, the four-string lute or barbiton. Its twenty-five short secular pieces, in seven-note scales with two modal tunings, appear to represent a performance suite.

One of these, no. 13 West River Moon (Yòumàn Qūzī Xijiangyuè), a familiar traditional piece in other versions, with the constant prosody, has lyrics to this title included elsewhere within the Dunhuáng collection. Would it be possible to fit the words to their music?

'Too few words, too many notes' or 'too many words, too few notes'?

In China, the most treasured musical tablatures have been those of the seven-string qín. These were printed in large numbers from the Míng dynasty. There were then two schools of qín, the vocal and the instrumental, the former scoring one word-syllable of lyrics per note-stroke (e.g. Xiè Lín ca. 1500: *Tàigú Yíyin*), and the latter scoring note-stroke only (e.g. Zhu Quán 1425: *Shénqí Mìpú*). The vocal model had been pioneered by 'White Stone Daoist' Jiang Kuí (ca. 1155-1230) in a self-publication of his own work, including his short qín composition and several songs to flute notation. These vocal scores follow the basic principle of 'one word per note' but, as customary with traditional qín scores, provide no instructions on time-values.

Phrasing may be inferred from the lyrics, often of irregular line length, but there is no indication as to which notes should be held and which not. Jiang Ku gives a possible clue by classifying his flute lyrics into two types: *ling* 'ditty' and *màn* 'adagio', a few bearing the label *jìn* 'approach'. In this Jiang followed the style of Northern Sòng lyrics which are likewise divided into these same three types, *jìn* being also named *cao* or *diàoz'* and classified by musical mode.

The Dunhuáng scores, containing several pieces bearing the labels *màn* or *qū* are exceptional in marking time by small intercolumnal squares into regular measures of four (1x), six (16x) or eight (6x) notes according to piece, six being in the overwhelming majority and the first two in free-time. This phenomena corresponds to the measures notated in Tôgaku of four, six or eight beats (*paiz'*), the latter being in the majority. From this, it would seem plausible that *màn* 'adagio' pieces might fit 8-beat measures, *jìn* 'approach pieces' 6-beat, and *ling* 'ditties' 4-beat. Acting on this hypothesis, the problem arises, in the case of Dunhuáng's regular measures, how to set lyric lines composed to the same title.

Monk Yìhài's 'Magic' Formula

Only one author's surviving work offers instructions on a method of setting lyrics *cí* to their corresponding music. This occurs in the writings of Buddhist pre-eminent qín maestro Yìhài 義海 (*Qínyuàn Yàolù*). Taking as his example, Su Dongpo's popular qín hit Drunken Dotard Refrain (*Zuìweng Yín* 醉翁吟), a *màn* 'adagio' lyric, he cites the formula 'double start, single finish' (*shuangqí dansha*), explained as 'two long notes to start and one long to finish' as in the line:

Pure... and round...,

whose playing echoes in the empty mountain

without...

a word? Just a dotard

Làng-- rán--, qing yuán, shuí tán xiāng kong shan **wú--** yán? Weí weng...

This line of thirteen word-syllables can thus fit two eight-beat measures by lengthening the first, second and tenth word-syllable and its accompanying note. If we divide it into two measures of eight, we get a rhythm of 4+4 and 3+2+3:

|Làng-- rán--, ' qing yuán, shuí tán'
|xiāng kong shan' wú—' yán? Weí weng...

Clearly the verse lines overlap the measures in enjambment, yet each of the paired stanza exactly fits the eight measures of eight-beat: 52 word-syllables (13 x 4) plus 12 prolongations (3 x 4) equal 64 beats (8 word-syllable notes x 8 lines).

In the case of the Dunhuáng 'adagio' Upturned Cup Music (*Qingbei Yue*) in two stanzas of eight eight-beat measures, I have found Liú Yōng's classic piece to the same tune in exactly fifty-two word-syllable stanzas fits, applying Yìhài's identical formula, by giving two notes to the first, second and final word-syllable of each measure. Since Sòng dynasty lyrics are highly asymmetric in line length (as in the above Su Dongpo example) enjambment is again required. As the late Picken remarked, asymmetric verse does not require asymmetric musical measures.

In the case of Dunhuáng six-beat measures, I have made a setting of West River Moon (no. 13) in six-word-syllable lines, which though labeled 'adagio' corresponds to the intermediate type. Yìhài explains this type's setting by a reversal of the 'adagio' formula, i.e. 'single start, double finish'. I have accordingly applied three note-beats to the first word-syllable, and to the last two of each line. The same procedure may be applied to Jiang Kuí's 'adagios' and 'approaches' with interesting results.

