

Unit 12
Reading A

A Brief Introduction to Classical Chinese Poetry 《中国古典诗歌简介》

1 In China “poetic education” in the original meaning is learning The Book of Songs. This is the first comprehensive anthology of Chinese poems including 305 poems of the Zhou Dynasty (1122-256 BC). It was originally called Shi (Poems) and Shi Sanbai (Three Hundred Poems). Each poem in The Book of Songs was set to music and could be sung. The compilers classified the 305 poems into folk songs, ceremonial songs, and sacrificial songs, according to their contents and the style of the music. Folk songs, which were popular among the people, made up the best part of The Book of Songs, while ceremonial songs and sacrificial songs were used mainly on ceremonial or sacrificial occasions to eulogize the merits and virtues of the Son of Heaven and of his forefathers.

在中国，“诗教”的原意是学习《诗经》。《诗经》是中国第一部诗歌总集，收录了周朝（公元前 1122 年—公元前 256 年）的 305 首诗歌。它最初被称为《诗》或《诗三百》。《诗经》中的每一首诗都配有音乐，可以歌唱。编纂者根据诗歌的内容和音乐风格将这 305 首诗分为民歌、雅乐和颂歌。在民间流行的民歌构成了《诗经》中最精彩的部分，而雅乐和颂歌主要在礼仪或祭祀场合使用，以歌颂天子及其祖先的功绩和美德。

2 Confucius (551 BC-479 BC), a great philosopher and educator, was very fond of The Book of Songs. He used to recite the poems from time to time, and used it as a textbook for his pupils. In the Han Dynasty, The Book of Songs was formally accepted as a classic of the Confucian school, called Shi Jing. The Book of Songs has over a long period of time been highly appreciated, and has exerted a profound and far-reaching influence on the development of Chinese literature, especially that of poetry, over a period of more than 2, 000 years. It has also served as important historical data for the study of ancient China from the early years of the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn Period.

孔子（公元前 551 年—公元前 479 年），一位伟大的哲学家和教育家，非常喜爱《诗经》。他时常吟诵其中的诗篇，并将其作为学生的教科书。在汉代，《诗经》被正式接纳为儒家经典，称为《诗经》。长期以来，《诗经》备受推崇，在两千多年的时间里，对中国文学尤其是诗歌的发展产生了深远而广泛的影响。它也为研究从西周早期到春秋时期的古代中国提供了重要的历史资料。

3 By the 4th century BC China's boundaries had expanded to include the vast area of the Yangtze river valley, where the strong State of Chu became even stronger. This region is very fertile and the life of the inhabitants was more highly developed than that of the northern people. They produced their own type of song, a representative collection of which was compiled under the name of the Chuci (The Songs of Chu). The songs in this collection are more lyrical and romantic. The style is different from that of The Book of Songs. It is called “poetic prose of Chu”, or “the Sao style”, in the history of Chinese literature. The representative poet is Qu Yuan (340-278BC) and his follower Song Yu (4th century BC).

到公元前 4 世纪，中国的疆域已扩大到包括广阔的长江流域，强大的楚国在这一地区变得更加强盛。这个地区非常肥沃，居民的生活比北方人更为发达。他们创作了自己类型的歌曲，

其中具有代表性的作品集以《楚辞》之名被编纂起来。这部作品集中的诗歌更加抒情和浪漫。其风格与《诗经》不同。在中国文学史上，它被称为“楚地的诗体散文”或“骚体”。代表诗人是屈原（公元前 340 年—公元前 278 年）以及他的追随者宋玉（公元前 4 世纪）。

4 In the following literary history, there were certain periods which were dominated by one distinctive predominant literary genre, such as fu (descriptive prose interspersed with verse) during the Han Dynasty, poetry in Tang, ci poetry (a special poetic form) of Song and qu (singing verse) of Yuan.

在接下来的文学史中，有一些时期以一种独特的主要文学体裁为主导，例如汉代的赋（韵文与散文夹杂的描写性文体）、唐代的诗、宋代的词以及元代的曲。

5 During the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), the Chu lyrics evolved into the fu, a poem usually in rhymed verse except for introductory and concluding passages that are in prose, often in the form of questions and answers.

在汉代（公元前 206 年—公元 220 年），楚辞演变成了赋，赋通常主体部分为韵文，开头和结尾部分为散文，且常常以问答的形式呈现。

6 The Han was a period of cultural flowering. A poetic form that became the norm for creative writing, began to flourish. Emperor Wu created a music bureau, called “yuefu”, 乐府, in Chinese, specially to collect and record ceremonial chants, but also the songs and ballads of ordinary people. Collected by the Han Music Bureau “yuefu” many of these songs are anonymous, but also men of letters wrote these tunes and folk ballads, many of which are very narrative. Later, during the Eastern Han Dynasty, poems with five characters to a line in imitation of the yuefu style appeared. The employment of five characters to the line was found to be a more rewarding measure, permitting a smoother and more melodious effect and the evocation of subtler human feelings.

