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Trace to the Source of “Pingdian” 評點

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“Pingdian” criticism is one of the most important critical forms in the history of Chinese literary criticism. “Pingdian” literally means criticizing (Ping) and marking (dian). Since middle twelfth century it become increasingly popular. The Pingdian critic worked on given text, using dots and circles to indicate individual lines or extended passages which he admired or disapproved of, and writing critical comments in the top margin, between the lines, or at the end of a piece of writing. However it’s absent of deep and system research about tracing to the source of the pingdian. The present paper tries to discuss it from four directions in synthesis, and gained such conclusions: “Zhangju” 章句——punctuation and annotation——which since Han Dynasty provided the use dots and format for reference of the pingdian, the evolvement of former literary criticism choosing its center of gravity, the imperial examination of Song Dynasty bring on the requirement for it, the “pingchang” 評唱——one of the Zen works genre——gave its writing model.

On the transition of Nigu-shi 擬古詩 : from Lu Ji 陸機 to Li Bai 李白

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This paper investigates nigu-shi 擬古詩 from the Six Dynasties 六朝 to Tang 唐 era. The *Wenxuan* 文選 contains sixty-three imitative poems in the category of zani 雜擬, each of which show various levels and methods of imitation. I focus my attention especially on nigu-shi, generally supposed to imitate gushi 古詩 or gu-yuefu 古樂府 of the Han-Wei 漢魏 era. I describe how the nigu-shi genre becomes less imitative and more lyrical from the Six Dynasties to the Tang.

Nigu-shi of the Six Dynasties can be classified into two main types. The first is that which makes a faithful imitation of theme, content, or expression of earlier works such as gushi or gu-yuefu. I consider Lu Ji's 陸機 "*Nigu-shi er shou*" 擬古詩十二首 to be a typical example. This type of nigu-shi exhibits florid rhetoric and was composed as a kind of group amusement, a competition in which participants drafted imitations of a single model's elaborate verbal expression.

By contrast, another type of nigu-shi is intended less for the verbal imitation of former works and more principally for the delineation of feelings. The following are the most notable examples: "*Nigu-shi jiu shou*" 擬古詩九首 by Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, "*Nigu-shi ba shou*" 擬古詩八首 by Bao Zhao 鮑照, and "*Guyi er shou*" 古意二首 by Yan Zhitui 顏之推. These nigu-shi borrow diction, thematic patterns, and an impulse toward emotional effusiveness, but still maintain a certain distance from their models. I explore various methods by which this distance is maintained, methods I think result in more original poetic works. Appreciating them leads to an understanding of how nigu-shi transformed from simple imitation into composite lyrical poetry.

These two strands of nigu-shi continue into the Tang era. Early in the Tang, there appear several examples of poets presenting nigu-shi and guyi to acquaintances, works which show a more obvious tendency toward lyricization. In the High Tang 盛唐, Li Bai's 李白 "*Nigu-shi shi er shou*" 擬古詩十二首 (the work I regard as the era's most important nigu shi), is categorized in the *Fen lei bu zhu Li Taibai shi ji* 分類補注李太白詩集 as a ganyu 感遇, indication that the genre's lyrical qualities had been fully recognized. At the same time, it also seems that during the Tang the nigu-shi gradually fell into decline. Conceivably, as lyrical modes of poetry diversified, lyrical nigu-shi

lost its vitality and appeal.

Understanding “Mature” versus “Old” in Poetics :
The progression from Du Fu 杜甫 to Ou-yang Xiu 歐陽脩
and Mei Yao-chen 梅堯臣

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“Old” is usually regarded as a sign of degeneration and dissipation in classical Chinese poetry, bringing on the woeful laments of poets. In the critiques of poetics, however, the term “old” more often represents the maturity in style of the literary piece, and the perfection of the poet’s character. Du Fu was the first to use “old” as a positive concept of poetics. This thesis is concerned with how this concept of poetics was formed.

Du Fu perceived that the style of poetics changed accordingly with the richness of the poet’s growth and experience. He also pointed out that this is what constitutes the “maturity” of the literary style. Actually, Du Fu’s own creations bear testimony to this. In the middle and late Tang period, the use of “old” in literary criticism is commonly found among the commentaries of ancient-style prose pundits 古文家. However, the use of “old” by ancient-style prose pundits remains within the sphere of Confucian virtues.

In reality, as early as the Six Dynasties-Tang period, people had started using the term “old” to critique the calligraphy of Wang Xi-zhi 王羲之 in his later years. During the early Tang period, Sun Guo-ting 孫過庭 explained in *Shu-pu* 書譜 how the art of calligraphy and Confucian virtues are fused together, “the person and the word grow together” (人書俱老) at the highest level. This establishes the meaning of “old” as a concept of artistic style.

Later in the Northern Song, the meaning of “old” in the literary sphere and the meaning of “old” in the calligraphy sphere became interchangeable. During this period, Ou-Yang Xiu and Mei Yao-chen played an important part in deepening the understanding of “old” in poetics. For example, they were primarily concerned with the later works of an author, the natural result of this being that the author’s image was viewed to be a presence of constant change and maturity. Apart from this, Ou-yang and Mei pursued a “refreshing” (清新) state of aesthetic attainment in their own literary creations. In this way, the understanding of “old” has an intimate connection to how the characteristics of

Song poetry were formed.

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—Bunji TAKAHASHI, Osaka University

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