ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to study Zhou Bang Yan’s contribution towards the development of Song “Ci” poetry. Zhou Bang Yan’s bibliographical background and thinking was introduced to help readers understand the poets position when he wrote his literary pieces.

Through his literary excellence and skilled artistry in portraying his thoughts and feelings, Zhou was able to influence his pupils greatly. However, many critics criticised the contents of his works and felt that he could only be commended on the styles, language and techniques he used.

This is due to the fact that most of Zhou Bang Yan’s works portrayed his close relationships with courtesans. They were often criticised as socially degrading and morally unacceptable by his critics who preferred lyrical poems along the line of Su Shi’s pieces.

Many of the critics formed negative reviews of Zhou Bang Yan’s lyrical poems which had in turn influenced readers to form subjective opinions of his lyrical pieces. This dissertation hopes to establish an in-depth study and a fair appreciation of Zhou’s work by looking into his talent and skills in bringing out the theme of the poem, his artistic and bold display of emotions, and more importantly, his ability to produce poems with clever techniques and skill.

Despite Zhou Bang Yan’s highly controversial personal life, he had brought about a new development in Song “Ci”. Through bold portrayal in his work which led him to be severely criticised. Many critics had compromised and disregarded his distinctive lyrical pieces written during his darkest moments. These pieces portrayed the ideas he had of a vagabond’s despair who could not apply his patriotism in serving his country. Mixed emotions - passion, enthusiasm, dejection and despair were translated into beautiful and excellent work-of-art. Therefore it is unfair to overlook the value of Zhou’s work on account of his sensitive display of sensual indulgence.