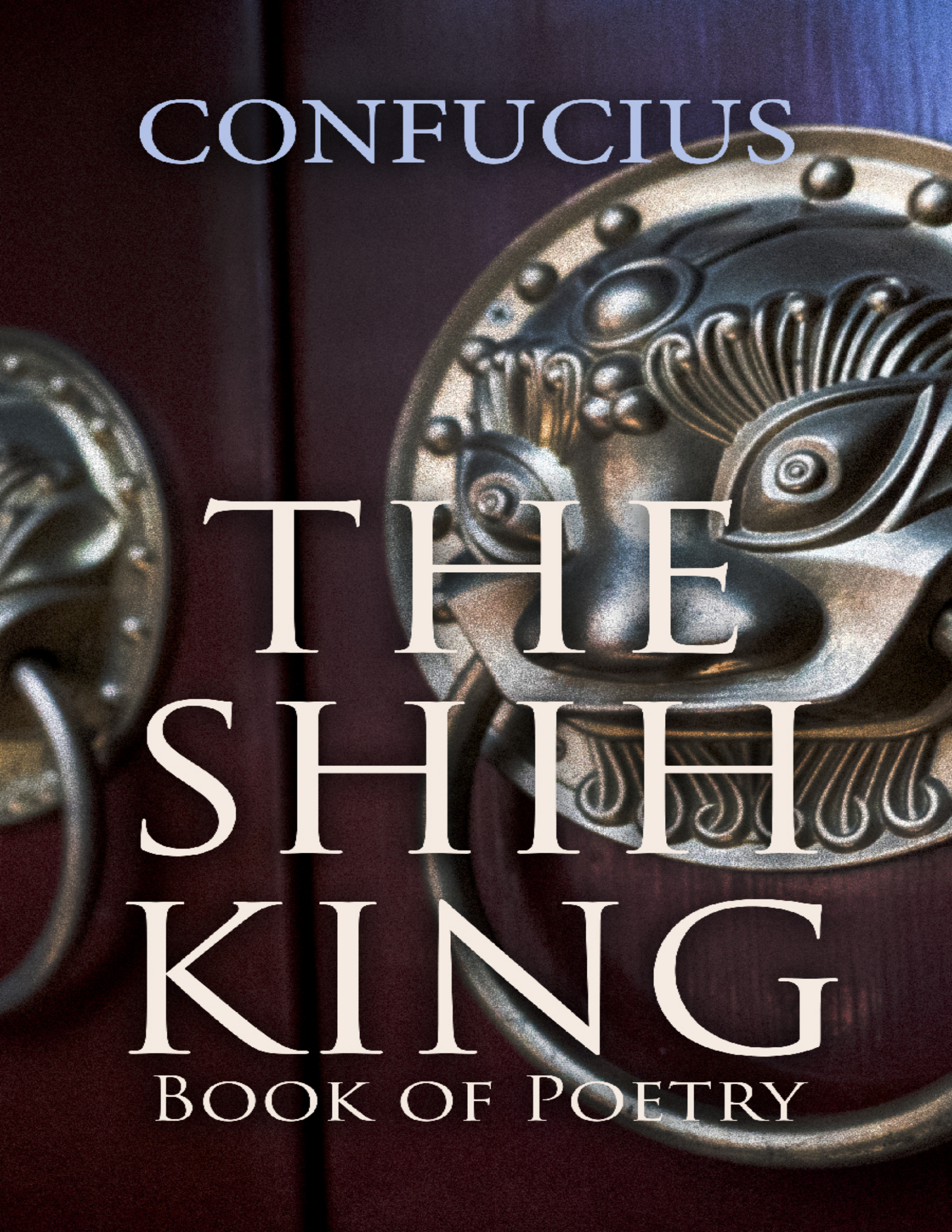
CONFUCIUS

THE SHIH KING

BOOK OF POETRY



Confucius

The Shih King: Book of Poetry

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CHAPTER I.
THE NAME AND CONTENTS OF THE CLASSIC.

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1. Among the Chinese classical books next after the Shû in point of antiquity comes the Shih or Book of Poetry.

