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Liu Tsung-yüan 柳宗元 and Buddhism
of the Mid-T'ang 中唐

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Of approximately 600 writings of Liu Tsung-yüan, a thinker and classical man of letters of the Mid-T'ang, 59 writings—nearly 10 % of the entire work—are concerned with Buddhism, describing his association with Buddhists and the life in the temple, or discussing Buddhist doctrines. Today they are regarded as important features in the study of Liu Tsung-yüan, and not a few papers have been written on this theme. Most of these studies, however, center around Liu Tsung-yüan's thoughts on Buddhism in general—i. e., his ideas about the reverence for Buddha, the nature of Buddhist belief, the unification of Confucianism and Buddhism, and so on—as viewed in comparison with those of Han Yü 韓愈, his contemporary thinker and writer; virtually no investigation has been made, so far, as to the position he actually held in relation to Buddhism in the confused situation of those days. Yet I think such an approach is essential for the understanding of Liu Tsung-yüan's view of Buddhism, for the Buddhist circles in his days were muddled, with incessant unit-

ing and splitting of various religious denominations and sects, and not all of them were accepted by him. It is a little-known fact, for example, that Liu Tsung-yüan attacked certain Buddhist sects as severely as the anti-Buddhist Han Yü did.

Of the existing Buddhist sects in those days, the ones with which Liu Tsung-yüan was most intimately related, and which he supported most vigorously, were T'ien-t'ai 天台 and Ching-t'u 淨土, or the amalgamate of the two, that is, Ching-t'u influenced by T'ien-t'ai doctrines. On the other hand, he denounced Ch'an-tsung 禪宗 quite drastically. Especially the two groups, Niu-t'ou Ch'an 牛頭禪 and Nan-tsung Ch'an 南宗禪, seem to have been the targets of his harshest attack, as far as one infers from the context of his criticisms. This attitude of Liu Tsung-yüan seems to me to suggest that, in his criticism and support, he took lines similar to those of the religious movement at that time promoted by the Ching-t'u believers influenced by Tz'ü-min 慈愍, such as Hui-jih 慧日, Ch'êng-yüan 承遠, and Fa-chao 法照, in the Buddhist world harassed by the antagonism between Ch'an-tsung and Ching-t'u.

A Study of the Opening of Yüan Tsa-chü 元雜劇

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It is indispensable that any research dealing with the dramatic genre should begin with a fundamental study of the actual performances on stage. The study of this aspect in Yüan Tsa-chü, however, is severely hindered by the lack of relevant materials. A lot of the extant scripts of Yüan Tsa-chü are incomplete, thus making it difficult for us to understand from them details about their performances on stage. But since it is generally agreed that the stage of Yüan Tsa-chü belongs to the group of "Open Stage", we may reckon that the actual opening of these Tsa-chü were not identical to what we can find in the extant scripts. Here we must keep our eyes on the role of the Ch'ung-mo 沖末, a unique creation in the Yüan Tsa-chü which appears only in the opening scene of the play. In the Nei-fu-pen 內府本 texts which are written exclusively for

performances in the emperor's palace, the Ch'ung-mo in a lot of cases also adds other Ch'ue-se 脚色. This reveals the fact that the Ch'ung-mo and the other Ch'ue-se are different in nature. Examining the classification of the Ch'ung-mo, we may notice that the greater part of them belongs either to the Wai 外 (the senior or the governor) or the Ching 淨 (the clown). We may therefore logically assume that the former suggests the existence of a prologue recited by the senior or the governor while the latter suggests a prologue or a farcical introduction by the clown. This may result from the fact that the original scripts for Yüan Tsa-chü were written prior to the performances and that they were subjected to alterations during actual performances in the theatre. The inclusion of the Ch'ung-mo appears in the Nei-fu-pen which are intended as basic scripts for stage performances, though this still remains at the level of conjecture. Since there are two different texts, on the one hand the 'original' text which follows faithfully the author's own intentions, and on the other hand, the Nei-fu-pen which contains the later additions, by comparison of the two, we may have better understanding of the way in which these alterations evolved. Two of the works of the early Ming writer Chou-hwien-wang Chu Yu-tun 周憲王朱有燾 exist in both these forms.

The Image of Ch'ao Yün 趙雲 in *San-kuo Yen-i* 三國演義

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In *San-kuo Yen-i*, Ch'ao Yün plays an active role as a general in the Kingdom of Shu 蜀. In the story, he is portrayed as "bold and careful". How does the author build up such an image for this protagonist? What kind of role has he assigned to Ch'ao Yün? These are two points that I shall examine in this paper.

