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The Poetry of Meng Haoran

孟浩然詩集

Translated and edited by Paul W. Kroll

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Library of Chinese Humanities

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Book 4

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Introduction

After the three most famous poets – Li Bo 李白 (701–762?), Wang Wei 王維 (701–761), Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) – of the reign of the Tang emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756) and extending roughly a decade afterward, a half-century generally regarded as comprising the finest period of Tang poetry (i.e., the so-called “High Tang”), it is the poet Meng Haoran 孟浩然 (689–740) whose name usually comes next to mind. In terms of the far smaller number of his extant works and their much narrower formal and topical variety when compared with the works of the other three poets, this may seem odd. It is largely a result, as is often the case in literary history, of aftertimes altering reputations. As evident from the relative number of selections included in two contemporary anthologies of poetry (more on which below), Meng Haoran was but one of many stars of medium magnitude in the crowded poetic firmament of the High Tang period.

His current renown as one of the four most respected poets of his age owes much to the fact that the eighteenth-century anthology *Tangshi sanbaishou* 唐詩三百首 (Three Hundred Poems of the Tang Dynasty), compiled by Sun Zhu 孫洙 in 1764, includes more of his poems (thirteen) than those of any of his contemporaries except Du Fu (thirty-six), Li Bo (thirty-five), and Wang Wei (twenty-eight).¹ Since this anthology has been, for the past two centuries and more, the book that is the normal starting-point for one’s acquaintance with Tang poetry, its selections and weightings have gone a long way toward determining the initial critical judgments of generations of readers. But the elevation of Meng Haoran to a level not far under Li Bo and Du Fu, and equal or nearly so to Wang Wei, goes back to the late ninth century and the final decades of the Tang dynasty. Then, Pi Rixiu 皮日休 (834?–883?) claimed that only Meng Haoran could be set adjacent to Li Bo and Du Fu as a poet and not be embarrassed.² During the Song dynasty it

1 Of all other Tang poets, only Li Shangyin 李商隱 (813?–858), with twenty-three, has more poems than Meng.

2 Being from the same homeplace as Meng, and writing at that time concerning Meng’s memorial pavilion, Pi had reason to be somewhat hyperbolic. “Yingzhou Meng ting ji,” *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 (Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1965), 797.3b–5a.

became common to speak of Wang Wei and Meng Haoran together as a “Wang-Meng school of poetry” (王孟詩派), whose emphasis was on nature imagery and unaffected plainness of diction.³ This was often mentioned as an admirable second-tier excellence of High Tang poetry, after first acknowledging the unsurpassed greatness of Du Fu and Li Bo. Meng Haoran’s verse was even adduced by Yan Yu 嚴羽 (1191–1241) as exemplary of Chan (or Zen) Buddhist enlightenment.⁴ One of his poems, “Spring Daybreak” (4.57 in this volume), was for centuries among those first recited and memorized by young students (and thereby embedded in the mind for life), thanks to it being the opening poem in the most popular introductory anthology to Tang and Song poetry for children.⁵

However, to judge from poems and references to Meng Haoran made during his lifetime and shortly after, his reputation then seems to have owed almost as much to his impressive personal character and perceived aloofness from political aspirations, as to his poetry itself. Those who passed through his native place of Xiangyang (in present-day north-central Hubei), en route to or from official postings elsewhere, would be apt or eager to encounter him there. One has the impression he was sometimes regarded, especially later in life, as a kind of provincial sage. Of course, in the social settings common to such occasions poems were sure to be composed, as they were on many similar encounters during Meng’s own travels to other places.

Meng Haoran is represented, with the other poets of his day, in the two major anthologies of contemporary poetry compiled during the High Tang. How he appears in these is rather revealing. The better known and more influential of these, *Heyue yingling ji* 河嶽英靈集 (*The Finest Souls of Our Rivers and Peaks*), was compiled by Yin Fan 殷璠, a sometime minor official, in 753. It originally collected 234 (now 229) poems by twenty-four poets who were active between the years 714

3 Despite the fact that their use of nature imagery and their level of diction was usually quite different.

4 See *Canglang shihua jiaoshi* 滄浪詩話校釋, ed. Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1983), 12 (“Shi bian”). For translation of this passage, see Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard Univ., 1992), 402. There is no evidence that Meng was himself a devout or practicing Buddhist.

5 Namely, the *Qianjia shi* 千家詩, in various recensions.

and 753.⁶ Nine of Meng Haoran's poems are included in the anthology. Of the other twenty-three poets, twelve have more poems than the nine by which Meng is represented, and eleven have fewer, putting him exactly in the middle.⁷ However, if one counts the total number of lines in each poet's selection, only four poets have fewer lines in the anthology than Meng Haoran. This anthology contains a preponderance of "old-style" (*guti* 古體) poems rather than the more tightly structured "recent-style" (*jinti* 近體) verse. But eight of Meng Haoran's nine poems are in *jinti* form, by far the largest such percentage of any poet. This is in fact an accurate reflection of Meng's own preference as evident in his extant works. In his evaluative headnote to Meng Haoran's poems in the anthology, Yin Fan said this about him:

When we consider Meng Haoran of Xiangyang, he stepped back in his diffidence like the bend of a lithophone. As the fame of his genius grew daily more lofty, his repute throughout the realm became extremely widespread. But from first to last settled in seclusion in this enlightened age, he came to the end still in a commoner's plain clothing. How sad! Haoran's verse is full and fraught in its textual richness, its warp and woof fine-spun and tight, mostly observing a decorous lyric tone and wholly paring away the everyday style. 及觀襄陽孟浩然，聲折謙退。才名日高，天下籍甚。竟淪落明代，終於布衣。悲夫。浩然詩，文彩芊茸，經緯綿密，半遵雅調，全削凡體。

The second High Tang poetry anthology that has come down to us is the *Guoxiu ji* 國秀集 (Collection of the State's Mature Talents). Compiled by Rui Tingzhang 芮挺章, a student at one of the imperial colleges in 744, presumably for private study, it was not circulated until 760, after Rui's death. Originally including 220 poems by ninety poets (now 218, by eighty-eight), this anthology, in contrast to *Heyue yingling ji*, gives over ninety percent of its selections to "recent-style" verse. With such a pronounced focus, Meng Haoran comes more to the fore. His

6 See P. W. Kroll, "Heyue yingling ji and the Attributes of High Tang Verse," in *Reading Medieval Chinese Poetry: Text, Context, Culture*, ed. Kroll (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 169–201.

7 The nine poems by Meng included in this anthology are the following, as numbered in the present volume: 2.1, 3.67, 3.72, 4.34, 4.35, 4.41, 4.44, 4.72, 4.75.

seven poems, six of which are “recent-style,” are a larger included number than all but one other poet.⁸

When we take account of the whole corpus of Meng Haoran’s extant works, we find that slightly more than half (133 out of 263) are *lüshi*, regulated eight-line poems. When we add in the thirty-seven poems in *pailü* 排律 (regulated couplets in series) form, almost seventy percent of the total registers as “recent-style” (*jinti*) verse – and that is before we include the twenty-five quatrains, most of which are also in *jinti* form. We note also that only fifteen of the total 263 poems are heptametric, all the rest, an overwhelming ninety-four percent, being pentametric. Wang Shiyuan, in his preface to Meng’s poems (on which, see below), says that “He was lauded by all as having exploited the utmost excellence of the pentametric form.” The longest extant poem by Meng comes to just twenty-six lines. And all but nine of the “old-style” poems employ a single rhyme, thus comprising but a single stanza, of varying lengths. Moreover, no poem by Meng Haoran in the more expansive *fu* 賦 form has come down to us. The picture this gives us is of a poet who chooses to work in a relatively limited range of options, not venturing extended flight, and composing almost entirely in pentameter form. Stephen Owen has appraised him fairly:

The limited subgeneric range of Meng’s poetry partially accounts for a general stylistic homogeneity in his work. He did vary the formality of his style to correspond with the formality of the occasion, and he did mix occasional styles, but there was little creative use of styles from other subgenres or from past poets. Within his restricted scope, however, Meng Haoran was a master.⁹

The majority of the poems consisting of no more than forty words, and almost all little more than twice that long, a light touch and suggestiveness is everything, with each line ideally evoking more than it

8 The most heavily represented figure is the now almost forgotten Lu Zhuan 盧僕 (fl. 741), who has thirteen poems included. The only poets with equal representation as Meng, with seven poems each, are Wang Wei and Cui Hao 崔顥 (ca. 700–754?). Meng’s seven poems in the anthology are 3.24, 4.27, 4.28, 4.42, 4.79, 5.1, 5.2, in this volume.

9 *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High T’ang* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), 76.

says. While he can be learned and formal, especially in poems for those of a higher standing than his, perhaps the most frequent impression one receives is a sense of easy sociability, at times even personal vulnerability, which can be sweetly engaging. Indeed the critical evaluation of most readers throughout a millennium agree that in his few chosen realms he was a most effective, and often movingly affective, poet.

Life

Most of what we know of Meng Haoran's life is derived from his poems and from those by others to him. Almost all of these are undated, so although we know where he was when a poem was written and can map the places he visited, our understanding of exactly when (outside of the season of the year) he was in a particular place and of the precise itinerary of his travels must, more often than not, be an exercise in conjecture. Such conjecture relies also on what we can know of the dates and travels of his friends and fellow poets. Hence, various competing *curricula vitae* have been constructed, with more or less credibility. But while some facts and placements are clear enough, no one can be certain of all the connecting details, such as how often he visited Chang'an and Luoyang,¹⁰ or in what years and how often he traveled to the middle and lower Yangzi regions and even farther south.

The biography of Meng Haoran included in the *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 is only forty-four characters long and tells us only three things: that he lived in seclusion at Deer Gate Mountain (Lumen shan 鹿門山) in Xiangyang 襄陽, that he went to the capital at the age of forty where he failed the *jinshi* 進士 civil-service examination, and that he was appointed to a minor office under Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (678–740) at the time the latter was governor of Jingzhou 荊州 (which we know was from mid-737 to early 740). Meng's official biography in the later *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 is longer, and likewise says he lived as a recluse at Deer Gate but adds that that was in his youth, likewise says he traveled to the capital at age forty but does not mention sitting for or failing the

10 See, e.g., Taniguchi Akio 谷口明夫, "Mō Konen jiseki kō: jōkyō ōshi o megutte" 孟浩然事跡考：上京應試をめぐって, *Chūgoku chūsei bungaku kenkyū* 11 (1976): 48–65.

exam, and likewise says Zhang Jiuling appointed him to a position late in life. It also provides three anecdotes of varying believability. In the most believable, while at the capital Meng participates in an evening bout of improvisational poetry competition with several scholars and produces a couplet of such excellence that everyone else gives up. In a clearly apocryphal anecdote, Meng is said to have been at Wang Wei's residence when the emperor came to visit; Meng supposedly hid under the bed, but was called out by the emperor who asked him to recite poetry and, when Meng recited a poem that implied the emperor had already rejected him, the emperor ordered Meng to go home to Xiangyang. In the third, hardly possible, anecdote, Meng is said to have rebuffed an appointment with a high official who wished to take him to the capital and recommend him at court, because he was having too merry a time drinking with friends. Besides these stories, the biography notes that Meng died near the end of the Kaiyuan period (713–742) from a reinfection of an abscess on his back, quotes from a letter written decades later by someone asking the local military governor to effect repairs of Meng's tomb, and finally mentions that Wang Wei is said to have once painted a portrait of Meng at an earlier prefect's residence. The source of much of this material is Wang Shiyuan's preface to the posthumous, first collection of Meng's works, which will be commented on below. Here it is just necessary to add that that preface also furnishes the more exact date that Meng's death occurred in early 740, in his fifty-second year, which yields the accepted date of his birth as 689.¹¹

There is, as we can see, only a little reliable information in these two official biographies. When we look more closely, we find that two of the supposed facts mentioned in the *Jiu Tang shu* biography that have been accorded the most longstanding credibility are not at all trustworthy. The first is the statement of his reclusion at Deer Gate Mountain. If Meng indeed had a dwelling there, it was only in his younger years, when he and his lifelong friend Zhang Zirong 張子容 both spent time there. Otherwise, and for most of his life, it is apparent that Meng's

11 Remembering that by traditional Chinese count, one is reckoned as in one's first year at birth. For the dispute that has led some scholars wrongly to regard 691 as Meng's birth-year, see P. W. Kroll, "Wang Shih-yüan's Preface to the Poems of Meng Hao-jan," *Monumenta Serica* 34 (1979–80): 364, n50.

family home in Xiangyang was a place he referred to as “the garden south of the branch [of the Han River]” (*jiannan yuan* 湖南園). This seems to have been a small family estate, a short way southwest of Xiangyang and close to Mount Xian 峴山, the local site he mentions most often in his poems and which had an established repute in history and literature.¹² When Meng talks, especially in those poems written in various places around Xiangyang, about “returning to his home,” it is almost always this place he means, not Deer Gate Mountain.

The second, and more surprising, statement that needs correcting is about his failing the *jinshi* examination. This supposed occurrence has been accepted unquestioningly by practically every commentator and plays a significant role in most of the *vitae* that have been constructed for Meng. However, it is rarely noticed or mentioned that the only source dating from the Tang and up to five hundred years later that refers to Meng Haoran taking the exam is the brief sentence in *Jiu Tang shu*. His failure at, or even sitting for, the exam is referred to or even hinted at nowhere else – not by any contemporary in any writing to or about him, not in either of the early prefaces to his works, not by any later Tang writer, and not in any text from the Song period or after that gathers together bits of historical fact, gossip, or anecdotes about Tang poets, such as the well-known *Tangshi jishi* 唐詩紀事 or *Tang caizi zhuan* 唐才子傳. The idea of a forty-year-old, especially one with already some literary reputation, sitting for (and failing) the exam would seem to be unusual enough to warrant at least some comment by someone, sometime in all of the literary and historical works dating from the Tang.¹³

It is difficult to explain this abiding silence unless one entertains the thought that no such event occurred and that the *Jiu Tang shu* statement is a mistaken comment, which was unobtrusively corrected by

12 See Chen Yixin 陳貽焮, “Meng Haoran shiji kaobian” 孟浩然事迹考辨, in idem, *Tangshi luncong* 唐詩論叢 (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1980), 1–8; also P. W. Kroll, *Meng Hao-jan* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981), chapter two, “The Land and Lore of Hsiang-yang.”

13 Admittedly an *argumentum ex silentio* is not conclusively provable. But it is much more likely in this case than the supposition that no one in the Tang ever thought it worthwhile or even of interest to mention an examination failure by Meng.

the *Xin Tang shu* editors who simply write that Meng made his first visit to the capital when he was forty. This does not, of course, mean that Meng was never interested in obtaining official preferment or appointment; he complains about being overlooked in more than a few poems. It suggests rather that he pinned such hopes that he had in this regard, when he visited the capital, on personal recognition and patronage. An additional clue in this direction is provided by the *Guoxiu ji*'s identification of included poets. During the Tang a candidate for the *jinshi* exam was referred to plainly as “*jinshi*,” while a successful degree-holder was called a “forwarded *jinshi*” (*qian jinshi*, 前進士). These terms are applied often as identifying tags by Rui Tingzhang to the poets whose works he includes in his anthology. Since he was himself a student preparing for the exam at one of the imperial colleges, presumably with an interest in and access to recent “pass lists,” his identifications are more than likely to be correct.¹⁴ He identifies Meng Haoran as neither a *jinshi* nor a *qian jinshi*, but simply as a *chushi* 處士, a “private scholar.”¹⁵ Yin Fan, too, in his words quoted above, seems to imply that Meng never pursued official rank.

One may note also that as soon as we cast aside the notion of the middle-aged Meng taking the exam, problems of interpretation or dating that pertain to several of his poems disappear.¹⁶

Assuming the above, we can begin Meng's entrance into public society at Chang'an in late 727 or early 728. (He had surely made the acquaintance earlier of some officials passing through Xiangyang, as

14 The same would hold true if these identifying tags were actually added by Rui's friend Lou Ying 樓穎, when he wrote his preface for the collection in 760, which, judging from the official titles applied to some of the poets might well be so.

15 Evidently employing the Tang terminology just noted, Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 in his bibliography *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題 (ca. 1235) refers to Meng Haoran as *jinshi*. This is the only such reference I know of in the Song dynasty, presumably a residue from the *Jiu Tang shu* biography. A century earlier Chao Gongwu 晁公武, in his bibliography *Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志 (1151), had identified Meng, as had the *Guoxiu ji*, simply as a “private scholar.”

16 Xiao Lanying's 蕭蘭英 article, “Meng Haoran 'ying jinshi' zhiyi” 孟浩然「應進士」質疑, in *Meng Haoran yanjiu luncong*, ed. Wang Huibin 王輝斌 (Hefei: Shidai chubanshe, 2011), 94–101, raises many of the same issues as in the preceding two paragraphs, and more.

well as private travelers, one among the latter probably being Li Bo.) His capital visit brought him into contact with a wider group of individuals, including those in the circles of the younger scholars Wang Wei and Wang Changling, and the older, high minister Zhang Jiuling.¹⁷ After his Chang'an sojourn, which seems to have been immediately followed by a visit to the eastern capital, Luoyang, the remaining dozen years of Meng's life alternated between frequent, fairly extensive travels to other parts of China (as amply attested in the poems) and periods of residence at home in Xiangyang. It was especially during this time when he seems to have attained the status of a local celebrity when in Xiangyang, living in the countryside outside the city, away from daily clamor but by no means as a complete recluse.

As already noted, when Zhang Jiuling was demoted in 737 from his position as prime minister and removed to the general supervision of all of Jingzhou, he invited Meng Haoran to join his administration in a subordinate role. This was the only time in Meng's life that he was able to wear the robes and act the part of an official. He must have had responsibility for some minor bureaucratic tasks, but we mainly know of his activities (as usual, through his poems) as a traveling companion of and participant in poetic exchanges with Zhang Jiuling when the latter conducted a tour of inspection in late 737 to mid-738 of the large area under his authority. Meng seems not to have served out even a year as an official, before resigning and then returning home again to Xiangyang. There he seems to have remained for the relatively short stretch of time before his death in 740.

Texts and Editions

The textual history of Meng Haoran's poems is too complicated and messy to allow for more here than being sketched in the barest outline. It begins within a decade of his demise. Meng Haoran did not leave, upon his death, an arranged, organized, or complete collection of his writings. In 745 or shortly afterward, Wang Shiyuan 王士源, a native of Yicheng 宜城, just half a dozen miles south of Xiangyang, undertook

17 Or perhaps "more closely in contact with" these men, if, as some think, he had already met them on a visit to Luoyang in 726.

to gather up Meng's poems. Wang Shiyuan had not known or been acquainted with Meng Haoran; this seems to have been an act of local esteem and personal appreciation on his part. Wang was known as a devout Daoist, practiced in the arcana. He had already attained some fame for "restoring" (actually creating from whole cloth) the supposedly ancient text of the Daoist classic, *Kangcangzi* 亢倉子, which in 742 was briefly raised by the emperor to canonical status with four other books (*Laozi* 老子, *Zhuangzi* 莊子, *Liezi* 列子, *Wenzi* 文子) that formed the basis of a newly instituted degree in Daoist studies. Since Wang had never met or corresponded with Meng Haoran, the descriptive historical and anecdotal information in his preface is entirely hearsay, reliant on what he called "detailed inquiries" of others. As noted above, much of this forms the preponderance of information included in Meng's *Xin Tang shu* biography, borrowed directly from the preface.

Wang states that it was 745 when he became aware, on a trip to the capital, of Meng Haoran's death. He then determined to collect his writings. It is here that Wang's account is most valuable. He says that Meng Haoran did not make a point of keeping his manuscripts, often destroying or discarding them because he felt they did not meet his full intent, also that Meng left poems scattered everywhere he traveled, without making copies. So Wang says that he has searched them out in the nearby villages as well as various other places and also offered rewards for them (which must have prompted at least some dubious submissions). In the end he estimates that his collection numbers fewer than half of the poems Meng wrote. But he has succeeded in copying 218 poems in four scrolls, including some poems written by others to or in exchange with Meng.¹⁸

This manuscript, or rather a copy of it written in more than one hand,¹⁹ called *Haoran wenji* 浩然文集 (Collected Works of Haoran), came in 750 to the attention of Wei Tao 韋滔, an official at the capital

18 See Kroll, "Wang Shih-yüan's Preface to the Poems of Meng Hao-jan," for complete translation and commentary on this text, but which should be updated in some places.

19 The latter fact, mentioned by Wei Tao, is significant in that it indicates Wang Shiyuan's collection of the poems had already undergone some unspecified editing, including possible variants or additions not recognized by Wei. Therefore when we speak of "Wang Shiyuan's edition," it is a convenient but not strictly accurate reference.

and editor in the library of the Academy of Assembled Worthies (*Jixian yuan* 集賢院). He notes that were it not for Wang Shiyuan, of whom Wei professed himself a great admirer, Meng's poems would now be no more than a dozen or so sheets of old paper. But Wei Tao was troubled that the manuscript was already much deteriorated and fading. So he had a fair copy made of the entire text, to which he also seems to have added some items. He then took the important step of depositing the newly made copy in the imperial library. This action far increased its chances for preservation and ultimately resulted in its becoming the primary source of one important line of textual recensions, with inevitable emendations and variants entered, and the number of poems augmented with additions over the centuries.

The second, almost equally distant source for Meng Haoran's poems is a collection in three scrolls compiled by Meng's younger brother Xianran 洗然. This is first mentioned in a brief note in the bibliographic monograph of the *Xin Tang shu*, along with a reference to Wang Shiyuan's edition, showing that there were two editions of Meng's works in the imperial library at that time. We know nothing about the process behind Meng Xianran's compilation, but it must have been done after Wang Shiyuan's collection, otherwise one assumes Wang would have mentioned or made use of it. One may assume as well that Xianran had access at home to some materials of his elder brother that Wang could not obtain.

The filiations and descendants of these two editions become vastly bewildering from the Southern Song period onward. In the Qing period we know of more than a score of different editions of Meng Haoran's poems, many of which are overlapping and interconnected in their relationships, and the number of poems has grown to more than two-hundred sixty. The most thorough study in English of the textual history of Meng's work is that done by Daniel Bryant in his 1977 dissertation.²⁰ In Chinese there have been several studies, perhaps the most

20 "The High Tang Poet Meng Hao-jan: Studies in Biography and Textual History" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of British Columbia). The value of this is somewhat lessened by Bryant's zealous advocacy of the 1576 Gu Daohong edition of the poems, which is neither the most complete nor the most reliable text. His biographical account of Meng, though presented with conviction, suffers from the same inescapable uncertainties as do all other attempts.

useful of which is a relatively brief but substantive summary article by Lü Zhenghui 呂正惠, published in 2011.²¹ Lü examines the differences between the four most significant editions of the poems. These are: (1) a Song woodblock edition, originally published in Sichuan, that eventually came into the possession of the Qing bibliophile Huang Pilie 黃丕烈 (1763–1825), this being the earliest extant edition and probably deriving indirectly from Wang Shiyuan's edition; (2) a Ming movable type edition, published in Suzhou during the first half of the sixteenth century, probably deriving indirectly from Meng Xianran's edition; (3) a mid-Ming woodblock edition, published ca. 1550, part of the *Tang shi'erjia shiji* 唐十二家詩集 printing, probably deriving indirectly from Meng Xianran's edition, later reprinted many times including in the *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊 series; (4) Gu Daohong's 顧道洪 1576 woodblock edition, based on the Yuan edition of Liu Xuxi 劉須溪 (a.k.a. Chenweng 辰翁), probably deriving indirectly from Wang Shiyuan's edition.

Lü Zhenghui makes a convincing case that, while none of these four texts or any of the numerous others may be regarded as wholly reliable, the mid-Ming text reprinted in the *Sibu congkan* and elsewhere is the most trustworthy, requiring comparatively the least amount of correction. It is this edition that I have used as my base-text in this book, also following the sequence of poems as presented there. This numbers 263 poems in four fascicles. The arrangement is by formal category: pentametric old-style verse (*wuyan gutishi* 五言古體詩), heptametric old-style verse (*qiyān gutishi* 七言古體詩), pentametric regulated couplets in series (*wuyan pailü* 五言排律), pentametric regulated verse (*wuyan lüshi* 五言律詩), heptametric regulated verse (*qiyān lüshi* 七言律詩), pentametric quatrains (*wuyan jueju* 五言絕句), and heptametric quatrains (*qiyān jueju* 七言絕句). I have also added a fifth, brief chapter, including a handful of uncollected poems attributed, most of them somewhat dubiously, to Meng Haoran.

As is evident from the foregoing, and as is true of the works of all Tang poets, we do not have original versions of the poems as they came from the author's hand. Instead we have the poems in various instantiations that have been edited and transmitted by different indi-

21 “Meng Haoran shiji de banben wenti” 孟浩然詩集的版本問題, in *Meng Haoran yanjiu luncong*, 145–56.

viduals, some known and some unknown, which represent snapshots of what were read as Meng Haoran's poems at discrete later times. The number of variants attested for many of Meng Haoran's poems can be dispiriting, as it seems sometimes that, depending on which variants we read, the same poem might present us with a poet of potentially different viewpoints. The application of judicious critical consideration and reliable historical knowledge, tempered with accepted principles of textual criticism, may allow us to make well-founded judgments among variants of word or phrase and very rarely to emend the texts. The translations offered here are a relatively diplomatic rendering of the chosen base-text; variants that have been adopted are noted in every case, and emendations have been made only when attested readings all seem indefensible.

Translation Conventions

The translations include footnotes to help make understandable historical references and literary allusions that would have been clear to Meng's readers. These are especially frequent and sometimes quite densely packed in those *guti* and *pailü* poems that are composed as display pieces on social occasions or as conscious laudations of particular companions.

Rhyme-changes in individual poems are always indicated by stanza breaks in the translations as well as in the Chinese texts.

Sanskrit words used by Meng Haoran in Chinese transliteration, rather than translated into Chinese semantic equivalents, are retained as Sanskrit transcriptions here. An exception is the word *chan* 禪 (Middle Chinese: *dzyen*), transcribing Sanskrit *dhyāna*, which is here always translated as "meditation." An exception in the other direction, where I retain the Sanskrit although a Chinese translation is used by Meng Haoran, is *fa* 法 (Chinese, "law"), here always rendered "dharma" which has now become an anglicized word. Another is *dhāraṇī*, though Meng translates it as *zongchi* 總持, "collect and keep [in mind]."

When a person is identified by a number in parentheses, it indicates his seniority among the males of his generation in his clan.

"Jiang" stands for the Long River (Changjiang 長江), usually called the Yangzi now, but not so in Tang times.

A section of Additional Notes, including selected variants, emendations, and occasional interpretive comments will be found at the back of the book. Preceding this there is also a Selected Bibliography.

Some of my first scholarly publications, forty-plus years ago, were on Meng Haoran. I still have the loose-leaf binder into which I then put draft translations of most of his poems. In examining these renderings again so many years later, as well as the translations I published in my early works, I found it necessary to redo them completely for this book. One does not often have the opportunity to redress youthful efforts. I am grateful for the opportunity to do so here.

I owe a special debt to Stephen Owen, who served as volume editor of this book with a fine generosity of spirit; his comments and suggestions have improved it in many places. My thanks go also to a certain R.B., for patient encouragement. As ever, I am most heartily thankful to Amy Strickland, my dear partner, for her daily presence, especially during the pandemic-shadowed months when this book was begun and completed. My world is brighter because of her.

Book 1

五言古體詩

1.1

尋香山湛上人

朝遊訪名山

山遠在空翠

氛氳亘百里

4 日入行始至

谷口聞鐘聲

林端識香氣

杖策尋故人

8 解鞍暫停騎

石門殊壑險

篁徑轉森邃

法侶欣相逢

12 清談曉不寐

平生慕真隱

累日探靈異

野老朝入田

16 山僧暮歸寺

松泉多清響

Pentametric Old-Style Verse

1.1

Seeking His Eminence Zhan, on Incense Mountain¹

- At morning out I rambled in search of a mountain of renown,
 A mountain distant, resting in the halcyon-blue of the void.
 Its full and favoring vapors extended a hundred leagues;
 4 At last as the sun went in, my journey brought me there.
 At the valley's mouth I heard the voice of a bell;²
 On the verge of a grove, sensed fumes of incense.
 Wielding a horse's reins, I came to find an old friend³ –
 8 Now loosing the saddle, I stop awhile from riding.
 A stone gate stands sheer in the steepness of the gorge;
 A footpath by a bamboo-brake turns in the forest's depths.
 The dharma companion takes delight in our meeting;
 12 His rarefied talk holds me sleepless till next daybreak.
 All life long I have admired true reclusion,
 Through the hoard of days searched for holy wonders.
 Here an old man of the moors goes into the fields at morning,
 16 And a mountainside monk comes home at evening to his temple.
 A spring near pine-trees multiplies echoes of purity,

1 “His (or Your) Eminence” is an honorific for a Buddhist monk. Zhan (or perhaps Zhanran 湛然) is his religious name, meaning “profound clarity.” Monk Zhan is also addressed elsewhere (see 1.15). There were at least five “Incense Mountains” in areas that Meng Haoran may have visited in his lifetime; this seems to be the one in Jingshan district, a day's ride southeast of Xiangyang, where we know there was a monk Zhanran in residence in the early 720s. The name is taken from the Buddhist Mount Gandhamādana, legendarily near sacred Mount Sumeru, and home of the gandharvas, deities of fragrance and music.

2 The bell is that of the monastery where monk Zhan resides.

3 Literally he has in hand a riding-crop.

苔壁饒古意
願言投此山
20 身世兩相棄

1.2

雲門寺西六七里聞符公蘭若幽與薛八同往
謂余獨迷方
逢子亦在野
結交指松柏
4 問法尋蘭若
小溪劣容舟
怪石屢驚馬
所居最幽絕
8 所住皆靜者
密篠夾路傍
清泉流舍下
上人亦何閑
12 塵念俱已捨
四禪合真如
一切是虛假
願承甘露潤

And a moss-covered wall adds to thoughts of older times.
 Would I might give myself up to this mountain:

20 Body and world – both cast aside!

1.2

Hearing of the Deep Seclusion of the Aranya of Sir Fu, Six or Seven *li*
 West of Cloud Gate Temple, I Go There with Xue (Eight)¹

Just when I, on my own, had lost direction,
 I meet you, out here in the wilds too!

Bound as friends, we bend our way toward pine and cypress,

4 Inquiring after the Law, we seek out the aranya.²

The little stream is unequal to bearing up a boat;

Weird rocks startle the horses time and again.

Where he dwells is deep-secluded and apart,

8 And he who lives here is one completely tranquil.

Thicket dwarf-bamboo hugs the edge of the path,

And a clear-running spring flows beneath the lodging.

The Eminent One, for his part, is so much at ease!

12 Thoughts of the dusty world wholly abandoned now.

The four *dhyānas* blend here with True Suchness –
 Each and everything affirmed as vacant and false.³

I would willingly receive the sweet dew's moisture,

1 An aranya (transliterated from Sanskrit) is a private hermitage. Cloud Gate Temple was a Buddhist monastery founded in the early fifth century on the mountain of that name, in Kuaiji, Zhejiang.

2 The Buddhist Law, i.e., the dharma.

3 The “four *dhyānas*” or “four *dhyāna*-heavens” are the successive spiritual regions attained in accordance with one's advancing practice of meditation. The fourth of them is a realm beyond pleasure and pain where one becomes united with “True Suchness” (*bhūthātatahā*), that which is truly so, and where all things are realized as inherently empty.

- 16 喜得蕙風灑
依止此山門
誰能效丘也

1.3

宿天台桐柏觀

- 海行信風帆
夕宿逗雲島
緬尋滄洲趣
4 近愛赤城好
捫蘿亦踐苔
輟棹恣探討
息陰憩桐柏
8 採秀尋芝草
鶴唳清露垂
雞鳴信潮早
願言解纓紱
12 從此去煩惱
高步陵四明
玄蹤得二老
紛吾遠遊意

- 16 Gladly obtain the ruffling of a gracious breeze.
 Having come to rest at this mountain gateway,
 Who then could follow old Qiu's example?¹

1.3

Passing the Night at Tongbo Abbey on Tiantai²

- Journeying on the water I trusted my sail to the wind,
 To spend this night loitering on an island in the clouds.
 Following an urge for the Watchet Isles faraway,
 4 I was enthralled by the beauty of Red Wall nearby.³
 Brushing past the bindweed, treading also on moss,
 The oars now set in check, I indulged in probing quest.
 Finally resting in shade, I relaxed at Tongbo,
 8 Plucking florets, searching for the magic herb.⁴
 When a crane cries out, pure dew descends;
 When a cockerel crows, the appointed tide will run early.
 Would I might loosen capstrings and seal-cords,
 12 From this time on discard all frets and vexations.
 Pacing aloft, I will climb past Fourfold Brightness,⁵
 In tracks of the occult, find the Two Laos.⁶
 So full are my thoughts for distant roaming,

1 Qiu is Confucius, who busied himself to no avail with the things of this world.

2 Tongbo Abbey in the Tiantai mountains had been constructed on imperial order in 711 as official seat of the influential Daoist master Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (647–735). By the time Meng Haoran visited in the 730s, Sima was no longer there but the abbey was still functioning.

3 The Watchet Isles are the Daoist paradise isles in the blue-gray Eastern Sea (likewise the Three Mountains in line 17). Red Wall, so called because of its rose-tinted rocks, was the southern rise of Tiantai whence one's ascent of the mountain usually began.

4 The wondrous polypore that bestows immortality.

5 Fourfold Brightness is a mountain adjacent to Tiantai on the northwest.

6 The Two Laos are Laozi and Laolaizi, seen here as transcendents. The line is a reversal of one from Sun Chuo's 孫綽 (314–371) "Rhapsody on Roaming the Tiantai Mountains," in which the author is unable to find the occult tracks of the Two Laos.

- 16 學此長生道
日夕望三山
雲濤空浩浩

1.4

- 宿終南翠微寺
翠微終南裏
雨後宜返照
閉關久沈冥
4 杖策一登眺
遂造幽人室
始知靜者妙
儒道雖異門
8 雲林頗同調
兩心喜相得
畢景共談笑
暝還高窓眠
12 時見遠山燒
緬懷赤城標

- 16 I will study well this Dao of prolonging life.
 At dusk of day, I gaze afar at the Three Mountains,
 As billows of clouds spread on and on in space.

1.4

Passing the Night at Cuiwei Temple on Zhongnan¹

- Halcyon-haze lies in the Zhongnan mountains;
 After rain it duly returns to radiance.
 My barred gate having long been sunk in gloom,
 4 Staff in hand, at once I've climbed here for the view.
 In due course reaching the abode of a man secluded,
 I realize now the fineness of one who is this calm.
 Although Ru and Dao are disparate gateways,²
 8 Clouds and grove are rather a shared mode.
 Our coupled hearts enjoy what we have found;
 With sunlight gone, we talk and laugh together.
 Turning to sleep, dozing by a lofty window,
 12 I glimpse at that time wildfire on a distant hill.
 It puts me in mind of Red Wall's faraway betokening,

1 The monastery's name refers to the bright halcyon-blue haze of distant hills (this meaning is made active in line 1). Located in the Zhongnan mountains south of the capital Chang'an, it had originally been a small palace for the early Tang emperors to enjoy relief from the summer heat. By Meng Haoran's time it had been converted to a Buddhist monastery.

2 That is, Confucianism and the Buddhist "Way."

更憶臨海嶠
 風泉有清音
 16 何必蘇門嘯

1.5

春初漢中漾舟
 羊公峴山下
 神女漢皋曲
 雪罷冰復開
 4 春潭千丈綠
 輕舟恣來往
 探翫無厭足
 波影搖妓釵
 8 沙光逐人目
 傾杯魚鳥醉
 聯句鶯花續
 良會難再逢
 12 日入須秉燭

1 The Red Wall Mountain in the Tiantai range (see preceding poem, note 2). Linhai (“Overlooking-the-Sea”) was an area of scenic hills near Kuaiji, Zhejiang, whose peaks were notably mentioned by the earlier poet Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (383–433).

- And also makes me recall Linhai's sharp peaks.¹
 But a wind-swept spring will have a pure sound,
 16 So what need of Master Sumen's mystic whistling?²

1.5

Afloat on the Han at the Start of Springtime

- Below Xian Mountain of the Lord Yang Hu,³
 At the bend of the Han embankment of the divine maidens,⁴
 When the snow has ceased and ice has opened once more,
 4 And springtime pools are green for a thousand rods,
 My light boat comes and goes where it will,
 In seeking enjoyment never tired or bored.
 The shadows of waves shake a courtesan's hairpins,
 8 And the brilliance of the sands chases away one's sight.
 We tilt our cups – the fishes and birds are drunk;
 We link verses – orioles and blossoms carry it on.
 Such fine gatherings are hard to come upon twice;
 12 When the sun goes in, one must surely “grasp a candle.”⁵

2 The poet Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263) once visited a Daoist master at Sumen Mountain. Eliciting no response for the various topics he spoke of, Ruan gave a dismissive whistle and departed. When he was partway down the mountain, suddenly he heard a resonant sky-filling whistle emitted by the master, putting him to shame. “Whistling” involved various vocalizations meant to put oneself “in tune” with the primal *qi* of the natural world.

3 Yang Hu 羊祜 served as military governor of Xiangyang in the mid-200s. He had a special affection for Mount Xian, which overlooked on its east a portion of the Han River two and a half miles south of the city. A famous stele was erected there in Yang Hu's honor (see 3.1).

4 Legend said that long ago a certain Zheng Jiaofu 鄭交甫 encountered two lovely maidens bathing at this spot. After he enjoyed a brief dalliance with them, they presented him with the gemstone pendants they wore. When he left, he found the pendants had vanished and, turning round, saw the girls had disappeared too. He then realized they were divine, not human, maidens.

5 One of the “19 Old Poems” from the end of the Han dynasty has the couplet: “The day is short, the bitter night long, /Why not grasp a candle and go enjoy oneself?”

1.6

宿來公山房期丁大不至

夕陽度西嶺
 群壑倏已暝
 松月生夜涼
 4 風泉滿清聽
 樵人歸欲盡
 煙鳥棲初定
 之子期宿來
 8 孤琴候蘿逕

1.7

耶溪泛舟

落景餘清暉
 輕橈弄溪渚
 泓澄愛水物
 4 臨泛何容與
 白首垂釣翁
 新粧浣紗女
 相看未相識
 8 脉脉不得語

1.6

Passing the Night at Sir Lai's Mountain Chamber where I was to Meet
with Ding (Eldest), who Does Not Arrive¹

- Evening's sunglow has crossed the west ridge;
All the many ravines suddenly now are dark-cast.
The pinetree moon brings forth nighttime's coolness;
4 A wind-swept spring is heard, overflowing with purity.
Woodsmen, returning home, are almost all gone;
Misty birds, in their roosts, have now settled in.
I have come for you, on this agreed upon night –
8 A lone zither, watching by the bindweed path.

1.7

Boating on Ye Brook²

- Fading sunlight is suffused with pure radiance,
As weightless oars dally round islets in the stream.
Limpidly pellucid – dear to me is everything of the river;
4 Looking upon it, drifting on – all so easy and free!
White-headed is an oldster dangling his fishing-line;
Freshly made up, a young maid washing gauze-silk.³
Seeing them, but yet not recognizing them,
8 “Staring and staring intently, finding no words to say.”⁴

1 Ding the Elder is Ding Feng 鳳 (see also 1.51).

2 Ruoye 若耶 Brook in the south of Shaoxing district, Zhejiang, where Xi Shi (see note 3) was discovered.

3 Reminiscent of Xi Shi 西施, fabled beauty of the Warring States period, who was found here as a young maid washing silk at streamside by the King of Yue's minister, who would use her to overthrow the rival King of Wu.

4 Quoting the last line of one of the “19 Old Poems,” which tells of the lovelorn stars Ox-leader (Altair) and Weaving-maid (Vega), separated from each other by the River of Heaven (the Milky Way).

1.8

彭蠡湖中望廬山

太虛生月暈

舟子知天風

挂席候明發

4 渺漫平湖中

中流見匡阜

勢壓九江雄

黯黹凝黛色

8 崢嶸當曙空

香爐初上日

瀑水噴成虹

久裕追尚子

12 况茲懷遠公

我來限于役

未暇息微躬

淮海途將半

16 星霜歲欲窮

寄言巖棲者

畢趣當來同

1.8

On Lake Pengli, Gazing Off at Mount Lu¹

- In the great void appears a nimbus round the moon;
 The boatman then deems there will be a wind from heaven.
 Hoisting the canvas, he watches for the dawn's breaking,
 4 Amid the infinite overflow of the flat-stretching lake.
 Then from mid-current Kuang's Mound is glimpsed,
 Contours pressing down, mighty on Nine Rivers;²
 Darksome and dim, in hue of clotted kohl,
 8 Lofted and lifted, against morning's empty sky.
 Incense Burner Peak first rises up with the sun,
 And the waterfall's spray spouts forth into a rainbow!³
 For long I have wished to follow Master Shang;
 12 Here even more do I hold Lord Yuan to heart.⁴
 This coming of mine has been restrained by duties,
 Nor have I yet the leisure to rest my trifling self.
 The Huaihai region remains half the road ahead,
 16 But under starry frost the year is nearly done.
 – I send word to those who roost on the cliffs:
 My intent at last will be to come and join you.

1 Lake Pengli in Jiangxi is better known now as Lake Poyang 鄱陽. Mount Lu overlooks it from the northwest, its name (lit. "Cottage") said to derive from the ancient recluse Kuang Su 匡俗 (line 5) having built a thatched cottage there.

2 "Nine Rivers" (Jiujiang) refers to the city north of the lake, but also refers to this region in general, where several smaller rivers feed into the Yangzi.

3 Incense Burner Peak is the southwest summit of Mount Lu. A prominent waterfall is on its southeast side.

4 Shang Ziping 尚子平 was an official at the end of the Western Han who retired rather than serve the usurper Wang Mang; he later went off on pilgrimage to the holy peaks. Lord Yuan is the monk Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416) who founded the Donglin 東林 (Eastern Grove) monastery on Mount Lu, which became one of the most important sites of medieval Chinese Buddhism.

1.9

登鹿門山懷古

清曉因興來
 乘流越江峴
 沙禽近方識
 4 浦樹遙莫辨
 漸到鹿門山
 山明翠微淺
 巖潭多屈曲
 8 舟楫屢迴轉
 昔聞龐德公
 採藥遂不返
 金澗養芝朮
 12 石牀臥苔蘚
 紛吾感耆舊
 結攬事攀踐
 隱迹今尚在
 16 高風邈已遠
 白雲何時去
 丹桂空偃蹇
 探討意未窮
 20 迴艫夕陽晚

1.9

Ascending Deer Gate Mountain, Thinking on Olden Times¹

- In clear dawnlight, following an impulse I came,
 Riding the current past Mount Xian on the river.
 I could just make out birds on the near sandbank,
 4 But of shoreside trees afar, none could be discerned.
 Gradually I drew close to Deer Gate Mountain,
 A mountain shining in the faintness of halcyon haze.
 And cliffside lakelets had so many quirks and crooks,
 8 The boat's oars repeatedly changed course and veered about.
 Of Lord Pang De I had heard long ago,²
 Who plucked herbs here and did not turn back again.
 By a freset of gold he tended hill-thistle and polypore,
 12 On a couch of stone, lay down on lichens and moss.
 Full the feelings that I had for this elder of the past,
 As I tied up the hawser, set off to clamber and to climb.
 Traces of the hidden one remain here still today,
 16 But his lofty air is remote and already distant.
 What season was it he departed with the white clouds?
 A redbud osmanthus reaching upraised against the sky.
 Questing and searching, my thoughts had not come to their end,
 20 When I turned the prow homeward, late in the evening sun.

1 Deer Gate Mountain, about twelve miles south of Xiangyang, stood over the Han River on its west. Although tradition names it as Meng Haoran's residence for much of his life, that is probably incorrect (see Introduction). At any rate he was not living there when he wrote this poem.

2 Pang Degong was Deer Gate Mountain's most famous resident prior to the Tang dynasty (earlier living near Mount Xian). A recluse from the early third century, who refused ever to enter city or marketplace, he was admired by all, even the great Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234), another worthy who originally lived nearby.

1.10

遊明禪師西山蘭若

西山多奇狀

秀出傍前楹

停午收彩翠

4 夕陽照分明

吾師住其下

禪坐說無生

結廬就嵌窟

8 翦竹通逕行

談空對樵叟

授法與山精

日暮方辭去

12 田遠歸冶城

1.10

A Visit to the West Mountain Aranya of Meditation Master Ming

- The west mountain takes many odd formations,
 Blooming forth vibrantly near your front pillars.
 Right at noon, varied bright-blue hues gather;
 4 In evening sunlight all is lit up sharp and luminous.
 My master resides here on the hillside,
 Sitting in meditation, discoursing on birthlessness.
 He thatched the hut hard by a recessed cavern,
 8 Sheared bamboo to give passage for a straight path.
 He talks of the void with grizzled woodcutters,
 And imparts the dharma to spirits of the mountain.
 – Only when the sun is down do I take my leave,
 12 To field and garden, home toward the Foundry.¹

1 The Foundry was a site evidently not far outside Xiangyang to the southwest and in the vicinity of Meng Haoran's South Garden home.

1.11

聽鄭五惛彈琴

阮籍推名飲

清風坐竹林

半酣下衫袖

4 拂拭龍唇琴

一杯彈一曲

不覺夕陽沉

余意在山水

8 聞之諧夙心

1.11

Listening to Zheng (Five) Yin Play the Zither¹

Ruan Ji made his name through drinking,
With a pure air, sitting in the bamboo grove.²

Half-tipsy, he lets fall the sleeve of his robe,

4 To brush and sweep over his “dragon-lip” zither.³

With every single cup, he plays one other tune,
Till we’re unaware that the evening sun is sinking.

As my own thoughts are placed in the hills and rivers,

8 Listening to this matches up with long-held feelings.⁴

1 Unless this is an identically named but otherwise unknown Zheng Yin, the player here is Zheng Yin who was involved with various malefactors at the courts of Empress Wu (r. 690–705) and Zhongzong (r. 705–710). He was banished from the capital in 707 but soon became one of the plotters in an ill-starred coup to overturn the imperial succession and was executed in 710. Sometime between 707 and 709 he may have passed through Xiangyang, where a teen-aged Meng Haoran would have seen him. If so, this would be the earliest of Meng’s extant poems. The quite conventional tone and predictable imagery of it suggests a young author. But Meng’s authorship of the poem is much disputed.

2 Ruan Ji (210–263) was one of the “Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove,” famous for his heavy drinking and unconventional behavior, his poetry, and his zither-playing. Zheng Yin is here identified with him.

3 The “dragon lips” are at the top end of a zither, where the strings are led to wrap under the instrument. Meng might also be using the term as though it is the name of Zheng’s zither.

4 As in the traditional story, Zhong Ziqi could discern whatever scene the great zitherist Bo Ya had in mind when playing, be it high mountains, flowing water, etc.

1.12

疾愈過龍泉寺精舍呈易業二上人

停午聞山鐘

起行散愁疾

尋林採芝去

4 轉谷松蘿密

傍見精舍開

長廊飯僧畢

石渠流雪水

8 金子耀霜橘

竹房思舊遊

過憇終永日

入洞窺石髓

12 傍崖採蜂蜜

日暮辭遠公

虎溪相送出

1.12

Recovered from Illness I Stop by the Dragon Spring Temple, Place of
Pure Concentration; To Show to the Two Eminences Yi and Ye¹

Just at noon I heard a bell in the mountains,

Arose and set out to dispel gloom and illness.

I went to find a grove in which to pluck wondergrowths;

4 In twisting valleys the pine-moss was thick.

To one side I saw open out a place of pure concentration;

On its long veranda the monks had finished their meal.²

In the gutters of stone coursed snowmelt water;

8 Spots of gold glistered on frosty tangerines.

Chambers by bamboo brought on thoughts of old companions,

And I stopped and lingered throughout the lasting day.

Entering a grotto, I discovered stone's marrow;³

12 By the side of a bluff gathered bee's honey.

And as the sun went down, I took leave of Lord Yuan,

Who came out to Tiger Stream to see me off.⁴

1 This is the Dragon Spring Temple five miles north of Xiangyang, not the famous one on Mount Lu, built by Huiyuan. However, in the final couplet Meng flatters his host by identifying him with Huiyuan.

2 Monks ate their one daily vegetarian meal at noon, called together by the temple bell.

3 "Stone's marrow" are stalactites, used in some elixir recipes, like the polypore "wondergrowths" of line 3.

4 Legend had it that Huiyuan on Mount Lu always escorted his departing visitors as far as the Tiger Stream but never went beyond it, except once on which occasion the roar of a tiger was heard.

1.13

湖中旅泊寄閻九司戶

桂水通百越

扁舟期曉發

荆雲蔽三巴

4 夕望不見家

襄王夢行雨

才子謫長沙

長沙饒瘴癘

8 胡為苦留滯

久別思款顏

承歡懷接袂

接袂杳無由

12 徒增旅泊愁

清猿不可聽

沿月下湘流

1.13

A Travel-Mooring by the Lake; Sent to Yan (Nine) of the Finance Bureau¹

The River Gui goes all the way to hundredfold Yue,²
And my light boat is appointed to set off at dawn.

Clouds of Jing cover over threefold Ba;³

- 4 Looking out at evening, one cannot see home.
King Xiang was dreaming of the shifting rain;
A gifted young man was banished to Changsha.⁴

Changsha abounds with pestilential vapors;

- 8 How is it one is sorely detained and mired there?
Parted long ago, I think of your openhearted countenance;
As a welcome joy I yearn to join sleeves with you.

But joining our sleeves is sadly not possible,

- 12 Which simply adds to my gloom at this travel-mooring.
The clear crying of the gibbons will no more be heard,
As I course the moonlight down the Xiang's current.⁵

1 The mooring is at Dongting Lake 洞庭湖 in northeastern Hunan. The recipient is probably Yan Fang 房, *jinsi* 734. As an aide in the local finance bureau, he occupied a rather subordinate position.

2 The Gui River of northern Guangxi mingled in southern Hunan with the Xiang (note 5 below) which emptied into Dongting Lake. "Hundredfold Yueh" in the Tang meant roughly the area of Guangxi.

3 Jing refers to Jingzhou on the Yangzi, north of Lake Dongting. "Threefold Ba" is roughly the area of the Yangzi from Dongting Lake to eastern Sichuan.

4 Legend had it that King Xiang of Chu in the fourth century BCE once dreamed he had a romantic tryst with the goddess of Mount Wu overlooking the Yangzi, after which she said he could recognize her in the dawn clouds at morning and the shifting rain at evening. The gifted youth famously banished to Changsha, just south of Dongting, was Jia Yi 賈誼 (200–168 BCE). It is possible that the addressee Yan Fang was in Changsha after demotion, when Meng Haoran wrote this poem.

5 The Xiang running south from Dongting Lake was one of the most important rivers of the old state of Chu. The gibbons are those heard famously at night in the Dongting area.

1.14

大堤行寄萬七

大堤行樂處
 車馬相馳突
 歲歲春草生
 4 踏青二三月
 王孫挾珠彈
 遊女矜羅襪
 攜手今莫同
 8 江花為誰發

1.15

還山贈湛禪師

幼聞無生理
 常欲觀此身
 心迹罕兼遂
 4 崎嶇多在塵
 晚途歸舊壑

1.14

A Great Dyke Ballad; Sent to Wan (Seven)¹

The Great Dyke is a place for making merry;
Carriage horses will be racing there smartly.
Year after year as springtime plants come forth,

- 4 We “tread the green” in the second and third month.
Princely young lads hold tight their pearl crossbow pellets,
And the “roaming maids” are proud in silk-gauze stockings.²
If in going arm in arm there is no one now to share with,
8 Then for whom will the riverside blossoms burst forth?

1.15

Returning to the Mountains; For Meditation Master Zhan³

From youth I have heard of the doctrine of nonproduction,
And always have wished for direct insight of this very body.⁴
But heart and action rarely lead to the same consequence,
4 And I have hobbled haltingly, residing mostly in the dust.
On a belated course now I’ve come back to the bygone vale,

1 The Great Dyke protected Xiangyang on the north from the Han River. The first ballad by this name dates to the fifth century; many poets wrote one, celebrating the local scene, especially the springtime festival of “treading the green.”

2 The young girls are reminiscent of the two “roaming maids” by the Han embankment who dallied with Zheng Jiaofu (see 1.5, note 4).

3 Probably the same monk as in 1.1.

4 The concept of “birthlessness” or nonproduction (*anutpāda*) defines all phenomena ultimately. Direct insight or intuition (*vipāśyanā*) into the true condition of phenomena is a feature of the highest mental contemplation; contemplation of the physical body reveals its basic uncleanness.

偶與支公鄰
 喜得林下契
 8 共推席上珍
 念茲泛苦海
 方便示迷津
 導以微妙法
 12 結為清淨因
 煩惱業頓捨
 山林情轉殷
 朝來問疑義
 16 夕話得清真
 墨妙稱古絕
 詞華驚世人
 禪房閉虛靜
 20 花藥連冬春
 平石藉琴硯
 落泉灑衣巾
 欲知明滅意
 24 朝夕海鷗馴

- And would here be paired as neighbor to his lordship Zhi.¹
 Pleased to make a pact beneath the grove,
 8 I advance with him what is precious on my mat.²
 When at this time I'm adrift on the sea of woe,
 His expedient means are shown to me lost at the ford.³
 He leads me by the Dharma subtle and marvelous,
 12 That I may carry through causation pure and unspotted.
 Afflicted though I am, suddenly karma is put aside,
 As in the mountain grove feelings turn to fullness.
 Mornings I ask for the right sense of what I have in doubt,
 16 And in evening converse I gain what is pure and true.
 His inkwork is a marvel, praised for classic distinction;
 His wording is eloquent, amazing the men of this age.
 The meditation chamber closes in vacuity and stillness;
 20 The "blossoming herbs" link up winter and springtime.⁴
 On a flat slab are laid out his zither and inkstone,
 And a trickling fountain moistens robe and headcloth.
 Would that I knew the import of enlightenment and extinction,
 24 Then morning and evening the seagulls would be tame.⁵

1 Portraying Master Zhan as Zhi Dun 支遁 (314–366), the learned monk who was an influential figure of elite culture at the Eastern Jin capital of Jiankang.

2 According to the *Liji*, the gentleman offers "what is precious on his mat" – that is, his virtue – to the ruler. Here Meng offers it to Master Zhan.

3 The sea of woe is this world that is replete with suffering. "Expedient means" is Sanskrit *upāya*, teaching that is gauged to the capacity of the learner and effective to guide him as far as he is capable. Being lost at the ford, originally a Confucian allusion, here is to be confounded and overcome with the ceaseless round of cause and effect.

4 The "blossoming herb" is the peony.

5 An anecdote in *Liezi* tells of a boy who played daily with seagulls on the shore, they having no fear of him because of his natural innocence. But one morning he came to the shore under orders from his father to catch one of the birds, and the gulls, sensing his changed character, would no longer come near him.