The character Shû [1], as formed by the combination of two others, one of which signified 'a pencil,' and the other 'to speak,' supplied, we saw in its structure, an indication of its primary significance, and furnished a clue to its different applications. The character Shih [2] was made on a different principle, that of phonetical formation, in the peculiar sense of these words when applied to a large class of Chinese terms. The significative portion of it is the character for 'speech,' but the other half is merely phonetical, enabling us to approximate to its pronunciation or name. The meaning of the compound has to be learned from its usage. Its most common significations are 'poetry,' a poem, or poems,' and a collection of poems.' This last is its meaning when we speak of the Shih or the Shih King.

The earliest Chinese utterance that we have on the subject of poetry is that in the Shû by the ancient Shun, when he said to his Minister of Music, 'Poetry is the Expression of earnest thought, and singing, is the prolonged utterance of that expression.' To the same effect is the

language of a Preface to the Shih, sometimes ascribed to Confucius and certainly older than our Christian era: 'Poetry is the product of earnest thought. Thought cherished in the mind becomes earnest; then expressed in words, it becomes poetry. The feelings move inwardly, and are embodied in words. When words are insufficient for them, recourse is had to sighs and exclamations. When sighs and exclamations are insufficient for them, recourse is had to the prolonged utterance of song. When this again is insufficient, unconsciously the hands begin to move and the feet to dance. . . . . To set forth correctly the successes and failures (of government), to affect Heaven and Earth, and to move spiritual beings, there is no readier instrument than poetry.'

Rhyme, it may be added here, is a necessary accompaniment of poetry in the estimation of the Chinese. Only in a very few pieces of the Shih is it neglected.

2. The Shih King contains 305 Pieces and the titles of six others. The most recent of them are assigned to the reign of king Ting of the *K*âu dynasty, B.C. 606 to 586, and the oldest, forming a group of only five, to the period of the Shang dynasty which preceded that of Kâu, B.C. 1766 to 1123. Of those five, the latest piece should be referred to the twelfth century B.C., and the most ancient may have been composed five centuries earlier. All the other pieces in the Shih have to be distributed over the time between Ting and king Wăn, the founder of the line of *K*âu. The distribution, however, is not equal nor continuous. There were some reigns of which we do not have a single Poetical fragment.

The whole collection is divided into four parts, called the Kwo Făng, the Hsiâo Yâ, the Tâ Yâ, and the Sung.

The Kwo Făng, in fifteen Books, contains 160 pieces, nearly all of them short, and descriptive of manners and

events in several of the feudal states of *K*âu. The title has been translated by The Manners of the Different States, 'Les Mœurs des Royaumes,' and, which I prefer, by Lessons from the States.

The Hsiâo Yâ, or Lesser Yâ, in eight Books, contains seventy-four pieces and the titles of six others, sung at gatherings of the feudal princes, and their appearances at the royal court. They were produced in the royal territory, and are descriptive of the manners and ways of the government in successive reigns. It is difficult to find an English word that shall fitly represent the Chinese Yâ as here used. In his Latin translation of the Shih, p. Lacharme translated Hsiâo Yâ by 'Quod rectum est, sed inferiore ordine,' adding in a note:--'Siâo Yâ, latine Parvum Rectum, quia in hac Parte mores describuntur, recti illi quidem, qui tamen nonnihil a recto deflectunt.' But the manners described are not less correct or incorrect, as the case may be, than those of the states in the former Part or of the kingdom in the next. I prefer to call this Part 'Minor Odes of the Kingdom,' without attempting to translate the term Yâ.

The Tâ Yâ or Greater Yâ, in three Books, contains thirty-one pieces, sung on great occasions at the royal court and in the presence of the king. p. Lacharme called it 'Magnum Rectum (Quod rectum est superiore ordine).' But there is the same objection here to the use of the word 'correct' as in the case of the pieces of the previous Part. I use the name 'Major Odes of the Kingdom.' The greater length and dignity of most of the pieces justify the distinction of the two Parts into Minor and Major.

The Sung, also in three Books, contains forty pieces, thirty-one of which belong to the sacrificial services at the royal court of *K*âu; four, to those of the marquises of Lû; and five to the corresponding sacrifices of the kings of Shang. p.

Lacharme denominated them correctly 'Parentales Cantus.' In the Preface to the Shih, to which I have made reference above, it is said, 'The Sung are pieces in admiration of the embodied manifestation of complete virtue, announcing to the spiritual Intelligences their achievement thereof.' *K*û Hsî's account of the Sung was--'Songs for the Music of the Ancestral Temple;' and that of *K*iang Yung of the present dynasty--'Songs for the Music at Sacrifices.' I have united these two definitions, and call the Part--'Odes of the Temple and the Altar.' There is a difference between the pieces of Lû and the other two collections in this Part, to which I will call attention in giving the translation of them.

