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## ON SUCH A NIGHT: A CONSIDERATION OF THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE MOON IN SU SHIH'S WRITINGS

 A.R. Davis

Any anthology of the *shih-poetry* of Su Shih (1037–1101) will select at least one of the three poems which he wrote for the mid-autumn moon of 1078; any anthology of his *tz'u* poems will certainly contain the “Water Music” of the mid-autumn of 1076. The list of Su Shih’s inspiration from the moon may be lengthened, but these indisputably famous works alone would suffice as testimony to the potent magic of moonlight for him. If one risks the word “inspiration”, one must limit it to the sense of an immediate cause. For Su Shih was in great part working with a diction and a style of treatment which a long tradition had formed for him. It is with the tracing and examination of this tradition that this paper is concerned.

The particular treatment of the mid-autumn moon naturally embraces much of the general Chinese vision of the moon. It is necessary, therefore, to show something of the sources of the conventions for representing the moon at any season as well as looking at the traditions for celebrating the mid-autumn. I hesitate to add the word “festival” and I must explain why. In books which describe Chinese festivals in their recent form one may find the Mid-Autumn Festival standing with other annual festivals as a regular part of the moon-year.<sup>1</sup> Since my concern is with literature, I make no attempt in general to join in the speculation on the possible antiquity and origins of the Mid-Autumn Festival, but I believe that I can state that in the literary tradition the fifteenth of the eighth month of the lunar calendar is a later arrival than the Double Third and Double Ninth. These latter are well-established festal days to be celebrated with poems in the period between Han and T’ang, but the Mid-Autumn is not. It is significant that the T’ang encyclopedias which draw so much of their material from the pre-T’ang period, as well as the *T’ai-p’ing yü-lan* of the beginning of Sung, do not include entries for the fifteenth of the eighth month. This day, or rather night, seems only to become established in the poet’s calendar during the T’ang period. A Sung writer named Chu Pien (d. 1148; he was uncle to the great Neo-Confucian

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. J. Bredon and I. Mitrophanow, *The Moon Year* (Kelly & Walsh, Shanghai, 1937), pp.397 ff; Derk Bodde (trs.), *Annual Customs and Festivals in Peking* as recorded in the *Yenching Sui-shih-chi* by Tun Li-ch’en (Henri Vetch: Peking, 1936; 2nd revised ed., Hong Kong University Press, 1968), pp.64–68; Wolfram Eberhard, *Chinese Festivals* (Henry Schuman, New York, 1952), pp.97 ff.

2 c.8.2a-b (*Chib pu tsu ch'ai ts'ung-shu*, repr. Ku-shu liu-t'ung ch'u, Shanghai, 1921). This reference has been extracted in Hua Wen-hsüan (ed.), *Tu Fu chüan*, 1st part (Chung-hua shu-chü, Peking, 1964), Vol.2, p.400, but it was Yoshikawa Kōjirō's article "To Ho to tsuki" (Tu Fu and the Moon), first published in *Chūgoku Bungaku Hō* XVII (1962), pp.38-44 and reprinted in his collection *Sbi to Gekkō* (Poetry and Moonlight; Chikuma Shobō, 1964), which called my attention to it.

3 *Ch'üan T'ang-shib* (Chung-hua shu-chü ed., 1960), Vol.2, p.729 contains two short "Mid-autumn moon poems" (*Chung-ch'iu yüeh*).

4 *Ch'u-tz'u pu-chu* (Ssu-pu pei-yao ed.), c.8.6a.

5 *T'ien wen*, 11.33-36 (*Ch'u-tz'u pu-chu*, c.3.4a). In my translation I have followed the proposal of Chiang Liang-fu in his *Ch'ü Yüan fu chiao-chu* (Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, Peking, 1957), pp.284-85 to understand the *li* (profit) of the third line of the transmitted text as *li* (black) and to read *erb ku* in the next line in the sense of *erb nai*. What results seems to me a simpler and more satisfactory reading of this section than the traditional reading according to the Han commentary of Wang I or the reading of Wen I-to who through a long argument (see *T'ien wen shib t'ien*, *Wen I-to ch'üan-chi*, K'ai-ming shu-tien, 1948, Vol.2, pp.328-33) in fact turns the hare into the toad who is the hare's companion in the moon. David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South* (Oxford University Press, 1959), is presumably following Wen I-to when he translates: "What does it advantage it to keep a frog in its belly?"

6 Like much of Chang Heng's work, the *Ling hsien* only exists in partial reconstruction from fragments gathered from quotations; see Yen K'o-chün, *Ch'üan Hou-Han wen*, c.55.5b.

7 By Fu Hsüan (217-78); fragment quoted in *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*, c.4.11b. *I-wen lei-chü*, c.1.6a has the same quotation and gives the author apparently erroneously as Hsüan's son, Fu Hsien (239-94).

8 c.7 (Liu Wen-tien, *Huai-nan hung-lieb chi-chieh* 3a). The moon with hare and toad appears in the top left corner (matching the sun with its crow in the top right) of the now famous T-shaped painted banner which was found, draped over the inner coffin of the wife of one of the Marquises of Tai (2nd century B.C.), excavated at Ma-wang-tui, Changsha, Hunan in 1972 (illustrated in *China Reconstructs* XXI.9; September 1972).

philosopher Chu Hsi, 1130-1200) in his *Ch'ü-yu chiu wen*<sup>2</sup> places the beginning of the tradition with Tu Fu (712-770). While one must take away the historical priority from Tu Fu and give it on the evidence I have seen thus far to an earlier minor T'ang poet Li Ch'iao (645-?714),<sup>3</sup> if one has regard for the greatness of Tu Fu's influence, Chu Pien's statement may not be substantially incorrect. A poet who was very important in carrying forward the tradition was Tu Fu's admirer, Po Chü-i (772-846). We should first, however, look on earlier appearances of the moon and begin at the beginning with the *Book of Songs*. In fact, I would say that the *Book of Songs* contributed very little to the conventions of Chinese moon poems. Yet being what it is, the first anthology of Chinese poetry and later one of the books which Confucianism made canonical, there was always the possibility of a kind of nodding reference, in particular to *Songs* 99 and 143. Both of these are love-songs and the moon may have a symbolic value here, though in the first case it would represent the beauty of the lover, while in the second, rather more appropriately, the beauty of the beloved. Whether this is really so or not, the Han Confucianists turned these love-songs into a quite different symbolism of ruler and minister, and as such they were less useful in the tradition of moon poems, which began thereafter to grow.

