

SUMMARIES
of
THE JOURNAL OF CHINESE LITERATURE
Volume LIV
April, 1997
Edited by
Department of Chinese Language and Literature
Faculty of Letters
Kyôto University

Preface of Poems in Early-Tang

Akihiro MICHISAKA, Mie University

A short way into Tang dynasty, a literary genre, "Preface of Poems" became rapidly flourishing. Preface of Poems here can be defined as an introductory essay attached when poems written on the occasion of banquets of seeing-off and others were grouped together. I examine works by Chu Tang si jie (初唐四傑), represented by Wang Bo(王勃), and following Chen Zi-ang(陳子昂) and Song Zhi-wen(宋之問), and consider their place and meaning in literary history. My conclusion is that Preface of Poems in Early Tang strongly reflects the literary and social situation of this period. The literature of Early Tang takes over the literary tradition from Six dynasties (六朝), like word-play literature "*Fu de shi* (賦得詩)" and it was created at banquets, which was typical of Six dynasties. But the banquet of Early Tang is different from that of Six dynasties. One difference is the banquet participant. In Six dynasties, participants were from the nobility class, while in Early Tang, from the newly-risen educated class who used to have little to do with literature. The other difference is that the banquet in Six dynasties was frequently repeated, but in Early Tang participants could not always expect to meet again after the banquet was over. For this reason, the banquet in Early

Tang was filled with strong feelings, which the banquet in Six dynasties lacks. As the best way to express strong feelings, Preface of Poems was invented.

Government officials of middle and low ranking were habitually transferred around the country and Preface of Poems in early Tang was a literary genre they acquired as a way of expressing themselves. The sense of ill fate and misfortune Preface of Poems of this period betray shows that they were conscious of their weak positions. Furthermore, when we think of the Preface established as a literary genre called “*Zeng xu lei* (贈序類)” in the Middle Tang and also of authors directly narrating to addressees of poems on the basis of the personal acquaintance with each other, Preface of Poems in Early Tang, we notice, gives precedence to expressing group sentiments. All these show the transitional character of Preface of Poems of this period. Authors and their works did not yet establish their own places in literary history. But the fact that the newly-rising class invented a new genre, Preface of Poems, as a means of the expression of their own sentiments is worth noticing. This is a new literary situation in Tang dynasty.

Yearning for Home and Getting Land in Su Shi's 蘇軾 Literature

Yôko YUASA, Kyôto University

As most of literary bureaucrats of the Northern Song 北宋 Dynasty, Su Shi enjoyed his leisure times in his provincial offices. But on the other hand, in his poems and proses, he expressed his anxiety for returning to his native place Shu 蜀 over and over again.

For all his yearning, came into exile to Huangzhou 黃州, Su Shi was forced to forsake returning to his birthplace. But even under the circumstances, he still tried to find something which related to Shu in the water of the river and the plants.

As some other literary bureaucrats in those days brought lands and tranfered their domicilies to districts rich in products and had facilities for communication, Su Shi got land in Changzhou 常州, also. But in his new home, he tried to find things which made him remember his birthplace as before. After all Su Shi could not be sastisfied with his new lands in Changzhou, and it was a contrast to Ou-yang Xiu 歐陽修. Ou-yang Xiu was legally domiciled in Jizhou 吉州 but looked forward to his retirement to his retreat in Yingzhou 潁州.

Su Shi was exiled to Lingnan 嶺南 district in his later days, he had to give up his anxiety for Shu. But in his poems at that days, he described his lost birthplace as if a closed peaceful paradise.

On Poetization of Fei-ming's Novel "Bridge"

Wu Xiao-dong, Beijing University

In modern Chinese literature, Fei-ming's novel "Bridge" is a distinctive work. This novel, without an overall plot or penetrative story line, presents each chapter as an independent paragraph. The norms of classical novels emphasize plot, incident, character portrayal and dramatics. However, "Bridge" develops different aspects that contribute to its categorization as an example of poetization.

In this article, analysis of the characteristics of the poetization of "Bridge" has been examined from the following angles.

The beauty of the writing

Fei-ming is greatly influenced by classical Chinese literary works. He professed to writing novels by using the technique of composing "jueju"(絕句), with succinct language, the writing meets the requirement of the aesthetic standard in addition to displaying a characteristic of self-derivation of novel language and image.

Omission and Blanks

Similar to classical Chinese poetry, Fei-ming's novel is imbued with omission and blanks which are expressed as the omission of the author's association process. Consequently, the novel displays leaps in the connection of ideas.

