

Poems on Poetry

Literary Criticism
by Yuan Haowen 元好問
(1190–1257)

Revised Edition

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Poem 18

東野窮愁死不休
高天厚地一詩囚
江山萬古潮陽筆
合在元龍百尺樓

Dōngyě qióngchóu sǐ bù xiū
Gāotiān hòudì yì shīqiú
Jiāngshān wàngǔ Cháoyáng bǐ
Hé zài Yuánlóng bǎichǐ lóu

Meng Jiao and his miseries, no respite even in death—
Between high heaven and deep earth, a captive to his poetry.
Enduring as mountains and streams, the brush of Han Yu—
He belongs high up in Chen Deng's hundred-span tower.

Dongye / extremely aggrieved // dying, no rest
High heaven / deep earth // ever a poetry captive
Streams and mountains / forever // the Chaoyang brush
Ought to be in / Yuanlong's // hundred-span tower

In Poem 18, Yuan Haowen contrasts the poetry of Han Yu 韓愈 (Tuizhi 退之, Changli 昌黎, 768–824) with that of Meng Jiao 孟郊 (Dongye 東野, 751–814).

The life of the poet Meng Jiao is one associated with much hardship. His family was impoverished.¹ He experienced difficulty in passing the imperial examinations, succeeding only at age fifty.² And he suffered the loss of three sons.³

Meng Jiao's sorrows permeate his poetry. For this reason, Yuan Haowen was prompted to use Du Fu's words—語不驚人死不休—"If my diction isn't startling, **THOUGH I DIE I WON'T REST**"—refashioning them into Line One to characterize Meng Jiao's poetry.⁴

Meng Jiao was not alone in finding expression for his sorrow (*qiongchou* 窮愁) in poetry. Sima Qian had written concerning a historical figure: 虞卿非窮愁，亦不能著書，以自見於後世云 “Were it not for his MISERIES, Yu Qing (fl. 250 BCE) would not have been able to write books so as to be understood by posterity.”⁵ Aware of Sima Qian’s lines, Yuan Haowen alludes to them in another of his poems:

Han Feizi, dying, wrote “Lonely Indignation”;
Yu Qing put his sorrows in writing.⁶

韓非死孤憤
虞卿著窮愁

Sima Qian’s statement implies an expressive view of literature.⁷ Even more so does Sikong Tu’s comment on Meng Jiao:

郊、島非附於蹇澀，無所置才。

If Meng Jiao and Jia Dao had not entrusted themselves to ‘hobbled, astringent’ statement, there would have been no place for them to put their talent.⁸

Bai Juyi, referring to Meng Jiao, wrote in more general terms about the hardships that it seems poets must endure:

For those who love the zither, love wine,
and love poetry,
There is much lowliness, much penury,
and much hardship.
Xi Kang and Ruan Ji died without rank;
Meng Jiao and Zhang Ji suffered surpassing poverty.⁹

愛琴愛酒愛詩客
多賤多窮多苦辛
中散步兵終不貴
孟郊張籍過於貧

Most famous is Ouyang Xiu’s statement of literary cause and effect:

非詩之能窮人，殆窮者而後工也。

Poetry does not make a person poor; but generally, one has to become poor to write good poetry.¹⁰

In Poem 18, Yuan Haowen is not saying that Meng Jiao had to write poetry because of his personal miseries, but that those miseries

were persistent, lifelong ones that affected and limited his writing.¹¹ His estimation of the poet resonates with his criticism elsewhere (Poems 19 and 25) of poets who are unduly expressive of disaffection.

Yuan Haowen juxtaposes the immensity of the universe with the confined image of Meng Jiao as a prisoner of poetry. The words ‘high heaven and deep earth’ (*gaotian houdi* 高天厚地) communicate feelings of awesomeness and expansiveness. But Meng Jiao had spoken ironically of the presumed grandeur of the universe:

Eating caltrops, even intestines feel bitterness;
Forcing a song, its strains are unhappy.
Going out the gate, at once I am blocked;
Who says HEAVEN and EARTH are broad?¹²

食齋腸亦苦
強歌聲無歡
出門卽有礙
誰謂天地寬

And in Line Two, Meng Jiao might be considered ‘ever a prisoner of poetry’ (*yi shiqiu* 一詩囚) in two ways. One, the poetic world he created, so oppressively sorrowful, closed in upon him, making him its virtual prisoner.¹³ Su Shi captured this in the second of a two-poem series on the poet where, from the third line onward, he parodies Meng Jiao’s writing style:

I despise Meng Jiao’s poetry,
But write in Meng Jiao’s idiom:
Starving intestines make growling sounds;
Empty walls tumble with starving rats.
Poetry that issues from the guts
Comes out to make the guts miserable.
It is like Yellow River fish
That fry in their own fat.¹⁴

我憎孟郊詩
復作孟郊語
飢腸自鳴喚
空壁轉飢鼠
詩從肺腑出
出輒愁肺腑
有如黃河魚
出膏以自煮

Second, Meng was a prisoner of poetry in the more literal sense that he was continually expending effort in writing and revising his verse. Like Chen Shidao in Poem 29, Meng Jiao spent day and night going over his compositions. Wei Tai 魏泰 (fl. 1082) early commented on this, citing Meng’s own words:

孟郊詩蹇澀窮僻，琢削不假，眞苦吟而成。觀其句法，格力可見矣。其自謂：

Meng Jiao's poetry, hobbled and astringent, is twisted by adversity. He polished and revised his poetry unceasingly. It is truly the product of pained versifying. Look at his way of constructing lines, and the force of its frame emerges. As he himself wrote:

At night I study, no rest till daybreak;	夜學曉未休
At my pained intoning,	
even gods and demons grieve.	苦吟神鬼愁
Why is it I am not at ease?	如何不自閑
Between my mind and body there is a feud. ¹⁵	心與身為讐

Yuan Haowen is drawing upon both aspects of the prisoner image. Not only is Meng Jiao prisoner of his emotions, he is also captive to pained versifying.

Yuan elsewhere uses the prisoner image to pair Meng Jiao with Jia Dao 賈島 (779–843):

In Changsha—the entangled one of River Xiang	
(i.e., Qu Yuan);	長沙一湘纍
Meng Jiao and Jia Dao—two PRISONERS OF POETRY. ¹⁶	郊島兩詩囚

In this, Yuan Haowen is echoing Ouyang Xiu's earlier yoking of the two poets:

孟郊、賈島皆以詩窮至死，而平生尤自喜為窮苦之句。孟有移居詩云：

Meng Jiao and Jia Dao expended themselves to the death on their poetry. And all their lives they especially delighted in lines about poverty and hardship. Meng Jiao has a poem about moving:

I borrowed a cart to move our furnishings,	借車載家具
But our furnishings make less than a cartful.	家具少於車

乃是都無一物耳。

In other words, he had nothing.¹⁷

Yuan Haowen's discussion of Han Yu forms a sharp contrast with that of Meng Jiao. Han Yu's poetry is said to be as 'eternal' (*wangu* 萬古) as

'streams and mountains' (*jiangshan* 江山).¹⁸ Han Yu is metaphorically called the 'Chaoyang pen' (*Chaoyang bi* 潮陽筆), the appellation coming from the place in Guangdong where he was exiled after writing his famous memorial on the bone of the Buddha.¹⁹

Han Yu's verse is said to soar high above that of Meng Jiao, like a hundred-span tower over lowly ground. The allusion is to an incident in the *Sanguozhi* biography of Chen Deng 陳登 (Yuanlong 元龍, 165–204):

[許] 汜曰，“陳元龍湖海之士，豪氣不除。”……汜曰：“昔遭亂過下邳，見元龍。元龍無客主之意，久不相與語，自上大牀臥，使客臥下牀。”[劉] 備曰，“君有國士之名，今天下大亂，帝主失所，望君憂國忘家，有救世之意，而君求田問舍，言無可采，是元龍所諱也。何緣當與君語？如小人，欲臥百尺樓上，臥君於地，何但上下牀之間邪？”

Xu Si (3rd century) said: “Chen Deng is a man who has seen much of the world. His bravura never leaves him.” And he said: “Some time ago, when the age turned disorderly, I crossed over to Xiapei to see Chen Deng. Chen had no concept of hospitality. For a long time he said nothing. He climbed onto the upper bed and had me, his guest, sleep on the lower one.”