When we come to the second corpus of Chinese poetry in the *Ch'u-tz'u*, which contains work from the third century B.C. to the second century A.D., the moon has now acquired its conventional epithet of "bright" and also something of its overtones of melancholy which will become apparent in the tradition I am tracing here; e.g. in the third poem of the series *Chiu pien*: "I look up at the bright moon and deeply sigh".<sup>4</sup> But besides these beginnings of emotional colouring, we also find in the *Ch'u-tz'u*, in the *T'ien wen*, a work which propounds questions on the apparent riddles of the universe, mention of certain of the characteristics and of the fauna of the moon, which were to become constant reference in later moon poems.

What power has the Night Brightness?  
When it dies it grows again.  
What are its dark marks?  
They are simply the hare in its belly.<sup>5</sup>

Even if the *T'ien wen* were younger than its traditional dating in the beginning of the third century B.C., the list of the fauna and other inhabitants of the moon is largely completed by the second century A.D. in the Han works, *Huai-nan tzu* and *Ling hsien*. The former was produced by Liu An, prince of Huai-nan, and his court in the later part of the second century B.C. and the latter by Chang Heng (A.D.78-139).<sup>6</sup> Besides the *T'ien wen*'s hare, which in a third century A.D. imitation of the *T'ien wen*<sup>7</sup> is said to pound drugs of immortality, there is another animal, a toad. In the *Huai-nan tzu*<sup>8</sup> the toad in the moon appears as a counterpart to the three-legged crow in the sun, while in the *Ling hsien* toad and hare appear together and are described as being produced from the concentrated essence of the *yin*, of which the moon itself is made. They are thus a very reasonable part-for-whole substitute and so they are already found to be functioning in the seventeenth of the anonymous series of Han lyrics, the *Nineteen Old Poems*:

On the fifteenth night the bright moon is full;  
On the twentieth night the toad and hare are waning.<sup>9</sup>

From here on they are used singly or together in moon poems as recurrent vocabulary.

The *Huai-nan tzu* also provides us with a moon goddess, Heng O (later more commonly Ch'ang O), who stole the drug of immortality which her husband, the archer I (famous for his removal of nine of the original ten suns when they came out together and threatened to burn up the world) had obtained from Hsi-wang-mu, fled to the moon and became moon essence.<sup>10</sup> The final recurring feature of moon poems and moon legends may also have found mention in the *Huai-nan tzu*, viz. the cassia tree. The *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*<sup>11</sup> quotes: "In the moon there is a cassia tree" as coming from that source, but I have not located this in the current text. Next in time to this possibly unreliable reference seems to come the statement in a fragment of the *An t'ien lun* by the Eastern Chin scholar Yü Hsi: "In popular tradition there are an immortal (*hsien-jen*) and a cassia tree in the moon. Now when one observes the moon beginning to grow, the immortal's foot gradually takes shape and the cassia tree grows afterwards."<sup>12</sup> The immortal is inevitably equated with the Sisyphus-like Wu Kang who is condemned for ever to chop the cassia tree which ever grows again. Wu Kang's name and story are found in the ninth century *Yu-yang tsa-tsu*<sup>13</sup> by Tuan Ch'eng-shih. The earliest reference in Chinese poetry to the Wu Kang story, which has been noticed, is in Tu Fu's poem for his wife *In the Moonlight on the Hundred and Fifth Night*.

I have no family on Cold Food eve,  
But I have tears like silver waves.  
Since there is one who chops the moon's cassia,  
Its clear light ought to be yet brighter.  
In separation she puts off her red flowers;  
I imagine how she wrinkles her dark brows.  
The Herdboy and the Maid idly have sad thoughts;  
In autumn time they still will cross the River.<sup>14</sup>

The suggestion of renewal and immortality in all this cannot fail to be remarked. Yet just as in the case of the similar associations of the Double Ninth which I have studied elsewhere,<sup>15</sup> intimations of immortality seem most generally to invoke a sense of poignant melancholy in the Chinese poet. Sadness is immediately apparent in Poem XIX of the *Nineteen Old Poems*, written probably sometime in the first or second century A.D., which stand at the beginning of the development of the regular *shih*-poem which leads to High T'ang and beyond.

The bright moonlight, how it gleams!  
It lights up my gauze bed-curtains.  
In my melancholy I cannot sleep,  
But pull on my clothes, get up and pace.  
Though the wanderer's travels be happy,  
It would be better if he soon returned.  
I go out and walk to and fro alone;  
To whom shall I tell my sad thoughts?  
I strain my gaze, then go back into my room;  
My tears fall damp upon my robe.<sup>16</sup>

This untitled poem ought, I think, to find a place in any anthology of Chinese moon poems. For it contains two of the constantly recurring features of such poems: sleeplessness and grief at separation. This *Old Poem* indeed seems to have established a theme which many of the leading poets of the next two centuries treated. Here I shall quote only one example by Ts'ao P'i (187-226), which stresses homesickness, as this too is especially prominent in the tradition of moon poems.

9 For text see Sui Shu-sen, *Ku-shih shih-chiu sbou chi-shih* (Chung-hua shu-chü, Peking, 1955), p.25.

10 c.6 (ed. cit., 16b). The identification of Heng O as I's wife derives from the note of the second century A.D. commentator Kao Yu on this passage.

11 c.957.5a.

12 Quoted in *Tai-p'ing yü-lan*, c.4.10a. Yü Hsi (fl. 1st half of 4th cent.) has a brief biography in *Chin shu* c.91.

13 c.1.10a (*Chin-tai pi-shu*, repr. Po-ku chai, Shanghai, 1922).

14 Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement no.14, 296/19/11; cf. Davis, *Tu Fu* (Twayne Publishers, New York, 1971), p.43.

15 "The Double Ninth Festival in Chinese Poetry" in Chow Tse-tung (ed.), *Wen-lin* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1966).

16 Sui Shu-sen, *op.cit.*, p.27.

17 The Milky Way of which the westward movement indicates the approach of dawn.

18 Names of constellations, which here will also indicate the coming of dawn by allusion to *Song* 21.

19 For text see *Wen-hsüan*, c.29.19a (Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an ed.).

20 Two of the seven poets grouped as the masters of the Chien-an period (A.D. 196–219). Both died in 217 which will set the date for Hsieh Chuang's imagined context, although he was clearly not concerned with precise chronology (see note 23).

21 Showing the season to be autumn, as does conventionally the following "white dew".

22 These are the "moon poems" of the *Book of Songs*, as pointed out above.

23 Courtesy-name of Wang Ts'an (177–217). Ts'ao Chih wrote a funeral elegy for Wang Ts'an (see *Wen hsüan*, c.56), which gives the date of his death as the 24th day *wu-shen* of the first month of Chien-an 22. There is a minor error in the text here: the 24th day would have been *wu-wu*; the *wu-shen* day would have been the 14th. Thus Wang Ts'an died on 7 or 17 February 217 so that Hsieh Chuang in making his imaginary attribution strays just outside the limits of Wang Ts'an's life.