From the above account of the contents of the Shih, it will be seen that only the pieces in the last of its four Parts are professedly of a religious character. Many of those, however, in the other Parts, especially the second and third, describe religious services, and give expression to religious ideas in the minds of their authors.

3. Some of the pieces in the Shih are ballads, some are songs, some are hymns, and of others the nature can hardly be indicated by any English denomination They have often been spoken of by the general name of odes, understanding by that term lyric poems that were set to music.

My reason for touching here on this point is the earliest account of the Shih, as a collection either already formed or in the process of formation, that we find in Chinese literature. In the Official Book of *K*âu, generally supposed to be a work of the twelfth or eleventh century B.C., among the duties of the Grand Music-Master there is 'the teaching,' (that is, to the musical performers,) 'the, six classes of poems:--the Făng; the Fû; the Pî; the Hsing; the Yâ; and the Sung.' That the collection of the Shih, as it now is, existed so early as the date assigned to the Official Book could not be;

but we find the same account of it given in the so-called Confucian Preface. The Făng, the Yâ, and the Sung are the four Parts of the classic described in the preceding paragraph, the Yâ embracing both the Minor and Major Odes of the Kingdom. But what were the Fû, the Pî, and the Hsing? We might suppose that they were the names of three other distinct Parts or Books. But they were not so. Pieces so discriminated are found in all the four Parts, though there are more of them in the first two than in the others.

The Fû may be described as Narrative pieces, in which the writers tell what they have to say in a simple, straightforward manner, without any hidden meaning reserved in the mind. The metaphor and other figures of speech enter into their composition as freely as in descriptive poems in any other language.

The Pî are Metaphorical pieces, in which the poet has under his language a different meaning from what it expresses,--a meaning which there should be nothing in that language to indicate. Such a piece may be compared to the Æsopic fable; but, while it is the object of the fable to inculcate the virtues of morality and prudence, an historical interpretation has to be sought for the metaphorical pieces of the Shih. Generally, moreover, the moral of the fable is subjoined to it, which is never done. in the case of these pieces.

The Hsing have been called Allusive pieces. They are very remarkable, and more numerous than the metaphorical. They often commence with a couple of lines which are repeated without change, or with slight rhythmical changes, in all the stanzas. In other pieces different stanzas have allusive lines peculiar to themselves. Those lines are descriptive, for the most part, of some object or circumstance in the animal or vegetable world,

and after them the poet proceeds to his proper subject. Generally, the allusive lines convey a meaning harmonizing with those which follow, where an English poet would begin the verses with Like or As. They are really metaphorical, but the difference between an allusive and a metaphorical piece is this,--that in the former the writer proceeds to state the theme which his mind is occupied with, while no such intimation is given in the latter. Occasionally, it is difficult, not to say impossible, to discover the metaphorical idea in the allusive lines, and then we can only deal with them as a sort of refrain.

In leaving this subject, it is only necessary to say further that the allusive, the metaphorical, and the narrative elements sometimes all occur in the same piece.

Footnotes

1. 

2. 

CHAPTER II.
THE SHIH BEFORE CONFUCIUS, AND WHAT, IF ANY, WERE HIS LABOURS UPON IT.

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1. Sze-mâ *Kh*ien, in his memoir of Confucius, says:--'The old poems amounted to more than 3000. Confucius removed those which were only repetitions of others, and selected those which would be serviceable for the inculcation of propriety and righteousness. Ascending as high as Hsieh and Hâu-*k*î, and descending through the prosperous eras of Yin and Kâu to the times of decadence under kings Yû and Lî, he selected in all 305 pieces, which he sang over to his lute, to bring them into accordance with the musical style of the Shâo, the Wû, the Yâ, and the Făng.'

In the History of the Classical Books in the Records of the Sui Dynasty (A.D.589 to 618), it is said:--'When royal benign rule ceased, and poems were no more collected, *K*ih, the Grand Music-Master of Lû, arranged in order those that were existing, and made a copy of them. Then Confucius expurgated them; and going up to the Shang dynasty, and coming down to the state of Lû, he compiled altogether 300 pieces.'

