Daqu: the *Gesamtkunstwerk* of Ancient China

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Daqu (大曲) was a genre of entertainment music popular in China from the Han dynasty to the Song dynasty. While *da* (大) in Chinese means large or great, *qu* (曲) means a song, or more generally, a piece of music. As its name implies, a *daqu* was always a long, multisectional piece of music performed in a grand style uniting singing of poetic verses, instrumental playing, and dancing together, and the *daqu* of each dynasty also reflects the period's overall cultural atmosphere. Thus, *daqu* can be imagined as a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork) of ancient China. Unfortunately, an important genre as it was, the music of *daqu* has not survived the harshness of history. To trace the rise and fall of *daqu*, we can only rely on various descriptions of this genre buried within historical sources such as the "Twenty-four Books of Official History" (二十四史).

I. The Birth of *Daqu*

1. From *Tuge* to *Xianghe Daqu*

The Han dynasty (202 B. C. – 220 A. D.) witnessed a revival of economic life throughout China. With the effort of Emperors Wendi, Jingdi, and Wudi, China finally had a chance to recover from the civil wars during the late Zhou dynasty and the tyranny of the Qin rulers. In these four hundred years of economic stability, two social classes gradually emerged: the upper gentry class, consisting of merchants, government officials, and soldiers; and the lower peasant class, consisting of farmers and servants. At the same time, as Qian Mu (钱穆) points out, the Han period was the first time in Chinese history during which common people had the opportunity to rule the country (since the first Han emperor, Gaozu, was originally a peasant), and the feudal structure of the Zhou dynasty was consequently broken into splinters by the Han rulers.[1] Under this social and political atmosphere, traditional ritual music, which was important to

[1]Qian Mu, *Guo Shi Dagang* (Taipei: Guoli Bianyi Guan, 1977), 90.

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the feudal social structure, was no longer emphasized by the government. Instead, music written for enjoyment quickly became popular in urban areas where the prosperous gentry families made their livings.

One of the genres of music for entertainment emerged during Han was the *tuge* (徒歌), which eventually gave rise to the Han *daqu*. *Tuge* was a type of unaccompanied solo folk song, probably of improvisatory nature.[2] It was mentioned in the *Yuezhi* of *Jinshu* (晋书乐志) ["The Book of Music" in *History of Jin*],[3] and not much is known about it. Another vocal genre that grew out of *tuge* was the *dange* (但歌). How a *dange* was performed was vividly described in the *Yuezhi* of *Songshu* (宋书乐志) ["The Book of Music" in *History of Song*]:

> The four *dange*'s are from the Han dynasty. They were sung without any string instrument nor any wooden clapper. A performance was initiated by one person, then three more voices were added harmoniously to the performance.
> 但歌四曲，出自汉世。无弦节，作伎，最先一人倡，三人和。[4]

Thus, *dange*, like its precursor *tuge*, was also sung without instrumental accompaniment; however, more singers were involved in *dange* than in *tuge*. *Dange* was further developed during Han into the *xianghege* (相和歌). According to *Songshu* again,

> The *xianghege* 's are old songs from the Han dynasty. They are characterized by the harmonious blending (*xianghe*) of the *si* ("silk") and *zhu* ("bamboo") instruments. The person holding the wooden clapper also sang.
> 相和，汉旧歌也。丝竹更相和，执节者歌。[5]

Here, we see a dramatic development from the *dange* to the *xianghege*: not only were musical instruments finally used to accompany the voices, but a variety of instruments, including string instruments ("silk"), wind instruments ("bamboo"), and at least one percussion (the wooden clapper) were also employed. Note that

[2]Wang Weizhen, *Han Tang Daqu Yanjiu* (Taipei: Xueyi, 1988), 6.
[3]Yang Yinliu, *Zhongguo Gudai Yinyue Shigao* (Beijing: Renmin Yinyue, 1981), 114.
[4]Su Jinren and Xiao Lianzi, ed., *Songshu Yuezhi Xiaozhu* (Shandong: Qilu Shushe, 1984), 193.
[5]Su and Xiao, 194.