24 Wang Ts'an was a native of Kao-p'ing hsien in Shan-yang commandery (S.W. of modern Yen-chou, Shantung).

25 These periphrases for "earth" and "heaven" respectively derive from the Pseudo K'ung An-kuo commentary's definitions of these phrases in the *Hung Fan* (Great Plan) chapter of the *Book of Documents*, which is the source of other parts of the poet's description here.

26 i.e. the usual *yin-yang* dualism of sun and moon.

27 The Fu-sang in the extreme east is the "sunrise" tree by which the sun climbs to the heavens.

28 The Jo Tree is the counterpart "sunset" tree in the extreme west, with the reflected light of which the moon is here said to rise. The knowledge that the light of the moon is reflected from the sun was established in China long before Hsieh Chuang's time, see Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol.III (Cambridge University Press, 1959), p.227. From here on the poet writes only of the moon.

Drawn-out, the autumn night is long;  
 Biting, the northern wind is cold.  
 Tossing and turning, I cannot sleep;  
 Throwing on my clothes, I get up and pace.  
 I look down at the clear stream's waves;  
 I look up at the bright moon's light.  
 The Heavenly Han<sup>17</sup> turns and flows west;  
 The Three and Five<sup>18</sup> are spread across the sky.  
 The insects in the plants, how mournfully they drone!  
 A solitary wild goose alone soars southward.  
 Anxious am I with many sad thoughts;  
 Continuously I think of my old home.  
 Though I wish to fly, how can I find wings?  
 When I want to cross, the River has no bridge.  
 Facing the wind, I heave long sighs,  
 Which shatter my heart within me.<sup>19</sup>

Ts'ao P'i's poem has no precise title but like other poems which I believe to be descended from *Old Poem* XIX is headed simply *tsa-shih* ("Miscellaneous Poem"). We may turn from it to a piece of which there cannot be the smallest doubt of its belonging to the tradition and which was certainly in Su Shih's mind when he wrote his first Red Cliff *fu* in 1082. *The Moon* by Hsieh Chuang (421–466) is formally a descriptive *fu*-poem, but, as will be seen, has a strongly lyrical quality. He gives it an imaginary setting more than two hundred years before his own time in the palace of Ts'ao Chih (192–232), the younger brother of Ts'ao P'i whose poem we have just seen.

When the King of Ch'en first mourned for Ying Ch'ang and Liu Chen,<sup>20</sup> in his solemn grief he remained for a long time idle. Green moss grew about his pavilions; fragrant dust settled in his arbours. Grieving and distressed, to the middle of the night he was without pleasure. But then he had the orchid paths cleared, the cassia garden put in order. He climbed the cold hills to play the pipes; he stayed his canopy on the autumn slope. Gazing down on the deep valleys, his distress ranged far; ascending the high crests his grief reached wide. At this time, the slanting Han lay in the eastern quarter and the sun had changed its northern orbit for its southern.<sup>21</sup> White dew clouded the air; bright moonlight flowed from the sky. The Ch'i air (*Song* 99) was sung in deep tones; the Ch'en song (*Song* 143) was carefully performed.<sup>22</sup> Brushes and tablets were brought out and Chung-hsüan<sup>23</sup> commanded to compose.

Chung-hsüan knelt and declared:

I, obscure and insignificant, from the eastern wilds,<sup>24</sup>  
 Grew up in the midst of hills and woods.  
 Ignorant of the Way and dull of learning,  
 I have unworthily received your enlightened favour.  
 I have heard that after the Deep and Hidden was duly formed  
 And the High and Clear was laid out.<sup>25</sup>  
 The sun was endued with light force;  
 The moon with a dark spirit.<sup>26</sup>  
 The one took the light of the Fu-(sang) at the Eastern Pool;<sup>27</sup>  
 The other took on the Jo Tree's blossoms at the Western Abyss,<sup>28</sup>  
 Leading the black hare to its imperial terrace,  
 And settling the pale (Heng) O in its imperial palace.  
 Its first and last quarters warn of deficiency;  
 Its beginning and fullness teach compliance.

In accord with the signs it diffuses its light;  
 In conjunction with the stars gives moisture and wind.  
 It increases the brilliance of the (Three) Terraces house;<sup>29</sup>  
 It extends the radiance of Hsüan-yüan's palace.<sup>30</sup>  
 When it projected its brightness, the work of Wu prospered;<sup>31</sup>  
 When it sent down its essence, the way of Han was smooth.<sup>32</sup>

Now when the air is clear to Earth's edges  
 And clouds are gathered to the sky's end;  
 When on Tung-t'ing waves begin to rise  
 And trees' leaves start to fall;<sup>33</sup>  
 When chrysanthemums scatter their sweetness on the hill-tops;  
 Wild geese spread sadness over the River's shallows;  
 The moon raises its remote pure essence  
 And sends down its soft clear rays.  
 The arrayed stars hide their beauty;  
 The Long River conceals its radiance.  
 The soft earth stiffens as with snow;  
 The round sky mirrors like water.  
 The line of pavilions are frost-white;  
 Their surrounding steps are ice-clear.  
 The prince wearies of daytime pleasures  
 And delights in night-time banquets.  
 The beautiful dances are ended,  
 The clear hanging jades silent.  
 He quits the candle-lit chamber  
 And goes to the moonlight hall.  
 Fragrant wine is brought in;  
 Sounding lutes set out.

Now when the cool night of itself is sad  
 And the wind-blown bamboos make a tune,  
 No dear friend is by me;  
 A solitary traveller, I go on and on.  
 I hear the marsh bird's<sup>34</sup> cry;  
 Listen to Tartar flutes' autumn note.  
 Then I tune the stringed board  
 And choose an appropriate mode.  
 Full of doubt is "Prepared Against the Dew";<sup>35</sup>  
 Melancholy is "The Sun Slope".<sup>36</sup>  
 The moaning trees cease to sound  
 The eddying pool stills its waves.  
 My feelings so fretful to whom may I tell?  
 Complaining to the bright moon, I draw out my song.  
 I sing:

The fair one has gone;  
 News is cut off.  
 Separated by a thousand *li*,  
 We share the bright moon.  
 Facing the wind, I sigh;  
 How shall I stop?  
 Rivers and roads are long  
 And cannot be passed over.

Before my song's notes are ended,

29 Name of a constellation formed of six paired stars (in Ursa Major), see Ho Peng Yoke (trs.), *The Astronomical Chapters of the Chin Shu* (Mouton, Paris & The Hague, 1966), p.80.

