ABSTRACT

Bao Zhao (鲍照) (412? - 466) was a literati of the Song regime of the Southern Dynasties (Liu Song 刘宋: 420 - 479). It was a period of chaos and destruction. The country was dominated by the powerful family clans (shizu 世族) and the humble families (hannan 寒门) were suppressed. Bao Zhao was born in a humble family and thus was not able to rise above the rank of a lower official.

Inspite of this, Bao Zhao became famous for his Music Bureau Poems (Yuefushi 乐府诗), which poured out his melancholy feeling about being ignored. It is unanimously agreed that the substance of the above creative works reflected his inner thoughts and are considered the best of his works, having tremendous impact on famous poets such as Li Bai (李白) and Du Fu (杜甫). But, his works in poems of Mountains and Rivers have been neglected.

The poems of Mountains and Rivers were popular in the Liu Song Dynasty. It is commonly said that the two Xie's (Xie Ling-yun 谢灵运 and Xie Tiao 谢眺) were the best among all such poets. But it can prove that Bao Zhao, their contemporary, also achieved remarkable standing in his poems of Mountains and Rivers.

This academic exercise attempts to study his poems of Mountains and Rivers and hopes to establish the values of these poems.
Chapter one defines the poems of Mountains and Rivers and provides a brief biographical background of Bao Zhao. The objectives and the approach are also listed. Chapter two discusses the literary background of poems of this literary-genre. The third chapter analyses the thematic significance of Bao Zhao's poems: sorrows of the official careers, regret over the passing of time, yearning for immortality and reclusion, and pleasures of banquets and outings. Chapter four explores the artistic techniques of his poems. It consists of three sections: general structure, depiction of mountains and rivers, and expression of emotions. The next chapter critically evaluates Bao Zhao's poems and the final chapter concludes with a summary of the findings, emphasising the values of Bao Zhao's contribution to the further development of this genre of poems.

My appreciation also goes to those who have contributed to the successful completion of this academic exercise.