Liu Bei (161–223) commented: “You have the reputation of a minister of state. The empire now is in disarray and rulers lose their position. Chen expected you to be distressed about state affairs, to forget your household, to be intent on trying to save the world. But you simply inquired about a house and land, nothing worth listening to. That is why Chen shunned you. Why should he speak to you? If he had been a petty person, he would have stretched out in a HUNDRED-SPAN TOWER and had you lie on the ground—no mere difference of upper and lower beds!”²⁰

Chen Deng and his hundred-span tower were to be used as poetic material by later writers.²¹ But it is Yuan Haowen who makes them a distinguishing feature of his poetry. Reference to them can express praise (and self-deprecation):

Run-down and fallen-apart as I am—

Don't laugh at one like me, you upstairs CHEN DENG.²²

籠疎潦倒今如此
樓上元龍莫笑人

And:

I am a hill-top Du Fu,
 long worn thin from poetic exertion; 山頭杜甫長年瘦
 You are an upstairs CHEN DENG, from early on,
 full of bravura.²³ 樓上元龍先日豪

For Yuan, Chen's edifice represents something heroic or imposing:

A long pavilion jutting forth,
 thrust amid flying streams, 孤亭突兀插飛流
 So imposing it overwhelms
 CHEN DENG'S HUNDRED-SPAN TOWER.²⁴ 氣壓元龍百尺樓

And as in the *Sanguozhi* citation, it can be associated with dauntlessness:

The bravura spirit—
 CHEN DENG'S HUNDRED-SPAN TOWER.²⁵ 豪氣元龍百尺樓

In Poem 18, Chen Deng's tall tower, imposing and superior, represents a hundred-span-high Han Yu soaring over the confined prisoner of poetry Meng Jiao.

Prior to Yuan Haowen, comparison of Meng Jiao with Han Yu had not always been to the former's disadvantage. Han Yu himself had been most admiring of Meng.²⁶ And Meng Jiao had compared himself with Han Yu:

The bones of poetry jut in Meng Jiao, 詩骨聳東野
 The waves of poetry surge in Han Yu.²⁷ 詩濤湧退之

Ouyang Xiu described Han and Meng as having complementary talents:

Han Yu and Meng Jiao are to writing 韓孟於文詞
 Two masters with strengths complementary 兩雄力相當
 Their pieces, weaving in talking and laughter, 篇章綴談笑
 Are thunder and lightning striking the firmament. 雷電擊幽荒
 Common birds dare not accompany them; 眾鳥誰敢和

They are singing phoenixes calling out to their mates. 鳴鳳呼其凰
 Meng impoverished, entangled in hardships; 孟窮苦纍纍
 Han wealthy, profusely expansive. 韓富浩穰穰
 The impoverished one gnaws away at his very essence; 窮者啄其精
 The rich one makes resplendent his writing. 富者爛文章
 In starting up, the one with a *gong* note; 發生一爲宮
 In concluding, the other with *shang* note. 擊斂一爲商
 Although the two musical modes are different, 二律雖不同
 They harmonize in tintinnabulation.²⁸ 合奏乃鏘鏘

Views critical of Meng Jiao, however, appeared considerably earlier than that of Yuan Haowen. There were the comments of Wei Tai cited above (quote *15). And Su Shi, notwithstanding nominally positive lines,²⁹ was quite critical of Meng:

White dew entering my liver and lungs, 白露入肺肝
 The evening's recitation like autumn insects. 夜吟如秋蟲
 For no apparent reason, my Li Bai bravura 坐令太白豪
 Is transformed into a Meng Jiao constriction.³⁰ 化爲東野窮

Su Shi's most famous characterization of Meng Jiao, however, appears in his series of two poems about the writer that probably influenced the comparison Yuan Haowen draws between the two:

Reading Meng Jiao's poems at night, 夜讀孟郊詩
 In characters fine as cow's hair, 細字如牛毛
 Cold lamp shining, my eyes blur and swim. 寒燈照昏花
 Good passages I rarely find— 佳處時一遭
 Lone flowers poking up from the mud; 孤芳擢荒穢
 Its bitter words outstrip *Songs* and *Sao*— 苦語餘詩騷
 Jumbled rocks clogging the clear stream, 水清石鑿鑿
 Making rapids too swift for poling. 湍激不受篙
 My first impression is of eating tiny fishes— 初如食小魚
 What you get is not worth the trouble; 所得不償勞
 Or of eating boiled tiny mud crabs 又似煮彭蠡
 The whole day long, getting only empty claws. 竟日持空螯
 Meng might compete with a monk in paleness, 要當鬪僧清
 But he'll never match Han Yu's bravura. 未足當韓豪

