POEM OF THE EMPEROR HAN WU-TI, B.C. 109,

AND THE HISTORY OF SHANG SHENG AND CH'Ü SHENG.

Among the advantages which we have in the uninterrupted succession of literary monuments in China is the opportunity of marking the evolution of the language.

Tones are the latest addition to the Chinese tongue. I propose now to trace briefly the history of the second and third of the Four Tones. We find in the Sacrificial Odes of the Shang dynasty very early traces of the introduction of this tone.

The words 右, 始, 子, u, shu, tsu, rhyme there in this tone. Also 里, 止, 海, which we may call li, ti, ki. Further we have 與, 鼓, 祖 wo, ko, tso, and 祖, 祐, 所 tso, ko, sho, all in this tone. The character 解 kiai is kak in the ju sheng. We have also 殆, 子 tai, yi, tsi, and 武, 楚, 阻, 旅, 緒, mo, t'o, tso, lo, zo.

Then we have in the Hung fan of the Shu king the words 好, 道, ho, do, 怒, 數, 敘, no, to, zo, rhyming together, and this fragment belongs at the latest to the Shang dynasty and may be earlier.

In the Hia shu B.C. 2100 we have 祖, 社, 女, tso, zho, no, rhyming together in the chapter Kan shi. In T'ang shi B.C. 1760 we have 女, 赦 no, sho, rhyming together. In the Hung fan we also have 雨, 夏 ho, go. In writing the sounds here I follow the Amoy dialect for rain; and for summer regard the character as having a sonant initial with ê, according to the many precedents afforded by Chekiang and Fukien dialects.

We find in Kau yau mu, which belongs to the emperor Shun's reign, the characters 喜, 起, 熙, he, k'e, he, rhyming together. The last of these, being in P'ing sheng, indicates that the other two were then in this tone also. Further it may be surmised that, while the evolution of surds from sonants, which we find in the later language, was accompanied by tone, it was in this earlier stage made without tone, as might be expected.

A large number of the departing tone Ch'ü sheng words are found rhyming as P'ing sheng in old poetry down to the time of Chü yuen, the third century before Christ. I give some examples 志, 佩, 異, 治, 倒, 照, 笑, 救, 告. They show that the departing tone did not then exist.

It appears that words such as 惡 wu, to hate, which is now in the departing tone, was in the time of the Hung fan in the even tone. We thus learn that it dropped k before it took the departing tone. This is what might be expected. Letters are dropped in all languages. Tone is adventitious and modern. Tone belongs to the larynx. Letters belong to the mouth, and the loss of k is simply ceasing to shut down the soft palate on the back of the tongue.

We have thus clear evidence that in ancient China there was in poetry no departing tone. It may however have existed in an incipient state in colloquial use. It is in this way we may account for the appearance of 賣 mai, to sell, in the time of the Contending

States when Chü Yuen lived. This word, not occurring in the Four Books or the Odes, is recent. It is met with in the Chow li, but its existence there proves no great antiquity, for that work was added to as occasion required, like all the other classics.

The history of painting shews that the word 繪 hwei was anciently used for painting. It was written 會 hwei, and served very well till the period of the Contending States, when pictures began to be much in use. Hwa 畫 appears in Chü Yuen in the entering tone k. This k was dropped and the word took its place with the new departing tone. Why so? Because a new word takes a fashionable sound. The departing tone was then growing in favour. But this word hwak must be regarded as formed from the root mek, mi, hek, black. Before lamp black was used, the Chinese had black varnish to write with. The initial m has changed to a guttural initial.

Shwai 帥 to lead, a general, was at first shut. The t was dropped and it must then have been in the even tone. But it occurs only in prose in the Chow dynasty, and its tone is known later in poetry as the departing. In the Han Wei shi-ch'eng we find the departing tone distinct with vowel finals only. There are in that work 漢魏乘詩 no instances of departing tone words ending in m, n, ng. These are in that work either even or ascending. I give here a poem written by the emperor Han Wu ti.

瓠子歌二首 漢書武帝紀云元封二年四月作瓠子歌

瓠子決兮將奈何 浩浩洋洋兮慮殫爲 河殫爲河兮地不得寧
功無已時兮吾山平 吾山平兮鉅野溢 魚弗鬱兮柏冬日正道
弛兮離常流 蛟龍騁兮放遠遊 歸舊川兮神哉沛 不封禪兮安
知外爲我謂河伯 兮何不仁汎濫不止兮愁吾人 齧桑浮兮淮
泗滿 久不返兮水維緩 浩浩洋洋一作皓皓昕〻放一作方我
謂河伯兮何不仁一作皇爲河公兮何
不仁吾山之吾音魚 齧桑縣名

其二

河湯湯兮激潺湲 北渡回兮迅流難 搴長茭兮湛美玉 河伯許
兮薪不屬 薪不屬兮衛人罪 燒薪條兮噫乎何以禦水 隤林竹
兮楗石 菑宣防塞兮萬福來 湛讀曰沈伯一作公 菑側其反

Translation.—The hymn of Hu tsi in two parts, with introductory note.

