

Re-examination of the Temporal and Innocent Character of Li Dongyang's Gediao Theory

JI Xin-yuan*

Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China

Li Dongyang's Gediao theory (格调说) advocates the style and tune of poetry, which has profound influences on later literati in the Middle and Later Ming Dynasty. This theory is the product of the time, put forward to complain about Taige style (台阁体) and to deal with the current problems under a subtle circumstance. It seems that Li Dongyang emphasized the metrics of poems, but in fact he aimed at putting renewed emphasis on the essence of Tao and the aesthetic pursuit of innocence and nature of poetry by Gediao theory. He ultimately proposed the functional activity of Qi as the method of expressing Tao and combined the tradition of poetry music to express human nature, which makes Gediao theory a temporal and innocent poetry theory.

Keywords: Li Dongyang, Gediao theory

Introduction

Taige style, because of its poor content and rigid form, had greatly inhibited the artistic vitality of literature and made it into a gloomy situation since the period of Yongle. In this case, Li Dongyang put forward Gediao theory in his poetic theory book *HuaiLuTang Poetics* (《怀麓堂诗话》), stressing the mastery of the style and tune. He thought the tune of people who song poems nowadays were different in weight, voicing, length, priority and urgency (今之歌诗者, 其声调有轻重、清浊、长短、高下、缓急之异). "Lü", also called rule. When it becomes tune, it exists ingenuity. Unless someone understand it achieve development, it makes no good even with the help of supervision and education (律者, 规矩之谓, 而其为调, 则有巧存焉, 苟非心领神会, 自有所得, 虽日提耳而教之, 无益也). Li Dongyang's propositions were based on literature and discuss the artistic aesthetic characteristics of poetry, which was new at that time and had profound influences on later literati in the Middle and Later Ming Dynasty. However, people usually equated this with "form" because Gediao theory emphasizes "Gediao" (style and tune), and simply came up with the conclusion of the binary opposition of "content and form", which was a misunderstanding and bias. Based on the background and core features of Gediao theory, this article tries to reexamine the relationship between Gediao theory, reality and poetics.

Literature Review

Since 1980s, the research on Li Dongyang's poetry theories can be generalized into three categories. The first one is negative. Zheng Zhenduo held the opinion that Li's poetics was merely jotting and informal essay

* JI Xin-yuan is a junior student in the School of Humanities at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China.

and most of them were moderate and normal (只是随感笔录, 多为中庸平正之论)¹. From Liu Dajie's point of view, the main spirit of *HuaiLuTang Poetics* was to discuss the form, not the content of poetry, which can only lead to formal imitation.² Min Ze had a similar viewpoint that Li Dongyang respected Tang Dynasty and followed the example of Du Fu formally. It was a transition of Ming poetry from one formalism to another, affecting poetry creation negatively³. Zhou Xunchu pointed out the members of Chaling school (茶陵派) could not discover new methods of theory and creation⁴. Then Guo Yuheng gave his further illustration that although Li Dongyang's theory and creation differed from Taige style, they didn't achieve enough improvement⁵. Wang Yunxi and Gu Yisheng deemed that Li Dongyang's emphasis on the style and tune of Tang Dynasty was the beginning of imitation school (拟古派)⁶.

The second kind is positive. From Fang Xiaoyue's viewpoint, Li Dongyang had a high aesthetic perspective and advocated Gediao instead of imitation. The poetry style of Ming Dynasty began to change since Li Dongyang⁷. Zhang Changgong regarded Li Dongyang's praise for Li Bai, Du Fu, Yuan Zheng and Bai Juyi as a kind of poetic interest⁸. Cai Zhenchu also held the opinion that Li Dongyang's theory paid attention to the style and tune of Tang poetry and was against imitation, which was different from the former seven poets(前七子)⁹. Chen Wenxin perceived Gediao theory as the reexamination of the musicality of poetry due to its lyricism, facilitating recitation and satirization¹⁰. From Fu Xuanqiong and Jiang Yin's perspective, Li Dongyang emphasized feelings and musicality and these characters had improved the poetry meaning¹¹. From Zhang Rusong's point of view, Li Dongyang's research on style and tune was epochal in Ming Dynasty¹². These scholars all demonstrated the artistic and aesthetic values of Li Dongyang's theory as well as the outstanding status in the history of Ming-dynasty literature.

The third kind is neutral. Liao Kebin regarded Li Dongyang's theory as an experiment to free the poetry from the constraints of neo-confucianism, traced back to Han and Tang dynasties and restored the aesthetic characteristics of classical poetry.¹³ The deficiency is that there was no complete demarcation line between Gediao theory and Taige style. Li Dongyang's poems were still left with the traces of Taige style. Yuan Zhengyu and Liu Mingjin held the view that Li Dongyang paid attention to the differences between poetry and article as well as tune, which was positive to rectify creating poems in an article way, but he laid too much

¹ Zheng Zhenduo, *Illustrated Edition of the history of Chinese Literature (Part ii)*, Peking: Peking Press, 2001, p. 830.

² Liu Dajie, *Chinese Literature development history*, Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1982, p. 897.