1.16

秋登萬山寄張五

北山白雲裡

隱者自怡悅

相望始登高

4 心隨鴈飛滅

愁因薄暮起

興是清秋發

時見歸村人

8 平沙渡頭歇

天邊樹若薺

江畔洲如月

何當載酒來

12 共醉重陽節

1.16Ascending Mount Wan in Autumn; Sent to Zhang (Five)¹

- On a northward hill, within the white clouds,
 One who is hidden is of himself pleased and content.
 To gaze at him afar I have now climbed a height,
 4 My heart following the wildgeese till their flight vanishes.
 Sorrow arises with the nearing of sundown,
 A mood that is the outcome of purest autumn.
 Just at this time one sees homebound villagers,
 8 And over level sands the ferry-point has become deserted.
 The trees at sky's edge seem like heart's-weed,
 And the islet by the riverbank resembles the moon.
 – May there sooner or later come someone toting wine,
 12 With whom to drink my fill on Double-Ninth Day.²

1 Mount Wan was about three miles northwest of Xiangyang, overlooking the south side of the Han River; its lower slope was the Han Embankment (Han gao; see 1.5). This Zhang is probably Zhang Yin 張諲.

2 On the day of “doubled *yang*,” ninth of the ninth month (autumn’s last month), it was customary to climb a height and share long-life wine with friends or family. Tao Qian, once without wine on the Double-Ninth, was happily surprised by a messenger who came toting wine from a friend.

1.17

登江中孤嶼贈王白雲先生迴

悠悠清江水
 水落沙嶼出
 回潭石下深
 4 綠篠岸傍密
 鮫人潛不見
 漁父歌自逸
 憶與君別時
 8 泛舟如昨日
 夕陽開晚照
 中坐興非一
 南望鹿門山
 12 歸來恨相失

1.17

Climbing the Solitary Isle in the River; For Wang Jiong, Monsignor of White Clouds¹

- Running on and on, the clear river's water;
 When the water ebbs, a sandy isle emerges.
 A winding tarn extends deep under the rocks,
 4 And green dwarf-bamboo are thick by the shore.
 The shark-people are submerged, not to be seen,
 But the fisherman sings of his own freedom.²
 Recalling the time when you and I parted,
 8 The drifting boat seems only yesterday.
 Evening sunlight now sheds late illumination;
 Seated amidst it, my mood is not all one.
 Southward I gaze toward Deer Gate Mountain,
 12 To come home there, I regret I've missed the chance.

1 Wang Jiong resided on Deer Gate Mountain, and is the recipient of several other poems (1.60, 2.4, 2.28, etc.).

2 "Shark-people" were said to live undersea, in coastal waters; their tears were pearls and they wove a special pongee. Their imagined presence here is odd, probably owing to the desire for a parallel with the fisherman of line 4, who is reminiscent of the same figure who appears in the *Chu ci* and celebrates the joy of disattachment from society.

1.18

晚春臥疾寄張八子容

南陌春將晚

北窻猶臥病

林園久不遊

4 草木一何盛

狹徑花將盡

閑庭竹掃淨

翠羽戲蘭苔

8 潁鱗動荷柄

念我平生好

江鄉遠從政

雲山阻夢思

12 衾枕勞感咏

感咏復何為

同心恨別離

世途皆自媚

16 流俗寡相知

賈誼才空逸

1.18

Lying Ill in Late Springtime; Sent to Zhang (Eight) Zirong¹

Along the balks southward, springtime grows late,
While at a northside window, I am still lying sick.

From grove and garden, long I've not ventured forth,

4 But the plants and trees have completely filled out!

Tight along the footpath, blossoms now are almost done;

By my idle courtyard, the bamboo is swept clean.

Halcyon-blue wings flit amid eupatory spikelets,

8 And flush-red fins jostle the hafts of the lotuses.

I call to mind the best friend of my whole life,

From our river country gone faraway for the government.

Since clouds and mountains thwart my dreaming thoughts,

12 By pillow and coverlet I work out a heart-felt song.

Yet a heart-felt song is tried again why?

From one alike at heart I hate being kept apart.

All on the world's road are charmed by their own;

16 By current custom but a few really know each other.

Just as Jia Yi's talent was uselessly displaced,²

1 Zhang Zirong was a friend from boyhood and the recipient of many poems throughout Meng Haoran's life.

2 The brilliant young scholar Jia Yi (see 1.13, note 4) attracted the favor of Emperor Wen of Han (r. 179–157 BCE) but thereby the jealousy of older courtiers, who succeeded in having him sent away to Changsha in the south.

安仁鬢欲絲
 遙情每東注
 20 奔晷復西馳
 常恐填溝壑
 無由振羽儀
 窮通若有命
 24 欲向論中推

1.19

書懷貽京邑故人
 惟先自鄒魯
 家世重儒風
 詩禮襲遺訓
 4 趨庭紹末躬
 晝夜常自強
 詞翰頗亦工
 三十既成立

1 Pan Yue 潘岳 (247–300), whose byname was Anren, was a famous poet and also supremely handsome. In his “Rhapsody on Autumn Inspirations,” he lamented that in only his thirty-second year his hair was turning white.

2 To have one’s corpse thrown in a ditch or gully was, according to *Mencius*, the fear of every ambitious man.

3 Literally, the “feathered form” of courtly regalia, metaphorical of admirable character and abilities that would be recognized at court.

- Even Anren's hair was bound to become silk-white.¹
 Whenever far-stretched feelings surge out eastward,
 20 With the sun's racing shadow they gallop west again.
 Always I'm fearful of "filling a ditch or gully,"²
 But there is no way to act out "courtly dignity."³
 If success and failure do have their fated destiny,
 24 Would I might prove it out from that disquisition.⁴

1.19

Writing My Heart-held Thoughts; To Present to an Old Friend in the
 Capital District

- Yes, my precursors hailed from Zou and Lu,
 A house that for generations valued the Ruist manner.⁵
 The *Poems* and the *Rites* were bequeathed as birthright teachings,
 4 So "hurrying through the courtyard" extended to my paltry self.⁶
 Day and night I always tried to "fortify myself,"⁷
 And with phrase and quill I was, likewise, rather skillful.
 At thirty years old, I had established a firm footing.⁸

4 In his "Disquisition on Fate" 辨命論, Liu Jun 劉峻 (462–521) said, "Regarding a gentleman's success or failure, there is nought but fated destiny."

5 Meng Haoran is claiming Mencius, who came from Zou and also shares his surname, and Confucius who came from Lu, as his spiritual forebears and that his family has a tradition of Ruist learning.

6 When Confucius's son was hurrying past him in the courtyard, Confucius inquired of his studies and gave him advice.

7 The *Yijing* says, "The man of noble character will fortify himself unceasingly."

8 Confucius said at thirty he had established a firm footing for himself; this hence became a standard aim.

- 8 嗟吁命不通
 慈親向羸老
 喜懼在深衷
 甘脆朝不足
- 12 簞瓢夕屢空
 執鞭慕夫子
 捧檄懷毛公
 感激遂彈冠
- 16 安能守固窮
 當塗訴知己
 投刺匪求蒙
 秦楚邈離異
- 20 翻飛何日同

1 Confucius said that one could not but be conscious, with both joy and dread, of one's parents' age – understood as joy for their having lived long, but dread of their approaching death. The reference here is to Meng Haoran's mother, his father having died earlier.

2 Nie Zheng (early fourth-century BCE) refused a commission and worked as a dog-butcher so he might provide sweet and crisp foods for his aged mother.

3 Quoting a phrase from Tao Qian's self-referential "Biography of Mister Five Willows," with an indirect allusion to Confucius's appreciative comment about the frugal lifestyle of his favorite student Yan Hui.

- 8 But alas! my fated destiny was not to succeed.
 My tender-loving parent has become enfeebled and old,
 So joy and dread lie deep in my inmost feelings.¹
 The “sweet and crisp” foods are not enough for her mornings,²
- 12 While “rice-bin and drinking-gourd are often empty” at evening,³
 With groom’s whip in hand, I would emulate the Great Master,
 But if receiving a call to office, would hold to heart Sir Mao.⁴
 Moved with gratitude, I should then “dust off my cap,”
- 16 Or how could one preserve “steadfastness in distress”?⁵
 To one on the high road, I plead as a dearest friend;
 As I present my card, it is not you who “seeks the immature one.”⁶
 Qin and Chu are so remotely different and apart;⁷
- 20 On what day shall we wheel on wing together?

4 Confucius said that if riches could surely be gained, he would be willing to serve whip in hand as a groom to do so; but otherwise would follow what he loves. Mao Yi (mid-first-century CE), paragon of filial conduct, accepted appointment to a lowly office in order to support his mother; but when she died, he gave it up and would not accept even a higher post.

5 Wang Ji and Gong Yu of the Western Han dynasty were such good friends that when the former was in office, the latter would “dust off his cap,” knowing his friend would advance him to office, too. Confucius advised that the man of noble character was steadfast in his principles even when in distress.

6 In the “judgment” on hexagram 4 (“Immaturity”) of the *Yijing*, it is said, “It is not I who seeks the immature one; the immature one seeks me.” Meng Haoran is accepting responsibility for his (overly direct) plea for help.

7 Qin, where the capital Chang’an and the addressee of the poem are; and Chu, where Xiangyang and the poet are.

1.20

遊雲門寺寄越府包戶曹徐起居

我行適諸越
 夢寐懷所歡
 久負獨往願
 4 今來恣遊盤
 台嶺踐磴石
 耶溪溯林湍
 捨舟入香界
 8 登閣憩旃檀
 晴山秦望近
 春水鏡湖寬
 遠行佇應接
 12 卑位徒勞安
 白雲去久滯
 滄海竭來觀
 故國眇天末
 16 良朋在朝端
 遲爾同攜手
 何時方挂冠

1.20

A Visit to Cloud Gate Temple; Sent to Finance Officer Bao and Diarist Xu of the Yue Administration¹

- My travels have brought me now to Yue,
 Where even in dream I recall those dear to me.
 Long I have borne the wish to fare on my own;
 4 At the present day I can range and roam off at will.
 On a ridge of Tiantai I trod upon stepping stones;
 At Ruoye Stream went against the swift current by a grove.
 Leaving the boat behind, I entered a realm of incense;
 8 After climbing a pavilion, rested amidst *candana*.²
 Here are fair hills, where Qin's Vista seems near,
 And springtime waters, where Mirror Lake stretches out.³
 On this far journey I look forward to our meeting up;
 12 Though low in position, I can treat you tolerably well.
 The white clouds have gone off, fixed long someplace;
 To the watchet sea I have come at last to look out.
 My old home-state is too far to see, at the sky's end,
 16 While close friends are here at the verge of the morning.
 We are long overdue to be arm-in-arm together,
 At whatever time you will hang up your official caps.

1 The monastery was on Cloud Gate Mountain, about ten miles south of Shaoxing, Zhejiang.

2 Transcribing the Sanskrit for "sandalwood," which wafts in the "incense-realm" of the monastery.

3 A nearby mountain and lake which can be seen from Mt. Yunmen.

1.21

示孟郊

蔓草蔽極野
 蘭芝結孤根
 眾音何其繁
 4 伯牙獨不喧
 當時高深意
 舉世無能分
 鐘期一見知
 8 山水千秋聞
 爾其保靜節
 薄俗徒云云

1.22

山中逢道士雲公

春餘草木繁
 耕種滿田園
 酌酒聊自勸

1.21

For Showing to Meng Jiao¹

- Vines and grasses spread over the farthest countryside,
 But eupatory and polypore form up solitary roots.
 All tunes together will make such a cacophony,
 4 But a Bo Ya on his own would not be dissonant.²
 At a time like that, thoughts lofty or profound,
 Throughout the world could not be differentiated.
 But as soon as a Zhong Ziqi were seen and known,
 8 Mountains and rivers for a thousand autumns would be heard.
 May you hold fast to your well-measured serenity,
 As the inferior and vulgar can only mumble and mutter.

1.22

Happening On the Daoist Adept, Lordship Yun, in the Mountains

At the very last of springtime, plants and trees are lush,
 As tillers and sowers fill the fields and gardens.
 Ladling out wine just for now braces my spirit;

1 This poem has long been thought spurious, since the poet named Meng Jiao (751–814) was not born until eleven years after Meng Haoran died. Either the poem should be excluded as a late interpolation or the Meng Jiao of the title must be a contemporary of Meng with the same name as the later poet. It has also been suggested that Jiao 郊 might be a miswriting of Yong 邕, the given name of one of Meng's cousins. The poem's authenticity is highly dubious.

2 Bo Ya, the legendary zither player, and Zhong Ziqi (line 6), his perfect auditor (see 1.11, note 4).

4 農夫安與言
 忽聞荊山子
 時出桃花源
 採樵過北谷
 8 賣藥來西村

村烟日云夕
 榛路有歸客
 杖策前相逢
 12 依然是疇昔
 邂逅歡覲止
 殷勤敘離隔
 謂余搏扶桑
 16 輕舉振六翮
 奈何偶昌運
 獨見遺草澤
 既笑接輿狂
 20 仍憐孔丘厄
 物情趨勢利
 吾道貴閑寂
 偃息西山下

- 4 With farmer folk I am comfortable in talking together.
 Suddenly I hear word that the Master of Mount Jing
 At this time has come forth from Peach Blossom Font.¹
 Gleaning firewood, he has crossed the north valley;
 8 Selling simples, has come to the west village.

- In the smoke of village cook-fires, as day nears to dusk,
 On the brush-tangled road is a visitor going home.
 Leaning on a staff he comes forward to greet me,
 12 So much the same, as in former bygone times.
 An “unlooked for encounter,” I delight “that we have met”;²
 Intently obliging, he recounts his separating apart.
 He said, “I myself have touched the Fusang tree,
 16 Rising up lightly, plying six pinions.³
 Why bother matching up with the cycle of glory?⁴
 On my own I’m left behind in the weedy moors.
 Having laughed with the craziness of Jie Yu,
 20 Still I feel sorry for Kong Qiu in distress.⁵
 Our creaturely passions run toward power and profit,
 But my Way values the inactive and the silent.
 I repose and take my ease below the western hills,

1 Mount Jing is where the Yellow Emperor legendarily cast the tripod whose completion prompted a dragon to descend and carry him away. The action of forging the tripod is seen as metaphorically similar to the Daoist adept’s refining of an elixir of immortality. Peach Blossom Font (from Tao Qian’s famous account) was a Shangri-la separated safely from the corrupt outside world. Master Yun is now emerging from his own secluded haven.

2 The line quotes two phrases from poems in the *Shijing*, about lovers meeting unexpectedly or yearning to meet.

3 The Fusang is the mythical tree on the easternmost edge of the world, upon which the sun (or in ancient times, ten suns) rises. Yun has traveled there airborne, like a transcendent or “feathered being.”

4 That is, the worldly wheel of good fortune and reversal, particularly relating to government.

5 Jie Yu, the “madman” of Chu who sang a “phoenix song” mocking Confucius’s involvement in government. Kong Qiu is Confucius, who was once short of provisions and “in distress” between the states of Chen and Cai in Chu.

- 24 門庭罕人跡
 何時還清溪
 從爾煉丹液

1.23

- 歲暮海上作
 仲尼既已沒
 余亦浮于海
 昏見斗柄迴
 4 方知歲星改
 虛舟任所適
 垂釣非有待
 為問乘槎人
 8 滄洲復何在

- 24 Where people's tracks are rare at my gate and courtyard."
 – And what time might I return to that clear stream,
 To follow you in refining the ichor of cinnabar?

1.23

Written by the Sea at the Year's Waning

- Now that Zhongni is already gone,
 For my part I will float out to sea.¹
 At twilight, when the Dipper's handle turns round,
 4 Just then one knows the Year Star is shifting.²
 As my empty boat yields to wherever it will go,
 Dangling a fishing-line, it's not that I wait on something.³
 I put a question to him who rode the raft:
 8 The Watchet Isles are located where:⁴

1 Confucius (Zhongni) once said, "If the Way does not prevail in the world, I shall board a raft and float out to sea."

2 When the Dipper's handle swings round to the east, it marks the end of one year and beginning of the next. At this time the Year Star, Jupiter, which makes a circuit of the ecliptic once in twelve years, shifts its position to a new lodging in the sky, completing its annual passage from one zodiacal position to the next.

3 Someone in harmony with the Way drifts like an empty, unmoored boat. In ancient times Lü Shang 呂尚 dangled a hookless fishing-line, waiting to "catch" the future King Wen of Zhou and become his chief minister.

4 Legend had it that in the eighth month of every year a raft came to a man who lived by the side of the Yellow River. He would take it and voyage to the site of the Weaving-maid and Ox-leader stars (Vega and Altair), since the Yellow River on earth connected with the Sky River (Milky Way). The Watchet Isles are the enchanted isles of the immortals in the Eastern Sea; perhaps the raft-rider knows his way to them as well.

1.24

越中逢天台太一子

仙穴逢羽人

停驢向前拜

問余涉風水

4 何事遠行邁

登陸尋天台

順流下吳會

茲山夙所尚

8 安得聞靈怪

上逼青天高

俯臨滄海大

雞鳴見日出

12 每與仙人會

來去赤城中

逍遙白雲外

莓苔異人間

16 瀑布作空界

福庭長不死

華頂舊稱最

永願從此遊

20 何當濟所屆

1.24

In Yue, Happening On the Tiantai Master of Greatest Unity¹

By a transcendent's cave I happened on a plumed person;²

Leaving my boat, I went forward to pay obeisance.

He questioned my fording of wind-swept waters:

4 How would that serve to get on with far journeys?³

“One may mount dry land to seek out Tiantai,

Or follow the current down to Kuaiji in Wu.⁴

That mountain all lifelong I have revered,

8 But how is one to learn of its numinous wonders?

Rising upward it crowds the heights of blue heaven;

Downward overlooks the breadth of the watchet sea.

When at cock's crow is seen the sun coming forth,

12 One is always in company with transcendent beings.

They come and go on Red Wall Peak,⁵

Easy and free beyond the white clouds.

Lichen and moss differ from that in the mortal realm,

16 And a sheet of spray marks the bounds of space.⁶

Of those blessed courts where death never comes,

Flowered Crest has long been praised paramount.⁷

Ever I pray to roam on from the place I am now,

20 Sometime to cross over there where I intend.”

1 The Master is a Daoist priest associated with Mount Tiantai (see also 3.19). The poet encounters him someplace nearby.

2 A plumed person is one who has transcended this world and can travel lightly through space as though winged. Their earthly residences are often in “grotto heavens” 洞天, caves within holy mountains that give access to separate worlds.

3 The far journeys the Master speaks of are those like the one described in the old poem “Far Roaming” 遠遊, which lead to celestial realms beyond this world.

4 The area of Kuaiji is where Mount Tiantai stands.

5 Red Wall, so called because of the flushed color of its stone bluffs, was the place from which one's ascent of Tiantai traditionally began.

6 The “sheet of spray” is a waterfall on a southwest peak of Tiantai, mentioned prominently, as was Red Wall, in Sun Chuo's famous “Rhapsody on Roaming to Mount Tiantai.”

7 Tiantai's blessed courts where there is no death were also mentioned by Sun Chuo. Flowered Crest is the highest peak of Tiantai.

1.25

自潯陽泛舟經明海作

大江分九派

淼漫成水鄉

舟子乘利涉

4 往來逗潯陽

因之泛五湖

流浪經三湘

觀濤狀枚發

8 吊屈痛沉湘

魏闕心常在

金門詔不忘

遙憐上林鴈

12 冰泮已回翔

1.25

Composed as My Boat Crosses Bright Lake from Xunyang¹

Here the great Jiang divides into nine branches,
The surge and swell forming a countryside of waters.
Boatmen “take advantage of the favorable crossing,”²

- 4 Coming and going, they pause at Xunyang.
Following after them, I drift the Five Lakes,³
Floating the whitecaps, passing on to the Three Xiang,⁴
Viewing the billows attests to Mei Sheng’s “Incitements”;⁵
- 8 Mourning Qu Yuan is pain for him who drowned in the Xiang.⁶
Amidst the palace pylons my heart persistently abides;
A summons to the Golden Gate is not to be ignored.⁷
So I envy afar the wildgoose of His Highness’ Grove,
12 As the ice melts away already soaring home.⁸

1 Xunyang is present-day Jiujiang (Nine Rivers), Jiangxi, just north of Lake Pengli (now Poyang). Bright Lake is probably Lake Pengli.

2 The quote comes from hexagram 5 of the *Yijing*, an image of attaining one’s goals.

3 Lake Tai 太湖 in Jiangsu and four others variously identified.

4 The Xiang River in Hunan and two branches of it variously identified.

5 Mei Sheng’s 枚乘 (d. ca. 140 BCE) poem “Seven Incitements” 七發 includes a section describing the tidal bore of the Qiantang River.

6 Jia Yi (see 1.13, note 4) wrote a poem “Mourning Qu Yuan” at the spot on the Xiang River where that unappreciated courtier and famous poet was said to have drowned himself.

7 The *Zhuangzi* tells of a prince Mouzi 牟子 who lamented that though his body was on the rivers and lakes, his heart still resided amidst the palace pylons. The Golden Gate was where imperial retainers were lodged in Han Wudi’s time (r. 141–87 BCE).

8 His Highness’ Grove is the grand imperial park (of Han Wudi’s time) outside the palace compound. As the ice breaks up in springtime at the capital, the migratory wildgoose now heads back there, which is where the poet wishes to go but cannot.

1.26

早發漁浦潭
 東旭早光芒
 渚禽已驚聒
 臥聞漁浦口
 4 橈聲暗相撥
 日出氣象分
 始知江路闊
 美人常晏起
 8 照影弄流沫
 飲水畏驚猿
 祭魚時見獺
 舟行自無悶
 12 况值晴景豁

1.27

經七里灘
 余奉垂堂誠
 千金非所輕
 為多山水樂

1 On the Zhe River, southwest of present-day Xiaoshan 蕭山 district, Zhejiang.

1.26Setting Out Early from the Tarn at Fisher's Cove¹

Early rays of light from the daystar in the east,
 And birds on the islet are now shrieking in surprise.

Lying back I hear, at the mouth of Fisher's Cove,

4 The sound of our oars stirring in the dimness.

As the sun shows forth, vaporous shapes are distinguished,
 And it's now that I know the vastness of the river's road.

Lovely women rising always late,

8 See their reflections and play with the current's froth.

I fear to alarm the gibbons drinking at the water;

At times one glimpses an otter sacrificing fish.²

As the boat moves on, I am free of any gloom,

12 Yet more when met with this cloudless scene spreading out.

1.27Passing Through Seven-League Rapids³

Having received the caution about "brinking the hall,"

A thousand in gold is not to be made light of.⁴

Yet taking much delight in the hills and waters,

2 Since otters often don't immediately eat the fish they've caught but place it first on a rock, it was thought that they seemed to be engaging in a ritual of sacrifice.

3 A difficult stretch of the Qiantang River, west of Mount Yanling (line 9) in Tonglu 桐廬 district, Zhejiang.

4 A proverb had it that "the heir to an estate of a thousand in gold should not sit on the brink of the hall" – because of danger that might befall him there.

- 4 頻作泛舟行
 五岳追尚子
 三湘吊屈平
 湖經洞庭闊
 8 江入新安清

- 復聞嚴陵瀨
 乃在此川路
 疊嶂數百里
 12 沿洄非一趣
 彩翠相氛氳
 別流亂奔注
 釣磯平可坐
 16 苔磴滑難步
 猿飲石下潭
 鳥還日邊樹
 觀奇恨來晚
 20 倚棹惜將暮
 揮手弄潺湲
 從茲洗塵慮

- 4 Habitually I'll set out on journeys gliding by boat.
 To the Five Marchmounts I will follow Master Shang,
 And by the Three Xiang will mourn for Qu Ping.¹
 On the lake I will cross Dongting's expanse,
 8 On the river will pass into Xin'an's clarity.²

More than once I've heard of Yan Ling's shallows,³
 Sited in fact on this very river's road.

- By piled-up hill-screens for several hundred leagues,
 12 With the flow or against, it's not a single rushing.
 Varied bright-blue in full and favoring vapors,
 Separate currents run headlong in tumult.
 The fishing jetty is level enough to sit on,
 16 The mossy ledge too slippery to walk on.
 Gibbons drink at the tarn below the rocks,
 And birds return to the trees beside the sun.
 Viewing such rare sights, I regret I came late;
 20 Leaning on the oars, begrudge it's nearing sunset.
 Swishing my hand, I trifle with the chattering waters,
 From now wash clean all dust-laden thoughts.⁴

1 Shang Ziping, recluse of old who went off to visit the most famous mountains (see 1.8, note 4). Mourning Qu Ping (i.e., Qu Yuan) by the Three Xiang is to follow in Jia Yi's footsteps (see 1.25, note 6).

2 The great lake Dongting, north of Changsha. The Xin'an River, which flows into the Qiantang, was famed for its exceptional clarity.

3 Yan Guang 嚴光 (byname Ziling 子陵) was a first-century CE recluse of this area, who refused a summons to official service and lived simply, fishing under the mountain that was later given his name. Yan Ling's Shallows are a section of the Seven-League Rapids.

4 Dust-laden because relating to the fundamentally soiled nature of the secular "world of dust."

1.28

南陽北阻雪

我行滯宛許

日夕望京豫

廣野莽茫茫

4 鄉山在何處

孤烟村際起

歸鴈天邊去

積雪覆平皋

8 饑鷹捉寒兔

少年弄文墨

屬意在章句

十上耻還家

12 徘徊守歸路

1.28

Blocked by Snow North of Nanyang¹

My journey being stalled from Yuan and Xu,²
At dusk of day I gaze toward the capital at Yu.³

Underbrush of the broad wilds stretches endlessly away,

4 And the mountains of my homeland are at what place?
A lone puff of cook-smoke rises at the edge of a village,
As homebound wildgeese move on at the brink of the sky.

Drifts of snow cover the level embankments,

8 Where hungering goshawks snatch up wintry hares.

In younger years I played with writings and ink,
And bound my thoughts to reside in chapter and verse.

After ten petitions sent up, now ashamed to go home,⁴

12 I lag lingering here, till I can keep to the homeward road.

1 Nanyang, in southern Henan, was a major travel intersection, with a main road leading to Xiangyang not far south, and thence to points farther south, and about equidistant northwest to Chang'an and due north to Luoyang. Meng Haoran is here returning south to Xiangyang.

2 Yuanxian was within the Nanyang area and Xuzhou was some ways northeast.

3 That is, Luoyang, in the area of Yuzhou.

4 Su Qin 蘇秦, in Warring States times, sent up ten petitions to the King of Qin but the latter acted on none of them. With his sable cloak worn bare and all his resources exhausted, Su Qin left the capital and returned home.

1.29

將適天台留別臨安李主簿

枳棘君尚棲

匏瓜吾豈繫

念離當夏首

4 漂泊指炎裔

江海非墮遊

田園失歸計

定山既早發

8 漁浦亦宵濟

泛泛隨波瀾

行行任艫柁

故林日已遠

12 群木坐成翳

羽人在丹丘

吾亦從此逝

1.29

Shortly on the Way to Tiantai, I Leave this at Parting for Li, Chief Registrar of Lin'an¹

Amid thorns and brambles you, sir, still nestle,²

And how can I be strung up as a calabash-gourd?³

I shall keep in mind our parting at the fore of summertime,

4 As floating and mooring I steer toward the torrid marches.⁴

On river and lake my traveling is not careless,

But to field and garden plans of return are given up.

Setting out early from near Mount Ding,

8 I'll cross over Fisher's Cove at nighttime.⁵

Freely afloat, along with the rolling waves,

Onward and on, trusting to the bow-sweep.

The old grove here will daily grow more distant,

12 While the hosts of trees readily form a screen.

"Plumed persons reside on Cinnabar Mound,"⁶

And I too henceforth will move away there.

1 Lin'an is about thirty miles west of present-day Hangzhou.

2 Qiu Lan 仇覽 of the Eastern Han dynasty, when occupying the position of Chief Registrar, compared it to being in thorns and brambles where phoenixes would not alight. Eventually his abilities were recognized and he was promoted.

3 Confucius lamented that, not being used, he felt he was strung up as though a worthless calabash.

4 That is, the hot lands farther south.

5 Mt. Ding is about thirteen miles southwest of Hangzhou. Fisher's Cove (see 1.26) was farther south and east of Hangzhou.

6 Quoting a line from Sun Chuo's "Rhapsody on Roaming to Mt. Tiantai," suggesting Tiantai is a residence of transcendents.

1.30

適越留別譙縣張主簿申屠少府

朝乘汴河流

夕次譙縣界

幸因西風吹

4 得與故人會

君學梅福隱

余隨伯鸞邁

別後能相思

8 浮雲在吳會

1.31

送從弟邕下第後歸會稽

疾風吹征帆

倏爾向空沒

千里去俄頃

4 三江坐超忽

向來共歡娛

1 Qiaoxian was near modern Chuxian 滁縣, about forty miles northwest of Nanjing. The Bian River began in southern Henan and ran to the southwest of Qiao. The term “Junior Administrator” 少府 is an alternative name for a district constable.

1.30

On the Way to Yue, I Leave this at Parting for Chief Registrar Zhang
and Constable Shentu of Qiao District¹

- In the morning I rode the current of the River Bian,
In the evening laid over in the bounds of Qiao district.
By good fortune blown along with the west wind,
4 I've been able to have a meeting with my old friends.
You sirs are imitating Mei Fu's hiddenness,
While I fare forward in the wake of Boluan.²
After parting you may think of me,
8 As a floating cloud in Kuaiji of Wu.

1.31

Seeing Off Paternal Cousin Yong, Returning to Kuaiji after Failing at
the Exam

- The surging wind may blow your journeying sail,
And quick as that, into the void you vanish.
A thousand leagues far gone in just an instant,
4 To the Three Rivers soon to go in the yonder haze.³
In times past we shared happiness and joy,

2 The scholar Mei Fu, though in a provincial position, tried to warn against the usurpation of the Western Han dynasty by Wang Mang's family. After a brief unsatisfactory period at court, he eventually retired incognito to the Wu area where some said he became a transcendent. Liang Hong 梁鴻 (byname Boluan) was a poor but zealous scholar of the 1st-century CE. He refused ever to serve as an official and eventually also went off contentedly to Wu and the lower reaches of the Yangzi.

3 The Three Rivers area was roughly Yangzhou, where the Jiang separated into three branches on its final run to the sea.

日夕成楚越
 落羽更分飛
 8 誰能不驚骨

1.32

送辛大不及
 送君不相見
 日暮獨愁緒
 江上久徘徊
 4 天邊迷處所
 郡邑經樊鄧
 山河入嵩汝
 蒲輪去漸遙
 8 石逕徒延佇

- But at dusk of day we become as Chu and Yue.¹
 With moulted plumes you'll instead be flying apart,
 8 So who could be able not to “shudder in one's bones”?²

1.32

Seeing Off Xin (Eldest), but I was Not in Time³

- I would see you off, sir, but I catch no sight of you,
 And at sunset am alone with sad heartstrings.
 By the riverside for long I linger and lag now,
 4 While at the sky's rim you are lost to someplace else.
 Of counties and towns you'll pass through Fan and Deng,
 Of mountains and waterways will pass into Song and Ru.⁴
 As your rush-lined wheels move gradually farther away,⁵
 8 On a stony path I stand expectantly in vain.

1 That is, two places far apart.

2 Jiang Yan's 江淹 (444–505) “Rhapsody on Parting” says that the sadness of parting causes one's “heart to crumble and bones to shudder.”

3 Xin E 辛諤, a Xiangyang friend (see also 1.42, 2.6, 4.16, 4.39).

4 The geography of these two lines indicates that Xin is heading north, perhaps to the secondary capital of Luoyang. Fan was Fancheng 樊城, present-day Xiangfan 襄樊, just north of Xiangyang. Deng was Dengzhou 鄧州, present-day Dengxian 鄧縣 in southern Henan. Song is Mount Song, about forty miles southeast of Luoyang. Ru is the Ru River, about forty miles south of Mount Song.

5 Wheels cushioned with reeds were for a carriage meant to convey in comfort a person summoned by the emperor. Meng flatters Xin – who has actually departed by boat – with this phrasing.

1.33

江上別流人

以我越鄉客

逢君謫居者

分飛黃鶴樓

4 流落蒼梧野

驛使乘雲去

征帆沿溜下

不知從此分

8 還袂何時把

1.34

洗然弟竹亭

吾與二三子

平生結交深

俱懷鴻鵠志

4 共有鷓鴣心

逸氣假毫翰

1.33

Parting at Riverside from Someone in Penal Exile

- While I am a stranger far from my homeplace,
 I happen on you, sir, who abide in banishment.
 But I fly off separately from Yellow Crane Tower,
 4 As you are swept detached into the Cangwu wilds.¹
 The posted messenger departs, borne off on the clouds,
 And a journeying sail coasts the current downstream.
 It is not known, once we part from here,
 8 At what time again we shall clasp each other's sleeve.

1.34

The Bamboo Pavilion of my Younger Brother Xianran

- I with you two or three younger ones²
 Have all my life knotted a friendship deep.
 All of us cherishing the wild swan's resolve,
 4 Together we have the wagtails' heart.³
 With uninhibited air we avail ourselves of fine quills,⁴

1 Yellow Crane Tower, the famous storeyed building atop Yellow Crane Hill, overlooking the Yangzi at Xiakou 夏口, present-day Wuhan 武漢, Hubei. Cangwu, where the sage-king Shun 舜 was reputedly buried, was in eastern Guangxi, a far outpost of empire.

2 Addressing Xianran and at least one other younger brother, Meng Haoran uses a phrase by which Confucius referred to his disciples.

3 The wild swan's resolve is to fly far off, beyond the ken of lesser birds. From a poem in the *Shijing*, wagtails are symbolic of the attentiveness of brothers because of the characteristic bobbing in concert of their heads and tails.

4 For composing poems.

清風在竹林
 遠是酒中趣
 8 琴上偶然音

1.35

夜登孔伯昭南樓時沈太清朱昇在座

誰家無風月
 此地有琴樽
 山水會稽郡
 4 詩書孔氏門
 再來值秋杪
 高閣夜無喧
 華燭罷燃蠟
 8 清絃方奏鷗
 沈生隱侯胤
 朱子買臣孫
 好我意不淺
 12 登茲共話言

- As a pure breeze lingers in the bamboo grove.¹
 Far-reaching is the pleasure within wine,
 8 And from the zither a tune that casually matches.

1.35

Climbing at Night to the Upper Storey of Kong Bozhao's South Loft-Building, When Shen Taiqing and Zhu Sheng were Present

- No house is without a breeze or moonlight,
 And this place has zither and wine-goblets.
 For mountains and rivers – Kuaiji commandery;²
 4 For the *Odes* and *Documents* – the family of Sir Kong.³
 As once more we meet with the endpoint of autumn,
 To this high balcony there comes no babble tonight.
 Flowering candles have used up their burning wax,
 8 While clear-sounding strings play out the stork-cry song.⁴
 Mister Shen is an heir to the Reticent Marquis,
 And Master Zhu a descendant of Maichen.⁵
 Those good to me in their manner are not shallow,
 12 When I have climbed up here to share in their fine talk.

1 Meng Haoran flatteringly sees his brother's pavilion as a place similar to that frequented by the third-century "Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove."

2 Known for the beauty of its landscape; present-day Shaoxing 紹興, Zhejiang.

3 By tradition Confucius (Master Kong) had established the *Shijing*, *Shangshu*, and other works as foundational texts, a legacy of study that Meng suggests Kong Bozhao continues.

4 A tune mentioned in Xi Kang's "Rhapsody on the Zither."

5 The "Reticent Marquis" was the posthumous title bestowed on the famous poet and official Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513). Zhu Maichen, from humble origins, rose to prominence as an official, including a period as governor of Kuaiji, during the first decades of Han Wudi's reign.

1.36

宴包二宅

閑居枕清洛
 左右接人野
 門庭無雜賓
 4 車轍多長者
 是時方盛夏
 風物自蕭灑
 五月休沐歸
 8 相攜竹林下
 開襟成歡趣
 對酒不能罷
 烟暝棲鳥迷
 12 余將歸白社

1.37

峴潭作

石潭傍隈隩
 沙岸曉夤緣
 試垂竹竿釣

1 This was Bao Rong 包融 who, along with the now more famous poets He Zhizhang 賀知章 and Zhang Ruoxu 張若虛, and the calligrapher Zhang Xu 張旭, was known as one of the "Four Scholars from Wu" 吳中四士.

1.36

A Fête at the Residence of Bao (Two)¹

- Dwelling at ease, pillowed on the clear-running Luo,
 To left and right adjacent to commoners and rustics.
 But your portalled courtyard has no random guests,
 4 Carriage tracks are mainly of those first in status.
 With this season just at the fullness of summer,
 The atmosphere is of itself softly serene.
 In the fifth month you've come home on "bath-leave,"²
 8 And walk in hand with me in the bamboo grove.
 I throw open my lapel in impulse of perfect joy,
 Am unable to call quits with wine before us.
 In the misty gloaming nesting birds lose their way,
 12 And I must be returning home to my Baishe.³

1.37

Composed by the Tarn at Xian Mountain⁴

By an unknown inlet of the pebble-lined tarn,
 Along sandy banks at sunrise I creep in closely;
 Let dangle, for a try, the bamboo rod and fish-hook,

2 Regularly permitted days off for officials.

3 Baishe, just east of Luoyang, was where at least two recluses from earlier times had stayed when visiting Luoyang. Meng Haoran appropriates it here as his own lodging.

4 Xian Mountain, southeast of Xiangyang, overlooking the west bank of the then south-running Han River.

- 4 果得查頭鱸
 美人騎金錯
 織手繪紅鮮
 因謝陸內史
 8 蓴羹何足傳

1.38

齒坐呈山南諸隱

- 習公有遺座
 高在白雲陔
 樵子見不識
 4 山僧賞自知
 以余為好事
 攜手一來窺
 竹露閑夜滴
 8 松風清晝吹
 從來抱微尚

1 A sleek and succulent fish found in the Han River, especially, according to local lore, where it runs past Mount Xian.

2 When the famous poet Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303), from the conquered southern state of Wu was serving at the Western Jin court in the position of Inner Scribe, he visited Wang Ji 王濟 who proudly set out goat's milk for him to drink and asked whether Wu had any delicacy to compare with this. Lu Ji answered, "water-mallow soup from Qianli and salted legumes from Weixia."

- 4 And sure enough I catch a loggerhead bream!¹
 For this a fair maid will speed a gold-inlaid knife,
 Her slender hand mincing fine the pink flesh.
 – I apologize duly to Lu, the Inner Scribe,
 8 But how is water-mallow soup as good to celebrate?²

1.38

At Chi's Old Site;³ To Show to Several Recluses South of the Mountain

- Here is Lordship Xi's base still remaining,
 Resting high on the rim of white clouds.
 Woodcutters see it, but don't know what it is;
 4 The mountain monks recognize and appreciate it.
 Since I am one who is fond of such things,
 I would take you by the hand and bring you for a look.⁴
 Here the dew on bamboo drips through languid nights,
 8 And a pine-tree breeze blows through days that are clear.
 In times past I embraced ideals of little moment,

3 Evidently the remains of the place where Xi Zuochi 習鑿齒, a famous fourth-century historian and official, and native of Xiangyang, once lived. He is remembered now as the author of a local history, the *Xiangyang qijiu zhuan* 襄陽耆舊傳, but in his time was known as an upright official who opposed Huan Wen's 桓溫 (312–373) desired usurpation of the imperial throne and also for writing the *Han Jin chungiu* 漢晉春秋, a history that was the first to champion the claim of the Sanguo state of Shu, instead of Wei, as the legitimate successor of the Han dynasty. When Fu Jian 苻堅, first emperor of the Former Qin dynasty, conquered Xiangyang in 379, he sought out Xi particularly and took him with him to his capital at Chang'an; but Xi soon returned to Xiangyang where he died.

4 Or perhaps "They (the monks) took me by the hand ..."

況復感前規
 於此無奇策
 12 蒼生奚以為

1.39

與王昌齡宴王道士房

歸來臥青山
 常夢遊清都
 漆園有傲吏
 4 惠我在招呼
 書幌神仙籙
 畫屏山海圖
 酌霞復對此
 8 宛似入蓬壺

- Am moved now even more by this former exemplar.
 At this place or time I have no special schemes,
 12 But “what can be done for the common folk?”¹

1.39

A Fête at the Dwelling of the Daoist Adept Wang, with Wang Changling²

- I have come back home to rest in the green mountains,
 Dreaming often of roaming to the Metropolis of Clarity.³
 “In the lacquer garden there is a well-contented clerk,”⁴
 4 His kindness to me is in his call of invitation.
 These inscribed hangings seem registers of divine transcendents,
 The painted screens illustrations from the *Mountains and Seas*.⁵
 As auroral clouds are now poured out before me here,
 8 It is quite as if I’m entering on Penglai and Fanghu!⁶

1 Although the poet admires Xi Zuochi, he has no ideal policies with which to serve the state. Xie An 謝安 (320–385) was forty when he came out of retirement to serve in the government. Before that, it used to be said that unless he came forth, “what’s to be done for the common folk?”

2 Wang Changling (ca. 690-ca. 756), *jinsbi* 727, whom Meng Haoran had met at the capital and who visited Meng in Xiangyang at least twice.

3 One of the celestial seats of the Daoist gods.

4 Zhuangzi was said once to have been a clerk in the Lacquer Garden (probably a library) in his home-state of Meng 蒙. This line, here identifying host Wang with Zhuangzi, is a direct quote from one of Guo Pu’s 郭璞 (276–324) series of poems on “Roaming to Transcendence” 遊仙詩.

5 Daoist registers were bestowed on adepts at various stages of their initiation; they contained lists of the transcendent beings now at the disposal of the adept. The *Book of Mountains and Seas* was a putatively ancient volume that presented information about various mythological or fantastic sites.

6 Auroral clouds were known to Daoists as the essence of the sun, and the imbibing of “fluid aurora” conduced to attaining transcendence. Here Meng Haoran identifies it flatteringly with the Daoist Wang’s wine. Penglai and Fanghu were two of the legendary “isles of immortals” in the Eastern Sea.

1.40

襄陽公宅飲

窈窕夕陽佳

丰茸春色好

欲覓淹留處

4 無過狹斜道

綺席卷龍鬚

香杯浮馬腦

北林積修樹

8 南池生別島

手撥金翠花

心迷玉芝草

談天光六義

12 發論明三倒

坐非陳子驚

門還魏公掃

榮辱應無間

16 歡娛當共保

1.40

Drinking at the Official Residence in Xiangyang

- Calm and charming, the evening sunlight lovely;
 Prodigal and replete, springtime's guise pleasing.
 I wished to find a spot to tarry and to linger,
 4 But without stopping by narrow, crooked roads.¹
 Here for filigreed mats are rolled "dragon's whiskers,"
 And for scented cups we float "mare's brains."²
 In the north grove tall trees are massed;
 8 In the south pond a detached islet stands out.
 One's hand here may pluck blooms of gold and halcyon,
 One's heart become lost with plants of jade entheogens.
 Our talk of the weather casts light on the "six principles";
 12 Our broaching of ideas illustrates the "three tumblings."³
 Seated here is no Master Chen to alarm one,
 But at the gate is still a Sir Wei to sweep.⁴
 Honor and dishonor ought admit no space between them,
 16 While joy and happiness must be preserved together.

1 That is, streets of ill repute.

2 "Dragon's whiskers" was a kind of rush-grass used for weaving mats; "mare's brains" literally translates the homonym used for agate.

3 The six principles are the traditional tropes used in the *Shijing*; the simple talk of the guests seems as elevated as that. The "three tumblings" recalls an anecdote in the fifth-century *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 that says when a certain interlocutor's subtle discussions reached the point of ultimate truth, his auditor would be so struck with admiration that he tumbled off his seat; when the latter heard his friend expound three times, he tumbled over three times.

4 During the time of Wang Mang there was a certain Chen Zun 陳遵 who was of some importance in his home region. When he visited others, much fuss was made over him. There was also a nobleman of the same name. Whenever the latter announced himself at someone's gate, it would cause great alarm until he was recognized as being the "other" Chen Zun. Meng Haoran is here being self-depreciatory. In the Warring States period there was a certain Wei Bo 魏勃 who had no connections but wished to meet the chief minister of the state of Qi 齊. Wishing to have an interview, he went daily and swept outside the gate of one of the minister's retainers. The latter eventually asked Wei why he was doing this, and Wei replied that he hoped the man would introduce him to the minister. Here Meng is flattering his host, identifying him with a chief minister's confidant and also dropping a hint that he would appreciate his aid in advancement.

1.41

同張明府清鏡嘆

妾有盤龍鏡
 清光常晝發
 自從生塵埃
 4 有若霧中月
 愁來試取照
 坐嘆生白髮
 寄語邊塞人
 8 如何久離別

1.42

夏日南亭懷辛大

山光忽西落
 池月漸東上
 散發乘夜涼
 4 開軒臥閑敞
 荷風送香氣

1.41

To Go With Magistrate Zhang's "Sighing Over a Mirror of Clarity"¹

- This handmaid has a mirror of coiling dragons,
 Clear and brilliant, always shining forth in daytime.
 But since the time when dust and dirt showed on it,
 4 It has seemed instead like the moon seen through haze.
 When sadness comes, I test the reflection it catches,
 In vain to sigh at new white hairs that have grown.
 I send word to that man at the border frontier:²
 8 Why is it you are so long parted and away from me?

1.42

On a Summer's Day at South Pavilion, Thinking of Xin (Eldest)

- Light on the mountains suddenly fades in the west,
 As the moon over the pond rises bit by bit in the east.
 I loosen my hair to enjoy the cool of night,
 4 Open the casement and rest in the idle expanse.
 A breeze over lotuses sends forth a scented breath,

1 The poem this one was meant to complement was by Meng's old friend Zhang Zirong. It must have taken for subject the now unused mirror of a lonely wife. The term that would literally be rendered "Enlightened Administrator" in the poem's title is an alternative designaton for a district magistrate.

2 The woman's husband is on military service at the frontier.

竹露滴清響
 欲取鳴琴彈
 8 恨無知音賞
 感此懷故人
 中宵勞夢想

1.43

秋宵月下有懷

秋空明月懸
 光彩露濕
 驚鵲棲不定
 4 飛螢卷簾入
 庭槐寒影疏
 鄰杵夜聲急
 佳期曠何許
 8 望望空佇立

- And dew on the bamboo drips clear echoes.
 I would take up the singing zither and play,
 8 But regret there is no “knower of tone” to appreciate it.¹
 Deeply moved, my heart holds thoughts of a dear friend,
 As in the night I’m belabored by dreams and longings.

1.43

Heart-held Thoughts on an Autumn Night under the Moon

- As a luminous moon hangs in autumn’s void,
 Under glowing brilliance the damp of dew soaks in.
 Magpies, startled, do not settle in their nests,
 4 And fireflies on wing come in past rolled-up curtains.
 With chill shadows of the courtyard’s sophora thinning out,
 Pestles from neighboring houses sound urgent in the night.²
 The date for a happy meeting is far off, and who knows when?
 8 Gazing and gazing to the distance, I stand waiting in vain.

1 Recalling the old story of the zither-player Bo Ya and his perfect auditor Zhong Ziqi.

2 The pestles are used for fulling cloth for winter clothing.

1.44

仲夏歸南園寄京邑舊遊

嘗讀高士傳

最嘉陶徵君

日耽田園趣

4 自謂羲皇人

余復何為者

栖栖徒問津

中年廢丘壑

8 上國旅風塵

忠欲事明主

孝思侍老親

歸來冒炎暑

12 耕稼不及春

扇枕北窻下

採芝南澗濱

因聲謝朝列

16 吾慕穎陽真

1.44

Returning to South Garden in the Mid-Month of Summer; Sent to Former Associates in the Capital Precincts

- I have read before the *Lives of High-minded Men*,¹
 Yet most splendid of all is Tao the Summoned Lord.²
 Daily he doted on the pleasures of field and garden,
 4 And called himself a person from Fu Xi's time.³
 As for me, what is it I've been engaged in?
 "Rushing restlessly about," vainly "inquiring of the ford."⁴
 In my middle years abandoning hillock and ravine,
 8 I traveled in the upper states on the wind-blown dust.⁵
 In loyalty I wished to serve an enlightened ruler;
 Yet, filial, I aim to wait on my aged parent.⁶
 Coming back home, I face summer's sweltering heat;
 12 It is too late now for the plowing and sowing of springtime.
 So I fan the pillow beneath the north window,⁷
 And gather the wondergrowth by the south beck.
 Apologies are duly voiced to the ranks of the court,
 16 But I admire the true one on the Ying's sunward side.⁸

1 A collection of biographies of exemplary figures from legendary times through the Eastern Han dynasty, compiled in the third century.

2 This is Tao Qian (365–427), the famous poet who retired to the countryside in mid-life; he was given the posthumous title Summoned Lord of Serene Restraint.

3 "Field and garden" is a phrase that came to be particularly applied to Tao's farmstead poems. Fu Xi (here, literally "the August Xi") was one of the great culture-heroes of legend; the people of his time would have been pure in their simplicity.

4 Confucius was once rebuked for "rushing restlessly about," seeking a fit ruler to advise. In an unfamiliar place he once sent a disciple to "inquire of the ford" of two local rustics, who ridiculed the Master for not retiring from the world of men.

5 That is, the states to the north, and more particularly the capital cities Chang'an and Luoyang.

6 We know from various sources that this reference must be to his mother.

7 Fanning the pillow is a traditional phrase for looking after the comfort of one's parents.

8 Legend had it that when the sage-king Shun offered to resign his kingdom to the recluse Xu You 許由, the latter fled to the sunward (north) side of the Ying River and washed out his ears to remove the taint of what he had just heard.

1.45

家園臥疾畢太祝曜見尋

伏枕舊遊曠

笙歌勞夢思

平生重交結

4 迨此令人疑

冰室無暖氣

炎雲空赫曦

隙駒不暫駐

8 日聽涼蟬悲

壯圖竟未立

斑白恨吾衰

夫子自南楚

12 緬懷嵩汝期

1.45

As I Lie Ill at my Home Garden, Grand Invocator Bi Yao Comes to Find Me

- Resting on a pillow, far away from former associates,
 As a song for reed-organ belabors my dreaming thoughts.
 All life long I have valued the bonds of friendship,
 4 But till the present have still had cause for doubt.
 A room for keeping ice admits no breath of warmth,
 As sweltering clouds burn chafing in the sky.
 The colt racing past a wall-crack can't be paused for a moment,¹
 8 While daily we hear the plaint of cicadas as it turns cold.
 My brave plans in the end have not been accomplished;
 With hair flecked white I regret I'm in decline.
 You, good sir, have come here from southern Chu,
 12 And I recall long past our meeting near Song and Ru.²

1 A passage in *Zhuangzi* compares the fleetingness of life to the sight of a colt quickly passing by a crack in a wall.

2 The area "between Mt. Song and the River Ru" (see 1.32, note 4) is a set phrase referring in general to the vicinity of Luoyang.

1.46

田家元日

昨夜斗回北
 今朝歲起東
 我年已強仕
 4 無祿尚憂農
 野老就耕去
 荷鋤隨牧童
 田家占氣候
 8 共說此年豐

1.47

晚泊潯陽望香鑪峰

挂席幾千里
 名山都未逢
 泊舟潯陽郭

1.46

New Year's Day for the Farmers

Last night the Dipper was turned round north,
 And this morning the year-star rose in the east.¹

My own years are now those of "vigor and employment,"²

4 But with no official salary, I'm still a sorry husbandman.

The rural oldsters go out to their plowing,

Hoes on shoulders, trailing after the shepherd lads.

These men of the fields unriddle the signs of the air,³

8 And all aver that this will be a bountiful year.

1.47Mooring at Night in Xunyang, Gazing at Incense Burner Peak⁴

The canvas has been hung for several thousand leagues,

But never yet have we come upon a mountain of renown.

Mooring the boat on the outskirts of Xunyang,

1 In winter the handle of the Dipper pointed to the northern quadrant of the sky, and by the beginning of spring (the first day of the new year) its gradual movement had it pointing eastward. The year-star is Jupiter, which takes roughly twelve years to make a full orbit of the heavens.

2 The *Liji* says that forty years of age is the time of "vigor and employment."

3 That is, the omens portended by various atmospheric phenomena.

4 Incense Burner Peak on Mount Lu, overlooking Lake Pengli. Mount Lu was home to the famous Eastern Grove monastery founded in the late fourth century, by the monk Huiyuan (see 1.8, note 4). The sound of that monastery's bell reaches Meng Haoran at sunset (line 8).

- 4 始見香鑪峰
 嘗讀遠公傳
 永懷塵外蹤
 東林精舍近
 8 日暮空聞鐘

1.48

萬山潭

- 垂釣坐磐石
 水清心益閑
 魚行潭樹下
 4 猿挂島藤間
 游女昔解佩
 傳聞於此山
 求之不可得
 8 沿月棹歌還

- 4 For the first time I glimpse Incense Burner Peak.
 I have read before the biography of Lord Yuan,
 And evermore cherished his tracks beyond the dust.
 Near his abode of concentration at the Eastern Grove,
 8 As the sun sets, in the void I hear the bell.

1.48

The Tarn at Mount Wan¹

- Seated on a stone slab, I let the fish-hook dangle;
 The water so clear that my heart gains in ease.
 Fishes move about beneath the tarnside trees,
 4 And gibbons swing amidst the island's hanging vines.
 The dallying maids once ago unfastened their pendants
 By this very mountain, so the legend reposes.
 I seek for them, but they are no more to be found;
 8 So coasting the moon, I head back on the song of the oars.

1 Mount Wan was about three miles southwest of Xiangyang, overlooking the Han River's south bank. The Han Strand (or Han Embankment) was at its foot, the place where two divine maidens were said to have had a brief tryst with a local man (see 1.5, note 4).

1.49

入峽寄弟

吾昔與汝輩
 讀書常閉門
 未嘗冒湍險
 4 豈顧垂堂言
 自此歷江湖
 辛勤難具論
 往來行旅弊
 8 開鑿禹功存
 壁立千峰峻
 澗流萬壑奔
 我來凡幾宿
 12 無夕不聞猿
 浦上搖歸戀
 舟中失夢魂
 淚沾明月峽
 16 心斷鶴鴿原
 離闊星難聚
 秋深露易繁
 因君下南楚
 20 書此寄鄉園

1.49

Entering the Gorges; Sent to my Younger Brothers¹

- In the past I, along with all of you,
 Read our books, always closing our gate.
 As I had never once braved billows and narrow passes,
 4 Why attend to the saying about “brinking the hall”?²
 From here I pass through the lakes of the Jiang,
 Troubled toil impossible to tell in full.
 Going or coming – wayfaring wastes your strength;
 8 Opening up, drilling through – Yu’s deeds remain.³
 Rock walls stand, with a thousand peaks jutting high;
 Confluent currents, through ten-thousand ravines hurtle.
 Since I’ve come, how many night-halts in all?
 12 There’s been no evening I’ve not heard the gibbons cry.
 In the boat, then, one’s dreaming soul slips away,
 And by the shore one wafts yearnings for home.
 Tears soak in the Luminous Moon Gorge,
 16 While one’s heart breaks on the plain with the wagtails.⁴
 As distance expands, the stars find it hard to mass;
 As autumn deepens, the dew more easily gathers.
 – Since you, sir, are going downstream to south Chu,⁵
 20 I write this to send to the garden at my homeplace.