Up-turned Cup Music 倾杯乐 *Qingbei Yuè/Lè* (Dunhuáng *Pípápû* no. 12)
Lyrics by (Northern Sòng) 柳永 Liǔ Yǒng (ca. 984-1053)

Setting by MSJW 2021 according to 'double start, single finish' formula (*shuangqǐ, dansha*): 2-notes per first two words and 2-notes per one word towards end of each line, shown here by heavy type. This procedure allows the asymmetric, impressionist phrasing of the verses to fit the music's constant eight-beat measures.

a)

Buildings locked in light mist, waters athwart
the setting sun. Far **mountains** half-hidden in mournful

楼锁轻烟水横斜照遥山半隐愁
|Lóu suǒ qīng yān, shuǐ héng |xié zhào, yáo shān bàn yīn chóu

| 6~4 7~6 4 6, 7 1 | 2 1, 6 3~1 2 2 6

blue. Lone sail, bank distant; walking
traveller, road darkling, **crowd** another day's cold

碧片帆岸远行客路杳簇一天寒
|bì. Piàn fān àn yuǎn, xíng |kè lù yǎo, cù yī tiān hán

| 1~2. 4~3 2 1 3, 4 | 5 6 2, 1~3 2 6 2

colours. Chū plumb-blossoms shine on snow, several
branches, gorgeously announce **green** springtime latest news.

色楚梅映雪数枝艳报青春消息
|sè. Chū méi yìng xuě shù |zhī yàn, bào qīng chūn xīào xī.

| 4~6. 1~4 7 1 2 3 | 4 7, 2 1~7 6 5 6.

Years of glory, dreams press; letters from home
cut, sounds distant, **flying** geese south to north.

年华梦促音信断声远飞鸿南北
|Nián huá mèng cù, yīn xìn |duàn, shēng yuǎn fēi hóng nánběi.

| 1~4 1~4 1 2, 4 2 | 4, 6 5 4~7, 1 2 3.

b)

Reckon she, after parting, left no word,
green fading, red **withered**. Two belts long-since

算伊别来无绪翠消红灭双带长
|Suàn yī bié lái wú xù, |cuì xiāo hóng miè, shuāng dài cháng

| 4~7 2~1 7 6 6 3, | 5 4 3 2~4, 5 6 4

discarded and dumped. Just tearful eyes sunk,
blurred, see crimson **changed** to blue. Stirring up vain

抛掷但泪眼沉迷看朱成碧惹闲
|pāo zhì. Dàn lèi yǎn chén |mí, kàn zhū chéng bì, rě xián

| 7~1 2~1. 7 6 5 6 | 1, 4 4 5~4 1, 4 2

melancholy piled in heaps. Rain memories, cloud hearts. Wine love, **flowery** forms, cruelly betray

愁 堆 积 雨 意 云 | 心 酒 情 花 态 辜 负
|chóu duī ji. Yū yì yún |xīn, jiǔ qíng huā tài, gūfù
|4~5 6~1 7 6 6 3 |5, 4 3 2~4 5, 6 4

the tavern's best customer. Regrets inexhaustible, like dreams goneby **much** time's gap divided.

高 阳 客 恨 难 极 | 和 梦 也 多 时 间 隔
|Gāo yáng kè. Hèn nán jí, |hé mèng yě duo shí jiān gé.
|. . . . |. . . . { . . }
|7~1 2~1 7 6 5 6, |1 4 4, 5~4 4 {1 4 }-
{ . . }
{4 1 }-

a)

Buildings locked in light mist, waters athwart the setting sun. Far **mountains** half-hidden in mournful **blue**. **Lone** sail, bank distant; walking traveller, road darkling, **crowd** another day's cold **colours**. **Chu** plumb-blossoms shine on snow, several branches, gorgeously announce **green** springtime's news. **Years of glory**, dreams press; intimate's letters cut, sounds distant, **flying** geese south to north.

b)

Reckon she, after parting, left no word, green fading, red **withered**. Two belts long **discarded and dumped**. Just tearful eyes sunk, blurred, see crimson **changed** to blue. Stirring up vain **melancholy piled** in heaps. Rain memories, cloud hearts. Wine love, **flowery** forms, cruellybetray **the tavern's best** customer. Regrets inexhaustible, like dreams goneby **much** time's gap divided.

Kangxi *Cípû* gives ten versions of Up-turned Cup lyrics from the Sòng dynasty. It notes that according to *Yuefû Zálù* the piece was originally composed for the reed-pipe by Táng emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (b. 810, r. 847-859). Three poets of Northern Sòng left compositions in this genre, Liú Yōng being the most prolific, with single examples by Chéng Bì and Zhang Xian. Their word-syllable totals and phrases (in first and second stanzas), starting from 52/52 word totals in the first two cases.

