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The Wind that Blows the Clouds: A Sino-Japanese Comparative Literary
Consideration of ‘Surprised by Autumn along the Fen’

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This paper examines ‘Fen shang jing qiu’ 汾上驚秋 (Surprised by autumn along the Fen), a quatrain by the early Tang poet Su Ting 蘇頲 that was anthologized in *Tang shi xuan* 唐詩選. The poem reads: 北風吹白雲 萬里渡河汾 心緒逢搖落 秋聲不可聞. Two theories have been proposed concerning the interpretation of the second line and there is still no firm consensus: one interprets the subject of the verb “cross” 渡 as “I,” meaning the poet himself, and the other takes it instead as the “north wind.” The first is an old theory that was proposed in the Ming dynasty and has become the standard interpretation in annotated editions written by Japanese commentators. However, consider such examples as Bao Zhao’s 鮑照 lines 胡風吹朔雪 千里度龍山 (from his poem 學劉公幹體) and Xie Tiao’s 謝朓 lines 朔風吹飛雨 蕭條江上來 (from his poem 觀朝雨), both of which are included in the *Wen xuan* 文選, as well as Su Ting’s own lines 北風吹早雁 日夕渡河飛. In all three of these cases, a similar pattern of expression can be seen in which the north wind blows upon something, crossing over mountains or rivers. These and other examples make the second theory seem the more likely. In other words, to interpret the lines as “When the

north wind blows the white clouds, I in the course of my journey of ten thousand leagues cross over the Fen River” is a mistake. With these observations in mind, I propose two reasons to account for why Japanese readers have been particularly likely to commit such a mistake. The first is that in Japanese *waka* poetry, it is conventional for a traveler to gaze at clouds in the midst of his journey and feel the sorrow of parting. We can understand the misunderstanding as having arisen from interpreting the lines of Su Ting’s poem in accord with the conceptions of such *waka*. Another reason relates to differences in the conceptualization of space between Sinitic and Japanese poetry. In Sinitic poetry, it is typical to imagine that the wind blows forth clouds from a distance of ten thousand leagues, and Su Ting’s poem is an example of this. The Sinitic poem has the capacity to imagine what lies beyond the horizon. However, in the world of *waka*, it is conventional to depict wind-blown clouds within the space delimited by the edge of the mountains; clouds are not imagined to be blown forth across limitless space. The spatial sensibility of *waka* poetry, nurtured in basin-like valleys surrounded by mountains, seems to have interfered with understanding that “white clouds” could be the subject of the second line: “crossing ten thousand leagues over the Fen River.”

The Olfactory Sense of a Poet: Expression of Aroma in the Poetry of Huang Tingjian

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Huang Tingjian(1045–1105), a famous poet of the Song dynasty, not only produced many poems which bear all the signs of true innovative genius, achieving a new level of poetic expression, but also engaged his art in many different directions, always in accordance with the predominant interests of the moment, and these constitute the best example of a way in which a great intellect, with remarkable powers of acquisition and liberty to grow in free luxuriance, sends its roots into various soils and draws from them the constituents of its sap.

In this paper, we concentrate our discussion on the relationship between the poet and Oriental aroma culture. Although there has been much interest in this

question, and several writers have reported that Huang Tingjian was accomplished in concocting perfumes, there appears to be a void in the particular expression of his sense of smell in his works.

Smell has an important influence on the whole of our emotional nature and indirectly upon expression of all kinds. In classical Chinese literature, poems on the subject of smell started to appear during the Han and Wei Dynasties, and in the Tang and Song period a great deal was written on the same theme. The perfumes in said poems were either merely background in a larger picture, or ostensible description, with scarcely any foundation in sincerity of feeling; but appreciating aromatic pleasure and entering into his inmost thought, the poet Huang Tingjian was intoxicated with his love of aroma, and represented his sensations in verse.

