Textual Criticism of Ch'u Tz'u

A Summary

The task of collating Ch'u Tz'u, the Songs of the South, an ancient Chinese Anthology, was first initiated by Tao Ch'ien (陶潜), a Buddhist monk of the Sui Dynasty (581-618 A.D.). Although his book, the Ch'u Tz'u Yin (楚辭音) deals mainly with the pronunciation of Ch'u Tz'u, it sporadically collates and compares variants of characters and sentences. Unfortunately, his book has long been lost. Nevertheless, from the fragmentary handwritten copy of the T'ang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.) found in the Cave of Tun Huang (敦煌), we may still find a few such examples. It is Hung Hsing-Tsu (洪興祖, 1090-1155 A.D.) of the Later Sung Dynasty (1127-1179 A.D.) who first published a book known as Ch'u Tz'u K'iao Yi, or Textual Criticism of Ch'u Tz'u (楚辭考異). However, it has been incorporated into Hung's Ch'u Tz'u Pu Chu (楚辭補注) ever since the Sung Dynasty. According to Ch'u Tz'u Pu Chu, it appears that Hung's K'iao Yi (考異) is nothing more than what Ch'en Chen-Sun (陳振孫) has stated in his book, Chih Chai Shu Lu Chieh T'i (直斋书录解題), "Variants of various editions are just placed side by side in the book". It fails to correct errors in the editions concerned. Later in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Wang Yulan (汪瑗) also published a book entitled Ch'u Tz'u K'iao Yi (楚辭考異). In this book, the author merely compares variations appearing in Wang I's (汪逸) Ch'u Tz'u Chang Chü (楚辭章句), Hung Hsing-Tsu's Pu Chu (補注) and Chu Hsi's (朱熹, 1130-1200 A.D.) Ch'u Tz'u Chi Chu (楚辭集注). It is hardly a good
book for one of its kind in view of the limited materials he used. The contemporary scholar Liu Shih-Pei (劉師培, 1884-1919) has published a complete volume of Textual Criticism of Ch'u Tz'u, also known as Ch'u Tz'u K'ao Yi (楚辭校異). The prime purpose of this book is to list variants; occasionally, it revises errors of characters. The collection of variants from various editions is, on the whole, comprehensive; nevertheless, omission and errors occur in many instances. This is why Hsu Wei-Yu (許維通) has a supplement written on it: Ch'u Tz'u K'ao Yi Fu (楚辭考異補), which has never been published, however. Both Wen I-To (聞一多, 1899-1946), and Chiang Liang-Fu (姜亮夫) have read the manuscript of this supplement, and according to Wen it begins with "Li Sao" (離騷) and ends at "T'ien Wen" (天問), the third chapter in Ch'u Tz'u. Chiang also states that its collection of quotations from Ch'u Tz'u and the consultation and comparison of different editions may be regarded to be extensive, but that it has not been completed. Wen I-To's work, Ch'u Tz'u Chiao Fu (楚辭校補) may be considered the best of its kind. In his work Wen consults some twenty-eight relevant works by ancient and modern authors. His contribution towards the reconstruction of the text, his review of theories propounded by former scholars and his modification of erroneous characters etc, are worthy of commendation; however, omissions, faulty theories and forced interpretations abound. The section which concerns textual criticism in Chiang Liang-Fu's work, Ch'ü Yuan Fu Chiao Chu (屈原賦校注) is a sheer plagiarism of Liu Shih-P'ei's Ch'u Tz'u K'ao Yi, Hsu Wei-Yu's Ch'u Tz'u K'ao Yi Fu and Wen I-To's Ch'u Tz'u Chiao Fu. Not only has Chiang produced nothing new, but he has also copied & repeated a number of mistakes. This is the
outcome of carelessness and failure to make reference to
the original sources. Recently Chang Heng (張 亨) pub-
lished two long articles on this topic, namely "Li Sao
Chi Chiao" (離騷輯校) and "Ch'ü Tz'u Chiao Pu" (楚辭
輯補) which are by no means superior to the afore-
said either; though Chang has incorporated copious mate-
rials into them and expressed new ideas at times.