*K*û Hsî, whose own standard work on the Shih appeared in A.D. 1178, declined to express himself positively on the expurgation of the odes, but summed up his view of what Confucius did for them in the following words:--'Royal methods had ceased, and poems were no more collected. Those which were extant were full of errors, and wanting in

arrangement. When Confucius returned from Wei to Lû, he brought with him the odes that he had gotten in other states, and digested them, along with those that were to be found in Lû, into a collection of 300 pieces.'

I have not been able to find evidence sustaining these representations, and must adopt the view that, before the birth of Confucius, the Book of Poetry existed, substantially the same as it was at his death, and that while he may have somewhat altered the arrangement of its Books and pieces, the service which he rendered to it was not that of compilation, but the impulse to study it which he communicated to his disciples.

2. If we place *Kh*ien's composition of the memoir of Confucius in B.C. 100, nearly four hundred years will have elapsed between the death of the sage and any statement to the effect that he expurgated previously existing poems, or compiled the. collection that we now have; and no writer in the interval affirmed or implied any such things. The further statement in the Sui Records about the Music-Master of Lû is also without any earlier confirmation. But independently of these considerations, there is ample evidence to prove, first, that the poems current before Confucius were not by any means so numerous as *Kh*ien says, and, secondly, that the collection of 300 pieces or thereabouts, digested under the same divisions as in the present classic, existed before the sage's time.

3. i. It would not be surprising, if, floating about and current among the people of China in the sixth century before our era, there had been more than 3000 pieces of poetry. The marvel is that such was not the case. But in the Narratives of the States, a work of the *K*âu dynasty, and ascribed by many to Zo *Kh*iû-ming, there occur quotations from thirty-one poems, made by statesmen and others, all

anterior to Confucius; and of those poems there are not more than two which are not in the present classic. Even of those two, one is an ode of it quoted under another name. Further, in the *Z*o *K*wan, certainly the work of *Kh*iû-ming, we have quotations from not fewer than 219 poems, of which only thirteen are not found in the classic. Thus of 250 poems current in China before the supposed compilation of the Shih, 236 are found in it, and only fourteen are absent. To use the words of *K*âo Yî, a scholar of the present dynasty, 'If the poems existing in Confucius' time had been more than 3000, the quotations of poems now lost in these two works should have been ten times as numerous as the quotations from the 305 pieces said to have been preserved by him, whereas they are only between a twenty-first and twenty-second part of the existing pieces. This is sufficient to show that *Kh*ien's statement is not worthy of credit.'

ii. Of the existence of the Book of Poetry before Confucius, digested in four Parts, and much in the same order as at present, there may be advanced the following proofs:--

First. There is the passage in the Official Book of *K*âu, quoted and discussed in the last paragraph of the preceding chapter. We have in it a distinct reference to poems, many centuries before the sage, arranged and classified in the same way as those of the existing Shih. Our Shih, no doubt, was then in the process of formation.

Second. Lî the ninth piece of the sixth decade of the Shih, Part II, an ode assigned to the time of king Yû, B.C. 78, to 771, we. have the words,

'They sing the Yâ and the Nan,
Dancing to their flutes without error.'

So early, therefore, as the eighth century B.C. there was a collection of poems, of which some bore the name of the Nan, which there is much reason to suppose were the *K*âu Nan and the Shâo Nan, forming the first two Books of the first Part of the present Shih; and of which others bore the name of the Yâ, being, probably, the earlier pieces that now compose a large portion of the second and third Parts.

Third. In the narratives of *Z*o *Kh*iû-ming, under the twenty-ninth year of duke Hsiang, B.C. 544, when Confucius was only seven or eight years old, we have an account of a visit to the court of Lû by an envoy from Wû, an eminent statesman of the time, and a man of great learning. We are told that as he wished to hear the music of *K*âu, which he could do better in Lû than in any other state, they sang to him the odes of the *K*âu Nan and the Shâo Nan; those of Phei, Yung, and Wei; of the Royal Domain; of Kăng; of *Kh*î; of Pin; of *Kh*in; of Wei; of Thang; of *Kh*ăn; of Kwei; and of *Z*hâo. They sang to, him also the odes of the Minor Yâ and the Greater Yâ; and they sang finally the pieces of the Sung. We have thus, existing in the boyhood of Confucius, what we may call the present Book of Poetry, with its Fang, its Yâ, and its Sung. The only difference discernible is slight,--in the order in which the Books of the Făng followed one another.

