Chen Ziang (659 - 700), a distinguished poet, was the advocate of the "poetry revolution" in the Tang Dynasty. His works flourished in the early Tang and survived to the present day.

This M.A. thesis consists of seven chapters. The first chapter introduces Chen Ziang's life: his family background, political views and his retirement. The second chapter analyses his poetic theory, his rationale and call for poetry reform. The third chapter traces the origin of his poetry while the fourth chapter focuses on the content of his poetry. The fifth chapter evaluates the literary merits and demerits of the poetry with particular reference to their artistic features. The sixth chapter examines the influence of his works on later poems. The final chapter is a research into the chronological order of his poetry.

Historical records showed that Chen Ziang was excellent in politics as well as in literary works. He was a just, capable imperial official; however, his frequent criticism of government's incorrect policies antagonised Empress Wu Zetian and her intimates. Although he retired
in despair from public life in his middle age, he was framed by his court enemies and subsequently died in prison. He was a prolific author, writing poetry and other literary forms. He opposed the style of his contemporaries who indulged in court poetry bordering on erotic art. He contended that poetry should be unique of rhythm, analogy and be able to reveal one's thought which included patriotic feelings and progressive ideas. Of his many poems, one hundred and twenty nine poems with substantial content survived to this day. Except for a few occasional verses, his poems reflect the political and social aspects of his country and his own thinking. There was clear indication that he had borrowed words and phrases from some earlier poets, but with his proficient skill and extensive knowledge, he was able to transform them into something uniquely his. His works have greatly influenced Tang and later poems. His outstanding achievement in poetry earned him an important position not only in the history of Chinese poetry development but also in the history of Chinese literary criticism.

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