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Roots of the Way Deep

Su Shi and Bo Juyi

STUART SARGENT

It is well known that Su Shi (1037–1101) felt a kinship with Bo Juyi (772–846) throughout his life. From the very earliest works in his career as a poet, he was borrowing diction from his Tang predecessor. He also continued some of the traditions in which Bo Juyi pioneered, such as writing poems of topical criticism and exchanging poems with other individuals. It has even been suggested that the name he took for his plot of land in exile at Huangzhou in 1081, and the sobriquet by which he was known thereafter — Dongpo, or Eastern Slope — can be related to poems that Bo Juyi wrote on an eastern slope in another location in 819–820.¹

In this essay, however, I want to look at the year 1087, when Su Shi made especially explicit references to his identification with Bo Juyi as a predecessor. In fact, this new self-image actually replaces the Eastern Slope persona that he had developed in the years 1084–1086, especially 1085. After leaving Huangzhou in 1084, Su Shi frequently referred to himself as “The Master of Dongpo” or “the Kulapati of Dongpo.” But among the poems he wrote in 1087, the phrase “Eastern Slope” appears only once, and then not as the poet’s appellation, nor even as his own special world, but as a place where a friend’s mother had lived and was now buried.²

Bo Juyi was a widely appreciated writer at this time; one indication of this is that when the emperor wished to bestow his favor on Su Shi at the conclusion of the latter's lectures on the *Analects* in the eighth month of 1087, he did so by writing out a quatrain (*jueju*) by Bo as his gift. The first two lines of Bo Juyi's quatrain provided the basis for the seventeenth and eighteenth lines of the poem Su Shi wrote in response:

Below the silk-thread galleries [= Secretariat], documents in
silence;
in the towers of bell and drum, the clepsydra drawn-out.
Alone I sit in the yellow dusk — who is my companion?
The *ziwei* flowers face this *Ziwei* Gentleman.³

In his response, quoted in part below, Su Shi ended his line eighteen with *yong* (forever), a near synonym of the *chang* (drawn out), at the end of Bo's second line.

Nephrite Hall, closed by day, *documents in silence*;
the [alarm] bell's cord does not stir, the [time] *bell, the clepsydra*,
go on forever.
Don't say I should wield my brush for a "few lines of writing";
you must believe the times are at peace, because our ruler is
sagely.⁴

Su Shi's quatrain is part of a long and more complex poem made up of seven quatrains (each having its own rhyme); the first sixteen lines celebrate the occasion and the imperial calligraphy in elevated language. In the quatrain quoted here, the poet claims to be idle within the Nephrite Hall while peace reigns in the empire. I take line nineteen, "Don't say I should wield my brush for a 'few lines of writing,'" to mean there are no urgent affairs for Su Shi to bring to the emperor's attention — he uses a phrase from Du Fu (712–770): "[As] reminder I once memorialized in a *few lines of writing*."⁵ In the two quatrains after this one, Su claims there is no threat from the Xixia empire, offering in the last couplet to "face the purple myrtle" as a writer of edicts and draft a letter to summon the "Turfan" king to court.

Surely there is no place for overt irony in a poem addressed to one's emperor; yet one senses here Su Shi's penchant for suggesting the

opposite of what he says, the reality that is evoked in its very denial. In a note he appends to the end of his poem to explain his reference to his own willingness to “face the purple myrtle” and draft edicts, Su Shi does not specifically mention Bo Juyi, but he does link his position as drafter with the edict-drafting function of the Hanlin scholars under the Tang system. As we shall see, parallels between Su Shi’s path through the Song bureaucracy and Bo’s career in the Tang system were important to the later poet. Thus, Su must have been mindful on this occasion that Bo was administering the drafting of edicts in 821, when he wrote the quatrain describing the “purple myrtle facing” him in the silent courtyard at dusk.⁶ In fact, his reference to the cord of the alarm bell that hung in the Nephrite Hall (in Tang times, at least) not stirring in the present era of peace (line 18) may be an intentional contrast with the situation in 821, when the alarm bell started ringing by itself at night: a rebellion had begun in Hebei Circuit, and the bell would mysteriously ring faster and slower as the urgency of the military situation changed.⁷

“Nephrite Hall” in line seventeen of Su’s poem refers to the Hanlin Academy — the appellation *Yutang* being standard from Tang times on — where he has been a drafter since the ninth month of the previous year; he refers to it frequently in 1087 as a place of silence and idleness, though often in juxtaposition with an anticipated departure from the capital for his home at Meishan or other remote districts.⁸ The Secretariat (“Purple Tenuity”) to which Bo refers was also the agency to which Su Shi had been promoted in the first month of 1086. This is a coincidence that may or may not have been in the emperor’s mind when he chose his gift poem, but it was certainly a matter to which the poet himself attached significance.

