

## Another Note on Shī 220 賓之初筵

E Bruce Brooks 白牧之  
University of Massachusetts at Amherst  
*WSWG Note 291 (6 May 2004)*

**Introduction.** Kennedy has suggested that Shī 220 is really two poems. One of them, 220a, portrays decorous banquet guests; the other, 220b, rowdy ones. They are linked by the common banquet subject and share an identical first line (賓之初筵). But Shī 77-78, which also have a common subject treated in a slightly different tone, and which share an identical first line (叔于田), are separate poems in the present Shī. Why are 220a/b pushed together? I suggest that a wish to preserve a “decade” 什 unit may be a factor, both here and in the growth of the Shī collection as a whole.

**Shī 211-220** (with Waley number and Waley category in parentheses) comprise:

- 211. Harvest blessing by overseer (Waley #161: Agriculture)
- 212. Harvest blessing by workers (#162: Agriculture)
- 213. Blessing of visitor (#186: Welcome)
- 214. Blessing of visitor (#187: Welcome)
- 215. Blessing of lord (#171: Blessings on Gentle Folk)
- 216. Blessing of lord (#175: Blessings on Gentle Folk)
- 217. Clan feast with blessing (#196: The Clan Feast)
- 218. Marriage feast with blessing (#95: Marriage)
- 219. Defense against slander (#287: Lamentations)
- 220a. Decorous banquet with blessing (#267: Moral Pieces)
- 220b. Rowdy burlesque of preceding (part of #267: Moral Pieces)

Waley’s subject categories show that the Shī in canonical order display a pattern of pairing plus a theme of blessing: two harvest blessings, two visitor blessings, two blessings of the lord, two festal blessings for special occasions, and (omitting #219) two banquet poems, one of them a blessing, and the other a burlesque of that blessing. Has something caused the compression of originally separate 220a/b into one poem, thus creating, or preserving, a ten-poem structure in this part of the Shī?

**Shī 201-210**, the preceding decade, provides an additional dimension:

- 201. Complaint of rejection (Waley #109: Marriage [Separation])
- 202. Complaint of hardship (#283: Lamentations)
- 203. Complaint of favoritism (#284: Lamentations)
- 204. Complaint of gentleman on campaign (#140: Warriors and Battles)
- 205. Complaint of warrior (#285: Lamentations)
- 206. Complaint of soldier (#286: Lamentations)
- 207. Complaint of campaigner (#143: Warriors and Battles)
- 208. Elegy for deceased general (#141: Warriors and Battles; “lamentation?”)
- 209. Offerings to secure blessings for lord (#199: Sacrifice)
- 210. Offerings to secure blessings for lord (#200: Sacrifice)

These complaints *of and about* high folk end with future blessings *for* high folk.

**Shī 191-200.** These poems complain of those in high office, some of whom are named. Waley treats nine of them as “Eclipse Poems.” If they do form a close group, then for the three decades here considered and omitting Shī 219 for clarity, we have:

191-200: Nine “Eclipse” lamentations and one other lamentation

201-210: Eight lamentations, followed by two sacrifices for blessings

211-218, 220a-b. Eight blessings, followed by two feast poems

Everything suggests that Shī 219 is anomalous: its decade *and the preceding decades* are formally tidier if we omit it. I next consider whether 219 may be a late insertion.

**Shī 219** contains three four-line stanzas, each with the syllable count 4344, a polymetric style more often encountered in the Fvng than in the Yǎ. The poem appeals to someone not to believe slander, then laments the success of that slander, which has caused disorder in the realm. There are two common lines.<sup>1</sup> line A3 豈弟君子, which in 219 is an address to a superior, appears in four Yǎ poems (174, 239, 251, 252); line B2 止于棘, of insects settling on a thornbush, is found also in a Fvng poem (131). We may consider these connections separately. Here is the 豈弟君子 series:

219A3. Karlgren has no gloss. He and Waley translate 豈弟 as follows:

174D3: Joyous and pleasant are the lords [description]

Waley: Blessed and happy are you, my lords

219A3: Joyous and pleasant lord [direct address]

Waley: Oh, my blessed lord

239A3: Joyous and pleased is the lord [description; so also BCEF3]

Waley: Here’s happiness to my lord

251A4: The joyous and pleasant lord [subject of sentence]

Waley: All happiness to our lord

252A3: The joyous and pleasant lord [subject of sentence]

Waley: All happiness to our lord

252B3: Joyous and pleasant lord [direct address]

Waley: All happiness to our lord

In all *except* 219A3, 豈弟 is a felicitation or a description of felicity. The appeal against slander in 219A3 might be thought to hope for other qualities in the lord than his personal happiness; we might be tempted to translate “merciful.” Waley follows the “felicity” precedent, but with an obvious effort (“Oh, my blessed lord” in 219A3, “All happiness to our lord” elsewhere). The usage of 219A thus seems to be aberrant.

219B2. The buzzing flies (symbolizing gossip) have as their 131A counterpart an oriole (a nature image in a human sacrifice scene):

131A2: They settle on the jujube trees

Waley: As it lights on the thorn-bush

219B2: They settle on the fence

Waley: That have settled on the thorns

Shī 131 is the better poem, but there is little here to suggest directionality. Lacking contrary indications, the relation 131 > 219 suggested by 219A3 may thus stand.

<sup>1</sup>For an introduction to Shī common line analysis, see Brooks **Some**.