Fourth. We may appeal in this matter to the words of Confucius himself. Twice in the Analects he speaks of the Shih as a collection consisting of 300 pieces [1]. That work not being made on any principle of chronological order, we cannot positively assign those sayings to any particular years of Confucius' life; but it is, I may say, the unanimous opinion of Chinese critics that they were spoken before the time to which Khien and *K*û Hsî refer his special labour on the Book of Poetry.

To my own mind the evidence that has been adduced is decisive on the points which I specified. The Shih, arranged very much as we now have it, was current in China before the time of Confucius, and its pieces were in the mouths of statesmen and scholars, constantly quoted by them on festive and other occasions. Poems not included in it there doubtless were, but they were comparatively few. Confucius may have made a copy for the use of himself and his disciples; but it does not appear that he rejected any pieces which had been previously received into the collection, or admitted any which had not previously found a place in it.

4. The question now arises of what Confucius did for the Shih, if, indeed, he did anything at all. The only thing from which we can hazard an opinion on the point we have from himself. In the Analects, IX, xiv, he tells us:--'I returned from Wei to Lû, and then the music was reformed, and the pieces in the Yâ and the Sung received their proper places.' The return from Wei to Lû took place only five years before the sage's death. He ceased from that time to take an active part in political affairs, and solaced himself with music, the study of the ancient literature of his nation, the writing of 'the Spring and Autumn,' and familiar intercourse with those of his disciples who still kept around him. He reformed the music,--that to which the pieces of the Shih were sung; but wherein the reformation consisted we cannot tell. And he gave to the pieces of the Yâ and the Sung their proper places. The present order of the Books in the Făng, slightly differing from what was common in his boyhood, may have now been determined by him. More than this we cannot say.

While we cannot discover, therefore, any peculiar and important labours of Confucius on the Shih, and we have it now, as will be shown in the next chapter, substantially as he found it already compiled to his hand, the subsequent

preservation of it may reasonably be attributed to the admiration which he expressed for it, and the enthusiasm for it with which he sought to inspire his disciples. It was one of the themes on which he delighted to converse with them [2]. He taught that it is from the poems that the mind receives its best stimulus [3]. A man ignorant of them was, in his opinion, like one who stands with his face towards a wall, limited in his view, and unable to advance [4]. Of the two things that his son could specify as enjoined on him by the sage, the first was that he should learn the odes [5]. In this way Confucius, probably, contributed largely to the subsequent preservation of the Shih, the preservation of the tablets on which the odes were inscribed, and the preservation of it in the memory of all who venerated his authority, and looked up to him as their master.

Footnotes

1. In stating that the odes were 300, Confucius probably preferred to use the round number. There are, as I said in the 'former chapter, altogether 305 pieces, which is the number given by Sze-mâ *Kh*ien. There are also the titles of six others. It is contended by *K*û Hsî and many other scholars that these titles were only the names of tunes. More likely is the view that the text of the pieces so styled was lost after Confucius' death.
2. Analects, VII, xvii.
3. Analects, VIII, viii, XVII, ix.
4. Analects, XVII, x.
5. Analects, XVI, xiii.

CHAPTER III.
THE SHIH FROM THE TIME OF CONFUCIUS TILL THE GENERAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENT TEXT.

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1. Of the attention paid to the study of the Shih from the death of Confucius to the rise of the *Kh*in dynasty, we have abundant evidence in the writings of his the grandson Ƹze-sze, of Mencius, and of Hsün *Kh*ing. One of the acknowledged distinctions of Mencius is his acquaintance with the odes, his quotations from which are very numerous; and Hsün *Kh*ing survived the extinction of the *K*âu dynasty, and lived on into the times of *Kh*in.

2. The Shih shared in the calamity which all the other classical works, excepting the Yî, suffered, when the tyrant of *Kh*in issued his edict for their destruction. But I have shown, in the Introduction to the Shû, p. 7, that that edict was in force for less than a quarter of a century. The odes were all, or very nearly all 1, recovered; and the reason assigned for this is, that their preservation depended on the memory of scholars more than on their inscription on tablets of bamboo and on silk.