In the colophon quoted below, “Recording Letian’s Poem on the Western Side Being Connected to the Eastern Department,” Su Shi contrasts Bo Juyi’s situation with his own.⁹

In [1086] I was a drafter in the Secretariat. At that time the executive officials were bothered by the fact that there were many leaks from their department and wanted to make a hedge behind the hall of the drafters to interdict their comings and goings with the department. I told them we should have [people

who are] “unceremonious and keep to the essential, [and those who are] pure and perceptive”; why plant a hedge and stick thorns into it? They all laughed and put the plan aside.¹⁰ The following year they finally made one. On a day off, I happened to read [Bo Juyi’s] collected works where he says, “They just made a little pavilion in the northern courtyard of the Western Department, planting bamboo and making a window that leads eastward to the Cavalry Department. I had a little drink with Attendant-in-Ordinary Li, and made a poem.”¹¹ Thereupon I realized that in Tang times they were able to make a window in the West Side to pass through to the Eastern Department, whereas today they cannot come and go from this department. This is regrettable!

Thus, although we do not know the date of this colophon, when in 1087 Su Shi addressed the following poem to a drafter in the Secretariat, Liu Ban (1023–1089), he must have had a comparison between himself and Bo Juyi in the back of his mind:

In the Nephrite Hall I sit alone, unendurable purity.
 Always I envy Zou and Mei’s receiving Changqing.¹²
 I am only allowed to hear, across the wall, the setting out of
 wine;
 at times, thanks to deliberations on matters, we are able to link
 our names.¹³

More direct evidence of Su Shi’s identification with Bo Juyi can be seen in a note appended by Su Shi to a quatrain Su wrote as he recalled lectures he had delivered to the emperor in the same hall in the spring and summer of the previous year:

[Bo] Letian, from being [demoted to] vice administrator at Jiangzhou [817–819], got a post as prefect of Zhongzhou [819–820]; before long, as director of the Bureau of Receptions, he administered the Drafting of Proclamations [821], and then was made drafter in the Secretariat [821–822]. Although I dare not compare myself with him, I was exiled to Huangzhou, raised up

to be administrator of Wendeng [i.e., Dengzhou], summoned as [director in] the Ministry of Rites, and then added to [the ranks of] attendants [with access to the emperor]. Our career patterns and ages are generally similar. I hope I may be blessed with the joy of idleness and ease of this old man in his late years.¹⁴

Although Su Shi's note expresses a desire to achieve the "idleness and ease" (*xianshi*) that is one side of Bo Juyi's character, what spiritual kinship did he think they shared in the context of the career steps singled out for comparison in this note? To answer that, we turn to the following quatrain, to which Su's comment is attached:

A tiny life by chance escaped a place of wind and waves;
 in late years there still remains [my] heart of iron and stone.
 Certainly it's like the old recluse of Xiangshan:
 ties to the world shallow in the end, roots of the Way deep.¹⁵

The first line appears to refer to the perilous years preceding the Yuanyou era, the second to the fact that the poet's heart remained solid through those bad times — and has in these good times, too. That is to say, his resolve to withdraw from public life is unchanged even now. "The old recluse of Xiangshan" is, of course, Bo Juyi, who in his sixties was quite involved with the Buddhist temple on the hill or mountain by that name near Luoyang.¹⁶ It is crucial to note that Su, whether he is in the Nephrite Hall or in exile, does not define the Way in terms of Buddhist, Daoist, or Confucian parameters, but by its opposition to the worldly; this opposition is the foundation of Bo Juyi's and Su Shi's "heart of iron and stone."

This same reading of Bo Juyi is evident in a poem using the rhymes of a fellow Hanlin academician, Zeng Zhao (1047–1107), the younger brother of Zeng Gong (1019–1083). Paired with another poem, it is labeled "Harmonizing Again" (Zai he);¹⁷ the crucial couplet is the second, where Su finds experiences shared with both Du Fu and Bo Juyi. Before that, he complains about seeing spots in front of his eyes and being a superfluous member of the imperial procession in which he and Zeng Zhao had participated.

