Abstracts in English of Thesis in Chinese

The Comparative Study of Poetical Works

by T'ao Yuan-ming and Haish Ling-yün

Tao Yuan-ming (365 - 427) and Haish Ling-yün (385 - 433) lived during the period of the Chin - Sung Dynasties. They are ranked as the greatest of nature - poets of China.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter introduces the important and special position of the poets in Chinese Literature. Tao Yuan-ming is the greatest poet of pastoral poems (田園詩). His poetry was highly praised by posterity both in China and abroad. Haish Ling-yün was the first poet who devoted the greater part of his literary career to exploring and describing the beauties of mountains and rivers and help to pioneer a new area in Chinese poetry known as the scenic poems (山水詩). He also exercised considerable influence on the poets of the T'ang Dynasty.

The second chapter attempts to compare the following aspects of the poets' lives: 1) names, aliases, and residing places; 2) family backgrounds; 3) living environments, personality and hobbies; 4) scholarly attainments; 5) official careers; 6) direct families; 7) social intercourse; 8) emotions; 9) thoughts; 10) dates of birth and death and others; in order to understand the differences between their lives especially their characters and outlooks of life. Haish Ling-yün was born of an aristocratic family, while Tao Yuan-ming later became a poor farmer. T'ao Yuan-ming loved his family and neighbours, his books and music and above all drinking, enjoyed the bounties of nature found among the willows and chrysanthemums, loved mountains and hills. Haish Ling-yün was more interested in visiting scenic spots; he lived eccentrically and courageously and he was dissipated and unrestrained.

Their family backgrounds and the studies of ancient sages had formed their ways of thinking. T'ao Yuan-ming was a man of principle whose experience of officialdom led him to retire early to become a farmer rather than give up his ideals. He was loyal to the Chin Dynasty. They were brought up in well established gentry families of the Confucian
tradition and were greatly influenced by the teachings of Chuang-tzu (莊子, 368 BC? - 288 BC?). T'ao Yuan-ming blend them and enjoyed his life. However, Hsieh Ling-yün, who learned the Confucian tradition and the teachings of Chuang-tzu was also a famous Buddhist thinker and had an overwhelming manly spirit, unable to blend the essentials of all the three philosophies and failed in embodying them. He valued his life above anything else, respected Taoism above anything the world offered, spent his life among the careerist intrigues before a court which forced him to yield and eventually to the blood-soaked execution ground of Kuang-chou. His conflicting ideas led him to live in anguish and despair.

Chapter three is based on the second chapter to compare their poetic works. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part compares their poetic sources. They came from two different poetic traditions. T'ao Yuan-ming from the Cheng-Shih tradition (正始系) and Hsieh Ling-yün from the Tai-K'ang tradition (太康系). T'ao Yuan-ming's poetry was greatly influenced by Ying Ch'ü (應璩, 191 - 252), Juan Chi (阮籍, 210 - 263), Tsao Su (曹署, 260? - 330), Chang Ching-yang (張景陽, floruit. 295) and Hsieh Ling-yün's by Ts'ao Chih (曹植, 192 - 232), P'an Yüeh (潘岳, 247 - 300), Lu Chi (陸機, 261 - 303), Chang Ching-yang and Kuo P'ü (郭璞, 276 - 324). The second part compares their poetic specialities. This part is divided into seven sections. Hsieh Ling-yün's five-word poems sound like lotuses, and T'ao Yuan-ming's like chrysanthemums. Hsieh Ling-yün is one of the greatest writers specialising in the penta-syllabic poetry. On the other hand, T'ao Yuan-ming's pastoral poems are simpler, more spontaneous and plainer. He brings to his readers his simple and yet profound contemplation of life and nature, his warm personal insights and the spontaneous flashes of his candid heart. His poems are relatively free from literary allusions. The secret of T'ao Yuan-ming's success is his ability to "open the heart" in his poems. His poems expose his personality like an open book. Hsieh Ling-yün had a very sound poetic genius. His poetic style is ornate and artistic and full of poetic allusions. To display his erudition, he searched unfamiliar obscure quotations. He placed equal emphasis on sound and rhyme in his poems to create verse harmony. Quotations from the classics are liberally
scattered throughout his works. Most of them come from *Yi-ching* 易經, *Shih Ching* 詩經, *Chuang tzu* 莊子, *Ch'u Tzu* 楚辭, *Han shu* 漢書 and *Ts'ao Chih's* works. As far as T'ao Yuan-ming is concerned, he preferred to quote from *Shih Ching*, *Lun Yu* 論語, *Chuang tzu*, *Ch'u Tzu*, *Shih chi* 史記 and *Han shu*. This is the chapter to which I have devoted the most time and effort.

Hsieh Ling-yun's poems are not mere description of scenery, but records of an essentially mystical mind driven to resolve its conflicts dramatically through the contemplation of nature. The conflicts within him gave rise to an intolerable tension which evolved some of the finest Chinese poems. This part also compares the words and vocabularies which are often used by them. Part three emphasises both of them as lonesome and proud. Their poems have a sense of loneliness and a spirit of arrogance.

Chapter four is the conclusion of the thesis. Since they came from two entirely different poetic traditions, it is unfair for us to stand on the same viewpoints to compare and contrast them. Anyway each of them possesses outstanding artistic skills and admirable performances. T'ao Yuan-ming's poems should be read meditatively, ideally out of doors on a summer's day; whereas before enjoying a poem of Hsieh Ling-yun's, we should understand the situation or surrounding in which the poem was composed.