SYNOPSIS

There were four schools of thought on Shi King (詩經) during the Han Dynasty. These were the Lu (魯), Ts'ii (齊), Han (韓) and Mao (毛). Except for Mao which was considered the later text, the rest were early texts. The Mao Commentary was authored by Mao Heng (毛亨) and Mao Ch'ang (毛萇). It was popularly known as the Mao Commentary (毛傳). Cheng Huan (鄭玄) was an eminent scholar of the Eastern Han Dynasty in this branch of study. He knew both the old and the new languages well. He was of the opinion that Mao's explanation of the Shi King was excellent, simple yet illuminating. His comments on Mao's Commentary were known as Cheng tsien (鄭箋). The other three schools were eventually overshadowed by this sub-commentary in terms of significance.

In one of his books, Liu-yi Iun (六藝論), Cheng made clear his approach. He based his commentary on Mao's, but attempted to clarify any obscurity in meaning and to redress erroneous explanation which Mao made. Such approach is commendable for it is so different in that he was bold to overcome the traditional conservatism.

The present thesis seeks to examine where the Cheng Commentary is different from that of the Mao's, which includes the construction, interpretation of the poetry and also the collating of errors of Mao Shi (毛詩).

Cheng Huan did not discard the other three schools totally, rather, he turned these into a tool of reference for correcting Mao Commentary.

The main differences include the following:
(a) Explanation on the so-called hsing (興), one of the constructions of poetry.
(b) Pointing out the differences between Mao Commentary and his sub-commentary with reference to the other three schools of thought.
(c) Clarifying Mao's Commentary with reference to the classical texts.
(d) Presenting his own views on the differences.
(e) Difference in the collating and comparing of the original text between Mao and Cheng Commentaries.
(f) Difference in the division of chapters between Mao and Cheng Commentaries.