- “Flowers” in the eyes, jumble-tumble; hair even-spread with frost.
- 2 A sick horse, a gaunt outrider, “only making [myself] dusty.”¹⁸
Escorting the carriage, the Reminder recklessly assumed the post of Attendant;¹⁹
- 4 Longing to return, the Junior Mentor envied the Zhu and Chen [clans].²⁰

Du Fu’s image as the ineffectual minister with high ideals is a familiar one by this time. Bo Juyi was more successful; on the other hand, his desire, when he was exalted as “junior mentor,” was to leave government. This pose was to become increasingly acceptable from his time on. Simultaneously embracing the position of the outsider yearning to get in and that of the insider ready to get out seems contradictory. Yet Su Shi, through the allusions in the last two lines quoted above, evokes both predecessors as figures for his own situation. (Although it is possible that one line is about Zeng Zhao and the rest of the poem about Su Shi, I think that is unlikely.) He is dedicated yet powerless; he has status, yet he longs for a utopian village society without conflict. Su Shi has far more political prestige than Du Fu, yet the struggles he experienced at court in 1087 obviously made him feel every bit as ineffectual as the great Tang poet. If we ask whether he will stay in service or leave, the juxtaposition of the two alternatives creates enough ambiguity to avoid our having to commit Su Shi irrevocably to anything at all, at least in his poetry.

The rest of the poem, about the burden of versifying, continues the ambiguity on a different plane:

- In my withering years this imposing sight startles my eyes, to
no purpose;
- 6 with perilous rhymes [your] unsullied poem: I struggle for the
new, in suffering.
- These final pieces, do not despise them —
- 8 pounded peppers and cinnamon retain some spiciness.

The imperial procession overwhelms the poet, and Zeng Zhao’s rhyme words are difficult to work into a poem. The final couplet seems to say

that because of these intractable rhymes, it is impossible to continue this repeated exchange any further — yet if Su's poem still has some flavor left over, it should not be rejected altogether. One could also say the poet himself is hanging on to his zest, not quite pounded out of him.²¹

A more pointed identification with Bo Juyi is found in a fascinating poem written for a painter and Daoist named Li Derou, who had apparently done Su Shi's portrait.²² The poem is built on many continuities with figures of the past, perhaps as an extension of the notion that this Li Derou is supposedly the reincarnation of a Daoist painter who had once been treated leniently by Li Derou's grandfather, an official in the southwest in the mid-1030s. The man had caused a fire and was to be executed for it, but Li's ancestor delayed the case until an amnesty for condemned criminals was declared. Finding himself pardoned at the age of eighty-one, the painter vowed to be reborn in the Li clan to repay this kindness.

Su Shi relates all this in a preface, then launches into his poem with a comparison between "General Cao," a painter much lauded by Du Fu, and Gu Kaizhi (ca. 345–406), Su's favorite painter.²³ Su Shi pretends that Cao is overrated; it is Gu Kaizhi's playful irreverence that is truly great. Clearly, these are qualities that have also come down to Li Derou. The next continuity is between Li and two "ancestors": Laozi and Yin Xi, Yin being the keeper of the pass through which Laozi was attempting to leave the declining Zhou dynasty and the man who forced him to commit his philosophy to writing. We can understand and enjoy this double identification if we know that Laozi's surname was also Li, and that the Daoist of whom Li Derou is supposedly the reincarnation was surnamed Yin.

The final two couplets introduce predecessors for Su Shi himself. To appreciate the first couplet, one must recall that Su Shi is fifty-two *sui* in 1087. This permits him to borrow language from a letter by Kong Rong (153–208): "The fiftieth year arrives suddenly; you are just fully fifty, and I have passed further by two."²⁴ But there is more than a coincidence of ages behind Su Shi's adoption of Kong's language. When he was a boy, Kong Rong gained admittance to the household of the powerful commandant Li Ying (110–169) by claiming to be related to him — a relation he later explained as being based on the fact that his

ancestor Kong Zhongni (Confucius) had supposedly once placed himself in the position of being a student of Laozi, who, being surnamed Li, could supposedly be Li Ying's ancestor.²⁵ Su Shi in the following lines thus becomes another Kong Rong, addressing another descendant of Laozi, our Li Derou:

The fiftieth year, [I've] just passed [by] two;
 14 a withered face, [you] record me now like this.
 In another time they'll point to this man of the Assembled
 Worthies
 16 and know it is the old retired scholar of Xiangshan.

It is the final couplet that brings the series of reincarnations, identity adoptions, and historical parallels around to Su Shi and Bo Juyi. Su compares his portrait to one of Bo Juyi that hung in the Hall of Assembled Worthies at the emperor's command when Bo was in the Hanlin Academy in 810 (like Su now). Bo himself mentions this portrait in a poem and its preface,²⁶ but there is a crucial difference between what is said there and Su Shi's allusion to it. Bo is writing on the occasion of a second portrait done for the Xiangshan Temple after his retirement in 842, lamenting the changes wrought in his visage and in the world by the three decades intervening between the two portraits. Su Shi's couplet blends the two images — Hanlin scholar and recluse — into a single portrait. What were two stages in the Tang poet's life, stages of entirely different character, are now two sides of a single personality, existing simultaneously. This is not unlike the Nephrite Hall-exile (or retirement) juxtaposition often seen in the poems Su Shi wrote just prior to the period under discussion.

