

The Influence of Confucianism on Extra-Territorial Poetics--Centered on the “Oriental Poetry Talks” of the Korean Dynasty

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Abstract: The development of poetics in East Asian countries has never been independent of each other, but has been complementary and mutually advanced through long-term interactions and exchanges. The reason for this is that East Asia has long been based on Chinese culture, and in this Chinese cultural circle, a regional order has been formed with Chinese culture as the center and Confucianism as the common philosophy. It can be said that Confucianism is not only the mainstream cultural thought that has influenced China for more than 2,000 years; after it was introduced to such extraterritorial countries as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, the East Asian countries, with their common Confucian classics, have made people have similar sensibilities in their understanding of human nature and values. Therefore, the Korean poetic discourse, which developed under the influence of Chinese poetic discourse, naturally retained a great deal of Confucian culture. With the keynote of respecting Confucianism and exalting Confucius, the social value, purpose and value orientation of poetry are clearly and richly imprinted with Confucian poetics.

Keywords: Confucian Culture; Oriental Poetry Talks; Korean Dynasty; Influence

1. INTRODUCTION

If Chinese characters are the perceptual symbols of the spread of

classical Chinese culture in East Asia, then Confucianism is undoubtedly the most important internal driving force for the widespread spread of classical Chinese culture in East Asia. The values of ethics, ritual, music, education, and family and state coexistence, as well as the individual and national values of benevolence, justice, ritual, wisdom, and trust, loyalty, filial piety, the way of loyalty and forgiveness, virtue and government, order, moderation, and harmony, had an obvious role in the construction of the spiritual culture and institutional civilization of the ancient Korean Peninsula and Japan. As far as literature is concerned, Korean Chinese poetry was closely related to China, and many Korean literati studied in China or went on missions to China, or passed on their teachings to Chinese literati, or wrote and replied to them, producing not only an amazing number of works, but also a great number of masterpieces. Therefore, the flourishing of Chinese poetry naturally influenced the development of ancient Korean poetic theories and created an artistic atmosphere for the prosperity of Korean poetic discourse. In the choice of poetic theory, the literati of North Korea stood looking up to the Chinese culture and consciously chose to take the evaluation standards and values of Chinese poetic discourse as the law. Xu Juzheng, was a famous poetry theorist in the early Korean Dynasty. In the socio-historical and cultural context of the time, Confucian poetics naturally became the core of the ideological sphere and the basic ideology of the ruling state due to the dominance of Neo-Confucianism during this period. In terms of family influence, Jin Shouwen (1431-1492) commented, "Mr. Xu Dacheng, born in the year of peace of the Dongguk, whose family passed on the training of Yangcun's poetry and rituals, ranked the top in the poetry world and became famous in the Central Plains." Xu Juzheng's father died when he was very young (Xu, 1983), and he grew up under the influence of his maternal grandfather, Guon-Gn, and received an orthodox education in Confucianism. In his view of poetics, Xu Juzheng advocated that "literature is the way" and that poetry should be created as a means of edification. It is worth noting here that Guon-Gn was an early giant of sexology, a famous Confucian scholar and poet in the Korean peninsula, and that Xu Juzheng repeatedly expressed in his poetry a strong desire to inherit his grandfather's learning. It can be said that the formation of his thought and poetic outlook was most influenced by Confucian culture. The combination of these internal and external factors deepened the perception that they shared the same Confucian philosophy as each other in the East Asian cultural system. This is the main source of the formation of Xu Juzheng's poetic thought.

