

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Japanese, Chinese, and Korean Literati Communications and Mutual Understanding: Through the Poetry of the Meiji Taisho Period*

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ZHAN Qianhui and ZHOU Zhihuang, Nagoya: ARM, 2020\*

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The issue of cultural exchange between Japan, China, and Korea via literary Chinese (*kanbun*, *hanmun*, 漢文) has long been a popular topic in the field of East Asian classical studies. From 2017 to 2019, Dr. Hagiwara Masaki (萩原正樹) of Ritsumeikan University, with the support of the Institute of Asian and Japanese Studies at the same university, conducted a research project entitled “A comprehensive study of poetic communications between Japanese, Chinese, and Korean literati in the Meiji (明治) and Taisho (大正) Eras”. As part of that project, an international symposium was held on June 29, 2019, and a collection of essays were published in a book entitled “Japanese, Chinese, and Korean literati communications and mutual understanding: Through the poetry of Meiji Taisho period” (Arumu, 2020).

Dr. Hagiwara, one of the authors and the Editor-in-Chief of this book, took up ancient Chinese *ci* (詞) poetry as the starting point of his research career, and focuses on the creation and study of *ci* poetry in Japan since the Meiji period, as well as the poetic communications between Japanese, Chinese, and Korean literati during the same period. The other authors of this book are from China, Taiwan, and Korea, reflecting the widespread interest and enthusiasm of scholars from China and Korea on this topic. The titles of the essays included in this book reveal that it is not a general discussion; most of the topics are specific and profound, describing the latest discoveries and the unique ways in which the authors think about poetic communications among the Japanese, Chinese, and Korean literati. It is of particular note that several young authors, originally dedicated to the study of classical Chinese literature, became interested in this topic after meeting and having in-depth academic exchanges with Dr. Hagiwara. This demonstrates how an academic topic can receive more attention and gain new impetus thanks to the scholarly communication of those who pioneered the field.

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\* 萩原正樹編；周志煌，萩原正樹，汪超，詹千慧，魯耀翰，賴信宏，余筠珺著『日中韓文人交流と相互理解：明治大正期の詩詞を通して』あるむ

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As a collection of essays, this book uses the poetic communications between Japanese, Chinese, and Korean literati during the Meiji and Taisho periods as a unifying theme, but the backgrounds and relationships of the people discussed in each paper vary widely. In general, poetic communications among Japanese, Chinese, and Korean literati during the Meiji and Taisho periods is a daunting topic because of the overwhelming amount of historical data, the complicated social networks, and the intricate relationship with the political situation of the same period. However, the existence of many unexplored historical materials and their relationship with contemporaneous historical research have attracted the attention of many scholars. The essays in this book are a valuable attempt to tackle these matters.

The three essays collected in this book, “Koizumi Tosen (小泉盜泉) and *ci*” by Dr. Hagiwara, “An Exploration and Poetry Criticism of the Chinese Poetry Communications between Taiwanese and Japanese Literati in the Yushan Yinshe (玉山吟社) in Taiwan during the Meiji Period” by Dr. Zhou Zhihuang (周志煌), and “A Study of the Communications between Mori Kainan (森槐南) and the Literati in the Newspapers of the Late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China” by Dr. Zhan Qianhui (詹千慧), are centered on this sub-topic.

Dr. Zhou’s paper takes the example of the Yushan Yinshe, the first poetry society established in Taiwan at the beginning of Japanese rule, and examines the way in which Chinese *ci* poetry entered the Taiwanese poetry scene, the responses it received, and the evolution and outcomes of this cultural strategy during the period of Japanese rule, against the backdrop of the colonial ruler’s policy of appeasement. Given that the Yushan Yinshe itself was active for only about a year, there is little research on this topic. Dr. Zhou is keenly aware that although the poetry society itself lasted for only a short period of time, its participants continued to create poetry in a dedicated manner after its dissolution and can therefore be considered a continuation of the society. With this as a breakthrough point, Dr. Zhou collected a large number of historical materials in an attempt to explore the daily lives of the literati in Taiwan during the early years of Japanese rule, beyond the scope of their political identities.