One last reference to Bo Juyi in 1087 comes at the end of Su Shi's poem "Following the Rhymes of Zhang [Wen] Changyan's 'Happy over Rain'";²⁷ this time the comparison is between Bo and Zhang Wen, not Su Shi. Zhang has obviously written a poem expressing joy over the ending of a drought; Su Shi follows suit, giving the emperor due credit for both showing concern for the people and restoring communication between Heaven and mankind, with the hoped-for results. The final couplet (lines 7 and 8) adds a complicating twist: "In loving his lord, who

is like the Yuanhe elder? / When ‘Congratulations on Rain’ was done — it was a letter of admonition.”

Su Shi is asking the rhetorical question, “Who else but Zhang Wen writes as Bo Juyi did?” His query implies praise and approval for a poem that evidently warned the emperor (or those around him) that he must maintain his moral leadership. The “Congratulations on Rain” to which he refers was written by Bo Juyi in the fourth year (809) of the Yuanhe Period.²⁸ It is a poem Bo later listed among several he found to cause dismay and displeasure to those who heard them;²⁹ the poem piously catalogues all the virtuous actions taken by the emperor to induce Heaven to bring rain, undoubtedly exaggerating for effect, then closes with a little lecture on the duty of the sovereign to be “aware,” the duty of the minister to be “straightforward,” and the hope that affairs will continue to be worthy of “congratulations.” Indeed, the poem was equivalent to a loyal critic’s letter of advice to his ruler.

Su Shi wrote a different kind of poem: where the ninth-century poet used archaic concepts of the powers and responsibilities of the sovereign to establish religious and political tension, Su Shi’s emperor reverses the advancing drought almost effortlessly: the enthusiastic recitation of his edict around the nation has the same effect on nature as if he had toured the provinces in person. Yet Su Shi recognizes, responds to, and praises a contemporary emulation of an aspect of Bo Juyi by Zhang Wen; this has the dual effect of overtly distancing Su from that admonitory mode and covertly acknowledging what his own poem has left unspoken: that the situation in the nation remains serious. The first line of the poem states explicitly that the “brown current” has “lost its old place” or “obscured the old dwellings” of the people, depending on how one chooses to interpret it, and although it is unclear whether this refers to floods that preceded the drought or the effect of rains that have now ended the drought, it certainly suggests that rain is not always something to be welcomed.

To recapitulate and draw some conclusions: Su Shi’s evocation of Bo Juyi as his precursor is similar to the repeated allusions to his exile at Eastern Slope in the poems of the years leading up to 1087 — similar insofar as he uses this evocation to hint that he is straddling two worlds:

his present world of prestige and the world of exile, or a place of “wind and waves” and a place of “idleness and ease.” The difference is that the Eastern Slope identity looks backward in time, and the Bo Juyi image looks forward to a future withdrawal from court. Both images imply a double identity, an outward one and an inward one that coexists with it psychologically (“roots of the Way deep”) but temporally belongs to a different sphere. One has its roots in the past; the other threatens to be realized in the near future.

NOTES

1. Michael Fuller, in *The Road to East Slope: The Development of Su Shi's Poetic Voice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 271–272, gives a complete review of proposals for connecting the two Eastern Slopes, from the twelfth century in China down to modern Japanese scholarship, prudently concluding that their association must remain an open question.
2. In “Dirge for Judge Pan [Geng]’s Mother, née Li” (Pan Tuiguan mu Li shi wanci), Eastern Slope appears in the second line as a place where “all who come and go are ‘hidden’ people,” withdrawn from society. Since Su Shi goes on to speak of Pan’s mother as someone he has visited, it seems likely that she resided in the Huangzhou area. The penultimate line states the poet’s intention to go to “rivers and lakes” this year, but the last line immediately subordinates whatever other significance this proposal might have had to an image of mourning: “Evening rains, linked mountains, trees on [her] mound [showing] spring.” See *Su Dongpo Quanji* (Taibei: He-Le tushu chubanshe, 1975; a typeset version of the 1468 “Seven Collections” edition), *Qianji*, 16, p. 223; Wang Shipeng’s (1112–1171) *Jizhu fenlei Dongpo shi* in the Yuan edition reproduced in the *Sibu congkan* (cited hereafter as *SBCK*), 24, p. 453b; and Wang Wen’gao (1764–?), comp., Kong Fanli, collator and ed., and Liu Shangrong, ed., *Su Shi shiji*, 3d ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), *juan* 28, p. 1474.
 “Harmonizing with Wang [Shen] Jinqing” (He Wang Jinqing), *Qianji*, 17, p. 233; *SBCK*, 19, p. 352b, ascribed by Shi Su and most others to 1087, begins with the poet (referring to himself as *xiansheng*, “mister,” “sir”) drinking alone at Eastern Slope under the moon, with obvious echoes of Li Bo. The creation of such a “character,” and the way the poem dwells on the exile experience of the two men now recalled to service make this strongly reminiscent of the “Dongpo” poems of 1086. Our stylistic or thematic perceptions are substantially confirmed by strong external evidence from Wang Wen’gao (*Su Shi shiji*, *juan* 27, p. 1422) that the poem should, in fact, be ascribed to 1086.
3. “Purple Myrtle” (Ziwei), *Quan Tang shi* (cited hereafter as *QTS*), 442, p. 4934. Bo’s final line (and my resort to transliteration) is based on the fact that the