2. FOCUS ON THE SOCIAL ROLE OF POETRY

The understanding of the social role of poetry is a fundamental question that has been explored by Chinese writers throughout the ages. What kind of poetry can enlighten people and what kind of poetry can play its social role? Confucius put forward the famous “having no depraved thoughts” and “Xing, Guan, Qun, Grievance”. The aim is to let people who read poetry distinguish good from evil in inner side and to maintain the true nature of human nature. The “Xing, Guan, Qun, and Grievance” summarizes Confucius’ basic view of the social role of poetry. Poetry can touch the reader's heart and influence his or her will through the depiction of images; it can recognize customs and reproduce social life; it can help people communicate their emotions and discuss with each other; it can accuse faults and express grievances. Confucius linked poetry with society and emphasized that poetry should serve reality. Korean classical poetic discourse, inheriting the Confucian poetic tradition, also often discusses the role of poetry in “expressing the will” and advocates that poetry be “returned to the righteousness”. The men of letters all affirmed the creative principle of “poetry expressing the will” and strongly advocated and practiced this principle (Zhang, 2004). They closely linked Confucianism and literature, showing the special way and special effect of literature to play the function of edification. In the first period of the Korean Dynasty, Neo-Confucianism monopolized the cultural and academic circles, and the idea of “literature as the way of life”, which Cheng and Zhu boasted, became the core of the literary thinking of the scholars at that time (Li & Ji, 2010). Xu Juzheng’s “Oriental Poetry Talks” (1474) was based on the idea that “literature carries the way” and emphasized the social role and ethical edification of poetry. Jiang Ximeng (1424-1483) clearly stated the purpose of the Oriental Poetry Talks in the Preface of Oriental Poetry Talks: “Not only do we take the beauty of the poems, but we implicitly take the maintenance of the world’s teachings as the basis.” This is the criterion for the selection of the notation of Oriental Poetry Talks”. Xu Juzheng talked about it in his article, “Poetry should be preceded by temperament and followed by literary alchemy” (Xu, 1983). Here, the relationship between poetry and the world religion is illuminated. The role of the world’s religion is to cultivate and nurture oneself, to promote the Confucian idea of “loyalty, filial piety, moral integrity” and the spirit of “everything for everyone” and to realize the social ideal of “regulating the family, governing the state, pacifying and world”. Poetry is an important medium to achieve its purpose.

3. THE VALUE OF POETIC DISCOURSE IS VALUED

Confucianism was the ruling ideology during the Korean Dynasty and was concretely reflected in literature, education, and the imperial examination system. This created a shroud of Confucian political thought in the society, shaping a strong atmosphere of political thought, and fostered and selected a class of scholars who conformed to Confucianism. They constituted the main body of creative works that conformed to Confucianism. Xu Juzheng ruled the literary world for twenty-three years during his life. As the leader of the literary circles, he composed “Oriental Poetry Talks” which showed the significance of summarizing the previous poetics and guiding the creation of future poets, and had a profound influence on the literary circles of the early Korean Dynasty. The entire text is divided into two volumes, totaling 141 articles, of which 67 articles are in the No.1 volume and 74 articles in the No.2 volume. The location and main contents of the specific materials included are listed below:

Table 1

Main Content	Location	Main Contents	Location
Imperial Poems	01	Poem on the Wall	02、06、59
Posthumous			04、15、25、26
Correction	03	Comparison of Poems	、32、46
Argumentative Style	05	Poet's Poetry Review	07、08、11
			10、29、34、36
Qijie	09、19	Learning poetry	、58
Pair of Lines (Genus Pair)	12、37、51	Poet's stories	13
			17、37、38、39
Rhyme	14、57	Use of events	、65
Syntax	18、33	Following the same line	20、28、44
Containing and Not		Poems with the same	
Revealing	21	title	22、23、64
Consecutive Lines	24	Refining words	27、30、37、49
Falling Flower Poems	38	The function of poetry	35、66
Poetic Style (Style)	38、52、54	The Poem's Style	40
Poet's Character	42、48、53	Melody	43
Palace Poetry	44	Abridged poetry	47
Using Scripture			
Language	50	Satirical poetry	55
Understanding of			
Poems	56	Overlapping Illnesses	60
Conceited Words	61	Poetry in the Boudoir	62
Zen Poetry	63	Feminine Temperament	67

