Abstract

Bai Ju Yi (白居易, 772 - 846) was one of the most famous, prolific and influential poets of the Tang Dynasty (705 - 907). As most studies of Bai Ju Yi concentrate on the poet's achievement in poems of socio-political criticism and long narrative poems, his poems of everyday life have been regrettably neglected. The objective of this academic exercise is therefore, to establish the value of his role in providing a link for poets before and after him in the history of development of poems of everyday life in Chinese Literature.

The final chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

As an introduction, chapter one first defines the poems of everyday life. The objectives and the approach of this study are then highlighted.

Chapter two discusses the literary background of Bai Ju Yi's poems of everyday life. The possible influence on Bai's works by poets such as Tao Qian (365 - 427) and Du Fu (712 - 770) are examined.

Chapter three analyses the themes and contents of Bai Ju Yi's poems of everyday life in five aspects: the experience of daily trivial matters, the sentiment towards the family members and relatives, the pleasure of idleness in daily life, the feeling of the passing of time and his optimistic outlook of life.
Chapter four explores the artistic techniques. It consists of three sections: (i) the unfolding of scenes of everyday life, (ii) the revealing of daily thoughts and emotions and (iii) the conveying of attitudes towards daily life.

Chapter five critically evaluates Bai Ju Yi's poems of everyday life and emphasizes his achievements in changing the scope of traditional poems, developing the trend of writing poems of everyday life, revealing himself as an ordinary person and bringing himself closer to the readers.

The final chapter concludes with a summary of the findings, establishing the reputation of Bai Ju Yi as one of the masters of this literary genre.