in the above quotation, the word *xianghe*, literally meaning "harmonious" in Chinese, refers to the blending of the strings and winds; but it can also mean the blending of the voices and the musical instruments since the use of instrumental accompaniment was a distinctive feature of *xianghege*. As more *xianghege*'s were composed, this new genre became more and more elaborate in style of performance. Later, even dancing was included in a performance of *xianghege*. At this point, *xianghege* had already been transformed into the Han *daqu*, or *xianghe daqu*, which can be regarded as a kind of art song instead of the *tuge*-type folk music, as Yang Yinliu (杨荫浏) remarks.[6]

2. The Structure of the Han *Daqu*

Although no music of the Han *daqu* has survived, the lyrics of fifteen Han *daqu*'s are preserved in the *Yuezhi* of *Songshu*,[7] and from the structure of the lyrics, the structure of a Han *daqu* can be reconstructed with the help of various authors who mention the Han *daqu* in their classical Chinese texts. One of them is Wang Sengqian (王僧虔), who elucidates the three sections of a typical Han *daqu* in his *Yanyue Jilu* (宴乐技录) [*A Record of Techniques in Yanyue*]:

> A *daqu* had *yan*, *qu*, and *luan*.....the *yan* section came before the *qu* proper, and the *qu* and *luan* sections went after the *qu* proper.
> ...而大曲又有艳、有趋、有乱……艳在曲之前，趋与乱在曲之后。[8]

In the above quotation, the first *qu* (趋) after *yan* literally means "quicker," while the *qu* (曲) in "the *qu* proper" means "a song," as explained earlier; thus, the two *qu*'s are two different characters. According to Wang Sengqian, in a Han *daqu*, there were three sections, in order, called *yan* (艳), the *qu* proper (曲), and *qu* (趋) or *luan* (乱) respectively. The *yan* section was considered to be a prelude to the *qu* proper section, and was probably performed without meter.[9] In the fifteen *daqu*'s listed in *Songshu*, ten have no *yan* section, three have *yan* sections but with no lyrics for them, and the remaining two have lyrics especially for their *yan* sections. Therefore, *yan* was really an optional section in a Han *daqu*, and if present, could be either a section with voices and instruments, or a section with only instruments. In Chinese, the word *yan* means "visually beautiful," or

[6]Yang, 114.
[7]See Su and Xiao, 247-277.
[8]Wang Sengqian, *Yanyue Jilu*, as quoted in Wang Weizhen, 14.
[9]Wang Weizhen, 15.

"voluptuous," suggesting that dancing was perhaps included in the *yan* section, as Yang Yinliu observes.[10] It is also natural for us to imagine that the atmosphere of the music in this prelude was relaxing but captivating, as the meaning of *yan* implies.

The *qu* proper was the longest of the three sections in a Han *daqu*. Lyrics for this section are included in *Songshu* for all the fifteen *daqu*'s, implying that singing played a critical role in this part of the *daqu*. Since the *qu* proper was always long, in *Songshu* the lyrics for the *qu* proper in each *daqu* are divided into subsections known as *jie* (解): the shortest *qu* proper has only three *jie*'s while the longest has eight *jie*'s. Yang Yinliu further points out that *jie* can alternatively mean a subsection of instrumental music with dancing in between two subsections of vocal music, and this *jie* subsection was often more energetic than the vocal subsections.[11] If Yang's conjecture was indeed correct, the *qu* proper section of a Han *daqu* must be a piece of *Gesamtkunstwerk* alternating between the more relaxing vocal subsections and the more vigorous dance subsections, contrasting strongly to the more static *yan* prelude.

