ABSTRACT

Chapter Four dwells mainly on the intricacies of Du Fu's literary style. Du Fu (A.D. 712 - 770) was undoubtedly the most accomplished poet of the Tang Dynasty. His unprecedented achievements could be attributed to his family background, determination to achieve literary excellence and hard work. With him Chinese poetry extended over a wider range of subjects than ever before. He gave an accurate and vivid portrayal of the varied social phenomena of his day - from important political, military and economic developments down to the life of the rural people. His main source of inspiration was the suffering of the people. This study of Du Fu is divided into six chapters. Chapter One gives the background to the subject of study.

The second chapter deals with Du Fu's life, which can be roughly divided into four periods. He died at fifty-nine after having encountered many misfortunes in life. During his lifetime, he had written some of the best poems of the Tang Dynasty.

Chapter Three touches on the main themes underlying his poems. Being a poor man, Du Fu had ample opportunities to meet other poor people and learn about their misfortunes. He came to understand the contradictions in society and the dangers confronting the country. In his poems he described graphically the days of insecurity, depicted the people's sufferings, and sang praises of the people's honesty and fortitude. He did not forget to condemn ceaselessly the ruling class for corruption, immorality and extravagance.
Chapter Four dwells mainly on the intricacy of Du Fu's literary style. Like Shakespeare, he could pack a wide range of images and ideals within a few verses. In addition Du Fu managed to strike a sound balance between down-to-earth facts and sentimentalism: a style of lyrical melancholy with a powerful punchline at the end. The compact and vivid diction of his writing has such intensity that it is really astounding.

In the fifth chapter the influence of Du Fu's works on succeeding poets is briefly discussed. His themes were adapted by poets in the later periods. His revolutionised style permits creation of more secular and flexible styles by later poets.

The last chapter is a compact conclusion summing up the above discussion, which shows Du Fu's contribution to Chinese poetry.