

ON THE LYRIC(AL)NESS IN THE SINO-JAPANESE
INTERLITERARY PROCESS: MUSINGS AFTER READING
KOKINSHŪ PREFACES *

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The aim of this essay is to show the lyric(al)ness of Japanese poetry of the Heian era (794-1192) and its similar and different features in comparison with Chinese poetry of the Six Dynasties (420-580), especially from its late period. The examples are taken from the Japanese collection *Kokinshū* (*A collection of poems ancient and modern*) and from the Chinese collection *Yutai xinyong* (*The new songs from the Jade Terrace*).

Key words: Lyric(al)ness, interliterary process, *Kokinshū*, *Yutai xinyong*, Ki no Tsurayuki, Xiao Gang

1

The Chinese as well the Japanese traditional literature is predominately of lyric character. The epic cast, although very conspicuous in the Japanese, even more than in Chinese, is not as prominent as in Western literature, where dramatic or epic vision sometimes prevail.

Under lyric(al)ness I understand the cream of the lyrical vision and the essence of lyrics. This concept is similar to that of literariness, coined by Roman Jakobson after 1921¹ or interliterariness which began to be used by Dionýz Ďurišin.² Both present the qualities which make literary works axiologically valuable enough to be regarded as literature, or which transcend the framework of their own origin and became the common property of supranational or supraethnic literary structures.

¹ JAKOBSON, R. *Noveishaia russkaia poezia* (Recent Russian poetry), p. 21.

² ĎURIŠIN, D. *Z dejín a teórie literárnej komparistiky* (From the history and theory of literary comparatistics), p. 107.

Lyrics is one of the three most important literary genres. According to the Czech literary theorist and comparatist: "Lyrics is a genre without plot. In it the causal ranging of motifs is not the most important aspect; the single motifs are connected through the author himself. He does speak about his relation to the world and life. If in epics, the author stands in background, here he stands in the foreground."³ Lyrics, of course, may also be objective and it has many subgenres in different literatures of the world, starting with those of the Near East and Egypt from the 3rd millennium B.C., up to our days.

Lyric(al)ness is not the same as lyrics. According to Emil Staiger, "the idea of lyric(al)ness" is definable. And he asserts where it resides: "Einheit der Musik der Worte und ihrer Bedeutung, unmittelbare Wirkung des Lyrischen ohne ausdrückliches Verstehen (1); Gefahr des Zerfließens, gebannt durch den Kehrreim und Wiederholungen anderer Art (2); Verzicht auf grammatischen, logischen und anschaulichen Zusammenhang (3); Dichtung der Einsamkeit, welche nur von einzelnen gleichgestimmten erhört wird (4)."⁴

It is certainly possible to agree with Staiger that Goethe's most "Chinese" or "Japanese" poem is one of "the most pure examples of lyric style".⁵

Über allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.
Warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch.

This poem is very popular in China. Chang Peng in his essay: "Deutsche Lyrik im chinesischen Sprachgewand"⁶ analyses five different renditions between 1921 and 1982. I do not know the situation in Japan, but I dare to guess that there it was translated even more times. Very simple message is accompanied by the still music of the words or their parts. The poem is similar to a picture by Taoist or Buddhist painter who with quite a few strokes of his brush produces a canvass of the evening, night, stillness and following sleep or dream. The Japanese or Chinese reader may feel that there is a kind of *sūnyatā*, *kong*, *ku* 空 emptiness, or *wu*, *mu* 無 nothingness in Goethe's poem. It is short, without stylistic repetitions and other extravagancies, easily comprehensible for every reader, and in any case for those

³ HRABÁK, J. Poetika (Poetics), p. 221.

⁴ STAIGER, E. Grundbegriffe der Poetik, p. 51.

⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

⁶ CHANG Peng. Deutsche Lyrik im chinesischen Sprachgewand, pp. 77-92.

who live, or yearn to be alone, and to repose after the day's toil or wandering. And it is short, which is a typical for the attractive, impressive and highly valuable lyric pieces, although this is not a rule. It is a poem of a fleeting moment of the genius' *état d'âme*.