1 That is, the Yangzi gorges. It is not known how far upstream Meng traveled; some say through all the gorges to what is present-day Sichuan, though there is no conclusive evidence for that. There is some suspicion that this poem was not actually composed by Meng Haoran.

2 “The heir to an estate of a thousand in gold should not sit on the brink of the hall” – because of danger that might befall him there.

3 Comparing his journey to the deeds of the sage-king Yu who quelled the primordial flood by digging channels for the water to run off.

4 Luminous Moon Gorge, in present-day Ba district 巴縣, Sichuan; but also literally “the gorge of (under) the luminous moon.” Wagtails are symbolic of the concern that brothers have for each other, since they seem to bob head and tail in concert, as established in ode 164 of the *Shijing*: “The wagtails on the plain, / Brothers hurry [to help] in difficulties.”

5 Addressing the person to whom he is entrusting the poem.

1.50

宿揚子津寄潤州長山劉隱士

所思在夢寐

欲往大江深

日夕望京口

4 煙波愁我心

心馳茅山洞

目極楓樹林

不見少微隱

8 星霜勞夜吟

1.51

送丁大鳳進士赴舉

吾觀鷓鴣賦

君負王佐才

惜無金張援

1.50

Passing the Night at the Yangzi Ford; Sent to Recluse Liu of Changshan
in Runzhou¹

- The one I long for rests in my dreaming sleep,
Where I wish to cross the great Jiang's depths.
At dusk of day I gaze out toward Jingkou,
4 As the misted waves bring sadness to my heart.
My heart races on to the grotto of Mount Mao,
As far as one can see over the forest of sweet-gum trees.²
But the recluse of Lesser Tenuity is not to be seen,³
8 And starry frost belabors my song in the night.

1.51

Seeing Off Ding Feng (Eldest), En Route as a Candidate for the Exam

I have read with appreciation a "Rhapsody on the Wren,"
By which you, sir, sustain a "talent of aid to a king."⁴
I regret there is no assistance of a Jin or Zhang,

1 Yangzi Ford was a crossing of the Jiang toward Jingkou 京口 (part of present-day Zhenjiang, Jiangsu). Changshan was a nearby district in Runzhou (also called Dantu 丹徒), the prefecture that included Jingkou and Changshan.

2 Mao Shan, in the south of Runzhou, was where the three Mao brothers in the Han dynasty attained transcendence. In the mid-fourth century it became famous as the center of Shangqing 上清 Daoism and was said to be the seat of the Huayang 華陽 grotto-heaven. The mid-Yangzi area (Chu) was sometimes referred to generally as the "forest of sweet-gum trees," because of an early usage in *Chuci*.

3 The Lesser Tenuity constellation was a group of four stars said to be symbolic of worthy gentlemen who were out of office. Mr. Liu is here seen as representative of it.

4 The "Rhapsody on the Wren" was written by Zhang Hua 張華 (232–300) and won him recognition as "a talent of aid to a king." Meng Haoran compliments Ding's writing and learning as being comparable to this.

- 4 十上空歸來
 棄置鄉園老
 翻飛羽翼摧
 故人今在位
 8 岐路莫遲回

1.52

送吳悅遊韶陽

- 五色憐鳳雛
 南飛適鷓鴣
 楚人不相識
 4 何處求椅梧
 去去日千里
 茫茫天一隅
 安能與斥鷃
 8 決起但槍榆

- 4 But after ten petitions sent up one comes home in vain.¹
 Thrown aside, to grow old in field and garden,
 Fluttering in flight, wings and feathers broken.
 When now an old friend is placed in position,
 8 Don't dawdle undecided over the branching road.

1.52

Seeing Off Wu Yue Traveling to Shaoyang²

- Five-colored, the phoenix chick I sympathize with,
 Flying southward to a new home with the francolin.³
 The men of Chu do not recognize or appreciate it,
 4 So where would it seek there its parasol tree?
 Gone, you'll be gone, a thousand leagues in a day;
 Beyond yonder, at one corner of the sky.
 How could you associate with the meager quail,
 8 Who at his highest hop only bumps against an elm?⁴

1 In the Western Han period the Jin and the Zhang were influential families, certain members of which looked out for each other's interests. Sending up ten petitions in vain recalls the famous Warring States persuader Su Qin, who was unsuccessful in his attempts to attract the patronage of the Qin ruler (see 1.28, note 4).

2 Present-day Qujiang 曲江 district, Guangdong, in the far south.

3 The "phoenix," most admirable and extraordinary of birds, displays all the primary colors and only nests in the rarest of parasol trees (line 4). The francolin is a bird found in the south.

4 In the first chapter of *Zhuangzi* the meager quail is uncomprehending of the far flight of the gigantic *peng*-bird; the cicada and turtle-dove who, at their best, can reach only a nearby elm-tree, also cannot understand the greater capability of the *peng*.

1.53

送陳七赴西軍

吾觀非常者
 碌碌在目前
 君負鴻鵠志
 4 蹉跎書劍年
 一聞邊烽動
 萬里忽爭先
 余亦赴京國
 8 何當獻凱還

1.54

田園作

弊廬隔塵喧
 惟先養恬素
 卜鄰近三逕
 4 植果盈千樹
 粵余任推遷
 三十猶未遇
 書劍時將晚

1.53

Seeing Off Chen (Seven) On his Way to the Armies in the West

I have taken a careful look at one who is not of the ordinary,
Rough and unwrought before my very eyes.

You, sir, who now take up the wild swan's resolve,

4 Slipped slackly through the years of study and swordsmanship.¹

But once you heard of the rousing of frontier beacons,

Across a myriad leagues you vied to be first to go.

For my part I am on the way to the capital region,

8 Where sooner or later you'll offer up a triumph in return.

1.54

Composed in Field and Garden

This humble cottage is cut off from the dust and babble,
Yes, where I put first cultivating contentment and plainness.

The neighborhood selected is near to three pathways,²

4 The fruit-trees planted fill up a thousandfold.

But as for me, trusting to time's advance and change,

At thirty even yet I am unmet by fortune.

For study and swordsmanship the time is growing late,

1 The ambition of the wild swan is to fly far beyond the limits of normal birds.
The years of one's youth are those that should be devoted to the basic skills of
civil and martial arts.

2 Three paths to one's dwelling are there for worthy visitors.

- 8 丘園日空暮
晨興自多懷
晝坐常寡悟
冲天羨鴻鵠
- 12 爭食羞雞鶩
望斷金馬門
勞歌採樵路
鄉曲無知己
- 16 朝端乏親故
誰能為揚雄
一薦甘泉賦

- 8 The sun on hillock and garden is setting to no avail.
 Mornings I rise with many thoughts in my breast;
 Days I sit, most often mindful of little.¹
 Surge now to the sky, emulating the wild swan?
- 12 Or vie for food, abashed before chicken and duck?²
 Hope is broken for the Gate of the Metal Horse,
 Yet a laborer sings on the road gathering firewood.³
 In the bends of the village is no one who truly knows me,
- 16 In the confines of the court I'm short of intimate friends.
 Who is there able, on Yang Xiong's behalf,
 To recommend once his "Sweet Springs Rhapsody"?⁴

1 Or perhaps, "mindful on my own."

2 The character of Qu Yuan, archetypal unfortunate courtier, questioned in the poem "Divination" whether he should "pair wings with the yellow swan or rather vie for food with chicken and duck."

3 In Han times the name of a governmental office for the emperor's on-call scholars, so named because of the statue of a bronze horse at its gate. The laborer gathering firewood likely recalls Zhu Maichen (see 1.35, note 5), who toiled in the fields and also studied the Classics, seemingly in vain, until late in life he was given an official post.

4 When Yang Xiong (53 BCE–18 CE) was a poor, unknown scholar, one of his poems came to the attention of the emperor, who was visiting with the courtier Yang Zhuang 楊莊. The emperor admired the poem and averred that it must be by the famous court poet of earlier times, Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (c. 179–117 BCE), but Yang Zhuang said no, it was by Yang Xiong who was alive today. The emperor then summoned Yang Xiong to him, and the first composition he composed for the ruler was the "Sweet Springs Rhapsody," celebrating an imperial sacrifice. Meng is pining for someone to do for him what Yang Zhuang did for Yang Xiong.

1.55

從張丞相遊紀南城獵戲贈裴迴張參軍

從禽非吾樂
 不好雲夢田
 歲晏臨城望
 4 只令鄉思懸
 參卿有幾幾
 聯騎何翩翩
 世祿金張貴
 8 官曹幕府連
 歲時行殺氣
 飛刃爭割鮮
 十里屈賓館
 12 徵聲匝妓筵
 高標迴落日
 平楚壓芳煙
 何意狂歌客
 16 從公亦在旃

1.55

Following after Prime Minister Zhang on a Hunting Excursion to Jinancheng; In Fun for Pei Jiong and Aide-de-Camp Zhang¹

- Pursuing game is no delight of mine,
 Nor am I fond of the fields of Yunmeng.²
 Late in the year, gazing out from the city-wall,
 4 Only makes homeward longings falter more.
 Of aides and stewards there are many, so many,
 And the riders in ranks so gracefully glide.
 The salaried of the age are the honored of Jin and Zhang;
 8 The classes of officials are grouped in their tented quarters.³
 In this season of the year, the mood of killing is stirred,⁴
 And fast-flying blades vie to carve up the fresh meat.
 Every ten leagues we reach a guest lodging,
 12 With summoned songs of entertainers circling the mats.
 Turning from the highest bough the sun drops down,
 As far-level Chu is heavy under aromatic smoke.⁵
 And what is it to mean when a madly singing guest,
 16 Following his lordship, is here as well under his banner?

1 Written while Meng Haoran was in service (737–38) under Zhang Jiuling when the latter was chief administrator of the Jingzhou 荊州 region. Jinancheng was the old capital Ying 郢 of the state of Chu, about three miles north of present-day Jiangling 江陵. Hubei. Pei Jiong (not Pei Di 迪, as often wrongly identified), who would later hold important positions at court, was in service with Meng at the same time. Aide-de-camp Zhang is not identified.

2 Hunting preserve of the rulers of ancient Chu.

3 Members of the Jin and Zhang families of the Western Han looked out for each other's interests (see also 1.51, note 1); here they stand flatteringly for men of influence and power. "Tented [head]quarters" refers to the military when in the field, here indicating the entourage of officials accompanying the excursion.

4 The *Liji* states that in autumn the "mood (lit. air) of killing" is at its fullest.

5 The fragrant smoke of the cooking fires.

1.56

登望楚山最高頂

山水觀形勝

襄陽美會稽

最高惟望楚

4 曾未一攀躋

石壁疑削成

眾山比全低

晴明試登陟

8 目極無端倪

雲夢掌中小

武陵花處迷

暝還歸騎下

12 蘿月在深溪

1.56

Ascending the Highest Crest of Mount Gazing-at-Chu¹

Of mountains and waters I've seen surpassing scenes,
And Xiangyang is even lovelier than is Kuaiji.²

Its loftiest height is indeed this Gazing-at-Chu,

4 But never yet had I clambered up it once.

Its rockface seems fashioned out of sheer scraping,³

The hills thronging round are stooped in contrast.

In fair light I tasked the climb and ascended;

8 As far as eye could see, there was no hint of limit.

Yunmeng was as though held tiny in my palm,

While Wuling was lost in a place of blossoms.⁴

As darkness came on, I rode down, turning home,

12 And the moon in the bindweed rests in the deep stream.

1 Located about two and a half miles southwest of Xiangyang; also called “Horse-saddle Mountain” 馬鞍山.

2 Kuaiji, in Zhejiang, had been famed for its scenery since Eastern Jin times.

3 Like the four sides of the great Mount Hua 華山, which were said to have been pared by a giant spirit.

4 Yunmeng, the hunting preserve of the ancient state of Chu (see 1.55, note 2), was quite far to the south. Tao Qian's fictional fisherman came upon the Shangri-la of Peach Blossom Font after losing his way in Wuling, which is present-day Changde 長德 district, Hunan.

1.57

採樵作

採樵入深山
 山深樹重疊
 橋崩臥查擁
 4 路險垂藤接
 日落伴將稀
 山風拂薜衣
 長歌負輕策
 8 平野望煙歸

1.58

早梅

園中有早梅
 年例犯寒開
 少婦爭攀折
 4 將歸插鏡臺
 猶言看不足
 更欲剪刀裁

1.57

Composed upon Gathering Firewood

- Gathering firewood I passed into the deep hills,
The hills' depths where trees are shelved in layers.
A plankbridge has collapsed, littered logs bunched round;
4 The path is cramped, with dangling rattan joined over.
As the sun drops down, comrades here grow scarce,
And a mountain breeze brushes my frond-woven cloak.
Singing long and bearing a light bundle,
8 Going home, I see hearth-smoke over the fields.

1.58

Early Prunus

- In the garden there are early prunus blooms,
An annual rule, opening out to brave the cold.
Young women vie to pull down and pluck them,
4 Take them home and set them into mirror stands.
It's as if to say: to look at them is not enough,
One wants instead a cutting from the pruning knife.

1.59

澗南園即事貽皎上人

弊廬在郭外
 素業唯田園
 左右林野曠
 4 不聞城市喧
 釣竿垂北澗
 樵唱入南軒
 書取幽棲事
 8 還尋靜者論

1.60

王迴見尋

歸閒日無事
 雲臥晝不起
 有客款柴扉
 4 自云巢居子
 居閒好芝朮

1.59

At the Garden South of the Branch, on a Chance Theme; To Present
to His Eminence Jiao¹

- My humble cottage lies beyond the outer city-wall,
My longstanding vocation nought but in field and garden.
To left and right the wooded countryside spreads out,
4 Where is heard no babble of city or marketplace.
As hook and rod dangle in the North Branch,
A woodcutter's song passes into the south casement.
My writing takes up the theme of nesting in seclusion,
8 Now to be brought round seeking the tranquil one's critique.

1.60

Wang Jiong Comes to Find Me²

- I've come home to idleness, with no affairs anytime,
To repose on the clouds and never rise through the day.
There is a guest who knocks at my brushwood door,
4 Who says himself to be the Nest-dwelling Master.³
Dwelling at his ease, he is fond of hill-thistle and polypore;⁴

1 The "garden south of the branch [of the Han River]" refers to Meng Haoran's usual residence in the Xiangyang area. The residence being south of the river, the latter is called the North Branch (line 4). The Buddhist monk Jiao (the "tranquil one" of line 8) is not identified.

2 The Daoist master Wang Jiong (Nine) resided on Deer Gate Mountain and is mentioned in several other poems (1.17, 2.4, 2.28, etc.).

3 Alluding to Chaofu 巢父, the legendary "Nest-Father," a recluse who lived in the time of the sage-king Yao and who, refusing to take part in worldly affairs, made a sleeping-nest in a tree.

4 Plants that conduce to long life and the gaining of transcendence.

採藥來城市
 家在鹿門山
 8 常遊澗澤水
 手持白羽扇
 脚步青芒屨
 聞道鶴書徵
 12 臨流還洗耳

1.61

與黃侍御北津泛舟
 津無蛟龍患
 日夕常安流
 本欲避驄馬
 4 何知同鷁舟
 豈伊今日幸
 曾是昔年遊
 莫奏琴中鶴
 8 且隨波上鷗
 堤緣九里郭

1 An elegant accoutrement of reclusion, most notably used by Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234).

- With herbs he's culled, comes to city and marketplace.
 His home he fixed on Deer Gate Mountain,
 8 Always roaming now the waters of beck and mere.
 In his hand he holds a white feather fan,¹
 Feet treading on sandals of green spikegrass.
 And when he hears word of a crane-writ summons,
 12 Still washes out his ears over the flowing stream.²

1.61

Boating at North Ford, with Imperial Censor Huang³

- At this ford there are no calamities of flood-dragons;⁴
 At dusk of day it is always peaceful in its flow.
 Wishing at first to "avoid the dappled steed,"
 4 How to know we'd now share a heron-prowed boat?⁵
 Could it be that he who favors me this day
 Once was an associate in years gone by?
 Let's not play the crane tune from the zither,
 8 But instead follow the gulls over the waves.
 Here the dyke hems nine leagues of the city outskirts,

2 The crane-writ summons was used to call a recluse to office. Xu You 許由, a contemporary of the Nest-Father, washed out his ears to remove the taint when Yao offered to cede the kingdom to him.

3 Huang's official title identifies him as a member of the imperial censorate.

4 The North Ford was on the Mian River 沔水 (a section of the Han), north of Xiangyang city. Local lore said that in the fourth century, the prefect Deng Xia 鄧遐 killed a flood-dragon that had been wreaking havoc there, thus making it safe henceforth.

5 Huan Dian 桓典 of the Eastern Han was a powerful censor feared by all. He usually rode a dappled steed, and a current ditty ran to the effect: "Move on, move on, but beware! / Avoid the Censor of the Dappled Steed!" A heron was commonly painted on the prow of a pleasure boat.

山面百城樓
 自顧躬耕者
 12 才非管樂儔
 聞君薦草澤
 從此泛滄洲

1.62

題長安主人壁

久廢南山田
 謬陪東閣賢
 欲隨平子去
 4 猶未獻甘泉
 枕席琴書滿
 褰帷遠岫連
 我來如昨日
 8 庭樹忽鳴蟬
 促織驚寒女

1 Zhuge Liang (181–234), once a recluse in the Xiangyang area, then brilliant strategist for the Three Kingdoms state of Shu, “did his own plowing” while in reclusion and often compared himself with the famous ministers Guan Zhong and Yue Yi of the Warring States period.

2 The isles of the transcendents in the Eastern Sea.

- And hills face high buildings of a hundred walls.
 I regard myself as “one who does his own plowing,”
 12 Yet am no match in ability for Guan Zhong or Yue Yi.¹
 You, sir, so I hear, recommend those from the weedy meres,
 But from now I shall drift on to the Watchet Isles.²

1.62

Inscribed on a Wall of my Host's in Chang'an³

- Abandoning for long the fields by South Mountain,
 I've taken up irrationally with Eastern Gallery worthies.⁴
 But I'm about to follow Zhang Heng in departing,
 4 Still not having offered up a “Sweet Springs Rhapsody.”⁵
 With pillow and mat spilling over with zither and books,
 Through the raised curtains distant peaks are ranged.
 It seems like only yesterday that I came,
 8 But courtyard trees are suddenly buzzing with cicadas.
 The “weaving-urgers” startle maidens in the growing cold,⁶

3 Evidently written when about to leave the capital.

4 In general the mountains just south of Xiangyang, with Mount Xian as the focus; but there is also a tradition of literary “South Mountains” in the vicinity of recluse residences. The Eastern Gallery was where the high minister Gongsun Hong 公孫弘 in Han Wudi's reign admitted potential courtiers for consultation.

5 The text's “Pingzi” is the byname of the great scholar and poet Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139), who departed the capital in dissatisfaction, returning home to write a “Rhapsody on Going Back to the Fields.” The scholar Yang Xiong (see 1.54, note 4), having been recommended to the emperor, won the ruler's favor by offering up the “Sweet Springs Rhapsody.”

6 “Weaving-urger” is a kenning for the cricket, whose stridulation reminds one of the clacking shuttle of a rapid weaver.

秋風感長年
 授衣當九月
 12 無褐竟誰憐

1.63

庭橘

明發覽群物
 萬木何陰森
 凝霜漸漸水
 4 庭橘似懸金
 女伴爭攀摘
 摘窺礙葉深
 並生憐共蒂
 8 相示感同心
 骨刺紅羅被
 香粘翠羽簪
 擎來玉盤裏
 12 全勝在幽林

- And autumn's breeze makes one aware of the lengthening year.
 Clothing is to be given out when the ninth month is here,
 12 Yet without even homespun, who at last will care?¹

1.63

Courtyard Tangerines²

- As light breaks, one takes in nature's manifold beings,
 With a myriad trees quite forested in shade.
 Thickened frost drop by drop turns to water,
 4 And the courtyard tangerines seem suspended gold!
 Our girl companions vie to pull down and pick them,
 Picking and peering into the depths of obstructing leaves.
 Side by side they grow – one is touched by their joined stalks;
 8 In mutual display – one is moved at their shared hearts.³
 Their spines prick the cloaks of crimson gauze-silk,
 And their scent clings to hairpins of halcyon plumes.
 On platters of jade they shall be raised and brought forward,
 12 Wholly superior to being left in shrouded groves.

1 Ode 154 of the *Shijing* says “In the ninth month, [warm] clothing is given out.”
 It also says: “Without clothing, without even homespun, / How is one to finish
 out the year?”

2 Specifically, the sourpeel tangerine (*Citrus reticulata*).

3 Their “hearts” are their stems.

Book 2

七言古體詩

2.1

夜歸鹿門歌

山寺鳴鐘晝已昏
 漁梁渡頭爭渡喧
 人隨沙岸向江村
 4 余亦乘舟歸鹿門

鹿門月照開煙樹
 忽到龐公棲隱處
 巖扉松徑長寂寥
 8 惟有幽人自來去

Heptametric Old-Style Verse

2.1

Song on Returning at Night to Deer Gate¹

The sounding bell from a mountain temple – day now is darkling;
At the head of Fish-weir Crossing – a clamor of quarrelsome crossers.²

The others follow the sandy shore toward the river village,

4 I for my part board a skiff, going back to Deer Gate.

Deer Gate's moon glows, disclosing hazy trees,

As soon I arrive at Lord Pang's place of hidden retreat.³

Cliffside door and pinetree path, for long still and silent:

8 Here, only a secluded one, who comes and goes on his own.

1 Deer Gate Mountain, about twelve miles south of Xiangyang, overlooking the Han River to its west.

2 Fish-weir Isle was amidst the Han, to the east of Mount Xian (itself to the north of Deer Gate Mountain).

3 The famous local recluse of the early third century (see 1.9, note 2).

2.2

和盧明府送鄭十三還京兼寄之

昔時風景登臨地
 今日衣冠送別筵
 閑臥自傾彭澤酒
 4 思歸長望白雲天

洞庭一葉驚秋早
 瀟瀟空嗟滯江島
 寄語朝廷當世人
 8 何時重見長安道

2.2

Matching Magistrate Lu's Poem "Seeing Off Zheng (Thirteen) Returning to the Capital"; Sent along with It

In times past when the air was brilliant, we'd climb high and look down
on the land;

Today wearing the raiment of office, you're seen off from parting mats.
Reclining at ease, we freely tipple the wine of Pengze,¹

4 As thoughts turn homeward, ever gazing toward the white-cloud sky.

A "single leaf at Dongting" alerts one of autumn's onset,
And I sigh for the "hugely useless," stuck on an island in the river.²
I send these words to a man of authority at the imperial court:

8 What time will we meet again on the streets of Chang'an?

1 Tao Qian (372–426) said he briefly took a position as magistrate of Pengze district only to have the resources that would keep him in wine.

2 An old saying had it that when a single leaf falls at Lake Dongting, you know of autumn's imminent arrival. The *Zhuangzi* tells of a man given a large gourd who, finding it unwieldy and "hugely useless," simply smashes it, unaware of how it might be used in an uncommon way. Meng is suggesting that he is like the gourd, if only someone (i.e., Zheng) will recognize his abilities, but instead he feels, as we would say, "up the creek without a paddle."

2.3

送王七尉松滋得陽臺雲

君不見巫山神女作行雲

霏紅沓翠曉氛氳

嬋娟流入襄王夢

4 倏忽還隨零雨分

空中飛去復飛來

朝朝暮暮下陽臺

愁君此去為仙尉

8 便逐行雲去不迴

2.3

Seeing Off Wang (Seven) to be Constable of Songzi; I Drew the Tag
“Clouds of the Sunlit Terrace”¹

- Sir, don't you see,² the divine maiden of Mount Wu as the shifting clouds?
Blurred pink against piled bright-blue, a hazy aura at daybreak.
Tempting and enticing she glided into the dream of King Xiang,
4 Too suddenly soon again to ensue as a complement of fine rain.

- In the empty sky airborne thither and once more airborne hither,
“Morning upon morning, sunset upon sunset, below the Sunlit Terrace.”
I am sad that you, sir, from now shall be a transcendent constable,
8 Readily to go off with the moving clouds and never to come back.³

1 A constable was one of the four centrally-appointed officials of a district, responsible for local police and military matters. Songzi district was in the extreme south of Hubei, on the southern shore of the Jiang. The phrasing “I Get ...” indicates that the poem was composed at a group gathering, where those in attendance were to compose poems on individual themes and rhymes that were drawn by chance. “Cloud of the Sunlit Terrace” refers to the story of King Xiang of Chu in the Warring States period who, when on the terrace below Mount Wu with the court poet Song Yu 宋玉, was told of an encounter that an earlier king had there with the goddess of Mount Wu for a daytime tryst, after which she said, “I reside on the sunlit side of Mount Wu, in a nook of the high hills; in the morning I am the shifting clouds, at sunset the shifting rain – morning upon morning, sunset upon sunset, below the Sunlit Terrace.” Two famous poems about this are attributed to Song Yu. In the most common version of this story the goddess says that in the morning she is the “dawn clouds,” but Meng’s opening line shows he knew the version quoted earlier.

2 A traditional extrametrical opening to certain poems of a narrative or discursive nature.

3 The term “transcendent constable” refers to Mei Fu 梅福 of the early first century CE, who once served as constable in Nanchang 南昌 district, but, when Wang Mang usurped the Han throne, left his wife and children and went off to Kuaiji where he was rumored to have become a transcendent. Meng flatters Wang by identifying him with Mei Fu and suggesting that upon departing he is accompanying the goddess of Mount Wu.

2.4

鸚鵡洲送王九遊江左

昔登江上黃鶴樓
 遙愛江中鸚鵡洲
 洲勢逶迤繞碧流
 4 鴛鴦鸕鶿滿沙頭

沙頭日落沙磧長
 金沙耀耀動颿光
 舟人牽錦纜
 8 浣女結羅裳
 月明全見蘆花白
 風起遙聞杜若香
 君行采采莫相忘

2.4

At Parrot Isle, Seeing Off Wang (Nine) Traveling East of the Jiang¹

In the past, at riverside, we climbed the Yellow Crane Tower,
 Off in the distance, amid the river, were charmed by Parrot Isle.
 The shape of the isle winds round, wreathing the deep-blue current,
 4 While mandarin ducks and tufted ducks crowd the sandy headland.

On the sandy headland, as sun drops down, sandy shingles lengthen;
 Golden sands gleam and glisten, exciting a shimmering light.
 As the boatman tugs the brocade hawser,
 8 A washer-girl knots up her skirt of gauze.
 In the moon's light the white of rush-blossoms is fully to be seen,
 A wind rises and one senses from far off the scent of pollia.
 When you, sir, move on, do not forget this lavish luxuriance.²

1 “East of the Jiang” is the downstream area of the Yangzi, also known as Jiangnan (“South of the Jiang”). Parrot Isle was in the Jiang, visible from the famous Yellow Crane Tower which was in Wuchang 武昌 district, present-day Wuhan, Hubei.

2 This is one of Meng Haoran's few poems that incorporate lines of different meter (lines 7–8 being pentameter while the rest are heptameter) and is also unusual in comprising an odd number of lines.

2.5

高陽池送朱二

當昔襄陽雄盛時
山公常醉習家池

池邊釣女自相隨
4 粧成照影競來窺
澄波淡淡芙蓉發
綠岸毵毵楊柳垂

一朝物變人亦非
8 四面荒涼人住稀
意氣豪華何處在
空餘草露濕羅衣

此地朝來餞行者
12 翻向此中牧征馬
征馬分飛日漸斜
見此空為人所嗟
殷勤為訪桃源路
16 予亦歸來松子家

2.5

At Gaoyang Pool, Seeing Off Zhu (Two)¹

In Xiangyang of days gone by, in times hale and hearty,
Lord Shan always drank his fill at the pool of the House of Xi.

Fisher-girls by the side of the pool followed along on their own,
4 With make-up in place they vied to come peek at their reflections.
In limpid wavelets meek and mild lotus blossoms burst forth,
As on verdant banks feathery full willow trees dangled down.

But all things changed one morning, the people too no more,
8 Every direction barren and bleak, and human dwellings few.
Their brave blooms of thought and spirit abide in what place now?
All the more in vain dew on grasses wets a silk-net cloak.

At this spot ever since then one makes a journeyer's farewell feast,
12 And it's come round now that just here we care for a traveler's steed.
A traveler's steed will soar away at parting as the sun gradually slants;
Seeing just this is what a person will sigh over in vain.
So be alert and attentive, to seek the road to Peach Blossom Font,
16 While I for my part will come back to Master Redpine's house.²

1 The Gaoyang Pool was located near the eastern slope of White Horse Mountain 白馬山 (also called White Crane Mountain 白鶴山), about a mile south of Xiangyang. It had been contrived during the first century CE by Xi Yu 習郁 who was then Marquis of Xiangyang. The pond had lotus and waterlily in it, with a fishing platform in the middle of it, and Xi Yu husbanded fish there after an ancient technique. He was so fond of his "Xi Family Pool" that he was buried nearby. More than two centuries later, Shan Jian 山簡 (253–312) was governor-general of Xiangyang and became enamored of the pool, regularly indulging in magnificent drinking bouts there that would end in boisterous returns to the city. Shan called the place his "Gaoyang Pool," and so notorious were his outings there that the youth of the city composed a bantering ditty about his excursions. The pool and Shan Jian are mentioned in several other poems (see 2.7, 2.35, 4.27, 4.35, 4.44).

2 Meng Haoran flatteringly imagines Zhu as finding Tao Qian's fictional haven of hidden tranquility, while seeing himself in the figure of the legendary "immortal" Redpine of ancient times, here regarded more as a recluse than as a transcendent.

五言排律

2.6

西山尋辛諤

漾舟乘水便

因訪故人居

落日清川裏

4 誰言獨羨魚

石潭窺洞徹

沙岸歷紆餘

竹嶼見垂釣

8 茅齋聞讀書

款言忘景夕

清興屬涼初

回也一瓢飲

12 賢哉常晏如

Pentametric Regulated Couplets in Series

2.6

Looking for Xin E in the Western Hills¹

The bobbing boat is borne along at water's ease,
Taking me to find the residence of my dear friend.
With the setting sunlight held in the clear stream,

4 Who says one can only “envy the catch”?²

By a rock-lined tarn one peers down to the deepest purity,
And along sandy banks passes by twists and turns.

Near an islet of bamboo one sees someone dangling a fish-hook,

8 By a grass-roofed study hears someone reciting texts.

Homefelt words make one forget the sunlight is fading,

As a mood of pure clearness fits with the start of coolness.

Yan Hui, he with but “a single gourdful of drink,

12 Is very worthy!” and always content just so.³

1 The hills west of Meng Haoran's home at the “garden south of the branch.”

2 A statement in *Huainanzi* says that rather than envy the fish caught by someone else, better to go home and knot a fish-net to use oneself.

3 “Very worthy is Hui!” said Confucius of his disciple Yan Hui, because having only “a single basketful of food, a single gourdful of drink, and residing in a lowly alley,” he was unchangeably happy. Meng sees Xin the same way.

2.7

冬至後過吳張二子檀溪別業

卜築依自然
 檀溪不更穿
 園林二友接
 4 水竹數家連
 直取南山對
 非關選地偏
 卜鄰依孟母
 8 共井讓王宣
 曾是歌三樂
 仍聞咏五篇
 草堂時偃曝
 12 蘭榭日周旋
 外事情都遠
 中流性所便
 閑垂太公釣
 16 興發子猷船
 余亦幽棲者

1 Sandalwood Stream joined the Han River between Mount Wan and the western edge of Xiangyang. It had associations with events from the Three Kingdoms period and took the name it had in Meng Haoran's time from a Buddhist monastery that had been founded nearby in the fourth century.

2.7

After the Advent of Winter, I Stop by the Detached Manors of the Two Men, Wu and Zhang, Near to Sandalwood Stream¹

- They divined for building according to the natural site,
 Not needing to alter or channel Sandalwood Stream.
 Gardens and groves of two friends are connected,
 4 Waters and bamboo of varied houses joined.
 Directly adjusted to confront the south mountains,
 Though not of a sort to make the chosen spot remote.
 Divining for a neighborhood, in accord with Mengzi's mother,
 8 Sharing a well as if in deference to Wang Can.²
 Once knowing them to sing of three happinesses,
 I still hear that they chant out the five poems.³
 By a thatched hut sometimes supine they sun themselves,
 12 Or with oars of eupatory make a day's full circuit round.
 External affairs by their disposition are completely distant,
 While in mid-current are predisposed to what is most easeful.
 They idly dangle the fishing-line of Jiang Taigong,
 16 And on a whim set out in the boat of Wang Ziyou.⁴
 For my part I, too, am one who roosts concealed,

2 It was said that when Mencius was a boy, his mother changed their residence three times before finding a neighborhood she thought suitable for him to be raised in. The poet Wang Can 王粲 (177–217), here called Wang Xuan, an abbreviated form of his byname Zixuan 子宣, once lived briefly in Xiangyang and shared a well with his neighbor.

3 There are different classical groupings of “three happinesses,” but Meng Haoran is likely thinking of that voiced by Confucius which included happiness at properly moderating rites and music, at speaking of the good points of others, and at having many worthy friends. The “five poems” are the five short pieces at the end of Ban Gu's 班固 (32–92) “Rhapsody on the Eastern Metropolis,” with which the host gives final moral instructions to the guest and which the guest says he will recite for the rest of his life.

4 Taigong was known by various names (Jiang 姜 Taigong, Lü Shang 呂尚, etc.); he went fishing with a hookless line and “caught” King Wen of Zhou, becoming chief minister to him and his son King Wu. Ziyou is the byname of Wang Huizhi 王徽之 (338?–386), about whom it was told that one moonlit winter night he thought of a recluse friend some ways distant and immediately set out in a boat to visit him; but when he came near the friend's dwelling he stopped and suddenly turned back, because “I came on a whim, and when it was gone I turned back.”

經過竊慕焉
 梅花殘臘月
 20 柳色半春天
 鳥泊隨陽鴈
 魚藏縮項鯿
 停杯問山簡
 24 何似習池邊

2.8

陪張丞相自松滋江東泊渚宮

放溜下松滋
 登舟命檝師
 寧忘經濟日
 4 不憚冱寒時
 洗幘豈獨古
 濯纓良在茲
 政成人自理

1 All-Hallows month is the twelfth month, last of the year, after which the first month of the new year brings springtime.

2 The shrunken-neck bream was a local specialty (see 1.37, note 1 [2], where it is called by its alternate name, loggerhead bream).

3 A flattering comparison is being made with the Xi Family Pool that was the favored Xiangyang drinking locale of the fourth-century governor Shan Jian (see 2.5, note 1).

- And I've come to call on those whom I humbly admire.
 Here prunus blossoms fade away in All-Hallows month,
 20 And the willow's color is half-full under springtime's sky.¹
 Of birds, here pause wildgeese that follow the sun;
 Of fish, here shelter the bream with shrunken necks.²
 Halting our cups a moment, let me ask Shan Jian:
 24 Does this resemble being beside the Xi Family Pool?³

2.8

Accompanying Chief Minister Zhang Eastward on the River from Songzi, to Moor by the Palace on the Holm⁴

- We cast off with the current, down the Songzi River,
 On board boat, commanding the Master of the Oars.
 Surely one can't forget the days of "aligning and relieving,"⁵
 4 Nor shrink from this season of frigid cold.
 How can rinsing a headwrap be only a thing of the past?
 Truly one may "wash one's capstrings" in this very place.⁶
 If government is a success, the people are well-ordered themselves;

4 A poem written when Meng was in service under Zhang Jiuling in 737–38. Songzi was in south-central Hubei, near the Hunan border. The river of that name was a tributary of the Jiang which met up with it again in Jiangling (present-day Jingzhou), where was the site of the old Chu detached "palace on the holm" from the Warring States period.

5 I.e., Zhang's days as chief minister when, in the common phrase, he worked to "align the world and relieve the people" 經世濟民.

6 A frugal official of the Eastern Han, whose black headwrap was discolored and worn-out but whose salary was too meager to purchase a new one, rinsed it clean and applied inkblack to it to spruce it up. The exiled courtier Qu Yuan was once advised by a simple fisherman that "when the water of the Canglang River runs clear (i.e., when good government prevails), you can wash your capstrings in it; when the water is muddy, you can wash your feet in it."

- 8 機息鳥無疑
雲物吟孤嶼
江山辯四維
晚來風稍緊
- 12 冬至日行遲
獵響驚雲夢
漁歌激楚辭
渚宮何處是
- 16 川暝欲安之

2.9

陪盧明府泛舟迴峴山作

- 百里行春返
清流逸興多
鷁舟隨鴈泊
- 4 江火共星羅
已救田家旱
仍憂俗化訛
文章推後輩

1 Recalling the story of the boy who innocently played with seagulls by the shore; but when his father asked him to catch one, the birds, sensing his duplicity, would no longer come near him.

2 The cordings that figuratively brace the sky in the four directions.

- 8 If cunning is stilled, the birds will have no suspicions.¹
 Amid cloudscapes we chant a verse on the solitary islet,
 The river and the hills are distinct to the sky's four braces.²
 With evening's arrival, the wind grows slightly brisk,
- 12 And at winter's advent, the sun's movement lags.
 Echoes of a hunt startle one out of Cloud Dream park,
 While a fisherman's song rouses up lyrics of Chu.³
 The palace on the holm, just where would it be?
- 16 With darkness over the stream, where should we go?

2.9

Composed while Accompanying Magistrate Lu, Drifting a Boat Back to Mount Xian⁴

- Returning from your hundred-league progress in springtime,⁵
 On the clear-running current ample is your easy mood.
 The heron-prowed boat follows wildgeese to mooring,
- 4 As fires by the river are spread out like stars.
 Having now delivered the farmers from drought,
 You still are anxious about errors in improvement of customs.
 With literary style praised in our later generation,

3 Cloud Dream (Yunmeng) was the name of the hunting preserve of the old kings of Chu. The fisherman's song is of the present but reminds one of the fisherman who chanted to Qu Yuan (line 6) and by metonymy of all the songs in the *Chuci* collection.

4 Magistrate Lu is probably Lu Zhuan 盧僕, who was district magistrate of Xiangyang and often mentioned by Meng.

5 A "hundred leagues" was a traditional description of a district's area. The magistrate would ideally make an inspection tour of the district in springtime, and Lu seems to be returning from doing that.

- 8 風雅激頹波
 高岸迷陵谷
 新聲滿棹歌
 猶憐不調者
- 12 白首未登科

2.10

陪張丞相祠紫蓋山途經玉泉寺

- 望秩宣王命
 齋心待漏行
 青襟列冑子
- 4 從事有參卿
 五馬尋歸路
 雙林指化城
 聞鐘度門近
- 8 照膽玉泉清
 阜蓋依林憇

1 Meng Haoran is referring to himself. The final phrase may refer to him never sitting for or passing the *jinsbi* exam.

2 On his progress through the Jingzhou region of which he is governor, Zhang Jiuling offered ritual sacrifice at various sacred spots, especially mountains. Purple Canopy Mountain was about 17 miles south of present-day Dangyang 當陽, Hubei. Jade Fountain Temple was on Jade Fountain Mountain, about 10 miles west of Dangyang; it was famed as the seat of the monk Zhiyi 智顛 (538–597), founder of the Tiantai tradition of Buddhism (see line 14).

- 8 Your airs and odes revive the time's faltering waves.
 When high banks are lost to fresh hills and valleys,
 A newer sound fills out the song of the oarsmen.
 And yet you care for someone who is out of tune,
 12 An old white-head who has never been up to par.¹

2.10

Accompanying Chief Minister Zhang to Offer Cult at Purple Canopy Mountain, Passing Jade Fountain Temple on the Route²

- To “sacrifice in order” and display the royal commands,
 With hearts purged, we go forth at the hour of the levee.³
 In blue robes are arrayed young scholars,
 4 Those engaged in the task include aides and stewards.
 As your five steeds seek the homeward road,
 Twin trees point toward the Conjured City.⁴
 We hear a bell, nearby the Gate of Salvation;
 8 Able to reflect one's gall, the Jade Fountain is clear.⁵
 Your ink-black canopy pauses by the grove,

3 In the second month of the year, the sage-king Shun was said to have gone to Mount Tai in Shandong, where he made a burnt-offering to Heaven and “sacrificed in order” to the important hills and rivers; this was the archetype of such sacrifices made by later rulers or, as here, on their behalf by trusted envoys. The “hour of the levee” loosely translates the phrase “waiting for the clepsydra,” i.e., announcement of the time for opening court at dawn

4 A carriage drawn by five horses traditionally indicates the conveyance of a marquis or, alternatively, a prefect. “Twin trees” recall the pair of *śāla* trees under which the Buddha attained nirvana. Here they point the way to the Jade Fountain Temple, seen metaphorically as the “conjured city” of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which was an illusory refuge for weary pilgrims that their bodhisattva guide created as an “expedient means” (*upāya*) to help them reach their destination of enlightenment.

5 While the “gate of salvation” can stand for the monastery, it is also the name of another monastery in the near vicinity. Being able to reflect one's gall, or other viscera, was descriptive of the clearest mirrors, with which the Jade Fountain, from which the temple takes its name, is compared.

- 緇徒擁錫迎
天宮近兜率
12 沙界豁迷明
欲就終焉志
恭聞智者名
人隨逝水嘆
16 波逐覆舟傾
想像若在眼
周流空復情
謝公還欲臥
20 誰與濟蒼生

- As a swart-robed one, clutching a pewter staff, greets us.¹
 In this palace of heaven, one is close to Tuṣita,
 12 In our sandgrain realm light is unfolded amid delusion.²
 About to set my mind to “come to an end herein,”
 I respectfully hear the words of “The Knowing One.”³
 As men sigh in their pursuit of the “rushing water,”
 16 Waves pitch in the wake of the Upturned Boat.⁴
 I’ve called to mind this image, as if before my eyes,
 But through everything my feelings are again in vain.
 If Lord Xie wished to go back into retirement,
 20 Who would there have been to save the common folk?⁵

1 The staff of the welcoming monk has pewter rings at its top, useful for exorcising demons.

2 The monastery is metaphorically a “palace of heaven” or *devaloka*, abode of the gods, resembling the Tuṣita Heaven where future bodhisattvas reside, especially the Buddha of the future, Maitreya. Our world is one of the realms countless as the grains of sand in the Ganges River.

3 I.e., I am ready to live out my life here under the ultimate teachings of the Mahāyāna, particularly those of Zhiyi who founded this monastery and was given the title “Great Teacher, Knowing One” 智者大師 by Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty when he was a prince.

4 The rushing water is that of life and time, described by Confucius when he stood by a river and sighed, “Rushing on like this, ah! it does not cease day or night.” Upturned Boat was an alternative name for Jade Fountain Mountain. There was also a saying that hearing Buddhist teachings for the first time could upend you like a wave overturning a boat.

5 Recalling the saying about Xie An (see 1.38, note 1) that “If Lordship Xie does not come forth, what’s to be done for the common folk?” Meng Haoran is encouraging Zhang Jiuling, who had once held the highest offices at court, not to regard his present, lesser position as the end of his career.

2.11

臘月八日於剡縣石城寺禮拜

石壁開金像

香山繞鐵圍

下生彌勒見

4 回向一心歸

竹柏禪庭古

樓臺世界稀

夕嵐增氣色

8 餘照發光輝

講席激談柄

泉堂施浴衣

願承功德水

12 從此濯塵機

2.11

On the Eighth Day of All-Hallows Month, Worshipping at Stone Citadel Temple in Shan District¹

The rockface here discloses a “golden” statue;
This Incense Mountain surrounded by the Iron Enclosure.²

Appearing here below, Maitreya is manifest,

4 And I am brought to refuge with an undivided mind.

Bamboo and cypress are aged in the meditation courtyard,
With buildings and terraces that are rare in the worldly realm.
As evening’s high mist adds to the look of the air,

8 Lingering sunlight throws off a bright sheen.

On the lecture mat one is inspired to point the discussion,

While in the hall by the fountain ablution robes are given out.³

Would that I receive the water of meritorious virtue,

12 And henceforth wash away all dust and contrivance.

1 The eighth day of the twelfth month was celebrated as the day of the Buddha’s enlightenment, on which a monastery’s statue of Buddha would be ritually washed. Shan district was near present-day Xinchang, Zhejiang. Stone Citadel Temple was on the mountain of that name, about two miles west of Xinchang. A statue of Maitreya Buddha was carved into the rockface near the monastery.

2 The carving is described as golden because of an early story that the Buddha seemed a “golden man.” “Incense Mountain” is a common metaphor for a mountain with a monastery. The Enclosing Hills of Iron (Cakravāla) encircle this world.

3 “Point” the discussion is literally “handle,” referring to the sambar-tailed chowry or the “as-you-will” (*ruyi*) baton with which the fourth-century masters of subtle “pure conversation” (*qingtan*) gesticulated when engaging in discussions. The ablution refers to the bathing of the Buddha statue (not of course the large, rock-hewn one which was, in any case, of Maitreya, not Śākyamuni).

2.12

同獨孤使君東齋作

郎官舊華省

天子命分憂

襄土歲頻旱

4 隨車雨再流

雲陰自南楚

河潤及東周

廨宇宜新霽

8 田家賀有秋

竹間殘照入

池上夕陽浮

寄謝東陽守

12 何如八詠樓

2.12

To Go With Prefect Dugu's Poem "Composed at My East Study"¹

You, a "gentleman" courtier, long familiar with splendid offices,
Have been ordered by the Son of Heaven to share his cares.²

The soil of Xiangyang has been all year ceaselessly parched,

4 But in your carriage's wake, rain flows again.

The clouds bring up shade from Chu in the south,

The river spreading moisture to Zhou in the east.

Your administrative precincts befit a fresh rain-cleared sky,

8 And the farming folk will offer you thanks to have their harvest.

Amidst the bamboo now the last sunbeams enter,

While on the pool here the evening sunlight drifts.

I send apologies to the prefect of Dongyang,

12 But how would his Loft of Eight Songs compare with this?³

1 Probably Dugu Ce 獨孤冊, who was prefect of Xiangzhou 襄州 (see also 3.34). The official title used here, literally "Commissioned Lord," is an alternative designation for the prefect, *cishi* 刺史, of a *zhou* 州.

2 The offices with the term "gentleman" in their title (especially *langzhong* 郎中 and *shilang* 侍郎) were fast-track positions for the most promising officials and highly coveted. The "splendid offices" are those occupied by the most honored courtiers. Magistrate Dugu seems to have been director of one of the six bureaus of the Ministry of State Affairs at the capital, before being sent out as magistrate of Xiangyang. Sharing the emperor's cares (and burdens) is what local magistrates or prefects were supposed to do.

3 Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513) was sent away from the Qi court in 493 to be prefect of Dongyang, where he directed the building of the Loft of Mystic Elation 玄暢樓, at which place he wrote a suite of eight long songs to express his personal feelings; the building was later called after those songs. Meng Haoran is flattering magistrate Dugu that his studio and poem are more than comparable to Shen's building and compositions.

2.13

峴山送朱大去非遊巴東

峴山南郭外

送別每登臨

沙岸江村近

4 松門山寺深

一言余有贈

三峽爾相尋

祖席宜城酒

8 征途雲夢林

蹉跎遊子意

眷戀故人心

去矣勿淹滯

12 巴東猿夜吟

2.13

At Mt. Xian Seeing Off Zhu Qufei (Eldest) Traveling to Badong¹

Mount Xian lies beyond the city's southern outskirts;
 For seeing off at parting we frequently climb and look out.
 From sandy shores the riverside village is close by,

4 And through a gateway of pines the mountain temple is far in.

What is mine to present you with is but a single saying,
 As you go off now to seek the three gorges.

Here on the honored one's mat is wine from Yicheng,

8 While the traveler's route is in the groves of Cloud Dream.²

Unsteady and unsure are the thoughts of a wanderer,
 But near to him and dear is the heart of his old friend.
 Gone you will be, so do not tarry overlong!

12 In Badong the gibbons cry in the night.

1 Mount Xian, about three miles southeast of Xiangyang. Badong is the area around the three gorges of the Yangzi, including eastern Sichuan. For another poem to Zhu Qufei, see 4.58.

2 Yicheng, the next town south of Xiangyang, was famous for its good wine. Cloud Dream (Yunmeng), the old Chu hunting preserve in southern Hubei / northern Hunan, from Warring States times.

2.14

宴張記室宅

甲第金張館

門庭軒騎多

家封漢陽郡

4 文會楚材過

曲島浮觴酌

前山入詠歌

妓堂花映發

8 書閣柳逶迤

玉指調箏柱

金泥飾舞羅

誰知書劍者

12 年歲獨蹉跎

2.14

A Fête at Secretary Zhang's Residence

- Your A-level mansion is a lodging of Jins and Zhangs,¹
 Many the coaches and cavaliers at the portalled courtyard.
 Your family was enfeoffed at Hanyang commandery,²
 4 Your literary gatherings attended by the talents of Chu.
 On a curving islet we float goblets filled full,
 On a mound in front engage in songs chanted aloud.
 Glints of blossoms show forth by the dais for performers,
 8 And by the study gallery the willows sway and bend.
 As jade fingers set the bridges of the cither,
 Gold paste-powder highlights the dancers' gossamer.
 – Who would know here a “scholar and swordsman,”³
 12 Who year upon year has only stumbled and faltered?

1 Influential families of the Western Han period.

2 The Zhang of this poem has been plausibly identified as Zhang Bi 張悌, grandson of the minister Zhang Jianzhi 張柬之 (625–706), who was enfeoffed as duke and then prince of Hanyang commandery for his service in deposing Empress Wu and restoring the Tang dynasty under Emperor Zhongzong in 705.

3 That is, someone of adult, experienced years, here the poet himself.

2.15

登龍興寺閣

閣道乘空出

披軒遠目開

逶迤見江勢

4 客至屢緣回

茲郡何填委

遙山復幾哉

蒼蒼皆草木

8 處處盡樓臺

驟雨一陽散

行舟四海來

鳥歸餘興滿

12 周覽更徘徊

2.15

Climbing the Gallery of the Dragon Ascendant Temple¹

The gallery's walkway leads out to mount the void,
 Its flung-back casements opening up a distant sight.
 In its winding meander one sees the river's ambit,

4 With travelers often arriving with or against its course.

This commandery is so very teeming full,
 The hills far off, how many more indeed!
 Darkest dark-green all the plants and trees,

8 And place after place replete with high lofts and halls.

Sudden rain, at a touch of sunlight, is dispersed;
 Journeying boats from all directions come here.

Birds homing to their nests enhance a fullness of mood,

12 As I scan all about and pace back and forth.

1 In 705 certain Buddhist monasteries throughout the empire were designated Temples of the [Dynastic] Resurgence 中興寺 in commemoration of the Tang restoration that followed Empress Wu's deposition. In 707 their name was changed to Temples of the Dragon Ascendant. Exactly where the one in this poem was located is unclear.

2.16

登總持寺浮屠

半空躋寶塔

晴望盡京華

竹遶渭川遍

4 山連上苑斜

四門開帝宅

千陌俯人家

累劫從初地

8 為童憶聚沙

一窺功德見

彌益道心加

坐覺諸天近

12 空香送落花

2.16

Climbing the Pagoda of the Dhāraṇī Temple¹

Halfway up to the void I have scaled the treasure stūpa,
 With a fair prospect to the ends of the capital's splendors.
 Bamboo winds everywhere around the Wei River,

4 Hills joining at a slant to the High One's Preserve.

Four gateways open onto the imperial residence,
 And a thousand footways lead down to peoples' homes.²
 Through repeated kalpas I'll follow from the initial ground,

8 Acting as a child remembering its built-up sand.³

When at just a glance acts of merit are manifest,
 Wholly augmented, the right-leading mind is strengthened.
 On the verge of awakening, all the heavens are near,

12 And incense in the void escorts the falling blossoms.⁴

1 From the descriptions in the poem, this temple was in Chang'an.

2 The first word of this line requires a number to parallel that in the first word of the preceding line, but it might actually be 阡, as some texts give; this is homophonous with 千 "thousand," incorporates the graph for "thousand" in it, and, with the following word forms the common compound "criss-cross paths."

3 The "initial ground" is the first stage (*bhūmi*) of ten on the bodhisattva path. The *Lotus Sūtra* speaks of children who built stūpas of sand at the seaside and, when the rain and waves violently washed them away, were reborn in the Tuṣita heaven and vowed to follow the bodhisattva path.

4 Reading 坐 in line 11 as "just as is" or "for the time being," as Meng regularly uses it elsewhere. It can also refer to sitting in meditation (so, "awakening born from meditation"). The blossoms falling from heaven are those that often accompany the arrival of a bodhisattva.

2.17

與崔二十一遊鏡湖寄包賀二公

試覽鏡湖物

中流見底清

不知鱸魚味

4 但識鷗鳥情

帆得樵風送

春逢穀雨晴

將探夏禹穴

8 稍背越王城

府援有包子

文章推賀生

滄浪醉後唱

12 因此寄同聲

2.17

An Outing to Mirror Lake with Cui (Twenty-one); Sent to the Two Gentlemen Bao and He¹

- Trying to look around at the scene of Mirror Lake,
 From mid-current I can see clear to its bottom.
 I do not know the taste of the perch-fish here,
 4 Am only familiar with the moods of the seagull-birds.²
 Our sail gets an escort from the woodcutter's wind,
 And springtime is clear-skied after meeting "Grain Rains."³
 We're about to search out Yu's cave from the Xia dynasty,
 8 For the moment turning our backs on the Yue king's fort.⁴
 Among the prefectural aides there is a Sir Bao,
 And for literary style most esteemed is Mr. He.
 After drinking full by the Canglang, I sing out,⁵
 12 Therefore sending this to those of like voices.

1 Mirror Lake was on the border between Kuaiji and Shanyin districts, Zhejiang. Some scholars identify Cui as Cui Guofu 崔國輔 (ca. 678–754), *jinsbi* 725.

2 Zhang Han 張翰 (?258–319) served briefly at the Western Jin court in Luoyang, but when the autumn wind rose, he thought of the local delicacies of his native place in Wu, including its thinly sliced perch, and forthwith quit the court and returned south. The seagull moods are those of the birds that played with the innocent boy at the seashore until he came one day under orders from his father to catch one of them and found they would not then come near (see 1.15, note 5; 2.8, note 1).

3 When Zheng Hong 鄭弘 (d. 87), who became an important Eastern Han official, was young and gathering firewood in the area around the Ruoye Stream (near to Mirror Lake) he found an arrow that turned out to belong to a "divine person." As a reward for having it returned, the latter granted Zheng a wish; to make his and others' foraging more pleasant, he wished that there be a south wind regularly by the stream in the morning and a north wind at evening. "Grain Rains" is the sixth of the 24 fortnightly "nodes" of the Chinese year, being the third and fourth weeks after the vernal equinox, usually in mid- to late April by the Western calendar.

4 The sage-king Yu, reputed last ruler of the Xia dynasty, was said to have died in Kuaiji and been entombed in a nearby cave. Exactly which fort of which king of Yue is being referred to in line 8 is uncertain.