A different sort of Shī 219 anomaly was noticed by Legge: “To me, the piece looks suspiciously like one of the Fung; and there have been critics who on some little show of evidence have claimed a place for it in [the Ngwèi 魏 section], but there is no answering the question put by Këang Ping-chung, If it belong to the Fung, how did it come to be placed here in the Ya?” I cannot answer that either, and I do not here suggest that Shī 219 was displaced from elsewhere in the Shī. I suggest that it was composed, late in the Shī formation process, partly from lines culled from other Shī poems (with sometimes scant regard for the previous context or standard meaning of those lines), and inserted before Shī 220; and that the separate Shī 220a/b were pushed into one in order to preserve the ten-poem structure against that intrusion.

That there *was* a decade structure, and that it had performance implications, is implied in the character of the poems at the ends of decades. Shī 200, 210, and 220b are thematically consonant with the poems that precede them, but may be seen as *lighter counterparts* of those poems; up-tempo pieces with which a performance of the decade might effectively have concluded.<sup>2</sup>

**Lost Poems.** Decades so far studied are within the Syău Yă 小雅 (Shī 161-234), but clearly the next Syău Yă “decade,” Shī 221-234, with 14 and not 10 poems, cannot precisely duplicate the above structure. If the six poems mentioned in the Máu commentary to Shī 000, but not present in our Shī, were restored, the Syău Yă would reach  $74 + 6 = 80$  poems (in principle, 8 decades), but restoring them *in their original places*, without other adjustments, would displace the beginnings and ends of the above three decades, thus spoiling their fit in context. As a contribution to defining the decade problem, we may ask if Shī 221-234 “decade” resembles those above studied. The thematic outline of that sequence is:

- 221 The [Jōu] King is in [his capital] Hàu
- 222 The several princes come to court
- 223 The danger of faithless brothers
- 224 The danger of adverse superiors
- 225 Complaint about a nobleman’s daughter
- 226 Lament about a betrothed who does not return
- 227 Celebration of a victory led by Shàu-gūng
- 228 Love for a new husband
- 229 Lament about an estranged husband
- 230 Weary soldier is given a ride
- 231 “Our lord has wine”
- 232 Soldier complaint
- 233 Sorrows of poverty
- 234 Soldier complaint

If there is a decade in here, it is probably best revealed if we subtract the four poems which seem to celebrate the King or his magnates: Shī 221-222, 227, and 231, leaving a set of complaint poems, plus one typologically consonant mitigation in Shī 228.

<sup>2</sup>Note the humorous reduplicatives in Shī 200, which are reminiscent of those in Shī 220. No recitalist is unaware of the value of ending a performance with something lighter in tone. For a further discussion of decade ends, see Brooks **Shī 189**.

It is, of course, the four poems about the Jōu King and his magnates which would have made a thematically satisfying ending to the Syǎu Yǎ section by continuing the elite ambience in Shī 211-220, whereas a restored “complaint” decade would fit better *before* Shī 211-220, with the complaint sequences of Shī 191-200 or 201-210.

This is a disappointment. But does the conjectural decade ending in Shī 233/234 at least show the same lightness or openness of final touch that we have seen in other decades? I believe the answer is Yes, though the key line has been obscured by both Legge and Waley. The last stanza, not in Legge’s or Waley’s version, might read:

234D 有芄者狐 The bushy-tailed fox  
 率彼幽草 Slinks through the dark grass;  
 有棧之車 Our heavy barrows  
 行彼周道 Travel the Jōu Highway.

And the final note of loyalty to Jōu, giving larger purpose to the soldiers’ hardships, takes the poem out of the genre of mere complaint, and into more open territory.

**Conclusion.** Further light might be shed by a study of the early Syǎu Yǎ decades, and of those Fǎng sections which contain 10 poems (Yǔng, Wèi, Wáng, Chín, Chǎn) or 1 more than 10 poems (Jōu-nán, Chí) or 1 more than 20 poems (Jǎng). Meanwhile, for the limited material of Shī 201-234 here considered, it seems plausible to posit at least three stages in that history: (1) C, a constitutive stage, in which the decade structure was established; (2) D, a stage in which the decades were protected against additions such as Shī 219 by compensation elsewhere, in that case by compressing 220a/b into one poem; and (3) E, an extension stage, in which additions were *not* compensated,<sup>3</sup> leading to the present anomaly of “decades” with more than ten poems.

On this understanding, Shī 219 would have been added to the repertoire at some time during stage D, and the complement of 10 poems in that decade was maintained by combining the previously separate Shī 220a and 220b. What abuse the seemingly late Shī 219 may have been meant to protest, and in what court, does not presently appear.<sup>4</sup> What does appear is that large formal considerations, such as the arrangement of poems in performance decades, seem at some point or points to have played a role in the formation of the Shī repertoire.

### Works Cited

- A Taeko Brooks. Disorderly Intoxication 醉 in the Shī. WSP v2 (2018) 203-206  
 A Taeko Brooks. Some Common Lines in the Shī. WSP v2 (2018) 45-50  
 E Bruce Brooks. Shī 189 斯干 and Its Neighbors. WSP v2 (2018) 55-61  
 Bernhard Karlgren. The Book of Odes. MFEA 1950  
 George A Kennedy. A Note on Ode 220; in Egerod (ed), *Studia Serica* (Munksgaard 1959) 190-198; *Selected Works* (Far Eastern 1964) 245-248  
 Arthur Waley. *The Book of Songs*. 1937; Grove 1960  
 Arthur Waley. *The Eclipse Poem and Its Group*. T’ien Hsia Monthly (1936) 245-248

<sup>3</sup>Such as the addition of the Shāng Sùng, Shī 301-305, to the previous 300-poem Shī.

<sup>4</sup>The Máu commentary, which views the poem as directed against the bad late Jōu ruler Yōu-wáng, seems not to be immediately helpful.