2

Kokinshū was not always highlighted in Japan, as it was during the Heian (794-1192) period and nearly one thousand years later. But in 1898 the well-known Japanese critic Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) wrote: "Tsurayuki is a bad poet, and the *Kokinshū* a worthless collection... If I must bestow some prize on the *Kokinshū*, I should say that its single merit is that although the poems are bad, it at least establishes a certain individual style that differentiates it from the *Manyōshū*, so that anyone might find a certain novelty in it on first reading. But I cannot understand what possessed those fools in later generations, who believed that true art could only be achieved by imitating the *Kokinshū*."⁷ Due to the rise and development of comparative methodology in Japan and in China, we may observe that the situation now is quite different.⁸

Kokinshū's Prefaces, both its Chinese and especially the Japanese version, are important milestones in the history of the traditional Japanese criticism. When reading them, the student of Chinese literary criticism, starting from the *Shujing* (*The book of documents*), Confucius (571-479 B.C.), *Lunyu* (*The analects*), or from the *Daxu* (*Major preface*) to the *Shijing* (*The book of songs*) (probably 1st cent. A.D.) and ending with Zhong Hong's (fl. 483-513) *Shi pin* (*Categorization of Poets*), the preface to the *Wenxuan* (*The literary anthology*) by the Prince Xiao Tong (501-531) and the preface to the collection of poems *Yutai xinyong* (*New songs from the Jade Terrace*) by Xu Ling (507-583), has the possibility to observe, how much the two writers of the prefaces, are indebted to the Chinese ideas, and what is originally genuine Japanese in them.

Let us start with the opening words from *Manajo* (*The Chinese preface*) to the *Kokinshū* attributed to Ki no Yoshimochi (fl. ca 800):

"Japanese poetry takes root in the soil of one's heart and blossoms forth in the forests of words. While man is in the world, he cannot be inactive. His thoughts and concerns easily shift, his joy and sorrow change in turn. Emotion is born of intent; songs take shapes in words... To move heaven and earth, to affect the gods and demons, to transform human relations, or to harmonize husband and wife, there is nothing more suitable than Japanese poetry."⁹

In the *Book of documents* we read: "poetry expresses in words the intent of the

⁷ McCULLOUGH, H.C. *Brocade by night*, p. 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹ KI NO YOSHIMUCHI. *Manajo*. The Chinese preface. In *Kokinshū. A collection of poems ancient and modern*, p. 379.

heart (mind), songs prolong the words in chanting, notes follow the chanting, and pitch-pipes harmonize with the notes."¹⁰

In the *Major preface* the whole idea of the origin of poetry is presented more clearly: "Poetry is where the intent of the heart (or mind) goes. Lying in the heart (or mind), it is 'intent'; when uttered in words, it is 'poetry'. When an emotion stirs inside, one expresses it in words; finding it inadequate, one sighs over it; not content with this, one sings it in poetry; still not satisfied, one unconsciously dances with one's hands and feet... In times of peace, the melodies are contented and joyful; we see in them signs of good government. In times of war, the melodies are plaintive or agitated; in them we recognize signs of bad government. And at the fall of a nation, the melodies are sorrowful and contemplative; in them we detect the distress of the people."¹¹

Let us end our citations with the opening words from *Kanajo* (*The Japanese preface*): "The seeds of Japanese poetry lie in the human heart and grow into leaves of ten thousands words. Many things happen to the people of this world, and all they think and feel is given expression in description of things they see and hear. When we hear the warbling of the mountain thrush in the blossoms or the voice of the frog in the water, we know every living being has its song. It is poetry which, without effort, moves heaven and earth, stirs the feelings of the invisible gods and spirits, smooths the relations of men and women, and calms the hearts of fierce warriors."¹²

