SUMMARY

Being one of the eldest of the major High T'ang poets, Meng Hao-Ran (689-740), with writing style which was able to go beyond the decorum of the Early T'ang tradition, had had a considerable impact on his successors and later generations of poets.

After the introductory chapter, which considers the importance of Meng Hao-Ran in the history of Chinese classical poetry, chapter two provides a sketch of the intellectual background in which Meng Hao-Ran wrote. The principal modes of his poetry are related to the traditional Confucian thought, as well as the characteristic practices in the literary arena of his time which include pursuing scholarly honour and official rank, seeking reclusive and spiritual life, and travelling. These have brought about the major events in Meng Hao-Ran's life and the fluctuations in the poet's inner world which are reflected in his poems.

Chapter three and four examine the intrinsic qualities of Meng Hao-Ran's poetry. Chapter three explores the "world" as a synthesis of the external and the internal experiences of life. It probes into five main aspects of Meng Hao-Ran's poetic world which are organically interrelated: (i) the thoughts of pursuing scholarly honour and official rank, (ii) the sentiments which accompanied travel, (iii) the reflections of the impermanence of human life and the passing of time, (iv) the admiration for spiritual and reclusive life and (v) the discovery of spiritual sustenance in landscape and pastoral life. The source of all these different worlds in Meng Hao-Ran's poetry is closely related to the poet's search for value and significance of life.

Chapter four analyses the artistic techniques of Meng Hao-Ran's poetry. The analysis concentrates on four types of poetic skills that Meng
Hao-Ran had most frequently adopted: (i) the creation of images, (ii) the employment of allusions, (iii) the constructions of contrasts and (iv) the establishment of intrinsic structure to reveal a theme.

Chapter five critically evaluates Meng Hao-Ran's poetry. It consists of two sections: (i) a thorough analysis of existing assessment of Meng Hao-Ran's poetry and (ii) an examination of the role that Meng Hao-Ran's poetry had played in the history of development of Chinese classical poetry.

The significance of Meng Hao-Ran is more than being a pioneer of the High T'ang landscape and pastoral poetry. Meng Hao-Ran can be seen as one of the earliest poets whose poems embed the characteristic qualities of "T'ang poetry". If the High T'ang poetry is, in a sense, a summation and comprehensive development of the lyrical tradition of the Chinese classical poetry, then Meng Hao-Ran is, even though not the most accomplished poet in this critical stage of the history of development of Chinese classical poetry, unquestionably an important link between the Early T'ang poetry and the High T'ang poetry.