

FUSHENG WU

Poetic Exchange and Power Plays among Third-Century AD Chinese Courtiers

ABSTRACT:

This essay provides a close textual and contextual analysis of a pair of *zengda* 贈答 poems by two prominent poets and courtiers of the Western Jin dynasty – Pan Yue 潘岳 (247–300) and Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303). It demonstrates that the two poems in question, Pan’s “To Lu Ji, Written on Behalf of Jia Mi” 爲賈謐作贈陸機 and Lu’s “In Reply to Jia Changyuan [Mi]” 答賈長淵 are excellent examples of what may be referred to as the “poetics of reciprocity” – unique to *zengda* poetry; they also shed light on a particular facet of poetic production in medieval Chinese courts, namely, a tool for power plays and struggles between and among officials and courtiers.

KEYWORDS:

zengda (presentation and reply) poetry, poetics of reciprocity, Western Jin court, power play, Jia Mi, Pan Yue, Lu Ji

Poetic exchange, known in Chinese as *zengda* 贈答 (“presenting and responding,” with a poem), is a genre that flourished during the third and fourth centuries, a period known in Chinese history and culture as the Wei-Jin 魏晉 era. In the later, important, anthology *Wenxuan* 文選 (*Selections of Refined Literature*), compiled by Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531), poetic composition is divided into twenty-three kinds, among which *zengda* is one of the largest, with seventy-two items. These works, written mostly by colleagues and friends to each other, bear witness to an important Confucian concept of poetry, namely, that it is a means for people to socialize and form communities, *qun* 群.¹ The pair of poems under consideration in this essay are “To Lu Ji, Written on Behalf of Jia Mi” 爲賈謐作贈陸機 by Pan Yue 潘岳 (247–300), as the title says –

➤ Fusheng Wu, Dept. World Languages and Cultures, U. of Utah

¹ Confucius once said that poetry could help people “stimulate, observe, socialize, and lament 興、觀、群、怨”; see *Lunyu* 論語, Book 17 “陽貨.” See James Legge, *The Chinese Classics: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean* (rpt. Hong Kong: Hong Kong U.P., 1960), p. 332. Recently some scholars have utilized Marcel Mauss’s research on gift exchange to expound this notion in *zengda* poetry; e.g., Wendy Swarz, “Trading Literary Competency: Exchange Poetry in the Eastern Jin,” in Paul Kroll, ed., *Reading Medieval Chinese Poetry: Text, Context, and Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 6: “Marcel Mauss observed that in archaic societies the exchange of goods and services served to establish a ‘bond of alliance and commonality’”; see Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic*

on behalf of Jia Mi 賈謐 (d. 300), and “In Reply to Jia Changyuan [Mi]” 答賈長淵 by Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303). They are excellent examples of what may be referred to as “poetics of reciprocity” – unique to *zengda* poetry. As such, they can shed light on the relevant poetic features and conventions. In addition, because these two poems were exchanged between people of different background, status, and faction, they manifest a special facet of poetic production related to the court during China’s medieval period, as a tool for power plays, which developed as struggles among courtiers for political position and social rank. In what follows I will address these two issues through a close textual and contextual reading of this pair of poems.²

The poetic exchange in question involves complex social and power relations among the three men involved. A contextual account of these relations is essential to our understanding and interpretation of the poems’ intricate maneuvers and nuanced meanings.

Societies, trans. W. D. Halls (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), p. 13. Swarz’s essay focuses on the connection between the important contemporaneous intellectual theme known as *xuanxue* (studies of the mysterious) and *zengda* poetry. For other recent studies of early-medieval *zengda* poetry, see Mei Jialing 梅家玲, *Wei Jin wenxue xinlu: nidai yu zengda pian* 魏晉文學新論, 擬代與贈答篇 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2004); Mei traced *zengda* poetry to two farewell poems in *Shijing* 詩經, sect. “Daya” 大雅 (“Songgao” 崧高 and “Zhengmin” 烝民), and to the practice of citing poems as a way of communication 賦詩言志 between representatives of states during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods; Zeb Raft, “The Space of Separation: The Early Medieval Tradition of Four-Syllable ‘Presentation and Response’ Poetry,” in Antje Richter, ed., *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2015). The interactive relationship between the presenter and replier in poetic exchange bears clear resemblance between the two parties in an epistolary exchange, and this has been examined recently by scholars of this period. See Raft, mentioned above, and Xiaofei Tian, “Material and Symbolic Economies: Letters and Gifts in Early Medieval China,” also in Richter, ed., *History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*; and idem, *Letter Writing and Epistolary Culture in Early Medieval China* (Seattle: U. Washington P., 2013).

Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this essay are those of the author of this essay.

² For the texts of these two poems, see *Wenxuan* 文選 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986; hereafter cited as *Wenxuan*) 24, pp. 1152–55, 1138–42; Lu Qinli 逯欽立, ed., *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983; hereafter cited as Lu Qinli), vol. 1, pp. 629–30, 673–74; *Pan Yue ji jiaozhu* 潘岳集校注, Dong Zhiguan 董志廣, annot. (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2005), pp. 226–33; and *Lu Shiheng wenji jiaozhu* 陸士衡文集校注, Liu Yunhao 劉運好, annot. (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007) 1, pp. 342–67. For general studies of Pan Yue and Lu Ji, see Chen Shumei 陳淑美, *Pan Yue jiqi shiwen yanjiu* 潘岳及其詩文研究 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1999); Wang Xiaodong 王曉東, *Pan Yue yanjiu* 潘岳研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011); Li Xiaofeng 李曉風, *Lu Ji lun* 陸機論 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 2007); and Yin Jun 尹軍, *Lu Ji Lu Yun pingzhuan* 陸機陸雲評傳 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011).

It should be noted that this pair of poems has been treated by David R. Knechtges in an essay entitled “Sweet-peel Orange or Southern Gold: Region Identity in Western Jin Literature,” in which they are used as illustrations of regional cultural clash between the state of Wu and the capital, Luoyang, in the north; see Paul W. Kroll and David R. Knechtges, eds., *Studies in Early Medieval Chinese Literature and Cultural History in Honor of Richard B. Mather & Donald Holzman* (Boulder: Tang Studies Society, 2003), pp. 27–79. As it will become clear, the focus of the current essay is very different.

By far the majority of the *zengda* poems in *Wenxuan* collection were composed by friends and colleagues who shared close bonds; we thus often find in these poems a genuine mutual affection and admiration between the presenter and replier. This, however, was not the case with the people in our current study. Jia Mi, who initiated the exchange, was at the time a rising political figure in the Jin court. He was the son of Jia Wu 賈午 (d. 300), the daughter of Jia Chong 賈充 (217–282). The latter had been a powerful official and aristocrat associated with the rise of the Sima 司馬 family's Jin 晉 dynasty. Jia Wu's husband was a lower clerk of Jia Chong named Han Shou 韓壽 (d. 300). Jia Mi's original name had been Han Mi 韓謐, based on his father's surname, but because the aging Jia Chong had no son to inherit his title of Lord Lu 魯公 at his death, and because of Jia Chong's special contribution to the founding of the Jin, Sima Yan 司馬炎 (emperor Wu 武帝; r. 266–290), approved the Jia family's petition of 284 to let this son of Jia Wu become the legal successor to Jia Chong and to have his name changed to Jia Mi.³

Jia Chong's other daughter, Jia Nanfeng 賈南風 (257–300), by his third wife, had become empress Jia 賈后. Because her husband, Jin emperor Hui 惠帝 (r. 290–307), was a weak monarch and said in contemporary notices to have been mentally unfit, empress Jia became the de facto ruler, sometime after 290. With sweeping power and unfettered cruelty, she began to purge and execute her enemies and concomitantly promote her followers. As the nephew of empress Jia and a newly anointed lord Lu, Jia Mi, who at that time was still a youth,⁴ became one of the most powerful political figures at court. He was given a number of high-ranking positions, among which was director of the Palace Library 秘書監 (probably soon after 296), a position that allowed him intimate access to the emperor and empress and to the state's most important locus of bibliographic research and official historiographic work. His biography in *Jinshu* 晉書 (*History of the Jin Dynasty*) gives the following description of his power and influence:

As the heir of [Jia] Chong, [Jia] Mi came after [Jia Chong] had helped the Jin to establish its mandate and empress Jia had begun to dictate [to the court]; his power surpassed that of the sovereign, and he even had some attendants of the Yellow Gate locked up.

³ The legal uproar over this that took place is studied in Hou Xudong, "Rethinking Chinese Kinship in the Han and the Six Dynasties: A Preliminary Observation," *AM* 3d ser. 23.1 (2010), pp. 58–60.

⁴ According to Xu Gongchi 徐公持, Jia Mi was not yet twenty when he began to exert political power; *Fuhua rensheng: Xu Gongchi jiang Xi Jin ershisi you* 浮華人生, 徐公持講西晉二十四友 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2010), p. 28.