If we compare these four quotations we see clearly that they have something in common, but there are also discordant or at least divergent opinions. The oldest of all of them, the one from the *Book of documents*, reads in Chinese: *Shi yan zhi* 詩言志 Poetry (*shi*) expresses in words (*yan*) the intent of the heart (mind) (*zhi*). Here the word *zhi* is the most important, if connected with the mind or heart which often mean the same in the traditional Chinese philosophy and aesthetics. The most probable source of both *manajo* and *kanajo*, the *Major preface* has very similar wording in Chinese: *Shizhe zhizhi suo zhi ye* 詩者志之所之也 Poetry is where the intent of the heart (or mind) goes. *Zhi* has various meaning in this case, for instance, expression of intention, inclination, determination, or will,¹³ or expression of mental inclination, will, ideal according to one view, or expression of the heart's wish, desire, emotion.¹⁴ *Zhi* understood as a mental inclination leads to the didactic and moral comprehension of poetry. If understood as a heart's wish or emotion, it became a basis for an expressive or individualistic conception.

The *manajo*, which, according to E.B. Ceadel, preceded the *kanajo*, does have *zhi* in its introducing part, but there is *xin di* 心地 the soil of one's heart, and *zhi* is

¹⁰ LIU James J.Y. The art of Chinese poetry, p. 69.

¹¹ LIU James J.Y. Chinese theories of literature, p. 69 and WONG, Siu-kit. Early Chinese literary criticism, p. 2.

¹² KINO TSURAYUKI. *Kanajo*. The Japanese preface, p. 35.

¹³ CHOW Tse-tsung. The early history of the Chinese word *shi* (poetry), p. 152.

¹⁴ LIU, James J.Y. The art of Chinese poetry, p. 72.

there understood in its emotional and not ideological or moral (didactic) meaning: *gan sheng yu zhih, yong xing yu yan* 感生於志, 詠型於言 emotion is born of intent; songs take shape in words.¹⁵

The *kanajo* likewise stresses the importance of *hito no kokoro* (human heart),¹⁶ but much more than the Chinese originals, it highlights the poetic images coming from nature, like the song of the bird in the trees or voice of the frog in the water.

In the Japanese understanding of the poetry and of its mission there is no explicitly didactic or moral vision, as was customary in China, but the individualistic and expressive tendencies prevail. It does not mean that the Japanese critics or poets do not care for the social mission in poetry. This mission is of a different kind. Poets are not responsible for the fate of the country. They may have some impact on the interhuman relations, the happy or unhappy life among spouses and lovers, but they need not be blamed for the disasters in the society, the sufferings caused by wars, although the Japanese preface by Ki no Tsurayuki *expressis verbis* asserts that the poetry "calms the hearts of fierce warriors", as we have read above.

The tendency towards individual expressive style is clearer in Tsurayuki's preface, although both prefaces did not deny the didactic or moral aims of the poetry. This second tendency is never thus prominent as in the Chinese literary theories in general.

3

John Timothy Wixted who studied the impact of the Chinese literary criticism on both of *Kokinshū's* prefaces, devoted much attention to all important specimens of the traditional Chinese literary thought from the *Book of documents* up to the *Categorization of poets* by Zhong Hong. His treatment of Zhong Hong's impact was rather brief. In *kanajo* we find a litannic listing (a kind of inventory) of poetic matters or "circumstances of poetic expression"¹⁷ that is similar to the part of Zhong Hong's exposition.

Zhong Hong's text is as follows:

"Vernal breezes and springtime birds, the autumn moon and cicadas in the fall, summer clouds and sultry rains, the winter moon and fierce cold - these are what in the four seasons inspire poetic feeling. At an agreeable banquet, through poetry one can make friendship dearer. When parting, one can put one's chagrin into verse."¹⁸

In *kanajo* we read:

¹⁵ CAEDEL, E.B. Two prefaces of the *Kokinshū*, p. 44.