An attempt has been made in this dissertation to
apply the theories expounded in Wang Shu-min's (王叔岷)
book, Introduction to Textual Criticism (校勘學). The present writer has made every effort to gather quo-
tations from Ch'ü Tz'u in ancient commentaries on the class-
ics, in reference books and encyclopaedias supported by
materials assembled from relevant work. In the course of
investigation, interesting discoveries have been made in
textual problems as well as problems about interpretation
and commentary. Such discoveries might be of the nature
of a character, words or sentences, yet they were either
unknown, or ignored before. In this paper, the present
writer attempts to remedy some of the textual errors em-
bodied in certain current editions, and, on the other hand,
to authenticate the genuineness of certain modern editions.
In determining whichever is an old or later edition, the
present writer has been able to put forward his critical
opinion, though he does not claim that all that he has
stated in this paper are flawless or perfect.

Chapter ONE

The interpretation of the title "Li Sao" (離騷)
totalling not less than ten in all has remained very con-
troversial ever since the great historian Ssu-Ma Ch'ien (司馬遷, 145-96 B.C.). The scholars who have interpreted the term in one way or another may be classified into four schools, namely, the conservative classical school, the mysterious classical school, the modern conservative school and the modern revolutionary school.

The conservative classical school, represented by Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Pan Ku (班固, 32-92 A.D.), Wang I and Tai Chen (戴震, 1723-1777 A.D.) etc, defines the term "Li Sao" as "the sadness of separation", or "encountering sorrows" which, the present writer agrees, is exactly what the poet Ch'u Yuan (屈原, 343?-277? B.C.) has tried to express.

Chou Sheng-K'ai (周聖楷) of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.) who represents the mysterious classical school, gives the definition of "Li Sao" as "Bright Fire" and "stormy disturbance", which is most fallacious and is discarded by all scholars.

Yang Liu-Ch'iao (楊柳橋), a representative of the modern conservative school, defines the term "Li Sao" as "to allay sorrows", which is not far from what the poet intended to do.

The modern revolutionary school, represented by such modern scholars as Yu Kuo-En (游國恩), Chang Shou-P'ing (張壽平) and Ho Ch'i-Chang (何鈺章), tries to interpret "Li Sao" as the synonym of the Ch'u Song "Lao Shang" (勞商), "a kind of song tune attributable to the Pre-Ch'in tribe known as Yüeh (越) or P'u (濮), or as "a verse of big lute music". These are fallacies of one kind or another which are all unfounded.
Chapter TWO

The opening lines of "Li Sao" in Ch'ü Tz'u, The Songs of the South (楚辭) read, "Scion of the High Lord Kao Yang, Po Yung was my father's name." Ever since the days of Wüang I (王逸), the second-century commentator of Ch'ü Tz'u, scholars have traditionally taken Ch'ü Yüan (屈原; 343?-277? B.C.) at his word: they have assumed that Po Yung (伯庸) is the poet Ch'ü Yüan's father. It was only recently that such scholars as Wen I-to (聞一多), Jao Tsung-i (饒宗頤), Wang Szu-yüan (王泗原), etc., disputed Ch'ü Yüan's statement. Basing their arguments on Liu Hsiang's (劉向) words, "Thus speaks the last scion of Po Yung's line, Ch'ü Yüan, the truly faithful-hearted: 'Tracing my ancestry from Kao Yang, I am the kindred of King Huai of Ch'ü,'" they stated that Po Yung was not Ch'ü Yüan's father, but his distant ancestor who had been identified with the State of Ch'ü's mandated King Hsiung I (熊繆), or Hsiung Ying (熊盈), also known as Chu Yung (祝融). This assertion was made on the assumption that the term "huang k'ao" (皇考) in "Li Sao" meant "distant ancestor"; others went so far as to say that Po Yung was Ch'ü Yüan's grandfather. Whether Po Yung is Ch'ü Yüan's ancestor, his grandfather, or his father, depends mainly on how the term "huang k'ao" in the opening lines of "Li Sao" is defined.

