ABSTRACT

In the study of early Tang poetry, the works of Wang Bo (王勃), Yang Jiong (杨炯), Lu Zhao Lin (卢照邻), and Luo Bin Wang (骆宾王) have always been considered together. Scholars have tended to look into their backgrounds, writings and contributions to the development of early Tang poetry. This academic exercise will, however, place the focus on Wang Bo (649 - 676; alt 650 - 676), zi Zi'an (子安) by giving a comprehensive and critical analysis of his poems.

Having conducted a thorough study of Wang's ninety-five poems, I found that they can be categorised into two major areas: (1) his feelings toward his friends or hometown; (2) his sentiments towards life. Besides these two areas, some of his poems also express his views on society and his feelings in various banquets with his fellow poets. Nonetheless, we should take note that in AD 669 and AD 674, he was forced to leave the government service twice. The changes in his feelings, anxieties and ambitions were clearly reflected in his writings.

In conclusion, though Wang Bo's poems can be seen from two different facets, we should not underestimate his contributions to the development of early Tang poetry. This is especially true of his way of writing that has revolutionised previous poetic styles and created a new style of poetry.