With his privilege and favor, he lived with unfettered extravagance. The grandeur of his houses was beyond his rank, and his utensils, clothes, singers and dancers were all selected from the best of the time. He opened his inner chamber for guests, and carts and carriages within the [four] seas converged therein. Those aristocratic loafers, relatives of rich households, and frivolous aspirants all did their best to serve him with reverence. Some composed flattering writings about him and compared him to Jia Yi. Shi Chong, Ouyang Jian of Bohai, Pan Yue of Yingyang, Lu Ji, Lu Yun of the Wu, Miao Zheng of Lanling, Du Bin, Zhi Yu of Jingzhao, Zhuge Quan of Langya, Wang Cui of Hongnong, Du Yu of Xiangcheng, Zou Jie of Nanyang, Zuo Si of the Qi, Cui Ji of Qinghe, Liu Gui of the Pei, He Yu, Zhou Hui of Runan, Qian Xiu of Pingan, Chen Zhen of Yingchuan, Guo Zhang of Taiyuan, Xu Meng of Gao Yang, Liu Ne of Pengcheng, and Liu Yu, Liu Kun of Zhongshan all tried to fawn upon [Jia] Mi; they were called the “Twenty-Four Friends,” and others could not get to be associated with them.⁵

既爲充嗣，繼佐命之後，又賈後專恣，謚權過人主，至乃鑱繫黃門侍郎，其爲威福如此。負其驕寵，奢侈踰度，室宇崇僭，器服珍麗，歌僮舞女，選極一時。開閣延賓，海內輻湊，貴遊豪戚及浮競之徒，莫不盡禮事之，或著文章稱美謚，以方賈誼。渤海石崇、歐陽建，滎陽潘嶽，吳國陸機、陸雲，蘭陵繆繆，京兆杜斌、摯虞，琅邪諸葛詮，弘農王粹，襄城杜育，南陽鄒捷，齊國左思，清河崔基，沛國劉瓌，汝南和郁、周恢，安平牽秀，潁川陳畛，太原郭彰，高陽許猛，彭城劉訥，中山劉輿、劉琨，皆傳會於謚，號曰二十四友，其餘不得預焉。

This is indeed not a flattering description. Jia Mi is portrayed as a spoiled, arrogant and undisciplined rake and bully, and those who flocked to him, Pan Yue and Lu Ji among them, are given the highly negative opprobrium of “frivolous aspirants” (浮競之徒). It is worth pointing out that when the above-mentioned activities took place, Pan Yue and Lu Ji were already in their fifties and forties, respectively; in addition, both had gained great fame as men of letters of the time.⁶

Pan Yue and Lu Ji, however, maintained different relations with Jia Mi. Before coming to Jia Mi, Pan Yue had already served under Jia Chong as his clerk. His loyalty continued under the patronage of Jia Mi, who helped him to obtain positions in the court such as gentleman

⁵ Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578–648) et al., *Jinshu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974; hereafter, *Jinshu*) 40, p. 1173.

⁶ See their biographies in *Jinshu* 54, p. 1480; 55, p. 1507. Xu Gongchi attributed the behaviors of the “Twenty-four Friends” to the general mores of the Jin era, which were marked by a lack of moral vision and pursuit for personal gain; *Fuhua rensheng*, especially chap. 4.

cavalier attendant 散騎侍郎 and gentleman attendant at the Palace Gate 黃門侍郎. Pan expressed his gratitude to Jia Mi in a number of his writings. In one of them, “To Lord Lu” 贈魯公詩, he even praised Jia Mi as being “like the earth carrying [all],/ Like the heaven overlooking [all] 如地之載, 如天之臨,” which, with its reference to “earth” and “heaven,” is a tribute normally only reserved for a monarch.⁷ Unlike Pan Yue, however, Lu Ji seemed to have had a more formal, even somewhat distant relationship with Jia Mi. The *zengda* poems that he wrote greatly outnumber those by Pan Yue, but the piece under discussion is the only one addressed to Jia Mi, and he wrote it as an obligatory reply. Moreover, Lu Ji seems to have in fact played a role in Jia Mi’s downfall, for his biography in *Jinshu* notes that he was “promoted to earl of Guanwei for his involvement in the execution of Jia Mi” in the tenth year of Yuankang 元康 (300 AD) when empress Jia and her followers, Jia Mi and Pan Yue among them, were rounded up and executed by an opposing intra-Sima-family faction.⁸

There is yet another relationship for us to consider before we examine the two poems in question – that between Pan Yue and Lu Ji. As mentioned earlier, both were renowned as men of letters and poets. In fact, they were often later on named together as representing the best literary achievement of the era. For example, the “Letters and Scholarship” 文學 section of *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (*A New Account of Tales of the World*) cites the following comment by Sun Chuo 孫綽 (314–371): “The writings of Pan were as splendid as brocade, excellent in every part; the writings of Lu were like sieving through sand; [one] often finds gems 潘文爛若披錦, 無處不善; 陸文若排沙簡金, 往往見寶.”⁹ Zhong Rong 鐘嶸 (468–518) cites Xie Kun 謝琨 (271–318) in his *Shipin* 詩品 (*The Ranking of Poetry*): “The talent of Lu is like an ocean, and that of Pan is like a river 陸才如海, 潘才如江.”¹⁰ The above remarks must have been representative of people’s opinions of their writings generally during this time. While Sun Chuo seemed to have put Pan above Lu, Xie Kun

⁷ See *Wenxuan* 20, p. 962, Li Shan’s note to “Yingzhao yan Qushui zuo shi” 應詔譙曲水作詩 by Yan Yannian 顏延年; also Lu Qinli 1, p. 637. Pan Yue also wrote a poem titled “Yu Jia Mi zuo jiang Hanshu shi” 於賈誼坐講漢書詩, which contains a similar tribute to Jia Mi; see Lu Qinli 1, p. 631.

⁸ *Jinshu* 54, p. 1473. It is worth noting here that Lu Ji also lost his life in this power struggle.

⁹ Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian* 世說新語校箋, Xu Zhen’e 徐震堦, annot. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), j. 上, sect. 4, passage 84, p. 143; my translation. For another translation and study of this work, see Richard B. Mather, *A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis: U. Minnesota P., 1976), p. 136.

¹⁰ See Zhong Rong 鐘嶸, *Shipin jizhu* 詩品集注, Cao Xu 曹旭, ed. and annot. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), p. 141.

did just the opposite. It is tempting to speculate whether or not Pan Yue and Lu Ji were aware of these different opinions of their writings. If they were, that would have made them rivals.

In addition to this possible literary rivalry, Pan Yue and Lu Ji once were colleagues when they both served under grand mentor 太傅 Yang Jun 楊駿 (d. 291), the father of empress Yang 楊皇后, the consort of emperor Wu, who entrusted to Yang Jun the affairs of the nation at his death bed. Pan Yue was his recorder 主簿, and Lu Ji held the position of libationer 祭酒. When Yang Jun was executed by empress Jia, Pan just barely escaped execution himself and was removed from office, but Lu got away with no harm.¹¹ Historical sources leave us with no record about their treatment of and attitude toward each other as colleagues. Both Pan and Lu left behind several poems of exchange with colleagues and friends, but the only one between the two of them is a couplet that survives in Li Shan's note to a poem by Xie Zhan 謝瞻.¹² There, Lu Ji offers a compliment to Pan Yue: "Everyone says that my learned colleague/ [Has] bright virtue and is fair 僉曰吾生, 明德惟允." As Xu Gongchi pointed out, such general and vague praise is formulaic in the writings and poetic exchanges of the time and hence tells us little about the actual relations between them.¹³

Another anecdote, however, seems to reveal a competitive relationship between the two:

[Lu] Ji was in his seat when Pan Anren [Yue] arrived. Lu got up to leave. Anren said, "When clear wind arrives, dust is blown away." Lu [Ji] replied immediately, "When birds arrive in flock, the phoenix hovers [to the sky]."¹⁴ [陸] 機在坐, 潘安仁至, 陸便起去。安仁曰: "清風至, 塵飛颺。" 陸應聲答曰: "眾鳥集, 鳳凰翔。"

Like similar, highly embellished, episodes in *Shishuo xinyu*, the authenticity of this one, which was taken from a much later text, is open to question. Nevertheless, it reveals a perception among later generations of the rivalry, contempt, and even hostility between Pan Yue and Lu Ji;¹⁵

¹¹ Xu Gongchi speculates that this was because Lu Ji left his post before Yang Jun ran afoul of empress Jia; Xu, *Fuhua rensheng*, p. 182.

¹² See Li Shan's note to Xie's "Da Lingyun" 答靈運, in *Wenxuan* 25, p. 1189; also in Lu Qinli 1, p. 678. Another poem by Lu Ji was mistakenly described in *Guang Wenxuan* 廣文選 (Ming era) as being addressed to Pan Yue, but it was in fact to Pan Ni 潘尼; see Lu Qinli 1, p. 677, and Liu, *Lu Shiheng wenji jiaozhu*, vol. 1, pp. 412-13.