“The solitude of a poet,” quoth he, “in the aromatic mist, was absolute.” In the works of Huang Tingjian, the fragrance of flowers and herbs disturb, infatuate, or tranquilize the human heart, and the poet became intoxicated by these fragrances, deeply introspecting on his true feelings, his body and mind alike while reposing greedily in delicious quiet. Another important point to note is an anecdote regarding Huang Tingjian which states that one day the poet walked into the mountains in autumn, turning a problem over and over in his mind; no sooner had he smelt the penetrating perfume of sweet-scented osmanthus than an epiphany belonging to the Buddhist tradition came to him. It was smell that renewed more fully his heart and impelled him to pursue his life enthusiastically.

The well-known profound knowledge and scholarship of Huang Tingjian have been favorite topics for analysis regarding the question of what fundamentally distinguishes the methods of his poetry. It is not only erudition, however, that makes a poet of him, it is a keen sense of smell by nature which delights in vigorous and beautiful thinking as well. At the same time, Huang Tingjian was at once powerful and delicate, excelling at what he proposes, executing what he conceives, and by means of giving expression to the sense of smell, bringing several new dimensions to the art of poetic description.

Shen Congwen's Fetishism: Corporeality of the City and the Rural Homeland in Representations of Women's Hair

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Shen Congwen's fictional images of women are often reduced to a naïve dualism, which consists of good-natured country women and corrupted city women. This tendency is supported by the sexualized and fetishized quality of Shen's writings regarding west Hunan (*Xiangxi* 湘西), his homeland, to which he was strongly attached. Shen often used images of ideal country girls as the embodiment of his nativism, although he hardly depicted the inner sentiments of his country women. His descriptions of women almost always stayed superficial; in other words, they are highly fetishized. As a result of these two qualities, studies on Shen's view of women are often conflicting: Is Shen a feminist writer with a profound concern for women in lower classes, such as country prostitutes? Or, is Shen a sexist male writer who can barely describe independent female characters with their own inner worlds? How can Shen's intensely fetishized female characters be reassessed from a 21st-century perspective?

This study approaches the relationship between Shen's images of women and his concepts of "city-homeland" from the viewpoint of fetishistic discourse. Shen's fetishistic view of women is seen in the detailed descriptions of female body's parts, such as the eyes, neck, bosom, legs, and feet. This work especially focuses on representations of women's hair.

When Shen began writing on the modern city by describing "modern girls" in Beijing in 1925, he used two types of hairstyles as a representative of modernity: tangled loose hair and short hair. Initially, modern girls with loose or short hair in his novel were mere objects of the narrator's libidinal gaze, but through descriptions of individual gazes from female students who look straight back at the narrator, loose or short hair gradually began to imply women's awakening of sexuality.

Meanwhile, when he began writing on west Hunan, one of the most important qualities of country women was that they were members of ethnic minorities (Miao); therefore, there were no specific hairstyles. These women wrapped their head with scarves, which clearly indicated their ethnic identities. Later, Shen began to bring in three types of new hairstyles into his description of country girls: thick plaits that call to mind the serpent mentioned in the Bible; tangled loose hair that implied a young lady's sexual awakening; and long and black

tresses that resembled a spider's web, which can catch and hold her lover's neck in a magical manner. These hairstyles were separately brought in from a libidinal discourse on the modern urban life and an obsession with women's hair, which was common among Victorian painters.

As Shen Congwen continues to be overestimated as a noble feminist who admired women, his specific tendency for machismo merits critical review from the perspective of feminism. In analyzing Shen's representations of women's hair, this work claims three new points of importance for Shen's fetishistic narrative. First, Shen's narrative of the modern city shows how young intellectuals in 20th-century China longed for love, strongly influenced by the discourse on love and sex that was novel at the time. Second, Shen created idealized country women through a rhetoric that was originally used to represent the city's modernity. Third, Shen's fetishistic narrative paradoxically opened new possibilities for depicting the inner sentiments of the "silent" subaltern.

TRANSLATION AND NOTES:

Jin-lou-zi (by Xiao Yi) Part 7

—KÔZEN Hiroshi

REVIEWS:

Chinese History of Art Theory: Philosophical Discourses by USAMI Bunri. Tôkyô: Sôbunsha, 2015

—NARITA Kentarô, The University of Tôkyô

SELECTIVE ABSTRACT OF RECENT WORKS