Man's life is like the morning dew
 Or a flame eating up oil night after night;
 Why should one strain one's ears
 Listening to the squeaks of this autumn insect?
 Better to lay aside the book
 And drink a cup of jade-colored wine.³¹

人生如朝露
 日夜火消膏
 何苦將兩耳
 聽此寒蟲號
 不如且置之
 飲我玉色醪

Yan Yu was also probably influenced by Su Shi in his opinion of Meng Jiao:

孟郊之詩刻苦，讀之使人不懂。

The poetry of Meng Jiao is imbued with hardship and suffering; reading it gives an unpleasant sensation.³²

And:

孟郊之詩，憔悴枯槁，其氣局促不伸，退之許之如此，何耶？詩道本正大，孟郊自爲之艱阻耳。

The poetry of Meng Jiao, careworn and withered, its spirit is cramped and inflexible. This being the case, how could Han Yu ever have approved of it! The Way of Poetry is basically straight and broad; but Meng Jiao, all on his own, has made it rugged and difficult.³³

Yuan Haowen may have been influenced by both Su Shi and Yan Yu.³⁴ But like Su, Yuan is not averse to using Meng's verse for his own poetic ends. He draws analogies between Meng and himself in at least three other poems.³⁵ Even if Meng was a poet absorbed in his miseries and captive to versifying, Yuan Haowen willingly drew upon him for his own poetic store.

Poem 18 has been the subject of later critical discussion. It was first explicated and commented upon with approval by Qu You 瞿佑 (1341-1427).³⁶ It engaged later critics' interest because of the harshly contrastive judgment made between Meng Jiao and Han Yu. To many critics it seems unfair that Yuan distinguishes so sharply between two

writers who, after all, shared many of the same concerns and attitudes toward poetic composition. Shen Deqian 沈德潛 (1673-1769) felt that Yuan went too far in his praise of Han and in his criticism of Meng.³⁷ Qian Zhenhuang 錢振鐸 (1875-1944) says that Yuan was 'very mistaken' (*you miu* 尤謬) in the view expressed in this poem.³⁸ And one of Yuan's more recent commentators, He Sanben, expends considerable effort trying to discredit Yuan's final evaluation of Meng Jiao.

Regardless of the fairness of Yuan Haowen's estimation of Meng Jiao, his evaluation of Han Yu is less than fully elaborated. Poem 18, even taken in conjunction with Poem 24, offers but sketchy reasons for Yuan's high evaluation of the poet. Perhaps at the time praise of him could be stated largely as a given without need for further elaboration.³⁹ In Yuan Haowen's thirty-poem series, Han Yu is presented as a pillar of strength, in contrast with the cramped Meng Jiao of Poem 18 and the effeminate Qin Guan of Poem 24.

Poem 18

- 1 Meng Jiao, QTS #20023/4266 (cited in quote *17 below).
- 2 *Xin Tang shu*, 176.11a (5265), Meng Jiao biography.
- 3 Han Yu, #107: 孟東野失子并序; cf. Zach 4.12 (98).
- 4 Du Fu, ch. 26, 409/30/2: 江上值水如海勢聊短述. Yuan Haowen may also have been influenced by the wording of Ouyang Xiu: see quote *17 below.
- 5 Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 76.22–23 (2376), Yu Qing biography.
- 6 YHW ch. 2, #068/112: 放言.
- 7 Abrams 1953: 3–29.
- 8 Sikong Tu: 與王駕評詩書, as cited in Guo Shaoyu 1961: 166. The *Quan Tang wen* version (807.8b) does not include the passage; it appears in Hu Zi, *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua, qianji*, ch.19, 1:125.
- 9 Bai Juyi, QTS #24044/5151: 詩酒琴人例多薄命予酷好三事雅當此科而所得已多爲幸斯甚偶成狂詠聊寫愧懷; cf. (translation of final line) Chaves, 1976: 85.
- 10 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Wenzhong gong wenji*, 42.11a: 梅聖俞詩集序; cf. Watson in Yoshikawa 1967: 73. Yuan Haowen makes his own play on the formulation:
 It is said that poetry makes one poor; 人言詩窮人
 But without poetry, I would be poor anyway. 無詩吾自窮
 (Ch. 2, #134/166: 繼愚軒和黨承旨雪詩四首, 其一.)
- 11 Yuan argues elsewhere that superb poetic lines are not to be found issuing from impoverished circumstances: ch. 14, #1263/650 (Addl. Crit. quote *23).
- 12 Meng Jiao, QTS #19858/4229: 贈別崔純亮; cf. Owen, 1975: 62. Compare the image of Ruan Ji in Poem 5 and of Huang Tingjian in Poem 5 quote *17, both being blocked upon going out the gate.
- 13 Even Meng Jiao himself, in a poem in which he speaks of his grief (*chou* 愁),