5 The Canglang river was where Qu Yuan encountered the fisherman who advised him to stop fighting against the world and just "go with the flow."

2.18

本閣黎新亭作

八解禪林秀

三明給苑才

地偏香界遠

4 心靜水亭開

傍險山查立

尋幽石逕迴

瑞花長自下

8 靈藥豈須栽

碧網交紅樹

清泉盡綠苔

戲魚聞法聚

12 閑鳥誦經來

棄象玄應悟

忘言理必該

靜中何所得

16 吟詠也徒哉

2.18

Written at the New Pavilion of the Ācārya of the Fundamentals¹

- The eight deliverances flourish in this meditation grove,
 The three understandings achieved in Piṅḍa's preserve.²
 The place is remote, a world of incense far removed,
 4 And with his mind tranquil, his New Pavilion is opened.
 Beside a narrow pass, the mountain's logs stand erect;
 Finding seclusion, a stone-laid footpath curves round.
 Blossoms of happy auspice ever drift down on their own,
 8 While herbs of numinous mana are never in need of tending.
 A netting of leaf-green interlaces pink-blooming trees,
 And a pure-clear fountain finishes the verdant lichens.
 Playful fishes are assembled to hear the Dharma,
 12 While unhurried birds come when sutras are recited.
 Set aside "images," and to the obscure you'll be awakened;
 Let words be forgotten, and the Truth will be complete.³
 Amidst tranquility what is to be achieved?
 16 As to declaiming poetry – it's mere vanity!

1 *Ācārya* is a term indicating a Buddhist teacher or master of proper conduct, especially a Tantric master from the eighth century on.

2 The eight deliverances, leading to freedom from rebirth, are defined variously; one list is: liberation from thinking the body is pure, that the world outside is pure, from illusions, from thinking that matter exists, that consciousness is limited, that dharmas have their own properties, that thought either exists or does not, and that cognition exists at all. The three understandings: knowledge of previous existences, of the future existences of all beings, and of the cessation of defilements. The *ācārya's* grounds are compared with the famous park of Anāthapiṅḍada (*piṅḍa* translates into Chinese as "giver" or "supplier"), which he endowed for the Buddha and where the first Buddhist monastic community, the Jetavana monastery, was founded.

3 An influential medieval theory said that thought is manifested by images, which are in turn expressed in words. And *Zhuangzi* recommends that once you understand the meaning of something, you should forget the words, just as you discard net and trap once you have caught fish or hare. What is *xuan*, "obscure," is what can be seen only as through a veil, what cannot be fully known or described in detail but only hinted at. In Buddhist terms, *li*, lit. "inherent pattern," refers to the noumenal, the thing-in-itself, as opposed to the phenomenal, hence ontological Truth.

2.19

長安早春

關戍惟東井
城池起北辰

咸歌太平日

4 共樂建寅春

雪盡青山樹

冰開黑水濱

草迎金埽馬

8 花伴玉樓人

鴻漸看無數

鶯歌聽欲頻

何當桂枝擢

12 歸及柳條新

2.19

Early Springtime in Chang'an¹

Our barrier guardpost is indeed the Eastern Well,
From city-walls and moats rises the North Constellation.²

As all sing the days of greatest peacefulness,

4 We delight together in a springtime set in the month of *yin*.³

Snow is vanishing now from trees on the green hills,

While ice is breaking up on the banks of black waters.⁴

New plants welcome steeds from golden paddocks,

8 And blossoms companion ladies from loft-buildings of jade.

The swan-geese progress gradually, seen innumerable;⁵

Orioles cry out, sounding almost urgent.

Sometime soon the cinnamon branch will be plucked,⁶

12 And one will return home as willow withes are fresh.

1 This poem is attributed to Meng Haoran's long-time friend Zhang Zirong in several collections and anthologies. If Meng was the author, it would have been written in 728, during his visit to the capital; if Zhang wrote it, as seems most likely, it would have been written in early 713, just before he sat for and passed the *jinshi* exam.

2 "Well" was the "lunar lodging" that corresponded geographically to the old state of Qin and especially Chang'an. The northern constellation is the Dipper, whose configuration was copied for the outline of the northern wall of Han-times Chang'an.

3 Days of greatest peacefulness are the ideal time of universal concord for which everyone wishes and which the poet suggests have now been attained. *Yin* (tigridine) was the cyclical sign of the sky-sector toward which the Dipper pointed in the first month of the year, according to the old Xia calendar, which Confucius advised that a good government would follow.

4 The waters are black only symbolically, since that is the color correspondence of the north, according to Five Agents theory.

5 The swan-geese are returning in their seasonal migration, but the wording also recalls the *Yijing* hexagram of "gradual progress," which imaged the swan-geese moving from the lowly waters to the cloudy heights and stood for the ambitious man making his way in the world. The poet hopes soon to join the many who have succeeded before him.

6 To "pluck the cinnamon branch" was a metaphor for passing the examination.

2.20

秦中苦雨思歸贈袁左丞賀侍郎

為學三十載
 閉門江漢陰
 明敎逢聖代
 4 羈旅屬秋霖
 豈直昏墊苦
 亦為權勢沉
 二毛催白髮
 8 百鎰罄黃金
 淚憶峴山墮
 愁懷湘水深
 謝公積憤懣
 12 莊鳥空謠吟
 躍馬非吾事
 狎鷗真我心
 寄言當路者
 16 去矣北山岑

1 Written autumn 728. Yuan is Yuan Renjing 袁仁敬, who served as left advisor in the Ministry of State Affairs; He is He Zhizhang 賀知章 (659–744), who once served as vice-director of the Board of Rites.

2 Shadeward of a river is the south side. In the compound “Jiang and Han” here, only the Han (at Meng’s dwelling on the “south branch” is meant; his early years were not spent south of the Jiang).

2.20

During Steady Rain in Qin I Long to Return Home; For Left Advisor
Yuan and Vice-Director He¹

- I had worked at my studies for some thirty years,
Kept my gate shut, shadeward of the Jiang and Han.²
With brilliance raised aloft we've come upon a sage's era,
4 But a wayfaring traveler is caught up in autumn's deluge.
How is one to confront this "dumfounding, whelming" incessance,³
When he is drowned as well by the privileged and powerful?
Two-colored strands are my hair early turning white,
8 While a hundred double-weights of yellow gold are used up.⁴
Tears are shed as I recall Mount Xian,
Sorrow grows deeper as I muse on Xiang River.⁵
Lordship Xie piles up distress and dolor,
12 And Zhuang Xi chants his lays of home in vain.⁶
To prance a steed is no affair of mine,
But to draw near the seagulls is truly my heart.⁷
I send these words to those who "control the roads":
16 I am gone away! To the crags of North Mountain!⁸

3 The Great Flood of highest antiquity was described by the sage-king Yu, who finally tamed it, as "dumfounding and overwhelming" the people.

4 Like Su Qin of Warring States times, who saw his cloak go threadbare and his yellow gold used up, during a fruitless visit to Chang'an in which he failed to gain notice from the king of Qin.

5 Xiangyang's Mount Xian was the site of the Tablet of Falling Tears, commemorating the city's third-century governor Yang Hu who loved to make excursions to this mountain (see 1.5, note 3). In musing on the Xiang River, Meng Haoran is thinking of the early Han scholar Jia Yi (see 1.13, note 4) who was exiled to Changsha in the Xiang River region.

6 The poet Xie Lingyun (385–433) often spoke of his sadness at not having an understanding friend and yearned for his family estate. Zhuang Xi, a man from Yue in the Warring States period, served the king of Chu, but voiced his own dialect when longing for home.

7 Cai Ze 蔡澤 of the Warring States period spoke of the pleasure he would have from prancing his steed while enjoying riches and power. Being friendly with the seagulls recalls the boy who played with them innocently at the seashore (see 1.15, note 5).

8 Those who control the roads are those in official positions. North Mountain was synonymous with the abode of a recluse, owing to Kong Zhigui's 孔稚珪 (447–501) composition "Dispatch from North Mountain."

2.21

陪張丞相登荊州城樓因寄薊州張使君及浪
泊戍主劉家

薊門天北畔

銅柱日南端

出守聲彌遠

4 投荒法未寬

側身聊倚望

攜手莫同懽

白壁無瑕玷

8 青松有歲寒

府中丞相閣

江上使君灘

興盡迴舟去

12 方知行路難

1 Again with Zhang Jiuling on his tour of the Jingzhou area in 737–38. Jingzhou was the name of the whole mid-Yangzi region and that of its administrative seat in present-day Jingmen (or Jiangling), Hubei. The two addressees are at opposite ends of the empire, prefect Zhang in Jimen (line 1), northeast Hebei, and Mr. Liu in Liangbo (line 2) which was near present-day Hanoi, Vietnam.

2.21

Accompanying Chief Minister Zhang to a High Loft on the Jingzhou City-Walls; This then Sent to Prefect Zhang of Jizhou and Mr. Liu, Garrison Chief of Liangbo¹

- One at Thistle Gate, the frontier north of the sky,
 One by the Bronze Pillars, the boundary south of the sun.²
 Gone out as protector, one's fame spreads more distant;
 4 Cast forth to the wastes, one's punishment not yet allayed.³
 Turning to the side, for a while I lean out and gaze;
 To be arm-in-arm there is no one to share the gladness.
 The white jade-disc has no flaw or defect,
 8 As the green pine can abide the season of cold.⁴
 In these precincts is a chief minister's gallery,
 And along the river are a district magistrate's rapids.⁵
 When the mood vanishes, one can turn the boat and go back,
 12 Recognizing just then that "traveling the road is hard."⁶

2 Rinan ("south-of-the-sun") was a name for the extreme south. The Bronze Pillars are those said to have been erected in what is now north Vietnam by the Eastern Han general Ma Yuan 馬援 after putting down a local revolt in the early 40s CE; they were meant to mark the southern edge of the empire.

3 Although both Zhang and Liu represent the empire at their respective posts, Zhang's position as civil magistrate in Jimen is a well-respected one, while Liu's as a mere garrison commander in what was regarded as territory beyond the pale of Chinese civilization must be a demotion occasioned by some unspecified misdeed.

4 In this couplet the focus is on Zhang Jiuling, formerly chief minister, praised as faultless and also steadfast in adversity, though the compliment might also apply to the addressees.

5 The gallery of a chief minister recalls Gongsun Hong and the place where he interviewed potential candidates for office (1.62, note 4); Meng Haoran identifies himself as Zhang Jiuling's underling. When Yang Liang 楊亮 went out in the late second century as magistrate to Yizhou 益州 in Sichuan, his boat capsized west of Yichang 宜昌 on the Jiang, the rapids there being later called after his title; the metaphor suggests Zhang Jiuling's unwarranted fall from power.

6 Turning round when the mood vanishes recalls the anecdote about Wang Huizhi (see 2.7, note 4). "Traveling the Road is Hard" is a well-known *yuefu* poem title and an obvious metaphor for life's troubles.

2.22

荊門上張丞相

共理分荊國

招賢愧楚材

召南風更闡

4 丞相閣還開

靚止欣眉睫

沉淪拔草萊

坐登徐孺榻

8 頻接李膺杯

始慰蟬鳴柳

俄看雪間梅

四時年箭盡

12 千里客程催

日下瞻歸翼

2.22

Offered Up to Chief Minister Zhang at Thorn Portal¹

You are bringing common order, meted out to the domain of Jing,
But in your summoning of worthies I'm a shamefast talent of Chu.

In Shaonan, the airs are made evident once more;

4 By the chief minister the gallery is again opened.²

“When we have met,” I delight in the look of your face;

From the boggy ripples, you pull up the grass and weeds.³

For the time being I climb upon Xu Ru's couch,

8 Frequently accepting the cup from Li Ying.⁴

At first condoled with by cicadas chirring in the willows,

Soon you'll see prunus blossoming amidst the snow.

The four seasons bring an end to the year's fluting,⁵

12 As a thousand leagues urge a traveler to his journey.

Under the sun you look at homeward-beating wings,

1 Thorn Portal (Jingmen) is a mountain on the south bank of the Jiang in present-day Yichang, Hubei. It traditionally marked the boundary between the state of Chu to the east and Ba-Shu to the west.

2 The “airs of Shaonan” section of the *Shijing* were thought to come from the area of the Jiang and Han rivers, roughly that of Jingzhou where Zhang Jiuling has been transferred. In one interpretive tradition, it was thought these poems were used by the Duke of Shao to win over worthy men. The gallery of the chief minister refers to that of Gongsun Hong where he met with potential officials (see 1.62, note 4).

3 The phrase in quotes comes from one of the Shaonan poems in the *Shijing*, expressing the speaker's delight at meeting her lord; “the look of your face” is literally “eyebrows and eyelashes.” The grass and weeds of line 6 are self-depreciatory of the poet himself.

4 Xu Zhi 徐稚 (97–168), byname Ruzi 孺子, was poor but refused the local governor Chen Fan's 陳蕃 offer of employment. However, Xu visited him often, and the governor kept a pallet reserved for Xu, which he brought out only for him. Li Ying (110–169) maintained correct conduct and graciously aided scholars, although the Han court was growing more disordered. Both lines are meant to praise Zhang Jiuling, and the second carries a criticism of the current Tang court.

5 The reference is to the twelve pitch-pipes of different lengths which were activated by the different airs of the twelve months.

沙邊厭曝鰓
 佇聞宣室召
 16 星象復中台

2.23

和宋太史北樓新亭

返耕意未遂
 日夕登城隅
 誰謂山林近
 4 坐為符竹拘
 麗譙非改作
 軒檻是新圖
 遠水自嶠冢
 8 長雲吞具區
 願隨江燕賀
 羞逐府寮趨
 欲識狂歌者
 12 丘園一豎儒

1 The sun often refers to the emperor, and this line suggests that Zhang Jiuling may soon return to court under the emperor's gaze. Legend tells that at a certain riverfall called Dragon Gate on the Yellow River in Shaanxi the fish who make it up the falls become dragons, while those that don't lie with parched gills on the sand; making it up Dragon Gate became a metaphor for attaining an official position through patronage or by passing the civil-service exam.

- While on the sands someone wearies of “parched gills.”¹
 You may expect to hear a summons to the Proclamation Chamber,
 16 As the starry symbols will restore the Central Terrace.²

2.23

Matching Grand Calendrist Song’s Poem “The North Loft’s New Pavilion”

- To return to the plow, your intention has not been fulfilled,
 And at dusk of day we climb to a corner of the city-walls.
 Who can say the hills and groves are near,
 4 When for now you hold an official’s bamboo tally?
 The fine-looking turret has not been altered or remade,
 It is the balcony’s railing that is of a new design.
 Our far-drawn waters derive from Buffer Mound,
 8 And long-extended clouds enclose Stored Hoard.³
 I wish to offer felicitations with the river swallows,⁴
 Am ashamed to hasten with department functionaries.
 But would you know of him who is so madly singing:
 12 Of hillock and garden he is a single piddling pedant.

2 The Proclamation Chamber is an imperial audience-hall. Stars and constellations symbolized earthly places and ranks; the three pairs of stars along the southwest border of Ursa Major were called the Three Terraces and identified with particular offices. The Central Terrace was counterpart to the ministry of state affairs (the term itself, 中台, was sometimes used for it), most important of the three great government bureaus and whose director had been Zhang Jiuling before his 736 removal. Meng suggests that the stars presage Zhang’s restoral to that position.

3 This couplet pictures the fantastically broad view from the tower. Buffer Mound is the mountain in Shaanxi, whence the Han River arises. Stored Hoard (Juqu) is an old name for Lake Tai, just west of Suzhou.

4 According to *Huainanzi*, “when a great edifice is completed, swallows and sparrows bring felicitations.”

2.24

夜泊宣城界

西塞沿江島

南陵問驛樓

潮平津濟闊

4 風止客帆收

去去懷前浦

茫茫泛夕流

石逢羅剎礙

8 山泊敬亭幽

火熾梅根冶

煙迷楊葉洲

離家復水宿

12 相伴賴沙鷗

2.24

Night-Mooring at the Border of Xuancheng¹

From the West Frontier I've coasted the Jiang's islands,
 At South Tumulus inquired of the post-station building.²
 The tide was smooth, the ford's crossing wide;

4 When the wind paused, the traveler's sail was gathered in.
 Pushing on and on, in mind of the cove ahead,
 So broadly boundless, adrift on the twilight current.

A rocky encounter was the barricade of rākṣasas,
 8 A mountain mooring was the fastness of Jingting.³

Fires blaze in the Foundry of Meigen,
 And lost in haze was the Isle of Yangye.⁴

Away from home, once more I pass the night on the waters,
 12 For my companions, relying on the sandshore gulls.⁵

1 In southeastern Anhui, in the Yangzi delta.

2 West Frontier (Xisai) was the name of a mountain in Hubei, also a reference to Thorn Gate on the Jiang, the west border of Chu, whence Meng Haoran has come. South Tumulus is a literal translation of Nanling, a city about 25 miles west of Xuancheng.

3 A rākṣasa (Skt.) is a homicidal demon; a group of dangerous rocks in the Jiang near Guichi 貴池 district, west of Nanling, were named this because thought to be the haunt of malignant spirits that would shipwreck the unwary. Mount Jingting was about seven miles north of Xuancheng.

4 Meigen (Prunus Root) foundry, east of Guichi, had been an important forge in Six Dynasties times. Yangye (Poplar-leaf) isle was about six miles northwest of Guichi.

5 Also recalling the gulls that played with the innocent boy (see 1.15, note 5).

2.25

奉先張明府休流還鄉海亭宴集探得堦字

自君理畿甸

余亦經江淮

萬里音信斷

4 數年雲雨乖

歸來休澣日

始得賞心諧

朱紱心雖重

8 滄洲趣每懷

樹低新舞閣

山對舊書齋

何以發秋興

12 陰蟲鳴夜堦

2.25

A Banquet Gathering at the Lake Pavilion of Magistrate Zhang of Fengxian who Has Returned to his Homeplace on Official Leave; I Drew the Rhyme-Word “Stairs”¹

- Since you, sir, have brought to pattern the royal domain,
 I for my part have ranged the Jiang and Huai.
 For a myriad leagues rumor and message were broken off,
 4 For several years clouds and rain have been contrary.
 Having come back home for days of rest and cleansing,
 You’ve now gained the concord of a like-minded friend.
 Though the red seal-cord of office lies heavy on your mind,
 8 Urgings for the Watchet Isles are always held to your heart.²
 Trees stoop over the new-built gallery for dance,
 As hills stand across from the old studio for reading.
 By what means shall I express this mood of autumn?
 12 Crickets in the shade chirp by the evening stairs.

1 Zhang has been identified variously but is clearly a native of Xiangyang. Fengxian was in the outer northwest environs of Chang’an, so technically part of the “royal domain” (line 1). By getting the word “stairs” in the party game of poetry composition, Meng Haoran must set his poem to that rhyme-group and also use that word as one of the rhymes.

2 The Watchet Isles are the so-called isles of the immortals in the eastern sea.

2.26

同張明府碧谿贈答

別業聞新製

同聲和者多

還看碧谿答

4 不羨綠珠歌

自有陽臺女

朝朝拾翠過

舞庭鋪錦繡

8 粧牖閉藤蘿

秋滿休閑日

春餘景色和

仙鳧能作伴

12 羅襪共凌波

別島尋花藥

迴潭折芰荷

更憐斜日照

16 紅紛艷青娥

2.26

To Go With the Poems of Bestowal and Response by Magistrate Zhang and “Blue Brook”¹

- The detached villa, I know, is newly fashioned,
 And many are those who accord in harmonious voices.
 But I am yet taken with “Blue Brook’s” response,
 4 No longer admiring the songs of “Green Jade.”²
 Now you have your own Lady of the Sunlit Terrace,
 Who dawn after dawn stops to gather halcyon feathers.³
 The dance courtyard is covered with figured embroideries,
 8 The ornate lattice-window barred with wisteria vines.
 In fullness of autumn, days of rest and idleness
 Are as leftover springtime in a blend of light and color.
 The transcendent’s wild-ducks may be your companions,
 12 While silk-net stockings will skim the wavelets with them.⁴
 On a detached island you search out blossoms and herbs,
 In the winding pool pluck caltrop and lotus.
 Even more do I love now the slanting sun’s radiance:
 16 Rouge and powder making gorgeous a fairy-like girl.

1 The melodiously named “Blue Brook” (Bixi) must have been a female entertainer in Zhang’s employ who was both lovely and adept at song-writing. See also 4.73.

2 “Green Jade” was the beloved concubine and entertainer of Shi Chong 石崇 (249–300) who refused to give her up to his lord.

3 The Lady of the Sunlit Terrace was the goddess of Mt. Wu with whom a king of Chu had a tryst and said she would then appear morning after morning, sunset after sunset as clouds or rain (see 2.3, note 1). In Cao Zhi’s 曹植 (192–232) “Rhapsody on the Goddess of the Luo River,” the goddess at one point gathers halcyon feathers.

4 Wang Qiao, an adept of the Eastern Han, had a pair of magical wild-ducks that transformed into footwear carrying him through the air twice monthly, to make official visits to the capital from the far district where he was magistrate. The goddess of the Luo River, in Cao Zhi’s rhapsody (see preceding note), was described as “skimming the wavelets” in her silk stockings. In this couplet Zhang is identified with Wang Qiao, Blue Brook with the Luo goddess.

2.27

贈蕭少府

上德如流水

安仁道若山

聞君秉高節

4 而得奉清顏

鴻漸昇台羽

牛刀列下班

處腴能不潤

8 居劇體常閑

去詐人無諂

除邪吏息奸

欲知清與潔

12 明月在澄灣

2.27

For District Constable Xiao¹

Highest virtue resembles flowing water;
At rest in humaneness, the Way is like mountains.²

I've heard that you, sir, maintain loftiest integrity,

4 Are able to be esteemed as one clear-countenanced.

The swan-goose's progress should rise with plumed ornaments,
But an ox-knife's quality is now placed within the lower ranks.³

Put amidst grease, you're fit not to be sopped;

8 Set in straits, your person is always at ease.

You having ousted improbity, there is no fawning from others,
And having expelled bias, the perfidy of underlings is halted.

If one would know of your purity and spotlessness –

12 Luminous moonlight lying on a pellucid bay.

1 Xiao's title as given is literally "Junior Administrator," an alternative designation for a district constable (*wei* 尉).

2 According to the *Daodejing*, highest virtue does not display itself as virtue, and the highest good is like water, while Confucius once said that water flowing everywhere without partiality is like virtue. He also said that those who are at rest in humaneness are humane, and that the humane are fond of mountains.

3 The swan-goose's gradual progress to the heights, from the *Yijing*, is a metaphor for an official's rise to higher rank (see 2.19, note 5). Confucius once noted that a knife for slaughtering an ox used for ritual sacrifice should not be used for the menial task of carving a chicken – hence a metaphor for someone of great ability (like Constable Xiao) who occupies a lowly position.

2.28

同王九題就師山房

晚憇支公室

故人逢右軍

軒窗避炎暑

4 翰墨動新文

竹蔽檐前日

雨隨堦下雲

同遊清陰遍

8 吟臥夕陽曛

江靜棹歌歇

溪深樵語聞

歸途未忍去

12 攜手戀清芬

2.28

To Go With Wang (Nine)'s "Inscribed at the Mountain Dwelling of Master Jiu"

By evening I rested at Lordship Zhi's chamber,
Having met here an old friend, he of the Army of the Right.¹

By casement and window we avoid the blazing heat,

4 As with quill and ink we contrive new verses.

Bamboos block out the sun before the eaves,

And rain trails after the clouds below the stairs.

Together we wander as pure shade spreads round,

8 Relax while reciting as the twilight glow wavers.

The river is still, the song of oars has ceased,

But in the mountain's depths woodcutters' talk is heard.

I cannot yet bear to go off on the homeward path,

12 Here arm-in-arm, enthralled by the pure fragrance.

1 Master Jiu is identified with Zhi Dun (314–366), the great Buddhist master and elite literary figure. Wang (Nine), i.e., Wang Jiong (see 1.17), is identified with the like-surnamed Wang Xizhi (321–379), famous calligrapher who was once given the title "General of the Army of the Right," and was, like Meng Haoran's Wang, a Daoist devotee.

2.29

上張吏部

公門世緒昌

才子冠裴王

自出平津邸

4 還為吏部郎

神仙餘氣色

列宿動輝光

夜直南宮靜

8 朝趨北禁長

時人窺水鏡

明主賜衣裳

翰苑飛鸚鵡

12 天池待鳳凰

2.29

Offered Up to Zhang of the Board of Personnel¹

- Your official gate has the glory of generational lineage,
 And you an exceptional talent higher than Pei or Wang.²
 Having emerged from the noble manor of Pingjin,
 4 You have come round to be gentleman of the Personnel Board.³
 With more than a little air of the divine transcendents,
 You are with the constellations giving off gleaming light.⁴
 When on night duty, the South Palace is quiet;
 8 As you scurry at dawn, the North Sanctum is astir.⁵
 The men of this time look to you as a transparent mirror;
 The enlightened ruler bestows on you ceremonial clothes.
 In the Garden of Quills, you seem a parrot in flight,
 12 And in the Pool of Heaven, phoenixes await you.⁶

1 This poem is quoted and attributed to Lu Xiang 盧象 in three texts earlier than any extant edition of Meng Haoran's works; that attribution seems convincing, but I include the poem for the sake of completeness.

2 In the Lu Xiang attributions, the recipient is identified as Zhang Jun 張均, a son of the influential high minister Zhang Yue 張說 (663–731), which explains the “glory of generational legacy.” In the Eastern Jin dynasty the two young men Pei Kai 裴楷 and Wang Rong 王戎 were known as exceptional talents, and Pei was appointed as gentleman (functionally vice-director) of the Board of Personnel 吏部郎, just as Zhang was (line 4).

3 The famous Han chief minister Gongsun Hong (see 1.62, note 4) was enfeoffed as Marquis of Pingjin; Zhang's father, also a chief minister and ennobled, is being identified with him.

4 Tang governmental offices in the capital were often compared with the seats of the divine transcendents. The offices with the term “gentleman” in their title were sometimes compared with the constellations above.

5 The Ministry of State Affairs (Shangshu sheng) in Tang times, under which the Personnel Board was one of six subsections, was often called the South Palace, equating it with that quadrant of stars in the sky. The North Sanctum was part of the imperial palace.

6 The Garden of Quills is another name for the Forest of Quills (Hanlin), a court establishment of literary men whose members were on call from the emperor for composition. The parrot was regarded as a rare and uncommon bird. The Pool of Heaven was visited by the great *peng*-bird in the first passage of *Zhuangzi*, and the Imperial Secretariat (Zhongshu sheng) in Tang times was often called the Phoenix Pool.

2.30

和于判官登萬山亭因贈洪府都督韓公

韓公美襄土

日賞城西岑

結構意不淺

4 崑潭趣轉深

皇華一動詠

荊國幾謳吟

舊徑蘭勿翦

8 新堤柳欲陰

砌傍餘怪石

沙上有閑禽

自牧豫章郡

12 空瞻楓樹林

因聲寄流水

善聽在知音

耆舊眇不接

2.30

Matching Evaluative Official Yu's Poem, "Climbing to the Pavilion on Mount Wan"; For Lordship Han, Governor-General of Hongfu¹

- Lordship Han regarded the land of Xiang as lovely,
 Daily appreciated this peak west of the city-walls.
 The structure he built here was not shallow in conception,
 4 And the pool by this cliff is especially deep in its appeal.
 Once that "radiant flower" was celebrated in song,
 Many ballads were intoned in the state of Jing.²
 Let not the eupatory by his path of old be shorn,³
 8 As along the new dyke willows are almost giving shade.
 Alongside the steps is a profusion of odd-seeming rocks;
 Upon the sands there are birds at their ease.
 Since you have gone to shepherd Camphor-wood commandery,
 12 I look to no avail over the forest of sweet-gum trees.⁴
 But in my sequent song when I impart flowing water,
 The right hearing rests with one who "knows the tone."⁵
 Elders and seniors are dwindled away, not to be reached,

1 Mount Wan was a few miles northwest of Xiangyang. Lordship Han is Han Chaozong 韓朝宗 (?-ca. 746) who in 734-736 was prefect of Xiangzhou 襄州 (including Xiangyang) and general commissioner of Jingzhou. While in Xiangyang he had the pavilion on Mount Wan built for his pleasure outings. In 736-739, when this poem must have been written, he was prefect of Hongzhou (present-day Nanchang, Jiangxi) and governor-general of the surrounding area. The position of *panguan* in a governor-generalship was functionally the lieutenant-governor; the identity of Yu who wrote the poem Meng Haoran matched on this occasion is not known.

2 The "radiant flower" was used in a poem from the *Shijing* to stand for a royal envoy; here it represents Lord Han whom the local residents praised in their own lyrics.

3 A *Shijing* poem bids "let not the flowering-pear be shorn," because near it the Duke of Shao, beloved by his people, had rested. Meng portrays the eupatory near the pavilion in the same light.

4 Camphor-wood commandery (Yuzhangjun) is another name for Hongzhou. The mid-Yangzi area (Chu) is the "forest of sweet-gum trees" (see 1.50, note 2).

5 Recalling the master zither-player Boya and his perfect auditor Zhong Ziqi. Meng Haoran's matching poem will be understood by the one who knows what he feels, Han Chaozong.

- 16 崔徐無處尋
 物情多貴遠
 賢俊豈遙今
 遲爾長江暮
 20 澄清一洗心

2.31

下瀨石

- 瀨石三百里
 沿洄千嶂間
 沸聲常浩浩
 4 洑勢亦潺潺
 跳沫魚龍沸
 垂藤猿狖攀
 榜人苦奔峭
 8 而我忘險艱
 放溜情彌遠
 登艫目自閑
 暝帆何處泊
 12 遙指落星灣

- 16 There is no place now to find Cui or Xu.¹
 Since human emotions mostly prize what is distant,
 Can a worthy paragon of today be made to seem remote?
 You are long overdue at sunset on the Long River,
 20 Which when clear and pure completely cleanses the heart.

2.31

Down the Gan Rock-race²

- The Gan rock-race is three hundred leagues long,
 Downstream and up, among a thousand cliff-faces.
 A noise of churning, always flooding fully onward;
 4 A force convulsive, likewise rushing roiling forth.
 Through leaping foam, fishes and dragons floundering;
 From dangling vines, gibbons and langurs cling tight.
 The helmsman is unsettled by the scarps dashing past,
 8 Yet I pay no heed to hazard or peril.
 Set free on the current, emotions ranging ever farther;
 Perched at the prow, my sight is well-pleased.
 At what place will our sail in the gloaming be moored?
 12 Far away it points, toward the Bay of the Fallen Star.³

1 Cui Zhouping 崔州平 and Xu Shu 徐庶 were Zhuge Liang's closest friends in Xiangyang.

2 The Gan River runs north in central and southern Jiangxi, emptying into Lake Pengli; it had a long stretch of rough rapids.

3 In the northwest part of Lake Pengli.

2.32

行至漢川作

異縣非吾土

連山盡綠篁

平田出郭少

4 盤壠入雲長

萬壑歸於海

千峰劃彼蒼

猿聲亂楚峽

8 人語帶巴鄉

石上攢椒樹

藤間養蜜房

雪餘春未暖

12 嵐解晝初陽

征馬疲登頓

歸帆愛渺茫

坐欣沿溜下

16 信宿見維桑

2.32

Composed on Reaching the Han Watercourse

- This unfamiliar district is not my own land,
 Its linked mountains full of green thicket-bamboo.
 Beyond the outskirts, level farmland becomes less,
 4 As twisting hummocks extend into the clouds.
 A myriad ravines retreat back toward the sea,
 With a thousand peaks drawn against the sky's cerulean.
 Here the gibbon's cry disturbs the Chu gorges,
 8 While men's chatter carries to the countryside of Ba.
 Atop boulders are clumped pepper bushes;
 Amidst vines are tended honeycombs.
 As the snow remains, springtime is not yet warm;
 12 Only when the high mists disperse is the day sunny.
 A wayfaring steed wearies of clambering up and down,
 And a homebound sail grudges the endless expanse.
 I'm content for now to coast the current down –
 16 Two night-halts and I'll see the mulberries of home.

2.33

久滯越中贈謝南池會稽賀少府

陳平無產業

尼父倦東西

負郭昔云翳

4 問津今已迷

未能忘魏闕

空此滯秦稽

兩見夏雲起

8 再聞春鳥啼

懷仙梅福市

訪舊若耶溪

聖主賢為寶

12 卿何隱遁棲

2.33

Long Detained in Yue; For Xie Nanchi and District Constable He of Kuaiji

A Chen Ping “without goods or property,”

A Father Ni wayworn east and west.¹

One’s home, said of old, was “fast against the outmost wall”;

4 The other inquired of the ford, but it was now already lost.

Not yet able to forget the palace pylons,

Vain is this lingering on Mounts Qin and Ji.²

Twice I’ve seen here the rising up of summer clouds,

8 Heard a second time the chaffer of springtime birds.

I recalled the transcendent in Mei Fu’s marketplace,

And have visited the past at Ruoye brook.³

To sage rulers worthy men are a treasure,

12 So why should you be roosting shaded and obscure?

1 Chen Ping was one of Liu Bang’s key lieutenants in establishing the Han dynasty. He came from a poor family. Line 3 also refers to him. The two phrases in quotes are taken verbatim from Zuo Si’s 左思 (ca. 250–ca. 305) description of Chen Ping in the seventh of his “Poems on History.” Father Ni is Confucius who never found a ruler to employ him, so had no fixed home. Line 4’s incident of asking after the ford also refers to him. The implied subject of all four lines is Meng Haoran himself.

2 Mount Qinwang (Qin Lookout) and Mount Kuaiji, both in Kuaiji.

3 Mei Fu (see 1.30, note 1) left his official position and his family when Wang Mang usurped the throne and retreated incognito to the Wu area, where he reputedly gained transcendence and was also seen in the Kuaiji marketplace. The Ruoye brook is where the fabled beauty Xi Shi (see 1.7, note 2) was discovered while washing silk.

2.34

送韓使君除洪府都督

述職撫荆衡
 分符襲寵榮
 往來看擁傳
 4 前後賴專城
 勿翦棠猶在
 波澄水更清
 重推江漢理
 8 旋改豫章行
 召父多遺愛
 羊公有令名
 衣冠列祖道
 12 耆舊擁前旌
 峴首晨風送
 江陵夜火迎
 無才慙孺子
 16 千里愧同聲

1 This is Han Chaozong (see 2.30, note 1).

2 The first two words of line 1 are a classical idiom referring to the Zhou feudal lords rendering periodic reports of the governance of their areas to the king. Mt. Jing and Mt. Heng marked roughly the northern and southern boundaries of Jingzhou, over which Han Chaozong had been governor-general. Two-part

2.34

Seeing Off Prefect Han, on His Appointment as Governor-General of Hongfu¹

Responsibilities accounted for, you relieved the regions of Jing and Heng;
Tallies divided, you have carried on your line's favor and glory.²

Past and present scions, you maintained the relay stations,

4 Formerly and after were entrusted in charge of territories.

“Let it not be shorn” – the peartree still remains;³

Pure are the waves, and the waters even clearer.

Now the management of Jiang and Han is handed on again,

8 As you, reassigned in turn, to Yuzhang journey off.⁴

Father Shao leaves much love behind him,

And Lordship Yang's estimable name endures.⁵

Robes and caps are marshalled for the offering at roadside,⁶

12 Elders and seniors press round your forward banner.

From the top of Mount Xian a dawn wind sends you off,

And by evening fires you'll be welcomed in Jiangling.

Having no ability, I'm an embarrassed Xu Ruzi,⁷

16 For a thousand leagues shamed before him whose song I share.

tallies were part of the accoutrement of centrally appointed officials. Han Chaozong's father and grandfather had both been honored officials, the grandfather having been enfeoffed by Tang Taizong.

3 In a *Shijing* poem a plea is made by the ancient Duke of Shao's admiring subjects not to cut down the flowering pear-tree under which he had enjoyed sitting. Han Chaozong's esteem and influence in Xiangyang will likewise endure.

4 The region of the Jiang and Han rivers refers to Jingzhou. Yuzhang is another name for Hongfu.

5 Father Shao is the Duke of Shao referred to in line 5. Lordship Yang is Yang Hu, the third-century governor of Xiangyang who was much revered by the people (see 1.5, note 3).

6 The local dignitaries assemble at the farewell banquet for Han Chaozong, which includes a sacrifice made to the divinity of the road to ensure a safe journey.

7 Xu Ruzi is Xu Zhi (see 2.22, note 4), who did not accept a recommendation for office but had a special seat reserved for him by the local governor whenever Xu visited him.

2.35

廬明府九日峴山宴袁使君張郎中崔員外

宇宙誰開闢

江山此鬱盤

登臨今古用

4 風俗歲時觀

地理荊州分

天涯楚塞寬

百城今刺史

8 華省舊郎官

共美重陽節

俱懷落帽歡

酒邀彭澤載

12 琴輟武城彈

獻壽先浮菊

尋幽或藉蘭

烟虹鋪藻翰

1 The opening lines play off a famous anecdote about Yang Hu (1.5, note 3) who, when governor of Xiangyang, loved to go on outings to Mt. Xian, where he once commented that the mountain had existed from the beginning of space and time and the men of his day surmounted and appreciated it just as their predecessors had done.

2.35

At Mt. Xian on Double-Ninth Day Magistrate Lu Fêtes Prefect Yuan,
Director Zhang, and Vice-Director Cui

- Who was it that split open space and time,
Here the river and mountain to be wrapped densely?
To climb and look outward is past and present practice,
4 As in usual customs the year's seasons are observed.¹
The lay of the land sets Jingzhou apart,
With sky's shores stretching wide to Chu's frontier.
A hundred cities now are governed by a present prefect,
8 While with the splendid offices are familiar these "gentleman" courtiers.²
Together enjoying the Double-Yang festival,
They jointly cherish the "toppled-cap" joy.³
Wine has been brought to pay respects to Pengze,
12 Whose zither, when played, brings surcease to Wucheng.⁴
Toasting long life, first we float chrysanthemums;
Seeking hidden depths, sometimes twine eupatorium.⁵
A rainbow in the haze spreads out elegance from our quills,

2 A prefect was by tradition hyperbolically thought to be in charge of a hundred cities; here it refers flatteringly to magistrate Yuan. The "splendid offices" are those of the three highest ministries of government, especially the Ministry of State Affairs with its six Boards each being headed by offices with the term "gentleman" (*lang*) in their titles, viz., director or *langzhong* as held by Zhang and vice-director or *yuanwailang* as held by Cui (see also 2.12, note 2).

3 The toppled cap is a conventional image in Double-Ninth poems, referring to the cap of Meng Jia (mid-fourth-century) blown off by the wind during a Double-Ninth outing and his genial attitude toward the joking by companions at his expense.

4 Tao Qian was once without wine on Double-Ninth day, when a messenger came bringing wine from a friend. Confucius once visited Wucheng and found the people had given up their rough ways and were playing music, owing to the good influence of Confucius's disciple Ziyou who had recently become magistrate of the place. Similar influence and results were effected in a different place by Mizi Jian who brought the people under his care to order by playing his zither in the official hall. Magistrate Lu is the implied referent in both lines.

5 Petals of the autumn-blooming (therefore symbolic of long life) chrysanthemum were floated in wine on Double-Ninth day. The act of twining eupatorium is reminiscent of the poet and courtier Qu Yuan, for whom it signified his moral purity.

- 16 松竹挂衣冠
 叔子神如在
 山公興未闌
 嘗聞騎馬醉
 20 還向習池看

2.36

宴崔明府宅夜觀妓

- 畫堂觀妙妓
 長夜正留賓
 燭吐蓮花艷
 4 粧成桃李春
 髻鬟低舞席
 衫袖掩歌唇
 汗濕偏宜粉
 8 羅輕詎着身
 調移箏柱促
 歡會酒杯頻
 儻使曹王見
 12 應嫌洛浦神

- 16 As on pine and bamboo hang our robes and caps.
 Shuzi's spirit seems still to be here,
 Nor is Lord Shan's elation yet wasted away.¹
 Having heard of the latter's drunken horseback riding,
 20 Let's head back for a look at the Xi Family pool.

2.36

A Fête at Magistrate Cui's Residence, Watching the Performers at Night²

- In your painted hall to behold marvelous performers,
 Long into the night you let your guest stay on.
 In the candles' flare is a seduction of lotus blossoms;
 4 Makeup is perfect as a springtime of peach and plum.
 Their coiled chignons droop above dancers' mats,
 And sleeves of long gowns veil their lips in song.
 Sweat dampens, but quite sets off their powder;
 8 Gossamer silk so fine it can barely clothe their persons.
 They move with the tune, as the cithern's stops are tightened,
 Mingling in gaiety at the wine cups' frequent passing.
 If only Prince Cao could be made to look upon them,
 12 His goddess on the Luo River's shore must be in disfavor.³

1 Shuzi was the byname of Yang Hu (see preceding note 2), who once vowed that if there were consciousness after death, his spirit would come back to Mt. Xian because he was so fond of it. Lord Shan is Shan Jian (see 2.5, note 1) whose Xiangyang drinking bouts were legendary, especially at his favorite spot, the Gao-yang pool, also called the Xi Family pool.

2 The performers or "artistes" are young women trained in song and dance.

3 Prince Cao is Cao Zhi (192–232) whose "Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess" describes at length that divinity's beauty and grace.

2.37

韓大使東齋會岳上人諸學士

郡守虛陳榻

林間召楚材

山川祈雨畢

4 雲物喜晴開

抗禮尊縫掖

臨流揖渡杯

徒攀朱仲李

8 誰薦和羹梅

翰墨緣情製

高深以意裁

滄洲趣不遠

12 何必問蓬萊

2.37

A Gathering at Commissioner Han's East Studio for His Eminence Yue and Several Scholars¹

- The commandery prefect keeps empty Chen Fan's pallet,²
 Where amid the grove he summons talents from Chu.
 When to mountains and rivers prayers for rain are accomplished,
 4 From cloudy forms we enjoy clear skies opening up.
 With well-meted rites one honors those with broad-seamed sleeves;
 At the edge of the stream bows to one who crossed in a cup.³
 Useless to pluck down the plums of Zhu Zhong,
 8 And who would present the prunes for an agreeable stew?⁴
 With brush and ink our "tracing of emotion" is crafted,⁵
 Lofty or deep, tailored according to the idea.
 The Watchet Isles are not far to yearn for from here,
 12 So why must one inquire about Penglai?⁶

1 The host is likely Han Chaozong (2.30, 2.34).

2 As a district governor Chen Fan tried to recruit the poor but worthy Xu Zhi. The latter declined office but came often to visit Chen, who kept a special pallet hung up just for Xu, which Chen took down for him to sit on whenever he came (see 2.22, note 4). Here, as elsewhere, Meng Haoran identifies with Xu Zhi and flatters his host by identifying him as Chen Fan.

3 Broad-sleeved clothing was worn by the people of Lu in Confucius's time; it came to refer to Confucian scholars, here to the "several scholars" at the gathering. An unnamed Buddhist monk was once said to have crossed a river miraculously by riding in a wooden cup; Eminence Yue is referred to by the analogy.

4 Zhu Zhong was reputedly a transcendent who stole the fine plums of Fangling 房陵 (present-day Fangxian, Hubei), about eighty miles west of Xiangyang. Adding prunes and salt to make an "agreeable stew" is a metaphor from the *Shangshu* for the assistance given by a worthy minister to an appreciative ruler.

5 Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303) in his "Rhapsody on Literature" described *shi*-poetry as a genre that "traces emotion."

6 The Watchet Isles are the paradise isles of the immortals in the Eastern Sea, one of which is Penglai. Meng Haoran suggests this gathering might as well be happening there.

2.38

初年樂城館中臥疾懷歸

異縣天隅僻

孤帆海畔過

往來鄉信斷

4 留滯客情多

臘月聞雷震

東風感歲和

蟄虫驚戶穴

8 巢鵲眇庭柯

徒對芳樽酒

其如伏枕何

歸來理舟楫

12 江海正無波

2.38

At the Start of the Year I Lie Ill at a Hostel in Lecheng, Longing to Go Home¹

- In an unfamiliar district, remote at a corner of the sky,
 My lonely sail has stopped by the margin of the sea.
 Coming or going, letters of home are cut off;
 4 Delayed and hindered, a stranger's feelings multiply.
 In All-Hallows month I heard the rumblings of thunder;
 With the east wind now I sense the new year's sweetness.
 Surprised by insects awaking in the cracks of the door,
 8 I notice the magpies nesting in courtyard boughs.
 Useless to have a cup of scented wine before me,
 What's to be done with it when resting on a pillow?
 Let me go home! Set the boat's oars aright,
 12 And on river and sea, be there no waves now.

1 Lecheng is present-day Leqing, in southern Zhejiang, on the coast of the East China Sea. See 3.16 and 3.59 for New Year's Eve poems written a few days before this.

2.39

上巳日澗南園期王山人陳七諸公不至

搖艇候明發
 花源弄晚春
 在山懷綺季
 4 臨漢憶荀陳
 上巳期三月
 浮杯興十旬
 坐歌空有待
 8 行樂恨無隣
 日晚蘭亭北
 煙開曲水濱
 浴蚕逢姹女
 12 採艾值幽人
 石壁堪題序
 沙場好解紳
 群公望不至
 16 虛擲此芳辰

2.39

At the Garden South of the Branch on the Double-Third Day, Expecting the Hermit Wang, Chen (Seven), and Several Others, Who Do Not Arrive¹

For casting off the skiff, I watched for dawnlight to break,
By the blossom-strewn font, basking in late springtime.
In his mountain I thought dearly of Qi Ji,

4 At the Han's edge recalled the Xuns and Chens.²

For the *shangsi* event we made a date in the third month,
To float wine-cups in the mood of the Ten Weeks brew.³
I sing for now, but to no end is there anyone to welcome,

8 Making merry, but regretting that no one is near at hand.

The day grows late, north of my Lanting,⁴

And mist opens up, at the brink of the curving stream.

In their washing of silkworm cocoons, I meet charming lasses;

12 In their culling of mugwort, I come upon secluded men.

A stony rockface is suitable for inscribing my own "preface,"

The sandy strand a fit place for undoing one's formal sash.

I look expectantly for the group of gentlemen, who do not arrive,

16 So for no purpose I throw away this sweet-scented occasion.

1 The Garden South of the Branch was Meng Haoran's home. The Double-Third was the day of the spring purification festival, originally held on the first *si*-day (of the sexagenary cycle) of the third month, hence its formal name, but by medieval times regularized to the third day of the third month. The hermit Wang is probably Wang Jiong (Nine), Master White Clouds (see 1.17, 1.60, 2.4, 2.28). The third is the last month of spring, hence the second line's "late spring."

2 Qili Ji 綺里季 was one of the "four graybeards" of Mt. Shang 商山, famously principled recluses at the start of the Han dynasty. Hermit Wang is being compared with him. In the mid-3rd century there were five men of the Xun family and five of the Chen family who were thought comparable in their worth. Meng is identifying Mr. Chen and the other gentlemen with them.

3 Floating wine-cups as part of drinking or verse-making games, along the banks of a curving natural or artificial waterway, was a favored amusement at gatherings of the literate elite. The Ten Weeks brew is wine that took 100 days (10 weeks) to mature.

4 The *shangsi* gathering at Lanting in 353, at which poems were composed by many individuals and a famous "preface" (see line 13) for the collection was written by Wang Xizhi, was the best-known of such occasions and the ideal of most that followed thereafter. Meng refers to his locale as Lanting's equivalent.

2.40

送莫氏甥兼諸昆第從韓司馬入西軍

念爾習詩禮

未嘗離戶庭

平生早偏露

4 萬里更飄零

坐棄三冬業

行觀八陣形

飾裝辭故里

8 謀策赴邊庭

壯志吞鴻鵠

遙心伴鶻鷁

所從文與武

12 不戰自應寧

2.40

Seeing Off My Cousin of the Mo Clan who, Together with Several
Brothers, is Following Marshal Han to Join the Western Armies

I remember you studying the *Odes* and *Rites*,

Never once leaving doorway or courtyard.

For your whole life early left orphaned and exposed,

4 For a myriad leagues drifting ever more forlorn.

But just right now you lay aside a three-winters' legacy,

Going off to witness formations of the eight battle-lines.¹

Thoroughly outfitted, you take leave of your old hamlet,

8 With plans and strategies proceeding to the frontier courts.

Your brave ambition embraces that of the wild swan,

Your heart, though distant, companions the wagtails.²

The one whom you follow is both cultured and martial;

12 Not even skirmishing, peace will come about by itself.

1 Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (154–93 BCE) said that when he was thirteen he studied through three winters and could then adequately make use of literary and historical texts. Although commentators take this as meaning three years' worth of study, I suspect that Dongfang Shuo is boasting that after studying for only "the three winter months" he had gained control of all important writings. The eight battle-lines are different military formations mentioned in Sunzi's *Art of War*. Referred to as a single "eightfold array," it was associated with Zhuge Liang's generalship in the Three Kingdoms period.

2 The wild swan's ambition is for far and resolute traveling. The wagtails, because of *Shijing* usage, are symbols of brotherly aid and affection.

2.41

峴山送蕭員外之荊州

峴山江岸曲

郢水郭門前

自古登臨處

4 非今獨黯然

亭樓明落日

井邑秀通川

澗竹生幽興

8 林風入管絃

再飛鵬激水

一舉鶴沖天

佇立三荊使

12 看君駟馬旋

2.41

On Mount Xian, Seeing Off Vice-Director Xiao to Jingzhou¹

Xian Mountain, by the bend of the river's bank;

Waters of Ying, before the outer wall's gate.²

From of old this has been a place to climb and look outward,

4 It's not only today that here we feel "so bleak."³

Pavilions and tall buildings are lit by the sinking sun,

Well-fields and township lovely along the running stream.

Bamboo by the freshet gives rise to a special elation,

8 As the forest wind enters into pipes and strings.

A second time the *peng*-bird flies, agitating the waters,

And with a single lift the crane mounts up to the sky.⁴

I stand waiting on this commissioner to tripart Jing,⁵

12 Watching, sir, your four-horse team as it turns away.

1 Mt. Xian, southeast of Xiangyang, on the west bank of the Han River. The city of Jingzhou (as opposed to the region) is present-day Jiangling, Hubei.

2 The Han River is called by the name Ying here, because on its way downstream to Jingzhou it passes by Ying, the old capital of the state of Chu.

3 Recalling the opening couplet of Jiang Yan's (444–505) "Rhapsody on Parting," which reads "So bleak, it dissolves the soul, / Indeed, parting, and that is all."

4 Xiao's departure is seen as the flight of the mighty *peng*-bird from the opening passage of *Zhuangzi* and as the rising up of a transcendent crane to the heavens.

5 Referring to three counties under the jurisdiction of Jingzhou.

2.42

送王昌齡之嶺南

洞庭去遠近

楓葉早驚秋

峴首羊公愛

4 長沙賈誼愁

土風無縞紵

鄉味有查頭

已抱沉痾疾

8 更貽魑魅憂

數年同筆硯

茲夕異衾裯

意氣今何在

12 相思望斗牛

2.42

Seeing Off Wang Changling to Lingnan¹

From Dongting you have gone far and near,
While a leaf of the sweetgum early alerts to autumn.²

Mount Xian is what Lordship Yang most loved,
4 Changsha is what brought Jia Yi to most sadness.³
Of local articles here is no white silk or ramie cloth,
The savor of the countryside is the loggerhead bream.⁴

8 You're to be worse given the worry of dire goblins.⁵
For many years the same with writing-brush and inkstone,
But from this night our coverlets and quilts will be unlike.
Where now shall thoughts and leanings find resting-place?

12 Longing for you I'll gaze afar toward stars of Dipper and Ox.⁶

1 Lingnan, the region "South of the Ranges," was basically present-day southern Guangdong and Guangxi and northern Vietnam, and was in Tang times a most undesirable area for an official to be posted.

2 Recalling the saying that when one leaf falls at Lake Dongting, autumn is at hand.

3 Referring to Yang Hu's special fondness for Mt. Xian when he was governor of Xiangyang (see 2.35, note 1), and to Jia Yi's demotion from court to Changsha (see 1.13, note 4).

4 Clothing made of white silk and of ramie cloth were the fine gifts exchanged by representatives of two states in a passage from *Zuozhuan*. Xiangyang has not anything so fine for Meng Haoran to present to Xiao, but he can offer him the local fish delicacy (see 1.37, note 1).

5 The far south was thought to be home to various unknown but malign creatures as well as noxious miasmas.

6 The constellations of the Southern Dipper and the Ox made up one of the twelve Jupiter stations in the sky and were symbolically correlated with the southern regions of Wu and Yue through which Xiao will pass on his way to Lingnan.

Book 3

五言律詩

3.1

與諸子登峴山

人事有代謝

往來成古今

江山留勝迹

4 我輩復登臨

水落魚梁淺

天寒夢澤深

羊公碑尚在

8 讀罷淚沾襟

Pentametric Regulated Verse

3.1

Climbing Mount Xian in Company with Several Gentlemen

- Human affairs fade in turn, each generation,
 Their comings and goings forming past and present.
 But rivers and mountains retain their notable traces,
 4 And our lot in its turn climbs and looks out.
 The water ebbs, and Fish-weir Isle is left in shallows;
 Sky turns cold, and the Marsh of Dream lies deep.¹
 Lordship Yang's stone tablet stands here still;
 8 We have read it, and tears now wet our lapels.²

1 Fish-weir Isle was in the Han River, east of Mt. Xian; legend said that the recluse Pang Degong (see 1.9, note 2) had once lived there, before or after his residence at Deer Gate Mountain. Marsh of Dream is otherwise Cloud Dream (Yunmeng), the old Chu hunting preserve, far south of and not visible from Mt. Xian.

2 Yang Hu (see 1.5, note 3), the mid-third-century governor of Xiangyang who went on outings to Mt. Xian as often as possible and wished for his soul to return there if there was consciousness after death. A memorial tablet and shrine in his honor were erected by the grateful citizens, who made seasonal sacrifices to his spirit. Du Yu 杜預, who succeeded Yang Hu in office in Xiangyang, styled it "The Tablet of Falling Tears," by which name it was afterwards known.

3.2

臨洞庭

八月湖水平
 涵虛混太清
 氣蒸雲夢澤
 4 波撼岳陽城
 欲濟無舟楫
 端居恥聖明
 坐觀垂釣者
 8 徒有羨魚情

3.2

Looking Out on Dongting¹

In the eighth month the lake's waters level out,
 And its engulfed voidness merges with the clearest sky.²

Vapors steam up from the Marsh of Cloud Dream,

4 As ripples now shake the city-walls of Yueyang.

I would cross over, but have not boat and oars;

Settled placidly, am shamed before the sage's brilliance.³

Vainly I observe those who are dangling their lines,

8 To no purpose have feelings of envying the catch.⁴

1 Lake Dongting, near Changsha in northern Hunan, had been the southern limit of the old Yunmeng hunting preserve (line 3) and was the traditional boundary between the regions of Jing and Wu. The city of Yueyang (line 4) was located on the northeast shore of the lake.

2 Water and sky (the latter, literally, "Greatest Clarity" to match the lake's "engulfed voidness") seem to merge as counterparts.