30 A group of seventeen stars in Leo and Lynx, see Ho Peng Yoke, *ibid.*, p.93.

31 The "work of Wu" was the struggle of the Wu state under the Sun family to succeed to the empire of Han. There is a story told in Chang Po's *Wu lu*, quoted in Li Shan's commentary to this piece in the *Wen-hsüan*, that when Sun Tse (175–200) was born his mother dreamed that the moon entered her bosom.

32 Li Shan refers this line to the empress of the Former Han emperor Yüan (reg. 48–33 B.C.), of whom it is similarly recorded in her biography in *Han shu*, c.98 that her mother dreamed of the moon entering her bosom. There seems, however, finally some inappropriateness in this. While not herself condemned by historians, this empress *née* Wang was the aunt of Wang Mang who usurped the Han dynasty and made himself emperor of a short-lived Hsin dynasty in A.D.9. She herself survived until A.D.13 and also had her Han titles changed. On the other hand, as already seen, Hsieh Chuang is not closely concerned with history.

33 These two lines are a near quotation from *Ch'u-tz'u*, *Chiu ko*, *Hsiang fu-jen* (*Ch'u-tz'u pu-chu*, c.2.8a): "Softly blows the autumn wind; / On Tung-t'ing there are waves, tree leaves fall".

34 Identified as the crane by reference to *Song* 184: "The crane cries in the Nine Marshes".

35 *Fang lu* is equated with the *Fang lu* (written with *fang* "to guard against") which appears in the *Wen fu* of Lu Chi (261–303; *Wen-hsüan*, c.17.10a) and in the *Shan chü fu* of Hsieh Ling-yün (385–433; *Sung shu*, c.67, Chung-hua shu-chü ed. p.1762). In the latter case Hsieh's own comment improbably identifies it with the *Ch'i Chien* of the *Ch'u-tz'u*, which are ascribed to the Former Han courtier and writer Tung-fang Shuo. Hsieh Chuang could of course have thought it to have this provenance.

36 This second ancient tune occurs in three references in *Huai-nan tzu* (Liu Wen-tien, *Huai-nan hung-lieb chi-chieh*, 2.19a; 16.17a; 18.25a).

37 The whole of the last two sections follow the form and echo the diction of the *Chiu ko* (Nine Songs) of the *Ch'u-t'zu*.

38 Text in *Wen-hsüan*, c.13. The piece is included in Ch'ü Shui-yüan's *Han Wei Liu-ch'ao fu hsüan 11* (Chung-hua shu-chü, 1964), pp.183–89 with extensive annotations which provide a virtually line-by-line interpretation in modern Chinese.

39 *Li T'ai-po ch'üan-chi* (Ssu-pu pei-yao ed.), c.6. 9b–10a.

40 "Enjoying the Moon in the Official Residence at the West Gate" (*Wen-hsüan*, c.30.13b; *Yü-t'ai hsin-yung*, c.4. 3b, Ssu-pu pei-yao ed.; cf. Ch'ien Chung-lien, *Pao Ts'an-chün chi chu*, Ku-tien wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, Shanghai, 1958, pp.185–87).

41 Tu Fu wrote poems for the moonlight of the following two nights; for translations see William Hung, *Tu Fu: China's Greatest Poet* (Harvard University Press, 1952), pp.247–48.

The whole hall's appearance changes;  
The last beams are gone.  
I am disconsolate as if suffering loss.

I sing again:

The moon has set;  
The dew begins to dry.  
The year is almost ended,  
But there is none with whom to go home.  
At a lucky time I may return,  
But light frost will soak my robe.<sup>37</sup>

The King of Ch'en said: "Excellent". He ordered his officers to reward him with a present of a jade ring. "I honour your jade sounds and repeat them without wearying."<sup>38</sup>

Hsieh Chuang's *The Moon* was very influential, almost one might say definitive, for subsequent poems on the moon. In it he confirms the chilliness, the melancholy, the restlessness, the associations of separation and homesickness, that were present in the first two poems quoted. He establishes the conceit of moonlight as snow or frost, which recurs again and again in the tradition and of which I suppose the most famous example is Li Po's quatrain:

Before my bed the bright moon's light;  
I wonder is it frost upon the ground.  
I raise my head and gaze at the bright moon;  
I lower my head and think of my old home.<sup>39</sup>

Still more, he gave expression to the thought that the moon's light joins the separated. "Separated by a thousand *li*, / We share the bright moon" is his greatest gift to the expression of emotion in moon poetry. To decide with certainty on priority of expression is in the nature of classical Chinese poetry very difficult, and in this case there is in fact a quite similar expression in a poem by Hsieh's close contemporary Pao Chao (ca. 420–466), *viz.* "Three Five and Two Eight time (i.e. the fifteenth and sixteenth nights of the month), / Over a thousand *li* I share with you."<sup>40</sup> I believe, however, that although Hsieh Chuang may have been generally a less well-known poet than Pao Chao, his *Moon* was especially famous, and is perhaps more likely to have been the source from which many variants of this expression flowed.

Though autumn is the season of Hsieh Chuang's piece and of many of the other moon-gazing poems which become quite common in the works of fifth and sixth century poets, the establishment of the mid-autumn moon in the poet's calendar, as I have said earlier, does not seem to have become firm until T'ang. Even Tu Fu, from whom, as we have seen the tradition has been traced, has left only two poems, written on the same occasion, the mid-autumn moon of 767.<sup>41</sup> Here the poet appears to be solitary.

I

Filling my gaze, flies the bright mirror;  
My homesick heart is pierced by a great sword.  
Tumbled thistledown, I have travelled the length of the earth;  
To grasp the cassia, I gaze at Heaven's height.  
The river way, I wonder whether frost or snow;  
On their woodland perches I can see the birds.  
When at this time I gaze at the white hare,  
I'd just like to count its autumn hairs.



## II

Gradually it descends into the Wu Gorge,  
 Yet still enfolds the White Emperor's City.  
 As its force sinks, the whole strand is dark;  
 As its orb slants, half the upper storey is bright.  
 The soldiers' pots all urge on the dawn;  
 The toad of itself in a while will disappear.  
 Bows are drawn by the light of the last rays  
 And not in the encampments of the Han people alone.<sup>42</sup>

In these two poems entitled simply "The Moon of the Fifteenth Night of the Eighth Month" Tu Fu has included much of the conventional reference, the hare, the toad and the cassia tree (the last with a *double entendre* to suggest the capital to which he seeks to return), the common frost-or-snow conceit and the frequent association of homesickness.<sup>43</sup> But on the side of originality, in the first poem he emphasizes the brilliance of the moonlight with the suggestion that he could count the fine hairs upon the moon's hare, and he turns the second poem to his own abiding concern with the continuance of the fighting which had brought so much suffering to his country and its people.