Juxtaposing *San-kuo Yen-i* and *San-kuo-chih* 三國志, we may easily notice that Ch'ao Yün plays a much more active role in the former story. However, there are scenes where the two books resemble each other closely. An example of which is the scene where Ch'ao Yün remonstrates with Liu Pei. Another point that should not

be neglected is that the role of Ch'ao Yün in *San-kuo Yen-i* has become much more important than in the two sources upon which it is based, namely *San-kuo-chih P'ing-hua* 三國志平話 and the Yüan Tsa-chü 元雜劇. While retaining his intellectual image as portrayed in *San-kuo-chih*, the author exaggerates his valiant quality in *San-kuo Yen-i*. Thus Ch'ao Yün becomes both an intellectual as well as a militarist in *San-kuo Yen-i*. This also explains why he enjoys the status of being the third most competent general in the Kingdom of Shu, second only to Kuan Yü 關羽 and Chang Fei 張飛, although in history he has been ranked, at the most, as the fifth general.

One of the reasons behind such a treatment of Ch'ao Yün in *San-kuo Yen-i* is that the author probably wishes to make him the counterpart of Chang Fei. Such a device is not unusual in Chinese novels. The contrast between Chang Fei and Ch'ao Yün in *San-kuo Yen-i* is obvious. While Chang is portrayed as a brave but emotionally unstable warrior, Ch'ao remains a calm and discerning person who almost never errs.

Another reason perhaps is that the author has intended Ch'ao to be a character who can be summoned conveniently both as a warrior in the battle-scenes and as a thinker in the field of strategy.

Finally, perhaps we may also look at Ch'ao Yün as a character to fill the gap when such leading figures as Liu Pei, Kuan Yü and Chang Fei have all passed away.

On the Enigmatic Beauty of Wang Yü-yang's 王漁洋

Poem *Ch'iu Liu* 秋柳

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The meaning of the poem *Ch'iu Liu*, written by Wang Yü-yang at the age of twenty four, has aroused much debates among critics. No consensus has yet been reached as to what the intended meaning is. The complicated use of abundant literary allusions has made the poem so ambiguous to the extent that it becomes almost unintelligible. Yet at the same time the poet has embodied the poem in such tranquil imageries, harmonious color pattern, melodious rhythm

and subtle sentiments that the poem is filled to the brim with a sense of feminine beauty. Such feminine quality, combined organically with its bewildering content, has resulted in giving the poem a sense of enigmatic beauty. Being indefinite and obscure, it has even greater power in arresting the attention of the readers than poems of more definable nature. Its ambiguity also increases its capacity to stimulate a variety of readings. This is probably a genuine characteristic of the richness of great poetry and it explains why readers from different backgrounds in the early days of the Ch'ing dynasty had such special fondness for this poem.

On the Hsing-ling 性靈 (“Character and Spirit”)

Theory of Yüan Mei 袁枚 (1716-97) and its Relations with Various Schools of Poetry in his Day

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The Hsing-ling theory advocated by Yüan Mei as the touchstone of poetry comprises two aspects. The first aspect is his theory of Hsing-ch'ing 性情, which looks at poetry as a spontaneous product reflecting the emotions, disposition, and natural endowment of the poet. The second aspect, the theory of Chi-ling 機靈, demands that poetry be keenly perceptive and witty. He thus proposed that poetry should testify to the individual disposition of each poet. Bearing such an opinion, he favored lyrics and love poems, and was opposed to such devices as classical allusions, prescribed rhymes and other rigid regulations because they contradicted his notion of Hsing-ling.

The origins of Yüan's Hsing-ling theory can actually be traced back to the theory of poetry advanced by Yang Wan-li 楊萬里 in the Sung 宋 dynasty. Although the late Ming 明 writer Yüan Hung-tao 袁宏道 and his two brothers' opinions about poetry could evidently be discerned in Yüan Mei's theories, he had never acknowledged this indebtedness because their works were banned in his day.

To promote his poetics, Yüan Mei had attempted to criticise and

discredit other contemporary schools of poetry which included the Shen-yün 神韻 (the flavor theory of poetry) poetics of Wang Shih-chen 王士禛, the Kê-tiao 格調 (stylistic theory) school of Shen Te-ch'ien 沈德潛, and the K'ao-chü 考據 (philology) school. While the Shen-yün school maintained that poetry embodied a mysterious spiritual harmony that laid beyond its words, Yüan Mei felt that poetry should be a matter of disposition and natural temperament and that poems possessing this harmony but not true emotions had not attained superb qualities. Moreover, he criticised Wang Shih-chen for his weaknesses in writing long poems and narrative verses. In attacking the Kê-tiao school, he quoted Yang Wan-li as saying that only poets whose talents for poetry were deficient took refuge in stylistic theory, and that this would hinder the spontaneous expression of emotion. Moreover, the theory of Wen-jou Tun-hou 溫柔敦厚 ("gentleness and seriousness") advocated by Shen Te-ch'ien rejected the kind of love poems that Yüan Mei acclaimed. Thus Yüan had written letters to Shen to dispute with him. He also argued that the poetry of the Sung and Yüan 元 dynasties was not as unworthy as Shen had said. Finally, Yüan Mei harshly criticised the K'ao-chü school which quoted extensively from classical texts and produced poetry that was very difficult to understand, which of course was incompatible with Yüan's poetics.

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