Abstract

SiKong Tu (司空图) lived at the end of Tang dynasty (唐朝) (618-907). He was born in 837 and died in 908 at the age of seventy-two. He is well known as a poet and craft-critic. According to The Complete works of Tang poetry (《全唐诗》), about four hundred poems of SiKong Tu are existing today. However, the most widely read of Sikong Tu’s works are not the four hundred poems but a set of twenty-four poems in archaic four-syllable line form, called Shi-pin (《诗品》) or Er-shi-si Shi-pin (《二十四诗品》). According to my research, from 1960s to 1980s, most of the scholars concentrated on the study of Sikong Tu’s Shi-pin. Only Wu Diao Kong (吴调公), Hua Yan (华岩) and Wong Yoon Wah (王涌华) break through the range of studying Shi-pin. They emphasized on studying Sikong Tu’s other poems and analyzed the work from aesthetical and symbolic viewpoints. As a matter of fact, regardless of the creation of poems or the treatise of poetics, they complement each other.

This dissertation is on the study of Sikong Tu’s poetry, analyzing the poems from symbolic viewpoint, comparing Sikong Tu’s creation of poems and treatise of poetics, in an attempt to prove that Sikong Tu is a workshop-critic.

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 covers the scope, objective and methodology of this dissertation. Chapter 2 is an evaluation survey of all Sikong Tu’s poetry from the past dynasties. Chapter 3 is a critical analysis of Sikong Tu’s poetry. Chapter 4 is a study of the symbolic aspects of Sikong Tu’s poetry. Chapter 5 is a comparison study of Sikong Tu’s literary theory and his poetry, proving that the treatise of poetics and the creation of poems complement each other, Sikong Tu is absolutely a workshop-critic. His poetry deserves a recognized position in the world of literature.