¹⁶ CAEDEL, E.B. *ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁷ WIXTED, J.T. Chinese influences on the *Kokinshū* Prefaces, p. 392.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

"Whenever there were blossoms at dawn in spring or moonlit autumn nights, the generations of sovereigns of old summoned their attendants to compose poetry inspired by these beauties. Sometimes the poet wandered through untraveled places to use the images of the blossoms; sometimes he went to dark unknown wilderness lands to write of the moon... At such times, it was only through the poetry that his heart was soothed."¹⁹

Two different aspects can be observed in these texts: the Japanese is about the Emperor and his suite, the Chinese about the same, or about the friends among the learned poets; the Japanese is about a soothing of poet's heart *nagusameru* and the Chinese about a chagrin or poetry "venting resentment" *ke yi yuan* 可以怨, which is nearly a verbal repetition by Zhong Hong of *The Confucian analects*. The Chinese poetics seems to stress more dark aspects of human existence and an interest for them.

Two Chinese scholars Zhang Tianfei and He Xuelin suppose that Zhong Hong was more right when he highlighted *yuan* 怨 resentment, chagrin, grievance as the core of the ancient Chinese poetry. Ki no Tsurayuki did not follow him. He stressed the role of *nagusameru* soothing, calming down, comforting the heart in creating poetry. The above-mentioned Chinese critics bring to their readers the opinion of a Japanese scholar of "nativist" orientation Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) who thought that the *waka* poetry did not transcend the *wu zhi ai* 物之哀 *mono no aware*, sensitivity to things, sadness of the phenomena.²⁰ Both Chinese authors seem to agree with this assertion, but they protest against Norinaga's view, that the *Major preface* extols *ai* 哀 sadness, pity as the main characteristic of pre-Han Chinese poetry.

One of the greatest differences between the *Major preface*, Zhong Hong's preface and *kanajo* is their attitude to the politics. If the Chinese critical texts underline the need of political engagement of poetry (*Major preface*), or the necessity to depict the socio-political troubles and suffering of the people, Ki no Tsurayuki's preface neglects both demands and he proposes mostly to express the poet's feelings and to adore nature and the myriads of things.²¹ Here lies another characteristic feature of the Japanese poetry different from that of the majority of Chinese models.

According to my observations, and they could be wrong, the Japanese of Ki no Tsurayuki's time did not pay much attention to the work of Liu Xie, the *chef d'oeuvre* of the old Chinese criticism. Even the preface to the *New songs from the*

¹⁹ KI NO TSURAYUKI. *Kanajo*. The Chinese preface. In *Kokinshū. a collection of poems ancient and modern*, pp. 40-41 and WIXTED, J.T. Chinese influences on the *Kokinshū* Prefaces, *ibid.*, pp. 391-392.

²⁰ ŌNO, SUSUMU (ed.). Motoori Norinaga zenshū (The complete works of Motoori Norinaga), pp. 57 ff. and ZHANG TIANFEI and HE XUELIN. *op. cit.*, p. 63.

²¹ ZHANG TIANFEI and HE XUELIN. *op. cit.*, p. 63 and KI NO TSURAYUKI. *op. cit.*, pp. 35 and 40-41.

Jade Terrace by Xu Ling seems to be neglected,²² with the exception of the concept of *yan, en* 艷 erotically coloured beauty,²³ but not the poems of this anthology and the post-Han poetry in general.²⁴