¹³ See Xu, *Fuhua rensheng*, p. 196.

¹⁴ From *Tianzhong ji* 天中記 by Chen Yaowen 陳耀文 (Ming dynasty), j. 26, which quotes *Yulin* 語林; cited in Xu, *Fuhua rensheng*, p. 196.

¹⁵ David Knechtges has drawn our attention to the potential of a family feud between Pan's and Lu's families. Pan Yue was married to the daughter of Yang Zhao 楊肇 (d. 275), who had

their attempts to overcome each other with verbal wit and power are directly relevant to our current discussion because we encounter a similar situation in the aforementioned two poems.

One last contextual element we need to consider concerns Jia Mi, the initiator of this poetic exchange and the patron of both poets. The *Jinshu* passage cited above, while noting his arrogance and extravagance, also pointed out that he “opened his inner chamber for guests.” Apparently these “guests” were mainly men of letters like the Twenty-four Friends who were named. This suggests that Jia Mi aimed to form a literary circle like the one that had once gathered around Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226) and Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232) at the Caos’ military redoubt of Ye 鄴 during the Jian’an 建安 period (196–222), thereby presenting himself both as a political and literary patron – an image much sought by political leaders all throughout Chinese history.¹⁶ Unfortunately, unlike Cao Pi and Cao Zhi, Jia Mi seems to have had no literary talent. There was no mention of his composing poetry or other writings in historical sources, and not even a fragment of his writing survives to this day.¹⁷ That he had to rely on another’s help to initiate the poetic exchange with Lu Ji was indeed pathetic, but his power and influence enabled him to pick the most famed and capable man of letters of his time, Pan Yue, to carry out the task.

As a mode, or one might say genre, poetic exchange inherently entails a hierarchal structure because it places the initiator in a position of power: he gets to select the topic and set the tone for the occasion, to which the respondent will need to pay due attention and respect in composing his reply. When the parties involved are close friends and colleagues of equal footing, however, this hierarchy is diminished and even leveled by the efforts of both parties, in particular by the initiator’s gesture to present his colleague or friend as someone he admires or is dear to his heart.

For instance, Wang Can’s 王粲 (177–217) “To Cai Zidu” 贈蔡子篤, the first poem in the “*Zengda*” section of *Wenxuan*, opens with these lines:

led a military expedition against Wu in 272; he was defeated by an army led by Lu Kang 陸抗, Lu Ji’s father, and was consequently reduced to a commoner. Knechtges speculates that “Pan Yue would not be favorably disposed toward Lu Ji”; idem, “Sweet-peel Orange or Southern Gold,” p. 33.

¹⁶ Xu Gongchi mentions numerous examples of this from the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, through the Han and into the Southern Dynasties; *Fuhua rensheng*, pp. 47–48.

¹⁷ Even Jia Chong, who was not known for literary achievement, produced several lines that are extant in the sources; Lu Qinli 1. p. 587.

翼翼飛鸞	Fluttering is the flying simurgh,
載飛載東	As it flies toward the east.
我友云徂	My friend is about to depart,
言戾舊邦	For his old native land. ¹⁸

Wang Can first pays tribute to his colleague, whose outstanding quality is conveyed through the image of a flying simurgh, which is the bird of birds. He then calls his colleague “my friend 我友,” a rhetorical gesture that not only places him and his colleague as equals, but also creates an emotional bond. As in most cases, Cai Zidu’s response is no longer extant, but Wang Can has created for his friend/colleague a framework where the focus is on their friendship and collegiality, which he is to respond to and expand.

By the time of the Jin dynasty, this rhetorical practice was a convention of *zengda* poetry. Pan Ni 潘尼 (ca. 250–311; courtesy name Zhengshu 正叔), who was Pan Yue’s nephew but seemed to have formed a close bond with Lu Ji, opened his “To Lu Ji, Who Is Leaving [the Capital] to Take up His Post as Court Attendant of Prince Wu” 贈陸機出爲吳王郎中令:

東南之美	The fine talents of the southeast,
囊惟延州	They were all of Yanzhou. ¹⁹
顯允陸生	Prominent is our scholar Lu,
於今尠儔	Nowadays few are his equal. ²⁰

Pan Ni praises Lu Ji, the recipient of his poem, by comparing him to the ancient prince Ji Zha of the Wu state (Lu Ji’s own homeland), who, because of his fame in learning throughout history, was one of “The fine talents of the southeast.” The tone here is more formal, but similarly affectionate and respectful.

When Jia Mi, with the help of Pan Yue, initiated his poetic exchange with Lu Ji, the hierarchy, both rhetorical and literal, between him and the poem’s recipient became the focus instead. Rather than being downplayed, it was to be emphasized and even celebrated. This situation also played into the hand of Pan Yue, who could use this particular power relationship to advance his own interest vicariously, through the authority of Jia Mi over Lu Ji. All this makes this particular poetic exchange much more complex and unique as well. Instead of

¹⁸ *Wenxuan* 23, pp. 1102–3.

¹⁹ Yanzhou, or Yanzhoulai 延州來, was the home area of Ji Zha 季扎, a prince of Wu during the Spring and Autumn era; see *ibid.*

²⁰ *Wenxuan* 24, p. 1156. Lu Ji wrote two extant poetic exchanges with Pan Ni; see Liu, *Lu Shiheng wenji jiaozhu* 1, pp. 409–15.

two parties under normal circumstances, here we have three. Generically, “To Lu Ji, Written on Behalf of Jia Mi” also encompasses both the *zengda* and *nidai* 擬代 (writing on behalf of someone) modes, which means that when Lu Ji reads this poem, he in fact hears two voices, that of Jia Mi, the presumed author, and that of Pan Yue, writing in Jia’s voice.²¹

Now let us turn our attention to this pair of poems. Here is the first stanza of Jia Mi/Pan Yue’s piece:

爲賈謐作贈陸機 *To Lu Ji, Written on Behalf of Jia Mi*

I.

肇自初創	Since the primordial creation,
二儀網緼	The airs of Heaven and Earth met.
粵有生民	From this people were born,
伏羲始君	And Fu Xi ²² became their ruler.
結繩闡化	He taught them to tie knots on rope, ²³
八象成文	The eight symbols ²⁴ formed patterns.
芒芒九有	The vast and distant Nine Regions, ²⁵
區域以分	Had their boundaries drawn and established.

Jia/Pan,²⁶ instead of addressing Lu Ji, as an initiating poet would normally do in *zengda* poetry, begins with a grandiose account of the

²¹ We do not know what title this poem bore when it reached Lu Ji. This was the title given or adopted by Xiao Tong, whose *Wenxuan* is the earliest source of the text of the exchange. No matter the scenario, Lu Ji must have had some inkling about the true authorship. Given the long, close relations between Pan and the Jia family, it would not have been hard for Lu Ji to suspect both Pan’s role and Jia Mi’s being too young and lacking in literary ability to have written it himself.

For a recent study of *nidai* poetry during the Wei-Jin period, see Mei, *Wei Jin wenxue xin-lun*; Mei in particular commented on the Bakhtinian “double voice” in *nidai* poetry; see p. 34. Stephen Owen discussed the complications of authorship caused by *daizuo* 代作, what he calls “persona poems.” See his *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2006), chap. 5, “Author and Speaker (*dai* 代).”

²² Fu Xi was a long-established culture-hero of high antiquity; see the “Shanxing” 繕性 chapter of *Zhuangzi* 莊子: “及燧人、伏羲始爲天下... (when Sui Ren and Fu Xi first began to rule the world...)”; *Zhuangzi jijie* 莊子集解, Wang Xianqian 王先謙, ed. (*Zhuji jicheng* 諸子集成 edn. Shanghai shudian, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 98.

²³ As a way to keep records, that is, to tabulate and compute; see *Zhouyi* 周易, sect. “Xici” 繫辭, *xia*: “上古結繩而治 (In high antiquity [people] tied knots on the ropes [and the world] was in order)”; (SSJZS edn. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), j. 1, p. 87B.

²⁴ These are the eight trigrams used in the 64 *Zhouyi* graphs.

²⁵ The Nine Regions 九有, also known as 九州, is another name for 中國, the Middle Kingdom; see the poem “Xuanniao” 玄鳥 in *Shijing* 詩經: “方命其後, 奄有九有 (He ordered his offspring / To keep the Nine Regions)”; trans. James Legge, *The Chinese Classics: The She King* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong U.P., 1960), p. 636.

²⁶ Due to the poem’s unique mode of authorship, I will refer to it using the names of both Jia Mi, the presumed author, and Pan Yue, the actual author. I ask the reader’s indulgence for this complexity, done so for purposes of precision.

“primordial creation 初創” of the universe and the subsequent founding of the “Nine Regions,” namely, the Middle Kingdom.²⁷ To fully understand this rhetorical move, we need to place it in a historical context.