The last section, *qu*, like the beginning *yan*, was again an optional section since nine of the fifteen *daqu*'s documented in *Songshu* have no *qu*. Even if *qu* was present, singing in the *qu* section was also optional. As explained earlier, *qu* in Chinese literally means "quicker," and hence the music of this section should be significantly faster than the preceding two sections. Dancing should also be an important component of *qu*. Guo Maoqian (郭茂倩), in his *Yuefu Shiji* (乐府诗集) [*A Collection of Yuefu Poems*], mentions that

> Following the end of various *daqu*'s was the [instrumental] piece *Huanglaotan* in which there was only dancing and no words could be heard.
> 凡诸大曲竟，黄老弹独出舞，无词。[12]

As Wang Weizhen (王维真) points out, the fact that Guo Maoqian emphasizes in the above quotation that there was only dancing but no singing in the piece *Huanglaotan*, which was performed after certain *daqu*'s, already implies that both singing and dancing must be involved at the end of a Han *daqu*. Very possibly, then, dancers should also be involved in the performance of the *qu* section in addition to the instrumentalists.

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[10]Yang, 118.
[11]Yang, 116-117.
[12]Guo Maoqian, *Yuefu Shiji*, as quoted in Wang Weizhen, 22.

Among the fifteen documented Han *daqu*'s, there is one which has no *qu* section, but has a *luan* section instead. Yang Yinliu asserts that *luan* and *qu* are synonyms in this case.[13] Nevertheless, in *Chuci Dazhao* (楚辞大招篇), there is a saying that "only *luan* can entertain people" (娱人乱只).[14] It is possible that the final section of that particular *daqu* was named *luan* instead of *qu* simply because its "finale" was more enchanting than the *qu*'s of the other Han *daqu*'s.

3. The Mode and the Instruments Used in the Han *Daqu*

In the Han dynasty, a *xianghege* was always written in one of the three *xianghe sandiao* (相和三调) (the three *xianghe* modes) – namely, the *ping* mode (平调), the *qing* mode (清调), and the *se* mode (瑟调). Most of the Han *daqu*'s were composed in the *se* mode,[15] which explains why the fifteen Han *daqu*'s are listed right after the *sediaoqu*'s (songs in the *se* mode) in the *Yuezhi* of *Songshu*. Guo Maoqian records that popular instruments used in the *sediaoqu*'s include *sheng* (笙), *di* (笛), *jie* (节), *qin* (琴), *se* (瑟), *zheng* (筝), and *pipa* (琵琶).[16] It is reasonable to assume that in the Han *daqu*, the above-listed instruments were also employed.

II. The Golden Age of *Daqu*

After the fall of the Han empire in 220, China entered the so called "Weijin" period during which China was divided into various smaller kingdoms. It was not until 589, when Sui Wendi successfully sacked the citadel of the Chen dynasty in the south, that China was unified again. The short-lived Sui dynasty was followed by the Tang dynasty (618-907) which is regarded by many historians as the wealthiest, the strongest, and the most cosmopolitan of all dynasties in Chinese history. *Daqu* also reached its acme of development in this golden age of China. It was transformed from the Han *xianghe daqu* into a *Gesamtkunstwerk* with a complicated structure in which the native Chinese style and some non-native musical styles imported to China through the Silk Road were combined. However, this transformation of *daqu* would be impossible without the patronage of the Tang emperors.

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[13]Yang Yinliu, "Shuo Luan Ji Qita," in *Yang Yinliu Yinyue Lunwen Xuanji* (Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi, 1986), 349.
[14]Zhang Shibin, *Zhongguo Yinyue Shilun Shugao* (Hong Kong: Union Press, 1974), 75.
[15]You Yumiao, "Han, Tang, Song De Daqu," *Wenxue Nianbao* 2 (1936): 235.
[16]Guo, as quoted in Zhang, 71.

1. *Daqu* and Emperor Xuanzong

As illustrated earlier, the Han *daqu* was a genre originated from the *xianghege*, which represents vocal music of the common people at that time; thus, the Han *daqu* should also be music circulated mainly among the gentry families and peasants in the urban areas. In the Tang dynasty, on the other hand, *daqu* became a type of music for the imperial court, and it can be considered as a part of the Tang *yanyue* (燕乐), or court banquet music. The growth of *daqu* in the Tang court was largely due to the emperors' support of music. Emperor Xuanzong (玄宗), one of the strongest Tang rulers, was a well known lover of *daqu*, as described in *Xintangshu* (新唐书) [*The New Book of Tang History*]:

> Xuanzong not only knew music very well, but also liked *faqu* [a type of Tang *daqu*][17] very much. He even selected three hundred musicians from the "string division" to be trained in *Liyuan*. Whenever a musician made a mistake in a performance, the emperor always realized the mistake and suggested a way to correct it.
> 玄宗既知律，又酷爱法曲，选坐部伎子弟三百教於梨园，声有误者，帝必觉而正之。[18]

It is apparent in the above quotation that the musicians in *Liyuan* (梨园), a music school privately owned by Xuanzong, were trained to perform *daqu*'s. This musical emperor even composed *daqu*'s himself: a Tang *daqu* documented in *Jiaofangji* (教坊记), called *Yulinling* (雨霖铃), was known to be composed by Xuanzong when he was in Sichuan soon after the Anshi Riot (安史之乱).[19] With the wealth of the Tang court, the enthusiasm of the Tang emperors, and the professionalism of the *Liyuan* musicians, it is hardly surprising that the Tang *daqu* had a much more elaborate structure than the Han *daqu*.

2. The Structure of the Tang *Daqu*

The tripartite skeleton of the Han *daqu* was retained in the Tang *daqu*; but each major section of the Tang *daqu* was expanded and further divided into many subsections, resulting in a form with unprecedented complexity. The famous Tang poet, Bai Juyi (白居易), describes the characteristics of each section of a

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[17]For a discussion of the relationship between *faqu* and *daqu*, see Qiu Qiongsun, *Yanyue Tanwei* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji, 1989), 44-99.
[18]Ji Liankang, ed., *Sui Tang Wudai Yinyue Shiliao* (Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi, 1986), 86.
[19]You, 236.

Tang *daqu* in his poem *Nichang Yuyi Ge* (霓裳羽衣歌).[20] According to Bai, the three sections of a Tang *daqu* were called *sanxu* (散序), *zhongxu* (中序), and *po* (破) respectively.

i. *Sanxu* While *san* (散), in Chinese, means not ordered, *xu* (序) means an introduction. As the meaning of its name suggests, *sanxu* was simply a slow and unmetered prelude in the Tang *daqu*. Bai, in a remark of the *Nichang* poem, explains how the instruments were presented in the *sanxu*:

> ...at first, the musical instruments did not play together. Instead, the "metal," "stone," "silk," and "bamboo" instruments produced their sounds one after another.....also, since the six sections of *sanxu* [in the *Nichang Daqu*] had no meter, there was no dancing in this section.
> …初，众乐不齐，唯金石丝竹，次第发声……散序六遍无拍，故不舞也。[21]

Not only was there no dancing in this section, but singing was also absent in the prelude.[22] Hence, in the *sanxu* only the sound of a small group of instruments could be heard. Note that Bai mentions there were six subsections in the *sanxu* of the *Nichang Yuyi Daqu*, implying that the *sanxu* prelude could be a very long section. Sometimes, the *sanxu* section had an ending subsection known as *sa* (靸), which was in nature an intermezzo between the *sanxu* and the *zhongxu*.

ii. *Zhongxu* Unlike the *sanxu*, the *zhongxu*, or "middle prelude," was a metered section, as Bai remarks in his poem.[23] It was a very long movement further divided into three subsections, known as *paibian* (排遍), *dian* (𠆢颠), and *zhengdian* (正 𠆢颠) respectively. The characters *pai* (排) and *bian* (遍) mean "to arrange in order" and "some sections of music," respectively, and they together suggest that the *paibian* subsection itself must comprise several "sub-subsections." Wang observes that the word *bian* can alternatively mean "changing,"[24] implying that different sub-subsections probably had very different

[20]Yang Yinliu, "Nichang Yuyi Qu Kao" in *Yang Yinliu Yinyue Lunwen Xuanji* (Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi, 1986), 326.
[21]Bai Juyi, as quoted in Yang, "Nichang," 326.
[22]Wang Weizhen, 142.
[23]Yang, "Nichang," 326.
[24]Wang Weizhen, 143.

music. The first sub-subsection of *paibian* was known as *getou* (歌头),[25] or the beginning of a song, and therefore, singing must be included in the *zhongxu* section. In addition, the *zhongxu* section was slow in tempo whereas the music in the following *po* section was much faster. In order to maintain a continuous flow of music in the *daqu*, the gap between the tempi of the two sections must be filled, and this was exactly the function of the *dian* and *zhengdian* subsections of the *zhongxu*, with the tempo of *dian* slightly slower than that of *zhengdian*.