3. Three different texts of the Shih made their appearance early in the Han dynasty, known as the Shih of Lû, of *Kh*î, and of Han; that is, the Book of Poetry was recovered from three different quarters. Liû Hin's Catalogue of the Books in the Imperial Library of Han (B.C. 6 to 1)

commences, on the Shih King, with a collection of the three texts, in twenty-eight chapters.

i. Immediately after the mention of the general collection in the Catalogue come the titles of two works of commentary on the text of Lû. The former of them was by a Shăn Phei of whom we have some account in the Literary Biographies of Han. He was a native of Lû, and had received his own knowledge of the odes from a scholar of Khî, called Fâu Khiû-po. He was resorted to by many disciples, whom he taught to repeat the odes. When the first emperor of the Han dynasty was passing through Lû, Shan followed him to the capital of that state, and had an interview with him. Subsequently the emperor Wû (B.C. 140 to 87), in the beginning of his reign, sent for him to court when he was more than eighty years old; and he appears to have survived a considerable number of years beyond that advanced age. The names of ten of his disciples are given, all of them men of eminence, and among them Khung An-kwo. Rather later, the, most noted adherent of the school of Lû was Wei Hsien, who arrived at the dignity of prime minister (from B.C. 71 to 67), and published the Shih of Lû in Stanzas and Lines. Up and down in the Books of Han and Wei are to be found quotations of the odes, that must have been taken from the professors of the Lû recension; but neither the text nor the writings on it long survived. They are said to have perished during the *K*in dynasty (A.D.265 to 419). When the Catalogue of the Sui Library was made, none of them were existing.

ii. The Han Catalogue mentions five different works on the Shih of *Kh*î. This text was from a Yüan Kû, a native of Khî, about whom we learn, from the same collection of Literary Biographies, that he was one of the great scholars of the court in the time of the emperor *K*ing (B.C. 156 to

141),--a favourite with him, and specially distinguished for his knowledge of the odes and his advocacy of orthodox Confucian doctrine. He died in the succeeding reign of Wû, more than ninety years old; and we are told that all the scholars of *Khî* who got a name in those days for their acquaintance with the Shih sprang from his school. Among his disciple's was the well-known name of Hsiâ-hâu Shih-*kh*ang, who communicated his acquisitions to Hâu *3h*ang, a native of the present Shan-tung province, and author of two of the works in the Han Catalogue. Hâu had three disciples of note, and by them the Shih of *Khî* was transmitted to others, whose names, with quotations from their writings, are scattered through the Books of Han. Neither text nor commentaries, however, had a better fate than the Shih of Lû. There is no mention of them in the Catalogue of Sui. They are said to have perished even before the rise of the *K*in dynasty.

iii. The text of Han was somewhat more fortunate. Hin's Catalogue contains the names of four works, all by Han Ying, whose surname is thus perpetuated in the text of the Shih that emanated from him. He was a native, we are told, of Yen, and a great scholar in the time of the emperor Wăn (B.C. 179 to 155), and on into the reigns of *K*ing and Wû. 'He laboured,' it is said, 'to unfold the meaning of the odes, and published an Explanation of the Text., and Illustrations of the Poems, containing several myriads of characters. His text was somewhat different from the texts of Lû and *Khî*, but substantially of the same meaning.' Of course, Han founded a school; but while almost all the writings of his followers soon perished, both the works just mentioned continued on through the various dynasties to the time of Sung. The Sui Catalogue contains the titles of his Text and two works on it; the Thang, those of his Text and his Illustrations; but when

we come to the Catalogue of Sung, published under the Yüan dynasty, we find only the Illustrations, in ten books or chapters; and Âu-yang Hsiû (A.D. 1017 to 1072) tells us that in his time this was all of Han that remained. It continues entire, or nearly so, to the present day.

4. But while those three different recensions of the Shih all disappeared, with the exception of a single treatise of Han Ying, their unhappy fate was owing not more to the convulsions by which the empire was often rent, and the consequent destruction of literary monuments such as we have witnessed in China in our own day, than to the appearance of a fourth text, which displaced them by its superior correctness, and the ability with which it was advocated and commented on. This was what is called the Text of Mâo. It came into the field rather later than the others; but the Han Catalogue contains the Shih of Mâo, in twenty-nine chapters, and a Commentary on it in thirty-nine. According to *K*ãng Hsüan, the author of this was a native of Lû, known as Mâo Hăng or 'the Greater Mâo,' who had been a disciple, we are told by Lü Teh-ming, of Hsün *Kh*ing. The work is lost. He had communicated his knowledge of the Shih, however, to another Mâo,--Mâo *K*ang, 'the Lesser Mao,' who was a great scholar, at the court of king Hsien of Ho-*k*ien, a son of the emperor *K*ing. King Hsien was one of the most diligent labourers in the recovery of the ancient books, and presented the text and work of Hang at the court of his father,--probably in B.C. 129. Mâo *K*ang published Explanations of the Shih, in twenty-nine chapters,--a work which we still possess; but it was not till the reign of Phing (A.D. 1 to 9) that Mâo's recension was received into the Imperial College, and took its place along with those of Lû, *Kh*î, and Han Ying.