The Jin dynasty, through a lengthy process of conspiracy and usurpation that involved four generations of the Sima family,²⁸ ended the centuries-long division of the country into the Three Kingdoms – Wei 魏, Shu 蜀, and Wu 吳. The Shu kingdom had already been defeated by the Cao-Wei in 263, and therefore Wu was the last territory to be rolled back into a unified China when it was defeated by the Jin in 280. Lu Ji hailed from a prominent aristocratic family of the Wu. His grandfather, Lu Xun 陸遜 (182–245), rose to the position of counselor-in-chief 丞相 of the state. His father, Lu Kang 陸抗 (226–274), served as commander-in-chief 大司馬. During the final days of the Wu, Lu Ji and his four brothers all fought against the invading Jin troops. Two of his brothers, Lu Yan 陸晏 and Lu Jing 陸景, were killed.²⁹ Lu Ji and his younger brother, Lu Yun 陸雲 (262–303), were taken to the north as captives of the Sima-Jin. They were later allowed to return to their native land in the south. After a few years, perhaps due to their family name, they were summoned by the court to take up positions once again northward, in the Jin capital of Luoyang. Lu Ji always felt deeply about his family’s past glory and the downfall of his beloved home state. He frequently alluded to those themes in his writings,³⁰ and, as we shall see, was ready to defend his family name and home when they were attacked.

The Jin grew out of the north-central Cao-Wei kingdom, which became a short-lived dynasty. Jia Mi and Pan Yue were both northerners. By focusing on cosmic creation and empire-building in this opening stanza, Jia/Pan seems to build a context for the legitimacy of the Jin’s dynastic mandate, thereby presenting themselves as true, legitimate representatives of the just-unified country. Such rhetoric asserts their

²⁷ A Ming-era critic, He Zhuo 何焯, complained that the first stanza “started too remotely” 發端太遠. But as Xu Gongchi pointed out, the purpose of starting the poem in such a manner was to “emphasize the legitimacy of the Jin dynasty, thereby establishing Jia Mi’s position as an illustrious authority over Lu Ji”; *Fuhua rensheng*, p. 192, n. 1. Knechtges also regarded this opening stanza as “somewhat curious,” but did not elaborate; “Sweet-peel Orange or Southern Gold?”, p. 33.

²⁸ The Sima leaders were Sima Yi 司馬懿 (179–251), his sons Sima Shi 司馬師 (208–255) and Sima Zhao 司馬昭 (211–265), and his grandson Sima Yan, the first emperor of the Jin.

²⁹ Lu Xun’s biog. is in *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959) 58, p. 1360.

³⁰ See, e.g., his “Yu di Qinghe Yun shi” 與弟清河雲詩, and “Bian wang lun” 辨亡論, in Liu, *Lu Shiheng wenji jiaozhu* 2, pp. 1133–62, 978–1031. Knechtges refers to this sentiment as “southern consciousness 南方意識”; “Sweet-peel Orange or Southern Gold?” p. 44.

power and authority over Lu Ji, who came from a defeated, and in the mind of many northerners, the less-civilized south.

In his reply, Lu Ji closely matches, in both content and diction, Jia/Pan's account in his own opening stanza. This is not hard, because rhetorically there is a readily available vocabulary in the Chinese poetic tradition to depict high antiquity, and politically a general outline of the primeval creation and the Nine Regions' origin also included the Wu region:

答賈長淵 *In Reply to Jia Changyuan*

1.

伊昔有皇	In the past there were those august leaders,
肇濟黎烝	They first nourished the common people.
先天創物	They made their creations prior to Heaven,
景命是膺	And embraced their great mandates.
降及羣後	Later when it came to other rulers,
迭毀迭興	Rise and fall alternate in succession.
邈矣終古	Remote are those ancient times,
崇替有徵	Where success and failure are shown. ³¹

We can see that even in this opening verse Lu Ji already begins to forge his own version of events. While Jia/Pan focus entirely on the august "creation" of the universe and Nine Regions, Lu Ji introduces a different motif in the second part of his stanza, the shifting heavenly mandate and the alternation of rise and fall in the later periods of the nation's history: "Rise and fall alternate in succession." As we shall see, this motif is crucial in Lu Ji's rebuttal to Jia/Pan's aggressive posture.

Jia/Pan's second stanza continues its account of the early history of the Nine Regions or the Middle Kingdom:

2.

神農更王	Shen Nong ³² became the new king,
軒轅承紀	Then came the turn of Xuan Yuan. ³³

³¹ Lu Ji wrote a preface to this poem:

I once was a frontrider for the crown prince, Lord Lu, Jia Changyuan, and had been a cavalier attendant in the East Palace for many years. I was later transferred to the prince of Wu as his chamberlain for attendants, and in the sixth year of Yuankang (296) was summoned back to the capital as a gentleman in the Secretariat. Lord Lu sent me a poem, to which I write this piece as a reply. 余昔爲太子洗馬，魯公賈長淵以散騎常侍侍東宮積年。余出補吳王郎中令，元康六年入爲尚書郎。魯公贈詩一篇，作此詩答之云爾。

³² Shen Nong was another legendary ruler, cum culture hero, of high antiquity; see *Zhouyi*, sect. "Xici", *xia*: "庖犧氏沒，神農氏作 (When Pao Xi died, Shen Nong arose)"; *j*. 1, p. 86c.

³³ Xuan Yuan was another name for the Yellow Emperor 黃帝, a legendary prehistoric ruler; see *Shiji* 史記, sect. "Wudi benji" 五帝本紀: "黃帝者...名曰軒轅 (the Yellow Emperor... was named Xuan Yuan)."

畫野離疆	He drew up fields and borders,
爰封衆子	And enfeoffed his numerous sons.
夏殷既襲	After him came Xia and Yin,
宗周繼祀	The venerable Zhou continued the rites. ³⁴
縣縣瓜瓞	Trailed and twined are the gourds on the vines, ³⁵
六國互峙	The Six States ³⁶ stood pitted against each other.

And so does Lu Ji, but again his shows considerable differences in details:

2.	
在漢之季	By the end of the Han dynasty,
皇綱幅裂	Imperial codes were torn apart.
大辰匿暉	The Great Star hid its brilliance,
金虎曜質	The Metal and Tiger displayed their luster. ³⁷
雄臣馳騫	Valiant officials galloped about,
義夫赴節	Righteous men marched in faith.
釋位揮戈	They left their posts to pick up spears,
言謀王室	And made plans to aid the royal house.

This by Lu Ji in comparison gives special attention to different periods of Chinese history. Instead of continuing to cover the pre-historic period as Jia/Pan have done, Lu begins his stanza with the end of the Han dynasty, when the “Imperial codes were torn apart.” While Jia/Pan’s stanza ends with the chaos of the Warring States period, Lu Ji’s is capped with the breakdown of the Han. This suggests that Lu Ji is eager to introduce the subsequent Three Kingdoms era, which would include a glorious and legitimate role for his beloved native state of Wu. But this move will also bring about some complications, as we shall see in the next part.

Jia/Pan’s third stanza glances over the histories of the Qin and Han dynasties; it ends with the introduction of the Three Kingdoms period, with a specific reference to the Wu:

³⁴ Xia 夏 and Yin 殷 (also known as Shang) 商 refer to the Xia dynasty (21st c.–16th c. BC), and the Yin/Shang (16th to 11th c. BC); the latter was conquered by the Zhou (11th c. BC–781 BC).

³⁵ This is the opening line of *Shijing*, sect. “Daya” 大雅, poem “Mian” 縣; trans. Legge, *She King*, p. 437.

³⁶ “Six States” refers to Qi 齊, Chu 楚, Yan 燕, Zhao 趙, Han 韓, and Wei 魏 during the Warring States period (403 BC–207 BC).

³⁷ These two lines refer to omens of a world out of order. *Erya* 爾雅 uses the phrase: “大辰, 房心尾也 (The Great Star is the tail of the Fangxin Star).” The phrase “金 (Metal) 和 虎 (Tiger)” also refers to stars; quoted in Li Shan’s note at *Wenxuan* 24, p. 1139.

3.
 疆秦兼併 The powerful Qin annexed them all,
 吞滅四隅 It swallowed up the entire country.
 子嬰面櫬 Ziying faced his carriage as coffin,³⁸
 漢祖膺圖 Emperor Gaozu of the Han took his mandate.
 靈獻微弱 Emperors Ling and Xian were weaklings,³⁹
 在涅則渝 They were darkened by the mud around them.
 三雄鼎足 The Three Powers⁴⁰ stood up like tripod legs,
 孫啓南吳 Sun Quan launched the Wu in the south.

Once more, Lu Ji's matching stanza focuses on a different historical period, that of the Three Kingdoms. Its account of this period is also markedly different:

3.
 王室之亂 When the monarchy was in chaos,
 靡邦不泯 No state would remain intact.
 如彼墜景 It was like the setting sun
 曾不可振 That could never be revived.
 乃眷三哲 [Heaven] turned its attention to the Three Sages,⁴¹
 俾乂斯民 To let them lead their people,
 啓土雖難 To open up lands and ease hardship,⁴²
 改物承天 To transform things and shore up Heaven.