With the support of the data derived from such treatises as Tso Chuan (左傳), Kuo Yü (國語), Shih Chi (史記), Shih Ching (詩經), Ch'ü Tz'u (楚辭) as well as inscriptions on bronze vessels, etc., this paper attempts to refute the hypotheses of Wen I-to, Jao Tsung-i and Wang Szu-yüan, which are based either on a misinterpretation or
a misunderstanding of the classics or materials concerned. On the other hand, the present writer asserts further that the signification of the term "huang k'ao" mentioned both in the classics and in the inscriptions is "father", not "distant ancestor" or "grandfather"; and that the Pre-Ch'in and Chou peoples invariably called their fathers "huang k'ao", their grandfathers and/or ancestors "huang tsu" (皇祖), and their ancestors in general "tsu k'ao" (祖考). The term "huang k'ao" must not be confused with "tsu k'ao". It is therefore correct to regard Po Yung as Ch'ü Yüan's father.

Chapter THREE

In Hsü Shen's (許慎, 30-124 A.D.) Shuo Wen Chich Tzu (說文解字), there are seven cases in which Hsü either quotes from or refers to Ch'ü Tz'u. All these are either irrelevant to or different from the existing Wang I's Ch'ü Tz'u Chang Chü, which point to the fact that the Ch'ü Tz'u mentioned by Hsü Shen was the original edition first compiled by the Han librarian-scholar Liu Shiang (劉向, 77-6 B.C.), and was different from the one Wang I used for annotation. This statement may be further strengthened by the following evidence:

1) Hsü Shen states, (Shuo Wen Ch.1, pt. 2 under the Character "善"), "The grass Artemisia is mentioned in Ch'ü Tz'u" ('楚辭有善蕭神'). However, the words "善蕭" simply do not exist in the existing Ch'ü Tz'u;

2) A quotation from "Li Sao" in Shuo Wen (Ch. 4, pt. 1 under the Character "隻") reads, "Seeking for one
whose thoughts are of your own measure" (求矩之同"
). These two Characters "矩"in the line are quite different from those of the present edition, which read "尺".

3) There is another quotation from "Li Sæ" in Shuo Wen (Ch. 12, pt.1 under the character "撈") which reads, "In the morning I gathered the angelica on the mountains" (朝撈批之木蘭). The characters "撈" and "批" read "澤" and "批" respectively in the present edition.

4) Another quotation from "T'ien Wen" (天問 ) in Shuo Wen (Ch. 12, pt.2 under the character "弔") reads, "Why did Yi shoot down the suns?" (夫羿焉弔日也?). In the present edition, the character "羿" reads "羿", and the line appears without the first and the last characters i.e. "夫" and "也 ".

Basing his arguments on the above, the present writer further believes that the edition from which Hsü Shen frequently quotes has long been lost, and that the current edition handed down by Wang I is certainly not the same one used by Hsü Shen before.

Chapter FOUR

The character "予" occurs twenty-one times in Ch' u Tz'u. Wang I first interpreted it as a personal pronoun "I", "my" or "me" (余、我、吾). Chu Hsi began to doubt it, but failed to explain why. Modern scholars like P'u Chiang-ch'ing (浦江清), Kuo Mo-Jo (郭沫若), Chiang
Liang-Fu (姜亮夫), Lu K'an-Ju (陆侃如) and Wen Huai-Sha (文懷沙) and so forth also query very much whether the meaning given by Wang I is correct. They are of the opinion that certain "子" in the Ch'ü Tz'u certainly do not function as a personal pronoun. Chou Ju-Ch'ang (周汝昌) states critically that the character "子" is definitely not "我"; but that it is merely a meaningless particle added to a required number of syllables. Chou's argument represents the other extreme of Wang I's. Neither argument is correct however.