Table 2

Main Contents	Location	Main Contents	Location
Attitude Toward Science	01	Literary Style	02
Contrasting Verses	03、 43、 48、 59	Poetry Legends, Eccentricities	04
Poetic Method	05	Poetry in the Lower class	06、 18、 63
Poetry in the Immediate Context	07	Characteristics of Poetry	08
Poetry of Style	09		10
Poems on Loyalty	11、 22、 34	Aphorisms	12
Reasons for the Same Bias	13	Zigui poem	14
The Poem of Exhortation	15	Style	16、 17
Explanation of Pastoral Concealment	19	Poem of light extinction	20
Similar Poems	21	Bone changing method	23
Pair of Stanzas (Genus Pair)	24、 30	Point of view poems	25
Criteria for Judging Poetry	26、 46、 57、 60	Poetry and People	27、 36、 68、 70
Twilight Poetry	29	The older the stranger	31
Commenting on Poems	32	Poetry in Context	33
Transformation	35	Collection of Lines	37
Satirical Poems	38、 39	Similar Poems	40
	41、 50、		
Using Things	66、 71	Fishermn's Poem	42
Relative Poems	44	Knowledge of Poems	45、 49、 69
Poems with the Same Scenery	47	Make-up	
Poem by a Woman	52	Poem by a woman	51
Poem on Sexual Prostitutes in the Liyuan	54、 62	Poem by a prostitute	53
		Poem on Farewell to Love (Farewell to Prostitutes)	55、 73、 74
Poem on Zen Forest	56	Poem on Old Prostitutes	58
Poems for Learning	61	Poems for Advocating Excellence	64
Poetry and Reality	65	Poem by a Long-strung Man	67
Words and Meaning	72		

Throughout *Oriental Poetry Talks*, we find that the center of Xu's argument has transformed from a discussion of events to a discussion of poetry. He makes full use of his poetic discourse to record and comment on the poetic climate, the nature of poetry, its creation, and the laws of poetic acquisition in the context of ancient Chinese literary theory. In addition, Jin Shouwen (1431-1492) reiterates the value judgment of poetic discourse at the beginning of the Korean dynasty in "*Oriental Poetry Talks After*": During Hong Hua time, I wrote two pieces of "*Oriental Poetry Talks*". Its intense and insightful knowledge is really so-called in the hall and discern the right and wrong in the imperial dynasty and the poetry of the collection of the great achievements ... And Xu's discussion is detailed and the majesty of rising and deposing is more than the praise and belittle. Xu has a far better knowledge than others. Not follow the sages of this collection, and the biography is what is seen and heard. Regardless of popular and elegance, he immediately raise the pen. I made a joke and say, "the more you read, the more you feel it is new, and do not know tired" (Xu, 1983)". It is obvious that the overall value of "*Oriental Poetry Talks*" is summarized by the words "recording," "knowledge," "fine discussion," and "not following the sages". In addition, later in the essay, Jin Shouwen mentions the innovative nature of the *Oriental Poetry Talks* again, whose content is far superior to that of the literati's works, which are "in the box". This undoubtedly confirms his high evaluation of the *Oriental Poetry Talks* and its nature as "a great collection of poetry" and "a poetical work of the four great, which has made Xu become master of a generation". The brief comment also reveals the author's clear understanding of poetic discourse, namely, the importance of correct poetic path to discern the right and wrong, theoretical value and historical value, and not superstitiously believe that the sages have their own originality. These poetic teachings and poetic ways are based on traditional Confucianism, and they have become the common thinking logic of Korean poetic discourse after the Korean literati repeatedly summarized their experiences and guided their creative practices.

4. THE PURSUIT OF THE BEAUTY OF CONFUCIAN PERSONALITY

The unity of human and literary qualities is an important principle of literary criticism in the Chinese tradition. In the Tang Dynasty, Han Yu proposed, "The root of the lush is fruitful, good makeup makes people

beautiful, the people of benevolence and righteousness, their words are as well.” “With good virtue, the people is open and sensible, and originally is not confined to the worldliness. Huang Shangu also paid attention to the reflection inner side and moral cultivation, which directly affect his literature creation and thoughts. He advocates poetry creation should be based on the “faithfulness and respect” personality and moral principles, and rests the Confucian tradition as the basis to express their feelings and perceptions of reality.