It is not certain whether dancing was included in the *zhongxu*. Analyzing the *Nichang* poem of Bai, Yang Yinliu asserts that dancing must be as important as singing in this "middle prelude."[26] However, Chen Yang (陈旸), in his famous *Yueshu* (乐书), remarks that "dancers did not enter the stage until the *po* section of the *daqu*."[27]

iii. *Po* The inner structure of the *po* section was the most complex among the three sections of *daqu*. Seven subsections of *po* can be identified, as listed below:

> *rupo - xucui - qiangun - shicui - zhonggun - xiepai - shagun*
> (入破 – 虚催 – 前衮 – 实催 – 中衮 – 歇拍 – 煞衮).

Rupo, the first subsection, literally means "entering the *po* section" in Chinese. In his *Yueshu*, Chen Yang describes how the *rupo* section was different from the preceding *zhongxu*:

> In the *rupo* section, the *jiegu*, *xianggu*, and *dagu* started to cooperate with the "silk" and "bamboo" instruments, and the rhythm of the music became even faster.
> 至入破则羯鼓、襄鼓、大鼓与丝竹合作，句拍益急。[28]

Jiegu, *xianggu*, and *dagu* are just three different types of drum. The use of drums together with the string and wind instruments must have made the music of *rupo* much more energetic and rhythmic than the preceding *zhongxu*. Following *rupo* was *xucui*, or "the false hastening." Note that there was also a *shicui*, or "the real hastening." The main difference between *xucui* and *shicui* is elucidated by Yang Yinliu: in *xucui*, the tempo of the music was already faster than that of *rupo*, and

[25]Wang Weizhen, 143.
[26]Yang, "Nichang," 326.
[27]Chen Yang, *Yueshu*, as quoted in Wang Weizhen, 145.
[28]Chen, as quoted in Wang Weizhen, 144.

the drums functioned only as an accompaniment and did not press on the tempo; but in *shicui*, the tempo became faster as a result of the faster drum beats; this is why the former *cui* was called a "false" *cui* whereas the latter a "real" *cui*.[29]

In between the false and real *cui*'s was the *qiangun*, and later in the *po* section, there was also a *zhonggun* and *shagun*. *Gun*, according to Yang, refers to the rapidly-repeated notes of the *pipa* or the rapidly-repeated strokes of the drums;[30] thus, the word *gun* was used in the names of these three subsections in order to describe figuratively the extremely fast tempo of the music in these subsections. In between *zhonggun* and *shagun*, there was also a *xiepai* subsection in which the music stopped momentarily so that the tension of the music built up in *po* can be slightly relaxed before the end of the *daqu*. Thus, *zhonggun* must be the section with the fastest tempo in the whole *daqu*.

As noted earlier, Chen Yang states that in a *daqu*, the dancers started to participate in the performance in the *rupo* section. Very possibly, then, dancing was included in all seven subsections of *po*. Nevertheless, singing was optional in this final *po* section of the Tang *daqu*.

The following table summarizes the structure of the Tang *daqu*.

Main Section	Sanxu	Zhongxu	Po
Subsection	sa interlude at the end	paibian - dian - zhengdian	rupo - xucui - qiangun - shicui - zhonggun - xiepai - shagun
Activity	Instrumental music only	Singing with instrumental accomp.; possibly with dancing as well.	Dancing with instrumental accomp.; optional singing.
Tempo & Meter	Slow and unmetered.	Slow and metered.	Fast, with accel.; tempo fastest in zhonggun. Music metered.