From the viewpoint of typography, statistics, grammar and palaeography the present writer gathers together all the occurrences of the character "子" in Ch'ü Tz'u and reviews them thoroughly. He asserts that both the traditional and later interpretations may be true in one respect, yet they are equally extreme, narrow-minded and harsh. In other words, some characters "子" in Ch'ü Tz'u may function as the personal pronoun "余", "我", "吾"; others function as the verbs "present" (賜子) or "give" (給予); and yet there are also some which are merely meaningless particles, sound-carriers or empty-words. We must not make the mistake of assuming that they have only one meaning. One should also bear in mind that when the character "子" functions as a sound-carrier or empty-word, it is a corruption of such characters as "乎", "兮", "兮" (子) etc, due to the resemblance in shapes. The character "子" itself has never been used as an empty-word in Ch'ü Tz'u, nor in any other Classics.
Chapter FIVE

The main purpose of this chapter is to collect materials from Pre-T'ang Classics, ancient commentaries, reference books and encyclopaedias which are related to, or which contain quotations from Ch'u Tzu, and then collate them with the extant photographic edition of Chu Hsi's Ch'u Tzu Chi Chu (楚辭集注), published by Chu Hsi's grandson Chu Chien (朱鑑) in 1235 A.D. It has been found that the existing edition is very much the same as the Pre-T'ang editions; but that the Pre-T'ang editions differ to a certain extent from those quoted in the original edition of Ku Yeh-Wang's (顧野王, 519-581 A.D.) Yu P'ien (原本玉篇) and in Hsu Shen's Shuo Wen Chieh Tzu.

In the course of investigation, interesting discoveries have been made in textual problems as well as problems about interpretation and commentary which might have been unknown or ignored before. The present writer attempts to rectify some of the textual errors included in certain current editions, and, at the same time, to authenticate the genuineness of certain modern editions, and also to determine whichever is an old or later edition.

For example, as quoted by Hung Hsing-Tsu in Ch'u Tzu Pu Chu, the character "滋" reads "蔭" in the lost Ch'u Tzu Yu Wen (楚辭釋文). In the T'ang hand-written edition of Wen Hsüan (唐寫本文選), the character "留" reads "罷". As quoted in the T'ang hand-written copy of Wen Hsüan, Lu Shan-Ching reads in his Wen Hsüan Chu (陸善經文選注) the character "藐" as "陳". The Buddhist monk Tao Ch'ien (道藏) reads the character "曼" as "曼" in his Ch'u Tzu Yin (楚辭音) and so on. All these point to the fact that the commonplace style of writing prevailed.

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over the period of Six Dynasties, Sui and T'ang (220-907 A.D.). Moreover, the characters "索" reads "索", "乘" reads "乗", and "稱" reads "稱" etc. in Tao Ch'ien's Ch'u Tz'u Yin proving that Ch'u Tz'u Yin preserves a number of original forms of modern script and that Ch'u Tz'u Yin is indeed a valuable edition.

During the Later Han Dynasty (25-220 A.D.), Huan T'ien (桓譔, 24 B.C. - 56 A.D.) stated in his Hsin Lun (新論) that ever since his youth he had been fond of "Li Sao". This has also been quoted in Yü Shih Nan's (虞世南, 558-636 A.D.) P'ai T'ang Shu Ch'ao (北堂書鈔卷九十七). Yen Chih-T'ui (顏之推, 531-591 A.D.) of the Northern Ch'i (北齊, 550-577 A.D.) and Liu Yi-Ch'ing (劉義慶, 403-444 A.D.) of the Southern Dynasty Sung (南朝宋, 420-479 A.D.) both repeatedly quote lines from "Li Sao" in their works Yen Shih Chia Hsin (顏氏家訓卷六、七) and Shih Shuo Hsin Yü (世説新語) respectively. The fact that Ch'u Tz'u was popular during the Later Han and Six Dynasties period (25-589 A.D.) was little known or completely unknown before.