- says: 一生虛自囚。 “My whole life, vainly IMPRISONED in myself”; QTS #19711/4201: 冬日; translation by Owen 1975: 159.
- 14 Su Shi, 16.7b, ZKKT 2:720–21: 讀孟郊詩二首, 其二. Compare the line from Ouyang Xiu’s poem cited below (quote *28): “The impoverished one (Meng Jiao) gnaws away at his very essence.”
 - 15 Wei Tai, *Lin-Han yinju shihua* 臨漢隱居詩話, 5b; cf. Debon 1962: 189 n. 529. The poem cited is Meng Jiao, QTS #19722/4203: 夜感自遣.
 - 16 YHW ch. 2, #068/112: 放言. This couplet immediately follows the one in quote *6 above.
 - 17 Ouyang Xiu, *Liuyi shihua*, 六一詩話, 5a. The poem cited is Meng Jiao, QTS #20023/4266: 移居.
 - 18 In his three-poem series on poetry, Yuan similarly uses the image of ‘streams and mountains’ to stress the need for broad vision and experience on the part of the poet: Addl. Crit. quote *23. For *wangu*, see Poem 4, Line One.
 - 19 *Jiu Tang shu*, 160.7a (4201–2), Han Yu biography. Han Yu, *Han Changli quanji*, 39.4b–9b.
 - 20 *Sanguozhi* (*Wei shu*), 7.10a–b (229–300), Chen Deng biography.
 - 21 Su Shi refers to the story at least twice. Likening a contemporary of his to Chen Deng, he writes:
 You are a CHEN DENG with the resolve that despised
 Cao Cao and Sun Quan of Wu, 元龍本志陋曹吳
 Your bravura craggy and rugged, it does not
 diminish with age. 豪氣崢嶸老不除
 (34.23a, ZKKT 5:93: 和劉景文見贈.)
 And humorously he says:
 I regret I haven’t a hovel
 like Yang Xiong, 恨無揚子一區宅
 And am too lazy to sleep in CHEN DENG’S
 HUNDRED-SPAN TOWER. 懶臥元龍百尺樓
 (15.18b, ZKKT 2:594: 次韻答邦直子由四首, 其四.)
 Also, Huang Tingjian wrote:
 The world puts a premium on bravura; 湖海尚豪氣

There was one (Xu Si) who criticized

Chen Deng. 有人議陳登
(*Shangu shiji zhu*, 8.2b: 送張天覺得登字.)

- 22 YHW ch. 8, #417/353: 寄希顏二首, 其一.
- 23 YHW ch. 8, #418/353: 寄希顏二首, 其二; cited as Poem 15 quote *7 (see accompanying note).
- 24 YHW ch. 8, #414/351: 橫波亭.
- 25 YHW ch. 12, #995/583: 劉氏明遠庵三首, 其一. The 'bravura spirit' (*haoqi* 豪氣), so associated with Chen Deng, complements the qualities Yuan Haowen in Poems 2, 3, and 7 deemed characteristic of Jian'an poets. Yuan also admires Chen Deng's unrestrainedness: ch. 3, #151/167; cf. ch. 13, #1149/619. Surprisingly, none of Yuan Haowen's commentators points out the references to Chen Deng and his tower cited above, other than the original *Sanguozhi* source.
- 26 For example, the following: Han Yu, #44, #130, #225; cf. Zach 2.8 (36), 5.2 (120–21), 8.9 (222–24). For #44, cf. also Owen 1975: 186–87
- 27 Meng Jiao, QTS #19885/4235: 戲贈無本二首, 其一; translation by A.C. Graham 1965: 57; cf. Owen, 1975: 155–56.
- 28 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Wenzhong gong wenji*, 2.10b–11a: 讀蟠桃詩寄子美; cf. (partial translation) Chaves 1976: 81. For other pairing of the two, Zhu Xi cites lines from Han Yu and Meng Jiao, praising both and making neither superior or inferior; *Zhuzi yulei*, 140.4a–b. And Xin Qiji 辛棄疾 (1140–1207) joins them while contrasting their life-styles:
Filling bookshelves all his life—
Han Yu's couplets; 平生插架昌黎句
Quite different from gathering firewood—
Meng Jiao's pain. 不似拾柴東野苦
(*Peiwen yunfu*, 4:2649.2: 玉樓春, 寄題文山鄭元英巢經樓. The allusion in the first line is to Han Yu, #213; cf. Zach 7.28 [194]; the allusion in the second is to Meng Jiao, QTS #20030/4268.)
- 29 Su Shi jokingly writes in Meng Jiao's idiom (quote *14 above) and refers to imitating certain of his work: 小詩試擬孟東野, 大草閑臨張伯英. "For minor poems, I try to imitate Meng Jiao; / For large-scale cursive