While Jia/Pan merely mention, in a matter-of-fact style, the rise of the Three Kingdoms, the Wu in particular, Lu Ji adopts a language charged with emotional engagement and value judgement. The leaders of the Three Kingdoms are called “sages,” chosen “To transform things and shore up Heaven.” Here, the state of Wu is an equal player in the recent historical drama that galvanized the country.

However, Jia/Pan single out the Wu kingdom in the previous stanza not for praise, but for insult. Here we have a most remarkable and rare incident in the history of *zengda* poetry: one party *presents* a poem to the other not to express friendship and appreciation, or to offer col-

³⁸ Ziying 子嬰 was a king of Qin who surrendered himself to Liu Bang 劉邦, the emperor Gaozu of the Han dynasty 漢高祖 (r. 206 BC–194 BC) mentioned in the next line. Liu Liang 劉良, one of the editors of *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan* 六臣注文選, explains this line: “降者輿而自隨, 以明必死也 (the one who surrendered was accompanied by his carriage to show that he would definitely die),” cited in Dong, *Pan Yue ji jiaozhu*, p. 228.

³⁹ These were the last, politically weakened, emperors of the Han dynasty.

⁴⁰ I.e., the concurrent Three Kingdoms already mentioned, above.

⁴¹ I.e., the kings in the respective Three Kingdoms – Cao Cao 曹操, Liu Bei 劉備, and Sun Quan 孫權.

⁴² Reading 雖 as 綏, as suggested in Liu, *Lu Shiheng wenji jiaozhu* 1, p. 351, n. 4.

grandfather and father are renowned within the Four Seas; how could he not know? How did the devil dare to talk like that!”⁴⁴ 盧志於衆坐問陸士衡：“陸遜、陸抗是君何物？”答曰：“如卿於盧毓、盧瑋。”士龍失色，既出戶，謂兄曰：“何至如此？彼容不相知也。”士衡正色曰：“我父祖名播海內，寧有不知？鬼子敢爾！”

Lu Zhi came from a famed clan from Fanyang 範陽 in the north. After the Jin's reunification of the country, the aristocrats of the north often felt that they were the true representatives of the culture and tradition of the Middle Kingdom. It was this sense of cultural and political superiority that caused Lu Zhi to hurl an insult at Lu Ji through calling his grandfather and father by their names in public. Lu Ji's response was pointed and swift. He reciprocated with the same insult by referring to Lu Zhi's grandfather and father by their names in front of the same audience.⁴⁵ Lu Ji got his revenge, but also made an enemy. Lu Zhi later played a crucial role in persuading Sima Ying 司馬穎, the prince of Chengdu 成都王, to put Lu Ji to death after his military defeat in the chaotic conflicts caused by the princes of the Sima family known in history as the “Rebellion of the Eight Princes 八王之亂.”⁴⁶

This incident, fictional or not, informs us how sensitive Lu Ji was to the demeaning treatment that he and his family suffered at the hands of northern aristocrats, and how proud he was of his family heritage. Here, in the poem we are discussing, Jia/Pan's insult to Lu Ji is even more severe, although it sounds less personal because it avoids direct name-calling. However, since their charge, that the Wu was a usurper, is at the level of national politics, it is more difficult to refute. After all, Jia/Pan are merely recounting a historical conflict, albeit from the “official” perspective of the Jin, which was the victor. Faced with this dilemma, Lu Ji's strategy is to offer a different narrative of the same history from his own point of view. Thus, the Wei might have set itself up “at the Celestial Capital 即宮天邑,” but the states of Wu and Shu also had their legitimate and magnificent palaces: “The Wu was truly a soaring dragon,/And the Shu was also a standing peak.” In addition

⁴⁴ Liu, *Shishuo xinyu* 1, pp. 167–68. This story, in a slightly different wording, is recorded in the biography of Lu Ji; *Jinshu* 54, p. 1473.

⁴⁵ David Knechtges explained this episode as an example of a north–south cultural clash. At that time in the north, many traditional rituals and taboos were broken or brushed aside by various iconoclastic intellectuals, the most famous being Ruan Ji 阮籍; so Pan Yue's calling Lu Ji's forefathers directly by their first, instead of courtesy names, might not be intended as an insult, but “... simply conventions of social discourse of the time that included deliberate breaches of etiquette and ritual. That Lu Ji took umbrage shows that he did not subscribe to this social discourse, and considered such conduct as a terrible offense”; “Sweet-peel Orange or Southern Gold?” p. 63.

⁴⁶ Sima Ying's biog. is in *Jinshu* 54, pp. 1479–80.

to the latter images, which evidently carried the intention and meaning of gloriousness, the adverbial expressions “truly 實” and “also 亦” imply a correction of and rebuttal to Jia/Pan’s claim and charge. Significantly, the last two lines of Lu Ji’s stanza ignore the personal compliment paid to him by Jia/Pan; they instead remain focused on the country’s recent past history, especially on the sufferings that the past conflicts had inflicted on its people: “People labored and troops rose, / The country relished only military march.” In their stanza, Jia/Pan have focused on the Jin’s glorious victory, “The great Jin united all under heaven, / Its virtuous influences spread far and wide”; Lu Ji, on the other hand, draws attention to the cost of the conflict on the nation. Moreover, his last line seems to imply a critique of Jia/Pan’s “official” attitude toward military conflicts, that it only “relished” the pomp associated with conquest. The critique has been subtly placed in the context of historical past.⁴⁷

Jia/Pan’s fifth stanza continues to pay tribute to Lu Ji; here we enter the more normal and conventional territory of *zengda* poetry:

5.
 長離云誰 Who is this phoenix called Changli?
 咨爾陸生 None other than our Scholar Lu.
 鶴鳴九臯 When a crane calls over the marshes,⁴⁸
 猶載厥聲 Its sound will reach far and wide;
 況乃海隅 Not just heard by the ocean’s corner,
 播名上京 But spreading your name in the capital.
 爰應旌招 You answered the summoning banner,
 撫翼宰庭 To lend your support in the imperial court.

The avian metaphor in the previous stanza is carried on and elaborated, so the mythical “Changli” or phoenix becomes a more identifiable, but equally symbolic “crane.” The image is taken from a poem in the *Shijing*, which begins: 鶴鳴於九臯，聲聞於野 (“The crane calls over the marshes, / its sound is heard in the wilds”). Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) takes the “crane” to be a metaphor for recluse, so according to him the meaning of these two lines is that “even though a worthy man lives in reclusion, he is known to everyone 賢者雖隱居，人鹹知之。”⁴⁹ As David Knechtges has noted, the crane here “stands for Lu Ji, who had

⁴⁷ Zhang Xian 張銑, one of the annotators of *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan*, remarked perceptively: “[The line] says that what [the country] delighted in was only military marching songs as [troops] entered states; it means that [the country] only valued military victory 言所玩習，但為凱樂之歌，而入於國，謂但尚戰勝也”; cited in Liu, *Lu Shiheng wenji jiaozhu* 1, p. 352.

⁴⁸ This line is first seen in *Shijing*, “Heming” 鶴鳴 (Mao no. 184).

⁴⁹ See *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 (SSJZS edn.), vol. 1, p. 433A.

been living in retirement until the Jin summoned him to office.”⁵⁰ Yet, in the midst of such formal rhetoric and flattering remarks about Lu Ji, one also hears a subtle poke at him, for the line “Not just heard by the ocean’s corner” is apparently meant to remind Lu Ji of his remote, origin on the periphery vis-à-vis the “Middle Kingdom,” which both Jia Mi and Pan Yue called their home.

In his matching stanza, Lu Ji yet again ignores Jia/Pan’s personal compliments, and continues to give his own narrative of the country’s recent history:

5.
 天厭霸德 Heaven grew tired of hegemonic power,
 黃祚告釁 The yellow blessing⁵¹ was in danger.
 獄訟違魏 Its verdict turned against the Wei,
 謳歌適晉 While its odes embraced the Jin.
 陳留歸藩 Prince Chenliu returned to his vassal state,⁵²
 我皇登禪 Our Emperor ascended to the throne.⁵³
 庸岷稽顙 Yong and Min kneeled down in submission,
 三江改獻 The Three Rivers region switched its tribute.⁵⁴

The focus here is on the shift of Heaven’s mandate, from the Wei to the Jin, and the resulting reunification of the country. Lu Ji casts the defeat of Shu and Wu in the light of “Rise and fall alternate in succession,” a motif introduced in his opening stanza (Lu Ji’s stanza 1). With this perspective, he is able to accept the fate of his beloved state with stoicism and resignation.

In the sixth stanza, one of the most straightforward of the entire poem, Jia/Pan carry on their tribute to Lu Ji. Here they concentrate on Lu Ji’s selection into the heir-apparent’s palace and his service there as a frontrider 洗馬. As Lu Ji informed us in the preface to his poem, it was there that he and Jia Mi first came to know each other. Jia/Pan write:

6.
 儲皇之選 Those selected to serve the Crown Prince,
 實簡惟良 Are all men of exemplary caliber.