3. The Influence of Foreign Styles on the Tang *Daqu*

The Tang dynasty was a truly international age. It is not an exaggeration to say that Tang culture was an amalgamation of the culture of the *Han* majority, the culture of the "Western Region" (西域), and Buddhism. In the *shibuji*

[29]Yang Yinliu, *Zhongguo Yinyue Shigang* (Shanghai: Wanye, 1953), 132.
[30]Yang, *Shigang*, 132.

(十部伎) (the ten music-performing divisions) established in early Tang for performances of court banquet music, seven of the ten divisions were in non-*Han* styles. Therefore, it is expected that the music of the Tang *daqu* was heavily influenced by some non-native musical elements, which were absent in the Han *daqu*. The poet Bai Juyi, in another of his poem, *Faquge* (法曲歌), complains the incorporation of foreign styles into the Tang *daqu*:

> All the *faqu*'s now are combined with songs from the barbarians; but barbarian music sounds evil and disordered whereas *Han* music sounds harmonious!
> 法曲法曲合夷歌，夷声邪乱华声和。[31]

A more convincing example showing foreign influence in the Tang *daqu* comes from the Song writer Shen Kuo (沈括), who describes in his *Mengxi Bitan* (梦溪笔谈) how Emperor Xuanzong arranges the *Nichang Yuyi Daqu* ("A *Daqu* on Variegated Dresses and Feathery Clothes"):

> Ye Fashan led Xuanzong to the "Moon Palace" where Xuanzong heard some music of the fairies. The emperor returned to his palace, but he remembered only half of what he heard; he then played the music which he remembered on a flute. At around the same time, Yang Jingshu, a governor from *Xiliang*, dedicated to Xuanzong the *Poluomenqu* whose melodies were close to what Xuanzong remembered. Xuanzong then composed the *Nichang Yuyi Daqu* using the music he heard in the "Moon Palace" in the *sanxu*, and the *Poluomenqu* in the main section of the piece.
> 叶法善尝引上入月宫，闻仙乐。及上归，但记其半，遂於笛中写之。会西凉府都督杨敬述进《婆罗门曲》，与其声调相符，遂以月中所闻为散序，用敬述所进为其腔，而名《霓裳羽衣曲》。[32]

[31]Bai, as quoted in Wenhuabu Wenwueyishu Yanjiuyuan Yinyue Yanjiushuo, ed., *Zhongguo Gudai Yuelun Xuanji* (Beijing: Renmin Yinyue, 1983), 165.
[32]Zhongyang Minzu Xueyuan Yishuxi, ed., *Mengxi Bitan Yinyue Bufen Zhushi* (Beijing: Renmin Yinyue, 1979), 32.

The *Poluomenqu* (婆罗门曲) mentioned above was a piece originated from India,[33] and very possibly, the "fairy music" which Xuanzong heard in the "Moon Palace" was of *Han* origin. Emperor Xuanzong, as a *Han* person, would also tend to write *Han*-style music when he was composing *Nichang*. Clearly, then, the *Nichang Yuyi Daqu* must contain elements of both *Han* music and Indian music.

4. Instruments Used in the Tang *Daqu*

Many more types of instruments were used in the Tang *daqu* than in the Han *daqu*. Since the Tang *daqu* was a type of banquet music, the instruments employed in *daqu* during Tang were similar to those used in the *shibuji*. Some examples listed by Wang[34] include *bianzhong* (编钟), *bianqing* (编磬), *pipa* (琵琶), *konghou* (箜篌), *zheng* (筝), *yaogu* (腰鼓), *jiegu* (羯鼓), *sheng* (笙), *di* (笛), *xiao* (箫), and *bili* (筚篥).

On the whole, the Tang *daqu* is much more aesthetically satisfying as a genre than the Han *daqu*. The structure of the Tang *daqu* is not only more elaborate and complete than that of the Han *daqu*, but is also designed to maintain a continuous increase in tempo so that tremendous tension can be built in both the music and the dance in the final section, resulting in an impressive conclusion of the *daqu*. The sudden pause in *xiepai* before the end also adds stylistic flair to the composition. Moreover, more instruments were employed in the Tang *daqu*, and the use of foreign musical elements must have given the music an exotic quality unknown to the musicians in the Han dynasty. This is why the Tang dynasty was the golden age of this grand genre of music.