There are many different types and quantities of historical materials on poetic communications between Japan and Taiwan during the Meiji–Taisho period, including poetry collections, diaries, and newspapers. Although newspapers and journals are trivial, they often covered a wide range of topics and therefore provided a lot of useful information. In particular, the openness and extensive use of a database of articles published by the Taiwan Daily News (臺灣日日新報) has enabled scholars to easily search through a vast trove of historical documents. Drs. Zhou and Chen made full use of such resources to research their papers. It is clear that the development and utilization of literary and historical databases have had a substantial impact on the advancement of research in the study of the Meiji-Taisho period in Japanese, Chinese, and Korean poetic communications as well as in other related fields. We hope that with the help of such databases, research in this field can move from mere data compilation to more in-depth analysis and criticism.

During the Meiji-Taisho period, the Chinese mainland was at its most chaotic and dynamic point in the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic period. For the Japanese poets of the time, the traditional China that existed in their imagination was, in a sense, their spiritual homeland. However, the continued decline of the real China caused them endless despair. During this period, a large number of Japanese literati, including Naito Konan (内藤湖南), a great scholar of sinology, traveled to mainland China, where they produced numerous diaries and poems about the period. In the present work, “Looking Back from a Divergent Path: Qing People and Qing Travels in Naito Konan’s Chinese

Poetry” by Dr. Wang Chao (汪超), “Nagao Uzan (長尾雨山) and the Poetic Communications of Modern Chinese Literati: Centering on Zheng Xiaoxu (鄭孝胥) and the Shanghai Association” by Dr. Lai Xinhong (賴信宏), and “Taisho Poet Kubo Tenzui (久保天隨) and His Reception of Qing Dynasty Poetry” by Dr. She Yunjun (佘筠珺) were developed within this framework. Dr. Wang’s essay compares the contrasting narrative style of Naito Konan’s poetry on the ideal China of his imagination with the real China and leads to a discussion of the ambiguous relationship between this paradoxical expression and the rise of Japanese colonialism at the time. If we can compare his colonialist tendencies with his historical research tendencies, we might gain a deeper understanding of the developmental path of modern Japanese sinology research, including that of Hunan Naito. We look forward to more exciting research from Dr. Wang.

Among the authors of this book, Dr. Noh Johann (魯耀翰) is the only scholar from Korea. Korea was an important intermediary for the spread of the Chinese language and Chinese culture to Japan and was one of the most important colonies of Japan in the modern period. Therefore, compared with Taiwan, which was also a Japanese colony, the Korean literati showed a more ambivalent attitude in their poetic communications with the Japanese literati. Dr. Noh takes up the example of Kim Yunsik (金允植), who is regarded as a pro-Japanese politician, and explores how he rationalized his political orientation through his poetic exchanges with Japanese writers. The paper also mentions a number of related figures around Kim Yunsik, but there is no prior research available, which reflects the many gaps left to be filled in the field. We hope that Dr. Noh’s work will attract more Korean scholars to this area.

It is worth mentioning that Taiwanese, Chinese, and Korean authors of this book focus on Japan–Taiwan, Japan–Qing, and Japan–Korea relations, respectively, sharing their deep understanding and concern for their respective localities in terms of combing through historical facts and providing interpretations with specific viewpoints. However, our expectations do not stop there. If we expand our horizons to all three places and consider the Japanese literati who have lived there and explore the various changes in poetic communications and mutual understanding and the underlying reasons behind major events in the modern history of East Asia, including the cession of Taiwan, the merger of Japan and Korea, and the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty, we will certainly come to many thought-provoking conclusions. The importance of Dr. Hagiwara’s work in academic organization and communication can be understood from the fact that such a multi-local and multi-disciplinary research project necessarily requires extensive and intensive international collaboration. Although this book and its research have been completed, we look forward to further related academic activities under the pioneering efforts of Dr. Hagiwara.

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