Lesson 1 Introduction to Chinese Poetry

Dr. Huo-Jin (Alex) Huang (黃火金)
ahuang@unca.edu

Schedule

Week 1, 3/26: Introduction to classical Chinese poetry
Week 2, 4/1: Poems of Li Bai
Week 3, 4/8: Poems of Wang Wei
Week 4, 4/22: Poems of Li ShanYin and Meng Haoran
Week 5, 4/29: Poems of Du Mu and Wang ZhiHuan
Week 6, 5/6: Poems of Bai Ju Yi, review and discussion
漢字 (hàn zì): sound, character, meaning

- Pinyin (拼音): Romanized spelling of Chinese characters (Sounds, vowels and consonants, and tones)
- Characters: Stroke, radicals, characters
- Meanings

Pinyin syllable: (initial) Consonant + (final) Vowel+ Tone

21 Initials (consonants) in six groups

| b | p | m | f | d | t | n | l | g | k | h | j | q | x | zh | ch | sh | r | z | c | s |

36 Finals (vowels and compound vowels)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a</th>
<th>o</th>
<th>e</th>
<th>ai</th>
<th>ei</th>
<th>ao</th>
<th>ou</th>
<th>an</th>
<th>en</th>
<th>ang</th>
<th>eng</th>
<th>ong</th>
<th>er</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>ia</td>
<td>ie</td>
<td>iao</td>
<td>lou (iu)</td>
<td>ian</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>lang</td>
<td>ing</td>
<td>long</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>ua</td>
<td>uo</td>
<td>uai</td>
<td>uei (ui)</td>
<td>uan</td>
<td>uen (un)</td>
<td>uang</td>
<td>ueng</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ü</td>
<td>üe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>uan</td>
<td>ün</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 tones

http://learningchineseonline.net/
漢字 (hàn zì): sound, character, meaning

Pinyin syllable: (initial) Consonant + (final) Vowel + Tone

Five Tones:
- First (high and level, transcendent, helpful, simplicity.),
- Second (mid and rising, insecure, unsure, questioning),
- Third (falling quickly and rising, mischievous, mean-spirited, illusive),
- Fourth (falling, angry, demanding, impatient), and
- Fifth (light/neutral/no tone, secretive, deceptive)

http://learningchineseonline.net/
It is believed that the inventor of Chinese writing was a minister named Tsang Chieh (倉頡, Cāng jié), who recorded the history in the court of Emperor (黃帝, huáng dì), the first king of China (~ 2650 BC).

Chinese writing's present form was established in the Qin period (221 to 210 BC) by the first emperor of China (秦始皇, qín shǐ huáng).

There are six principles that are used to define and explicate the Chinese characters:

1. Pictographs: A pictograph is a depiction of a material object.
2. Indicatives: Characters of abstract characters with indicating signs.
3. Ideographs: Ideographs are compounds of two or more existing characters.
4. Phonetic-semantic compounds: Characters consist of a semantic radical and a phonetic radical.
5. Mutual explanatory (Transmissives): Characters share the same semantic radicals and are mutually explainable.
6. Phonetic loans (Borrowed Words): A character which is used in a new meaning on account of its pronunciation.
1. Pictographs:  

tables, human,  

2. Indicatives:  

3. Ideographs:  

4. Phonetic-semantic compounds:  

5. Mutual explanatory Transmissives:  

6. Phonetic loans Borrowed Words:  

http://logos.uoregon.edu/explore/orthography/chinese.html  
http://dfludd.com/writing.php
漢字 (hàn zì): sound, character, meaning

Shih Ching (shī jīng, 詩經)
• First collection of Chinese classical poems;
• Poem Scripture (Classic of Poetry);
• The Book of Songs (or The Odes);
• A collection of 305 poems;
• Compiled in Zhou Dynasty (~ 600 BC);
• It became one of Five Confucian Classics.

Qu Yuan (qū yuán, 屈原, 340-278 BC)
• First famous poet in China

http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/chinese_poetry.htm
Poems in Tang Dynasty (618-907) 唐朝 (Tăng Châu)

- The Tang Dynasty was the heyday of classical Chinese poetry;
- More than 2,300 poets and 48,900 poems in Complete Poetry of Tang;
- Great poets: Li Bai, Du Fu, Bai Juyi, and others;
- Poems of social and political situations and conflicts, friendship, sadness and happiness, beauty of the land, both of romanticism and realism;
- Creative, colorful, elegant, diversified;
- Basic forms of Tang poetry are five-character ancient verse, seven-character ancient verse, five-character four-lined poems, seven-character four-lined poems, five-character eight-lined poems and seven-character eight-lined poems.


[Poem]

静夜思 李白

床前明月光
疑是地上霜
举头望明月
低头思故乡