

ENGLISH SUMMARIES
of
THE JOURNAL OF CHINESE LITERATURE

Volume XXIII

October 1972

Edited by

Yoshitaka IRIYA

Tamaki OGAWA

Department of Chinese Language and Literature

Faculty of Letters

Kyôto University

I. A Study of Ts'ao Ts'ao 曹操

Ritsuko INAMI, Kyoto University

Ts'ao Ts'ao (155-220 A. D.) was not only the outstanding political and military leader during the age of disorder that marked the Wei dynasty, he was also a leading poet in the Chien-an literary group.

This study examines Ts'ao Ts'ao's life and his dominant mental attitudes in an attempt to understand their relation to his writings.

During the reign of Emperor Hsien of the Later Han dynasty, Ts'ao acted as his protector and came to occupy a position of precedence among generals in the empire. With the defeat of his main rival, Yüan Shao, he became the leading man of power.

He viewed his own age as one of transition and worked at strengthening the central government on a legalist basis which aimed at reconstructing the ravaged society of the time.

His life was marked throughout by certain dominant attitudes. He refused to recognize the idea of a fate or of a mystery transcending man. Instead, he put emphasis on real talent and experience and on man's practical abilities.

These attitudes appear in Ts'ao's *yüeh-fu* 樂府 pieces. There he

rejects the fatalism of old *yüeh-fu*, wherein poets despair of the limited duration of man's life and his powerlessness. Basic to his view of man and the world is the idea that man is master of his own fate. We see this in such pieces as *Tuan-ko hsing* 短歌行, *Kuei-sui-shou* 龜雖壽, *Hao-li hsing* 蒿里行, *Hsieh-lu* 薤露. This marks a departure from Han popular *yüeh-fu* and represents something new in the poet Ts'ao Ts'ao.

II. Love Songs of the Southern Dynasties Centering on the "Hsi-chou-ch'ü" 西洲曲

Ichiro KOMINAMI, Kyoto University

Popular ballads differ from lyrical poetry in that lyrical poetry depends on the beauty of its self-regulating language while the ballads make the emotions of everyday life their base. Most ballads of Southern Dynasties have love as their theme. Fundamentally they symbolize in an exalted manner the emotions of everyday life of the townspeople of the Yangtze region. The strong-willed women, the use of the puns and hidden meanings appearing in "Tzu-yeh ko" 子夜歌 and "Tu-ch'ü ko" 讀曲歌, works belonging to the early period of Southern Dynasties love songs, can be viewed as the crystallization of the young spirit of the newly established townspeople. However, in such works as "Tzu-yeh ssu-shih ko" 子夜四時歌, this feature was altered. Women were regarded as weak things and the use of play on words became less marked. Nature as encountered in excursions became the important element. There appeared representation of beauty separated from reality and the glorification of order controlling appeared. Moreover in one group of ballads, including "Pi-yü ko" 碧玉歌, "T'ao-yeh ko" 桃葉歌, and others, the concubines and female attendants of rulers appear as heroines of the songs. These heroines strive to become favorites of the men. They differ very much from the women appearing in the earlier ballads "Tzu-yeh ko".

Southern ballads thus become altered with the passage of time. The ballads that once belonged to townsfolk gradually became influenced by interests of the ruling class and came to be mainly their concern. Finally in the Liang and Ch'en dynasties they became court poetry. The townspeople were neither able to preserve their ballads

nor able to see them to maturity. The fundamental reason why the townspeople as it were handed their ballads over to the ruling class lies in the fact that their economic strength had not yet reached full maturity.

“Hsi-chou ch'ü” 西洲曲 was written at a time not far removed from the period of court poetry. Yet it was not influenced by the over-refined tastes of the ruling class. Basic to this ballad are various kinds of plays on words, but these are only discernible with careful reading of the text. It represents an accomplished form of ballads of the Southern Dynasties. The spirit of general affirmation of life in towns that was the background of this ballad later gave birth to Li Po of the T'ang.

III. The Dating of Three of Li Po's Poems

Tamaki OGAWA, Kyoto University

Whereas the works of certain T'ang poets lend themselves to precise dating, others do not. In cases where detailed biographies are available, the task is not a difficult one; but when the biographies abound in unclear points, it often is.

Although the biographical details of the life of Li Po (701-762) are comparatively well-known, there are varying interpretations concerning the dating of his works. This paper treats of three of the poet's pieces in an attempt to establish their correct dates of composition.