3 I.e., embarrassed not to be in official service when a sage emperor is on the throne.

4 An old saying had it that to watch a fisherman and envy his catch was not as good as going home and braiding a net with which to catch them yourself. The fish to be caught are a metaphor for official position.

3.3

晚春

二月湖水清
 家家春鳥鳴
 林花掃更落
 4 徑草踏還生
 酒伴來相命
 開樽共解醒
 當杯已入手
 8 歌妓莫停聲

3.4

歲暮歸南山

北闕休上書
 南山歸弊廬
 不才明主棄
 4 多病故人疎
 白髮摧年老
 青陽逼歲除
 永懷愁不寐
 8 松月夜窻虛

3.3

Late Springtime

- In the second month the lake's waters are clear,
 And from home to home the springtime birds chaffer.
 Blossoms in the grove are swept, to fall again,
 4 As grass on the footpath is tramped but still grows back.
 A companion with wine has come to call on me;
 Goblets are set out, to relieve together our hangover.¹
 With the facing cups now in our hands,
 8 Don't let stop the voice of the songstress.

3.4

Returning to South Mountain at the Year's Waning

- At the north pylons I ceased handing up petitions,
 At south mountain come home to a tumbledown cottage.
 Untalented, by an enlightened ruler cast aside,²
 4 Ailing much, I'm distanced from old friends.
 While white hairs urge on the advancing of my years,
 The greening *yang*-force presses the twelvemonth to an end.³
 Ever held to heart, sadness will not let me sleep,
 8 As the pinetree moon brings night to the window's emptiness.

1 Liu Ling 劉伶, the most famous tippler of medieval times, was said to "relieve his hangover" by drinking large quantities of wine.

2 In Meng Haoran's *Xin Tang shu* biography, line 3 of this poem is said to have so offended the emperor when he heard Meng recite it that he forthwith sent Meng away from the capital. The anecdote is clearly apocryphal.

3 At the end of the year the force of *yang* is growing over that of *yin*, compelling the year to the next springtime (the symbolic seasonal color of which is green).

3.5

梅道士水亭

傲吏非凡吏

名流即道流

隱居不可見

4 高論莫能酬

水接仙源近

山藏鬼谷幽

再來迷處所

8 花下問漁舟

3.5

The Waterside Pavilion of the Daoist Adept Mei

The “well-contented clerk” is no ordinary clerk,¹
 The current of his fame is the current of the Dao.
 Dwelling hidden, he is not to be seen;

4 His lofty discourse no one can return.

The water here joins with a transcendent spring nearby,
 The hills conceal Revenant Vale secluded.²

Now coming again to where one lost his way,

8 Under the blossoms, I’ll inquire of a fisherman.³

1 Master Mei is being identified with Zhuangzi who was said to have once been a “well-contented clerk in the Lacquer Garden” (see 1.39, note 4). Mei is mentioned in two other poems (3.29, 4.29).

2 The transcendent spring (which might be a proper name) is one of the “favored lands” (*fiudi*) of Daoist immortals. Revenant Vale is the dwelling place of a Daoist adept referred to in the second of Guo Pu’s (276–324) “Poems on Roaming to Transcendence” (as well as the toponym of the reputed author of a proto-Daoist text).

3 The final couplet refers to Tao Qian’s story of Peach Blossom Font, in which a fisherman loses his way following a river covered with a fall of peach blossoms and ends up finding (in the poem that accompanies the prose tale) a hidden land of transcendents.

3.6

閑園懷蘇子

林園雖少事

幽獨自多違

向夕開簾坐

4 庭陰葉落微

鳥從煙樹宿

螢傍水軒飛

感念同懷子

8 京華去不歸

3.7

留別王維

寂寂竟何待

朝朝空自歸

欲尋芳草去

4 惜與故人違

當路誰相假

知音世所稀

祇應守寂寞

8 還掩故園扉

3.6

In My Idle Garden, Thinking Fondly of Master Su

- Although grove and garden may be slight affairs,
 In secluded solitude I've freely turned away from much.
 Along toward evening I sit by the opened curtain,
 4 As in the shade of the courtyard leaves fall faintly.
 Birds seek their night-lodging in the misty trees,
 And fireflies glide along the waterside railing.
 Moved, I remember you who shared my heart-felt thoughts,
 8 To the capital's splendors now gone, returning no more.

3.7

To Leave Behind on Parting from Wang Wei¹

- Lorn and forlorn, for what after all am I waiting?
 Dawn after dawn in vain I think to go home.
 On the verge of leaving to search out fragrant grasses,²
 4 I'm loath to turn away from a dear friend.
 Who of those controlling the roads will grant me anything?
 A "knower of the tone" is rare enough in this world.³
 I shall merely hold to silence and to stillness,
 8 Close for good my old garden's single-leaved door.

1 Wang Wei (701–761), already a famous poet when Meng Haoran knew him, although a dozen years Meng's junior.

2 Fragrant grasses (or plants) stand for the pure virtue one would like for oneself.

3 Those who control the roads are those in positions of power and influence. A "knower of the tone" is someone who understands what is in one's heart, like the perfect auditor Zhong Ziqi understood from the music whatever was in the master zither-player Boya's heart.

3.8

武陵泛舟

武陵川路狹
 前棹入花林
 莫測幽源裏
 4 仙家信幾深
 水迴青嶂合
 雲渡綠谿陰
 坐聽閑猿嘯
 8 彌清塵外心

3.8Drifting a Boat in Wuling¹

- In Wuling the river's path narrows down,
As advancing oars enter the blossoming grove.
None could fathom what the hidden font encloses,
4 Dwellings of transcendents, truly deep-seated within.
As the water winds round, blue hill-screens join;
As clouds ferry over, the green stream is darkened.
At ease I listen to the howling of idle gibbons,
8 Purifying all the more my heart beyond the dust.

1 Wuling, near present-day Changde, Hunan, just west of Lake Dongting, was where Tao Qian's fictional paradise of Peach Blossom Font was located. This poem is based on that account but also on the accompanying poem in which the inhabitants of the place are said to have become "transcendents."

3.9

同曹三御史行泛湖歸越

秋入詩人興

巴歌和者稀

泛湖同旅泊

4 吟會是歸思

白簡徒推薦

滄洲已拂衣

杳冥雲海去

8 誰不羨鴻飛

3.9

To Go With Censor Cao (Three)'s "Drifting on the Lake in Returning to Yue"

Autumn has entered into this poet's mood,
While with songs of Ba few are those who can harmonize.¹
Drifting on the lake, we share a mooring in our travels;

- 4 In his singing of Kuaiji is a longing to return home.²
A white document in vain has recommended him for advancement,
Since for the Watchet Isles he has already hitched his clothes.³
Far-gone and unseen, you'll be off in the sea of clouds,
8 And who will not envy the wild swan's flight?

1 When the court once attempted to collect songs from Ba, the more high-toned the songs the fewer were those who knew them.

2 Cao's poem, to which Meng Haoran is responding, evidently spoke of his retiring from official service and going back to Kuaiji in Wu.

3 A white document from the Censorate was originally a notice of impeachment, but the term in the positive sense of a "jade-like" document became commonly used to refer to a testament of recommendation. The Watchet Isles are the Daoist paradise realm in the blue-gray Eastern Sea, here symbolizing a place of retreat into reclusion.

3.10

遊景空寺蘭若

龍象經行處

山腰度石關

屢迷青嶂合

4 時愛綠蘿閑

宴息花林下

高談竹嶼間

寥寥隔塵事

8 疑是入雞山

3.10

An Outing to the Aranya by the Jingkong Temple¹

For a “dragon elephant,” a place of walking meditation;²

At the mountain’s waist a barrier of stones to pass over.

I kept losing my way where blue hill-screens are joined,

4 Often entranced by the green bindweed’s indolence.

Now I rest relaxed beneath the blossoming grove,

In lofty conversation amidst hummocks of bamboo.

Undisturbed and unimaginable, sundered from dusty affairs,

8 It seems as though I’ve passed into Cockerel Mountain.³

1 An aranya (Skt.) is a Buddhist hermitage. The Jingkong temple was located about three miles south of Xiangyang, on White Horse Mountain (Baima shan), having been established in the third century. The monk whose hermitage is attached to the monastery is probably Master Rong 融 who is mentioned in two other poems (3.41, 4.41).

2 Dragon (or serpent, Skt. *nāga*) and elephant are the most powerful creatures, respectively, on water and land; when combined the terms refer to the most accomplished monks in a monastery. A “dragon elephant” signifies a monk of greatest virtue, here the resident of the aranya. Walking meditation is the practice known in Japanese as *kinhin*.

3 Cockerel Mountain is short for Cock’s-foot Mountain (Jizu shan), the Chinese translation of Skt. *Kukkuṭapāda*, the mountain where Buddha’s disciple *Kāśyapa* entered nirvana.

3.11

陪張丞相登當陽樓

獨步人何在
 當陽有故樓
 歲寒問耆舊
 4 行縣擁諸侯
 泱莽北彌望
 沮漳東會流
 客中遇知己
 8 無復越鄉憂

3.11

Accompanying Chief Minister Zhang On the Dangyang Tower¹

Where now is the one who “paced alone”?²

In Dangyang here is his tower as of old.

In the chill of the year, inquiring of seniors and elders,

4 Visiting your districts, you convene the various nobles.

To the north, blurred and boundless, we gaze a long way off,

While to the east, the rivers Ju and Zhang flow on together.

Among strangers, I have fallen in with one who truly knows me,

8 And no more am saddened at being so far from home.

1 Written while in service under Zhang Jiuling, then governor-general of Jingzhou, on his tour of the region in winter 737 / spring 738. Dangyang is in central Hubei and was where Wang Can 王粲 (177–217) wrote his famous “Rhapsody on Climbing the Tower” (line 2). The Ju and Zhang rivers flow together farther east, being used here (line 6) for their association with Wang Can in a poem of imitation written by Xie Lingyun.

2 Cao Zhi (192–232), when characterizing the great writers of his age in his “Letter to Yang Dezu,” described Wang Can as “one who paced alone, south of the Han River,” alluding to the fact that Wang, to avoid the violence and turmoil at the capital, had fled south to the area of Jing controlled by Liu Biao.

3.12

與顏錢塘登樟亭望潮作

百里雷聲震

鳴絃暫輟彈

府中連騎出

4 江上待潮觀

照日秋雲迴

浮天渤澥寬

驚濤來侶雪

8 一坐凜生寒

3.12

Together with Yan of Qiantang, Composed on Ascending Camphor Pavilion to Look Upon the Tidal Bore¹

- For a hundred leagues the thunder's voice quakes,
 Your sounding strings for a while cease their playing.²
 From within the prefecture a line of riders comes forth,
 4 To wait along the river for the viewing of the tide.
 The shining sun reaches far on clouds of autumn,
 The floating sky is widespread to the Surging Sea.³
 Frightening billows now come toward us, seeming snow,
 8 And all at once we suddenly shiver and grow cold.

1 The tidal bore of the Qiantang (or Zhe) river rolls upstream toward Hangzhou at maximal fury around the time of the full moon of the eighth month. It was an awesome and frightening sight, celebrated in literature since the second century BCE.

2 The thunder is the sound of the bore. The best magistrates were said to rule over their districts simply by playing their zither. A district was traditionally referred to as comprising "a hundred leagues." Mr. Qian was evidently district magistrate of Qiantang, who has temporarily set aside official duties to go view the bore.

3 The "Surging Sea" is the East China Sea, to which the sky reflected in the river extends.

3.13

大禹寺義公禪房

義公習禪寂
 結宇依空林
 戶外一峰秀
 4 塔前眾壑深
 夕陽連雨足
 空翠落庭陰
 看取蓮花淨
 8 方知不染心

3.14

尋白鶴崑張子容隱居

白鶴青崑畔
 幽人有隱居
 塔庭空水石
 4 林壑罷樵漁
 歲月青松老
 風霜苦竹疎
 覩茲懷舊業
 8 携策返吾廬

1 This Buddhist monastery was on Mt. Kuaiji, having been founded in 545.

2 The grove is empty or “void” as are all phenomena ultimately and also because it is not tainted by human traffic.

3.13

Lordship Yi's Meditation Chamber at the Temple of the Great Yu¹

For Lordship Yi to practice the stillness of meditation,
He has built a structure close to a grove of emptiness.²

Outside the doorway, a single peak blooms forth;

4 Before the steps, a host of valleys deepen.

Evening's sunlight merges with footfalls of rain,

As the void's bright-blue drops shade on the courtyard.

My gaze picks out the purity of a lotus blossom,

8 And it is just now I perceive its unsullied heart.³

3.14

Seeking Out Zhang Zirong's Recluse Dwelling on White Crane Cliff⁴

On the edge of White Crane's cliff of blue,

A secluded person had his hidden dwelling.

Steps and courtyard now empty of water and rock,

4 Grove and gully are done with woodcutters and fishermen.

After years and months the green pines have grown old,

While in wind and frost the bitter bamboo is sparse.⁵

Beholding this, I think fondly of what were his old effects;

8 With reins in hand turn back to my own cottage.⁶

3 Though the lotus is rooted in mud, its stem (a plant's stem is also called its "heart") rises purely to place its blossom atop the water, and is thus a favorite symbol of how the Buddhadharma arises out of the turbid world. Here it is also a metaphor for Lordship Yi.

4 White Crane Cliff was on White Horse Mountain, south of Xiangyang. Meng is searching out the place where his friend Zhang resided before he went off to Chang'an to sit for the examinations (see 3.73) and began his official career.

5 "Bitter bamboo" is the name for amarus bamboo which has bitter, inedible shoots; but we may also read that it is "miserable" because Zhang left so long ago.

6 Literally, "with riding-crop in hand."

3.15

九日得新字

九日未成旬

重陽即此晨

登高尋故事

4 載酒訪幽人

落帽恣歡飲

授衣同試新

茱萸正可佩

8 折取寄情親

3.15

Double-Ninth Day; I Draw the Rhyme-word “New”¹

Nine days do not yet make up a decade,
But the Double Yang falls just on this morning.

I climb a height to seek out affairs of the past,

4 And carry wine for a visit to one who is secluded.²

Hat topped, I enjoy drinking unrestrained;

“Clothes are given out” as we share in “tasting the new.”³

Dogwood flowers right now may be hung from your sash,

8 So pluck them, to send on to your loving kin.⁴

1 Ninth day of the ninth month, “Double Yang,” has numerous traditional stories and elements associated with it, many of which are referred to in this poem.

2 It was customary to climb a height on this day, as did Huan Jing in order to avoid a disaster that was predicted by his friend Fei Changfang to strike his household. The proper scholar Meng Jia had his cap blown off during a Double Yang outing but was enjoying himself too much to notice.

3 A *Shijing* poem says “In the ninth month clothes are given out.” “Tasting the new” refers to tasting the newly harvested grain.

4 Dogwood (or more accurately, prickly-ash) flowers were traditionally gathered to wear as protection against malign spirits on the Double Yang. On this day, if parted from home, one thought longingly of one’s kin.

3.16

除夜樂城張少府宅

雲海訪甌閩

風濤泊島濱

如何歲除夜

4 得見故鄉親

余是乘槎客

君為失路人

平生復能幾

8 一別十餘春

3.16

At District Constable Zhang's Residence in Lecheng on New Year's Eve¹

By a sea of clouds, visiting the area of Ou and Min,²

On gusty billows, I moored by an island shore.

How could I know, on this night of the year's passing,

4 I should see a dear friend from my native village?

I'm indeed the stranger who rode the raft,

And you, sir, a man lost on the road.³

Throughout our lives, how many times can we meet again?

8 Once parted, it's now been ten springtimes and more.

1 Constable Zhang is Meng Haoran's old friend Zhang Zirong, from whom there are extant two poems addressed to Meng on this occasion. Lecheng is on the Zhejiang coast, slightly north of Wenzhou. See 3.59 for another poem from this night.

2 The two main rivers in eastern Zhejiang and Fujian.

3 See 1.23, note 4, for the legend of the raft-rider. That poem, also written at year's end by the sea, was probably written shortly before this one. Zhang seems to be a man who has lost his way because he is now merely a constable in a district far from the capital but had previously been a district magistrate in a more desirable place.

3.17

舟中曉望

挂席東南望

青山水國遙

舳舻爭利涉

4 來往任風潮

問我今何適

天台訪石橋

坐看霞色曉

8 疑是赤城標

3.18

遊精思觀迴王白雲在後

出谷未停午

至家已夕曛

迴瞻山下路

4 但見牛羊群

樵子暗相失

草蟲寒不聞

衡門猶未掩

8 佇立待夫君

3.17

Gazing Afar from the Boat at Daybreak

- With matting hoisted, to the southeast I gaze,
 Where blue mountains are far off in a realm of water.
 Stern and prow contest a successful crossing,
 4 This way and that indulging the gusty tide.
 If one asks me, where am I headed now? –
 To Tiantai, to search out the stone arch.¹
 Just now as I look on daybreak in rose-pink hues,
 8 I wonder if it is a betokening of Red Wall.²

3.18Returning from an Outing to the Jingsi Abbey, with Wang “White Clouds” Behind Me³

- As I emerged from the valley, full noon had not yet come;
 Now arrived home, already gloaming is the dusk.
 Looking back at the path down the mountain,
 4 I glimpse only a host of oxen and sheep.⁴
 A woodcutter has lost his way in the dark,
 And grass-insects are no longer heard in the cold.
 My crossbeam gate has still yet to be shut,
 8 As long I stand waiting for you, my good sir.

1 An exceedingly narrow stone span (sometimes considered a proper name) over a deep chasm is the most dangerous site in ascending Tiantai's highest peak.

2 Red Wall, so named because of the color of its rockface, was the southern rise of Tiantai whence one's ascent usually began.

3 The Jingsi (“Concentrated Thought”) Abbey was in the vicinity of Xiangyang. Wang White Clouds is Wang Jiong, a frequently mentioned Daoist friend (see 1.60, 2.4, 2.28, 2.39, etc.).

4 A *Shijing* poem says, “It being now dusk of day, / The oxen and sheep come down.”

3.19

與杭州薛司戶登樟亭驛樓

水樓一登眺

半出青林高

帘幕英僚散

4 芳筵下客叨

山藏伯禹穴

城壓伍胥濤

今日觀溟漲

8 垂綸欲釣鼇

3.19

Climbing the Loft-building of the Camphor Pavilion Post-station, in
Company with Xue of the Finance Bureau of Hangzhou¹

At the riverside loft-building, when we climb to gaze about,
We have come out fully high above the green forest.

From curtained offices your fine associates have dispersed,

4 And with splendid fittings you've deigned to host a nobody.

The mountains conceal the cave where Sire Yu is buried,
While city-walls bear down upon the billows of Wu Zixu.²

On this present day as I look upon the heaving swells,

8 Let me dangle a silk-line in hope of catching the mammoth turtle.³

1 At this time Hangzhou was another name for Qiantang commandery. This poem seems to have been written near the same time and place as 3.12.

2 The sage-king Yu was said to be buried in a cave in the Kuaiji area. The legend of the Chunqiu-era minister Wu Zixu said that after the king of Wu, who refused to take Wu Zixu's political advice, forced him to commit suicide, the king had his body sewn into a sack and thrown into the Zhe River where fearsome waves arose because of Wu Zixu's unfulfilled righteous anger. Some said his spirit was the god of the Qiantang tidal bore, which seems to be what Meng is looking at in line 7.

3 One of the giant turtles said to bear on their backs the three paradise isles of the immortals.

3.20

尋天台山作

吾友太一子

飡霞臥赤城

欲尋華頂去

4 不憚惡溪名

歇馬憑雲宿

揚帆截海行

高高翠微裏

8 遙見石梁橫

3.20

Composed upon Finding the Way to Tiantai

A good friend of mine, the Master of Greatest Unity,
 Sups on auroral clouds and takes his rest at Red Wall.¹
 Wishing to go off in search of Flowered Crest,

4 I do not dread the name of Baleful Stream.²

Pausing my steed, I passed the night leaning on clouds;
 Then raised a sail, to journey cleaving the sea.

Higher than high, within the bright halcyon-haze,

8 Faraway I see the stone bridge's horizontal line.³

1 This Daoist master is also mentioned in 1.24. Auroral clouds, and other subtle celestial items, were the fare of Daoist transcendents. For Red Wall, see 3.17, note 2.

2 Flowered Crest was the highest peak of Tiantai. The forbiddingly named Baleful Stream, so named because of its numerous rapids, ran near to Tiantai; in the Sui dynasty its name had been changed to Beaucous River, but the old name was still known.

3 The dangerously narrow stone span (see 3.17, note 1) that one must cross in ascending to Tiantai's summit.

3.21

宿立公房

支遁初求道

深公笑買山

何如石嵒趣

4 自入戶庭間

苔澗春泉滿

蘿軒夜月閑

能令許玄度

8 吟臥不知還

3.21

Passing the Night at the Abode of Lordship Li

When Zhi Dun early on sought the Way,
 Lordship Shen laughed about his purchasing a mountain.¹

How could one compare the charms of a rocky bluff

4 With simply passing into your portalled courtyard?

By a lichen-rung freshet springtime's fountain overflows,

On a bindweed-hung casement night's moonlight idles.

Just these are quite able to cause Xu Xuandu

8 To lean back and recite verse, not caring to go home.²

1 The mid-fourth-century monk Zhi Dun once approached his fellow monk Fashen (hence Lordship Shen) about purchasing a certain hill for a hermitage. Fashen ridiculed him, saying he'd never heard of the ancient recluses Chaofu and Xu You needing to own a mountain in order to get away from the world.

2 Xu Xuandu is Xu Xun 許詢, a contemporary of Zhi Dun, who once passed the night, forgetting to go home, in close conversation and expression of lyrical feelings with the Jin emperor who had been a long-time friend.

3.22

尋滕逸人故居

人事一朝盡

荒蕪三徑休

始聞漳浦臥

4 奄作岱宗遊

池水猶含墨

山雲已落秋

今朝泉壑裏

8 何處覓藏舟

3.22

Searching Out the Former Residence of the Unattached Person, Teng¹

Human affairs one morning come all to an end,
Weed-choked and overgrown the three pathways are closed up.²

I had barely heard of your reclining on the Zhang's banks,

4 When too soon you were making passage to Mount Tai.³

The pond's water retains yet the ink of your brush,

And the mountain's clouds have now descended with autumn.

On this very morning, within the ravine by the spring,

8 Where should one look for the boat you hid there?⁴

1 See also 3.24, for an earlier poem visiting this place when Teng was alive.

2 Even a recluse has three pathways used by friends to visit him.

3 Reclining on the Zhang's banks refers to removing oneself from the world, often in illness. Mount Tai (here called by its more formal name Daizong, "Revered Paramount") was traditionally thought to be where the souls of the dead returned.

4 *Zhuangzi* relates how one may hide a boat in a ravine in order to keep it safe, but it could still be carried off by a strong man in the middle of the night. The boat concealed unsuccessfully in the ravine became a metaphor for the unpredictability of securing one's own life.

3.23

姚開府山池

主人新邸第

相國舊池臺

館是招賢闢

4 樓因教舞開

軒車人已散

簫管鳳初來

今日龍門下

8 誰知文舉才

3.23

At the Private Garden of Grand Dignitary Yao¹

For my host this is a new domal mansion;
 For a minister of state it was a previous pool and terrace.
 The lodging here was opened out for summoning worthies,

4 The building now cleared for instruction in entertainment.

Persons in high-railed coaches were long ago scattered;

To pipes of the syrinx the phoenix used to come.²

But these days, below the Dragon Gate,

8 Who can recognize the genius of Wenju?³

1 This is the garden (literally, “hillside pool”) that once belonged to the high minister Yao Chong; see additional notes.

2 The nobles and high officials who visited Yao Chong are long gone. Legend said that Xiao Shi 箫史, who had won the heart of a princess of Qin, played the syrinx such that he called to himself a phoenix which wafted him and the princess away.

3 The influential second-century minister Li Ying sought out worthy men to recruit as officials. Gaining his recommendation was described as getting over the Dragon Gate (like the fish who successfully passed over a difficult part of the Yellow River and thereafter became dragons). Wenju was the byname of Kong Rong 孔融 (153–208) who, in his tenth year, had an interview with Li Ying and impressed the latter sufficiently with his youthful genius that he won Li’s praise, going on to become one of the more famous scholars of his time. The implication is that, with Yao Chong no longer at this place, there is no one to appreciate unappreciated talents (like the poet).

3.24

夏日浮舟過滕逸人別業

水亭涼氣多
 閑棹晚來過
 澗影見藤竹
 4 潭香聞芰荷
 野童扶醉舞
 山鳥笑酣歌
 幽賞未云遍
 8 煙光奈夕何

3.25

夏日辨玉法師茅齋

夏日茅齋裏
 無風坐亦涼
 竹林新笋概
 4 籐架引稍長
 鷺覓巢窠處
 蜂來造蜜房
 物華皆可翫
 8 花藥四時芳

3.24

Boating on a Summer's Day and Stopping at the Detached Manor of the Unattached Person, Teng¹

- By your waterside pavilion, plenty of cooling air,
 As idling the oars, I stop by here late in the day.
 Reflected in the stream one sees rattan and bamboo;
 4 Fragrant over the tarn, one sniffs caltrop and lotus.
 A country lad supports me in a drunken dance,
 And mountain birds laugh at my tipsy song.
 Still it isn't possible for deepfolded joy to be perfect,
 8 For what can the hazy glow avail against the night?²

3.25

A Summer's Day at the Thatched-roof Retreat of the Dharma Master Bianyu

- On a summer's day within your thatched-roof cottage,
 Even without a breeze one still sits in coolness.
 In the bamboo grove new shoots are growing thick,
 4 As on the rattan trellis leading tendrils lengthen out.
 The swallow searches for a place to nestle its cote,
 And the bee comes to fashion its chamber of honey.
 The splendor of nature's beings may all be enjoyed here,
 8 Where blossom and petal in four seasons remain fragrant.

1 See 3.22, for a later poem visiting this place after Teng's death.

2 "Deepfolded joy" is also appreciation of the hidden depths of the tranquil scene.
 The hazy glow is that of the setting sun.

3.26

與張折衝遊耆闍寺

釋子彌天秀

將軍武庫才

橫行塞北盡

4 獨步漢南來

貝葉傳金口

山櫻作賦開

因君振嘉藻

8 江楚氣雄哉

3.26

An Outing to Gṛdhra Temple with Zhang of the Intrepid Militia¹

The son of Śākya here is a bloom of the all-pervading heavens,
 While this army leader is a genius of the martial armory.²
 With his marching done, across everywhere north of the frontier,

4 He has now come “pacing alone, south of the Han River.”³

As patra leaves may convey words mouthed in gold,
 Wild cherries are written into a recitation spoken out.⁴

Following from you, sir, who has quickened fine phrasing,

8 In Chu, along the Jiang, is an air of bravest mastery.

1 Gṛdhra, transcribed into Chinese as *qishe* (MC *gij-dzyac*), is short for Gṛdhrakūṭa, “Vulture Peak,” where the Buddha preached some of his most important sūtras. Zhang, who is the subject of lines 2–4, is an officer, presumably a local commander in one of the several militia garrisons that were scattered throughout the country and referred to as “intrepid” (literally “line-storming”) militia.

2 In the mid-fourth century when the Xiangyang scholar Xi Zuochi (see 1.38) visited the renowned Buddhist monk Dao’an who had recently fled turmoil in the north and moved to Xiangyang, he introduced himself as “Xi Zuochi from within the four seas.” Not to be outdone, Dao’an introduced himself as “Shi (i.e., Śākya) Dao’an of the all-pervading heavens.” Thereafter monks commonly took Shi as their surname. The reference here is to an unnamed but important monk of the monastery being visited. “Army leader” is a literal translation of what is usually rendered “General.” In the mid-third century Du Yu, when governor of Xiangyang (see 3.1, note 2), was referred to as Du, “the Martial Armory,” because it was said there were no military resources he did not have. Note that both of these allusions refer to Xiangyang notables.

3 As the poet Wang Can was described by Cao Zhi (see 3.11, note 2). This is echoed by the reference in line 6 to Zhang’s *fu* composing.

4 Patra leaves are the palm leaves on which sūtras, the teachings mouthed as though in gold by the Buddha, were sometimes written in India. Complementarily, line 6 refers to a verse composition evidently composed by Zhang on this occasion (*fu* here meaning a recitation, not the verse genre of that name; but the undertone picks up the reference to Wang Can and his famous rhapsody in line 4).

3.27

與白明府遊江

故人來自遠

邑宰復初臨

執手恨為別

4 同舟無異心

沿洄洲渚趣

演漾絃歌音

誰識躬耕者

8 年年梁甫吟

3.27

An Outing on the River with Magistrate Bo¹

An old friend has come here from afar,
As borough chief taking on his first supervision.
Clasping hands, I would hate to be parted;

- 4 Sharing a boat, with no difference in our hearts.
We coast the eddies, taking pleasure in isle and holm,
Carried with the current, to the sound of strings and song.
Who is there to recognize one who does the plowing himself,
8 Year after year, humming the Liangfu ballad?²

1 The river here is probably not the Jiang but the Han.

2 Before his worth was recognized by Liu Bei, Zhuge Liang (181–234), who was in reclusion about twenty miles west of Xiangyang, defined himself as someone who did his own plowing and was happy singing his “Liangfu ballad.” Meng Haoran identifies with him.

3.28

遊精思題觀主山房

誤入花源裏
初憐竹迳深
方知仙子宅
4 未有世人尋
舞鶴過閑砌
飛猿嘯密林
漸通玄妙理
8 深得坐忘心

3.28

An Outing to the Jingsi Abbey; Inscribed at the Abbot's Mountain Chamber¹

By mistake I've passed within the Font of Peach Blossoms,²

Having admired first the depths of the bamboo pathway.

Just now I perceive the transcendent master's abode,

4 Which has never yet been found by a person of the world.

A preening crane stops by these idle stepstones,

While a gibbon in the air shrieks from the dense forest.

Gradually I get through to the truth of the mystery's subtleties,

8 Profoundly to attain a heart of sitting in indifference.³

1 See 3.18 for a poem composed after visiting this Daoist abbey.

2 Tao Qian's fictional enclave of people who removed themselves from the world and (in the poem accompanying the prose account) themselves became transcendents.

3 The first chapter of the *Laozi* ends by saying, "The mystery even more than the mystery: the gateway of manifold subtleties." In the *Zhuangzi* Yan Hui defines "sitting in indifference" (or sitting and forgetting) as "dismantling one's limbs and body, dismissing apprehension and perception, casting off form, letting go of cognition, and conforming with the great thoroughfare of the Dao." This became a Daoist meditation practice.

3.29

尋梅道士張山人

彭澤先生柳

山陰道士鵝

我來從所好

4 停策夏雲多

重以觀魚樂

因之鼓枻歌

崔徐跡未朽

8 千載揖清波

3.29

Seeking the Daoist Adept Mei and Hermit Zhang¹

Willows of the fine person of Pengze;

Geese of the Daoist adept of Shanyin.²

I've come here "following what I'm fond of,"³

4 Pausing in my ride as summer's clouds multiply.

Once more hereby I observe the happiness of the fishes,

Continuing from that the song of rapping the gunwales.⁴

The traces of Cui and Zhou have not yet decayed,

8 For a thousand years, we salute their clear ripples.⁵

1 For two others to Mei, see 3.5 and 4.29.

2 Tao Qian, who was briefly magistrate of Pengze, wrote a pseudo-autobiography in which he called himself the fine person (or Master) of Five Willows. A Daoist adept who raised geese in Shanyin once agreed to exchange some with the great calligrapher Wang Xizhi for a scroll of the *Laozi* written in the latter's hand.

3 Confucius once said that if wealth were not something that could be sought successfully, he would instead "follow what I'm fond of."

4 Zhuangzi, looking down from a bridge, once commented on "the happiness of the fishes" sporting below, which occasioned a dialogue with his friend Huizi. The fisherman who dismissed Qu Yuan's concerns with the world sang his song of advice while moving away in his boat and "rapping its gunwales."

5 Cui Zhouping and Xu Yuanshu were the two friends of Zhuge Liang who knew him best and believed he would prove himself equal to the famous ministers of old if given the chance. Here they are identified with adept Mei and hermit Zhang.

3.30

陪姚使君題惠上人房得青字

帶雪梅初暖
 含煙柳尚青
 來窺童子偈
 4 得聽法王經
 會理知無我
 觀空厭有形
 迷心應覺悟
 8 客思不遑寧

3.30

Inscribed at the Chamber of His Eminence Hui, while Accompanying Prefect Yao; I Drew the Rhyme-word “Green”

- Carrying snow, the prunus is first to warm,
 As wrapped in mist, the willow is nearly green.
 I’ve come here to steal a look at the disciple’s *gāthā*,
 4 And get to hear the sūtra of the Dharma King.¹
 Comprehending the immanent, I realize there is no “I,”
 Contemplating the void, tired of having a body.
 A deluded mind ought to awake to enlightenment,
 8 But this visitor’s thoughts are not ready to be quieted.

1 The monk Hui is a disciple of the Buddha, literally a “neophyte.” A *gāthā* is a verse interjected into the prose of a sūtra; by this time it simply meant a monk’s poem on a Buddhist topic.

3.31

晚春遠上人南亭

給園支遁隱

虛寂養閑和

春晚群木秀

4 關關黃鳥歌

林棲居士竹

池養右軍鵝

花月北窓下

8 清風期再過

3.31

Late Springtime, at the South Pavilion of His Eminence Yuan

In Jeta Park, Zhi Dun is hidden away,
Where emptiness and stillness foster heedless calm.¹

Late in springtime a stand of trees blooms forth,

4 And *gan-gwan*, the yellow birds sing out.

The grove nestles the lay scholar's bamboo,

As the pond fosters the Right General's geese.²

Moonlight in blossoms lies below the north window,

8 And a pure breeze as expected comes by again.

1 The Jetavana Park was bought by a devout layman and presented to the Buddha, for whom it became a favored retreat. Zhi Dun, the highly accomplished monk at the Eastern Jin capital, who participated in the activities of the most famous literati of his time. "Emptiness" and "stillness" often describe practices leading to enlightenment, or enlightenment itself.

2 Wang Huizhi (d. 388) once said he could not live a day without the company of bamboo. The great calligrapher Wang Xizhi (Huizhi's father) once had the title of General of the Army of the Right and was known to be specially fond of geese.

3.32

人日登南陽驛門亭子懷漢川諸友

朝來登陟處
不似艷陽時
異縣殊風物
4 羈懷多所思
剪花驚歲早
看柳訝春遲
未有南飛鴈
8 裁書欲寄誰

3.33

遊鳳林寺西嶺

共喜年華好
來遊水石間
烟容開遠樹
4 春色滿幽山
壺酒朋情洽
琴歌野興閑
莫愁歸路暝
8 招月伴人還

3.32

On the Day of Humans, Ascending the Pavilion at the Nanyang Post-station Gate, and Thinking of Several Friends in Hanchuan¹

- During the morning, at this spot for climbing up aloft,
 It doesn't resemble the season of captivating sunlight.
 In this unfamiliar district all of nature looks peculiar,
 4 My wayfaring thoughts are full of those whom I long for.
 For clipping blossoms I'm surprised the year is too early,
 For noticing the willow am shocked springtime is so tardy.
 And as there are not yet any south-flying wildgeese,
 8 To whom can the letters I've fashioned be sent?²

3.33

An Outing to the Ridge West of Phoenix Grove Temple³

- Together enjoying the beauty of the year's splendor,
 We've come for an outing amidst water and rock.
 Here the features of the mist disclose distant trees,
 4 As springtime's sheen fills the deep-hidden hills.
 A jug of wine is a mingling of feelings of friendship,
 A zither song, the leisure of a plain and simple mood.
 Let's grieve not over the darkening of the homeward road,
 8 But summon the moon for companion as we turn back.

1 The Day of Humans was the seventh day of the new year, the first six each attached to a different domestic animal. Nanyang is in present-day Henan. Hanchuan is in present-day Hubei, some distance south of Xiangyang.

2 Migrating wildgeese were traditionally thought reliable messengers to convey letters to faraway friends or family.

3 Phoenix Grove Mountain (Fenglin shan), where the monastery was located, was about three miles southeast of Xiangyang, near to Mt. Xian. It was where Meng Haoran's "Garden South of the Branch" was located and where he was eventually buried.

3.34

陪獨孤使君冊與蕭員外誠登萬山亭

萬山青嶂曲

千騎使君遊

神女鳴環佩

4 仙郎接獻酬

遍觀雲夢野

自愛江城樓

何必東陽守

8 空傳沈隱侯

3.34

Accompanying Prefect Dugu Ce and Vice-Director Xiao Cheng on
Climbing to the Pavilion on Mount Wan¹

Mount Wan's green hill-screens wind about,
Where a thousand riders travel with the prefect.²

Here divine maidens made their girdle pendants ring,

4 And a transcendent gentleman received the proffered pledges.³

All around one may view the wilds of Cloud Dream,

But I myself am partial to the buildings of the river city.⁴

What need is there for the prefect of Dongyang,

8 Who was vainly memorialized as Shen the Reticent Marquis?⁵

1 Mount Wan, a few miles northwest of Xiangyang. For Dugu Ce, see also 2.12.

2 The mountain's name literally means "ten thousand," which here is forefronted as a parallel to the "thousand" in the next line. An early *yuefu* poem spoke of a prefect being accompanied by a thousand subordinates, hence the hyperbolic number here.

3 Referring to the story of Zheng Jiaofu and the two goddesses by the Han Embankment at the foot of Mt. Wan (see 1.5). "Transcendent gentleman" was in Tang times also an informal reference to the highest officials of the Ministry of State Affairs; so line four can imply that Vice-Director Xiao is engaging in an exchange of poems with Prefect Dugu.

4 Cloud Dream (Yunmeng), the ancient hunting preserve of the old state of Chu, was actually far south of Xiangyang, but here it is imagined as within view. However, the poet prefers the view of his home city.

5 See 2.12 where Meng likewise refers to Dugu Ce with a concluding allusion also suggesting his superiority to Shen Yue (441–513), the famous poet once prefect of Dongyang (and, interestingly, magistrate of Xiangyang), who was given the posthumous title "Reticent Marquis" for his ability to keep his political opinions hidden.

3.35

贈道士參寥

蜀琴久不弄

玉匣細塵生

絲脆絃將斷

4 金徽色尚榮

知音徒自惜

聾俗本相輕

不遇鍾期聽

8 誰知鸞鳳聲

3.35

For the Daoist Adept Canliao¹

The zither of Shu for long has not been played;²
On its jade-trimmed case fine dust has appeared.

Silk grown brittle, the strings almost broken,

4 But the hue of the gold-inlaid studs still glows.

A “knower of the tone” cares for it but to no avail,

As the deaf and vulgar disregard it from the start.

Having not met a Zhong Ziqi who’ll truly hear,

8 Who will recognize the voice of phoenix or simurgh?³

1 The adept’s Daoist sobriquet means “Participant-in-the-Unimaginable.” Li Bo also wrote a poem to him, which indicates he resided for a time on Mt. Xian. Both poems suggest he was a native of Shu whose true abilities have gone unrecognized. While Li Bo’s poem emphasizes the master’s Daoist accomplishments, Meng slights these to focus on his zither playing as a metaphor.

2 A zither from Shu recalls the great Western Han poet Sima Xiangru, who hailed from there and had used his zither playing to win for his wife Zhuo Wenjun.

3 Zhong Ziqi was the original “knower of the tone” or perfect auditor who understood the thoughts of the master zither player Boya from the music itself.

3.36

京還贈張維

拂衣去何處

高枕南山南

欲徇五斗祿

4 其如七不堪

早朝非晏起

束帶異抽簪

因向智者說

8 遊魚思舊潭

3.36

Returning from the Capital; For Zhang Wei

Brushing off my robe, for what place do I depart?
 South of South Mountain, to pillow myself on high.¹
 I had wanted to pursue a “five-pecks salary,”

4 But it was more like the “seven things I couldn’t bear.”²

For early court it is unfit to rise behindhand;
 While binding up one’s sash, it is at odds to cast aside the hatpin.³
 And so I explain to a person of discernment:

8 The straying fish yearns for its familiar pool.⁴

1 South Mountain here is a general term for one south of Xiangyang, probably called this in reference to the South Mountain mentioned by Tao Qian near his home.

2 Tao Qian quit his brief magistracy because he decided he couldn’t “bend his back” for the sake of a salary that would earn him five pecks of rice. Xi Kang (223–262) once spoke of seven expectations of correct conduct he couldn’t bear to follow for the sake of gaining an official position at court.

3 Rising early in response to the court herald was the first of the seven things Xi Kang said he couldn’t bear to do (see preceding note). Binding up one’s sash was a metaphor for accepting an official position, while setting aside one’s hatpin (of one’s official cap) signified giving up office.

4 Only to “a person of discernment” can one unburden one’s true feelings, according to Sima Qian (ca. 145–ca. 86 BCE) in his famous letter to Ren An. Tao Qian referred to his returning home, after resigning from office, as a bird returning to its former grove or a fish to its familiar pool.

3.37

題李十四庄兼贈綦毋校書

聞君息陰地
 東郭柳林間
 左右瀟澗水
 4 門庭緱氏山
 抱琴來取醉
 垂釣坐乘閑
 歸客莫相待
 8 緣源殊未還

3.37

Inscribed at the Farmstead of Li (Fourteen); Presented Also to Collator Qiwu¹

- I've heard that you, sir, rest in a shaded place,
 In the eastern outskirts, amidst a willow grove.
 To left and right, the waters of the Chan and Jian,
 4 With your portalled courtyard near to Goushi Mountain.²
 Cradling a zither, I came to drink deep with you,
 Dangling a fish-hook, I sat enjoying my ease.
 But this homebound visitor won't wait any longer,
 8 For the one tracing the spring to its source has not come back.³

1 Probably the residence of the same Li mentioned in 4.33. Qiwu is Qiwu Qian 秦毋潛, *jinsbi* 726, one of whose first appointments was as a collator in the imperial library.

2 These are all places near to Luoyang.

3 The suggestion is that Li must have gone off to Tao Qian's Peach Blossom Font.

3.38

寄是正字

正字芸香閣

幽人竹素園

經過宛如昨

4 歸臥寂無喧

高鳥能擇木

羝羊漫觸藩

物情今已見

8 從此願忘言

3.38

Sent to Shi, Corrector of Texts¹

A corrector of texts in the Rue-scented Gallery,

A person secluded in a garden of bamboo-slips and plainsilk.²

Your passing through here seems quite as though just yesterday;

4 Now back home to rest, all is still and without babble.

The high-nesting bird is able to choose its own tree,

But the horned he-goat futilely butts the hedge.³

The way things really are is readily seen in this,

8 So henceforth I pray we just “forget the words.”⁴

1 A “corrector of texts” was one of the lowest centrally-appointed positions in the imperial library. As Tong Peiji has shown, the addressee was Shi Guangyi 是光义.

2 Rue was used as an insectifuge for books; the imperial library was sometimes called after it. Bamboo-slips and plainsilk were the two traditional carriers of writing; a garden of them is another name for a library.

3 Line 6, recalling a statement by Confucius in *Zuozhuan*, means a minister chooses which lord to serve and does not accept just any appointment. Line 7, from the *Yijing*, means it is useless to attack an intractable situation.

4 Recalling the final couplet in a famous poem by Tao Qian which says, “Just in this there is a sense of what is real, / But wanting to explain it, I’ve already forgotten the words.”

3.39

秋登張明府海亭

海亭秋日望

委曲見江山

染翰聊題壁

4 傾壺一解顏

歡逢彭澤令

歸賞故園間

余亦將琴史

8 棲遲共取閑

3.39Ascending the Lakeside Pavilion of Magistrate Zhang in Autumn¹

From your lakeside pavilion on an autumn day we gaze afar,

To where bends and windings reveal the river and hills.

With an ink-dyed quill I briefly write an inscription on the wall,

4 And tipping the wine-jug at once relaxes my features.

I delight in coming upon the magistrate of Pengze,

Returned back home for enjoyment in his old garden.²

I too shall take up the zither and history,

8 To roost in repose and along with you gain ease.

1 Commentators identify virtually all Zhangs named in Meng Haoran's poem titles as his early friend and fellow native of Xiangyang, Zhang Zirong. It seems unlikely that this is so.

2 The reference is to Tao Qian, who gave up his brief tenure as magistrate of Pengze and returned home to his field and garden.

3.40

題融公蘭若

精舍買金開

流泉遶砌迴

芰荷薰講席

4 松柏映香臺

法雨晴飛去

天花晝下來

談玄殊未已

8 歸騎夕陽催

3.40

Inscribed at the Aranya of Lordship Rong¹

A place of concentration, bought with gold, is opened,²

With a flowing spring wrapping round about its steps.

Caltrop and waterlily scent your lecture mat,

4 While pine and cypress glint against the incense platform.³

The dharma rain flies off from a clearing sky,

As heaven-sent blossoms drop down in daytime.

Our talk of the arcane is surely not yet done,

8 But a homebound horseman is hurried on by twilight's glow.

1 Probably the same monk Rong as in 3.10 and 4.41, whose retreat was attached to the Jingkong Temple near Xiangyang.

2 Rong's retreat is being compared with the Jetavana Park, which was said to have been purchased for the Buddha by a devout layman who met its owner's demand to cover its grounds with goldpieces.

3 The "incense platform" is Rong's place of meditation.

3.41

九日龍沙寄劉大

龍沙豫章北

九日挂帆過

風俗因時見

4 湖山發興多

客中誰送酒

棹裏自成歌

歌竟乘流去

8 滔滔任夕波

3.41

At Dragon Sands on Double-Ninth Day; Sent to Liu (Eldest)¹

The Dragon Sands are to the north of Yuzhang;²

On double-ninth day my hoisted sail stops here.

Common customs are seen to follow the seasons,

4 Lake and mountains induce very much of a mood.

Who among strangers will present me with wine?³

Within the sweep of the oars I form my own song.

And when the song is done, I ride the current onward,

8 Flowing on, steadily flowing, trusting to the evening waves.

1 Liu is probably Liu Shenxu 劉春虛, *jinsbi* 723, a minor official and poet, known as friend of Wang Changling, Yan Fang, et al.

2 Yuzhang, also known as Hongzhou 洪州, is present-day Nanchang, Jiangxi, near the southwest corner of Poyang Lake.

3 Referring to the official who unexpectedly brought wine to Tao Qian on a Double Ninth day when he had none.

3.42

洞庭湖寄閻九

洞庭秋正闊

余欲泛歸船

莫辨荆吳地

4 唯餘水共天

渺瀰江樹沒

合沓海湖連

遲爾為舟楫

8 相將濟巨川

3.42

At Lake Dongting; Sent to Yan (Nine)¹

Dongting Lake in autumn stretches out truly broad,

As I am ready to set a homebound boat on its way.

Not to be told apart, the lands of Jing and Wu,

4 Nothing but a suffusion of water in union with the sky.²

In the endless expanse rivers and trees are engulfed,

Mingling and massing, sea and lake link up.

I look forward to your being the oars of the boat,

8 To lead one on across the mighty waterway.³

1 Yan is Yan Fang 閻防, see also 1.13.

2 Jing, within which Dongting lies, is roughly equivalent to Chu; Wu is further east. But so large is the lake that its boundaries can't be discerned.

3 Recalling a passage in the *Shangshu*, where King Wu Ding said to his minister Yue Yi, "Suppose me crossing a mighty waterway, I will use you for the oars of my boat." Meng Haoran is forecasting that Yan will rise to high office.

3.43

和李侍御渡松滋江

南紀西江闊
 皇華御史雄
 截流寧假楫
 4 挂席自生風
 寮案爭攀鷁
 魚龍亦避驄
 坐聞白雪唱
 8 翻入棹歌中

3.43

Matching Attendant Censor Li's Poem "Crossing the Songzi River"¹

"Arranger of the southland," this river in the west is broad;

"Flower of the August One," the imperial censor holds sway.²

Cutting across the current, surely you needn't borrow a steersman;³

4 Hoisting up the sail, you raise the wind at your will.

Your subordinate officials vie to climb onto the heron-boat,

While for their part fish and dragons "beware the dappled steed."⁴

Just now I've heard a singing of the rare "White Snow" tune,⁵

8 Which here fits itself into the music of the oars.

1 The Songzi River was a major tributary of the Jiang, running more or less parallel to it in southern Hubei.

2 A *Shijing* poem refers to the Jiang and the Han as "arrangers of the southland." Another *Shijing* poem, which begins with the line "A flower of such radiance" is explained in its preface as being in praise of a ruler's envoy; the word for "radiance" in that poem may also mean "the Radiant, or August One (i.e., the ruler)" which is how Meng uses it here.

3 Recalling the same *Shangshu* passage as mentioned in 3.42, note 3, with censor Li here as a figure not needing an oarsman.

4 Certain boats had herons carved on their prow. There was a local chant about the powerful Eastern Han censor Huan Dian, which warned people to stay out of the way of his dappled steed. See 1.61, note 5 for a similar pairing of these allusions, also in a poem for an imperial censor.

5 The "White Snow" song was in early Han times one of the tunes from the ancient state of Chu that was still known by only a small number of people. The implication is that Li's poem, which Meng's is matching, is as special as that.

3.44

秦中感秋寄遠上人

一丘常欲臥
三徑苦無資
北土非吾願
4 東林懷我師
黃金燃桂盡
壯志逐年衰
日夕涼風至
8 聞蟬但益悲

3.44

In Qin, Moved at Autumn; To Send to His Eminence Yuan¹

On merely a lone hill I've always wished to rest,
 Though my three pathways be frequently lacking resources.²
 This northern land is not what I desire,

4 But I cherish my teacher in the Eastern Grove.³

Yellow gold is here used up like fired cinnamon-wood,⁴

And my brave ambition fails along with the year.

At dusk of day a cooling breeze reaches me,

8 But hearing the cicadas only adds to my grief.

1 Yuan is a Buddhist monk.

2 Three pathways signify the rustic dwelling of a recluse.

3 The Eastern Grove was the name of the famous monastery on Mt. Lu that Huiyuan founded in the late fourth century; Meng Haoran associates it with the monk of the same name to whom he is writing.

4 A reference to the words of the Warring States persuader Su Qin, during a visit to Qin in which he spent all his resources without gaining an audience with the ruler. This poem was probably written in early autumn of 728.

3.45

重訓李少府見贈

養疾衡茆下

由來浩氣真

五行將禁火

4 十步想尋春

致敬維桑梓

邀歡即故人

還看後凋色

8 青翠有松筠

3.45

Replying Again to the Poem Presented to Me by Constable Li

Tending to illness under the thatch of a crossbeam hut,

Thereby I'll get eventually to the "flood-like *qi*."¹

The five phases lead us on to the day of banning fires,²

4 And ten paces around me I think of finding springtime.

Regarded most with reverence, yes, are mulberry and catalpa,³

As welcomed with delight is indeed an old friend.

Looking yet to the color of the plants that fade latest,⁴

8 Dark-green and bright-green are pine-tree and bamboo-culm.

1 The first line plays off of a line in one of Tao Qian's poems that says, "Tending to what is true under the thatch of a crossbeam hut." The "flood-like *qi*" is a mysterious quality of general well-being with nature that Mencius spoke of tending. The term "flood-like" (*haoran*) was Meng's personal name, alluding to this passage from the identically surnamed Mencius (Mengzi).

2 I.e., the so-called Cold Food festival, 105 days after the winter solstice, when lighting fires was banned.

3 A line from a *Shijing* poem says that the mulberry and catalpa, traditionally planted close to one's homestead, are to be most looked on with reverence – probably because they recall one's ancestors who planted them.

4 Confucius said that the pine was last to fade in the cold and was thus a good symbol of endurance in adversity.

3.46

宿永嘉江寄山陰崔國輔少府

我行窮水國

君使入京華

相去日千里

4 孤帆天一涯

臥聞海潮至

起視江月斜

借問同舟客

8 何時到永嘉

3.46

Passing the Night on the Yongjia River; To Send to Constable Cui
Guofu of Shanyin¹

I have journeyed to the ends of the watery domain,
While you, sir, are now commissioned to the capital's splendor.
Going farther off, each day a thousand leagues,

- 4 My orphan sail, is at one shore of the sky.
Lying back, I hear the sea's tide coming in,
Rising, I view the moonlight slanting over the river.
Let me ask a traveler on the same boat:
8 Just when is it we will get to Yongjia?

1 The Yongjia River (also called the Ou 甌 River) in Zhejiang leads to Yongjia district (present-day Wenzhou) on the seacoast. Cui Guofu, *jinsbi* 726, was a native of Shanyin, Zhejiang. For a similar poem, see 3.49.

3.47

上巳日洛中寄王迴九

卜洛成周地
 浮杯上巳筵
 鬪雞寒食下
 4 走馬射堂前
 垂柳金堤合
 平沙翠幕連
 不知王逸少
 8 何處會群賢

3.47

On the Double-Third Day in Luo; To Send to Wang Jiong (Nine)¹

Divined-for Luo is the place that completed Zhou;²

Here we float wine-cups at the *shangsi* festivity.

Cocks are set to fighting on the Cold Food day,

4 And horses are raced before the archery hall.

The drooping willows commingle by the metal-strong dyke,

While by level sands curtains of halcyon plumes are conjoined.

But I do not know about Wang Yishao,

8 Where it is that he's gathering a host of worthies?³

1 The Xiangyang recluse Wang Jiong is mentioned in many other poems (1.17, 1.60, 2.4, 2.28, 2.39, 3.17). The *shangsi* holiday (see 2.39), by Tang times, was celebrated on the third day of the third month, close to the Cold Food day (see 3.45, note 2). Among the traditional activities were parties of the elite at which wine-cups were floated (line 2) on natural or artificial watercourses as part of poetry-competition and drinking games; cockfighting and horse-racing (lines 3–4) are mentioned in some earlier texts as other entertainments.

2 Luoyang was chosen by divination of the Duke of Zhou as the site of the Zhou dynasty's eastern capital, which is said to have completed the geographic scope of the Zhou.

3 Wang Yishao is Wang Xizhi, whose renowned *shangsi* gathering of poets at Lanting in 353 set the ideal for all such later gatherings. Meng Haoran is flattering Wang Jiong with the identification, since he shares the same surname as Wang Xizhi.

3.48

聞裴侍御朏自襄州司戶除豫州司戶因以投
寄

故人荆府掾
尚有柏臺威
移職自樊沔
4 芳聲聞帝畿
昔余臥林巷
載酒訪柴扉
松菊無君賞
8 鄉園嬾欲歸

3.48

Having Heard that Imperial Censor Pei Fei is Being Transferred from
the Finance Bureau in Xiangzhou to the Finance Bureau in Yuzhou, I
Consign this Poem to Send to Him¹

My old friend, an official in the Jingzhou headquarters,
Possesses still the majesty of the Cypress Terrace.²

Your duties are shifting now away from Fan and Mian,

4 To where well-favored rumors will be heard in the imperial domain.³

In times past when I reclined at ease by the forest lane,
Toting wine you came to call at my brushwood door.