name of the flower is homophonous with "Purple Tenuity," which was "from 713 to 717 the official variant name of the Secretariat." See Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 557, where one also notes that the Qing Dynasty was to make the two terms homographic as well, Hall of the Purple Myrtle being an unofficial term for the Central Drafting Office.

4. "On the Fifteenth Day of the Ninth Month" (Jiuyue shiwuri), *Qianji*, 17, p. 233; *SBCK*, 11, p. 227b; *Su Shi shiji*, *juan* 29, p. 1541.
5. Du Fu, "Respectfully Responding to the Work Sent by Mr. Yan to Inscribe on the Rustic Pavilion" (Fengchou Yan Gong ji ti yeting zhi zuo), *Du Shaoling ji xiangzhu* (Commentary by Qiu Zhaoao et al., preface dated 1693; rpt. Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1974; hereafter cited as *Du Shaoling*), *juan* 11, p. 48.
6. Zhu Jincheng, *Bo Juyi nianpu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), pp. 118-119.
7. The note to Su Shi's line in *Su Shi shiji*, *juan* 29, pp. 1543-1544, places this incident "in the Changqing period," from 821 through 824, but surely it refers to the unrest of August 821 in Chengde (Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986], pp. 104-108) — about three months before Bo became a Hanlin scholar.
8. See "Planting Flowers at the Nephrite Hall: Zhou [Yin] Zhengru Has a Poem [on this]; Following His Rhymes" (Yutang caihua, Zhou Zhengru you shi, ciyun), *Qianji*, 16, p. 224; *SBCK*, 14, p. 267a; *Su Shi shiji*, *juan* 28, p. 1475); "Following the Rhymes of Zhang Shunmin's 'Going Out from the Censorate to be Assistant Prefect at Guozhou': To Detain Him" (Ciyun Zhang Shunmin zi yushi chu cui Guozhou liubie), *Qianji*, 17, p. 232; *SBCK*, 19, p. 352b; *Su Shi shiji*, 5, *juan* 29, p. 1534); and "Guo Xi's Painting of Autumn Mountains in Level Distance" (Guo Xi hua qiushan pingyuan), *Qianji*, 16, p. 229; *SBCK* 11, p. 226b; *Su Shi shiji*, *juan* 28, p. 1509; Ronald C. Egan, "Poems on Paintings: Su Shih and Huang T'ing-chien," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43.2 (1983), p. 431.

Huang Tingjian [Huang T'ing-chien] refers, in poems ascribed to 1087, to Su Shi's Nephrite Hall, but always in juxtaposition with Eastern Slope, asserting for Su Shi the exile-returned-to-power identity that Su himself is now avoiding. See "The lines of poetry of Zizhan are the marvel of the whole age," quoted in *Shangu quanji* (Sibu beiyao ed.), *Neiji*, 5, p. 3a; Kurata Junnosuke, trans., *Kō Sankoku* (Kanshi taikai, 18; Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1967), p. 138; Arai Ken, trans., *Kō Teiken* (Chūgoku shijin senshū, 7; Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1963), p. 78; Huang Baohua, *Huang Tingjian xuanji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), p. 209; "Shuangjing Tea: Sent to Zizhan" (Shuangjing cha song Zizhan), *Neiji*, 6, p. 3b; and "Following the Rhymes of Zizhan's 'Inscribed on Painted Mountains by Guo Xi'" (Ciyun Zizhan ti Guo Xi hua shan), *Neiji*, 7, p. 6a; Kurata, *Kō Sankoku*, p. 162; Huang Baohua, *Huang Tingjian xuanji*, p. 233.

