ABSTRACT

The scenic beauty and the illustrious poetic value of the Zhongnan Mountain, as well as its precious relics and culture, has long captivated the imagination of travelers and scholars alike. Due to its proximity to Chang’ An, the Capital City of the Early and High Tang Dynasty, as well as the above mentioned factors, has made this site unique and in many ways, resplendent in academic and historical value, rather than just picturesque pleasures to the eyes. The deep and profound connection of the Early High Tang poets with Zhongnan Mountain cannot be ignored, thus the purpose of this dissertation is to investigate this relationship and demonstrate the importance of this landscape, in relation to the eremitism and lyric writing in that era.

Before showing the influence of Zhongnan Mountain in detail, the geographical aspects of the mountain are investigated. Often forgotten, but fundamentally important, the geography of the mountain plays a very important role as to facilitate the thorough understanding of the landscape poetry. It will also show why famous scholars and poets of that time chose to this mountain as a place for reclusion.

Zhongnan Mountain was pivotal as a religious medium which is an inspiration to poets and their poems. This is because of the extensive number of temples preaching Buddhism and Taoism existing on it and they are part of the allure that poets find fascinating.

Many renowned poets, like Wang Wei and Cen Cen, chose the Zhongnan Mountain as a place of residence and built villas and manors. The eremitism of the Early High Tang can be shown through this mountain as a choice of residence by these poets, and from their
psychology, this thesis hopes to further demonstrate the culture of that time.

Finally, from the aesthetic perspective, two different viewpoints of poets on the landscape of Zhongnan Mountain are presented.