Now pine and chrysanthemum will lack your appreciation,

8 So to my countryside garden I am chary of returning.

1 Pei Fei is being transferred from the Xiangyang area to Yuzhou in what is present-day Runan 汝南, Henan.

2 Xiangzhou was part of the larger Jingzhou administrative area. The imperial censorate, where Pei had evidently been in service earlier in a more prestigious position than occupying now, was often referred to as the Cypress Terrace. We know that later, in 740, he was returned to the capital, as vice-director of the Board of Rites.

3 Fan is Fancheng 樊城, just north of Xiangyang. Mian is the Mian River, another name for a section of the Han River near Xiangyang. Yuzhou, where Pei is being posted, is closer to the “imperial domain” of Luoyang.

3.49

江上寄山陰崔國輔少府

春堤楊柳發

憶與故人期

草木本無意

4 枯榮自有時

山陰定遠近

江上日相思

不及蘭亭會

8 空吟祓禊詩

3.49

On the River; To Send to Constable Cui Guofu of Shanyin¹

As willow trees fill out by the dyke in springtime,
 I call to mind an engagement made with an old friend.
 While plants and trees in fact have no conscious intent,

4 Decay and efflorescence have their own seasons.

I don't know for sure whether Shanyin is far or near,
 But on the river my thoughts are of you each day.

If I'm not in time for the gathering at Lanting,

8 In vain I'll chant my poem for the purification ceremony.²

1 For a similar poem to Cui, see 3.46.

2 The original reason for celebration on the Double-Third was a purification ceremony at waterside to wash away the noxious influences of winter. Lanting was where Wang Xizhi hosted the most famous of all Double-Third gatherings.

3.50

送洗然弟進士舉

獻策金門去
 承歡彩服違
 以吾一日長
 4 念爾聚星稀
 昏定須溫席
 寒多未授衣
 桂枝如已擢
 8 早逐鴈南飛

3.50

Seeing Off Younger Brother Xianran, for the Advanced Scholar Examination

You are off to present exam papers at the Gate of Gold,
Turning away from giving pleasure in gaily colored clothes.¹

“You may take me as your senior by just one day,”

4 But I’ll remember you when massed stars are but few.²

“At twilight to adjust,” one must warm the bed-mat,
Yet as the cold grows, clothing has not been given out.³

The cinnamon branch is now as good as carried off,

8 So be soon to follow the wildgeese when they fly south.⁴

1 Gate of Gold is short for Gate of the Golden Steed (Jinma men), where imperial retainers were lodged in Western Han times. The “gaily colored clothes,” which Xianran now puts off for his journey, are those which, according to tradition, were worn by the adult Laolaizi 老來子 as he performed childish antics to bring pleasure to his aged parents.

2 Line 3 is a direct quote from the *Analects*, in which Confucius, desiring his disciples not to revere him for his age, asks them to treat him as though he’s just a day older than them. The massed stars of line 4, who are becoming few, stand for like-minded friends.

3 Line 5 is a partial quotation from the *Liji*, which says a son “at twilight adjusts [everything for his parents] ... in winter warms [the bed for his parents].” Meng is reminding Xianran of filial responsibilities. Line 6 recalls a *Shijing* poem that says in the ninth month [warm] clothing is given out; but here it hasn’t been done.

4 Carrying off the cinnamon branch signifies success in the examination. As this takes place early in the year, Xianran is encouraged to return home soon afterward, when wildgeese go south with the warm weather.

3.51

夜泊廬江聞故人在東林寺以詩寄之

江路經廬阜

松門入虎溪

聞君尋寂樂

4 清夜宿招提

石鏡山精怯

禪林怖鴿棲

一燈如悟道

8 為照客心迷

3.51

While Mooring at Night on the Lu River, I Hear that an Old Friend
is at the Eastern Grove Monastery, so Send Him this Poem¹

Where the river road passes by Mount Lu,
Pinegate Freshet leads into Tiger Stream.²

I've heard you, sir, are seeking bliss in stillness,

4 In the clear night loding at the *caturdiśa*.³

Before the stone mirror, mountain wraiths cower;

In the meditation grove, frightened doves find refuge.⁴

If your single lamp is awakened to the Way,

8 Let it light the confusion in this traveler's heart.⁵

1 The "Lu River" is that part of Lake Pengli at the foot of Mount Lu, the mountain where the famous Eastern Grove Monastery, founded by the monk Huiyuan in the fourth century, was located.

2 Pinegate was the name of a brook on Mount Lu. Tiger Stream marked the outer vicinity of the monastery, beyond which Huiyuan rarely went.

3 The Chinese *zhaoti* (MC *tsyew-dej*) is an abbreviated transcription of Skt. *caturdiśa*, referring to a monastery meant to house monks of all "four quarters."

4 On the east of Mount Lu there was a stone outcropping so round and smooth that it resembled a mirror. Wraiths were elemental spirits of various phenomena that had attained great age and taken on human form, but their true form could be revealed in a mirror. There are several stories in Buddhist scriptures that speak of frightened doves that are succored by sheltering in the shadow of the Buddha or one of his disciples.

5 The lamp represents the teachings of the Buddha.

3.52

宿桐廬江寄廣陵舊遊

山暝聽猿愁
 滄江疾夜流
 風鳴兩岸葉
 4 月照一孤舟
 建德非吾土
 維揚憶舊遊
 還將數行淚
 8 遙寄海西頭

3.52

Passing the Night on the Tonglu River; To Send to Former Acquaintances in Guangling¹

As the hills darken, I hear the gibbons' sad cries,
And the cold-blue river hurries its evening current.

A breeze gives voice to leaves on both shores,

4 While the moon illumines a single lonely boat.

Jiande is not my own dear land,

But in Weiyang are remembered past acquaintances.²

Looking back I take these several lines of tears,

8 Send them afar to the sea's western end.

1 Tonglu (also Tong) River joined the Zhe River east of Hangzhou. Guangling was an old name for Yangzhou 揚州 on the seacoast, at the mouth of the Jiang.

2 Jiande is the modern city of that name in Zhejiang. Weiyang was another name for Guangling (Yangzhou).

3.53

南還舟中寄袁太祝

沿泝非便習

風波厭苦辛

忽聞遷谷鳥

4 來報五陵春

嶺北迴征棹

巴東問故人

桃源何處是

8 遊子正迷津

3.53

On the Boat when Returning from the South; To Send to Grand Invo-
cator Yuan¹

Whether downstream or upstream, it is not easy going,
As wind and waves have worn me out with bitter distress.

But suddenly I hear of a bird removed from the valley,

4 Come to tell about springtime by the Five Mounds.²

North of the range, where my voyaging oars turn round,

Now in the east of Ba I ask of an old friend:

At just what place is that Peach Blossom Font?

8 Fo this traveler right now has lost the ford.³

1 This Yuan has been identified as Yuan Huan 袁瓊 (see also 4.15).

2 A *Shijing* poem tells of a bird that “emerges from a deep valley, / removing to a lofty tree”; this became used, as here, as a metaphor for being promoted in officialdom. The Five Mounds are tumuli of Han-dynasty emperors outside Chang’an, therefore signifying that Yuan has been advanced to the capital.

3 Being “east of Ba,” the poet, having figuratively lost his way, asks his successful friend to help him find Tao Qian’s fictional enclave of Peach Blossom Font.

3.54

東陂遇雨率爾貽謝南池

田家春事起
 丁壯就東陂
 殷殷雷聲作
 4 森森雨足垂
 海虹晴始見
 河柳潤初移
 余意在耕稼
 8 因君問土宜

3.55

行至汝墳寄盧徵君

行乏憇余駕
 依然見汝墳
 洛川方罷雪
 4 嵩嶂有殘雲
 曳曳半空裏
 溶溶五色分
 聊題一詩興
 8 因寄盧徵君

3.54

Encountering Rain on the Eastern Slope; Impulsively Presented to Xie Nanchi¹

- For the farmer, when springtime work begins,
 The hardy fellows tend to the eastern slope.²
 Rolling and rumbling, thunder's voice is started,
 4 Dousing and drenching, rainfall lowers its step.
 A rainbow appears over the lake just as the sky is clearing,
 And willows by the river soon sway with a moist sheen.
 With my thoughts resting on the plowing and sowing,
 8 You, sir, may ask if the soil is as it should be.

3.55

Upon Reaching Rufen on My Journey; Sent to Summoned Gentleman Lu³

- Weary from the journey, I pause my carriage;
 As it used to be, I see the banks of the Ru.⁴
 While by the River Luo snow has just now ceased,
 4 Above the bluffs of Mount Song there are straggling clouds:
 Trailing off and away, halfway in space,
 Amply adrift and arrayed in five colors.
 For the moment I'm taken by a mood for a poem,
 8 And thus send this to Summoned Gentleman Lu.

1 For another to Xie Nanchi, see 2.33.

2 These two lines are partial quotes from a traditional commentary to the *Shangshu*.

3 Rufen is present-day Linru 臨汝, Henan. The addressee is Lu Hong 盧鴻 (his name sometimes given as Lu Hongyi 鴻一), who was summoned to court on at least two occasions but refused to leave his residence on Mount Song 嵩山.

4 A poem in the *Shijing* speaks of "Tracing a course to the banks of the Ru."

3.56

寄天台道士

海上求仙客

三山望幾時

焚香宿華頂

4 裊露採靈芝

屢踐莓苔滑

將尋汗漫期

儻因松子去

8 長與世人辭

3.56

Sent to a Daoist Adept on Mount Tiantai

- Beseeching transcendent visitors from over the sea,
 For so long you have looked afar at those three mountains.¹
 Lighting incense, you pass the nights on Flowered Crest;
 4 Drenched with dew, you glean divine wondergrowths.²
 Frequently treading on the slipperiness of moss and lichen,
 Someday to make a rendezvous with Far-flooded Freedom.³
 Should it happen that you depart along with Master Red Pine,
 8 You may bid farewell forever from the world of men.⁴

1 The three supposed paradise isles of Penglai, Yingzhou, and Fangzhang which were the home of transcendents.

2 Flowered Crest is the highest peak of Tiantai. The plants being gathered are a particular mushroom that reputedly conduces to immortality.

3 Treading on slippery moss and lichen is a phrase from Sun Chuo's "Rhapsody on Roaming to Mount Tiantai." Hanman, or "Far-flooded Freedom," was mentioned in *Huainanzi* as a personified quality of ultimate independence; it later became used as a proper name for a distinct transcendent.

4 Master Red Pine was one of the most often mentioned "immortals" in poetry from the Han dynasty on. The final couplet might also be read with the poet as subject: "Should it be that I depart with you, master adept, / I would [gladly] bid farewell ..."

3.57

和張明府登鹿門山

忽示登高作
能寬旅寓情
絃歌既多暇
4 山水思彌清
草得風先動
虹因雨後成
謬承巴俚和
8 非敢應同聲

3.57

Matching Magistrate Zhang's Poem "Climbing Deer Gate Mountain"

All at once you showed me a composition on climbing high
 That ably set forth the feelings of a wayfarer's sojourning.

Since your song to stringed music yields much leisure time,

4 For mountain and river your thoughts are evermore pure.¹

Grasses sway first when they catch the wind,

As a rainbow will form up following the rain.

Ineptly I respond by matching with just a coarse Ba ballad,

8 Which in no way dares answer you in an equal voice.²

1 The best magistrate is, according to Confucius, one who brings his subjects to order simply by playing his zither.

2 Meng Haoran compares his matching poem to Zhang's with merely a commonplace song from Ba that hundreds of people would know how to sing, not something composed in the same high style as Zhang's poem.

3.58

和張三自穰縣還途中遇雪

風吹沙海雪

來作柳園春

宛轉隨香騎

4 輕盈伴玉人

歌疑郢中客

態比洛川神

今日南歸楚

8 雙飛侶入秦

3.58

Matching Zhang (Three)'s Poem "Returning from Rang District I'm Met with Snow on the Road"¹

The wind blows in snow from the sea of sands,

Come to fashion springtime in the willow gardens.²

Turning and wheeling, it would pursue perfumed horsemen;

4 Dainty and delicate, as if accompanying a jade maiden.³

I suspect that your song is that of a guest from Ying,

And its description like that of the Luo River goddess.⁴

Today as you return home southward to Chu,

8 Paired in flight you seem to be passing into Qin.⁵

1 Rang district is present-day Dengxian 鄧縣, Henan. Zhang was returning to somewhere in Hubei, the old state of Chu.

2 The snow seems blown in from cold, sandy wastes of Central Asia. Early-blooming flowers of spring are often compared with snow.

3 The 3rd line is a nearly exact quote from a poem by Shen Quanqi 沈佺期, describing courtiers playing polo. The snow also seems to be a fit embellishment for divine maidens of pure-white complexion.

4 The early poet Song Yu 宋玉 told of a guest from Ying (capital of the old state of Chu) whose song about "White Snow in Reviving Springtime" was so elegant that only a few people could harmonize with it. Cao Zhi's 曹植 "Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess" includes, among many similes for the goddess' beauty, that she is "like swirling snow on the drifting wind."

5 Zhang is returning to the warmer climes of Chu, but the snow that now accompanies him makes it seem that he and it are being carried north into the colder climate of Qin.

3.59

歲除夜會樂城張少府宅

疇昔通家好
 相知無間然
 續明催畫燭
 4 守歲接長筵
 舊曲梅花唱
 新正柏酒傳
 客行隨處樂
 8 不見度年年

3.59

A New Year's Eve Gathering in Lecheng at the Residence of Constable Zhang¹

- From times long past our families have been closely connected,
 And since we have known each other there has been no break.
 To prolong the light now we push forward painted candles,
 4 Preserving the twelvemonth we join our long mats to one another.²
 For an old-time tune the one about prunus blossoms is sung,
 For the new aligning, cypress-leaf wine is passed around.³
 A traveler makes merry at whatever place he may be,
 8 But year upon year has passed since last I looked upon you.

1 The Lecheng constable is Zhang Zirong. See 3.16 for another poem on this occasion, and 2.38 for one shortly afterward.

2 To “preserve the twelvemonth” was to sit up all night till New Year’s morning. We avoid translating *sui* as “year” here, because of the doubled *nian*, also meaning “year,” in line 8.

3 The song reference is to the *yuefu* called “Prunus Blossoms are Falling.” The “new aligning” refers to the first day of the year, when month and year begin a new seasonal cycle. Wine infused with cypress leaves was thought effective for keeping away evil influences.

3.60

自洛之越

遑遑三十載

書劍兩無成

山水尋吳越

4 風塵馱洛京

扁舟泛湖海

長揖謝公卿

且樂杯中物

8 誰論世上名

3.60

Going from Luo to Yue¹

Unquiet and unsettled for these thirty years,
Both in learning and swordsmanship I've no accomplishment.²
For their hills and rivers now I seek out Wu and Yue,

- 4 Being wearied of the Luo capital's wind-blown dust.
So my small boat will drift the lakes and seas,
After I bow low in farewell to great and noble lords.
But I rather delight at "the thing within the cup,"³
8 And who am I to dispute over fame in this world?

1 That is, from Luoyang to the area of the lower Yangzi.

2 The thirty years is a notional, not chronologically specific, number, since by that time one was supposed to "be established" in the world. Civil and martial abilities (learning and swordsmanship) were alternative pathways to fame; the great general Xiang Yu 項羽 (ca. 232–202 BCE) said he had achieved nothing in either realm when young.

3 "The thing within the cup" was Tao Qian's kenning for wine.

3.61

歸至郢中作

遠遊經海嶠

返棹歸山阿

日夕見喬木

4 鄉園在伐柯

愁隨江路盡

喜入郢門多

左右看棄土

8 依然即匪佗

3.62

途中遇晴

已失巴陵雨

猶逢蜀坂泥

天開斜景遍

4 山出晚雲低

餘濕猶霑草

殘流尚入谿

今宵有明月

8 鄉思遠悽悽

3.61

Composed upon Reaching Ying while Returning Home

- In my far roaming I passed by the seaside scarps,
 Then turned the oars to go home toward a fold in the hills.
 Now at dusk of day I glimpse the lofty old trees,
 4 And know my homeland garden must lie near to hand.¹
 Melancholy is done with as I follow the river road,
 Rejoicings are many as I enter the gates of Ying.
 To left and right I see the fields of mulberries,
 8 Just as they were before, and indeed no others.²

3.62

Meeting with Clearing Skies on the Road

- Now that I've left behind rain at Baling,
 Still I'm faced with mud on this slope of Shu.³
 But the sky opens up, slanting sunlight spreads around,
 4 Mountains push out, as evening clouds bend down.
 Lingering moisture wets the grasses yet,
 While shrinking rivulets still rush into the stream.
 The heavens this night will hold a luminous moon,
 8 While homeland longings, carrying far, are twice intense.

1 "Near to hand" is literally "hewing an axe-handle," a metaphor alluding to a *Shijing* poem with the couplet, "In hewing an axe-handle, hewing an axe-handle. / The pattern is not far distant."

2 Recalling a *Shijing* poem that says "How can they be strangers? / They're brothers, and no others."

3 Baling (literally, "the tumulus of Ba") is present-day Yueyang, Hunan, on the eastern shore of Lake Dongting. We should understand "the slopes of Shu" as metaphorical: the poet's route is as difficult as the famous Nine Bends Slope in Sichuan.

3.63

蔡陽館

日暮馬行疾
 城荒人住稀
 聽歌疑近楚
 4 投館忽如歸
 魯堰田疇廣
 章陵氣色微
 明朝拜嘉慶
 8 須著老萊衣

3.63

At the Caiyang Hostel¹

As the sun sets, my horse's pace quickens;
 In the fallow land by the city men's dwellings are few.
 But on hearing a song, it seems that I'm near to Chu;

- 4 Taking refuge in this hostel, suddenly it's as if I'm home.
 Close by Lu Dyke, plowed fields stretch out,
 Near to Zhang Mound the feel of the air is mild.²
 Tomorrow morning I'll pay excellent felicitations,
 8 And must needs put on Laolaizi's clothing.³

1 Caiyang was near present-day Zaoyang 棗陽, in northern Hubei, a half-day's journey from Xiangyang.

2 The exact location of the dyke is unclear. The tumulus, established and named by Han Guangwudi (r. 25–57), to honor a distant ancestor, was somewhat east of Caiyang.

3 To “pay excellent felicitations” was a Tang phrase for paying respect to one's parent(s), especially one's mother; *jia* 嘉, excellent, is also *jia* 家, family. Laolaizi, a paragon of filial piety, even in his seventies put on gaily-colored clothes and performed childish antics to amuse his aged parents.

3.64

他鄉七夕

他鄉逢七夕

旅館益羈愁

不見穿針婦

4 空懷故國樓

緒風初減熱

新月始登秋

誰忍窺河漢

8 迢迢望斗牛

3.64In Another Countryside on Seventh Night¹

In another countryside I happen on Seventh Night,
Where lodging in a hostel adds to my traveling sadness.

I see no women here threading their needles,

4 Yearn in vain for the domiciles of my former land.

As a hinting breeze first diminishes the heat,

A new month just now rises to autumn.²

Who can bear to peer at the He and Han?

8 So far faraway I gaze toward Dipper and Ox.³

1 According to legend, on the seventh night of the seventh month the two star-spirits Ox-leader 牽牛 (Altair) and Weaving Maid 織女 (Vega), placed on opposite sides of the Milky Way (the celestial He and Han rivers of line 7), meet for their only rendezvous each year. A number of festive activities for women were carried out on this night, including a contest of threading needles (line 3).

2 The seventh month was the first month of autumn.

3 The Southern Dipper and Ox (not the same as the star Ox-leader) are two constellations, in Sagittarius and Capricorn, that make up the Jupiter station called Xingji 星紀, located south of the Milky Way (the He and Han). Meng Haoran is too homesick to look at the Milky Way, where the two lovelorn stars are meeting on this night, but gazes instead at a different part of the sky.

3.65

夜泊牛渚趨薛八船不及

星羅牛渚夕

風退鷁舟遲

浦溼常同宿

4 烟波忽間之

榜歌空裏失

船火望中疑

明發泛湖海

8 茫茫何處期

3.65

Night-Mooring at Ox Isle, Hoping to Catch Up to Xue (Eight)'s Boat,
But I'm Not in Time¹

As the stars spread out over Ox Isle at night,
The wind receded, and my fish-hawk boat is late.

At this riverside strand we used to pass the night together,
4 But now the misty waves have suddenly come between us.

The song of your oarsmen is lost in the void,
And the boat's firelight is just imagined in my gaze.
With dawn's breaking I'll set adrift on lake and sea –

8 In this vast expanse where shall we meet up again?

¹ Ox Isle marked a ford of the Jiang, about seven miles west of Dangtu 当塗, Anhui.

3.66

曉入南山

瘴氣曉氛氳

南山沒水雲

鯤飛今始見

4 鳥墮舊來聞

地接長沙近

江從泊渚分

賈生曾吊屈

8 余亦痛斯文

3.66

Passing Into South Mountain at Daybreak¹

Miasmatic vapors at daybreak are fully fuming,²

As South Mountain is drowned in moist clouds.

But now at last I glimpse the *kun*-fish soaring,

4 Where of old it was heard that birds tumbled down.³

This place is linked to Changsha nearby,

The river dividing in line with the mooring isle.⁴

Sir Jia once mourned here for Qu Yuan,

8 And I too grieve deeply over such culture as that.⁵

1 The mountain is Yuelu shan 岳麓山, a foothill of the Southern Marchmount Heng shan 衡山, near Changsha.

2 It was proverbial that the lands south of the Jiang were beset with miasmatic, pestilential vapors (see also 1.13 for these at Changsha).

3 In the opening passage of *Zhuangzi* the gigantic *kun*-fish of the northern seas transforms annually into the equally huge *peng*-bird which sets off southward in flight. Since the moist-laden clouds of fuming vapors cover the mountain, Meng imagines that he sees the giant fish, not its avian avatar, in flight. The Eastern Han general Ma Yuan 馬援 once said he saw birds drop from the sky, because of the poisonous vapors in this vicinity.

4 Southwest of Changsha was the well-known mooring site of Juzhou 橘洲, at which point the Xiang River 湘水 divided.

5 The young scholar Jia Yi (see 1.13, note 4), when relegated to Changsha, wrote a rhapsody “Mourning Qu Yuan” at the nearby site where the exiled poet Qu Yuan was said to have drowned himself. The term *siwen*, “such culture as that,” was originally used by Confucius when describing the legacy of the early Zhou rulers with which he allied himself and which, he thought, Heaven would not abandon. The phrase also means “this (or these) writing(s),” and may here be taken as well to refer to Jia Yi’s rhapsody and Qu Yuan’s poems, both of which exemplify “such culture as that.”

3.67

夜渡湘水

客行貪利涉
 夜裏渡湘川
 露氣聞香杜
 4 歌聲識採蓮
 榜人投岸火
 漁子宿潭煙
 行侶時相問
 8 涔陽何處邊

3.68

赴京途中遇雪

迢遞秦京道
 蒼茫歲暮天
 窮陰連晦朔
 4 積雪滿山川
 落鴈迷沙渚
 飢鳥噪野田
 客愁空佇立
 8 不見有人烟

3.67

Crossing Xiang River at Night

- A journeying stranger covets a favorable crossing,
 And in the night we pass over the Xiang waterway.
 In the dewy air I sense the fragrant pollia,
 4 From a voice in song recognize "Picking the Lotus."¹
 The master of the oars steers toward shoreside fires,
 While fishermen pass the night amid mists over the tarn.
 At one time a fellow journeyer asks of me:
 8 "Where, on what side, might Cenyang be?"²

3.68

Going to the Capital, Encountering Snow on the Way

- Farther on and more distant, the road to the capital in Qin,
 Gray-blurred and boundless, the sky at year's waning.
 The extremest gloom of *yin* joins the month's last day to the first,
 4 As snow piling up fills the mountains and waterways.
 Wildgeese settling down are confused over sandy isles,³
 And starving rooks clamor in the countryside fields.
 A traveler, despondent, in vain stands long and waiting,
 8 Catching not a glimpse of cook-smoke that is man's.

1 A well-known *yuefu* title in medieval times.

2 Cenyang was near present-day Lixian 醴縣, in northern Hunan.

3 They are confused because the whiteness of the snow blankets the usual look of the sand.

3.69

宿武陵即事

川暗夕陽盡

孤舟泊岸初

嶺猿相叫嘯

4 潭影侶空虛

就枕滅明燭

扣船聞夜漁

雞鳴問何處

8 人物是秦餘

3.69

Passing the Night in Wuling; On a Topic of the Moment¹

The stream grows dark, the evening sunlight gone,
My lonely boat early moored by the shore.

Gibbons on the ridge cry and shriek to one another,

4 Reflections in the bay seem empty and transparent.

Taking to my pillow, I snuff out the bright candle,
Soon hear the night fishermen slapping the boat's side.

When the cock crows, I ask where we are:

8 The people here must be those survivors of Qin!²

1 Wuling, the site of Tao Qian's Peach Blossom Font, was near present-day Changde 常德, Hunan, just west of Lake Dongting.

2 The original denizens of Peach Blossom Font were supposed to have fled there at the time of the Qin dynasty's downfall.

3.70

同盧明府餞張郎中除義王府司馬海園作

上國山河裂
 賢王邸第開
 故人分職去
 4 潘令寵行來
 冠蓋趨梁苑
 江湘失楚材
 預愁軒騎動
 8 賓客散池臺

3.70

To Go With Magistrate Lu's Poem, "Composed at the Lake Garden, at a Farewell Banquet for Director Zhang Who is Appointed Martial Administrator for the Prince of Yi's Palatinate"

- From His Highness's domain mountains and rivers are partitioned,
 And now a worthy prince's lordly mansion has been established.¹
 An old friend is departing to take up allotted duties there,
 4 And magistrate Pan has come favoring his journey with a poem.²
 As official cap and coach haste off to the royal park of Liang,
 From the Jiang and Xiang rivers the talent of Chu is depleted.³
 Saddened already at the movement of carriages and horsemen,
 8 We guests will all disperse from the pondside terrace.

1 That is to say, a titled fiefdom has been carved out and bestowed on the Prince of Yi, who will be provided with the official retinue of a separate establishment at the capital. This prince was Li Pin 李玘, Xuanzong's twenty-fourth son. Magistrate Lu was Lu Zhuan 盧僎. Director Zhang was Zhang Yuan 張愿, at whose private landscape garden in Xiangyang the banquet is taking place.

2 Magistrate Lu, whose poem to Zhang is being coupled by Meng's, is here compared with the poet Pan Yue 潘岳 (247–300), who was himself a magistrate several times over.

3 The Prince of Yi's new establishment, where Zhang is going, is favorably identified with the famous Hare Park 兔苑 of Prince Liang 梁王 of the Western Han, to which were summoned the most brilliant scholars of the kingdom. The Jiang and the Xiang are the main rivers of Chu.

3.71

落日望鄉

客行愁落日

鄉思重相催

况在他山外

4 天寒夕鳥來

雪深迷郢路

雲暗失陽臺

可歎悽惶子

8 勞歌誰為媒

3.71

Gazing Afar toward Home in the Setting Sun

A traveler, journeying, is saddened by the setting sun,

As longings for home again press upon one.

Even more is it so when beyond strange hills

4 The sky turns cold and twilight birds come by.

As snow deepens, I have lost the road to Ying;

In the darkness of clouds, I've missed the Sunlit Terrace.¹

You may sigh for one who is anxious and unsettled,

8 But who will act the go-between for my troubled song?

¹ Ying, the oft-mentioned old capital of Chu, and the Sunlit Terrace, where an ancient King of Chu had a rendezvous with a mountain goddess, represent the poet's home region.

3.72

永嘉上浦館逢張八子容

逆旅相逢處

江村日暮時

眾山遙對酒

4 孤嶼共題詩

廨宇鄰蛟室

人烟接島夷

鄉關萬餘里

8 失路一相悲

3.72

At Shangpu Hostel in Yongjia, I Happen on Zhang (Eight) Zirong¹

An inn of welcome is the place we meet each other,

In this river village at the hour of the waning sun.

Amidst crowded hills, in this distant spot we have wine,

4 Near a solitary islet, we inscribe our poems together.

The bureau offices here are neighbor to the homes of shark-people,

And human cook-smoke reaches the brutes on the islands.²

Our homeland's margin is more than a myriad leagues away,

8 In having missed the road, we are one in our regret.

1 Yongjia, on the seacoast in Zhejiang, was close to Lecheng where Zhang, Meng Haoran's old friend from home, was then constable and where the two were in each other's company at year's end (see 3.16, 3.59; also 2.38).

2 The shark-people were said to live under coastal waters and produced a special pongee (see 1.17, note 2). Residents of the offshore islands are seen as uncivilized foreigners. Both images are emphasizing the coastal setting of Yongjia.

3.73

送張子容赴舉

夕曛山照滅
 送客出柴門
 惆悵野中別
 4 殷勤醉後言
 茂林余偃息
 喬木爾飛翻
 無使谷風誚
 8 須令友道存

3.73

Seeing Off Zhang Zirong On His Way to the Examination¹

In twilight's darkling, sunshine on the hills is extinguished,
As I see off a traveler, leaving from his brushwood gate.

Heartsick and heartsore, at this parting in the countryside;

4 Complaisant and courteous are words after drinking full.

In the lush grove I will settle down and take my rest,

While to the loftiest trees you will wheel in flight.²

Let not the "valley wind" bring on a rebuke,

8 One must see that friendship's path is preserved.³

1 Zhang Zirong passed the *jinsi* exam in 713, hence this poem was probably written in 712, making it one of Meng Haoran's earliest remaining poems.

2 Line 5 is a near quotation from Pan Yue's "Rhapsody on Autumn Inspirations." Line 6 recalls a *Shijing* poem in which a bird comes out from a dark valley to roost in the loftiest trees elsewhere, here a metaphor for Zhang's hoped-for success in the examination.

3 The *Shijing* poem called "The Valley Wind" (Mao 201) is a lament for a once close friendship broken when one of the friends advances to happier circumstances and forgets his former companion.

3.74

送張參明經舉兼向涇州省覲

十五綵衣年
 承歡慈母前
 孝廉因歲貢
 4 懷橘向秦川
 四座推文舉
 中郎許仲宣
 泛舟江上別
 8 誰不仰神仙

3.74

Seeing Off Zhang Shen for the *Mingjing* Examination, Also to Pay His
Familial Respects in Jingzhou¹

Fifteen is a year for wearing gaily-colored clothes,
To give pleasure before one's tender-hearted mother.²

Being "filial and incorrupt" makes you part of the year's tribute,

4 As you "tuck away tangerines" for going to the Qin rivers.³

All those seated around have praised this Wenju,

And the court official forecasts fame for Zhongxuan.⁴
Parting at riverside from your outbound boat,

8 Who would not envision you as a divine transcendent?

1 The *mingjing*, or "Expounding the Classics," exam tested one's retention and recall of two, three, or five selected Classics, without the additional requirements of argumentative interpretation and literary composition of the *jinshi* exam; thus it more often happened that younger candidates, like Zhang here, might sit for this exam. Zhang Shen later in his life became a successful official and respected scholar. Jingzhou, where his parents were living at this time, was present-day Jingchuanxian 涇川縣 in southeastern Gansu.

2 Recalling Laolaizi who, as an old man, put on gaily-colored clothes for the pleasure of his very aged parents. Zhang Shen will be doing this, even though young.

3 Exam candidates, along with natural and fabricated products of local origin, were annually sent to the capital in the eleventh month as tribute to the court. "Filial and incorrupt" was an earlier epithet conferred on those recommended for office, sometimes applied flatteringly in Tang times to exam candidates. Line 6 alludes to Lu Ji 陸績 (187–219) who, when a young boy being received at court by the king of Wu, covertly placed in his robe three tangerines to take away and present to his mother.

4 When still a boy, Kong Rong (153–208, byname Wenju) impressed the local governor and his attendants by his perspicacity. In his teens, Wang Can (177–217, byname Zhongxuan) was treated with high regard by the honored scholar Cai Yong, who predicted Wang would surpass Cai's own abilities.

3.75

沂江至武昌

家本洞湖上

歲時歸思催

客心徒欲速

4 江路苦迢迢

殘凍因風解

新梅變臘開

行看武昌柳

8 髣髴映樓臺

3.76

唐城館中早發寄楊使君

犯霜駟曉駕

數里見唐城

旅館歸心逼

4 荒村客思盈

訪人留後信

策蹇赴前程

欲識離魂斷

8 長空聽鴈聲

3.75

Going Up the River to Wuchang¹

My hearth has its roots by the Grotto Lake,²
 And in this season of the year homeland longings beset me.
 But in the traveler's heart vain is the wish to speed along,

- 4 On the river road toilsome are the bends and windings.
 The last vestiges of ice break up in the warming breeze,
 As new prunus blooms open with the end of All-Hallows month.
 Soon I will be seeing the willow trees of Wuchang,
 8 Almost as if they are tall gleaming towers.

3.76

Starting Out Early from the Tangcheng Hostel; Sent to Prefect Yang³

Braving the frost, I urge on my ride at daybreak,
 And from several leagues away look back on Tangcheng.
 At the travelers' inn, oppressed was my homebound heart,
 4 By the weed-grown village overfull were a stranger's longings.
 I paid you a visit, leaving a message behind,
 Now whipping up my nag, take to the road ahead.
 If you wish to understand a disjoined soul's rending,
 8 In the sky's long emptiness, hear the wildgoose's voice.

1 Wuchang was present-day Echeng 鄂城, in eastern Hubei.

2 A place in Xiangyang associated with the former recluse Pang Degong.

3 Tangcheng was present-day Suixian 隨縣, Hubei, about fifty miles east and slightly south of Xiangyang.

3.77

陪李侍御謁聰上人

欣逢柏臺舊

共謁聰公禪

石室無人到

4 繩床見虎眠

陰崖常抱雪

松澗為生泉

出處雖云異

8 同權在法筵

3.77

Accompanying Censor Li on a Visit to His Eminence Cong

I was pleased to happen on an acquaintance from the Cypress Terrace,¹
 Together to pay our respects at Lordship Cong's meditation place.

To his rock-ringed chamber hardly anyone comes,

4 By his cord-wrapped seat one may see tigers asleep.²

The overshadowed bluff always retains snow,

And a freshet by pine-trees brings forth a wellspring.

Though going out in the world and staying back are different,³

8 We share in the delight of attending at this dharma mat.

1 Cypress Terrace was an alternative name for the Censorate.

2 As was said to be the case on both sides of the cord-wrapped chair of the similarly titled sixth-century monk Facong 法聰.

3 That is, Li who is an official and Meng who is uninvolved.

3.78

和張丞相春朝對雪

迎氣當春立
承恩喜雪來
潤從河漢下
4 花逼艷陽開
不覩豐年瑞
安知燮理才
散鹽如可擬
8 願糝和羹梅

3.78

Matching Chief Minister Zhang's Poem, "Facing Snow on a Spring Morning"¹

- We welcome the aura now of springtime's advent,
 Receiving favor, are happy with the arrival of snow.²
 As enriching moisture descends from the river in the sky,
 4 Snowflakes blossom, forced in the captivating sunlight.³
 Were one not to behold this auspice of a bountiful year,
 How to recognize the genius of one who "adjusts and regulates"?⁴
 If sprinkled salt may be indeed permitted as a comparison,
 8 Then let it be mingled with the prunes of an "agreeable stew."⁵

1 Another poem written when Meng was accompanying Zhang Jiuling on his Jingzhou tour during the winter and spring of 737–38.

2 Snowfall at the beginning of spring was traditionally thought to presage a bountiful year.

3 The snowflakes are literally "blossoms," which would normally be the object urged to blooming in the spring sun.

4 One who "adjusts and regulates" was originally used in the *Shangshu* to refer to the three highest dignitaries of the government, but then came to signify specifically the chief minister.

5 Xie Lang, nephew of the respected fourth-century figure Xie An, once compared snow with scattered salt, to his uncle's appreciation. Adding prunes and salt to make an "agreeable stew" is a metaphor from the *Shangshu* for the assistance given by a worthy minister to an appreciative ruler. Here Meng also connects this with the habitual image of snow falling on prunus blossoms in the early spring. Like the entire poem, this sees the snow as not only a favorable omen of a rich year but as lauding Zhang Jiuling's ministerial abilities.

Book 4

五言律詩

4.1

送王宣從軍

才有幕中畫

而無塞上勳

漢兵將滅虜

4 王粲始從軍

旌旆邊庭去

山川地脉分

平生一匕首

8 感激贈夫君

Pentametric Regulated Verse

4.1

Seeing Off Wang Xuan to Follow the Army

In ability you have that to devise plans in the tents,¹

Though as yet have not deeds of merit at the frontier.

With the Han troops ready to exterminate the caitiffs,

4 Wang Can at last will be following the army.²

Banners and pennons are departing for the border courts,

Across mountains and streams that divide the veins of earth.

For your whole life's benefit, a single spoon-handled sword:

8 Moved with ardor, I present it to you, good sir.

1 Like the great general Zhang Liang 張良 who assisted the first emperor of Han.

2 Comparing Wang Xuan with the identically surnamed poet Wang Can (177–217), who accompanied Cao Cao's troops on campaign to Sichuan and wrote poems on "Following the Army."

4.2

送張祥之房陵

我家南渡隱

慣習野人舟

日夕弄清淺

4 林湍逆上流

山河據形勝

天地生豪酋

君意在利涉

8 知音期暗投

4.2

Seeing Off Zhang Xiang to Fangling¹

My home is hidden away by the southern ferry-point,

Where I'm familiarly accustomed to a rustic's boat.

At dusk of day as I dally with the clear shallows,

4 In the swift flow by the grove you go against the current.

While mountains and rivers take on the most superb of forms,

Heaven and earth bring forth men bold and complete.

Your intent, sir, rests in "crossing the water to advantage,"

8 "Knowing your tune," I hope to "present a gift from the dark."²

1 Fangling was present-day Fangxian, in northwestern Hubei, about sixty miles upriver from Xiangyang.

2 "Crossing the water to advantage" refers to hexagram 5 of the *Yijing*, an image of attaining one's goal. "Knowing the tune" refers to how the perfect auditor Zhong Ziqi understood immediately the thoughts of his friend Bo Ya from the music the latter played on his zither. "Presenting a gift from the dark" is to give something (here, a poem or perhaps a future visit) without fanfare.

4.3

送桓子之郢城過禮

聞君馳綵騎
 躡蹠指南荆
 為結潘楊好
 4 言過鄢郢城
 標梅詩已贈
 羔鴈禮將行
 今夜神仙女
 8 應來感夢情

4.3

Seeing Off Master Huan to Yingcheng, for Following Through with the Rites¹

I've heard, sir, that you are hastening your gaily-colored escort,
Prancing in display toward southern Jing.

You'll make a bond like the affinity of the Pans and Yangs,

4 And so are passing on to the towns of Yan and Ying.²

The poem of the dropping plums has now been presented,

The rites of eanling and wildgoose will soon take place.³

This very night a divine and transcendent maiden

8 Shall come to stir your emotions in dream.⁴

1 Marriage rites, as the poem makes clear.

2 The families of Pan Yue (247–300) and his friend Yang Zhongwu were allied in marriage through three generations. Yan and Ying are two of the old capitals of the Chu region (T'ang-time Jingzhou).

3 The plum-dropping song from the *Shijing* was traditionally interpreted as celebrating a favorable marriage. Gifts of eanling and wildgoose were in former times presentations of goodwill between high officials; by the medieval era they symbolized the propitious joining of two families in marriage.

4 As did a goddess with a long-ago king of Chu.

4.4

早春潤州送弟還鄉

兄弟遊吳國
 庭闈戀楚關
 已多新歲感
 4 更餞白眉還
 歸泛西江水
 離筵北固山
 鄉園欲有贈
 8 梅柳着先攀

4.4

Early Springtime in Runzhou; Seeing Off a Young Brother Returning
to our Homeland¹

Elder and younger brothers, we've traveled the lands of Wu,
But for parental courtyard and parlor, yearn for the borders of Chu.
Plentiful already are these feelings roused by the new year,

- 4 Even more when bidding farewell to White Eyebrows going home.²
You'll return by boating on the Jiang's waters westward,
After we part from our sitting-mats on the hill of Northern Fastness.³
For something you might wish to send from the homeland garden,
8 Make sprigs of prunus and willow be the first things you pluck.

1 Runzhou was present-day Zhenjiang 鎮江, Jiangsu. The term “brother” is here being used for a cousin, probably Meng Yong (see 1.31).

2 Ma Liang 馬良, a third-century native of Xiangyang, was one of five brothers who were all regarded highly. He had white eyebrows and was said, with a pun on his given name, to be the very best of the five.

3 A hill overlooking the Jiang, north of Zhenjiang, where Meng Haoran is hosting the farewell party.

4.5

送告八從軍

南兒一片氣

何必五車書

好勇方過我

4 才多便起余

運籌將入幕

養拙就閑居

正待功名遂

8 從君繼兩跡

4.5

Seeing Off Gao (Eight) to Follow the Army

A young fellow with a full scope of spirit:
 Why should you need five cartloads of books?¹
 Your love of valor simply surpasses mine,

- 4 Your gifts so many, you readily get my meaning.²
 In advancing stratagems you'll soon be entering the tents,
 While I nurture ineptitude, choosing to dwell in idleness.³
 I will await in certainty the fulfillment of your fame from exploits,
 8 Then will join you in resuming the withdrawal of the two Shus.⁴

1 As the philosopher Huizi had.

2 Line 3 quotes Confucius's comment about his disciple Zilu, line 4 his comment about the disciple Zixia.

3 The great general Zhang Liang was said by the founding emperor of Han to excel in "advancing stratagems" when in the headquarters tent. The third-century poet Pan Yue wrote a "Rhapsody on Dwelling in Idleness," in which he praised "nurturing ineptitude."

4 Shu Guang 疎廣 and his younger nephew Shu Shou 疎受 were tutors of the crown prince in Han Xuandi's reign (74–48 BCE); when the prince was twelve, Shu Guang deemed their work was done, and both withdrew to their home village where they spent their time with family and with village elders.

4.6

送元公之鄂渚尋觀主張驂鸞

桃花春水漲

之子忽乘流

峴首辭蛟浦

4 江邊問鶴樓

贈君青竹杖

送爾白蘋洲

應是神仙輩

8 相期汗漫遊

4.6

Seeing Off Sir Yuan to Ezhu, Who is Seeking Out the Abbot Zhang
Canluan¹

With peach blossoms the springtime waters swell,
As this gentleman abruptly rides out on the current.

By Mt. Xianshou he takes leave of Lamia Bay,

4 Upon the river will be inquiring of Crane Pavilion.²

I present you, sir, with a staff of green bamboo,

As I see you off at an isle with white clover-fern.

Sure it is that your peers of divine transcendents

8 Will set a date for rendezvous with Far-flooded Freedom.³

1 Ezhu was present-day Wuchang, Hubei. Zhang was evidently the abbot of a Daoist establishment there and the object of the otherwise unidentified Yuan's journey.

2 Xianshou is another name for Mt. Xian, south of Xiangyang. "Crane Pavilion" is the famous Yellow Crane Pavilion in Ezhu.

3 A personified quality of unbounded independence (see 3.56, note 3).

4.7

峴山餞房琯崔宗之

貴賤平生隔

軒車是日來

青陽一靚止

4 雲霧豁然開

祖道衣冠列

分亭驛騎催

方期九日聚

8 還待二星迴

4.7

A Farewell Feast at Mt. Xian for Fang Guan and Cui Zongzhi¹

Noble and base for a whole lifetime have been separated,
 But those in high-railed coaches come here on this day.
 Once the greening *yang*-force has been “seen and met,”²

4 Clouds and haze are opened out wide and clear.

For the roadside offering those in lordly attire are drawn up,
 From the parting pavilion the post-riders are urged on.
 At the appointed time, on the Day of Nines, we’ll gather,

8 To attend again on the return of two stars.³

1 Fang Guan (697–763) and Cui Zongzhi were well-placed officials when they visited Xiangyang, having both been imperial censors previously. Fang would later be best remembered as a friend and patron of Du Fu, and Cui, who had inherited his father’s noble rank, was one of the so-called “Eight Immortals of Wine” celebrated by Li Bo.

2 Quoting a favorite phrase from the *Shijing*.

3 The “two stars” that are expected to reappear on the Double-Ninth day are Fang and Cui.

4.8

送王五昆季省覲

公子戀庭幃

勞歌涉海沂

水乘舟楫去

4 親望老萊歸

斜日催烏鳥

清江照綵衣

平生急難意

8 遙仰鶴鷓飛

4.8

Seeing Off Wang (Five), Older and Younger Siblings, to Pay Familial Respects

You honorable fellows hold dear parental courtyard and parlor,
As my humble song makes its way to the lakeside shore.

The water will bear the oars of your boat away,

4 As your kinfolk anticipate the returning of Laolaizi.¹

The sun slanting down urges on the crows,

While the clear river reflects your gay-colored clothes.

For your whole life, in moods of trouble and distress,

8 You may look up afar to the wagtails in flight.²

1 The paragon of filial devotion, who dressed in colorful clothes (line 6) when amusing his aged parents.

2 Wagtails symbolize brothers who show concern for one another, deriving from a *Shijing* poem.

4.9

送崔易

片玉來誇楚
 治中作主人
 江山增潤色
 4 詞賦動陽春
 別館當虛敞
 離情任吐伸
 因聲兩京舊
 8 誰念臥漳濱

4.9

Seeing Off Cui Yi

A sample of jade is brought here to be shown off in Chu,
While the assistant governor now acts as host.¹

The landscape adds to the season's enriching aura,

4 And the verses we compose quicken sunlit springtime.²

The detached lodge faces an empty enclosure,

As feelings at parting are confided in extended outpouring.

Let the songs be carried to acquaintances in both capitals,

8 But who will remember one that lies back by the Zhang's banks?³

1 Cui Yi is being compared with the jade that, in an old story, was brought forth three times before its value was recognized. The term *zhizhong* is a Han-dynasty designation for the second- or third-in-command in a prefecture, sometimes applied in Tang times to the *sima* 司馬 or military adjutant of a district or a prefecture, here referring to the unnamed host of the farewell party for Cui.

2 "Sunlit Springtime" was also the name of a choice tune in Chu during the Warring States period.

3 The one who remains inactive (and unappreciated) is Meng Haoran. Because of a passage from a poem by Liu Zhen 劉楨 (d. 217) and a reference in the *Shanhai jing* 山海經, being by "the banks of the Zhang" indicates being laid up with illness.

4.10

送盧少府使入秦

楚關望秦國
 相去千里餘
 州縣勤王事
 4 山河轉使車
 祖筵江上列
 離別恨前書
 願及芳年賞
 8 嬌鸞二月初

4.11

送謝錄事之越

清旦江天迴
 涼風西北吹
 白雲向吳會
 4 征帆亦相隨
 想到耶溪日
 應探禹穴奇
 仙書儻相示
 8 余在北山陞

4.10

Seeing Off District Constable Lu, Commissioned to Go to Qin

- The borders of Chu look afar to the state of Qin,
 From one to the other a thousand leagues and more.
 In prefecture and district you toil at the king's business,
 4 Over mountains and rivers move a commissioner's carriage.
 Mats for a farewell party are arranged at shoreside;
 At leave-taking one has little use for former messages.
 I pray you will have enjoyment of a flourishing year,
 8 With the gentle orioles at this second month's start.¹

4.11

Seeing Off Intendant Xie to Yue

- In the clear dawn, river and sky grow distant,
 As a cooling breeze blows from the northwest.
 White clouds move toward Kuaiji in Wu,
 4 While your journeying sail itself follows after.
 I imagine the day you'll arrive at Ye Brook,
 Or will explore the marvels of Yu's cave.²
 Should a transcendent's message be revealed,
 8 I'll be found at the rim of North Mountain.³

1 According to tradition, orioles were supposed to sing out at the beginning of the second month.

2 For Ye, or Ruoye, Brook, see 1.7. For Yu's cave, see 2.17, note 4.

3 The hoped-for "transcendent's message" is a letter sent in the future by Xie. North Mountain alludes to the abode of a recluse (see 2.20, note 8).

4.12

洛下送奚三還揚州

水國無邊際
舟行共使風
羨君從此去
4 朝夕見鄉中
余亦離家久
南歸恨不同
音書若有問
8 江上會相逢

4.12

By the Luo, Seeing Off Xi (Three) Returning to Yangzhou¹

The river country has no borders or limits,
A boat's passage there is invested with the wind.

I envy you, sir, departing from this place,

4 In a morning and evening to be seeing your homeland.

For my part I've been away very long,

And regret not to be like you returning southward.

If there be a letter or message to pay regards,

8 You're sure to receive it at shoreside.

¹ Xi is traveling from Luoyang to the "river country" of the lower Jiang where his home, Yangzhou, lies.

4.13

送袁十嶺南尋弟

早聞牛渚詠

今見鶴鷓心

羽翼嗟零落

4 悲鳴別故林

蒼梧白雲遠

烟水洞庭深

萬里獨飛去

8 南風遲爾音

4.13

Seeing Off Yuan (Ten) to Find his Younger Brother South of the Ranges¹

Early on I heard your Ox Isle chant,
And now discern your wagtail heart.²

Wings and pinions, alas, are sere and stripped,

4 Grievously one calls at parting from the olden grove.

White clouds over Cangwu are far distant,

The misty waters of Dongting lie deep.³

You are leaving, to fly alone a myriad leagues,

8 I will wait for word of you from the south wind.

1 “South of the Ranges” is Lingnan, the area of present-day southern Guangdong and Guangxi.

2 One night when moored at Ox Isle, Ezhu, Yuan Hong 袁宏 (328–376; note the surname) was overheard chanting poems about history by the high official Xie Shang 谢尚 (308–357). Xie invited him into his own boat, and Yuan’s career progressed successfully thereafter. Wagtails traditionally symbolize the care and affection of brothers, deriving from a passage in a *Shijing* poem.

3 Cangwu was near present-day Wuzhou 梧州, Guangxi, here standing for Yuan’s destination. He will presumably cross Lake Dongting on his journey.

4.14

永嘉別張子容

舊國余歸楚

新年子北征

挂帆愁海路

4 分手戀朋情

日夜故園意

汀洲春草生

何時一杯酒

8 重與季鷹傾

4.14

Parting from Zhang Zirong in Yongjia¹

To our familiar country I am going home in Chu,
 While at the new year you are traveling northward.
 Hoisting the sail, despondent by the seaside route,

- 4 We part hands, cherishing feelings of friendship.
 At evening of the day, my olden garden is in mind,
 As on sandflat isles springtime grasses come forth.
 When will it be that one cup of wine
 8 Shall again be drained with Jiying?²

1 Another poem written during the year-end meeting on the southeastern coast with his old friend Zhang (see 2.38, 3.16, 3.59, 3.72) who is evidently on the verge of traveling north.

2 Jiying was the byname of Zhang Han 張翰 (?258–319) who gave up his official position because of homesickness and once said, “Were I to have posthumous fame, it would not compare with a cup of wine for the nonce.”

4.15

送袁太祝尉豫章

何幸遇休明
 觀光來上京
 相逢武陵客
 4 獨送豫章行
 隨牒牽黃綬
 離羣會墨卿
 江南佳麗地
 8 山水舊難名

4.15

Seeing Off Grand Invocator Yuan to be District Constable of Yuzhang¹

So fortunate to have encountered “beneficent enlightenment,”

For “viewing its glory” I’ve come to the upper capital.²

There happening upon a stranger from Wuling,³

4 I see you off alone, journeying to Yuzhang.

Owing to credentials, you pull out a yellow seal-cord;⁴

Aside from the throng, you commune with ink-and-brush officials.

“The Southland is a place of excellence and beauty,”⁵

8 Its mountains and rivers endlessly hard to describe.

1 Yuzhang was present-day Nanchang 南昌, Jiangxi.

2 According to the *Zuozhuan*, “beneficent enlightenment” is when the ruler’s virtue is ascendant. “Viewing the glory [of the state]” is an auspicious judgment from the *Yijing*. The “upper capital” here is Chang’an.

3 Where Tao Qian’s Peach Blossom Font was located.

4 On which a seal of office is placed.

5 Directly quoting a line from a poem by Xie Tiao 谢朓 (464–499). The Southland is literally “South of the Jiang.”

4.16

都下送辛大

南國辛居士

言歸舊竹林

未逢調鼎用

4 徒有濟川心

余亦忘機者

田園在漢陰

因君故鄉去

8 遙寄式微吟

4.16

At the Metropolis, Seeing Off Xin (Eldest)¹

Of the southern domains, retired scholar Xin

Is going back to his familiar bamboo grove.

It hasn't befallen to be used for "blending the cauldron,"

4 To no avail he has a heart for "crossing the stream."²

For my part I'm one who "ignores contrivances,"

In field and garden located shadeward of the Han.³

With you, sir, departing for your old homeplace,

8 From far away I send the lay of "how faint are we!"⁴

1 Xin E, like Meng Haoran a native of Xiangyang, is mentioned in several other poems (1.32, 1.42, 4.39). The metropolis is the capital, here probably Luoyang.

2 The two quotations are from *Shangshu* passages in which a king describes how his minister should instruct him, like one blends ingredients for an agreeable stew in a cauldron and, also, functions like the oars of a boat in crossing a great river.

3 A *Zhuangzi* passage tells of a simple gardener who rejects the use of a man-made device that would water more of his fields, more quickly, than he can himself, because it would lead to other objects and actions that would inevitably diminish his natural abilities; better to "ignore contrivances." Meng Haoran's own field and garden were south (shadeward) of the Han river near Xiangyang.

4 The refrain of a *Shijing* poem traditionally thought the lament of people who had fled their state upon invasion, now wishing to return home.

4.17

送席大

惜爾懷其寶
迷邦倦客遊
江山歷全楚
4 河洛越成周
道路疲千里
鄉園老一丘
知君命不偶
8 同病亦同憂

4.17

Seeing Off Xi (Eldest)

I regret that you “hold close your treasure,”
And with “the state off course,” are spent in futile travels.¹

Across rivers and hills you’ve been through all of Chu,

4 On the He and the Luo have traversed the whole of Zhou.²

Over pathway and road, wearied a thousand leagues,

Now to your homeland garden, growing old on a lone hill.

Knowing that you, sir, have been unmet by fate,

8 I share the hurt and also share the despair.

1 Confucius once acknowledged that it was wrong to “hold close one’s treasure (i.e., one’s talents) when the state was off course.”

2 When the Duke of Zhou sited the Zhou’s secondary capital at Luoyang, he was said to have “completed (or made whole) Zhou.”

4.18

送賈昇主簿之荊府

奉使推能者

勤王不暫閑

觀風隨按察

4 乘騎度荆關

送別登何處

開筵舊峴山

征軒明日遠

8 空望郢門間

4.18

Seeing Off Chief Registrar Jia Bian to Jingfu¹

Receiving a commission, one who puts forward one's gifts,
In toiling for the king, is not idle for even a moment.

“Observing the folkways,” accordingly to “inspect and examine,”²

4 Astride your steed, you pass on to the borders of Jing.

To see you off at parting, we have climbed to what place?

I've spread out the mats, as usual, at Mount Xian.³

Your wayfaring coach tomorrow will be far distant,

8 And vainly I'll gaze off toward Yingmen.⁴

1 Jingfu, or Jingzhou, included the stretch of the Jiang from present-day Songzi 松滋 to Shishou 石首, Hubei. See 4.31 for another poem with Jia Bian.