III. Epilogue: *Daqu* in the Song Dynasty and After

After the collapse of the Tang empire in 907, China was once again divided into many small states; but only fifty-three years later, these kingdoms were united by the Zhao family into the Song empire. The Song dynasty (960-1279) was politically much more fragile than the Tang dynasty. Music was supported by the royal family, but not to the extent of the Tang court. Without the enthusiasm of the rulers, *daqu* no longer flourished in the palaces of the emperors; instead, it became the property of the common people again. Most of

[33]Yang, "Nichang," 334.
[34]Wang Weizhen, 152-153.

the Song *daqu*'s were arrangements of the Tang *daqu*'s. However, the *daqu*'s of the two dynasties differ in a number of ways. One of them is mentioned by Shen Kuo:

> The *daqu*'s performed nowadays are often selections of the originals; they do not represent at all the original [Tang] *daqu*'s.
> 今人大曲，皆是裁用，悉非大遍也。[35]

The grandiose structure of the Tang *daqu* was perhaps too "heavy" for the Song common people, and thus, very seldom was a Tang *daqu* performed complete during the Song dynasty. This is why the Song *daqu* was sometimes called *zhaibian* (摘遍), literally meaning "selected sections."

In addition, unlike the Tang *daqu*, singing was not emphasized at all in the *daqu* of Song. Instrumental playing and dancing were equally important in a Song *daqu*, and later, the dance of a Song *daqu* was even designed to convey dramatic action. An example of a Song "dramatic *daqu*" is the *Jianwu* (剑舞) ("Sword Dance") by Shi Hao (史浩).[36] At this point, the original conception of the Han and Tang *daqu* was already lost – the elaborate tripartite structure could no longer be seen, and the essence of *daqu* had been shifted from the integration of instrumental music, singing, and dancing in the Han and Tang *daqu* to the dramatic plot in the Song *daqu*. The *daqu* of late Song should really be called *xiqu* (戏曲), or "music for drama," instead of *daqu*. It paved the way for the prominence of *zaju* (杂剧) ("variety musical drama") in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) following the Song dynasty.

By the Yuan dynasty, *daqu* was already a dead genre. Nevertheless, relics of *daqu* can still be traced today in Nanguan (南管) and Chaozhou (潮州) music. Nanguan is an ancient Chinese ensemble tradition preserved in Taiwan. Xu Changhui (许常惠) observes that a famous Nanguan piece, called *Meihua Cao* (梅花操) ("Maneuver of Plum Blossom"), has a structural organization very similar to that of the Tang *daqu*.[37] Chen Anhua (陈安华) also realizes that the tripartite structure of the famous Chaozhou piece, *Hanya Xishui* (寒鸦戏水), is analogous to the *sanxu-zhongxu-po* arrangement of the *daqu* during the Tang dynasty.[38] That the *daqu* structure can still be observed more than one thousand

[35]Zhongyang Minzu, 30.
[36]Wang Guowei, *Song Yuan Xiqu Shi* (Shanghai: Shanghai Shangwu, 1915), 49.
[37]Xu Changhui, "Investigation and Research Report on Lu-Kang's Nankuan, a Preserved Chinese Traditional Music" in *Minzu Yinyue Lunshugao Yi* (Taipei: Yueyun, 1987), 38.
[38]Chen Anhua, "Tang Song Guyue Yizong," *Xinghai* 4 (1989): 20.

years after its creation confirms that *daqu* must be a very influential genre in the history of Chinese music.

For Prof. Alan R. Thrasher
April 16th, 1999

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Alan R. Thrasher of the University of British Columbia for his invaluable advice to my study of *daqu*. Also, I thank my sister, Joyce Cheuk-Yan, for helping with typing Chinese characters. Thanks are also due to Audrey C. G. Chan and David Y. T. Tang; without their encouragement and support, this study would not have been possible.