Pan koo says in his history that the emperor Woo ti wrote this poem in the 4th month of B. C. 109. The historian, in his section on canals and rivers, says that after the emperor Woo ti had performed the mountain sacrifice, he sent several tens of thousands of soldiers to repair the embankment of the Yellow River at Hu tsi. On his way home he went himself to the spot to offer sacrifice and threw a white horse and jade sceptre into the river. He ordered all the officers who were in attendance on him to carry faggots on their backs to fill the breach in the river bank. But at that time, because in the prefecture on the east the grass was being burnt, there was not much brush-wood to be found. The emperor therefore caused the bamboos in the Chi garden to be cut down to check the waters in the breach. The emperor going to the river saw it bursting open the barriers. Touched with the failure of the work to check the inundation, he made a song in two parts to commemorate the misfortune. The soldiers meantime filled the breach with their faggots at Hu tsi and erected above it an imperial lodge. It was called Siuen fang kung.

HYMN.

1. There is a breach in the river at Hu tsi. What shall be done?

2. How vast and wide-spreading are the waters! The river will be everywhere.

3. If the river is everywhere, the land cannot enjoy peace.

4. The workmen never end their toil. The Yü mountain is even with the waters.

5. The Yü mountain being even with the waters, the wide country is overflowed.

6. The fishes have no sorrow. Close at hand are the winter days.

7. The river, abandoning the right path, no longer flows in its old bed.

8. Alligators and dragons rush forward. Unrestrained they wander far.

9. A return to the old stream. Will a god effect this by his abundant kindness?

10. Had I not offered the mountain sacrifice, how should I have known what is outside the human sphere?

11. Let him speak for me to the River God, asking him why he is not kind.

12. Why does he cause this overflow, bringing sorrow on my people?

13. K'i sang is floating. The Hwai and the Sï are brimming full.

14. After so long time, without turning back, the waters are still slow to retreat.

SECOND PART.

15. The river, with its boiling surging tide, flows on without end.

16. The waters, returning from the north, flow on swiftly past all difficulties.

17. The men pull with long ropes and submerge the lovely jade.

18. The water god has consented, yet the faggots do not cling.

19. That the faggots do not cling, is the fault of the river guardsmen.

20. The burning has left too little brush-wood. Alas! how could the water be checked?

21. The bamboo grove is cut down to strengthen the stone breakwater.

22. The Siuen fang barrier is completed and all happiness comes with it.

The Chinese friend who helped me in this translation thinks that this ode is not equal in graceful winding elegance of phraseology to the poem which follows it, called Hymn of the Autumn Wind. I told him that in my opinion there was in that poem nothing so striking as the picture of the army of attendant officers each carrying a faggot to bank up the bursting river, or as the personification of the river god. He remarked of this poem that it is archaically plain, ku p'u, and on this account agreeable.

The personification of the river god was very common in that age, as in Chü yuen's poems and in Chwang tsï.

The emperor, when returning from Tai shan westward to his capital in Shen si, would pass near Hu tsï on the Yellow River on his

way to Honan. The Hwai river mentioned is the stream to the south flowing into the Yellow sea on the south of Shantung promontory. The Sï river which is mentioned is in sight from Tai shan where the sacrifice was performed.

In this poem we have two remarkable facts in regard to the rising and departing tone. It is the first known poem in which words ending in a consonant rhyme in shang sheng; the words being 滿 man and 緩 hwan, slow. It is also the first poem in which occurs a rhyme in Ch'ü sheng with vowel finals 沛 p'ei and 外 ngoi. It lays the last stone on the building up of Shang sheng which had previously since the Hia dynasty been limited to words with vowel finals. It constitutes the foundation of the structure we call Ch'ü sheng, which slowly grew to the dimensions it has in the mandarin tongue and was complete in about the year A.D. 1000 or 1200.

If we seek a historical cause for the reign of Han Wu ti being an epoch in tone history, we find it in the pacification of the empire by Ch'in shi hwang in the preceding century. The reduction of a country to unity tends to reduce speech to unity also. The national mind, which made language first, made literature afterwards, and the one is the antitype of the other. Poetry and tone are contemporaneous. What tone is to language, rhyme is to poetry. Both are gradually developed and to some extent each is a measure of the other. Hence the poetry of the early Han is useful in fixing the chronology of tone changes.

J. EDKINS.

CHINESE ROOTS ENDING IN P, T, K, OR A VOWEL.

(Continued from Vol. XIV., page 146.)

而 er 5 ni, nik, and, and further. Root, a verb of marking or cutting.

兒 5, ni, ngik, son. Probably same as 孩 hai, boy. Ultimate root 包 pok, carry, wrap. But I should expect to find that this was pop at an earlier stage.

耳 6, ni, nip, ear. Root nip, the sound of whispering 葉 yep, dep, leaf. Named from nip 'ear' on account of likeness in shape. Mongol, lapchi, 'leaf.'

爾 6 ni, nip, you. Root, a demonstrative.

邇 near, may be derived from whispering, niep.

二 7, ni, nik, ngik, two. From cutting, bisecting.

Among these words 而, 兒, and 二 have k, while 耳 and 爾 have p final. In Chalmers' Kanghi seven words with 兒 have final k, while one has final t. One word with 二 has k. Five words with 而 have k and three have p, while one has t. Sixty-five words with 耳 have p, while one has k. Three words with 爾 have p. Chalmers' Kanghi* is extremely useful for philological investigation. There is no other book by the use of which these results could be so easily reached.

We know by 法 and 乏 which have t in Canton and Amoy and p in Tie chiu† and in the Tonic Dictionaries, that p becomes

* The spelling in Chalmers needs to be checked by reference to Kanghi. For example 棁 he gives 詽 nget, but in Kanghi it is 倪結 out of the 集韻 which we find to be a much later authority than the Kwang yun. The first syllabic spelling in Chalmers is the oldest.

† 乏 has however t in Tie chiu.