2 Jia has evidently been appointed as an *anchashi*, or “Inspecting and Examining Commissioner.” According to the *Liji*, in old times court officials were sent out to the feudal territories to “observe the folkways,” specifically local songs, in order to discover the unvarnished sentiments of the populace.

3 Mt. Xian, south of Xiangyang, a favorite place for farewell gatherings.

4 Near present-day Zhongxiang 鍾祥, Hubei, which Jia will pass on his way to Jingfu.

4.19

送王大校書

導漾自嶠塚

東流為漢川

維桑君有意

4 解纜我開筵

雲雨從茲別

林端意渺然

尺書能不悵

8 時望鯉魚傳

4.19

Seeing Off Wang (Eldest), Collator of Texts¹

“The Yang was brought out from Mt. Bozhung,
Coursing east to become the River Han.”²

The mulberries of home are what is in your thoughts,

4 Before you cast off the hawser, I set out our farewell mats.

Clouds and rain from this point on will be parted,

At the edge of the forest my thoughts stretch far.

As long as you aren't stingy with foot-length letters,

8 Sometimes I'll look for transmittals from the carp.³

1 Usually identified as Wang Changling, who passed the *jinsshi* exam in 727 and whom Meng met at the capital. This poem seems to have been written when Wang went through Xiangyang to a posting farther away.

2 Quoting from the “Yu gong” chapter of the *Shangshu*. The Han was the familiar river that flowed around Xiangyang; it originated near Mt. Bozhong in Shaanxi where it was called the Yang.

3 An old *yuefu* poem spoke of foot-length letters being transmitted from afar in the belly of a carp.

4.20

浙江西上留別裴劉二少府

西上浙江西

臨流恨解携

千山疊成嶂

4 萬壑合為溪

石淺流難泝

藤長險易躋

誰憐問津者

8 歲晏此中迷

4.20

Going Westward Up the Zhe River; I Leave this Behind at Parting for
the Two District Constables Pei and Liu

Going upstream westward, to the west of Zhe River,
At the edge of the current, I hate to loosen hands.

A thousand mountains are layered into hill-screens,

4 A myriad ravines join up to make a riverbed.

Where rocks lie shallow, it's hard to go against the current;

Where vines trail long, it's easy to clamber up a defile.

Who will sympathize with one who "asks after the ford"?¹

8 Late in the year, just here I've lost my way.

¹ When Confucius was once in difficulty when traveling, he sent someone to "ask after the ford." The phrase came to be used often for seeking employment.

4.21

京還留別新豐諸友

吾道昧所適

驅車還向東

主人開舊館

4 留客醉新豐

樹遶溫泉綠

塵遮晚日紅

拂衣從此去

8 高步躡華嵩

4.21

Returning from the Capital; I Leave this Behind for Several Friends in Xinfeng¹

- I feel in the dark about where my own road is heading,
 As I urge on my carriage returning eastward.
 The host here has opened his familiar lodging,
 4 Guests I leave behind are drunk on Xinfeng wine.²
 Trees surrounding the hot springs are green,
 And dust veils the evening sun with red.
 Shaking out my cloak, I set off from this place,
 8 To tread with lofty paces Mounts Hua and Song.³

1 Xinfeng (present-day Lintong 臨潼) was a short distance east of Chang'an, in the area of Mount Li 驪山, on which was an imperial compound including the famous hot springs (line 5). This was not called the Huaqing 華清 palace until 747; during Meng Haoran's life it was simply known as the Hot Springs Palace.

2 Xinfeng means "new bounty," and here the meaning is made active by parallelism with the "familiar lodging."

3 These mountains are on the route east from Chang'an and are often mentioned together in poetry as residences of transcendents or of high-minded recluses.

4.22

廣陵別薛八
士有不得志
悽悽吳楚間
廣陵相遇罷
4 彭蠡泛舟還
檣出江中樹
波連海上山
風帆明日遠
8 何處更追攀

4.22

Parting from Xue (Eight) in Guangling¹

A scholar with unrealized ambition
Is most downcast between Wu and Chu.

From Guangling, with our chance meeting done,

4 Across Lake Pengli your drifting boat goes back.

Your mast upthrust is a tree in the river,

And billows conjoined are mountains on the sea.

The wind-blown sail tomorrow will be far distant,

8 Where again shall I “catch up and cling” to you?²

1 Guangling is an old name for Yangzhou 揚州. For another poem mentioning Xue (Eight), see 1.2.

2 The quoted phrase comes from a poem by Wang Can (177–217) in which friends “catch up and cling to” the departing poet.

4.23

臨渙裴明府席遇張十一房六

河縣柳林邊

河橋晚泊船

文叨才子會

4 官喜故人連

笑語同今夕

輕肥異往年

晨風理歸棹

8 吳楚各依然

4.23

At District Magistrate Pei's Banquet in Linhuan, I Happen On Zhang
(Eleven) and Fang (Six)¹

In this riverside district, beside a grove of willows,

At the river's bridge, I moor the boat at evening.

Of literary men I'm favored by a meeting of young talents,

4 From officialdom am glad to be united with an old friend.

Laughter and conversation I share throughout this night,

Your light furs and sleek steeds differing from bygone years.²

With the morning's breeze, homebound oars will be trimmed,

8 And in Wu and in Chu each of us will be just as before.³

1 Linhuan was west of present-day Suxian 宿縣, in northern Anhui, by the Huan river.

2 Literally, "Your 'light and sleek' . . .," metonymy from a phrase in *Analects* describing someone who is well off; here the reference is to Pei, who has done well since Meng saw him last.

3 Pei and the others will still be in Wu, as the poet continues on into Chu.

4.24

盧明府早秋宴張郎中海園即事得秋字

邑有絃歌宰
 翔鸞狎野鷗
 眷言華省舊
 4 暫滯海池遊
 鬱島藏深竹
 前溪對舞樓
 更聞書即事
 8 雲物是新秋

4.24

In Early Autumn District Magistrate Lu Gives a Fête at the Lake Garden of Director Zhang; On the Spur of the Moment and Drawing the Rhyme-word “Autumn”¹

In this township is a steward of strings and song,
A soaring simurgh, intimate with the wild gulls.²

He looks back fondly on an associate from the splendid ministry,

4 Detaining for a time this acquaintance by the lake pool.³

Here a “lush island” preserves a deep stand of bamboo,
And a “streamlet in front” faces the pavilion for dance.⁴

Then I learn I must write on the spur of the moment,

8 With the cloudscapes confirming it is newly “autumn.”

1 Cf. 3.70, from a later time with the same company at the same place. See the Notes, regarding the disputed authorship of this poem.

2 Confucius spoke approvingly of his disciple Ziyou’s magistracy in Wucheng, for bringing the populace to good order merely through his zither playing and song. Line 2 recalls the anecdote about the young boy who was trusted enough to come close to wild seagulls on the shore. Both are frequently used allusions by Meng Haoran.

3 The “splendid ministry” was another name for the Ministry of State Affairs, where Pei and Zhang had evidently once been colleagues.

4 There was a “lush island” in the eastern sea, known to be able to shift its position and as a haunt of transcendent beings. “Streamlet in front” was the name of a musical tune with strong associations with dancing.

4.25

同盧明府早秋夜宴張郎中海亭

側聽絃歌宰
 文書游夏徒
 故園欣賞竹
 4 為邑幸來蘇
 華省曾聯事
 仙舟復與俱
 欲知臨泛久
 8 荷露漸成珠

4.25

To Go With District Magistrate Lu's Poem "In Early Autumn, an Evening Fête at the Lake Pavilion of Director Zhang"¹

I bend an ear to the steward of strings and song,
Who is, in literature and writing, of the likes of You and Xia.²

In this old-time garden he is happy to appreciate the bamboo,

4 Managing the township, in good fortune he has "come to revive."³

At that splendid ministry you two were linked in your work,

Now on a transcendents' skiff you are once more together.⁴

If you would know how long you have drifted away –

8 Dew on the lotuses has gradually become pearls.

1 Composed on the same occasion as the preceding poem and with some of the same imagery, to accompany a poem by Magistrate Lu who is hosting the party.

2 For "steward of strings and song," see 4.24, note 2. Confucius's disciples Ziyou and Zixia were praised by him as being particularly able in literature and learning.

3 Recalling a passage from the *Shangshu*, in which the populace said, on the progress of King Cheng through the empire, "Our lord has come, and we revive." The word for "revive" is also the word for fragrant perilla, thus catching at least graphically a crypto-parallelism with "bamboo."

4 See 4.24 for the "splendid ministry." Pei and Zhang boating on the lake in Zhang's private garden recalls an anecdote about the influential officials Li Ying 李膺 (d. 169) and Guo Tai 郭太 (127–169), who were described as resembling "divine transcendents" when seen together in a boat.

4.26

崔明府宅夜觀妓

白日既云暮

朱顏亦已酡

畫堂初點燭

4 金幌半垂羅

長袖平陽曲

新聲子夜歌

從來慣留客

8 茲夕為誰多

4.26

At District Magistrate Cui's Residence, Watching the Performers at Night¹

- The white light of day is already at eventide,
 As ruddy faces, too, have now become flushed.
 While in the painted hall, candles are lit early,
 4 Gold-hued curtains half let down their gossamer.
 With rippling sleeves there are Pingya tunes,
 For new-fashioned music there are Ziyè's songs.²
 It's always been your custom to keep your guests long,
 8 And on this night it's more the case for all of us.

1 As in 2.36, the performers are female singers and dancers.

2 The rippling sleeves signify a dancer. Pingya was where Han Wudi discovered his empress Wei, as a performer. Ziyè songs were expressed in the vernacular of the Wu area, framed as *yuefu* verse with often erotically suggestive lyrics.

4.27

題榮二山池

甲第開金穴
 榮期樂自多
 櫪嘶支遁馬
 4 池養右軍鵝
 竹引嵇琴入
 花邀戴客過
 山公時取醉
 8 來唱接籬歌

4.27

Inscribed at the Landscaped Hill and Pool of Rong (Two)

Your A-level mansion opens out as a “golden cave,”

Where Rong Qi finds his own happinesses many.¹

Whinnying in the stable is Zhi Dun’s horse,

4 Tended in the pool are the Right General’s geese.²

The bamboo entices Xi Kang’s zither to enter,

As blossoms invite Dai Kui’s guests to stop by.³

Lordship Shan sometimes will drink his fill here,

8 Coming to sing a song with his egret-plumed cap.⁴

1 Guo Kuang 郭况 (10–59) had a guest hall so lavishly outfitted that it was called his “golden cave.” Rong Qiqi 榮啓期 (note the surname), in the *Liezi*, said there were three things that made him happy: that he was born a human, was a man instead of a woman, and lived to an old age.

2 The influential monk Zhi Dun (314–366) kept a horse, explaining when asked why, that he valued them for their “divine swiftness.” The great calligrapher Wang Xizhi (309–ca. 365) fondly kept a flock of geese.

3 Xi Kang (223–262), one of the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove, was famous for his zither playing. Dai Kui (d. 396) was the object of a snowy night’s visit by Wang Huizhi (d. 388), who turned back in the morning from Dai’s gate after the urge to visit him had faded.

4 For Shan Jian (253–312), see 2.5, note 1. He was said to wear an egret-plumed cap on his drunken excursions.

4.28

夏日宴衛明府宅遇北使

言避一時暑
 池亭五月開
 喜逢金馬客
 4 同飲玉人杯
 舞鶴乘軒至
 遊魚擁釣來
 座中殊未起
 8 簫管莫相催

4.28

A Fête on a Summer's Day at the Residence of District Magistrate Wei,
Meeting a Commissioner Going North

- Just to avoid the heat of this season,
 Your pavilion by the pool in the fifth month is opened.
 Glad to happen on a guest from the Gate of the Golden Steed,
 4 I share in drinking from cups put forth by the Jade Man.¹
 Preening cranes arrive, riding in windowed coaches,²
 And darting fishes come, crowding round the hook.
 Not one of us has yet risen from our seat,
 8 So let not the pipes and flutes hurry us on.

1 In Han Wudi's time worthy scholars were housed by the capital's Gate of the Golden Steed. Wei Jie 衛玠 (d. 311; note the surname), a court official and "pure conversationalist," was so handsome of complexion that he was dubbed by contemporaries "the Jade Man."

2 In Warring States times, Duke Yi of Wei 衛懿公 (note coincidence of state name with Magistrate Wei) was so fond of cranes that he permitted them to ride in his lordly coach.

4.29

清明日宴梅道士房

林下愁春盡

開軒覽物華

忽逢青鳥使

4 邀我赤松家

丹竈初開火

仙桃正發花

童顏若可駐

8 何惜醉流霞

4.29

A Fête on Qingming Day at the Quarters of the Daoist Adept Mei¹

Under the grove I grieved for springtime's passing,
 Opened the casement, to take in nature's flowering.
 Unexpectedly I was met with a blue bird messenger,

4 Inviting me to the dwelling of Master Red Pine.²

Your cinnabar crucible is beginning to disclose fire,
 While peaches of transcendence just now set forth blossoms.³

Supposing that youth's countenance might be stayed –

8 Why grudge getting drunk on mist of drifting auroras?⁴

1 Qingming day (“clear and bright”) is the fifteenth day after the vernal equinox, in the third and last month of spring. For other poems to Mei, see 3.5 and 3.29.

2 The blue bird is the traditional envoy of the Daoist goddess Xiwangmu (Queen Mother of the West). Master Red Pine was a transcendent known from early times, here symbolizing the adept Mei.

3 The crucible is the furnace in which the Daoist elixir of immortality (the chief ingredient of which is cinnabar) is fired. Xiwangmu's peaches, which conduce to transcendence, flower once every 3,000 years and have just come into flower in this springtime.

4 The auroral mists are a celestial beverage of Daoist transcedents, which arrest one's aging.

4.30

寒食宴張明府宅

瑞雪初盈尺
寒宵始半更
列筵邀酒伴
4 刻燭限詩成
香炭金爐暖
嬌絃玉指清
厭厭不覺醉
8 歸路曉霞生

4.30

A Fête on Cold-Food Day at the Residence of District Magistrate Zhang¹

- An auspicious snowfall early piled up over a foot,
 While the chill night is but half through the first watch.
 You've arrayed the mats and invited companions in wine,
 4 Notched a candle to limit the time for composing verse.²
 Fragrant ashes now are warm in the golden censer,
 Delicate strings sound clear under fingers of jade.
 Carefree and content, I'm unaware of being drunk,
 8 As over the road home, dawn's rosy clouds come forth.³

1 Cold-Food Day is the 105th day after the winter solstice, early in the third lunar month.

2 A common drinking *cum* literary game was to compose poems within a set time-limit. The time was up when a candle burned down to a notch made in it. Traditionally the time for composing an eight-line poem was notched as one inch.

3 The penultimate line recalls a couplet from a *Shijing* poem that says, "Carefree and content, we drink through the night, / And if you're not drunk, then don't go home."

4.31

和賈主簿昇九日登峴山

楚萬重陽日

群公賞燕來

共乘休沐暇

4 同醉菊花杯

逸思高秋發

歡情落景催

國人咸寡和

8 遙愧洛陽才

4.31

Matching Chief Registrar Jia Bian's Poem "Ascending Mount Xian on Double-Ninth Day"¹

Instead of to Mounts Chu and Wan, on Double Yang day,²

A host of gentlemen comes here to enjoy an outing.

Together taking advantage of free time for "bath-leave,"

4 We share in drinking full on cups of chrysanthemum wine.³

Unengaged thoughts come out with high-aired autumn,

Affectionate feelings are quickened in the declining sunlight.

Of all the persons in the state, few are those to match your poem,

8 Far from doing so, I'm ashamed before "a Luoyang genius."⁴

1 See 4.18 for a poem bidding farewell to Jia Bian.

2 Probably referring to Mt. Gazing-at-Chu (see 1.56) and Mt. Wan (see 1.16), two other mountains outside Xiangyang.

3 "Bath-leave" was regularly permitted days off for officials. Wine infused with chrysanthemum leaves was drunk on Double Yang day (ninth of ninth month) as a long-life tonic, since the chrysanthemum blooms in autumn when most other flowers are dying.

4 In Chu those who could harmonize with the most elegant songs were few. Pan Yue (247–300) once referred to the brilliant young scholar Jia Yi 賈誼 (200–169 BCE; note the surname) as "a genius from Luoyang."

4.32

宴張別駕新齋

世業傳珪組

江城佐股肱

高齋徵學問

4 虛薄濫先登

講論陪諸子

文章得舊朋

士元多賞激

8 衰病恨無能

4.32

A Fête at Executive Aide Zhang's New Study¹

For generations jade tablet and silk cord have been a family legacy,
And now in a riverside city you act as "thigh and forearm."²

Your lofty study summons those who quest to learn,

4 Shallow and paltry, I presume to be one of the first to rise.

For lecturing and commentating one consorts with various scholars,
In composing literature finds familiar comrades.

Pang Shiyuan gives much esteem and encouragement,³

8 But weak and infirm, I regret my lack of competence.

1 A *biejia* was functionally second-in-command in a prefecture or a governor-generalship.

2 The jade tablet and silk seal-cord are accoutrements of officialdom. To act as thigh and forearm is a traditional metaphor for serving as a high official.

3 Pang Tong 龐統 (179–214), a Xiangyang native, was recommended to his ruler as worthy to act as an executive aide. Here he is being identified with Zhang who, with the opening of his study, is attempting to foster scholarship.

4.33

李氏園臥疾

我愛陶家趣

林園無俗情

春雷百卉坼

4 寒食四隣清

伏枕嗟公幹

歸山羨子平

年年白社客

8 空滯洛陽城

4.33

Lying Ill at Mr. Li's Garden¹

I cherish the ambience of the house of Tao,

“In grove and garden, no vulgar qualities.”²

With thunder in springtime, the hundred flora burst forth,

4 On Cold Food day, the four environs become clear.³

Reclining on a pillow, I sigh for Liu Gonggan;

Returning to mountains, I admire Shang Ziping.⁴

Year upon year, a stranger in Baishe,

8 Lingering to no avail, here by Luoyang's walls.⁵

1 Probably the residence of the same Li mentioned in 3.37, near to Luoyang.

2 Li's house and grounds are being identified with those of Tao Qian. Line 2 quotes directly what Tao says in one poem about his residence.

3 The commentary to hexagram 40 of the *Yijing* says that plants and trees burgeon forth when it thunders in springtime. Cold Food day, the 105th after the winter solstice, shortly before the time of “Clear and Bright.”

4 The poet Liu Zhen 劉楨 (byname Gonggan; d. 217) wrote of being chronically ill. For Shang Ziping, see 1.8, note 4.

5 On Baishe, see 1.37, note 3.

4.34

過故人庄

故人具雞黍
邀我至田家
綠澗村邊合
4 青山郭外斜
開筵面場圃
把酒話桑麻
待到重陽日
8 還來就菊花

4.34

Stopping by an Old Friend's Farmstead

An old friend has prepared chicken and millet,

Inviting me to come to his home in the fields.

Bright-green trees merge at the village's edge,

4 Dark-green hills slant beyond its outskirts.

On unrolled sitting-mats facing the vegetable garden,

With wine in hand, we chat of mulberry and hemp.¹

I shall bide my time till the Double Ninth arrives,

8 Then come back to attend the chrysanthemum blossoms.

1 As Tao Qian did with a friend in one of his poems on "Returning to Field and Garden."

4.35

途中九日懷襄陽

去國似如昨

倏然經杪秋

峴山不可見

4 風景令人愁

誰採籬下菊

應閑池上樓

宜城多美酒

8 歸與葛強遊

4.35

On the Road on Double-Ninth Day, Yearning for Xiangyang

I left my own country, as if already yesterday,
 Suddenly am passing through the last bit of autumn.

Mount Xian is now no longer to be seen,

- 4 And the “air being brilliant” brings me only sadness.¹
 Who is here to pick chrysanthemum under the hedge?
 I ought to be idling at a pavilion by the pool.²
 Yicheng numbers many its excellent wines –
 8 Let me go home to indulge with Ge Qiang.³

1 When “the air shone with brilliance,” the third-century governor of Xiangyang, Yang Hu, loved to go on outings to Mount Xian (see 3.1; 1.5, note 3). Meng Haoran mentions in several poems that Mount Xian is a favorite destination for Double-Ninth outings.

2 Tao Qian wrote of “picking chrysanthemum under the hedge.” The pool that the poet yearns to be idling by is the Gaoyang Pool, favored by the Xiangyang governor Shan Jian (see 2.5).

3 Yicheng, just a few miles south of Xiangyang, was famous for its home-brewed wines. Ge Qiang had been an intimate friend of Shan Jian (see preceding note).

4.36

初出關旅亭夜坐懷王大校書

向夕槐烟起

葱籠池館曛

客中無偶坐

4 關外惜離群

燭至螢光滅

荷枯羽滴聞

永懷蓬閣友

8 寂寞滯揚雲

4.36

On First Going Out the Pass, I Sit Up at Night in a Travelers' Inn,
Thinking Fondly of Collator Wang (Eldest)¹

Toward evening, with haze rising over the sophora trees,²

Lush and leafy, the pondside hostel is lit in gloaming.

Among guests here, there is no one to sit paired with;

4 Beyond the pass now, I regret I've left the flock.

With candles brought out, the fireflies' glow is extinguished;

As lotuses wither, a rainy drizzle is heard.

Ever I hold to heart a friend in Peng Gallery:

8 Alone and forlorn, a Yang Yun stuck in place.³

1 The pass is the Tong Pass 潼關, about thirty miles east of Chang'an. Wang is Wang Changling, who, as Meng was leaving Chang'an, was serving as a collator in the imperial library.

2 Since the word for the sophora tree is homophonous with the word for "fondly thinking of," it often appears in poems longing for an absent friend or loved one.

3 The imperial library had since Han times been referred to as a place as extraordinary as Penglai, one of the fabled "isles of the immortals," and was given the alternate name of Peng Gallery. The great scholar Yang Xiong 揚雄 (byname Ziyun 子雲; 53 BCE–18 CE), when a collator in one of the imperial libraries, felt trapped upon being summoned to serve under the usurper Wang Mang and, according to a popular saying, "Being alone and forlorn, / He threw himself from the gallery." He survived, but his sense of frustration became an attribute traditionally associated with him. Meng is sympathizing that Wang Changling has so far not advanced beyond the position he currently holds.

4.37

李少府與王九再來

弱歲早登龍

今朝喜再逢

何如春月柳

4 猶憶歲寒松

烟火臨寒食

笙歌咽曙鐘

喧喧鬪雞道

8 行樂羨朋從

4.37

District Constable Li Comes Once More with Wang (Nine)

In your capping year you rose early to dragon status,¹
 At the present day I'm delighted to meet you once more.

How is it you, a willow in the months of spring,

4 Still recall this pine in the cold of the year?²

Cook-fires smoke on the verge of Cold Food day,

A song to the reed-organ sobs till the bells of dawn.

There is bustle and fuss at the cock-fighting lane,³

8 To join the fun I would wish to follow such friends.

1 The capping ceremony for young men took place in their twentieth year. Ascending to dragon status here means passing the civil-service exam.

2 Wang Gong 王恭 (d. 398) was once praised as being "Sleek and shining, like a willow in the months of spring." Confucius said one who endured in adversity was like the pinetree which was last to wither in winter's cold. Here Constable Li is the young willow, Meng Haoran the aged pine.

3 Cock-fighting was a traditional entertainment during the Cold Food festival.

4.38

尋張五

聞就龐公隱
 移居近澗湖
 興來林是竹
 4 歸臥谷名愚
 挂席樵風便
 開軒琴月孤
 歲寒何用賞
 8 霜落故園蕪

4.38

Seeking Zhang (Five)

I've heard you have taken on Lord Pang's reticence,
 Moving your dwelling near to the lake by the branch.¹

On an impulse I've come, to the grove which is of bamboo,

4 Where you've returned to rest in a valley named Witless.²

When you hoist a sail, the woodcutter's wind is at hand;³

Opening a window, the zither's moonlight is yours alone.

In the cold of the year, what use to be recognized?

8 As frost falls, the old garden is weed-grown.

1 That is, Zhang is modeling himself on the famous Xiangyang recluse Pang De-gong 龐德公 (see 1.9, note 2). He had lived on Deer Gate Mountain and, earlier, near to Mount Xian where Meng Haoran's "garden south of the branch [of the Han River]" was.

2 Recalling an old man who was encountered long ago by Duke Huan of Qi and told the duke that the valley where he lived was called Witless because that is how his neighbors thought of him.

3 For "the woodcutter's wind," see 2.17, note 3.

4.39

張七及辛大見訪

山公能飲酒
 居士好彈箏
 世外交初得
 4 林中契已并
 納涼風颯至
 逃暑日將傾
 便就南亭裏
 8 餘樽惜解醒

4.40

題張野人園廬

與君園廬並
 微尚頗亦同
 耕釣方自逸
 4 壺觴趣不空
 門無俗士駕
 人有上皇風
 何必先賢傳
 8 唯稱龐德公

4.39

Zhang (Seven) and Xin (Eldest) Pay Me a Visit¹

Lordship Shang is skilled at drinking wine,
 The retired scholar is fond of playing the classic zither.²
 Beyond the common realm, I gained their friendship before,

- 4 Amid the grove, our pact has been joined.
 We take in the coolness as the wind's sigh reaches us,
 Escaping from the heat as the sun begins to dip.
 Comfortably emplaced within the south pavilion,
 8 With a surplus of goblets we begrudge sobering up.

4.40

Inscribed at the Garden Cottage of the Rustic Zhang³

With you, sir, at this garden cottage I'm side-by-side,
 With ideals of little moment that are also much alike.
 Plowing or angling, agreeably at your ease,

- 4 As wine-pot and tumbler tend never to be empty.
 At the gate are no carriages of vulgar minions,
 Only people with the air of august ones of yore.
 What need is there for traditions of former worthies?
 8 I will simply praise this place's Lord Pang De.

1 For Xin E, see also 1.32, 1.42, 4.16.

2 Zhang is being compared with Shan Jian (see 2.5). The retired scholar is Xin.

3 Probably the same Zhang who moved his dwelling near to the site of Lord Pang's in 4.38. For Pang Degong, identified with Zhang in line 8, see 1.9, note 2.

4.41

過故融公蘭若

池上青蓮宇

林間白馬泉

故人成異物

4 過客獨潛然

既禮新松塔

還尋舊石筵

平生竹如意

8 猶挂草堂前

4.42

早寒江上有懷

木落鴈南度

北風江上寒

我家襄水曲

4 遙隔楚雲端

鄉淚客中盡

歸帆天際看

迷津欲有問

8 平海夕漫漫

4.41

Stopping By the Aranya of the Late Venerable Rong¹

- Here by the pool, a shelter of blue lotus,
 There amid the grove, the White Horse fountain.²
 An old friend has now become a different being,
 4 And a traveler stopping by is tearful in solitude.
 The rites having been observed at the new stupa by the pines,
 Still I look for his familiar prayer-mat among the rocks.
 The bamboo scepter of the faith, his a whole lifetime,
 8 Hangs suspended even yet at the front of his grass-thatched hut.

4.42

Heart-held Thoughts in the Early Cold, On the Jiang

- Trees have shed their leaves and wildgeese pass southward,
 A wind from the north turns cold upon the Jiang.
 My home is in a bend of the River Xiang,
 4 Far asunder at the edge of Chu's clouds.
 Homesick tears in a stranger's heart are spent,
 As a homebound sail is tended at the sky's limits.
 I've lost the ford, and would ask the way:
 8 The level sea at evening stretches on and on.

1 Probably the same monk Rong mentioned in 3.10, 3.40.

2 The blue lotus or *utpala*, sometimes identified with the eyes of the Buddha, here stands for Rong's retreat as an emblem of the faith. Rong's retreat was on White Horse Mountain, three miles south of Xiangyang. The white horse is also symbolic of Buddhism, for tradition says that the first Buddhist sutras were carried to China on the back of a white horse.

4.43

南山下與老圃期種瓜

樵牧南山近

林閭北郭賒

先人留素業

4 老圃作鄰家

不種千株橘

唯資五色瓜

邵平能就我

8 開徑翦蓬麻

4.43

I Set a Time with an Aged Gardener to Plant Melons under South Mountain

Woodcutters and shepherds are close by the south mountain,
 The forested lanes are far from the north-facing outer wall.

Those who came before left me a simple patrimony,

4 And a gardener old in years makes for my neighbor.

I do not plant a thousand stock of tangerine trees,

For resource rely only on multi-hued melons.¹

If Shao Ping were inclined to look in on me,

8 I'll open up a footpath, cut back the bramble and hemp.²

1 A certain Li Heng 李衡 once planted a thousand tangerine trees, referring to them as his “wooden slaves.” For the multi-hued melons, see next note.

2 Shao Ping, one-time Marquis of Dongling, became a commoner with the fall of the Qin and grew beautiful melons outside the eastern wall of Chang'an. In a poem by Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263) they were described as multi-hued (literally, “five-colored”).

4.44

裴司士見訪
 府寮能枉駕
 家醞復新開
 落日池上酌
 4 清風松下來
 廚人具雞黍
 稚子摘楊梅
 誰道山公醉
 8 猶能騎馬迴

4.45

除夜
 迢遞三巴路
 羈危萬里身
 亂山殘雪夜
 4 孤燭異鄉人
 漸與骨肉遠
 轉於僮僕親
 那堪正漂泊
 8 來日歲華新

4.44

Service Manager Pei Pays Me a Visit

- A government functionary is able to waste a visit on me,
 So the household's brew is then to be opened afresh.
 In the setting sun we pour drinks by the pool,
 4 While a pure breeze comes from under the pines.
 As the kitchen help prepares chicken and millet,
 My young son gathers bayberries by hand.
 Who says that Lordship Shan has had too much to drink?
 8 He still can ride his own horse back home.¹

4.45

New Year's Eve

- Far and distant, on the road to threefold Ba,
 Wayfaring uneasily, my person gone a myriad leagues.
 In jumbled mountains, a night of patchy snow,
 4 By a lone candle, someone in an unknown homeland.
 Gradually growing remote from relations of bone and flesh,
 I turn instead to groom and serving-lad as kin.
 How to bear just now this drifting and mooring,
 8 When tomorrow the year will blossom afresh?

1 For Shan Jian, see 2.5. The people of Xiangyang were said to have made a song about him that ran, "When Lordship Shan has had too much to drink, / Straight-away he heads to his Gaoyang Pool. / At day's end, slumped, he rides back home, / Feeling no pain, oblivious to all."

4.46

傷峴山雲表觀主

少小學書劍
 秦吳多歲年
 歸來一登眺
 4 陵谷尚依然
 豈意餐霞客
 忽隨朝露先
 因之問閭里
 8 把臂幾人全

4.46

Grieving for the Abbot of Beyond-the-Clouds Abbey on Mount Xian

In youth I studied books and swordsmanship,

Many the years since, I've spent in Qin and Wu.

On coming home, I climb up here to command the view,

4 The mounds and valleys still are as they were before.

But I could not imagine the visitor who quaffed auroral clouds¹

Would suddenly have left before, along with the morning dew.

So I question the country folk of the village lanes:

8 Of those I used to take by the arm, how many survive?

1 Daoist adepts partook of auroral clouds, said to be the essence of the sun, as a beverage conducing to transcendence. The abbot is referred to as a visitor because thought to be merely a temporary guest in this mundane world.

4.47

賦得盈盈樓上女

夫婿久別離
 青樓空望歸
 粧成卷簾坐
 4 愁思嬾縫衣
 鶯子家家入
 楊花處處飛
 空牀難獨守
 8 誰為解金徽

4.48

春怨

佳人能畫眉
 粧罷出簾帷
 照水空自愛
 4 折花將遺誰
 春情多豔逸
 春意倍相思
 愁心極楊柳
 8 一種亂如絲

4.47

For Impromptu Composition I Draw the Topic “Fair and Well-favored,
the Lady in the Tower”¹

Her husband for so long has been parted from her,
From the blue loft-building, she looks in vain for his return.
Makeup perfectly done, she sits by the furled curtain,

- 4 Sadly yearning, listlessly mending a robe.
As young swallows enter house after house,²
Willow buds float from place to place.
“An empty bed is hard to keep alone,”³
- 8 For someone’s sake she unstrings the gold-studded zither.

4.48

Springtime Complaint

The comely maiden knows well how to paint her eyebrows,
With makeup done, she emerges from behind her curtains.
To no avail she admires her reflection in the water,

- 4 Plucks a flower, but to whom shall she give it now?
Feelings in springtime multiply a sultry abandon,
Thoughts in springtime redouble yearnings of love.
Her despondent heart most resembles willow catkins,
- 8 Of one and the same kind, tangled like silk threads.

1 The quotation is the first line and assumed title of the second of the “Nineteen Old Poems” from the last years of the Han dynasty.

2 The swallow is a harbinger of springtime.

3 Line 7 directly quotes a line from the “old poem” that furnishes the topic for this poem.

4.49

閨情

一別隔炎涼
 君衣忘短長
 裁縫無處等
 4 以意忖情量
 畏瘦宜傷窄
 防寒更厚裝
 半啼封裹了
 8 知欲寄誰將

4.50

寒夜

閨夕綺窓閉
 佳人罷縫衣
 理琴開寶匣
 4 就枕臥重幃
 夜久燈花落
 薰籠香氣微
 錦衾重自暖
 8 遮莫曉霜飛

4.49

Sentiments from the Women's Quarters

- Once parted, we've been separated through the heat and cold,
Of your garments I've forgotten how long or short.
I cut and stitch, but can nowhere check the fit,
4 In thought pondering the measure of your condition.
Fearful of your growing thin, best to make things more spare,
And to ward off the chill, add more padding to the coat.
Half with a sob, I seal the package up,
8 Wishing I knew by whose hand I can send it to you.

4.50

A Cold Night

- In the women's quarters at evening the traceried window is shut,
The comely maiden has finished with mending clothes.
When readying her zither, she opens the precious coffer;
4 When turning to her pillow, retires behind layered curtains.
As night draws out, the lamp's blossoms are shed,
From the incense basket the sweet-scented air grows faint.
But if the brocade coverlet is thick enough to keep her warm,
8 No matter if the daybreak frost drifts on.

4.51

美人分香

豔色本傾城
 分香更有情
 髻鬟垂欲解
 4 眉黛拂能輕
 舞學平陽態
 歌翻子夜聲
 春風狹斜道
 8 含笑待逢迎

4.51

A Lovely Woman Apportioning Incense

A ravishing beauty can in fact overthrow a city,¹

Apportioning incense, she also holds one's feelings.

Her coiled chignon, drooping, is about to come undone;

4 The kohl of her eyebrows, smeared, is nearly airy-light.

In dance she copies the Pingyang manner,

In song reworks the voice of Ziye.²

In the springtime breeze, by a narrow, slanting way,

8 With suggestive smile, she waits to meet and welcome you.

1 As said of a great beauty in a Han-dynasty song.

2 Han Wudi's empress Wei was discovered as a songstress and dancer in Pingyang. Ziye was said to be a lovely maiden whose slightly erotic songs set the pattern for the *yuefu* poems titled with her name.

七言律詩

4.52

登安陽城樓

縣城南面漢江流
 江嶂開成南雍州
 才子乘春來騁望
 4 羣公暇日坐銷憂
 樓臺晚映青山郭
 羅綺晴嬌綠水洲
 向夕波搖明月動
 8 更疑神女弄珠遊

Heptametric Regulated Verse

4.52

Ascending a High Loft on the Anyang City-walls¹

This district city faces southward to the flow of the River Han,

Where river and mountain-walls open out to South Yongzhou.²

Young talents, because of springtime, have come to indulge in the view,

4 While a group of elders, on a free day, sits here to dispel their cares.

At evening buildings and terraces glint, with dark-green hills on the
outskirts;

Under the cloudless sky gauze and gossamer entice, on isles in the
bright-green river.

Along toward night the waves toss, the bright moonlight trembles:

8 But I fancy it's the divine maidens going out to trifle with a pearl.³

1 This is the small city of Anyang that was just north of Xiangyang. In the Tianbao period (742–56), after Meng Haoran's death, its name was changed to Linhan 臨漢.

2 From Han times to the Tang, the prefecture of Xiangzhou was sometimes called South Yongzhou.

3 For the divine maidens of the Han Embankment, see 1.5, note 4. Meng imagines they are what is stirring up the waves, as they play with the reflected pearl-like moon.

4.53

歲除夜有懷

五更鍾漏欲相催
 四氣推遷往復迴
 帳裏殘燈纔有焰
 4 鑪中香氣盡成灰
 漸看春逼芙蓉枕
 頓覺寒消竹葉杯
 守歲家家應未臥
 8 相思那得夢魂來

4.54

登萬歲樓

萬歲樓頭望故鄉
 獨令鄉思更茫茫
 天寒鴈度堪垂淚
 4 月落猿啼欲斷腸
 曲引古堤臨凍浦
 斜分遠岸近枯楊
 今朝偶見同袍友
 8 却喜家書寄八行

4.53

Heart-held Thoughts at Night on New Year's Eve

In the fifth night-watch waterclock and bell hurry each other on,
The four seasonal auras have changed their positions, departing to
return once more.

Within the curtains the fading lamp just barely keeps a flame,

- 4 Inside the brazier scented fumes have burned out fully to ash.
At last it seems that springtime prompts me to my lotus-blossom pillow,
As suddenly I feel a chill that imbues my cup of bamboo-leaf wine.
Holding onto the year, in house after house, no one will have retired,
8 Is it possible for longing thoughts to bring back a dreaming soul?

4.54

Climbing the Tower of Myriad Years¹

From the top of the Myriad Years Tower I gaze off toward my own
homeland,
Solitude making my homeland longings stretch farther than one can see.
With the sky turning cold, wildgeese crossing over, enough to make
tears fall;

- 4 With the moon setting, a gibbon crying, likely to shred one's insides.
The ancient dyke, curving, is led on to the edge of the frigid cove;
The far shore is split by an incline, near a withered poplar.
On this day I've chanced to see a friend who will share his robe,
8 But more I'd rejoice at a letter from home, couched in a mere eight
lines.²

1 In Runzhou 潤州, modern-day Zhenjiang 鎮江, Jiangsu.

2 Deriving from a *Shijing* poem, one who shares his robe is a close friend. Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166) once wrote a friend that a letter from him, even if a mere eight lines, would make Ma immeasurably happy.

4.55

春情

青樓曉日珠簾映
 紅粉春粧寶鏡催
 已厭交懽憐枕席
 4 相將遊戲遶池臺
 坐時衣帶縈纖草
 行即裙裾掃落梅
 更道明朝不當作
 8 相期共鬪管絃來

五言絕句

4.56

宿建德江

移舟泊烟渚
 日暮客愁新
 野曠天低樹
 4 江清月近人

4.55

Springtime Feelings

In her blue loft-building as the dawning sun glints against beaded curtains,
 Springtime makeup of pink powder is hurried on before the precious
 mirror.

Being contented with a pleasure shared, she thinks tenderly of pillow
 and mat,

- 4 Goes out now for amusement with him around the pondside terrace.
 When sitting, the sash of her robe entwines with slender grasses,
 Walking, the train of her skirt sweeps up fallen prunus-blossoms.
 Then she says, “Doing just this for tomorrow won’t serve,”
 8 And engages to be together again but bring along flute and strings.

Pentametric Quatrains

4.56

Passing the Night on the Jiande River¹

The gliding boat moors now by a misty islet,
 As the sun is setting, a stranger’s sorrows revive.
 Countryside so bleak, the sky stoops to the trees,

- 4 River so clear, the moon close to man.

1 That is, the upper reaches of the River Zhe 浙, in the vicinity of Jiande, Zhejiang.

4.57

春曉

春眠不覺曉
處處聞啼鳥
夜來風雨聲
4 花落知多少

4.58

送朱大入秦

遊人五陵去
寶劍直千金
分手脫相贈
4 平生一片心

4.59

送友人之京

君登青雲去
余望青山歸
雲山從此別
4 淚濕薜蘿衣

1 For another to Zhu Qufei, see 2.13.

4.57

Spring Daybreak

- Drowning in springtime, not aware of daybreak,
 From all around, just hearing chiff-chaffing birds.
 During the night were voices of wind and rain,
 4 But of the blossoms' falling, how much do we know?

4.58

Seeing Off Zhu (Eldest) On His Way Into Qin¹

- As the traveler to the region of Five Barrows departs,
 Here is "a precious sword worth a thousand cash."²
 Parting hands, I slip it off for bestowal:
 4 All our lives have we been of one heart.

4.59

Seeing Off a Friend to the Capital

- You, sir, depart to ascend clouds in the blue,³
 I am going home to gaze at dark-green mountains.
 Clouds and mountains from here separate,
 4 As tears moisten my vine-woven cloak.

2 The five barrows are tomb mounds of five Han-dynasty emperors, north of Chang'an and therefore metonymy for the capital. The quotation is a line from a poem by Cao Zhi (192–232), but there are several classical references to a valuable double-edged sword representing friendship between two men.

3 The phrase "to ascend clouds in the blue" was a metaphor for passing the civil-service exam.

4.60

初下浙江舟中口號

八月觀潮罷

三江越海尋

回瞻魏闕路

4 無復子牟心

4.61

醉後贈馬四

四海重然諾

吾常聞白眉

秦城遊俠客

4 相得半酣時

4.60

Upon First Descending the River Zhe, Composed Aloud on the Boat

The eighth-month viewing of the tidal bore is done,

And the three rivers seek the ocean farther on.¹

Looking back at the road to the palace pylons,

4 I will no longer have the heart of Zimou.²

4.61

After Drinking Too Much; For Ma (Four)

Amid the four seas value is laid on one's given word,

And often of White Eyebrows I have heard tell.³

In the city of Qin roaming gallants are visiting,

4 Mutually content when halfway besotted.

1 On the famous tidal bore, see 3.12. The three rivers, which form the Zhe, are the Wu, Qiantang, and Puyang.

2 Zimou, prince of Zhongshan in Warring States times, once said "Though my person be on the rivers and lakes, my heart is still within the palace pylons."

3 For "White Eyebrows," see 4.4, note 2.

4.62

檀溪尋故人

花伴成龍竹

池分躍馬溪

田園人不見

4 疑向武陵迷

4.63

同張將薊門看燈

異俗非鄉俗

新年改故年

薊門看火樹

4 疑是燭龍然

4.62

Seeking an Old Friend at Sandalwood Stream¹

Here blossoms companion bamboo that becomes dragons,

A pool divides the stream where the horse made a leap.²

But the man of fields and gardens is no more to be seen,

4 I suspect he's lost the way toward Wuling.³

4.63

To Go With Zhang's "Tending a Lamp in Jimen"⁴

The unfamiliar customs are not my homeland's customs,

A new year is taking the place of the old year.

In Jimen, where you tend a "fire tree,"

4 One suspects it's the flame of the Candle Dragon.⁵

1 Sandalwood Stream joined the Han River just south of Xiangyang and east of Mount Wan. It was where Liu Bei 劉備, founder of Shu during the Three Kingdoms period, escaped an attack on his life, owing to a legendary thirty-foot leap across the stream by his horse.

2 A length of bamboo given by a Daoist transcendent to Fei Changfang 費長房 magically carried him home across a long distance and, when Fei then threw it aside, turned into a dragon. For the leaping horse, see preceding note.

3 Wuling was where Tao Qian's fictional Peach Blossom Font was located, and Tao was the most famous "person of field and garden."

4 For Jimen, and possibly the Zhang in the title, see 2.21.

5 The third-century scholar Fu Xuan 傅玄 once referred to a candelabra as a "fire tree." Zhang may have used the phrase in his poem. The Candle Dragon is a mythical creature who lives in the far north and sheds light on the world when its eyes are open.

4.64

峴山亭寄晉陵張少府

峴首風湍急

雲帆若鳥飛

憑軒試一問

4 張翰欲來歸

4.65

口號贈王九

日暮田家遠

山中勿久淹

歸人須早去

4 稚子望陶潛

4.64

From the Mount Xian Pavilion; Sent to District Constable Zhang of Jinling

From Xian's summit windy billows surge,
The clouds take sail like birds in flight.
As I lean on the railing, let me ask you:

- 4 Does Zhang Han wish to come back home?¹

4.65

Composed Aloud; For Wang (Nine)

At close of day, as field and garden are distant,
Do not tarry overlong amid the hills.
A homebound man must soon depart;

- 4 Your young tot is watching for Tao Qian.²

1 The allusion is to Zhang Han, who gave up his high position at the Eastern Jin court when the autumn winds stirred in him thoughts of his home in Wu (see 4.14, note 2).

2 Wang is flatteringly identified with Tao Qian, recalling lines from his poem "Let Me Go Home" which say "Lad and groom happily greet me, / The young tot waits at the door."

4.66

同儲十二洛陽道中作

珠彈繁華子
 金羈遊俠人
 酒酣白日暮
 4 走馬入紅塵

4.67

尋菊花潭主人不遇

行至菊花潭
 村西日已斜
 主人登高去
 4 雞犬空在家

4.68

張郎中梅園作

綺席鋪蘭杜
 珠盤折芰荷
 故園留不住
 4 應是戀絃歌

4.66

To Go With Chu (Twelve)'s Poem "Composed on the Streets of Luoyang"¹

- Pearl crossbow-pellets, fellows replete in finery,
 Yellow-gold bridles, they who are roaming gallants.
 Tipsy with wine as the white sun is setting,
 4 Ambling on horseback, they pass into the red dust.

4.67

Seeking the Master of Chrysanthemum Blossom Tarn, But Not Meeting Him

- I've journeyed here to Chrysanthemum Blossom Tarn,
 West of the village, the sun already slipping down.
 The master has gone off, to climb a height,
 4 Chickens and dogs, deserted, are at home.²

4.68

Composed at the Prunus Garden of Director Zhang

- There are filigree mats with outspread eupatory and pollia,
 Plates of pearl and plucked caltrop and lotus.
 Yet in your home garden you cannot tarry to stay,
 4 For it must be that you favor strings and song.³

1 Chu is the poet Chu Guangxi 儲光義 (709–759?).

2 Judging from the imagery, the visit is evidently taking place on the Double-Ninth day.

3 The ideal way to serve as an official, according to Confucius, is to bring order to the populace simply by playing one's zither.

4.69

問舟子

向夕問舟子

前程復幾多

灣頭正好泊

4 淮裏足風波

4.70

揚子津望京口

北固臨京口

夷山近海濱

江風白浪起

4 愁殺渡頭人

4.71

北澗泛舟

北澗流恒滿

浮舟觸處通

沿洄自有趣

4 何必五湖中

4.69

Inquiring of the Boatman

On toward evening I inquire of the boatman,
 “The route ahead, how much more is there?”
 “The head of the bay is just right for mooring,
 4 On the Huai it’s too much wind and waves.”

4.70

At the Yangzi Ford, Looking Off at Jingkou¹

Mount Beigu overlooks Jingkou,
 Mount Yi is near to the brink of the sea.
 With wind on the river, whitecapped waves rise,
 4 And as sad as can be is one at the ferry-point.

4.71

Boating on the North Branch²

On North Branch the current is always full,
 My boat drifts through whatever place it comes upon.
 Coasting the tide or breaching it, one takes one’s pleasure;
 4 What need is there to be amid the Five Lakes?³

1 This was an important ford of the Jiang, near Jingkou (part of present-day Zhenjiang, Jiangsu). Jingkou (“Entrance to the Capital”) was some ways downstream from Jiankang. Mount Beigu (“Northern Fastness”) was on the north shore of the Jiang, across from Jingkou. Mount Yi was several miles east, closer to the sea.

2 The branch of the Han river, near Mount Xian, south of which was located Meng’s home.

3 The five large lakes in Wu, which traditionally were considered sites of free roaming.

4.72

洛中訪袁拾遺不遇

洛陽訪才子

江嶺作流人

聞說梅花早

4 何如北地春

4.73

送張郎中遷京

碧溪常共賞

朱邸忽遷榮

預有相思意

4 聞君琴上聲

4.74

戲贈主人

客醉眠未起

主人呼解醒

已言雞黍熟

4 復道甕頭清

1 That is, somewhere between the middle Jiang and the area of the Five Ranges in southern Hubei and northern Guangdong.

4.72

In Luoyang, Calling on Reminder Yuan But Not Meeting Him

In Luoyang I called on a young man of genius,
But found he'd been exiled to the River and Ranges.¹

There, I hear, prunus blossoms show early,

4 Hardly comparing with springtime in the north.

4.73

Seeing Off Director Zhang on His Transfer to the Capital

“Blue Brook” is one with whom you always share enjoyment,
To a vermilion manor you've suddenly been promoted in honor.²

In advance now I have thoughts of dear longing,

4 As I hear the music arising, sir, from this zither.

4.74

For My Host, in Fun

The guest, drunk, is yet to get up from drowsing,
As the host calls out for relieving our hangover.³

Noting that chicken and millet are already cooked,

4 He then says “The ‘jar-top’ is clear.”⁴

2 “Blue Brook” is a female entertainer in Zhang’s household; she is mentioned also in 2.26. A lodging with a vermilion gate at the capital refers to the residence of a high official; Zhang is being promoted to a position as director of one of the six boards of the Ministry of State Affairs.

3 To “relieve the hangover” is to have more to drink, or, as we might say, to have “the hair of the dog.”

4 “Jar-top springtime” refers to the year’s earliest fermented wine. Being clear, without sediment, it is ready to drink.

七言絕句

4.75

過融上人蘭若

山頭禪室挂僧衣
 窓外無人溪鳥飛
 黃昏半在下山路
 4 却聽泉聲戀翠微

4.76

涼州詞二首, 其一

渾成紫檀金屑文
 作得琵琶聲入雲
 胡地迢迢三萬里
 4 那堪馬上送明君

Heptametric Quatrains

4.75

Stopping by the Aranya of His Eminence Rong¹

In a mountaintop meditation room hangs a monk's robe,

Outside the window is no one, but streamside birds fly.

Yellow dusk is halfway on the path down the mountain,

4 But I listen to the fountainhead's voice and love the halcyon-blue haze.

4.76

Liangzhou Lyric, No. 1 of 2

Fully shaped purple sandalwood, flecked with powdered gold,

Fashioned into a lute whose voice will penetrate the clouds.

Hunnish lands are far, far away, three myriads of leagues,

4 How can one bear to see off the Bright Consort on horseback?²

1 For monk Rong, see also 3.10, 3.40, 4.41.

2 Wang Zhaojun 王昭君, "Bright Consort Wang," was sent off to Central Asia by the emperor in 33 BCE, to be married to the leader of the Xiongnu ("Hun") empire as part of diplomatic relations. Sandalwood was foreign to China, just as the lute was originally associated with foreign lands.

4.77

涼州詞二首，其二

異方之樂令人悲
 羌笛胡笳不用吹
 坐看今夜關山月
 4 思殺邊城遊俠兒

4.78

越中送張少府歸秦中

試登秦望望秦川
 遙憶青門更可憐
 仲月送君從此去
 4 瓜時須及邵平田

4.79

濟江問同舟人

潮落江平未有風
 輕舟共濟與君同
 時時引領望天末
 4 何處青山是越中

4.77

Liangzhou Lyric, No. 2 of 2

Music of foreign places just makes one feel sad,
 What use in blowing Tibetan flute and Hunnish reed-pipe?
 To no purpose regarding this night “Moon over Passes and
 Mountains,”¹

- 4 Brings the worst longings in a border fort to a gallant young stalwart.

4.78

In Yue, Seeing Off District Constable Zhang Returning to Qin

We’ve essayed to climb Qin’s Vista to gaze toward Qin’s rivers,
 Recalling in the distance Azure Gate, more to be favored.²

- In the second month I see you off, as you leave from here,
 4 Who are sure to come in melon season to Shao Ping’s field.

4.79

Crossing the River, Inquiring of a Fellow Boatman

The tide has ebbed, the river calm, no more wind,
 My light boat makes the crossing together with yours.
 Time after time I crane my neck, looking toward the horizon,

- 4 At what place among those dark-green hills would be Yue?

1 “Moon over Passes and Mountains” was the name of a song about the far frontier.

2 Qin’s Vista is a peak near Mt. Yunmen (see 1.20, note 3), oriented toward the far-off state of Qin (where the capital is). The rivers of Qin are seen only in imagination. Azure Gate was the Chang’an gate outside of which Shao Ping grew his famous melons (see 4.43, note 2).

4.80

送杜十四

荊吳相接水為鄉
君去春江正渺茫
日暮征帆泊何處
4 天涯一望斷人腸

4.80

Seeing Off Du (Fourteen)

Jing and Wu are jointly tied, the waters being their homelands,¹
You, sir, leave while springtime rivers are now in spate and swell.
When the sun sets at what place will your journeying sail be moored?

4 At the sky's shore a single long look will rend one's heart.

¹ Jing refers generally to the middle Yangzi region (i.e., Chu), Wu to the lower.

Book 5

集外詩

5.1

長樂宮

秦城舊來稱窈窕
漢家更衣應不少
紅粉邀君在何處
4 青樓苦夜長難曉

長樂宮中鐘暗來
可憐歌舞慣相催
歡娛此事今寂寞
8 唯有年年陵樹哀

Uncollected Poems

These few poems are not included in the *Sibu congkan* edition, but are attributed to Meng Haoran in other sources. The attributions are doubtful. I do not include the half-dozen poems and handful of couplets that in one place or another have mistakenly had Meng's name attached to them but which have been clearly shown to be the work of other Tang poets.

5.1

The Palace of Lasting Happiness¹

The city of Qin from of old was praised as splendid and elegant,

The House of Han surely had many places for “changing clothes.”²

Those in rouge and powder who enticed their lord are to be found where?

4 The blue loft-buildings, through endless nights, long hopeless to see the dawn.

In the Palace of Lasting Happiness the bells have since been muffled,

Where singers and dancers, so attractive, were used to being urged on.

Delight and enjoyment in such matters now has gone still and silent,

8 There is just, year upon year, the lamenting of trees by the tumuli.

1 From *Guoxiu ji*. The Palace of Lasting Happiness was originally built outside Chang'an during Qin Shihuang's reign, with a different name. The founding Han emperor, Gaozu, had it renovated and given this name.

2 That is, places for relaxation where palace ladies would attend one.

5.2

渡揚子江

桂楫中流望
 京江兩畔明
 林開揚子驛
 4 山出潤州城
 海盡邊陰靜
 江寒朔吹生
 更聞楓葉下
 8 浙瀝度秋聲

5.3

清明即事

帝里重清明
 人心自愁思
 車聲上路合
 4 柳色東城翠
 花落草齊生
 鶯飛蝴蝶戲
 空堂坐相憶
 8 酌茗聊代醉

5.2

Crossing the Jiang at Yangzi¹

- From cassia oars in mid-current I gaze afar,
 The Jiang near the capital is bright on both shores.
 A grove discloses the Yangzi post-station,
 4 Out of mountains emerges Runzhou city.
 Where the sea ends, shade has settled at the margins,
 As the river grows cold, boreal gusts arise.
 And then I hear, from under the sweetgum leaves,
 8 The rushing and rustling of autumn's voice passing.