4.1 When Composing Poetry, One Should Pay Attention to the Character of the Person

Literary works are produced by various factors of social consciousness accumulated in the writer’s mind after communicating with specific objects of literary expression. The writer’s inner feelings of love and hate, praise and criticism, and suppression are often revealed or shown through works of art. Historically, Confucius was the first to link human virtue with creativity. Confucius said, “He who has virtue must have words, and he who has words need not have virtue.” In (Analects - Xianwen) he believed that those who have good character must have good speech. Ancient Chinese poetics has always been governed by Confucianism, following Confucius’ view of virtue and speech. It is believed that the inner feelings, human qualities, personality and broad-mindedness often influence and regulate the character of their works. Therefore, “poetry is like a person”, and Chinese literati have always pursued the beauty of personality. Xu Juzheng was influenced by this, and especially respected the poetry of Du Fu, Huang Tingjian, Chen Shidao, Chen Youyi and other “Jiangxi School of Poetry”. One of the reasons is that their poems “are all out of concern for the country and the people, they never forgot their inner side “and the poetry is reserved but not to reveal”. Xu Juzheng’s “Oriental Poetry Talks” regards Du Fu as a “poetic sage”, and Li Yiguang’s “Topical Discourse of Chibong” also strongly praises Du Fu as a “poetic historian” and considers Du’s poetry to be unique in the poetry world of Korea for thousands of years (Cai & Long, 2006). Obviously, this view of poetics and aesthetics originated from the requirements of Confucianism, and it also shows the deep influence of Confucian culture on the creation of Korean poetry. Ding Wei said the poem, “the door of heaven is open, eventually people are arrogantly going into.” Wang Yuanzhi said: “Going to the imperial house, people should bow, let alone arrogantly going to the door of heaven, this person is not loyal.” Recently, there is a Confucian surnamed Li, who is demoted, rhyming with the word mountain in Lixing Qingxin Building.

Since then, and he have been against the king. People know that he has a rebellious heart, and Li is killed not a long time (Xu, 1983). In the year of the year Dingchou, Gao Taichang's wife was ordered to come to Taipingguan Building to compose a poem in the ancient style. She said that the poem was "profound in thought, elegant in writing and spirited in emotion". She also wrote a poem about a saddle horse, praising Zu Ti's effortless driving skills on a journey of a thousand miles. She described this poem as "prudent". However, when one looks at her poem, one finds that she uses flashy and light words, but uses the Chinese wording of the Chinese horse, which makes it difficult to understand what she meant. She self-evaluated but thought she had written very well. I think her evaluation may be a bit too high (Xu, 1983). In the Oriental Poetry Talks, Xu Juzheng combines an argument on people and an argument on poetry as one, judging poetry. In both materials, he argues that the character of the poet determines the character of the poem. In turn, the character of the poem reflects the character of the person, and the character of the person can often be seen from the character of the poem. The History of the Song Dynasty • Volume 283 evaluates Ding as being "more dangerous and cunning than others, yet his is a bad people". The heart of the Confucian student of the surname Li then sprouted a rebellious heart. Therefore, a person who is indifferent to the future of the country, the fate of the nation and the suffering of the people in the officialdom must not be able to write these poems with passionate emotions and lofty aspirations, and the content of his poems must be to flatter and please. The content of his poems must be to show off and flatter, to please and to flatter. And if the wife evaluated her poem boastful and proud, she will be frivolous and shallow.