The catalogue of mid-autumn moon poems begins to grow after Tu Fu, but no poet offers more than one or two poems until we reach Po Chü-i (772–846). Po Chü-i's poetry collection is of course the largest of the T'ang period, so that we might in any case expect it to offer the best view of poems on a festal theme. It is quite clear by Po Chü-i's day that the mid-autumn moon should be enjoyed in company. For in a quatrain for this night in 805 he calls his friends to join him in viewing the moon at the Hua-yang Monastery in Ch'ang-an.

Men say that at mid-autumn the bright moon is fair;  
 What if I want to invite you to enjoy it with me?  
 In Hua-yang's grotto, on the autumn altar,  
 This night's pure light is most abundant here.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, the majority of Po's mid-autumn poems speak not of companionship but separation. In the circumstance of Chinese official life close friends were often parted, but the growing tradition of mid-autumn poems, to which Po Chü-i's own poems added, had its emphasis set on separation. On the mid-autumn night of 810 as he worked in the Han-lin, he thought of Yüan Chen (779–831), the dearest of his friends, who the year before had been banished to Chiang-ling in modern Hupeh province.

On Silver Terrace, in Golden Pavilion the night is deep.  
 I pass the night alone, with thoughts of you, in the Han-lin.  
 On Three Five Night, new moonlight;  
 Over two thousand *li*, old friends' feelings.  
 On the Shore Palace's eastern face the misty waves will be cold;  
 On the Pool Hall's western side the clock's drops are deep.<sup>45</sup>  
 Still I fear we do not share a view of the clear light;  
 Chiang-ling's low damps may be in autumn gloom.<sup>46</sup>

Po's variation on Hsieh Chuang's "Separated by a thousand *li*, / We share the bright moon" in the third and fourth lines was to become one of the favourite quotations from his poems in Japan.<sup>47</sup> The earliest example is in the *Tale of Genji*,<sup>48</sup> where Genji who has exiled himself from the court to the wild coast of Suma, realizes that it is the fifteenth night of the eighth month

42 Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement No.14, 465/30/27.

43 Interestingly but probably only quite accidentally, in the poems for the two following nights such reference is absent.

44 *Po Hsiang-shan shih-chi* (Ssu-pu pei-yao ed.), *Ch'ang-ch'ing chi*, c.13.6a–b.

45 The Shore Palace, the ancient palace of the kings of Ch'u in the Spring and Autumn period more than a thousand years earlier, indicates Chiang-ling, while the Pool Hall in the Ta-ming Palace at Ch'ang-an serves to locate Po who is in the Han-lin Academy to the west of it.

46 *Ch'ang-ch'ing chi*, c.14.3a.

47 See Mizuno Heiji's list in his invaluable *Haku Rakuten to Nihon Bungaku* (Meguro shoten, 1930), pp.298–302.

48 *Genji Monogatari*, c.12 (Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei ed.), Vol.2, p.41).

49 Arthur Waley's translation omits this passage and Edward Seidensticker's new version (*The Tale of Genji*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1976, Vol.1, p.238) in rendering Po's line: "My thoughts are of you, old friend, two thousand leagues away" is not quite accurate and so fails to bring out the full force of the quotation.

50 Ts'ui is Ts'ui Hsüan-liang (772–833), who passed the examination of 802 with Po and Yüan Chen and remained one of his closest friends. Ch'ien Hui (755–829), son of the poet Ch'ien Ch'i (722–?780), had been a colleague in office.

51 Li Chien (764–821) had like Yüan Chen been sent from court, in his case to Li-chou (modern Li-hsien, Hunan).

52 "White clouds" = high office (Ts'ui and Ch'ien): "rivers and lakes" = banishment (Li and Yüan).

53 *Ch'ang-ch'ing chi*, c.5.9a (Poem No.7 of the sixteen-poem series *In Imitation of the Style of T'ao Ch'ien*).

54 *The Life and Times of Po Chü-i* (Allen & Unwin, London, 1949), pp.87–88. I am not clear why Waley dated the poem, contrary to general opinion, in 814 rather than 813, as he was not happy with this date.

55 Strictly, the north-west frontier.

56 *Ch'ang-ch'ing chi*, c.16.14b.

and thinks of the parties in the capital on this night and that his friends may be looking at the moon and thinking of him, as he of them. He recites Po's fourth line. His companions weep. Thus Murasaki Shikibu, who has partly incorporated the idea and partly quoted Po's lines, seems to have grasped very clearly the intense melancholy implicit in them.<sup>49</sup> Po Chü-i himself in his poem may be seeking to intensify the sadness still more by the suggestion that the moonlight may after all not be able to unite them.

In 813, when he was living in retirement at Hsia-kuei in mourning for his mother, he again thought of Yüan Chen and other of his friends.

On mid-autumn's fifteenth night,  
The bright moon is at my front verandah.  
Wine-cup before me, suddenly I do not drink,  
For I recall past delights of mine.  
I have friends who are of one mind,  
But far-off are Ts'ui and Ch'ien.<sup>50</sup>  
I have friends with whom I forget self,  
But distant are Li<sup>51</sup> and Yüan.  
Some have flown up to the white clouds;  
Some have dropped amid rivers and lakes,<sup>52</sup>  
But since I saw them,  
It's now four or five years.  
I have no art to contract the earth;  
You are not immortals who ride on the wind.  
How can it be that under the bright moon  
The four should come and talk with me?  
A fair night is truly hard to get;  
Our happy meeting is not destined.  
The bright moon also does not stay;  
Gradually it sinks in the south-western sky.  
How should there be no other chance?  
Yet I grudge the brilliant scene before me.<sup>53</sup>

The emotion here does not seem to be particularly intense. Arthur Waley<sup>54</sup> translated this poem somewhat less literally than I have done and to some degree heightened the feeling, but I am not sure that it is necessary to do so. Certainly there is, I think, a sharper emotion in the last of Po Chü-i's mid-autumn poems that I shall cite here. This was written for the mid-autumn of 817, when Po was still in exile at Chiang-chou (modern Kiukiang, Kiangsi) on the Yangtse.