⁵⁰ “Sweet-peel Orange or Southern Gold?” p. 69, n. 106.

⁵¹ “Yellow blessing” refers to the mandate of the Wei, which was aligned with earth 土 in the Five-Phases 五行 cycle, yellow being the color of earth. See Li Shan’s note, *Wenxuan* 24, p. 1140.

⁵² Prince Chenliu was Cao Huan 曹奂, emperor Yuan of the Wei dynasty 魏元帝 (r. 260–266). He abdicated his rule to the Jin dynasty and was awarded that title.

⁵³ I.e., emperor Wu of the Jin 晉武帝.

⁵⁴ According to Li Shan, Yong 庸 and Min 岷, an ancient state and a mountain range, respectively, both refer to the state of Shu, while Three Rivers 三江 stands for the lands of Wu; *Wenxuan* 24, p. 1140.

英英朱鸞	That brilliant vermilion simurgh,
來自南岡	Comes from the ridges of the south.
曜藻崇正	He lets his talent shine in the Upright Palace,
玄冕丹裳	Wearing his black cap and scarlet gown.
如彼蘭蕙	[He is] like thoroughwort and angelica,
載採其芳	People all come to gather their fragrance.

To the avian metaphor of the previous stanzas, Jia/Pan here add a floral one. Like phoenix and crane, “thoroughwort and angelica” are conventional figures of praise established in the *Chuci* 楚辭 repertoire.⁵⁵

Here is Lu Ji’s response:

6.

赫矣隆晉	Glorious is the magnificent Jin,
奄宅率土	Taking its residence in this vast land.
對揚天人	In glorifying Heaven and man,
有秩斯祐	It receives this great blessing.
惟公太宰	Your sire, the Grand Steward, ⁵⁶
光翼二祖	Aided brilliantly its two founders. ⁵⁷
誕育洪胄	He begat an outstanding offspring,
纂戎於魯	Who inherited his great place in Lu.

This stanza is divided into two parts. In the first four lines, Lu Ji continues to describe the Jin’s mandate, perhaps as a way to introduce Jia Chong, who played an important role in its establishment. In the second part, Lu Ji tries to perform a generic act of *zengda* poetry, namely to reciprocate Jia Mi’s compliment to him, but here an awkwardness occurs. In paying formal compliment to someone, it is conventional to trace that person’s origin to a famed forefather. So here, in order to praise Jia Mi, who bears the title of Lord Lu, it is almost imperative to mention the first bearer of that title. However, as mentioned, Jia Chong was not Jia Mi’s paternal, but his collateral, or maternal, grandfather. In fact, when emperor Wu was considering the petition of Jia Chong’s third wife to transfer the title of Lord Lu to the then Han Mi, someone in the court objected precisely on the ground that as a maternal grandson, Han Mi bore a different family name 異姓 and was thus illegitimate.⁵⁸ By mentioning Jia Chong here, Lu Ji inevitably brings forth that unpleasant and ignoble part of Jia Mi’s background. So, a seeming

⁵⁵ See, e.g., the following lines from “Li Sao” 離騷: “余既滋蘭之九畹兮, 又樹蕙之百畝 (I had tended many acres of thoroughwort, / And then planted hundred more of angelica)”; *Chuci buzhu* 楚辭補註, Hong Xingzu 洪興祖, ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), p. 10.

⁵⁶ I.e., Jia Chong, Jia Mi’s maternal grandfather (see discussion of Jia Mi’s link to Jia Chong, above).

⁵⁷ I.e., Sima Zhao 司馬昭 and his son Sima Yan, emperor Wu of Jin.

⁵⁸ Jia Chong’s biog. is in *Jinshu* 40, p. 1171.

compliment becomes to the informed reader a prod, a sarcasm, apparently in response to Jia/Pan's similar gestures in the previous part of the poem. This is intensified in the last two lines, where Lu Ji writes, with tongue in cheek, that Jia Chong, the "Great Steward," "begat" Jia Mi, his "outstanding offspring." This deliberately and glaringly erroneous statement calls unwanted scrutiny on Jia Mi's origin, thereby questioning the legitimacy of his title of Lord Lu. In this light, the line that Jia Mi "inherited [Jia Chong's] great place in the Lu" not just describes a historical fact, but also conveys a subtle taunt, even a rebuke.⁵⁹

Jia/Pan's next verse recounts another personal experience of Lu Ji, his service under Sima Yan 司馬晏, prince of Wu 吳王, in his native land. To be sent out of the capital was usually regarded as a demotion or punishment at that time, but Lu Ji, according to Jia/Pan here, accepted the assignment "with reverence" and "felt peaceful and at ease":

7.
 藩嶽作鎮 A vassal lord is stationed away,
 輔我京室 To offer assistance to our royal house.
 旋反桑梓 So you returned to your native place,
 帝弟作弼 As an aide to the Emperor's younger brother.
 或云國宦 Some said [you were] a state official
 清塗攸失 Who had lost his pure career path.
 吾子洗然 Yet you took it with reverence,
 恬淡自逸 And felt peaceful and at ease.

Lu Ji's seventh stanza, as he has often shown, does not respond closely to that of Jia/Pan. It describes a different episode of his life, namely his service under the heir-apparent at the capital Luoyang, where he and Jia Mi first met:

7.
 東朝既建 The East Palace⁶⁰ was established,
 淑問峩峩 And lofty was its beautiful fame!
 我求明德 The Crown Prince sought bright virtues
 濟同以和 To aid our accord and harmony.⁶¹
 魯公戾止 There arrived you, Lord Lu,
 袞服委蛇 Wearing your splendid ducal gowns.

⁵⁹ Neither Knechtges nor Xu Gongchi commented on the implication here; nor 7th-c. Li Shan. But it did catch the attention of the Song-era critic Ge Lifang 葛立方 (d. 1164), and the modern scholar Liu Haoyun, for which see idem, *Lu Shiheng wenji jiaozhu* 1, pp. 343, 367.

⁶⁰ The crown prince's separate palace.

⁶¹ Li Shan cites a passage from *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Duke Zhao 20) to explain this line (his quotation being incomplete, I have filled in the text using brackets); see *Wenxuan* 24, p. 1141: 齊侯曰, 唯據與我和。晏子對曰, 據亦同也, 焉得為和? 公曰, 和與同異乎? 對曰, 異。和如羹焉。[水火醯醢鹽梅以烹魚肉, 燂之以薪; 宰夫和之, [濟之以味], 濟其不及, 以洩其過。君子食之, 以平其心, 君臣亦然。 Knechtges translates:

思媚皇儲 You showed your love to the Crown Prince,
高步承華 And strode through the Chenghua Gate.

Lu Ji describes the formality and pomp at the heir-apparent's palace. The focus here is on Jia Mi, the Lord of Lu, and his service to the crown prince. Beneath this seemingly straightforward and conventional section that puts great emphasis on "accord and harmony," there is a deep discord that becomes clear only through a contextual reading. Historical sources indicate that Jia Mi's relationship with the crown prince was anything but cordial and respectful. Once, he got into an argument with him over a chess game, which caused Sima Ying 司馬穎, the prince of Chengdu 成都王, to "sternly call out at him: 'Crown prince is the deputy ruler of our state; how dare you Jia Mi be so rude!'"⁶² The crown prince also seemed to have had a deep grudge against Jia Mi, because when "Jia Mi arrived at the East Palace, he [the crown prince] would abandon him and amuse himself in the backyard." Pei Quan 裴權, the supervisor of household 詹事, had to remind the crown prince of Jia Mi's background, and admonish him to restrain from showing his displeasure in order not to offend Jia Mi, or else "all will be gone 大事去矣."⁶³

After a few years under prince Wu, Lu Ji was called back as a gentleman of the Secretariat 尚書郎 at the imperial court in the capital. Jia/Pan's eighth stanza praises Lu Ji as a worthy member of this imperial establishment:

8.
廊廟惟清 The imperial court is a pure place,
俊乂是延 Where only the outstanding are chosen.
擢應嘉學 You answered the auspicious summon,
自國而遷 And moved up from the vassal state.
齊轡羣龍 You rode together with other dragons,
光讚納言 Splendidly aided the monarch with words.⁶⁴

The marquis said, "It is only Ju who is in harmony with me." Yanzi said, "Ju is merely in accord with you. How can he be thought to be in harmony with you?" "Are harmony and accord different?" the marquis asked. "They are different," replied Yanzi. "Harmony is like a soup. You have water, fire, vinegar, pickles, salt and apricots with which to cook fish. One cooks it with firewood, and the cook blends the ingredients. He balances the taste by means of flavoring, supplying what is lacking and draining off what is in excess. The lord eats it in order to settle his mind. The relationship between ruler and vassal is like this." See idem, "Sweet-peel Orange or Southern Gold?" p. 77, n. 139.

⁶² *Jinshu* 59, p. 1615.

⁶³ *Jinshu* 53, pp. 1458-59.