9. "Ji Letian Xiye tong Dongsheng shi," *Su Shi wenji*, *juan* 68, p. 2151. The

- Western Side (*Xiye*) is the Song term for an area where most of the edict drafters in the Hanlin Academy lived, according to Yang Huan (1186–1255), as quoted in *ibid.*, *juan* 27, p. 1429. This is also the term by which Bo Juyi refers to his office in 821, when he was administrator of drafting, as Su Shi is in 1087. In the lengthy title quoted by Su Shi, Bo uses the term Western Department, but this is equivalent to Western Side: see his “Facing the Flowers in the *Western Department* and Recalling the New Blossoming Trees at Eastern Slope in Zhongzhou: Sent to Inscribe on the Eastern Tower” of 821 (*QTS*, 442, p. 4932), line 3: “My eyes of today, within the walls of the *Western Side*.”
10. The expression *jiányào qǐngtóng* (“unceremonious . . . perceptive”) seems to echo the characterization of Pei Kai (237–291) and his brother-in-law Wang Rong (234–305) as given in the *Jin shu*. Both of them rose to high office, Wang in the Department of State Affairs, and Pei in the Secretariat, but it is unclear whether this is relevant. *Tóng* (perceptive) also means “to pass through,” so part of Su Shi’s wit may involve a pun. See Richard B. Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo hsün-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), pp. 211, 212, and 214; *Jin shu*, 35, p. 1047. (I use Mather’s translation of the phrases.) One would expect that the hedge and thorns in the next line evoke a matching allusion, but I have been unable to identify it.
 11. Bo’s lengthy title in *QTS* (442, p. 4935) ends with “each inscribed [a poem] in four rhymes.” I do not know what the Cavalry Department (*jisheng*) was, and although early in the year Bo might have enjoyed a drink with Li Jian, whom he had known since around 803, the title given Li in his grave inscription (he was to die two months after Bo became administrator of edict drafting) is vice president (*shilang*) of the Ministry of Justice, making him a more exalted man than the attendant-in-ordinary (*changshi*) with whom Bo shared a drink through the window.
 12. Zou Yang and Mei Sheng (or Cheng) were rhetoricians in the retinue of the king of Liang. When Sima Xiangru (Changqing) met them, he was so pleased with their talent that he resigned his post, left the capital, and went to the Liang court to be in their company. (Burton Watson, trans., *Records of the Grand Historian of China: Translated from the Shih-chi of Ssu-ma Ch’ien* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1961], 2, p. 297.) Su Shi wishes he could do the same for Liu Ban and his nephew.
 13. Lines 1–4 of “Following the Rhymes of Liu [Ban], Jingfu’s Nephew’s ‘Riding in the Imperial Retinue’” (Ciyun Liu Gongfu shuzhi hujia), *Qianji* 17, p. 234; *SBCK* 19, p. 353b; *Su Shi shiji*, *juan* 29, p. 1549. The last line means that Su and Liu’s names occasionally appear together on position papers, and that is all the “contact” they have.
 14. “In Spring and Summer of Last Year, I Stood in Attendance in the Miying [Hall]” (Shi yi qusui chunxia shili Eying), *Qianji*, 16, p. 229; *SBCK*, 2, p. 69a; *Su Shi shiji*, *juan* 28, p. 1505. This is the fourth of four quatrains. There is some confusion among the scholiasts in Shōun Seisen (early 16th century), comp., *Shika jikkai* (movable type ed., ca. 1600; reprod. ed. Nakata Norio;

Tokyo: Bensei sha, 1970-, 1, pp. 640-642) as to when these quatrains were written (1086, 1087, or 1088); I side with Zuikei Shūhō, Ikkan Chikō, and Banri Shūku; Shi Su and Wang Wen'gao also place them in 1087. It is eerie to note that Bo Juyi asked for an assignment outside the capital in 822 and consequently went as prefect to Hangzhou, precisely as Su Shi was to do in 1089; the parallels in their careers did not stop with their rise from exile to drafting proclamations for the emperor.