The ten-thousand *li* pure light, inconceivably,  
Adding sadness, increasing grief, circles earth's limits.  
Someone is long on service beyond the borders;<sup>55</sup>  
Somewhere there's a new parting before the courtyard.  
The night when a former concubine out of favour  
returns to her apartments,  
The hour when the aged general lost among the  
Tibetans climbs a tower,  
They shine on so many men's heartbreak,  
But jade hare and silver toad, remote, do not know.<sup>56</sup>

Since the poet's complaint is of the aloofness of the moon, it may seem at first paradoxical to suggest that this poem marks a step towards involving the moon more intimately in moon poems and is in fact a slight turn

in a direction which Su Shih was skilfully to exploit in the first poem of his three-poem series for the mid-autumn moon of 1078.<sup>57</sup>

Attentive is last year's moon,  
As she pours down east of the old city.  
Disconsolate is last year's man,  
Lying sick in the broken window.  
To and fro she artfully seeks him;  
Gracefully she slips through the bars.  
How should the moon know I am sick?  
Simply she saw the house of the singing girls deserted.  
Leaning on my pillow three times I sigh;  
Supported on my stick I get up and follow her.  
The wind from the sky does not pity me,  
But blows on me from the jade palaces of the setting moon.  
The white dew penetrates my breast;  
In the night I hum like an autumn insect!  
I sit and let T'ai-po's genius  
Turn into Tung-yeh's poverty.<sup>58</sup>  
My remaining years, how many will they be?  
A lovely moon, how should I often meet?  
The cold fish also do not sleep,  
But all night long mouth at me.

The advance in Su's poem towards personification is of course a considerable one, which I have marked by slipping into the feminine gender, something which is not in the Chinese, yet seems to be suggested by the feminine "artfully" and "gracefully" of the fifth and sixth lines. It may be felt that this poem has little of the tradition which I have sought to lay down before it. It is true that it has no hare or toad or cassia tree, though it has "jade palaces" to which I shall return later. The emotional atmosphere, however, is entirely within the tradition. The dumb fish in the final lines are an interesting variant upon "To whom shall I tell my sad thoughts?"

The second poem in the series starts in a more familiar fashion for here Su speaks directly of his separation from his younger brother, Su Ch'e.

Of the six years we faced this moon  
Five years it shone on our separation.<sup>59</sup>  
When I sing your song of parting,<sup>60</sup>  
The whole company weeps at it.  
The second capital<sup>61</sup> truly gay;  
Yet how can you lightly dismiss this time?  
Above the thousand-acre lake of molten silver  
Are the hanging mirror's eight-thousand-foot towers.  
In the third watch the songs and pipes are ended;  
Men's shadows hurry in the cold trees' shade.  
As you go home to your northern hall,  
The cold light shimmers on the dewy leaves.  
You call for wine and drink with your wife;  
You think of me and talk to your children.  
How can you know that after decline and sickness  
With empty cup I face the pears and chestnuts?  
Only I see east of the ancient river  
Buckwheat flowers spreading their snow.

57 *Su Tung-p'o chi* (Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen ts'ung-shu ed., 1933, repr. 1958), c.9 (3. pp.78-79).

58 i.e. the quality of his lines falls from the level of Li Po to that of Meng Chiao (courtesy-name Tung-yeh; 751-814), a poet of whom Su had a poor opinion.

59 In 1077 when Su Ch'e visited his elder brother at Hsü-chou for two months in the autumn, he wrote a "Water Music" *tz'u* (for text see Lung Yü-sheng, *Tung-p'o yüeh-fu chien*, Commercial Press, Shanghai, 1936, repr. 1958, c.1.47b-48a) in which he says, correctly, that they had been apart for seven mid-autumns. Su Shih in his own note to these present lines (written a year later) explains his "six years" as years when the mid-autumn moon was visible.

60 The "Water Music" *tz'u* of the preceding note.

61 Su Ch'e had taken up an appointment on the staff of the governor of the southern capital at Ying-t'ien (near modern Shang-ch'iu, Honan).

62 Su's note states that Shu Huan was in Yün-chou (modern Tung-p'ing, Shangtung) on the Wen river for the prefectural examination, but line 2 would indicate that he was withdrawing from the world.

63 Cheng Chien, according to Su's note, had been appointed financial secretary on the staff of the governor of the northern capital at Ta-ming (in modern Hopei province).

64 Su notes that Tun Ch'i had come to Hsü-chou for the prefectural examination.

65 Su writes in his note: "Today I received a letter from Chao Kao-ch'ing, in which he recalled the 'Water Music' I wrote at mid-autumn in Eastern Wu", i.e. at Mi-chou in 1076.

I would harmonize with your last year's song,  
But again I fear my heart would break.

Once again there is no hare or toad or cassia tree, but "eight thousand-foot towers" to represent the moon. In the third and final poem there are apparently no towers either, but certainly many of the words and thoughts which we have met before. It may be remarked in passing that the habit of Chinese, Japanese and Western anthologists of selecting one out of a series of poems may quite often destroy an intended unity. If my oft-repeated thesis that Chinese poets are highly conscious of writing in a tradition and will always seek to demonstrate the fact is correct, to omit Su's third poem here will remove most of his demonstration of affinity.

Master Shu is by the River Wen;  
He has shut his door and turned to the pure.<sup>62</sup>  
Master Cheng heads north of the Yellow River;  
His lonely boat goes on night after night.<sup>63</sup>  
Master Tun, though very close, is remote as though confined.<sup>64</sup>  
Master Chao has sent a letter;  
The "Water Music" has lingering notes.<sup>65</sup>  
Anxious are the hearts of these four.  
As they share this thousand *li* brightness.  
The bright moon does not relieve old age,  
The fair time is hard to match.  
I look round at the company  
Which meets and scatters like drifting weed.  
I have heard that this night's moon  
Over ten thousand *li* has the same clarity.  
The Heavenly Lord has shown his intent;  
How can this occasion be disregarded?  
Next year each will longingly gaze  
And go over past and present feelings.

In this third poem there are many echoes of the tradition, and since I have brought their poems together here, we may say, like Su's contemporary readers: Ah yes, Po Chü-i, Po Chü-il But Su has also almost quoted himself. For the "Water Music" is his own work.

At the mid-autumn of Ping-chen (1076) I enjoyed drinking until dawn. When I was very drunk, I composed this piece. At the same time I was thinking of Tzu-yu.

When was there a bright moon?  
Cup in hand I ask the blue sky.  
I do not know, in the heavenly palaces  
What year this night is?  
I would mount the wind and fly there;  
Only I fear in the jade towers' jade domes' heights I  
could not bear the cold.  
I arise and dance, moving my clear shadow.  
It's better in the world of men.

Around red pavilions,  
Bending to silken widows,  
She shines on the sleepless.  
She ought to have no sadness;  
Why is she always at partings full?

For men there is joy and sorrow, separation and union.  
 For the moon dimness and brightness, waxing and waning.  
 These things from of old have seldom been perfect.  
 I only wish you may live long  
 And a thousand *li* away share the loveliness.<sup>66</sup>

This *tzu*-poem of Su Shih has very identifiable antecedents in a poem by Li Po, "Cup in Hand, Questioning the Moon".