4

The most important models for creating *waka* in the *Kokinshū* were created in China between the Wei dynasty (ca. 220-264) and the Liang to Chen (502-589) dynasties.²⁵ After the *Literary anthology* edited by Xiao Tong, the literary criticism, according to the well-known modern scholar Zhu Dongrun, began to be *fangdang fenpi* 放蕩紛披 (profligate and confused).²⁶ Xiao Tong did not include the Confucian classics in his anthology, the first comprehensive anthology in China, and the reason was, that these works were written to present the ideas *yi* 意 but not literary beauty *wen* 文,²⁷ which should be the proper aim of works of literature, and especially of poetry. Xiao Tong's younger brother Xiao Gang (503-551), later known as the Emperor Jian Wendi (549-551), went even further when he excluded too much stress on the moral aspects from his deliberations about literature asserting that "the principle of one's personal cultivation is different from the literary composition. In personal cultivation one should be prudent, but in literary composition one should be unrestrained."²⁸ In his letter to Prince Xiao Yi (508-554), who became his successor as the Emperor Liang Yuandi (551-554), Xiao Gang complains that the poets of his generation do not *yinyong qingxing* 吟詠情性 chant their feelings and personality, but they follow "Nei ze", one of the chapters from the Confucian classical book *Li ji* (*Book of rites*).²⁹ Wu Fusheng has another opinion.³⁰ For me Wong's opinion is more acceptable. The phrase *yinyong*

²² ZHANG TIANFEI and HE XUELIN. op. cit., p. 61 and WIXTED, J. T. Chinese Influences on the *Kokinshū* Prefaces, p. 388.

²³ HUANG GONGZHU. Yutai xinyong xu (Preface to the New songs from the Jade Terrace), p. 3.

²⁴ KONISHI JIN'ICHI. The genesis of *Kokinshū* style, pp. 61-170 and McCULLOUGH, H.C. op. cit., pp. 34-72.

²⁵ KONISHI JIN'ICHI. op. cit.

²⁶ ZHU DONGRUN. Zhongguo wenxue pipingshi dagang (A comprehensive outline of the history of Chinese criticism), p. 70.

²⁷ WU FUSHENG. The poetics of decadence. Chinese poetry of the Southern dynasties and late Tang periods, p. 25.

²⁸ WU FUSHENG. The concept of decadence in the Chinese poetic tradition, p. 53.

²⁹ WONG SIU-KIT. Early Chinese literary criticism, pp. 137, 143 and 182.

³⁰ WU FUSHENG. The poetics of decadence. Chinese poetry of the Southern dynasties and late Tang periods, p. 42.

qingxing is taken over from the *Major preface*,³¹ but Xiao Gang, like his peers, or the so-called *gongti shi* (Palace style poetry), and like the Japanese poets of the later generations, gives it another meaning and thus undermine its didactic, political and in a great measure its social mission. The aim of the poet is to express his emotions and personality in the environment so well known to him and his peers, among the beautiful, slender-waisted, alluring, and often seducing, half-drunk frustrated ladies of the pavilions in the imperial palaces. Like in the poem by Xiao Gang:

Light yellow temples can imitate the moon,
Gold hairpins cleverly form the stars.
Her bright face surprises the beauty of jade,
Her gauzy clothes resemble the wings of the cicada.
An intimate air accompanies her glowing face,
Alluring songs follow her soft voice.
Her blushing face is already half drunk
With a delicate smile she hides herself behind the fragrant
screen.³²

Both Xiao Gang and Daigo (897-930) were Emperors and they both commissioned the well-known poets of their times to collect the best pieces of their own and previous times into the anthologies. Both anthologies had their fates; that of *Kokinshū* was much better. According to Helen Craig McCullough, Ki no Tsurayuki and *Kokinshū* "enjoyed virtually impregnable reputations for almost a thousand years".³³ After some negative comments at the end of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century, were made after the meeting of Japanese critics with European poetry, the situation changed for better in the last decades. In the case of the *New songs from the Jade Terrace*, the Chinese literary historians or critics usually held this collection of the poetry in contempt, although Palace style poetry was written and appreciated by some poets of Tang Period.³⁴ A more objective and positive attitude to the Palace style poetry in the Chinese Mainland can be observed only towards the end of the 1980s and later.³⁵

³¹ WONG SIU-KIT. op. cit., p. 167.

³² WU FUSHENG. The concept of decadence in the Chinese poetic tradition, pp. 56-57.

³³ McCULLOUGH, H.C. Brocade by night, p. 4.