4.2 Poetry Should have a Great Atmosphere

Xu Juzheng believes that poetry is the voice of the heart and should not be written against the heart. Poetry, writing and human character are consistent. Because of the "great atmosphere" in the poem, some becomes an officer after passing the imperial exams or gains the fame and fortune or is famous in the literary world. Therefore, he introduced the concept of "atmosphere". "Atmosphere" means that the writer's work contains the spirit, temperament and character of the author. During the Song dynasty, Duke Yi, the king of Song, presented the works he had made to Duke Lu Wenmu. Thereafter, Duke Yi wrote a poem expressing his expectations for a future that was not yet accomplished. Lv Wenmu Duke recognized this

as a symbol of great talent and succeeded in ascending above the rock corridor. Huang Yuan, a Jin bachelor, also wrote a poem expressing his feelings in his later years. Jin bachelor Fu Yi, on the other hand, interpreted it as a sign of great success in his later years. Li Tao, on the other hand, climbed Song Mountain and wrote the poem “Walking to the top of the mountain”, which is considered to be magnanimous and far-sighted. All these literary works reflect the inner feelings and personality characteristics of people. It is a truth (Xu, 1983). Here, Xu Juzheng believes that the most important thing in poetry creation is the “atmosphere” presented in the poems, not the techniques. Through the appreciation of poetry, we can see the author’s “atmosphere”. From the “atmosphere” to the poet’s mind and aspirations is evidenced of fame and fortune. In the next volume of “Oriental Poetry Talks”, he also borrowed through Mr. Bian Jiliang of Chunting to further elucidate the “atmosphere”, “Pu Lao’s bold and handsome, horizontal and outstanding atmosphere both in the poem can be seen.” It can be seen that different people have different “atmosphere”. The upright person inside shows the “atmosphere” of great ambition and full of ambition, while the sinister person inside has a frivolous and extravagant “atmosphere”. We appreciate that through the “atmosphere” in the poem, we can feel the great difference in the author's environment, attitude to life and outlook on life. Each era has its own style of poetry, each person has its own “atmosphere”, the poem without “atmosphere”, it is floating sound and skin rhetoric, rootless, hollow and tasteless.

5. ENHANCING THE ETHNICITY OF KOREAN POETIC DISCOURSE

Each nationality has its own unique way of life, national spirit, customs and aesthetic interests, etc. Literary scholars who have lived for a long time in the social environment of the nation to which they belong naturally observe life with their own eyes, perceive life with their own thinking, and view life with their own aesthetic ideals (Liu & Xu, 2001). Therefore, the Korean scholar Mr. Cho Jong-ye also offers his own insights on the ethnicity of poetic discourse, arguing that Since there are also some differences in the state of existence of poetic discourse in each country, poetic discourse also has differences between the ancient and modern eras. At the same time, it inevitably has regional differences as the countries differ from each other. If there are regional differences, it will in turn inevitably have a regional character. In other words, Korean poetic

discourse is bound to be different from Chinese and Japanese poetic discourse because of the differences between countries (Zhao, 1997). Although Korean poetic discourse is a derivative of Chinese poetic discourse, the writers of poetic discourse also valued the universal form of Chinese literature and did not simply emphasize the particularities of their own country. However, it is still a display of the poetic conceptions, aesthetic sensibilities, and national character and personality of the Korean literati, and their desire for their own independent development is evident between the lines. A total of 238 verses from Chinese poets are excerpted from “Oriental Poetry Talks”, involving about 53 poets, accounting for more than half of the total. Among them, the poets with the most excerpts are Du Fu, Su Shi and Li Bai. It can be said that the poems of Chinese poets, led by Li Bai and Du Fu, were the unattainable models for the literati in Korea at that time. However, we can see from the word “dongren” in “Oriental Poetry Talks” that “dongren” means Koreans. The purpose of his poetic studies was always to establish his own poetic paradigm and poetic tradition. In other words, although the poetic form and value orientation of the poetic discourse converged, the purpose of creating poetic discourse was unique, dynamic, and autonomous. Due to the influence of Neo-Confucianism, Xu Juzheng advocated the “text to penetrate the Tao” but at the same time he also recognized that literature has its own value and status. Xu Juzheng said, “The text of the Tao, the six scriptures of the text, not intentionally in the text, but naturally with the Tao. Later generations of literature, first intended for the text, and may not be pure to the Tao (Xu, 1989). From this statement, we can easily see, he advocated that the text should be consistent with the Tao and “naturally match the Tao”, but also opposed the tendency to focus only on the “Tao” or only on the “text”, that the two can not be neglected (Wang, 2001). Xu Juzheng showed the understanding of literature by the literati of Korea as a giant of the literary world. He showed the self-conscious tendency of Korean poetics and enhanced the nationality and uniqueness of Joseon poetic discourse. In addition, Xu Juzheng and from the viewpoint of the essay out of sex, presenting a view of women’s literature that is contrary to traditional Confucian rituals: To many people, etiquette may restrict people’s behavior, while food and drink are appropriate. At the same time, according to the divination of the Book of Songs, if the host can sincerely entertain his guests, he will get good results, so there is no need to pay too much attention to such things as tedious rituals and the study of poetry and books. However, the specifics may vary from place to place and from cultural background to cultural background. Although in some parts of the