In the T'ang hand-written edition of Wen Hsüan, the characters "病頲" read "減蔽". They read "減蔽" in Lu Shan-Ching's edition, which are different from those of the modern editions. Furthermore, Lu's commentary on "Li Sao" differs in many cases from those of Wang I's. T'ang hand-written edition of Wen Hsüan has on many occasions quoted Kung-Sun Lo's Wen Hsüan Yin Chüeh (公孫羅文選音決). All these are invaluable works of scholarships in the study of Ch'u Tz'u, but are ignored by most of the scholars, even eminent scholars like Hung Hsing-Tsu and Chu Hsi etc are no exception.
Ch'ien Kao-Chih (錢杲之) of the Sung Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.) has on several occasions mentioned in his Li Sao Chi Chuan (離騷集傳) that "Lu's edition reads such and such". For instance, the character "雄" in the line "The magpie flew off with noisy chatterings" ('雄鳩之鳴 彼兮') reads "鳩" in Ch'u Tz'u Shih Wen (楚辭釋文) as quoted in Hung Hsing Tsu's Ch'u Tz'u Pu Chu. Ch'ien Kao-chih says, "Lu's edition reads 鳩". Chang Heng (張 亭) identifies Lu with Lu Te-Ming (陸德明, 556-627 A.D.), of the T'ang, and assumes that Lu Te-Ming is the author of Ch'u Tz'u Shih Wen. (See "Li Sao Chi Chao" 離騷輯校). As a matter of fact, all these statements are not true. The author of the lost Ch' u Tz'u Shih Wen is unknown. The Lu whom Ch'ien Kao-Chih frequently mentions is in fact the author of Wen Hsüan Chu (文選注): Lu Shan Ching (陸善經) of the T'ang Dynasty, as quoted in the T'ang hand-written edition of Wen Hsüan.

Under the line "Beware lest the shrike sounds his note before the equinox," ('恐 鳩鳩之先鳴兮'), Tao Ch'ien (道 鳩) comments, "It is Chiang's opinion that it exists in autumn" (Ch'u Tz'u Yin). Prof. Jao Tsung-I (饒宗頤) considers the character "江" to be a corruption of "注" (Ch'u Tz'u Shu Lu 楚辭書録). This is undoubtedly incorrect, for, as quoted by Hung Hsing-Tsu in his Ch'u Tz'u Pu Chu, Chiang is evidently the Chiang Chieh (江介) of the Southern Ch'i Dynasty (南齊, 479-502 A.D.). What he is quoted to have said by Hung Hsing Tsu is similar to that quoted by Tao Ch'ien.

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Chapter SIX

Han Wu-Ti (漢武帝, 140-87 B.C.) was fond of art and literature, especially Ch'ü Tz'u. For the study of Ch'ü Tz'u, he summoned Liu An, the Prince of Huai Nan (淮南王劉安, 179-122 B.C.) to make a commentary on "Li Sao" (離騷傳). This is on the record of Liu An's biography in Han Shu (漢書淮南王安傳), Wang I's commentary on Ch'ü Tz'u, Liu Hsieh's (劉勰, 465-521 A.D.) Wen Hsin Tiao Lung (文心雕龍辨騷篇) and Yen Shih-Ku's (顏師古, 581-645) commentary on Han Shu (漢書注), about which no one has raised a query. It was not until the Ch'ing Dynasty that Wang Nien-Sun (王念孫, 1744-1832) began to question whether what Liu An had written was a commentary. In Tu Shu Tsa Chih (讀書雜志) he writes, "The character '傳' should read '傳', and '傳' is a loan of '賦'. ...'summoned him (Liu An) to compose a Li Sao Fu (離騷賦) means 'summoning him to sum up the main point and compose a fu 賦 on it.'" It appears to be convincing at first glance. However, in the final analysis, it is a fallacy in fact.

In this chapter, the present writer disproves Wang's argument by providing evidence from Ch'ü Tz'u, Shih Chi, Han Shu and other related materials. In conclusion, the present writer asserts that the character "傳" has always been erroneously taken for "傳", and vice versa, due to similarity in shape. In spite of the fact that the two characters "傳" and "賦" are interchangeable in the usage of the classics, under no circumstances have they been used as synonyms for one another in Ch'ü Tz'u, Shih Chi or Han Shu. That what Ch'ü Yuan has written is a "Li Sao Fu" (離騷賦), and what Liu An has composed is a "Li Sao Chuan".
Chapter SEVEN