15. *Su Shi shiji*, *juan* 28, p. 1507.
16. Bo paid for its revitalization in 832 and deposited one edition of his works there in 840. In view of the fact that "Xiangshan" (Incense Mountain) is also a legendary peak of some importance in Buddhist texts, we might also translate the name Bo adopted into Sanskrit as "The Kulapati of Gandhamadana." My information on Bo Juyi's life comes from the *nianpu* in Gu Zhaocang and Zhou Ruhang, eds., *Bo Juyi shixuan* (Selected Poems of Bo Juyi), Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1962.
17. *Qianji*, 16, p. 227; *SBCK*, 19, p. 351b; *Su Shi shiji*, *juan* 28, p. 1491.
18. Three words from *Book of Poetry*, ode no. 206, which begins "Do not help forward the great carriage, you will only make yourself dusty; do not think of the many anxieties, you will only make yourself ill." Bernard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes: Chinese Text, Transcription, and Translation* (Stockholm: The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950), p. 158. In the context of the procession in which Zeng Zhao and Su Shi had participated, the metaphorical dust of the ode takes on literal meaning.
19. This line borrows all its diction from the "reminder" himself (Du Fu). In "Remembering the Past" (Yixi), written in 764, Du recalled his earlier service in Chang'an: "I formerly was in close attendance, recklessly assuming the task of escorting the carriage" (*Du Shaoling*, *juan* 13, p. 48); and two years earlier, in "Respectfully Requiring the Work Sent by Mr. Yan to Inscribe on My Rustic Pavilion" (Fengchou Yan gong . . ., *ibid.*, *juan* 11, p. 48), he had already devised the service-retirement juxtaposition that was to be the foundation of Su Shi's couplet, although Du is *looking back* on the service part of it: "Escorting the carriage, I presumptuously rode a horse from the Sandy Park [Stable]; perched in obscurity, I actually angle for fish in the Brocade River." The words translated "recklessly assume" and "presumptuously" in these lines are, of course, formal self-deprecatory expressions.
20. Bo Juyi was given the prestigious title "detached junior mentor" to the heir apparent in 853 when he was in Luoyang (Zhu, *Bo Juyi nianpu*, pp. 235-254). He closes his poem "Village of the Zhu and Chen [clans]" (Zhu-Chen cun) (*JTS*, 433, p. 4780) by saying he "envies" the people of that ideal society. Arthur Waley dates the poem to 811 (*Translations from the Chinese* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941], p. 157). In 811 Bo might have passed through Xuzhou, the district where this village was located, to bring his father's body from Xiangyang, where he had died in 794, for reinterment with his mother near the capital (Zhu, *Bo Juyi nianpu*, p. 55, says only that he reburied his grandfather and father there, but not where they had been buried previously). In any case

Bo did make attestable journeys through the area in other years and did not even have to be there to write such a poem. The exact date of "Village of the Zhu and Chen [clans]" does not matter; Su Shi is simply saying that Bo Juyi looked on the tradition-bound, simple life of that village as an ideal one.

21. The couplet is cited in "Western Purity [Chamber] Poetry Talks" (Xiqing shihua) as "When I finish reading your poem, what is it like? / pounded ginger and cinnamon retain some spiciness," and Su Shi is quoted as saying this means that Zeng Zhao's original was "spicy hot." Zhao Cigong seems to be quoting this comment in his note in *SBCK*. Guo Shaoyu, however, notes that these poetry talks are possibly by Cai Tao (?-after 1147), the son of Cai Jing (1048-1126), leader of the movement to crush the "Yuanyou faction" after the turn of the century; although this book does treat the Su family and Huang Tingjian as worthy of attention and respect, other writings by Cai Tao show him to be not at all opposed to his father's views, and his poetry talks do indeed contain critical remarks on Su Shi and figures associated with him and "alterations of the facts," as in the case of this couplet. In any case, both the authorship and the textual integrity of the "Western Purity [Chamber] Poetry Talks" are clouded with doubts. There is no reason to take its version of our couplet seriously. See Guo's *Song shihua kao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), pp. 20-22.
22. "Presented to Daoist Li" (Zeng Li Daoshi), *Qianji*, 17, p. 232; *SBCK*, 4, p. 105b; *Su Shi shiji*, juan 29, p. 1533.
23. See Du Fu's poem describing General Cao, "Song on Painting" (Danqing yin), *Du Shaoling*, juan 13, p. 40. Here and on the other two occasions in 1087 when Gu Kaizhi is mentioned, it is always by his youthful appellation, Tiger Head. At the end of the second of two "Guo Xi's Autumn Mountains in Level Distance," Su Shi uses Tiger Head Gu in an allusion-of-substitution to stand for Guo Xi. In another poem, for the avid collector of calligraphy Mi Fu (1052-1107), who arrived in the capital in the sixth month, Su alludes to Mi's penchant for obtaining valuable paintings or works of calligraphy by various devious means, then asks, who could be as insouciant as addlepated Tiger Head was about having his art stolen? Gu Kaizhi lent a chest of valuable paintings to Huan Xuan (369-404); when the chest was returned empty, though still sealed, Gu did not get angry but merely joked that "wondrous paintings communicate with the numinous; they transformed themselves and departed, indeed, like people becoming immortals" (*Jin shu*, 92, p. 2405). Su Shi is either warning Mi Fu that people no longer take such a relaxed attitude toward the theft of art, or gently chiding him for being in his covetousness unlike Gu Kaizhi. "Two Poems Following the Rhymes of Mi Fu's Postscript-colophons at the End of Calligraphy by the Two Wangs" (Ciyun Mi Fu er Wang shu bawei ershou), *Qianji*, 17, p. 232; *SBCK*, 11, p. 227a; *Su Shi shiji*, juan 29, p. 1536.
24. "Letter on Sheng Xiaozhang" (Lun Sheng Xiaozhang shu), *Wen xuan* 41.
25. Mather, *Shih-shuo hsin-yü*, p. 26.
26. "Poem on a Portrait of the Retired Scholar of Xiangshan" (Xiangshan jushi xiezhen shi), *QTS*, 459, p. 5222.