East, women may not be educated in tedious etiquette, this does not mean that it is useless not to learn. Different cultural traditions also have different values for the cultivation of character and virtue(Xu, 1983). He thought, “moreover, there are genders all over the world. If the women of the East do not learn the customs, how can they know that they are beneficial?” While affirming the fact that women write poetry, he also argues that Korean women should have their own characteristics in writing poetry, and that they do not have to follow the norms of the Poem and the Book of Changes. The implication is to break the shackles of feudal Confucianism on female literary creation and to appreciate women’s poetry (Ma & Pu, 2015). Of course, the limitations of Xu Juzheng’s view of women’s literature cannot be avoided, not only as a product of history, but also because of the deep Confucian literary tradition that had developed in the author’s heart and was difficult to return.

6. SUMMARY

The value of the poetic discourse before the Korean dynasty lies in the fact that it came into being under the influence of Ouyang Xiu’s *On Liuyi’s Poetic Criticism* and began to develop based on the national subject consciousness, fully absorbing the essence of Confucian poetic theory and combining it with its own specific practice of Chinese poetry. Mr. Cai Zhenchu of Hunan Normal University once said, “The focus of poetic discourse shifted from poetic storytelling to poetic theory, from said par to poetic commentary, from poetic ability to poetics, to literary and aesthetic theory, which is the advanced form of the development of poetic discourse” (Cai, 1990). Obviously, since the beginning of Xu Juzheng *Oriental Poetry Talks* in the Korean dynasty, a Korean style poetic system with its own characteristics was gradually formed and Korean poetic discourse took a mature path. Therefore, the poetic discourse of this period, represented by *The Oriental Poetry Talks*, is enormous in terms of both its historical and theoretical value, as well as its contribution to the construction of poetic discourse forms, and it has laid the foundation for the development of poetic discourse and poetics for future generations (Ren & Kim, 1995). In short, the development of each country’s literature is not isolated, and it is an indisputable fact that Chinese literature has had a profound influence on the literature of neighboring peoples since ancient times. The literary creations of the Korean peninsula were also inevitably placed in the midst of the extensive influence of Chinese literature, and

took the initiative to integrate themselves into the East Asian Han cultural circle, from which they drew valuable intellectual nourishment. Therefore, in the construction and development of East Asian poetics, its implicit meaning and value lies in the autonomous choice and positive effect of literary exchanges within the East Asian cultural circle. In the international comparative literature circles, the influence study theory represented by the French school advocates, “no writer’s creation is completely independent, and a writer’s influence will be reflected in his personal creation after receiving another kind of literature. Accomplished writers around the world have always innovated and created on the basis of borrowing and absorbing the best literature.” Thus, in the history of the development of Korean poetic discourse, we can clearly see the imprint of Confucian poetics. It is impossible to deviate from Confucianism in Korean poetics, which developed in the tone of Confucianism. As a literature that spreads the “world religion” and serves the ruler, it is inevitable that it accepts Confucian poetics in terms of literary criticism, value orientation, and the purpose and function of poetry.

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