Xue Zongming 1980: *Zhongguo Yinyue Shi, Yuepu Pian*, Taipei, reproduced

From Hayashi Kenzô 1955: *Chugoku Dunhuang Biwafu no Kaidoku Kenkyû*.

G lydian 風香調 A cea

八、琵琶譜

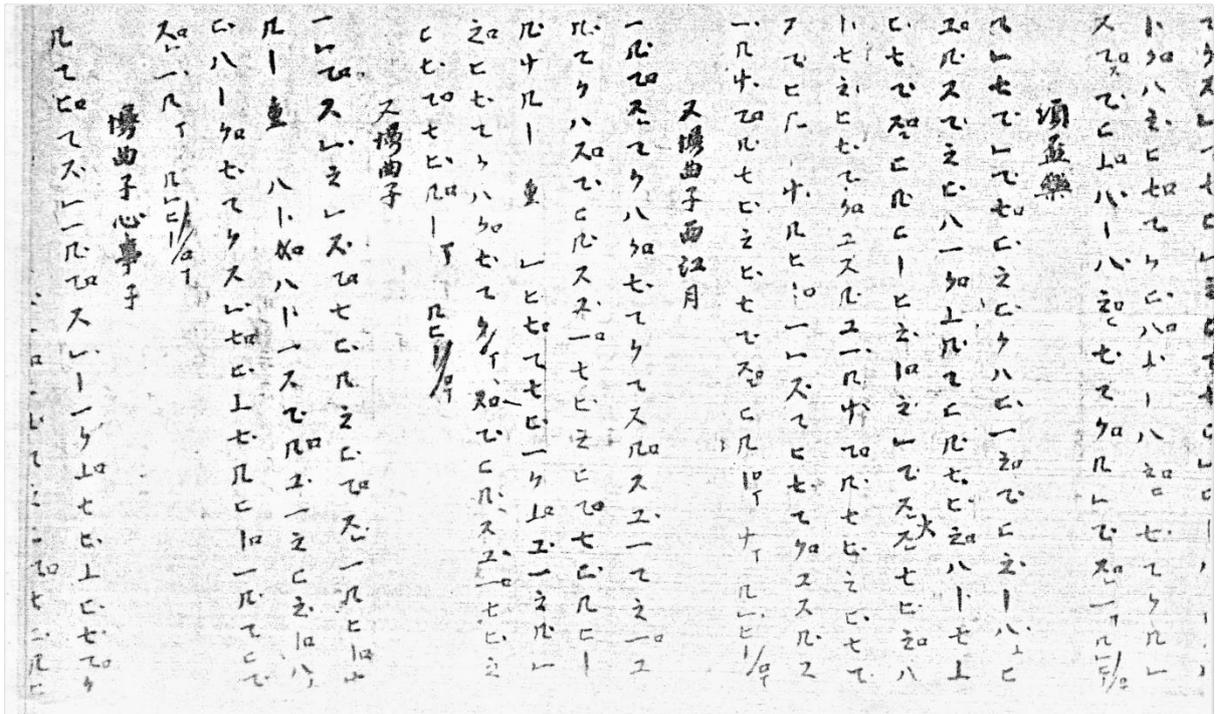
12. 傾盃樂

4 4 7 6 4 6 7 1 2 1 6 3 1 2 2 6 1 2 4 3 2 1 3
4 5 6 2 1 3 2 6 2 4 6 1 4 7 7 2 3 4 7 2
1 7 6 5 6 1 4 1 4 1 2 4 2 4 6 5 4 5 4 7 1 2
3 4 7 2 1 7 6 6 3 5 4 3 2 4 5 6 4 7 1 2 1 7 6 5
6 1 4 4 5 4 1 4 2 4 5 6 1 7 6 6 3 5 4 3 2 4 5 6
4 7 1 2 1 7 6 5 6 1 4 4 5 4 4 1 4 4

13. 又慢曲子西江月

2 4 6 5 4 6 6 3 6 7 6 6 6 5 4 5 3 2 6 2 2
3 4 6 6 3 5 6 1 4 5 3 2 7 1 2 1 7 6
7 1 4 1 4 4 5 4 4 4 1 7 6 7 1 2 6 2
3 2 2 4 4 2 1 7 6 6 3 6 7 6 6 5
6 1 4 5 3 2 7 1 2 1 7 6 7 1 4 4 1 4 4

一六九



Section of Dunhuang Pípápû tablature, collected by Paul Peilliot (P 3808), Paris. The first from the right is no. 12, 'Upturned Cup Music' in two stanzas of eight eight-beat measures. The second title from the right is no. 13, 'Another Slow tune West River Moon' in eight six-beat measures in two stanzas. The measures are marked out by small intercolumnal squares.