³⁴ OWEN, S. The Poetry of early Tang, MIAO, R.C. Palace-style poetry. In Studies in Chinese poetry and poetics. Vol. 1 and WU FUSHENG. The poetics of decadence. Chinese poetry of the Southern dynasties and late Tang periods.

³⁵ SHEN YUCHENG. Gongti shi yu "Yutai xinyong" (The Palace style poetry and "New songs from the Jade Terrace", pp. 55-65, YANG MING. Gongti shi pingjia wenti (The question of evaluation of the Palace style poetry), pp. 46-52, SU HAN. Xiao Gang shi lun (On Xiao Gang's poetry), pp. 54-58, ZHOU XIAOLIN. Lun gongti shi

Xiao Gang's idea concerning *dang* 蕩 unrestrained liberty not bound by the old rules which are not suitable to the spirit of the present age, was an important contribution to the treasury of Chinese literary criticism.³⁶ The Japanese, if they knew this opinion of Xiao Gang, followed him in their own way. Their *waka* poetry was not a blind imitation of the Chinese post-Han poetry and also not of the Palace style poetry. Especially in relation to the last, they took the poetry from the harem boudoirs of the imperial Xiao family, from where it mostly took its "raw material", to the fields and forests, mountains and rivers of the Yamato. In Japanese *waka* we do not see such a degree of objectification of female bodies and their souls as in the Chinese poetry written by the species of *masculini generis*.

This objectification is perfectly clear in the above Xiao Gang's poem. In Japan the women poets wrote about themselves and this kind of objectification was simply meaningless. Even if the poets forged the female voices, the tone of their poetry was very natural and sincere, the expression of their hearts and minds.

Here is a poem by the monk Sosei (fl. ca 896). This *waka* poet does not depict his love to a boudoir lady, but to a hardly known girl with whom he fell in love:

Though I but know you
through others, love has made me
like chrysanthemum dew,
rising by night and by day
fading into nothingness.³⁷

This poem reminds me of the wanderer's song by Goethe. In contrast to the greatest among German poets, Sosei, certainly not so famous among the Japanese, probably did not have anybody thus prominent as was Frau von Stein, who was one among the myriad of addressees to whom this poem was, at least innerly, if not openly, dedicated. It was written at the end of the day, which was not easy for Goethe, in the environment of nature and mountains, under blue heaven and setting sun, outside the busy social life, human confusion and the wasteland of the towns. The poem ends just before the twilight in peace, sleep, and I would say, nothingness.³⁸

At this moment starts the poem by Sosei. It overbridges the night in pleasant dream and ends in nothingness during the next day. Both seem to be happy or at

(On Palace style poetry), pp. 51-58 and ZHAN FURUI. *Gongti shipai de xingcheng ji fazhan guocheng* (The rise and development of the Palace style poetry), pp. 382-392.

³⁶ WU FUSHENG. The concept of decadence in the Chinese poetic tradition, p. 53. value as social facts, p. 54.

³⁷ McCULLOUGH, H.C. *Brocade by night*, p. 454.

³⁸ SEGERECHT, W. Johann Wolfgang Goethes Gedicht „Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh“, 1978.

least satisfied. Goethe because in September 1780, when he wrote this poem, had behind him the years of *Sturm und Drang*, and Sosei because he believed in the impermanence or transience *wuchang*, *mujō* 無常 of all phenomena, including love as one of the strongest among the feelings of our heart.