⁶⁴ The phrase 納言 stands for gentlemen of the Secretariat, which was Lu Ji's position at that time; see *Shangshu* 尚書: "帝曰, 龍, 命汝作納言 (The Emperor said, 'Long, I appoint you to be an Aide of Words');" as quoted in *Wenxuan* 24, p. 1154.

優遊省闈 You roamed about the inner courts,
 珥筆華軒 Wore your brushes in the brilliant halls.

To this, Lu Ji answers with the following verse:

8.

昔我逮茲 When I first arrived here in the past,
 時惟下僚 I was only a low-ranking clerk.
 及子棲遲 Though I perched and rested with you,
 同林異條 We were different branches in the same grove.
 年殊志比 Though separated by age, we had similar minds,
 服舛義稠 Our clothes differed, yet our ties went deep.
 遊跨三春 Our sauntering spanned over three springs,
 情固二秋 Our affections were solidified across two autumns.

Lu Ji reciprocates Jia/Pan's conventional compliment with an equally conventional, but self-deprecating gesture. Compared with Jia Mi, he says, he was but a "low-ranking clerk" under him when he first joined the heir-apparent's palace. However, in the midst of the warm descriptions of his close ties and emotional bond with Jia Mi, which might be viewed as "fawning 傳會" over his patron (note the same description, as given in the *Jinshu* passage toward the beginning of this article), Lu Ji also tries to differentiate himself from him. The line "We were different branches in the same grove" is noteworthy, because although it may refer to their different social and power positions, it could also signify Lu Ji's unwillingness of being grouped together with someone like Jia Mi, who was not only his junior by many years, but also possessed of no particular virtue or talent, and above all, who was widely despised for his arrogance and connection with empress Jia, his adoptive aunt. Immediately after this gesture, though, Lu Ji goes in the opposite direction, stating that "Though separated by age, we had similar minds." Is this an attempt to avoid offending Jia Mi, who must have been very sensitive about the gap between him and Lu Ji, especially in learning and reputation? In any event, this tortuous textual movement reveals a painstaking maneuver on the part of Lu Ji.

Jia/Pan's tone becomes more personal in the next stanza:

9.

昔餘與子 In the past you and I,
 繾綣東朝 Bonded closely at the East Court.
 雖禮以賓 Although we respected each other as guests,
 情通友僚 In our hearts we were like colleagues and friends.
 嬉娛絲竹 We enjoyed string and flute music,

撫鞞舞韶 Played the drum and danced to the “Shao.”⁶⁵
 修日朗月 On fine days and under bright moons,
 攜手逍遙 We sauntered with joined hands.

In many ways this stanza echoes Cao Pi’s description of the activities of his literary circle at Ye. The following is from a letter that Cao Pi wrote to his friend Wu Zhi 吳質:

During those old days we would go on outings together. As we traveled, our chariots touched one another; as we sat, our mats joined. We were never separated even for a moment. We passed around goblets, listened to string and flute music. Whenever our ears became hot from drinking, we would look up and write poetry. 昔日遊處，行則接輿，止則接席，何曾須與相失。每至觴酌流行，絲竹並奏，酒酣耳熱，仰而賦詩。⁶⁶

In comparison, a noticeable missing component in Jia/Pan’s description is poetic composition. This is unfortunate, but it reflects a fact that must have made Jia Mi dejected, as he considered his lack of literary products, especially as compared to the influential Cao Pi. Nevertheless, the longing tone in Jia/Pan’s verse reveals a strong desire to imitate that famed literary circle and its activity. As has been mentioned earlier, this may very well be one of the factors that motivated Jia Mi to initiate this very poetic exchange with Lu Ji, an outstanding man of letters.

Lu Ji’s corresponding verse entirely ignores Jia/Pan’s yearning description. It focuses instead on his own conscientious service at the imperial court:

9.
 祇承皇命 Reverently I followed the imperial decrees,
 出納無違 And obediently conveyed their intent.⁶⁷
 往踐蕃朝 I went to serve in the vassal court,
 來步紫微 Then returned to walk the Purple Palace.⁶⁸
 升降祕閣 Stepping up and down the Secretariat,
 我服載暉 My robes glimmered brilliantly.
 孰云匪懼 Who could say that I felt no awe,

⁶⁵ Music associated with the prehistoric ruler Shun 舜.

⁶⁶ “You yu Wu Zhi shu” 又與吳質書, in Xia Chuancai 夏傳才 and Tang Shaozhong 唐邵忠, eds., *Cao Pi ji jiaozhu* 曹丕集校注 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1992), p. 108. Cao Pi made a similar remark in an earlier letter to Wu Zhi in the year 215; see *ibid.*, pp. 101–2.

⁶⁷ This line refers to *Shijing*, sect. “Daya” (“Zhengmin” 蒸民): “出納王命 (to convey the king’s decrees)”; Legge, *She King*, p. 543.

⁶⁸ “Purple Palace refers to the imperial court; see Li Shan’s note: “紫微，至尊所居 (The Purple Palace is where the monarch resides)”; *Wenxuan* 24, p. 1141.

仰肅明威 As I looked up to his bright authority?

Is this a gesture to reject and deny that elegant description in Jia/Pan's verse? In any event, Lu Ji here shows no interest in "responding" to Jia/Pan's call to recollect purportedly carefree and graceful encounters between them in the past.

In the penultimate stanza, Jia/Pan, after continuing to voice a personal affection for Lu, express the expectation of a reply from him:

10.

自我離羣	Since I left our coterie,
二周於今	Two full years have passed.
雖簡其面	Although we seldom meet face to face,
分著情深	We convey our deep feelings in writing.
子其超矣	You have advanced yourself indeed,
實慰我心	And this truly consoles my heart.
發言爲詩	I utter my words to make this poem,
俟望好音	And eagerly await your fine response.

Lu Ji this time answers the call:

10.

分索則易	Parting and separation are easy,
攜手實難	Holding each other's hands is truly hard.
念昔良遊	When I recall our past roaming,
茲焉永歎	I cannot help letting out long sighs.
公之云感	Your Lordship must have been moved,
貽此音翰	That you sent me this tuneful verse.
蔚彼高藻	How beautiful is your lofty writing,
如玉如蘭	It is like jade and thoroughwort.

The first four lines treat, correspondingly, the separation between him and Jia Mi and the chagrin that it has caused. Here, in recalling his past encounters with Jia, he adopts the phrase "good roaming," perhaps as a perfunctory but late response to Jia/Pan's longing description in the previous stanza. Also, Lu goes out of his way here to please Jia's literary vanity, calling his poem "beautiful," "lofty writing," and likening it to "jade and thoroughwort." This move is conventional in *zengda* poetry, but in the current context it carries an important political function.

Traditionally, there are two ways of ending a poem presented to a colleague or friend. The first is to end with a statement or expression of affection, and the second is by offering advice and encour-

agement.⁶⁹ Had Jia/Pan ended their poem with the tenth stanza, it would have made it complete both in structure and content. However, on this particular occasion the second type of ending was more desirable for them, because it lends a chance to assert power over their recipient:

11.

欲崇其高	If you wish to ascend higher,
必重其層	You must move up another level.
立德之柄	The handle for achieving virtue,
莫匪安恒	Is none other than perseverance.
在南稱甘	What is called <i>gan</i> in the south,
度北則橙	Becomes <i>cheng</i> when moved to the north.
崇子鋒穎	Please treasure your splendid talent,
不頹不崩	So it will never collapse and crumble!

Having just displayed some personal affection to Lu Ji in the previous two stanzas, Jia/Pan now adopt a voice of authority, instructing him that “If you wish to ascend higher, / You must move up another level.” Lines 5–6 are particularly noteworthy because they contain a veiled insult that is nothing but malicious. The following passage in *Yanzi chungiu* 晏子春秋, 內篇, 雜下 (*The Annals of Master Yan*) is the one of the many sources of this widely known reference:

A *ju* (sour-peel tangerine) is a *ju* if it grows on the south side of the Huai River, but when it grows north of the Huai River, it is a *zhi* (trifoliate orange). Even though their leaves are similar, their flavors are different. What is the reason for this? The waters and soils are different.⁷⁰ 橘生淮南則爲橘, 生於淮北則爲枳, 葉徒相似, 其實味不同, 所以然者何? 水土異也。

The *gan* (sweet-peel tangerine) and *cheng* (coolie orange) in Jia/Pan’s stanza, like the *ju* and *zhi* in the above passage, are words for different types of the same fruit. To an informed reader, the mention of *ju* also calls to mind the “Ode to the *Ju*” 橘頌 in *Chuci* 楚辭 (*Lyrics of Chu*) repertoire. In this poem, attributed to Qu Yuan, the *ju* tree is pre-

⁶⁹ The first way can be illustrated by Wang Can’s two poems, both in four-character, that is, tetrasyllabic, length: “To Cai Zidu” 贈蔡子篤 ends with these two lines: “Alas gentleman, / How can I not miss you? 嗟爾君子, 如何勿思”; “To Scholar Sun Wenshi” 贈士孫文始 has the following ending: “Let us keep our interaction, / Do not cut off your letters 既往既來, 無密爾音.” The second way may be seen in many of Cao Zhi’s poems; e.g., “To Ding Yi and Wang Can” 贈丁儀王粲 ends with “Excessive pleasure and grief are not right, / better to follow the Golden Middle Path 歡怨非貞則, 中和誠可經”; “To Ding Yi” 贈丁翼 has the following ending: “A Gentleman understands the great path, / Never be a pedantic Confucian 君子通大道, 無願爲世儒”; all of these appear in *Wenxuan* 23, pp. 1102–4, 1105–6, 1121–22, 1126–27.