汉朝是一个文化繁荣的时期。一种成为创造性写作规范的诗歌形式开始蓬勃发展。汉武帝设立了一个音乐机构，中文名为“乐府”，专门收集和记录礼仪颂歌，同时也包括普通百姓的歌曲和民谣。由汉代乐府收集的这些歌曲很多是匿名的，但也有文人创作这些曲调及民间歌谣，其中很多都非常具有叙事性。后来，在东汉时期，出现了模仿乐府风格的五言诗。人们发现每行五个字的运用是一种更有价值的方式，能产生更流畅、更悦耳的效果，并能唤起更微妙的人类情感。

7 The yuefu began to develop into shi or classical poetry – the form which was to dominate Chinese poetry until the modern era. These poems have five- or seven-character lines, with a caesura before the last three characters of each line. They are divided into the original gushi (old poems) and jintishi (recent style poems), a stricter form developed in the Tang Dynasty with rules governing tone patterns and the structure of the content. The greatest writers of gushi and jintishi are often held to be Li Bai and Du Fu respectively. The Tang Dynasty was a period of great radiance in literary creation and was especially noted for poetry writing, for which it has been dubbed the golden age of poetry, a predominant genre among all literary forms popular with both the rulers and the populace for about 300 years. There had emerged during this period of time a considerable number of brilliant poets and outstanding poetic compositions.

乐府开始发展为诗或古典诗歌——这种形式在现代之前一直主导着中国诗歌。这些诗有五言或七言的诗句，每行在最后三个字之前有一个停顿。它们分为古诗（旧体诗）和近体诗（今

体诗)，近体诗是在唐朝发展起来的一种更严格的形式，有关于韵律模式和内容结构的规则。古诗和近体诗最伟大的作家通常分别被认为是李白和杜甫。唐朝是文学创作极其辉煌的时期，尤其以诗歌创作著称，它被称为诗歌的黄金时代，在大约 300 年的时间里，诗歌是所有文学形式中最受统治者和民众欢迎的主要体裁。在这一时期出现了相当多杰出的诗人和优秀的诗歌作品。

8 Towards the end of the Tang Dynasty, the ci lyric became more popular. Most closely associated with the Song Dynasty, ci most often expressed feelings of desire, often in an adopted persona, but the greatest exponents of the form (such as Li Houzhu and Su Shi) used it to address a wide range of topics.

在唐朝末期，词这种抒情文体变得更加流行。词与宋朝的联系最为紧密，它通常表达渴望之情，常常以一种假定的角色来表达，但这种文体的最杰出代表人物（如李煜和苏轼）用它来涉及广泛的主题。

9 As the ci gradually became more literary and artificial after Song times, the san qu, a freer form, based on new popular songs, developed. The use of san qu songs in drama marked an important step in the development of vernacular literature.

在宋朝之后，随着词逐渐变得更具文学性和矫饰性，散曲这种基于新的流行歌曲的更自由的形式发展起来。散曲在戏剧中的使用标志着白话文学发展的一个重要阶段。

10 After the Song Dynasty, both shi poems and lyrics continued to be composed until the end of the imperial period, and to a lesser extent to this day. However, for a number of reasons, these works have always been less highly regarded than those of the Tang Dynasty in particular. Firstly, Chinese literary culture remained in awe of its predecessors: in a self-fulfilling prophecy, writers and readers both expected that new works would not bear comparison with the earlier masters. Secondly, the most common response of these later poets to the tradition which they had inherited was to produce work which was ever more refined and allusive; the resulting poems tend to seem precious or just obscure to modern readers. Thirdly, the increase in population, expansion of literacy, wider dissemination of works through printing and more complete archiving vastly increased the volume of work to consider and made it difficult to identify and properly evaluate those good pieces which were produced. Finally, this period saw the rise of vernacular literature, particularly drama and novels, which increasingly became the main means of cultural expression.

宋朝以后，诗和词一直创作到封建帝制时期结束，在较小程度上甚至延续至今。然而，由于多种原因，这些作品一直不如尤其是唐代的作品那样受到高度重视。首先，中国文学文化始终对其前辈怀有敬畏之情：在一种自我实现的预言中，作家和读者都预期新作品无法与早期大师的作品相媲美。其次，这些后世诗人对他们所继承的传统最常见的反应是创作出更加精致和充满典故的作品；结果，这些诗歌对现代读者来说往往显得矫揉造作或晦涩难懂。第三，人口的增加、识字率的提高、印刷品使作品更广泛地传播以及更完整的档案保存极大地增加了需要考虑的作品数量，使得识别和正确评价那些优秀作品变得困难。最后，这一时期白话文学兴起，尤其是戏剧和小说，它们日益成为文化表达的主要手段。