How long has there been a moon in the blue sky?  
 Now I stay my cup and question it.  
 A man cannot take hold of the moon,  
 Yet the moon always follows him about.  
 Gleaming, the flying mirror looks down on the red pavilions;  
 The dark mists are scattered and its pure rays break through.  
 I only see it at night rise from the sea;  
 How do I know at dawn it will sink among the clouds?  
 The white hare pounds herbs, autumn and again spring;  
 Heng O is lonely with none for a neighbour  
 Men of today did not see the moon of ancient times,  
 But today's moon shone on the men of ancient times,  
 The men of the past and the present are like a flowing stream  
 Alike they look on the bright moon, which was always as it is now.  
 Only I desire when I sing and drink,  
 The moonlight will ever shine in the golden cup.<sup>67</sup>

But what is the source of the "jade towers" which in Su Shih's poem have replaced the more conventional hare and Heng O of Li Po? Though Li Po had suggested that the moon was always beyond man's reach, Hsüan-tsung, the emperor whose reign covered much of the lives of Li Po and Tu Fu, had visited it, at least so tales of the miraculous have it, through the aid of the Taoist Yeh Fa-shan. The story appears in various transmitted collections, but undoubtedly the most circumstantial and delightful version appears in one of the manuscripts from Tun-huang.<sup>68</sup> In this version Yeh Fa-shan has been replaced by his great-uncle Yeh Ching-neng, and the story of Hsüan-tsung's moon visit is one of a chain of anecdotes in which Yeh Ching-neng appears as the protagonist.<sup>69</sup>

On the night of the fifteenth of the eighth month the emperor with Yeh Ching-neng and a company and attendants enjoyed the moon on a high place. The emperor said to Ching-neng: "Is it possible to measure the events in the moon?" Ching-neng replied: "There would be no advantage in my describing them. I would like to take your Majesty to visit the moon palace, if it is possible." The emperor said: "How can we go there?" Ching-neng said: "Your Majesty could not go by yourself, but if you go with me, what difficulty will there be?" The emperor showed great joy on his dragon countenance. He said: "Can I take my attendants with me?" Ching-neng replied: "When we went to Chien-nan to see the lanterns,<sup>70</sup> it was to a place of men. The realms above of the moon palace are not the same as the human world. Because Your Majesty has the capacity of an immortal (*hsien-jen*), you can go for a short time." The emperor further asked: "What colour clothes shall we wear?" Ching-neng replied: "We can wear white brocade wadded gowns." The emperor said: "Why should we wear white brocade wadded gowns?" Ching-neng replied: "Because they are crystal towers and halls, the cold is overwhelming."

The emperor made his preparations for the journey. Ching-neng cast a spell and in an instant they arrived in the moon palace. The towers, halls, terraces

66 Lung Yü-sheng, *Tung-p'o yüeh-fu chien*, c.1.40b.

67 *Li Tai-po ch'üan-chi*, c.20.12a.

68 Stein 6836, reproduced in edited form in Wang Chung-min *et al.* (eds), *Tun-buang pien-wen chi* (Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, Peking, 1957), Vol.1, pp.216-29.

69 The whole work has been excellently translated by Arthur Waley in *Ballads and Stories from Tun-buang* (Allen & Unwin, London, 1960), pp.124-44. I give my own translation of the moon episode merely for convenience.

70 The expedition of the preceding episode.

71 Reading *chu* (pearl) for *shu* (unusual); I do not know precisely what the expression was intended to convey.

72 *Ch'i pao* (cf. modern Japanese *shippō-yaki*) looks as if it might mean "cloisonné" here; see discussion on the subject by Edward H. Schafer, "Notes on T'ang Culture, II," *Monumenta Serica* XXIV (1965), pp.139–43.

73 Here there is a very Buddhist and Indian departure from the moon cassia.

74 Recent examples in English are by A.C. Graham in C.Birch (ed.), *An Anthology of Chinese Literature* (Grove Press, New York, 1965), Vol.1, pp.381–82 and by Burton Watson in his *Su Tung-p'o: Selections from a Sung Dynasty Poet* (Columbia University Press, 1965), pp.87–90.

75 The Red Cliff was the site of the battle on the Yangtse in 208, in which the fleet of Ts'ao Ts'ao (155–220), the warlord of Wei, was burned by an allied force of his rivals under Sun Ch'üan (182–252) of Wu. The name "Red Cliff" because of its association with this famous rout became attached to a number of places in the central Yangtse area above and below modern Wu-han. Ku Tsu-yü (1631–92) notes five separate places bearing the name in his *Tu-shih fang-yü chi-yao*, c.76 (Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen ts'ung-shu ed., repr. Chung-hua shu-chü, 1955, p.3222), one of which was near Huang-chou (Su's place of banishment at this time) in modern Hupeh and which was the one to which Su made this excursion. The actual site of the battle was much higher up the Yangtse at modern Chia-yü hsien, Hupeh. Though Su appears in the present case to accept Huang-chou as the historical site, in references elsewhere he adopts a tone of doubt.

76 The "Bright Moon" song is certainly *Song* 143 but the identification of "The Beauty" (*yao-tiao*) is not so obvious. If Su were closely following Hsieh Chuang, it would refer to *Song* 99, but *yao-tiao* so strongly suggests *Song* 1 (which is not generally associated with the moon) that it is difficult to imagine that he could have used the word to refer to another *Song*.

77 Su's description presents apparent problems of astronomical possibility, which are not entirely solved by understanding *tou*, which would normally indicate *pei-tou* (Northern Dipper) as *nan-tou* (Southern Dipper).

78 Like Hsieh Chuang, Su in his song imitates the *Chiu ko* in the *Ch'u-tz'u*.

79 Because of the mention of this instrument, Chao I (1727–1814) in his *Kai-yü ts'ung-k'ao* (Commercial Press, Shanghai, 1957), c.24, p.490 identified Su's guest as the Taoist Yang Shih-ch'ang whose playing is praised in a poem by Su.

and pavilions which they saw were different from those of men in the world; the gates and lattices, doors and windows were of a completely different world. The emperor looked carefully at the towers and halls, and when he went in through the double gates he saw further storeyed buildings and palace pavilions and so he came right up to the main hall. Everything was made of crystal, beryl and carnelian and its extent was immeasurable. The windows were of crystal; the towers and terraces were of crystal. He also saw several beautiful women in garments of triple pearls,<sup>71</sup> carrying trays of crystal, on which were vessels made of crystal and (?) cloisonné.<sup>72</sup> Whatever the emperor saw, he maintained an attitude of decorum.