27. "Ciyun Zhang Changyan 'Xiyu,'" *Qianji*, 16, p. 229; *SBCK*, 7, p. 152a; *Su Shi shiji*, *juan* 28, p. 1510.
28. *QTS*, 424, pp. 4653-4654.
29. This, in his important "Letter to Yuan the Ninth" (Yu Yuan Jiu shu) of 815, Hiraoka Takeo and Imai Kiyoshi, eds., *Hakushi monshu*, 2 (Kyoto: Kyōtō Daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūjō, 1972), text no. 1486, p. 206. See Gu and Zhou, *Bo Juyi shixuan*, pp. 351 and 355, for the dates of the poem and letter.

GLOSSARY

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|---|---|
| Banri Shūku 万里集九 | Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 |
| Bo Juyi 白居易 | Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 |
| Cai Jing 蔡京 | Guo Xi hua qiushan pingyuan 郭熙
畫秋山平遠 |
| Cai Tao 蔡條 | He Wang Jinqing 和王晉卿 |
| chang 長 | Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 |
| Changqing 長卿 | Huangzhou 黃州 |
| changshi 常侍 | Huan Xuan 桓玄 |
| Chengde 成德 | Ikkan Chikō 一韓智翹 |
| Ciyun Liu Gongfu shuzhi hujia 次韻
劉貢父叔姪扈駕 | Jiangzhou 江州 |
| Ciyun Mi Fu er Wang shu bawei ershou
次韻米黻二王書跋尾二首 | jianyao qingtong 簡要清通 |
| Ciyun Zhang Changyan Xiyu 次韻
張昌言喜雨 | Ji Letian xiye tong dongsheng shi 寄
樂天西掖通東省詩 |
| Ciyun Zhang Shunmin zi yushi chu
cui Guozhou liubie 次韻張舜民
自御史出倅虢州留別 | jisheng 騎省 |
| Ciyun Zizhan ti Guo Xi hua shan
次韻子瞻題郭熙畫山 | Jiuyue shiwuri 九月十五日 |
| Danqing yin 丹青引 | jueju 絕句 |
| Dengzhou 登州 | Kong Rong 孔融 |
| Dongpo 東坡 | Kong Zhongni 孔仲尼 |
| Du Fu 杜甫 | Letian 樂天 |
| Fengchou Yan Gong ji ti yeting zhi zuo
奉酬嚴公寄題野亭之作 | Li Derou 李得柔 |
| | Li Jian 李建 |
| | Liu Ban 劉放 |
| | Li Ying 李膺 |
| | Lun Sheng Xiaozhang shu 論盛孝
章書 |

- Meishan 眉山
 Mei Sheng 牧乘
 Mi Fu 米黻
 Pan Tuiguan mu Li shi wanci 潘推官
 母李氏挽詞
 Pei Kai 裴楷
 Shika jikkai 四河入海
 shilang 侍郎
 Shi Su 施宿
 Shi yi qusui chunxia shili Erying
 軾以去歲春夏侍立邇英
 Shuangjing cha song Zizhan 雙井茶
 送子瞻
 Sima Xiangru 司馬相如
 Su Shi shiji 蘇軾詩集
 Su Shi wenji 蘇軾文集
 Wang Rong 王戎
 Wang Wen'gao 王文誥
 Wendeng 文登
 Xiangshan 香山
 Xiangshan jushi xiezhen shi 香山居
 士寫真詩
 Xiangyang 襄陽
 xianshi 閑適
 Xiqing shihua 西清詩話
 Xixia 西夏
 Xiye 西掖
 Yin Xi 尹喜
 Yixi 憶昔
 yong 永
 Yuanhe 元和
 Yuanyou 元祐
 Yutang 玉堂
 Yutang caihua, Zhou Zhengru you shi,
 ciyun 玉堂裁花周正孺有詩次韻
 Yu Yuan Jiu shu 與元九書
 Zai he 再和
 Zeng Gong 曾鞏
 Zeng Li Daoshi 贈李道士
 Zeng Zhao 曾肇
 Zhang Wen 張問
 Zhao Cigong 趙次公
 Zhongzhou 忠州
 Zhu-Chen cun 朱陳村
 ziwei 紫薇
 Ziwei 紫微
 Zou Yang 鄒陽
 Zuikei Shūhō 瑞溪周鳳