The first is “Setting Out Early from Pai-ti-ch'eng” 早發白帝城 (Obata, p. 98). Until recently it has been assigned the date 725, when the young poet left his native Szechwan. More recent research by Huang Hsi-kuei 黃錫珪 (d. 1941) has revealed, however, that the poem was probably written in 759 when the poet was returning home east from Wu-shan 巫山. The author here concurs with the late Aoki Masaru 青木正兒 in considering Huang Hsi-kuei's dating correct.

The second poem is Li Po's “Song to the O-mei Mountain Moon” 峨眉山月歌 (Obata, p. 61). This seven-character *chiieh-chü* has been assigned the same traditional date of 725 as the poem above. There is, however, another poem by Li Po, a seven-character *ku-shih*, on the same theme: “Song to the O-mei Mountain Moon—Seeing Off the Szechwanese Monk, Yen, upon Entering the Middle Capital” 峨

眉山月歌送蜀僧晏入中京。 In as much as Ch'ang-an was given the name Chung-ching or 'Middle Capital' in 757, only to be renamed Hsi-ching or 'Western Capital' in 761, the work must have been written in this five-year period. The recent scholars, Chan Ying 詹鏞 and Huang Hsi-kuei, have dated the poem 759 and 760 respectively. The similarity in theme and treatment between this latter poem and the seven-character *chiieh-chü* lead the author to believe that the *chiieh-chü* dates from the same period.

The third poem is the seven-character *chiieh-chü*, "Gazing at T'ien-men Mountain" 望天門山. Huang and Chan assign the dates 754 and 743 to the work. Yet there is another poem by Li Po entitled "Presented to My Uncle, the Inspector of Tang-t'u, Yang-ping" 獻從叔當塗宰陽冰—Tang-t'u being the district where T'ien-men Mountain is located—for which the two scholars agree on a 762 date of composition. This latter piece contains the line, "The moon holds the T'ien-men dawn in its mouth" 月啣天門曉. This would seem to lend support to a 762 dating for the former work also. "Gazing at T'ien-men Mountain" contains the line, "Alone, a single sail emerging from near the sun" 孤帆一片日邊來. Li Po uses the phrase *jih-pien* 日邊, or 'near the sun', a total of six times in his poetry. It is the author's view, however, that in this poem does Li Po use the term to refer to the place where the emperor resides. Presumably the poet wrote the verse late on in life while thinking back nostalgically to his years (743-744) spent in the bustling capital of Ch'ang-an.

In summary, the author feels that these three poems traditionally assigned to Li Po's early period should be reassigned to his final years.

IV. Li Ho and His Poetry

Kōzō KAWAI, Kyoto University

Because of his poems dealing with a strange world of fantasy, Li Ho (791-817) has had a special place in the history of Chinese literature. But Li also dealt frankly with his own very real tribulations as a rejected examination candidate before his early death.

Rejection as a candidate served to sharpen and sensitive his awareness of himself, enhancing the pride he took in his own literary talent and his family lineage. This pride also served to make him

aware of how unsuited he was for the actual circumstances of the World.

Beset by the contradictions between his own talent and official rejection, between his family name and actual poverty, his mind wavered and suffered, feeling at a loss. His poetic world was born of this anxiety.

Through a blending of the senses (in particular, the primitive ones of smell and touch), Li created a rich, new poetic imagery. This undifferentiated sensorium would provoke the aural with the visual, and feelings of heat or cold through the sense of smell. Instead of calling something by its name, he would often use an alternate, more sensually evocative word.

Li Ho's daring verse, so unusual for Chinese poetry, was made possible because of the poet's strong pride and his image of himself as "a man different from others", the latter resulting from the circumstances of his life.

REVIEWS:

Naoaki MAENO, "*Tōdai no shijintachi*", (Poets of the T'ang), Tokyo, 1972—Sigeru SIMIZU, Kyoto University.

Kuo Mo-juo, "Li Po yü Tu Fu (Li Po and Tu Fu)", Peking, 1971—Kumiko KAKEHI, Kobe University.

Shōkō KANAOKA, "*Tonkō shutsudo bungaku bunken bunruimokuroku* (Classified catalogue of Chinese Literary Manuscripts from Tunhuang)", Tokyo, 1971; "*Tonkō no bungaku* (Tunhuang Literature)", Tokyo, 1971.—Yoshitaka IRIYA, Kyoto University.