Ching-neng led the emperor straight to the side of the *sāla*<sup>73</sup> tree to inspect it. The emperor saw the tree rising to an immeasurable height, its branches reaching to three thousand or six thousand worlds. The colour of its leaves was like silver and its flowers were like clouds in colour. The emperor walked slowly beneath the tree and then he hesitated and stood still for a while. The cold was overpowering and an icy numbness penetrated to his bones. The emperor said to Ching-neng: "The cold is very severe; I want to return to the palace." Ching-neng replied: "I would like to roam round with Your Majesty and see things, especially the fairy flowers, which are unmatched below. Your Majesty should not be in a hurry. Surely it would be better to enjoy the moon at leisure and see its sights before we return." The emperor leaned against the tree and felt more and more the freezing cold. He again asked Ching neng: "Now I can't bear the cold and want to go home. A moment more and I am afraid I shan't be able." As Ching-neng listened to the emperor, he was forced to smile. Then he cast a spell and in an instant they arrived back in Ch'ang-an.

Some version of this story must have been known to Su Shih and affected his conception of the topography of the moon and impressed him with its intolerable coldness. It seems a good example of the way in which a major Chinese poet, while seeking to show his affinity with an ever more consciously felt tradition, at the same time extended the tradition by exploiting new sources.

Consciousness of tradition is naturally not unique to Chinese poetry. As in other cultures it is a strand which is entwined with individuality and period. Yet it is a very thick strand which in lesser poets may seem to overwhelm both man and time.

In conclusion, I should like to add my version of one of Su Shih's most famous and often translated works,<sup>74</sup> which is not a mid-autumn poem but was written on the day after the full moon of the seventh month of 1082. No-one would wish to deny the distinguishing features of Su Shih and the Northern Sung period, but I hope that my paper may be a preface that enables the reader to appreciate a little more keenly its antecedent tradition.

### *Red Cliff I*

In the autumn of *jen-hsü* (1082) on the sixteenth day of the seventh month, I went with a guest in a boat and made an excursion below the Red Cliff.<sup>75</sup> I took wine and poured for my guest. I recited the "Bright Moon" song and sang the stanzas of "The Beauty".<sup>76</sup> In a little while the moon came out over the eastern hill and wavered between the Dipper and Herdboy stars.<sup>77</sup> White dew spread over the river; the radiance from the water joined with the sky. Letting our light boat go where it would, we crossed the great expanse. Majestically, we seemed to have mounted the empty air and to be riding the wind, not knowing where we should come to rest; lightly, we seemed to have left the world and to be standing apart, turning into immortals and ascending to paradise.

Then, elated with wine, I beat on the side of the boat and sang:

With oar of cassia, oar of magnolia,  
We strike the empty brightness, ascend the flowing light.  
Unbounded are my feelings,  
As I gaze at the fair one in a corner of the sky.<sup>78</sup>

My guest played on a bamboo pipe<sup>79</sup> an accompaniment for my song. The sound was plaintive, as though complaining, as though yearning, as though weeping, as though accusing. Its dying notes were delicate, unbroken like a thread, making the hidden dragon of the remote ravine dance, the widow in the lonely boat weep.<sup>80</sup>

I sadly adjusted my gown and sat erect and said to my guest: "Why do you play like this?"

The guest said: "The moon is bright, the stars are few; the magpies are flying south." Is not this Ts'ao Meng-te's song?<sup>81</sup> Westward, one looks toward Hsia-k'ou, eastward, towards Wu-ch'ang.<sup>82</sup> The hills and rivers wind together in an intense blue. Was not this where Meng-te was trapped by young Chou?<sup>83</sup> When he had just overcome Ching-chou and left Chiang-ling to go downstream to the east, his ships stretched a thousand *li*, his banners hid the sky.<sup>84</sup> He poured wine by the River; he composed the poem with his lance ready at hand.<sup>85</sup> Truly he was the hero of the age, but where is he now? It is still more so with you and me, living like fishermen and woodcutters on the banks of the River, companions of fish and shrimps, friends of deer, travelling in a leaf-like skiff, raising a gourd jar to offer wine to each other, staying as briefly as midges between heaven and earth, insignificant as a single grain upon the ocean. I grieve the momentariness of our life, I envy the limitlessness of the Long River. I would clasp the flying immortals to wander free, embrace the bright moon to endure for ever. Yet I know that this cannot be suddenly achieved and I commit notes to express my feeling to the mournful wind.

I said: Do you understand the water and the moon? The water passes away like this<sup>86</sup> but is never gone. The moon waxes and wanes like that, but it never decreases or grows. For if one views things in their changes, then heaven and earth cannot remain for the space of a single glance. But if one views things in their unchangingness, then all things and ourselves are alike without limit. What then is there to envy? Besides, everything between heaven and earth has its owner. Of what is not mine, I may not take even a particle. Only the pure wind on the River, the bright moon among the mountains can become sounds in the ear and colours in the eye. There is no prohibition against taking them; they cannot be exhausted by use. This limitless storehouse of creation, you and I can enjoy together.

The guest laughed delightedly. We rinsed our cups and poured again. When the meats and fruits were finished, the cups and plates were scattered in confusion. We lay tumbled on one another in the boat and did not know the east was bright.<sup>87</sup>

80 Yamamoto Kazuyoshi in his comments (*So Shoku*, Chūgoku Shibun Sen series, No.19, Chikuma Shobō, 1973, p.149) notes that in the *T'ang kuo-shih pu* by Li Chao (9th cent.) there is a story of the master flautist Li Mou playing his flute in a boat at night and of a dragon (*chiaio*) appearing and borrowing his flute to play on (Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh ts'an-kao tzu-liao hsiao ts'ung-shu ed., Ku-tien wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, Shanghai, 1957, p.58). This story seems insufficiently close to have been a source for Su. His suggestion that the following clause recalls the subject of Po Chü-i's famous long poem, *P'i-pa hsing*, seems more apposite.

81 The lines are from Ts'ao Ts'ao's *yüeh-fu Tuan ko hsing* (*Wen-hsüan*, c.27.23b).

82 Hsia-k'ou is modern Hankow, now incorporated in Wu-han; Wuch'ang is modern O-ch'eng. This shows clearly that the Red Cliff at Huang-chou is being described as the site of the battle.

83 Chou Yü (175–210), the general of Sun Ch'üan.

84 Ts'ao Ts'ao had gained Ching-chou, a strategic province in the modern central Hupeh area, by the surrender to him of Liu Tsung on the death of his father Liu Piao. He then assembled his forces at Chiang-ling (modern Hupeh) to go down river to crush Wu.

85 Su probably took this expression from Yüan Chen's tomb inscription for Tu Fu: "The Ts'aos, father and son, wrote prose in the saddle and frequently wrote poems with lance ready at hand" (*Yüan shih Ch'ang-ch'ing chi*, Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an ed., c.56.3a).

86 Su adapts to his own purpose Confucius' words in *Lun-yü* 9.16. His philosophizing in the passage which follows is founded generally in conception and expression upon *Chuang-tzu* (c.2 and 17 in particular).

87 *Su Tung-p'o chi*, c.19 (4. p.112).

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