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A Struggle with “the Nebula of Tragedies”
An Introduction to the Literary Study of *Shi Ji* 史記

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It is sometimes stated that *Shi Ji* or *Records of a Historian* is a literary work rather than a historical record. People often regard *Shi Ji* as a literary creation by Sima Qian 司馬遷 because of its deep emotion, and they associate it with his tragic life.

On the other hand, historians in modern times regard *Shi Ji* as a corpus of historical material. They divide *Shi Ji* into several parts and examine the reliability of each part. In the past, some historians considered that *Shi Ji* included a considerable number of fictional tales, but today they are indifferent to tales in *Shi Ji*, since many unearthed texts demonstrate the reliability of *Shi Ji*. Historians pay more attention to Sima Qian's sense of mission, that is, carrying forward the tradition of *Chun-Qiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*) and praising the glory of the Han dynasty, and Emperor Wu in particular.

Shi Ji is rich with impressive stories, but we must note that they are not Sima Qian's creations, nor are they the entire content of *Shi Ji*. Nevertheless, many stories in *Shi Ji* are interconnected and form a literary world as a whole. We can call it 'a nebula of stories'.

The end of the Warring States era and the establishment of absolute government by the Han dynasty were very important events in *Shi Ji*. They were the road to the victory of Emperor Wu, on the other hand, however, they were the course in which all but the emperor would be defeated. Sima Qian, who intended to record the glory of Emperor Wu, collected numerous tragedies as a result, and he also had the tragic experience of emasculation. We consider that the literary value of *Shi Ji* comes from Sima Qian's struggle with "the nebula of tragedies".

From Dong-fang Shuo 東方朔 to Sun Wu-kong 孫悟空

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This is a famous episode in the *Xi-you-ji* 西遊記 that Sun Wu-kong steals peaches from the Queen of the West 西王母, and as you know, originally the thief was Dong-fang Shuo who served under the Emperor Wu 武帝 of the Han 漢 dynasty in history. Taoists said that Dong-fang Shuo is exiled to the earth by the Queen of the West, and that he introduces the Emperor Wu, who wants to be immortal, to a lot of things about the west. The character of Dong-fang Shuo arranged by Taoists reminds us of Hou Xing-zhe 猴行者, the antecedent of Sun Wu-kong, in the *Da-Tang San-zang qu-jing shi-hua* 大唐三藏取經詩話. Hou Xing-zhe steals peaches from the Queen of the West and is banished from heaven, subsequently he guides Tripitaka Xuan-zang 玄奘三藏 to the west for the purpose of obtaining Buddhist scriptures. The author points out that Buddhists adapted the Taoist character of Dong-fang Shuo as a guide to Hou xing-zhe when they described the pilgrimage and ascentation of Tripikata Xuan-zang.

Before giving this view, the author discusses Ju-ling 巨靈, who fights with Sun Wu-kong as a general in the *Xi-you-ji*. Ju-ling was depicted by Taoists as a dwarf who is a messenger of the Queen of the West and is exposed by Dong-fang Shuo. Going back to the Han dynasty, Ju-ling had two types of the original form, one was the God of canal works, and the other was a turtle which bears a holy mountain on its back. Moreover Ju-ling is now male, now female. The author pays attention to these multiple images of Ju-ling, and explore the origin of the so-called trapped monkey. Then in view of the "goddess and traveler" motif he analyzes the relationship between Dong-fang Shuo

and the Queen of the West, as well as Sun Wu-kong and the Goddess of Mercy 觀音菩薩. This analysis shows us the evolution of Sun Wu-kong and the Goddess of Mercy from Dong-fang Shuo and the Queen of the West, which took place against the background of the race for power between Buddhists and Taoists.

An Analysis of Du Fu 杜甫's Influence on Gidoh Shushin 義堂周信

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From Heian 平安 Era to Kamakura 鎌倉, Muromati 室町 Eras, a major change took place in the Chinese literature history in Japan. Du Fu replaced Bai Juyi 白居易 as the model. And in early Gozan 五山 literature, the monk poet Gidoh Shushin was the leader of the movement. Gidoh inherited his predecessors' interests but strongly recommended Du Fu. In theory he dug deep into Du's poems, finding their meaning, and the loyalty and brotherhood implied. On the other hand, he also imitated his diction, syntax and organization of poems. This helped him write some serious well thought-out works which combined integrity with reflection and took after Du's style. Therefore, he did a lot to promote the Du study in Japan.

REVIEWS:

Kuniyasu KATOH: Cross-border Poet Yü Hsin—On His Life and Poetic Representation

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MISCELLANEOUS:

Bibliography of the Catalog Raisonné of Chinese Classic Books in Japan

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