It is recorded in Kuo P' u's (276–324 A.D.) Biography in the Chin Shu, the History of the Chin Dynasty (晉書
郭璞傳), that, apart from annotating such books as the
Erh Ya (爾雅), San Ch'ang (三倉), Fang Yen (方言),
Mu T'ien Tzu Chuan (穆天子傳), Shan Hai Ching (山海
經) etc., Kuo P' u also wrote a commentary on the Ch' u
Tz'u -- the Songs of the South (楚辭注). It survived
through the Sui and the T'ang dynasties, but was lost, prob-
ably in the Sung Dynasty. It was not until the recovery
in Tun Huang ( 敦煌 ), of fragments of a book by the Sui
Dynasty buddhist monk Tao Ch'ien entitled Ch' u Tz'u Yin
( 釋道 傳 楚辭音 ) that scattered sentences from Kuo
P' u's Commentary on the Ch' u Tz'u were found. As a result
of Wang Chung-min's ( 王重民 ) and Wen I-to's ( 聞一多)
studies of the fragmentary Ch' u Tz'u Yin, four quotations
from the Commentary on the Ch' u Tz'u and one from the "Chiang
Fu" ( 江賦 ) of Kuo P' u have been identified.

Professor Jao Tsung-I ( 饒宗頤 ) has devoted a chap-
ter of his Ch' u Tz'u Shu Lu ( 楚辭書錄 ) to the study of
this problem, and claimed that a further identification of
another 21 quotations from Kuo P' u's Ch' u Tz'u Chu ( 楚辭
注 ) have been made. This claim is groundless as the 21
quotations in question are not from Kuo P' u's Commentary
on the Ch' u Tz'u, but from Kuo P' u's commentaries on the
Erh Ya, Shan Hai Ching and Mu T'ien Tzu Chuan etc.

In this paper, the writer, after making an exhaustive
investigation of the commentaries of Hung Hsing-tsu (洪興祖) and Chu Hsi (朱熹) on the Chi'yu Tz'u has identified 3 quotations from Kuo P'u's lost Chi'yu Tz'u Chu. He points out, moreover, that Kuo P'u never produced such a book as the Erh Ya Lin Yi (爾雅音義). The 3 quotations are found scattered in the chapters "Li Sao" (離騷) and "Chi'yu T'yan" (九歌) of Hung and Chu's Commentaries on the Chi'yu Tz'u, which may be listed as follows:

1. 雞鳴：「鳴江雄興聽芷兮」洪補、朱注引郭璞云：「江雄興」
2. 雞鳴：「鸚鵡競來奮」洪補、朱注引郭璞云：「鸚鸚競，謂
3. 雞鳴：「鳴鳴鳴而來鳴」洪補、朱注引郭璞云：「鳴鳴鳴，仙人名也。」

These quotations from Kuo P'u are considered by the writer to be scattered sentences taken out of Kuo P'u's Commentary on the Chi'yu Tz'u which is no longer extant.

Chapter EIGHT
- A Supplement -

The original version of Hu Yeh-Wang's Yu P'ien (原本玉篇) embodies copious materials of Pre-Liang (502-557 A.D.) date. It includes quotations from such classics as Chiing (經), Shih (史), Tzu (子) and Chi (集), together with their commentaries. It is particularly valuable in preserving the Pre-Liang text intact, and is, therefore, very useful to the study of textual criticism, etymology, and writing. For instance, there are altogether 129 entries of quotations from Chi'yu Tz'u in the extant five chapters of Yu P'ien, ranging from Chi'yu Yuan's "Li Sao" (Ch. I) to Liu Hsiang's "Chi'yu T'yan" (九歌) (Ch. 15), without Wang I's "Chi'yu Ssu" (九思) (Ch. 17). It implies that the Chi'yu
Tz'u which Ku Yeh-Wang has used is the original edition first compiled by Liu Hsiang (劉向). Moreover, the character "糅" in the line "芳與澤其雜糅兮 " as quoted in Yu P'ien reads "糅". Ku Yeh-Wang states that "糅" is interchangeable with "糅". Both these characters read "糅" in all its seven occurrences in modern editions of Shu Tz'u. That the Shu Tz'u from which Yu P'ien has quoted is the original edition compiled by Liu Hsiang may be further proved by the fact that Han Shen's Shu Jing includes only the characters "糅" and "糅", but not "糅".