Artistic conception and symbol

One of the important characteristics of the poetization of "Bridge" is the construction of artistic conception. Through the use of novel language the author pursues to achieve a novel with symbolic atmosphere. The artistic conception of "Bridge", however, results in ambiguity. It is difficult to have insight into its obscurity and symbolic implication. Therefore, "Bridge" has a complicated aesthetic perception which results in the possibility of numerous interpretations.

The observer of aesthetic life

Xiao-lin, the protagonist in "Bridge" represents Fei-ming's ideal of life and aesthetic spirit. His image is an observer of aesthetical life. He keeps life at a

distance and observes it aesthetically, contemplating from the sidelines. Moreover, he is intoxicated with philosophical understanding and conceptual thinking about life. Therefore, "Bridge" is a novel with an abundance of "理趣" (speculation).

A symbolic Picture of oriental Utopia

Upon examination of Fei-ming's overall leading intention, "Bridge" suggests a symbolic picture of oriental Utopia. "Bridge" resembles countryside pastoral songs with an atmosphere of "隱逸" (describing the hermits' life style). It may be associated with Tao Qian's "A visit to the Land of Peach Blossoms" (陶潛《桃花源記》). Moreover, the image of the leading lady in the novel may also be associated with the prospect garden (大觀園) in *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (《紅樓夢》) and the ladies' world (女兒國) in *The Romance of Flowers in the Mirror* (《鏡花緣》). Both the land of peach blossoms and the ladies' world are oriental Utopias. Therefore, based on the overall understanding of the theme of "Bridge", we can simply conclude that the concrete ways of life "Bridge" represents an oriental Utopian ideal state of life.

The study of Fei-ming's novel is also important because his style and aesthetics influenced later generations deeply. From Shen Cong-wen's "Border town", "Gazing at a Rainbow" (沈從文《邊城》,《看虹錄》). He Qifang's "Wang Zi-you", "Uki yoe" (何其芳《王子猷》,《浮世繪》). Feng Zhi's "Wu Zi-xu" (馮至《伍子胥》), Bian Zhi-lin's "Mountains and Rivers" (卞之琳《山水水》) to Wang Zeng-qi's (汪曾祺) novels in the mid-1940's, a tradition of poetization has been developed in the modern Chinese novel.

Yangren (Westerners) in *Yangchang* (Concession)

Foreigners in Eileen Chang's 張愛玲 novels

Maya HAMADA, Kyoto University

Shanghai has played a central role in the development of Chinese Modern literature. China's defeat in the Opium War ushered in the creation of Metropolitan Shanghai. From its birth as a modern city, foreigners (Westerners) have been integral part of Shanghai.

The "Shanghai-School Fiction" 海派小說 is characterized by its foreign flavor. The depiction of streets in Shanghai emphasizes imported (mostly Western) materials, revealing an exoticism effectively. Later, during the 1920's and 30's, when the foreign concessions in Shanghai were at their

height, characters in novels from different countries served to shape certain stereotypes peculiar to foreigners: British and Americans enjoy a luxurious life; Russian prostitutes tout their customers along streets; Indian people always work as gatekeepers and so on. Most of these fictional characters just served to show “exoticism” in Shanghai; they never showed any individual or independent characteristics.

Eileen Chang’s novels acquired great popularity in Shanghai during the 40’s when it was occupied by Japan. In her novels written during a short period before the time of the CCP’s victory, she describes a number of foreigners living either in Shanghai or in Hong Kong. The British, who in novels, were depicted as rich men without any serious anxiety, are now intimidated by their own resentment that they live in a colony, not in Britain, while a Russian woman, who makes ends meet by working as a typist, is afraid of finding a spouse in foreign circumstances. A number of mixed-race people also appear in Chang’s novels. All these characters feel anxiety and apprehensions that they are and always will be the “other” within the concession community, however they can go nowhere by leaving Shanghai (or Hong Kong).

Chang, in her novels, provides Westerners, who were depicted as the thorough “powerful” or “evil”, with the particular characteristic as the “other”. They oscillate between inferiority complex regarding their own fellow countrymen living in their homeland and a superiority complex over Chinese, identifying themselves with neither one. Such characteristics correspond with those of Shanghai people to whom Chang herself also belonged. She produced stories of Shanghai people who were unable to identify with either the dominating West or the dominated hinterland China. Her writings bloomed in a linguistic vacuum, created by Japan’s control over the literary publications in Shanghai.

TRANSLATIONS AND NOTES:

Zhuizi Yulei Dushufa (The Reading Method)

—— Hiroshi KÔZEN, Kyôto University. Yûko KIZU, Dôshisha Women’s University. Mareshi SAITÔ, Nara Women’s University.

REVIEWS:

Kôzô KAWAI: *The Autobiography in China*, 1996

—— Tadao YOSHIKAWA, Kyôto University.

SELECTIVE ABSTRACT OF RECENT WORKS