script, I occasionally follow Zhang Zhi's model"; 26.4b, ZKKT 4:93: 贈葛葦. For discussion of whether any calligraphy originals by Zhang Zhi 張芝 (Boying 伯英) were extant in Su Shi's time, see Ledderose 1979: 54. Whereas Ledderose dates Zhang as having flourished ca. 90 CE, Fu Shen (81) locates him considerably later, ca. 150 CE. For *lin* 臨 in the sense of 'modeling,' see Poem 11, Line Three.

- 30 Su Shi, 17.2b, ZKKT 3:4: 中秋月寄子由三首, 其一. For 'autumn insects,' see Poem 16, Line One.
- 31 Su Shi, 16.7a–b, ZKKT 2:718: 讀孟郊詩二首, 其一; translation by Watson 1965: 59, modified; cf. Ogawa 1962: 1:111–14.
- 32 Yan Yu, *Canglang shihua*, 166: 詩評; translation drawn partly from Richard Lynn (unpublished), partly from Owen 1975: 30; cf. Debon 1962: 90.
- 33 Yan Yu, *Canglang shihua*, 179: 詩評; unpublished translation by Richard Lynn, modified; cf. Debon 1962: 92. For *qiaocui* 憔悴 ('emaciated, care-worn'), including reference to Han Yu's use of the phrase to characterize Meng Jiao, see Poem 15 n. 2.
- 34 It is an open question whether Yuan Haowen was familiar with Yan Yu's work; see Intro., Section 2.
- 35 In one, Yuan Haowen says self-deprecatingly:
For pained reflection,
there is another Meng Jiao (me); 苦心亦有孟東野
But for true esteem,
who can come up to Gao Shi (you)? 眞賞誰如高蜀州
(Ch. 9, #609/454: 別周卿弟. Gao Shi 高適 [Shuzhou, d. 765].)
In another poem, written while relocating the remains of his second son by his first wife who had died in infancy, Yuan wrote of the poet who had himself lost so many sons:
Meng Jiao always made for a bundle
of dry faggots standing— 孟郊老作枯柴立
No need for verses lamenting
the early death of a child. 可待吟詩哭杏癘
(Ch. 10, #674/488: 清明日改葬阿辛. The allusions in the two lines are to Meng Jiao: QTS #20073/4276, QTS #20066 [Pref.]/4275.)

In still another poem (ch. 2, #072/115), Yuan refers to Meng Jiao and his meagre furnishings (alluding to the Meng Jiao lines included in quote *17 above).

36 Qu You, *Guitian shihua* 歸田詩話, 5b.

37 Shen Deqian, *Shuoshi zuiyu* 說詩碎語, 10b.

38 Qian Zhenhuang, *Zhexing shuoshi* 摘星說詩, as cited by Guo Shaoyu 1961: 167.

39 But compare the critical view of Han Yu taken by Wang Anshi: Poem 29 quote *15. Also, Chen Zhanquan argues that, inasmuch as Huang Tingjian is quoted by Lü Benzong 呂本中 (1084–1145), the Jiangxi-school advocate, as praising Meng Jiao in contrast with Han Yu, Yuan Haowen in Poem 18 is being critical of those Jiangxi adherents who echo such a comparison of the two.