Abstract

Development of Buddhism was at its prime in the Tang dynasty. Wang Wei (王维) was one of the most important poet of that period. He is highly regarded for his accomplishment in the landscape poetry (山水田园诗) and also well-known for his Buddhist poems. Wang Wei's Buddhist knowledge was reflected in many of his poems. As a result, he was conferred with a title Shi fo (诗佛), i.e., Buddha poet in the history of Chinese literature. Wang Wei came from a Buddhist family and had many friends who were Buddhist Monks. Throughout his life, he was very much influenced by Zen Buddhism.

This dissertation aims to study the Vimalakirti-Nirdesa sutra and Wang Wei's poem on Layman Hu's sickness. This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One lays the background of the development of Buddhism in the Tang dynasty. Chapter Two reveals Wang Wei's relationship with Buddhism and discusses his Buddhist poems. Chapter Three talks about the Vimalakirti-Nirdesa sutra. Chapter Four exams in detail the poem on Layman Hu's sickness and its relationship with the Vimalakirti-Nirdesa sutra. Lastly, chapter Five is the conclusion. This study reveals that Wang Wei's way of thinking and his lifestyle during his middle-age and old-age periods parallel that of Vimalakirti-Nidesa sutra, thus affirming close relationship between the poet and this particular Buddhist sutra.