⁷⁰ Cited in Dong, *Pan Yue ji jiaozhu*, p. 233. Knechtges also cited *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮註疏

sented as a metaphor of loyalty and steadfastness, manifested in these well-known lines: “受命不遷，生南國兮。深固難徙，更壹志兮” (“Mandated not to move, / It grows in the southern state. / Deeply rooted and hard to shift, / Its will is forever firm”).⁷¹ In adopting the other version of the *ju*-lore, where the *ju* is said to not only move between the south and north but to also change its name, from *gan* to *cheng*, Jia/Pan are apparently hurling an insult at Lu Ji, that, unlike Qu Yuan, in leaving his native southern Wu state to come to serve in the northern Jin court, Lu Ji has given up his identity and has, in the words of Li Shan, “betrayed his integrity 變節.”⁷² Because of this, Jia/Pan continue, Lu Ji must constantly “treasure [his] splendid talent, / So it will never collapse and crumble.” In other words, he must keep up his moral cultivation in order to maintain his character and name.

One can only imagine how Lu Ji must have felt at reading this. He opens his response by directly taking on the allusion to the variously-named fruit:

11.

惟漢有木	By the Han River there is a tree,
曾不踰境	It never moves out of its place.
惟南有金	In the south there is gold,
萬邦作詠	That is sung all over the land.
民之胥好	People all like to urge each other,
狂狷厲聖	To keep themselves on the Sage's path.
儀形在昔	With the ancient as my model,
予聞子命	I hear your lordship's command.

In Lu Ji's handling, the significance of the *ju* tree has changed radically. Now it represents a parochial quality, stuck by the Han River in the north, and is hence inferior to the gold that hails from the south and is “sung all over the land.” Here, the “gold,” with its specified location in the south, is apparently meant to be a metaphor for Lu Ji himself. Lu is telling Jia/Pan that they may pride themselves on their local virtue, like the *ju* tree by the Han River that “never moves out of its place,”

(SSJZS edn.) 39, p. 5b, and *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (SBBY edn.) 1, p. 6b); “Sweet-peel Orange or Southern Gold?”), p. 37, n. 23.

⁷¹ Hong, *Chuci buzhu*, p. 153. An English transl. is provided in David Hawkes, trans., *The Songs of the South: An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* (New York: Penguin, 1985), p. 178.

⁷² *Wenxuan* 24, p. 1155. Knechtges also pointed out this insulting message in Jia/Pan's stanza; “Sweet-peel Orange or Southern Gold?” p. 37.

but his is a universal, eternal virtue that will endure and shine wherever it chooses to go.⁷³

Having given Jia/Pan this resounding rebuke, Lu Ji turns to Confucius for his final authority. The phrase *kuang juan* 狂狷 in line 6 alludes to a passage in the *Analects*:

The Master said, “Since I cannot get men pursuing the due medium, to whom I might communicate *my instructions*, I must find the ardent and the cautiously-decided. The ardent will advance and lay hold of *truth*; the cautiously-decided will keep themselves from what is wrong.⁷⁴ 子曰：不得中行而與之，必也狂狷乎。狂者進取，狷者有所不爲。

Lu Ji seems to be saying that in our conduct, even though we cannot always be perfect by following the middle way 中行, or “due medium” in Legge’s translation, we must still try our best to cultivate ourselves after the model of Confucius 厲聖. With this ancient authority in mind, he tells Jia/Pan, he has heard their command in their last verse, that he keep up with his moral cultivation. With this qualification, Lu Ji greatly undermines the power of Jia/Pan’s assertion, because it implies that their advice is in fact customary instruction since ancient times, and that Confucius is the ultimate authority that he will follow. Thus, this last part of Lu Ji’s poem functions both as a perfunctory nod to

⁷³ Traditional and modern annotators seem to have missed this point. Li Shan, for instance, gives the following explication to the first four lines of this stanza:

Tree refers to *cheng*. Jia Mi says in his poem: “What is called *gan* in the south, / Becomes *cheng* when moved to the north,” hence [Lu Ji] replies with this. It says that the tree changes its nature when moved to the north, therefore it cannot be carried to another territory. Gold is refined hundreds of times, yet it never dissolves, hence it is sung of in every place. Jia instructs [Lu Ji] with the tree, but Lu urges himself using the gold. 木謂橙也。賈謐贈詩云：“在南稱柑，度北則橙，”故答以此。言木度北而變質，故不可以踰境。金百煉而不銷，故萬邦作詠。賈戒之以木，而陸自勗以金也。 (*Wenxuan* 24, p. 1142.)

However, instead of interpreting “southern gold” as a rebuke of Jia/Pan’s insult, Li Shan views it as Lu Ji’s self-admonishment. Xu Gongchi concurs with this; *Fuhua rensheng*, p. 194. This is a conventional interpretation of a very unconventional expression in *zengda* poetry. Knechtges’ interpretation, although more elaborate, takes a similar line:

The phrase “southern gold” as Lu Ji uses of it has several meanings. First, it represents a valuable resource of the southeast. Second, it is an ancient tribute item presented at royal court in the Zhou. Like “southern gold,” Lu Ji is one of the great treasures of the southeast. . . . And like southern gold, he has been presented as a tribute from the fallen Wu kingdom to the Western Jin court. In his reply to Pan Yue, Lu Ji seems to be saying that if I were a humble tree, I would not have been worthy to leave my native habitat to be presented as a tribute in the north. So please do not call me a tree. I would rather be compared to something more valuable and durable – gold, which as a Tang dynasty commentator on this line says, “is refined hundreds of times and never dissolves.” (“Sweet-peel Orange or Southern Gold?” pp. 40–41.)

⁷⁴ See *Lunyu* 論語, sect. “Zi Lu” 子路; trans. Legge, *The Chinese Classics: Confucian Analects*, p. 272.

the formal conventions of the *zengda* poetry, and a rebuttal of Jia/Pan's aggressive assertion of power.

Zengda poetry, because it normally involves two parties, an initiator and a respondent, is by nature and definition a social discourse. It posits a mutual and reciprocal relationship, friendly or hostile, that is essential for its creation and interpretation. This fact makes *zengda* poetry the product of a "poetics of reciprocity" because its signification process, or meaning production, can be fully elucidated only by letting the two poems involved interact and illuminate each other. Thus, in our current discussion, not only the structure and motifs of the two poems in question speak to each other, but the meaning and significance of many crucial passages, such as the *gan/cheng* or tangerine/orange tree reference in Jia/Pan's final stanza and Lu Ji's response to it, can be grasped only when we consider them together. In this light, *Wenxuan's* selection of *zengda* poetry, although plentiful, fails to fully represent this poetic mode because in most cases it selects only one of the pair, either a *zeng* (presented poem) or a *da* (responding poem). Even when both poems are selected, as in the case of the two poems discussed in this essay, they are not arranged as a matching pair. Lu Ji's reply is given first, and between it and Jia/Pan's initiating poem there are several other poems by Lu Ji. *Wenxuan's* compiler Xiao Tong apparently wanted to arrange his selections by authors, but when it comes to *zengda* poetry this arrangement, along with his omission of many corresponding pieces in a pair, causes a skewed, incomplete representation that poses challenge and even obstacle to our interpretation.⁷⁵ Only by rematching them and letting them speak to each other, as we have done in this article, can we gain a better understanding of this particular type of poetry.

In contemporary literary and cultural criticism we have become accustomed to the notion that writing is power. While this truism has been applied to the extent of abuse, it does seem to have found a strong case in the two poems examined here. The court, ancient or modern, Chinese or Western, is where power concentrates. The writings produced therein inevitably reflect the power play, cum struggle, among their authors; this is particularly true with *zengda* poetry in medieval China, because its very structure and function embody and enact the power relations of the parties involved.

⁷⁵ Modern scholars have begun to correct and amend Li Shan's arrangement; e.g. the editor of Lu Ji's works places Pan/Jia's piece after Lu Ji's reply; Liu, *Lu Ji ji jiaozhu* 1, pp. 342-70.

FUSHENG WU

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Jinshu* Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 et al., *Jinshu* 晉書
Lu Qinli Lu Qinli 遼欽立, ed., *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦
漢魏晉南北朝詩
Wenxuan Xiao Tong 蕭統, *Wenxuan* 文選