The Chinese critics nave carefully traced the line of scholars who had charge of Mâo's Text and Explanations down to the reign of Phing. The names of the men and their works are all given. By the end of the first quarter of our first century we find the most famous scholars addicting themselves to Mâo's text. The well-known *K*iâ Khwei (A.D. 30 to 101) published a work on the Meaning and Difficulties of Mâo's Shih, having previously compiled a digest of the differences between its text and those of the other three recensions, at the command of the emperor Ming (A.D. 58 to 75). The equally celebrated Mâ Yung (A.D. 79 to 166) followed with another commentary;--and we arrive at Kang Hsüan or *K*ăng Khang-*kh*ăng (A.D. 127 to 200), who wrote a Supplementary Commentary to the Shih of Mâo, and a Chronological Introduction to the Shih. The former of these two works complete, and portions of the latter, are still extant. After the time of Kăng the other three texts were little heard of, while the name of the commentators on Mâo's text speedily becomes legion. It was inscribed, moreover, on the stone tablets of the emperor Ling (A.D. 168 to 189). The grave of Mâo *K*ăng is still shown near the village of *Ʒ*un-fû, in the departmental district of Ho-*k*ien, *K*ih-lî.

5. Returning now to what I said in the second paragraph, it will be granted that the appearance of three different and independent texts, soon after the rise of the Ha dynasty, affords the most satisfactory a evidence of the recovery of the Book of Poetry as it had continued from the time of Confucius. Unfortunately, only fragments of those texts remain now; but they were, while they were current, diligently compared with one another, and with the fourth text of Mâo, which subsequently got the field to itself. When a collection is made of their peculiar readings, so far as it

can now be done, it is clear that their variations from one another and from Mâo's text arose from the alleged fact that the preservation of the odes was owing to their being transmitted by recitation. The rhyme helped the memory to retain them, and while wood, bamboo, and silk had all been consumed by the flames of *Kh*in, when the time of repression ceased, scholars would be eager to rehearse their stores. It was inevitable, and more so in China than in a country possessing an alphabet, that the same sounds when taken down by different writers should be represented by different characters.

On the whole, the evidence given above is as full as could be desired in such a case, and leaves no reason for us to hesitate in accepting the present received text of the Shih as a very close approximation to that which was current in the time of Confucius.

Footnotes

1. All, in fact, unless we except the six pieces of Part II, of which we have only the titles. It is contended by *K*û Hsî and others that the text of these had been lost before the time of Confucius. It may have been lost, however, after the sage's death; see note on p. 283.

CHAPTER IV.
THE FORMATION OF THE COLLECTION OF THE SHIH

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HOW IT CAME TO BE SO SMALL AND INCOMPLETE; THE INTERPRETATION AND AUTHORS OF THE PIECES; ONE POINT OF TIME CERTAINLY INDICATED IN IT; AND THE CONFUCIAN PREFACE.

1. It has been shown above, in the second chapter, that the Shih existed as a collection of poetical pieces before the time of Confucius [1]. In order to complete this Introduction to it, it is desirable to give some account of the various subjects indicated in the heading of the present chapter.

How were the odes collected in the first place? In his Account of a Conversation concerning 'a Right Regulation of Governments for the Common Good of Mankind' (Edinburgh, 1704), p. 10, Sir Andrew Fletcher, of Saltoun, tells us the opinion of 'a very wise man,' that 'if a man were permitted to make all the ballads of a nation, he need not care who should make its laws.' A writer in the Spectator, no. 502, refers to a similar opinion as having been entertained in England earlier than the time of Fletcher. 'I have heard,' he says, 'that a minister of state in the reign of Elizabeth had all manner of books and ballads brought to him, of what kind soever, and took great notice how they took with the people; upon which he would, and certainly might, very well