5.3

On Qingming Day, a Topic of the Moment²

- In the emperor's precincts, Qingming Day is valued,
 One's heart turns naturally to thoughts of sadness.
 The clatter of carriages merges on the high road,
 4 The color of willows is deep-green by the east city-wall.
 Blossoms fall, as grasses spring up together,
 Orioles take flight, while butterflies play.
 In the empty hall just now I am remembering you,
 8 Pouring tea for a while instead of getting drunk.

1 From *Guoxiu ji*. This poem is included in *Tangyin tongqian* 唐音統籤 (late Ming) and *Quan Tang shi*, but attributed in both to Ding Xianzhi 丁仙芝 who was a contemporary of Meng's; *Quan Tang shi* includes it also under Meng Haoran. The stretch of the Long River from roughly Jiangdu 江都 to Runzhou was in Tang times the only part of it commonly called the Yangzi.

2 From *Quan Tang shi*. The mention of tea in line 8 would be unusual in poetry during Meng Haoran's lifetime. On Qingming Day one often visited one's ancestors' graves in remembrance.

5.4

初秋

不覺初秋夜漸長
 清風習習重淒涼
 炎炎暑退茅齋靜
 4 階下叢莎看露光

5.5

白石灘

跂石復臨水
 弄波情未極
 日下川上寒
 4 浮雲淡無色

5.4

Earliest Autumn¹

Not aware of earliest autumn as nights gradually get longer,

A clear breeze sighs and sighs, doubling the cool chill.

Fervid and fiery, summer's heat recedes, the thatched studio lies still,

4 Under the steps in a clump of nutgrass one sees the glitter of dew.

5.5

White Rock Rapids²

With legs dangling from a rock at the brink of the water,

Swishing the waves, my mood has not run its course.

As the sun goes down, it turns cold on the river,

4 Drifting clouds are dull and without color.

1 From the Jiguge 汲古閣 edition of Meng's poems, late Ming.

2 From *Yuxuan Tangshi* 御選唐詩 (1713).

句

5.6

微雲淡河漢
疏雨滴梧桐

5.7

北闕辭天子
南山隱薜蘿

Unattached Verses

5.6

Wispy clouds pale the He and Han above,
Scattered rain sprinkles the phoenix tree.¹

5.7

At the north pylons I bid farewell to the Son of Heaven,
In the south mountain will hide away in vine-woven cloak.²

1 The He and Han rivers in the sky are equivalent to our Milky Way. This is the couplet reported by Wang Shiyuan in his preface to Meng's poems, the composition of which, on an autumn night when friends from the imperial library were extemporizing verse, was reportedly so admired by everyone that they all gave up and set aside their writing brushes.

2 From the twelfth-century *Yin Chuang Zalu* 吟窗雜錄. This couplet reads like a précis of poem 3.4, taking account of the apocryphal *Xin Tang shu* anecdote pertaining to it.

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List of Abbreviations

Main editions

- Sbck mid-Ming edition, published ca. 1550; from *Tang shi'erjia shiji* 唐十二家詩集; may derive indirectly from Meng Xian-ran's edition; rpt. *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊.
- Song Song edition, published in Sichuan; may derive indirectly from Wang Shiyuan's edition.
- Gu mid-Ming edition of Gu Daohong 顧道洪, 1576, based on Yuan edition of Liu Chenweng 辰翁 (a.k.a. Xuxi 須溪); from same tradition, with some differences, as Song.
- Mmt Ming movable-type edition, published in Suzhou, 1st half of 16th-c., probably from same tradition, with some differences, as Sbck; rpt. *Tang wushijia shiji* 唐五十家詩集.

Other sources

- Gxj *Guoxiu ji* 國秀集, ed. Rui Tingzhang 芮挺章, 744; 3-juan early Ming edition.
- Hyylj *Heyue yingling ji* 河嶽英靈集, ed. Yin Fan 殷璠, ca. 753; 2-juan Song edition.
- Wyyh *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華, ed. Li Fang 李昉 et al., ca. 975.
- Tsjs *Tangshi jishi* 唐詩紀事, ed. Ji Yougong 計有功, ca. 1140.
- QTs *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩, 1705–6.

Additional Notes

As noted in the Introduction, the textual history of Meng Haoran's poems is extremely tangled and messy. The earliest extant edition dates from nearly five hundred years after his death, and no edition is free of numerous demonstrable mistakes and errors. Four editions (see List of Abbreviations) are most useful, and of these the *Sbck* edition is more reliable than others; it is here used as the base-text. The notes keyed to the translations include those variants that I find interesting or significant for various reasons from the three other editions, plus occasional variants from certain anthologies or general collections; this is not meant to be a comprehensive collation. I also indicate where I have accepted particular variants or, in rare cases, have emended the text myself. In these notes the characters that follow the forward-slash are the *Sbck* reading, while those that precede the slash are the variants from whatever text is being noted. Occasional comments of a more discursive nature are also included.

Although I have examined many other editions of the poems, only four are used for these collation notes and are in the list of abbreviations. Since variants from certain anthologies or general collections are also noted occasionally, these texts are likewise listed.

1.1

Title .4 Song, Gu read 堪/湛; 2.3 Wyyh reads 若/在; 9.5 Song, Gu read 陰/險; 10.4 Song, Gu read 深/森; 14.3 Song, Gu read 求/探; 14.4 Mmt, QTs read 奇/靈; 15.5 Song, Gu read 雲/田; 17.4 Song, Gu read 逸/清.

1.2

1.3 Song, Gu read 遊/獨; 8.2 Wyyh reads 往/住, Song, Gu read 佳/住; lines 9–10 Song, Gu, QTs read 雲蕨興座隅, 天空落階下; 11.5 Wyyh, Gu read 問/閑; 12.3 Wyyh, QTs read 都/俱; 17.2–3 Song, Gu read 此託 / 止此; 18.2 Wyyh reads 願/能, Song, Gu read 知/能; 18.2–3 Wyyh reads 願教 / 能效.

1.3

1.2 Mmt reads 汎/行; 4.4 Song, Gu read 松/城; 6.4 Wyyh reads 窮/探; 8.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 弄/尋; 11.5 Wyyh reads 絡/絨, Song reads 路/

絨; 12.3 Song, Gu read 無/去; 13.5 reading 明/壁 with Song, QTs; 14.4 reading 二/三 with Song, as the reference is clearly to the “Two Laos” as in Sun Chuo’s poem; 16.1–2 Song, Gu, Mmt read 樂彼 / 學此.

1.4

Title: Song, Gu, QTs read 題終南翠微寺空上人房.

1.5

Line 1 Song, Gu read 漾舟逗何處; 4.5 Song reads 淥/綠; 8.3 Song, Gu read 動/逐; 10.1 Song, Gu read 得/聯; 10.3 Song, Gu read 煙/鶯.

1.6

Title: Song, Gu, Mmt read 宿業師山房待丁大不至, QTs reads 業師 / 來公; 3.4–5 Wyyh reads 涼意 / 夜涼; 7.4 Wyyh reads 未/宿; 8.2 Wyyh reads 宿/琴.

1.7

3.1–2: Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 澄明 / 滋澄; 6.4 emending 紗/沙; 7.3 Gu reads 似/未. Line 7 may instead be read as “Seeing each other, but not recognizing each other,” the old fisherman and the young maid being joint subjects; but it would seem odd for the poet to conclude by removing himself completely from the scene.

1.8

2.2 Reading 子/中 with Wyyh, Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 5.4–5 Song, Gu read 遙島 / 况阜; line 7 Song, Gu, QTs read 黠黠容霽色; 9.1–2 QTs reads 爐峰 / 香爐; 10.2 Song, Gu read 布/水.

1.9

Title: Song, Gu read 題鹿門山, QTs reads 登鹿門山; 11.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 餌/養; 20.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 艇/轡.

1.10

Title .1 Song, Gu read 題/遊, .5 Mmt omits 山; 2.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 倚/傍; 5.3 Song, Gu read 位/住; 6.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 證/說; line 8 Song, QTs read 剪茗通往行; 12.5 Song reads 治/洽.

1.11

2.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 滿/坐.

1.12

2.3 Song reads 送/散; 4.1–2 Song, Gu read 谷轉 / 轉谷; 4.4 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 翠/蘿; 7.2 Wyyh reads 梁/梁; 8.2 Wyyh reads 鳥/子; 13.2 Wyyh reads 暝/暮.

1.13

This and 2.5 are the only extant poems in which Meng uses more than one rhyme-change. Title: .1–2 Reading 湖中 / 襄陽 with Song, Gu, QTs; .1–2 Tsjs reads 湘中 / 襄陽; Tsjs, QTs add Yan's given name as Fang 防, which would identify him as the Yan Fang (*jinsbi* 734) known to be acquainted with Meng and other poets and who is represented in the Hyylj anthology; 2.4 Song reads 晚/晚; 3.2 reading 雲/門 with Wyyh, Tsjs, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 8.3 Mmt reads 久/苦; 14.3 Song, Tsjs read 上/下.

1.14

4.3–4 Song, Gu read 三兩/二三.

1.15

Title: Song, Gu, QTs read 還山詒湛法師; lines 7–10 missing in Song, Gu, QTs; 16.3 Song reads 歸/得; 17.4 Song reads 今/古; 19.1 Song reads 竹/禪; 23.3 QTs reads 冥/明.

1.16

Title .3 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 蘭/萬; 3.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 試/始; line 4 Song, Gu, QTs read 心飛逐鳥滅; 6.4 Song, Gu read 境/秋; 7.3–5 Wyyh reads 村人歸 / 歸村人; 8.1–2 Wyyh reads 沙平 / 平沙; Song, Gu, QTs read 沙行 / 平沙; 10.3 Wyyh, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 舟/洲.

1.17

9.3–4 Song reads 門返 / 開晚; 9.4 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 返/晚; 12.4 Song, Gu read 如/相.

1.18

4.1 Song reads 果/草; 12.4, 13.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 歌/感; 18.5 Song, Gu read 垂/絲.

1.19

Title: Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 同好 / 故人; 4.3 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 沾/紹; 6.2 reading 翰/賦 with Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs.

1.20

Title: Song, Gu read 題鹿門山, QTs reads 題雲門山; 11.2 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 懷/行; 13.3–4 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 日夕 / 去久; 14.3–4 Song reads 去還 / 竭來, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 去來 / 竭來; 15.2 Song reads 園/國; 18.2 Wyyh reads 刺/策.

1.21

None.

1.22

Line 4 might instead be read as “With the farmer folk, how can I converse?” which suggests rather a different tone. 15.3 Song reads 轉/搏.

1.23

1.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 云/已; 6.4 Song reads 所/有; 8.2 Wyyh reads 浪/洲; 8.4 Wyyh, QTs read 誰/何.

1.24

4.2 Song, QTs read 處/事; 8.3 Song, QTs read 問/聞; 9.2 Song reads 通/逼; line 12 QTs reads 常觀仙人禱; 13.1–2 Song, QTs read 往來 / 來去; 16.3 Song, QTs read 當/作; 17.4–5 Song, QTs read 自然 / 不死; 19.2 Mmt reads 懷/願; 19.2–4 Song reads 比從之 / 願從此.

1.25

Title .7–8 Mmt reads 海潮 / 明海; 1.5 Song, QTs read 流/派; 2.2 Song, QTs read 淼/漫; 4.3 Song, QTs read 至/逗, Mmt reads 過/逗; 8.4 Song reads 沅/沉; 12.2 Song reads 判/泮.

1.26

1.1 Wyyh reads 晨/東; 1.3–4 Wyyh reads 光蒼 / 早光; 1.5 emending 芒/茫; 7.5 Wyyh reads 然/起; 9.4–5 Song, Gu read 猿驚 / 驚猿.

1.27

10.3–4 Song, Gu, QTs read 茲湍 / 此川.

1.28

Title: Song, Gu, QTs read 南歸阻雪; 7.3 Wyyh reads 復/覆; 7.5 Wyyh reads 湍/泉; 9.1 Wyyh reads 妙/少.

1.29

Line 3 Song, Gu read 誰念離當夏, Wyyh reads 誰念離亭下; 4.2 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 淡/泊; 7.1 Wyyh, Song read 空/定; 12.1 reading 群/郡 with Wyyh, Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 12.4 Song, Gu read 咸/成.

1.30

1.5 Song, Gu read 去/流; 2.1 Song reads 返/夕; 3.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 值/因; 6.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 從/隨.

1.31

Title .8 Song, Gu, QTs read 尋/歸; 3.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 在/去.

1.32

Title: omit 之鄂渚 with Wyyh, Song, Gu, because Ezhu is in the opposite direction of the places mentioned in lines 5–6; 6.1–2 reading 山河/雲山 with Gu, QTs.

1.33

1.5 Song, Gu read 里/客; 3.4 Song reads 鶴/鶴; 4.2 reading 落/客 with Song, Gu, QTs.

1.34

4.1 QTs reads 昔/共; 7.1 QTs reads 達/遠.

1.35

Title .12–13 Song reads 朱鼎 / 朱昇; line 9 Song, Gu read 沈侯隱公隱; 12.3 Song reads 同/共.

1.36

Title: reading 包/鮑 with Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs; 5.2 QTs reads 歲/時; 5.4 reading 盛/正 with Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs; 7.2 QTs reads 日/月; 7.5 Song reads 浴/歸, Gu reads 初/歸; 10.2 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 酌/酒.

1.37

Title .2 Tsjs, Song, Gu read 山/潭; 2.2 Tsjs, Song, Gu read 榜/岸.

1.38

3.3–4 QTs reads 不見 / 見不.

1.39

Title: reading 王道士房 / 黃十一 with QTs; Wyyh, Song read 王十一;
2.1–4 Song reads 嘗魂在青 / 常夢遊清, Gu reads 嘗愧在青; 4.2 Song,
Gu read 縣/我, Mmt, QTs read 好/我; 10.2 Song, Gu read 後/復.

1.40

1.4 Song, Gu read 陰/陽; 6.4–5 Wyyh, Song read 瑪瑙 / 馬腦, QTs
reads 碼礪; 10.4 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 紅/芝; 11.2 Wyyh reads
笑/天; 15.2 Song, Gu read 華/辱.

1.41

None.

1.42

Title .2 Wyyh reads 夕/日; 1.5 Wyyh reads 發/落; 3.4 Wyyh, Song, Gu,
QTs read 夕/夜.

1.43

3.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 未/不.

1.44

3.2 Song, Gu, Mmt read 曙/耽; 8.1–2 Song, Gu, Mmt read 十上 /
上國; 11.3–5 Song, Gu, QTs read 當炎夏 / 冒炎暑; 15.4 Song, Gu, QTs
read 同/朝.

1.45

Title: reading the addition of the personal name 曜 with Song, Gu,
QTs; 2.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 篁/歌; after line 12, Song, Gu, Mmt,
QTs add eight more lines reading 顧予衡茅下，兼致稟物資。脫分趨庭
禮，殷勤伐木詩。脫君車前鞅，設我園中葵。斗酒須寒興，明朝難重持。

1.46

3.2 Song reads 來/年; 4.3–4 Song, Gu read 惟尚 / 尚憂; line 5 Song,
Gu, QTs read 桑野就耕父.

1.47

Title .6–8 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 廬山 / 香鑪峰; 1.2 Wyyh reads 帆/席; 7.5 Wyyh reads 在/近; 8.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 但/空.

1.48

3.2 Wyyh reads 游/行; 4.4 Song reads 蘿/藤; 8.1 Wyyh reads 神/游.

1.49

1.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 爾/汝; 9.2 Song reads 直/立; 9.4 Song, Gu read 巖/峰; 13.3 Song reads 思/搖; 18.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 已/易; 20.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 示/寄.

1.50

1.4–5 Song, Gu, QTs read 建業 / 夢寐; 7.8 Song, Gu, QTs read 星/隱; 8.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 風/星.

1.51

Title: reading with Song, Gu the absence of four final words 呈張九齡, “For Showing to Zhang Jiuling” that appear in Sbck, Mmt, QTs. If one admits these four words into the title and understands the poem as addressed to Zhang Jiuling, presumably when he was “in position” (line 7) at court, the sense of the poem and meaning of several lines changes drastically. But if Meng Haoran were sending this poem on behalf of Ding Feng to Zhang in the latter’s official capacity, he would use Zhang’s official title (as he does in all other poem-title references to Zhang), not his personal name. There are other problems. The allusion in line 4 is used by Meng in reference to himself in 1.28, and lines 5 and 6 sound much more like references to Meng himself than to someone who is setting off for possible success at the capital. If so understood, lines 7 and 8 would then be seen as the poet’s plea to Ding that when you, old friend, attain an influential position, please do not be tardy in helping me – the kind of request that Meng uses elsewhere in seeing off friends traveling expectantly to court. The title reference to Zhang Jiuling is likely a late editorial addition.

1.52

None.

1.53

None.

1.54

Title .2 reading 園/家 with Song, Gu, QTs; 2.3 Song, Gu read 尚/養; 3.3 reading 近/勞 with Song, Gu, QTs; 4.4 Song, Gu read 十/千; 7.2 reading 劍/枕 with Song, Gu, QTs; 8.1 Song reads 立/丘; 8.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 已/空; 12.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 嗟/羞.

1.55

Title: .6–7 Song, Gu, QTs read 南紀 / 紀南, .13 reading 迴/迪 with Song, the identification with Pei Jiong being proven; 3.2 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 暮/晏; 4.1 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 偏/只; 5.1 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 公/參; 5.4–5 reading 幾幾 / 數子 with Song, Gu, QTs; 6.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 車/聯; 8.5 QTs reads 賢/連; 9.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 順/歲; 14.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 散/歷.

1.56

12.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 映/在.

1.57

2.3 reading 樹/水 with Song, Gu, QTs (probably should emend to 木); 6.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 蘿/薜.

1.58

None.

1.59

2.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 產/業; 4.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 朝/城; 8.5 Song, Gu read 言/論.

1.60

Title: Song, Gu, QTs read 白雲先生王迴見訪; 1.1–2 Song, Gu, QTs read 閒歸 / 歸閒; 5.4–5 reading 芝朮 / 花木 with Song, Gu, QTs.

1.61

2.2 Song reads 久/夕; 4.2 Song, Gu, QTs reads 如/知; 14.4 Song, Gu read 芳/滄.

1.62

2.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 叨/謬; 2.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 闕/闕; 5.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 籍/席; 10.3 Song, Gu read 思/感; 11.5 Song reads 日/月.

1.63

None.

2.1

Title: Wyyh, QTs add 山 after 鹿門; 1.3–4 QTs reads 鐘鳴 / 鳴鐘; 2.6 Wyyh reads 喧/渡; 3.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 路/岸, Hyylj reads 道; 6.2 Wyyh reads 辨/到; 7.3 Wyyh reads 草/松; 7.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 夜/自.

2.2

3.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 醉/闕; 6.1 Song, Gu read 漢/漢.

2.3

2.1–2 Wyyh reads 虹霓 / 霏紅; 2.2 Song, Gu read 虹/紅; 3.3 Wyyh reads 遊/流; 3.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 楚/襄; 4.1–2 Wyyh reads 覺後 / 倏忽; 5.3 Wyyh reads 曉/飛.

2.4

This is the only extant poem of Meng Haoran in which he uses varying line-lengths: the poem is mainly heptametric, but lines 7–8 are pentametric. This is also the only poem with an odd number of lines. The first stanza rhymes AABA, the second AABACAA. Title .7 Song, Gu, QTs read 之/遊; 3.5 Song, Gu read 還/繞; 5.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 灘/沙.

2.5

This and 1.13 are the only extant poems in which Meng Haoran uses more than one rhyme-change. 1.1 Song, Gu read 嘗/當; 3.5 QTs reads 日/自; 4.5 Song, Gu read 竟/競; 5.1 Song, Gu read 紅/澄; 6.3–4 Song,

Gu read 對彬彬 / 毳毳; 8.6 Song, Gu, QTs read 徑/住; 9.7 Song, Gu read 去/在; 10.6 Song, Gu read 征/羅.

2.6

2.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 尋/訪; 6.5 QTs reads 徐/餘.

2.7

1.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 因/依; 2.3–4 Song, Gu read 更不 / 不更; 3.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 廬/林; 5.2 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 與/取; lines 7–10 omitted by Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs; 15.5 reading 鈞/欵 with all other editions; 19.5 reading 月/日 with Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs.

2.8

Title .5–9 Song, Gu read 登當陽城樓; 3.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 詎/寧; 9.3 QTs reads 凝/吟; 10.2 Song reads 天/山; 11.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 急/緊; 16.5 Song, Gu read 抵/安.

2.9

3.4 Song, Gu read 鳥/雁; 6.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 醫/憂; 6.3 Song, Gu read 里/俗; 11.4–5 Song, Gu, QTs read 才子 / 調者.

2.10

Title .5 Wyyh reads 禮/祠; .13 reading 寺/詩 with Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs; 9.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 松/林; 11.2 Wyyh reads 堂/宮; 11.3 Song, QTs read 上/近; 14.1 Song, Gu read 先/恭; line 14 Wyyh reads 雖謀計未成; 15.5 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 沒/嘆; 16.1 Wyyh reads 山/波; 16.1–2 Song, Gu read 止欲 / 波逐; 16.4 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 船/舟.

2.11

2.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 倚/繞; 5.1–2 Wyyh reads 松竹 / 竹柏; 11.2 Song, Gu read 從/承; 12.2 Song, Gu read 心/此.

2.12

None.

2.13

Title .4–5 Song, Gu read 張 / 朱大; 6.4 Wyyh, Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 將/相.

2.14

2.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 車/軒; 2.5 Wyyh reads 過/多; 4.5 Wyyh reads 多/過; 11.1 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 寧/誰; 12.1–2 Song, Gu, QTs read 歲月 / 年歲.

2.15

2.4 Mmt reads 日/目; 11.5 QTs reads 遠/滿.

2.16

2.1 Song, Gu read 時/晴; 5.2 Song, Gu read 郊/門; 6.1 QTs reads 阡/千; 6.1–3 Song, Gu read 行陌逗 / 千陌俯; lines 7–10 omitted in Song, Gu; 12.3 Song, Gu read 逐/送.

2.17

2.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 到/見; 3.3–4 Wyyh reads 蓴鱸 / 鱸魚; 4.2 Wyyh reads 見/識; 7.1 Song, Gu, read 特/將; 9.1 Song reads 守/府; 12.2 reading 此/子 with Song, Gu, QTs.

2.18

Title .1 QTs reads 來/本.

2.19

Wyyh, Tsjs attribute to Zhang Zirong, which seems likely; 1.1–3 Wyyh reads 開國移 / 關戍惟; 1.5 reading 井/漠 with Song, Gu, QTs; 2.1 Song reads 西/城; 5.3 Wyyh reads 黃/青; 10.2 Song, Gu read 聲/歌; 11.3–4 Song, Gu, QTs read 遂榮 / 桂枝.

2.20

1.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 苦/為; line 3 Song, Gu, QTs read 用賢遭聖日; 12.1 Song, Gu read 履/莊; 14.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 宜/真.

2.21

Title .12–13 reading 薊州 / 蘇臺 with QTs; 薊臺 is a possible emendation; 蘇臺 is obviously wrong, as is 荊州 which most other editions read, since Magistrate Zhang's post must be in the far north, not along the Yangzi; 1.1–2 Song, Gu read 荊州 / 薊門; 4.1 Song reads 收/投; 12.3 Song, Gu read 茲/行.

2.22

2.4 QTs reads 不/楚; 9.5 Song reads 稻/柳; 11.3 Song, Gu read 雲/年; 16.3–4 Song, Gu, QTs read 列三 / 復中.

2.23

Title .4 Wyyh, Song read 使/史; 4.1 Song, Gu read 半/坐; 9.2 Song, Gu read 為/隨; 11.5 Song, Gu read 客/者.

2.24

Title: Wyyh reads 旅行欲泊宣州界; 3.1–2 Song reads 平湖 / 潮平; 5.5 Song, Gu read 事/浦; 9.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 識/織.

2.25

Title: adding last four words 探得堦字 with Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs; 3.3 QTs reads 書/音; 3.4 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 書/信; 7.1–4 Song, Gu read 先綬恩難 / 朱絨心雖; 7.2–3 Wyyh reads 綬恩 / 絨心; 11.4 reading 秋/佳 with Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs.

2.26

Title: Song omits 贈; 2.3 Mmt reads 應/和; 7.1–2 Song, Gu, QTs read 綺筵 / 舞庭; 9.1 QTs reads 秋/秋; 10.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 氣/色; 13.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 曲/別; 13.5 Song reads 葉/藥.

2.27

1.3–4 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 流如 / 如流; 4.1 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 為/而; 5.4 QTs reads 儀/台; 6.4 Song, Gu read 上/下; 9.2 Wyyh reads 訐/詐; 12.3 QTs reads 照/在.

2.28

1.5 Wyyh reads 寺/室, Song, Gu read 房/室; 3.2 Song, Gu read 空/窗; 4.4 Song, Gu read 斯/新; line 5 reading 竹蔽檐前日 / 竹閉窗裏日 with original note in Song and with QTs; 7.1 Wyyh, QTs read 周/同; 7.1–2 Song, Gu read 周旋 / 同遊; 9.2 Song reads 淨/靜.

2.29

Hyylj, Wyyh, TSsjs attribute to Lu Xiang 虛象, which is most likely; the title in Hyylj and Tsjs identifies the recipient as Zhang Jun 張均

(son of Zhang Yue 張說) and all three give his position as vice-director 員外郎 of the Personnel Board. All three of these versions have an additional four lines at the end, as does Song. 1.2 Wyyh reads 家/門; 1.4 Wyyh, Tsjs read 業/緒; 6.3 Song, Gu read 炳/動; 7.2 Song reads 入/直; 8.2 Song, Gu read 遊/趨.

2.30

Title .2 Song, Gu, QTs read 張/于; 1.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 是/美; 6.4 Gu, QTs read 謠/謳; 18.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 無/遠.

2.31

3.4–5 QTs reads 話話 / 浩浩; 7.1 Song reads 傍/榜; 9.4–5 Song, Gu read 深愜 / 彌遠; 9.5 QTs reads 愜/遠; 11.2 Song, Gu read 維/帆; 11.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 宿/泊.

2.32

Title: Song reads 行出竹東山望漢川, QTs same but without 竹; there is much dispute about whether 漢川 refers to the district of that name, instead of the river; 1.2 Song reads 日/縣; 1.3 Song reads 分/非; 4.2 Song reads 坂/壠; 5.5 Wyyh, Song, QTs read 漢/海; 10.3 Song, QTs read 綴/養; 16.4 Wyyh reads 浮/維, Mmt reads 扶/維.

2.33

3.3 Song, Gu read 共/昔; 4.4 Song, Gu read 亦/已; 6.2 Song reads 北/此; 12.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 君/卿.

2.34

1.2 Wyyh, Song read 德/職; 7.2 Song, Gu read 頌/推; 7.5 Song, Gu read 治/理; 12.5 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 程/旌; 14.1 Song, Gu read 廣/江.

2.35

14.4 Song, Gu read 坐/藉; 15.5 Song, Gu read 麗/翰; 19.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 傳/嘗.

2.36

None.

2.37

Title .3 reading 使/候 with Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 2.2 Song reads 閑/間; 4.1 Song, Gu read 品/雲; 5.1 Song reads 枕/抗; 8.1 Song, Gu read 更/誰.

2.38

5.2 Mmt reads 日/月; 11.2 QTs reads 歟/來.

2.39

4.4 Song reads 恩/荀; 6.5 Song reads 春/旬; 10.2 reading 開/花 with Song, Gu, QTs; 14.3 Song reads 妙/好; 14.5 Gu reads 神/紳; 16.5 reading 辰/晨 with Song, Gu, QTs.

2.40

2.3 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 達/離; 2.5 Wyyh reads 扃/庭; line 3 Wyyh reads 嚴君先早露; 5.4–5 Song, Gu, QTs read 牲養 / 冬業; 12.1 Wyyh reads 無/不.

2.41

5.5 Song, QTs read 照/日.

2.42

2.4 Song, Gu read 經/驚; 5.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 毛/風; 7.4 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 痼/痾; 10.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 間/異.

3.1

7.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 字/尚.

3.2

Title: Song, Gu read 岳陽樓; Wyyh reads 望洞庭湖上張丞相, QTs same as Wyyh but has 贈 instead of 上; there has been much dispute over whether the “Chief Minister Zhang” of the Wyyh and QTs titles is Zhang Yue or Zhang Jiuling, but the name is surely a late addition and it is unlikely that the poem was actually addressed to either Zhang; 4.2 Wyyh, Tsjs, Song, Gu read 動/撼; 7.1–2 Tsjs reads 徒憐 / 坐觀; 7.2 Wyyh reads 憐/觀; 8.1 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 空/徒.

3.3

Title: QTs reads 春中喜王九相尋, evidently to solve the problem of the first line's "second month" which is not "late spring," but the more likely solution, if one is needed, is to emend 三月 / 二月; 6.5 Song reads 醒/醒.

3.4

Title: Hyylj reads 歸故園作; 8.4 Song reads 堂/窗.

3.5

None.

3.6

4.3–4 Song, Gu read 落影 / 葉落, QTs reads 落景 / 葉落; 5.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 過/從.

3.7

Title: Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 留別王侍御, Mmt reads 留別王侍郎維; 7.4 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 索/寂.

3.8

6.2 QTs reads 度/渡.

3.9

Title: reading absence of 行 after 御史 with Song, Gu; 1.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 意/興; 3.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 逸/旅; 7.4 Gu, QTs read 外/海.

3.10

None.

3.11

Title .6 emending 當/嵩, since Songyang is in Hebei, was never visited by Meng Haoran, and has no connection with Wang Can or with the Ju and Zhang rivers; 5.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 林/泱; 8.5 Song, Gu read 愁/憂.

3.12

Title .6 Song, Gu, QTs read 障/樟; 1.3–4 Song, Gu, QTs read 聞雷 / 雷聲; 5.4 Song, Gu read 空/雲; 6.2 Song, Gu read 雲/天; 7.1 Song reads 驚/驚.

3.13

Title: adding 房 to end of title with Mmt; Song, Gu read 題大禹義公房; 1.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 處/寂; 2.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 構/宇; 4.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 群/眾; 5.3 Song, Gu read 照/連; 8.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 應/方.

3.14

1.5 Wyyh, Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 半/畔; 2.4 Wyyh reads 舊/隱; 4.1 Song, Gu read 井/林; 8.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 迴/携, Wyyh reads 杖/携.

3.15

Title: adding with Song, Gu, QTs the words 得新字; 1.1–2 Song, Gu, QTs read 初九 / 九日; 2.5 Song, Gu read 辰/晨; 3.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 聞/尋.

3.16

1.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 泛/訪; 2.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 潮/濤; 3.1–2 Song, QTs read 何知 / 如何.

3.17

Title .3 reading 曉/晚 with QTs, as several lines imply the beginning rather than the end of day; 4.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 接/任; 5.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 去/適; 7.3–5 Song reads 烟霞晚 / 霞色晚; 7.5 reading 曉/晚 with QTs.

3.18

1.4 Gu, Mmt read 亭/停; 2.1 Wyyh, QTs read 到/至; 2.4–5 Song reads 日已 / 已夕; 4.1–2 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 下山 / 山下; 8.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 望/待.

3.19

Title: adding the final 樓 with Mmt; Mmt does not have 杭州; Wyyh, Song, Gu read 梓亭 / 樟亭; 1.5 Wyyh reads 望/眺; 3.5 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 敞/散; 8.3 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 學/欲.

3.20

1.2 Mmt reads 愛/友; 5.4 Song, Gu read 君/雲; 8.4 Song, Gu read 橋/梁.

3.21

None.

3.22

Title .2 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 陳/滕; 5.4 Mmt reads 涵/含; 6.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 風/山; 7.2 Song, Gu read 霄/朝, QTs reads 宵/朝.

3.23

During Xuanzong's reign the only person surnamed Yao who held the title of *kaifu yitong sansi* 開府儀同三司 was Yao Chong 姚崇 (651–721), one of the two most important chief ministers of the early Kaiyuan era. He had a garden retreat (“hillside pool”) in Luoyang. Yao Chong died long before Meng Haoran visited Luoyang. So the host in this poem must be someone else. We know that Yao's retreat was eventually taken over by Princess Jinxian (“Transcendent in Gold”) who had become a Daoist priestess many years earlier, but neither she nor any member of the imperial family is in this poem. We can only assume the host is a now nameless official, but his identity is not essential to the poem. No variants.

3.24

Title: Gxj reads 過陳大水亭, .6 Song, Gu read 張/滕, Mmt reads 陳/滕, .6–10 QTs reads 陳大水亭 / 滕逸人別業; 1.2 Song, Gu read 高/亭; 3.4 Song, Gu read 松/藤; 6.2 Song, Gu read 妓/烏; 6.3 QTs reads 助/笑; 7.3 Song, Gu read 雲/云.

3.25

3.3 Gu, QTs read 深/新.

3.26

6.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 樓/櫻.

3.27

6.1 Song reads 衍/演; 7.2 Gu reads 為/識.

3.28

1.3 QTs reads 桃/花.

3.29

Title: adding 張山人 to end of title with Wyyh, Mmt, because lines 1–2, 7 seem to imply two people; Song, Gu add 張逸人 to end of title; 3.4 Song, Gu read 此/所; 4.3–4 Song, Gu, QTs read 漢陰 / 夏雲; 5.3 Song, Gu read 窺/觀.

3.30

Title: Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs omit the last three words; 3.1 Song, Gu read 平/來.

3.31

2.4 Song, Gu read 身/閑; 4.1 QTs reads 間/關; 5.3 Song, Gu read 良/居; 7.1 Wyyh, Song, Gu, Mmt read 炎/花.

3.32

8.2 Gu reads 衣/書.

3.33

None.

3.34

Title: accepting Taniguchi's emendations of the two given names, which are convincing; 7.4 emending 陽/南 to accord with history.

3.35

None.

3.36

3.2 Gu reads 狗/狗; 5.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 晚/晏.

3.37

8.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 尋/緣.

3.38

Title .2 reading 是/趙 with Song; Wyyh omits any name; 2.4 reading 素/葉 with Wyyh, Song, Gu; 6.3 Wyyh reads 屢/漫, Song reads 謾/漫; 8.1–2 Wyyh, Mmt read 徒自 / 從此; 8.3 Song reads 欲/願; 8.4 Wyyh, Song read 無/忘.

3.39

3.3 Wyyh, Song read 臥/聊; 4.4 Wyyh reads 破/解; 5.1 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 歌/歡.

3.40

Title: Wyyh reads 題容山主蘭若; 1.5 Wyyh reads 地/開; 5.4 Song, Gu read 霏/飛; 8.1–2 Wyyh reads 綠駭 / 歸騎.

3.41

Title: Tsjs, Gu, QTs include the given name 春虛.

3.42

6.4 Mmt reads 潮/湖; 7.3 Mmt reads 迴/為.

3.43

Title: Song, Gu, QTs read 秋日陪 / 和.

3.44

QTs attributes this poem to Cui Guofu, but its similarity with 1.61 argues for Meng Haoran's authorship; title: reading addition of 遠 before 上人 with Wyyh, Song; 3.2 Wyyh reads 山/土; 7.1 Wyyh reads 旦/日.

3.45

Title: Song reads 愛州李少府見贈, Gu is without 重; 1.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 簷/茆; 4.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 任/想; 6.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 主/故; 7.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 迴/還.

3.46

None.

3.47

Title: omitting 十 before 九 with all other texts.

3.48

1.3–4 Song, Gu read 經河 / 荊府; 6.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 過/訪; 7.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 時/君; 8.3–4 Song, Gu read 欲瀨 / 瀨欲.

3.49

3.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 性/意.

3.50

Title: Song, Gu read only 寄弟聲; 3.1 Song reads 可/以.

3.51

6.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 枝/林.

3.52

7.3 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 兩/數.

3.53

4.3 Mmt reads 武/五, suggesting that Yuan has been promoted to Wuling near Changsha, which, while connecting with the reference to Peach Blossom Font in line 7, would be a demotion for someone with the court position of Grand Invocator and hardly fitting with the favorable implication of line 3; 5.5 QTs reads 帆/棹.

3.54

Title .2 Mmt reads 歸/陂; 6.3–5 Song, Gu read 濕初稀 / 潤初移; 7.5 Gu, Mmt, QTs read 鑿/稼; 8.1–4 Song, Gu read 問君田事 / 因君問土.

3.55

7.4 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 時/詩.

3.56

1.3 reading 求/來 with Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 5.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 驪/踐.

3.57

Most commentators identify Magistrate Zhang as Meng Haoran's old friend and fellow Xiangyang native, Zhang Zirong; but that is by no means certain. Title .6–8 Song reads 六門作 / 鹿門山; 4.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 微/彌; 5.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 光/先; 6.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 氣/後.

3.58

2.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 漸/來; 2.3–4 Wyyh reads 本園 / 柳園; 8.2 Song, Gu read 花/飛.

3.59

None.

3.60

7.5 reading 物/酒 with Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs.

3.61

2.5 Wyyh reads 河/阿; 4.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 關/園; 4.3 Wyyh reads 成/在; 6.1 Song reads 意/喜; 7.5 Song reads 上/土.

3.62

None.

3.63

Title: Song, Gu, QTs add 夕次 as first two words; 3.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 知/疑.

3.64

2.3 reading 益/亦 with Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 6.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 臨/登; 8.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 問/望.

3.65

Title: .6 Song, Gu read 錢/薛; 1.5 Song, Gu read 宿/夕; 2.2 reading 退/送 with Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 4.4 Song, Gu read 問/聞; 7.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 潮/湖.

3.66

Title: .1 Song reads 晚/曉; 2.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 復/沒; 6.3 QTs reads 汨/泊.

3.67

Other versions of Hyylj than the Song 2-juan edition attribute this poem to Cui Guofu. Title: .4 Hyylj reads 江/水; 1.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 舟/行; 2.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 闇/夜; 3.4 Hyylj, Song, Gu, QTs read 芳/香; 4.4 Wyyh reads 暗/採; 7.2 reading 侶/旅 with Hyylj, Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 7.3 Hyylj, Wyyh read 遙/時; 8.1 reading 涉/澗 with Hyylj, Wyyh.

3.68

This poem is usually regarded as being written on Meng's journey to sit for the *jinsi* exam at the capital. But an unsolvable problem is presented by the fact that prospective candidates were first presented and matriculated in the tenth month of the year before that in which the exam was held (in the third month). This poem's snowfall and mention of it being so late in the year rules out this being a trip for the exam. This difficulty vanishes if Meng went twice to Chang'an which is unlikely or, as mentioned in the Introduction, we understand that Meng was never a candidate for the exam. Title: reading 京/命 and 遇/逢 with Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 4.3 Gu reads 徧/滿; 6.2 Song reads 鷹/鳥; 6.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 集/噪.

3.69

Title: Song, Gu read 宿武陽川 / 宿武陵即事; 4.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 嶂/影; 5.3-5 Song, Gu read 減明月 / 減明燭.

3.70

Title: Song reads 就張瓜海作 / 海園作, Gu reads 就張園作 / 海園作; 1.3-5 Song, Gu read 星河列 / 山河裂; 1.5 QTs reads 列/裂; 2.3 Song, Gu read 甲/邸; 6.2 Song, Gu read 山/湘.

3.71

Title: Song, Gu simply read 途次, QTs reads 途次望鄉; 8.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 高/勞.

3.72

7.2 QTs reads 園/關.

3.73

4.3–4 Song, Gu, QTs read 岐路 / 醉後; 5.2 Mmt reads 陵/林.

3.74

6.1 Song, Gu read 張/中.

3.75

1.3–4 Wyyh reads 江湖 / 洞庭; 1.4 reading 湖/庭 with Gu, Song, Mmt, QTs; 4.1–3 Wyyh reads 世路共 / 江路苦; 6.2–3 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 正度 / 梅變; 7.4 Song, Gu read 楊/昌.

3.76

None.

3.77

Wyyh attributes this poem to Wang Changling, QTs includes it among Meng Haoran's poems and also among Wang Changling's, with the latter titled 遇薛明府謁聽上人. Title: omitting 禪 as last word, with Mmt; Song, Gu read title as 陪柏臺友共訪聽上人禪居, QTs reads Meng's title as 陪李侍御訪聽上人禪居; 1.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 友/蒼.

3.78

1.5 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 至/立; 6.1 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 焉/安.

4.1

Title: reading 送王宣從軍 / 送吳宣從事 with Song, Gu because of allusion in line 4 and general topic; 1.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 士/畫; 2.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 寧/無; 3.1 Song, Gu read 隆/漢; 3.3 Song, Gu read 初/將; 5.4 reading 庭/亭 with Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs.

4.2

1.5 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 頭/隱; 4.2 reading 端/端 with Mmt, QTs; 5.1–2 Song reads 上流 / 山河, Mmt reads 鄱陵 / 山河; 7.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 往/涉; 8.4 Song, Gu, QTs read 自/暗.

4.3

2.4–5 Gu reads 荊衡 / 南荊; 3.4 Song, Gu, Mmt read 陽/楊; 5.1 reading 標/標 with all other texts; 5.4 Song, Gu read 有/已; 8.1 Song reads 往/應.

4.4

Title: Song, Gu, QTs add 從 before 弟; 3.5 Gu reads 改/感; 8.3 Song, Gu, Mmt read 看/着.

4.5

4.1–2 QTs reads 多才 / 才多.

4.6

Title .2 Song reads 先/元; Song, Gu omit 張驂鸞; 3.2 Song reads 下/首; 3.3 Song, Gu read 離/辭; 4.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 中/邊; 4.3 Song reads 聞/問; 6.5 Song, Gu read 羞/洲; 7.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 子/輩; 8.2 Song reads 逢/期.

4.7

Title .2 Song, Gu read 亭/山, .3 QTs reads 贈/餞, .5 Song, Gu read 瑋/瑄; 1.3–4 Song reads 生平 / 平生; 3.1 Song reads 清/青; 4.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 路/霧; 5.5 Mmt reads 別/列.

4.8

2.1 Gu reads 芳/勞; 2.5 QTs reads 涯/沂; 5.4 Song, Gu read 飛/鳥.

4.9

Song reverses the order of the first and second quatrains of this poem. Title .3 Song, Gu, QTs read 遇/易.

4.10

1.4 Song reads 春/秦; 5.5 Song reads 別/列; 6.2–3 Song, Gu read 恨別 / 別恨.

4.11

7.4 Wyyh reads 先/相; 8.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 此/北.

4.12

Title .2 Gu, QTs read 中/下; .7 emending 揚/楊; 1.2 Wyyh reads 闕/國; 2.3–4 Wyyh reads 興使 / 共使; 6.2 Song, Gu read 行/歸.

4.13

Title: Song, Gu read 十三 / 十 and Song reads 舍弟 / 弟; 2.2 Song, Gu read 日/見; 6.1 Song, Gu read 空/烟.

4.14

Title: Song reads 李膺 / 張子容; 5.2 Song, Gu, QTs read 夕/夜; 8.4–5 reading 季鷹 / 李膺 with QTs, since allusion to Zhang Han, who is identified with Zhang Zirong elsewhere by Meng and whose surname is coincident, makes more sense than allusion to the stern 2nd-c. official Li Ying who was primarily known for opposing the eunuch clique at Han Huandi's court.

4.15

4.1 Song reads 相/獨.

4.16

Title: omitting final words 之鄂 with Song. Xin's given name was E 諤, and I suspect the correct title of this poem was 都下送辛大諤, just as the place-name E 鄂 which figures wrongly in a different poem about Xin (see 1.32, note 3 and collation note) must also be deleted; 2.2 Mmt reads 旋/歸; 8.1 Song, Gu, Mmt read 還/遙.

4.17

None.

4.18

None.

4.19

Title: Mmt omits 大.

4.20

Title: Song, Gu read 游江西上留別富陽裴劉二少府, as do Wyyh and QTs but omitting 上; 1.3 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 游/浙; 2.3 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 愠/恨; 3.5 Wyyh reads 障/嶂; 4.2 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 水/壑; 4.3 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 瀉/合; 5.5 Song, Gu read 注/沂; 6.2 Song, Gu read 亦/易; 7.4–5 Song reads 苦勞 / 津者, Gu reads 勞苦 / 津者; 7.5 Wyyh reads 客/者; 8.5 Song, Gu read 棲/迷.

4.21

Title: Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 東京留別諸公, obviously the wrong geography; 6.3 Wyyh reads 曉/晚.

4.22

Title: Gu reads 送友東歸; 2.1–2 QTs reads 棲棲 / 悽悽.

4.23

Title: Wyyh reads 臨渙裴贊席遇張十六; 7.4 Wyyh reads 征/歸; 8.4 Wyyh reads 悠/依.

4.24

This poem is also found in QTs, without the first three words of the title as given here, among the poems of Lu Xiang 盧象. It has also been attributed by some scholars to Lu Zhuan 盧僊, who does seem convincingly to be the Magistrate Lu of the title (as he is of 3.70). But no magistrate would speak of himself with the *Analects* allusion of the first line, which is in other poems a favorite allusion of Meng Haoran when writing respectfully of district magistrates. The rest of the poem would likewise seem inappropriate and self-congratulatory, if coming from a magistrate. Although 4.25 uses several of the same images and would thus need to be understood as a second poem by Meng (or perhaps a reworking of this one) on the same occasion, I retain this as being authored by Meng. Title: reading addition of the last three words with Song, Gu, QTs; 2.3–4 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 已狎 / 狎野; 3.1 Mmt reads 春/卷; 4.2 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 拂/滯; 8.4 Wyyh reads 清/新, Mmt reads 高/新.

4.25

Title: QTs omits the word 夜.

4.26

None.

4.27

Title: reading 題榮二山池 / 宴榮山人池亭 with Gxj, Wyyh; QTs reads 宴榮二山池; it would seem at best inappropriate to refer to Rong as a 山人 in light of the description of his well-appointed residence and landscape garden; line 1 reading 甲第開金穴 / 甲地金張宅 with Gxj, Wyyh, Gu, QTs; 5.3 Gxj, Wyyh, Gu read 携/嵇; 6.4 Gxj, Wyyh, Gu read 酒/客; 7.2 Gu reads 翁/公; 7.3 Gxj, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 來/時; 8.1 Gxj, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 時/來; 8.4 Gxj, QTs read 羅/籬.

4.28

Title: adding last three words with Gxj, as apt for line 3; Wyyh, Song, Gu read 夏日與崔二十一同集衛明府席, which would also concur; 2.4 Gxj reads 日/月; 6.4 Wyyh, Song read 劍/釣; 7.5 Mmt reads 已/起.

4.29

1.2 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 臥/下; 2.2 Mmt reads 帷/軒; 5.1 Song, Gu read 金/丹; 6.4 Wyyh, Song, Gu, Mmt read 落/發.

4.30

Title .2 QTs reads 夜/食; Song, Gu place 宴 as last word instead of third; 2.1 Song, Gu read 閑/寒; lines 7–8 Wyyh, Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 醉來方欲臥, 不覺曉雞鳴.

4.31

Title .5 emending 昇/弁 to match the name of same person in 4.18.

4.32

None.

4.33

Title: Mmt, QTs add 林 after 園; 1.4 Mmt reads 潛/家; 2.1–2 Song, Gu, QTs read 園林 / 林園; 6.2 reading 山/田 with Song, Gu, QTs because Shang went off to the mountains, not his fields, 田 probably being contamination from the mention of Tao Yuanming in lines 1–2.

4.34

The first four lines of this poem have sometimes been attributed to Wang Wei as a self-contained quatrain, though the full eight lines appear under Meng Haoran's name as early as in Hyylj. 7.2 Mmt reads 至/到.

4.35

1.3 reading 似/已 with Hyylj, Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs; 2.2 Wyyh reads 焉/然; 3.3–4 Hyylj, Wyyh read 望不 / 不可.

4.36

Title: Song omits the characters 旅亭夜坐; 7.3 QTs reads 芸/蓬.

4.37

Title .5 Song, Gu, QTs read 楊/王; 2.2 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 來/朝; 6.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 達/咽; 6.4 Mmt reads 曉/曙; 8.4 Song reads 明/朋.

4.38

Title: Song, Gu, QTs add 迴夜園作 as final words; 1.2 Song, Gu read 說/就; 2.4 reading 澗/洞 with Song, Gu; 5.3 Song, Gu read 窗/樵; 8.2 Song, Gu read 露/落.

4.39

Title: Mmt, QTs add 南亭醉作 as final words.

4.40

Title: Song, Gu read 憶張野人; 1.2 Mmt reads 客/君; 7.2 Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 處/必.

4.41

Title: Hyylj, Song, Gu, QTs add 景空寺 after the first word, Wyyh reads 悼正弘禪師, Mmt reads 過潛上人舊房; 4.2 Wyyh, Song, Gu read 憇/客; 5.2 Mmt reads 理/禮; 6.2 Mmt reads 瞻/尋; 8.5 Mmt reads 遠/前.

4.42

Title: Gxj reads 江上思歸; 1.5 Tsjs reads 初/度; 3.3 reading 襄/湘 with Gxj, Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; Tsjs reads 江/湘; 3.5 Tsjs, Song, Gu, QTs

read 上/曲; 4.4 Gxj reads 山/雲; 6.1 Song, Gu, QTs read 孤/歸; 6.4 Gxj reads 外/際.

4.43

Title: Mmt omits 南山下; Song, Gu read 與卜/下與; 1.2 reading 牧/木 with Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 3.4 Song, Gu read 蒼/素; 6.2 Song, Gu read 田/資; 8.3 Song, Gu read 有/翦.

4.44

Title: Song, Gu, QTs add 員司戶 after 裴司士; Hyylj, Tsjs read 尋/訪; 1.5 Tsjs reads 顧/駕; 2.1 Tsjs reads 嘉/家, Gu reads 喜/家; 7.4 Hyylj, Mmt read 翁/公.

4.45

Besides attributing this poem to Meng Haoran, QTs attributes it in another chapter, with minor variants in lines 4 and 8, to Cui Tu 崔塗 (*jinsbi* 888) with the title 巴山道中除夜書懷. 6.3 Mmt reads 奴/僮.

4.46

Title .6–7 reading 觀主 / 上人 with Wyyh, Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs, as the subject is clearly a Daoist master, not a Buddhist monk. 1.2 Song, Gu read 予/小; 6.1 Wyyh, Song, Gu, QTs read 盍/忽; 8.2 Song, Gu read 背/臂.

4.47

1.4–5 Song, Gu, QTs read 離別 / 別離; 8.3 Song, Gu, QTs read 報/解.

4.48

Title: Song, Gu, QTs read 春意; 8.2 Song, Gu read 動/種.

4.49

5.3 Mmt, QTs read 疑/宜.

4.50

None.

4.51

None.

4.52

2.2 QTs reads 漲/嶂; 6.4 Mmt reads 驕/嬌.

4.53

Title: Song, Gu, QTs omit 歲; 1.4 Wyyh reads 鼓/漏; 3.6 Song, Gu, QTs read 去/有; 7.6 Wyyh reads 不/未.

4.54

2.2 Wyyh reads 憐/令; 4.1 Gu, QTs read 日/月; 4.3 Wyyh reads 烏/猿; 8.6 Wyyh reads 一/八.

4.55

Title: Gu reads 春晴; 1.3 Mmt reads 色/日; 3.4 Mmt reads 情/權.

4.56

1.4 Mmt reads 滄/烟.

4.57

Title: Song reads 春晚絕句; line 3 Wyyh reads 欲知昨夜風; 4.3 Wyyh reads 無/知. Probably MHR's most famous poem. The last line is often read as "Flowers fell, who knows how many?" But that misconstrues it. Besides remarking the flowers lost to last night's rain and wind, the line is a comment on our ignorance of life's real significance, as brief as the flowers that bloom and fall in springtime, battered by unpredictable storms.

4.58

Title: Song omits 大; 1.3 QTs reads 武/五.

4.59

Title: Mmt omits 人; 3.3 Song, Gu read 欲/從.

4.60

1.4 Mmt reads 濤/潮; 2.5 Mmt reads 潯/尋; 4.1 Mmt reads 空/無.

4.61

Title .4 Mmt reads 高/馬; 3.5 Song, Gu read 窟/容; 4.1 reading 相/想 with Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 4.2 Mmt reads 待/得.

4.62

Title: reading 故人 / 古 with Song, Gu, QTs; 1.2 reading 伴/半 with Song, Gu, QTs; 2.3 reading 躍/濯 with Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs; 4.3–5 Song, Gu, QTs read 洞中棲.

4.63

The dangling word 將 in the title, which I leave untranslated, has troubled scholars who usually emend it to 將軍, “General.” But if this is the same Zhang mentioned in 2.21, he is a prefect, not a general. I suspect this is a scribal slip that has become ossified. Some emend 薊門 to 荊門, because Meng Haoran never went to Jimen; but the poem does not require him to be in Jimen, simply to be responding to a poem from someone who is there (cf. 2.21 where I likewise reject a similar emendation to the title).

4.64

Title: Song, Gu, QTs add 登 as the first word; 1.4 reading 端/端 with Song, Gu, QTs.

4.65

Title: Song, Gu, QTs omit 口號; 2.3 Song, Gu read 忽/勿; 4.1 Song, Gu read 樵/雅.

4.66

Title: Song, Gu, Mmt omit 作.

4.67

None.

4.68

2.3 reading 折/析 with Mmt, QTs.

4.69

2.3 Song, Gu read 無/復; 3.4 Mmt reads 堪/好.

4.70

Title .5 Song, Gu read 魚/京; 2.3 Song, Gu read 對/近.

4.71

Title .3 Song, Gu, Mmt read 浮/泛; 1.4 Song, Gu read 常/恒.

4.72

None.

4.73

None.

4.74

Title: Song, Gu read 戲題; 2.5 Song, Gu read 醒/醒; 4.2 Song, Gu read 說/道; 4.5 Song, Gu read 聲/清.

4.75

Wyyh attributes this poem to Qiwu Qian 綦毋潛 (ca. 692–ca. 749); QTs includes it under both Meng Haoran and Qiwu Qian. 2.5 Hyyjlj reads 越/溪, QTs reads 水/溪; 4.3 Song, Gu, Mmt read 松/泉; 4.5 Hyyjlj reads 聯/戀.

4.76

The authorship of this poem and the next are doubtful. If they actually are by Meng Haoran, they would be by four decades the earliest known “Liangzhou lyrics.” They are not included among the poems so titled in Guo Maoqian’s 郭茂倩 early twelfth-century collection *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集. “Purple sandalwood” (*Pterocarpus santalinus*) is what is usually called red sandalwood elsewhere today; traditionally used for chordingophones and furniture, it is a different genus than the sandalwood (*Santalum album*) whose oil is used in incense. No variants.

4.77

None.

4.78

Title: Song, Gu replace first two words with 送新安; 1.4 emending 望/嶺; 2.4 Song, Gu read 明/門; 2.5 Song, Gu, QTs read 春/更; 3.2 Mmt reads 春/月; 4.1 Mmt reads 他/瓜.

4.79

Title: Hyylj reads 渡湘江問舟人, Gxj reads 渡浙江; Wyyh, Song, Gu omit 同; 2.1 Gxj reads 歸/輕, Wyyh, Song, Gu, Mmt, QTs read 扁/輕.

4.80

Title: Mmt, QTs add 之江南 as final words; 1.3 Song, Gu read 日/相; 1.6 Wyyh reads 連/為, Song reads 鳥/為.