Another poem by Sosei written in the name of a woman is much more natural and in harmony with human mind and soul than most of the similar Chinese poems written by males:

What I am to do
with someone who would leave me
despite my deep love?
I must simply think of you
as flowers that scatter too soon.³⁹

This poem can be compared with one of the most famous poem by the woman *waka* poet Ono no Komachi (9th cent.). The last one is only deeper:

Did you come to me
because I dropped off to sleep
tormented by love?
If I had known I had dreamed
I would not have awakened.⁴⁰

The freedom of human and individual expression of the Japanese *waka* poet is much broader than that of the Chinese poet. His lyric(al)ness is much less restrained, even he had to follow prescribed rules, to adjust his poems to the present topics and then to use "a vocabulary limited to native Japanese words and, those, only those sanctioned by tradition as being poetic; metaphorical and decorative language, particularly for the expression of deep emotion; occasional syntactical reversals; and expressions of wonderment, puzzlement, and confusion."⁴¹ Rodd and Henkenius, probably following the critical work of Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner⁴² and, of course Konishi,⁴³ see in the *Kokinshū* an original adaptation of the late Six Dynasties poetry: obliqueness of the poetic

³⁹ McCULLOUGH, H.C. Brocade by night, p. 456.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 457.

⁴¹ Kokinshū. A collection of poems ancient and modern, pp. 15-16.

⁴² BROWER, R.H. and MINER, E. Japanese court poetry.

⁴³ KONISHI JIN'ICHI, The genesis of the Kokinshū style.

speech, wit, reasoning and original treatment.⁴⁴

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I personally see the greatest achievement of the Japanese poetry after Ki no Tsurayuki in the effort to achieve the high standard of beauty *mei, bi* 美. Quest for beauty was much more typical for the Japanese than for Chinese culture. We do not find *bi* among the literary terms in *The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature* or in *The Vocabulary of Japanese Literary Aesthetics* by Hisamatsu Sen'ichi. In ancient China *mei* meant the same as *shan* 善 in modern Chinese, that is good or goodness.⁴⁵ At least from what can be deduced from reading Hisamatsu Sen'ichi's work, originally partly abridged from his introduction to the monumental *Nihon bungakushi (A History of Japanese Literature)*,⁴⁶ it seems to me that for the Japanese the "aesthetic phenomenon" in literature, was a kind of a bouquet of different flowers binding together the nonaesthetic values (stylistic, psychological, philosophical, religious, moral and social). In this way aesthetic value operates within the emotional and volitional realm of the human soul and regulates its attitudes to nature, society and life in general.⁴⁷

Das Ästhetische (aestheticness) is to some extent similar to lyric(al)ness. It is different from one interliterary community (commonwealth, *Gemeinschaft*), and even from one single literature to another. The above characteristics of lyric(al)ness by Emil Staiger is only one attempt to define it within the framework of Western European literature. The characteristic features in the field of the Far Eastern interliterary community are to some extent different. This also applies to Chinese and Japanese literature. My attempt to describe it is only preliminary and should be supported with more proofs and reasoning in the future.

What is the essence of the different character of the greatest part of the Japanese lyric(al)ness from that of the Chinese? Let us repeat briefly what was said above:

(1) in the Japanese understanding of lyric poetry there is no explicitly didactic or explicitly moral vision, but the individualistic and expressive tendency prevails.

(2) poets are not responsible for the fate of the country. They have a social mission, but this usually does not transcend interhuman relations.

(3) Japanese poetry stresses the role of *nagusameru* (soothing, comforting heart) and the Chinese more *yuan* (resentment, grievance), the darker side of human feelings.

(4) Japanese poetry does not underline the political engagement so much as

⁴⁴ Kokinshū. A collection of poems ancient and modern, p. 14.

⁴⁵ TRAUZETTEL, R. *Das schöne und das Gute*, p. 297.

⁴⁶ HISAMATSU SEN'ICHI. Introduction. In *Nihon bungakushi (A history of Japanese Literature)*.

⁴⁷ MUKAŘOVSKÝ, J. *Estetická funkce, norma a hodnota jako sociální fakty (Aesthetic function, norm and value as social facts)*, p. 54.

the Chinese.

(5) Japanese poetry gives more space to the rise and development of the female voices and creates the possibility of women's poetry and fiction unprecedented in the literature of mankind.

(6) striving after beauty is stronger in the Japanese than in Chinese poetry, where the inclination to the moral, didactic and political mission of the poetry is much more stressed and needed from the practitioners of literary criticism.

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