³ Min Ze, *History of criticism of Chinese literary theory*, Peking: People's Literature Press, 1982, pp. 656-662.

⁴ Zhou Xunchu, *A brief history of Chinese literary criticism*, Nanjing: Jiangsu ancient books publishing house, 2000, p. 260.

⁵ Guo Yuheng, *A brief history of ancient Chinese literature*, Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 2003, pp. 409-410.

⁶ Wang Yunxi, Gu Yisheng, *History of Chinese literary criticism*, Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, pp. 249-252.

⁷ Fang Xiaoyue, *Criticism of Chinese Literature*, Peking: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1986, p. 16.

⁸ Zhang Changgong, *New Edition of Chinese Literary History*, Peking: Kai Ming Book Company, 1941, p. 21.

⁹ Cai Zhenchu, *The history of Chinese Poetics*, Changsha: Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House, 1998, pp. 150-152.

¹⁰ Chen Wenxin, *Poety of Ming Dynasty*, Changsha: Hunan People's Publishing House, 2000, p. 94.

¹¹ Fu Xuanqiong, *General Theory of Ancient Chinese Literature (volume of Ming dynasty)*, Liaoning: Liaoning People's Publishing House, 2005, pp. 27-28.

¹² Zhang Songru, *The History of Poetry in Ming and Qing dynasties*, Changchun: Jilin Educational Publishing House, 1998, pp. 138-146.

¹³ Liao Kebin, *Ming Dynasty Literature and Retro Sports*, Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1994, pp. 36-53.

emphasis on the form¹⁴. Guo Shaoyu and Wang Wensheng illustrated three important characters of “tune”, including different forms are supposed to have different tunes; the Pingze (平仄, the level and oblique tones) of poetry are different from each other; a well-tuned poem must be harmonious with pentatonic scale (五声)¹⁵. Ding Fang generalized a conclusion of Li Dongyang's theory that Li Dongyang paid equal attention to Shanlin theory (山林) and Taige style, instead of getting rid of Taige style thoroughly; Li Dongyang advocated truth and purity; the core of his theory was Gediao theory¹⁶. Zhang Jun also held the opinion that although Li Dongyang didn't get rid of the custom of Taige style thoroughly, his theory and practice was different from Taige style and directly influenced the former seven poets, acting as a transition between Taige style and the seven poets¹⁷. Huang Zhuoyue's viewpoint was that Li Dongyang regarded poetry as a study of prosody and emphasizes the differences between poetry and article but his poetics still followed the tradition of Taige style and “writing is for conveying ethics” (文以载道)¹⁸. Wang Ying concluded that Li Dongyang preferred form and tune while still learned from the content of Tang Dynasty, especially Li Bai and Du Fu, which could be regarded as revivalism¹⁹. From Zhen Xianchun's perspective, *HuaiLuTang Poetics* was not only Li Dongyang's work but also Chaling school's theoretical quintessence²⁰. Sun Qingchun deemed that Li Dongyang's theory failed to get free from the time and “Gediao” was just a technical interpretation to the tune in poetry, making superficial changes²¹.

However, these scholars usually focused on the form and judged Gediao theory and Li Dongyang's aesthetic standpoint through his interpretation of form and devices, ignoring the core characteristics and epochal meanings of Gediao theory.

The Times Style: Correcting the Bad Times

Li Dongyang's Gediao theory is the product of the time to deal with the current problems. Since Zhu Yuanzhang founded Ming dynasty, neo-confucianism had been highly praised and had been utilized to govern the nation, which makes Cheng-Zhu neo-confucianism (程朱理学) and literature the tool of moralization and government. Meanwhile, Taige style is tedious and unchanged (肤廓冗长,千篇一律)²². The content of these poems is deficient. They are usually written for emperors, inscriptions and phatic function, under the theme of extolling the emperor and singing for the peace. The artistic pursuit is also moderate and normal. As a result, it's difficult for people to recognize the reflection of the diversity in life and the authors' individual thoughts and feelings in literature. The poetry becomes a tool of window dressing and is too boring and simple to maintain the artistic vitality.

There are many reasons for the popularity of Taige style. The first reason is the literati's living condition. These civil officials held important posts and lived in comfortable circumstances. Their duty was to accomplish

¹⁴ Yuan Zhenyu, Liu Mingjin, *History of Chinese Literary Criticism (volume of Ming dynasty)*, Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1991, pp. 69-92.

¹⁵ Guo Shaoyu, Wang Wensheng, *Chinese Literary Theory Selections (volume 3)*, Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1980, pp. 31-33.

¹⁶ Ding Fang, *History of Jin, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasty Poetry Theory*, Hefei: Anhui University Press, 2000, pp. 96-100.

¹⁷ Zhang Jun, *History of Chinese Literature (volume 4)*, Peking: Beijing Normal University Press, 1998, pp. 42-43.

¹⁸ Huang Zhuoyue, *Ming Yongle to Jiajing Early Poetry Study*, Peking: Beijing Normal University Press, 2001, pp. 134-140.

¹⁹ Wang Ying, Li Dongyang and Poetry Review, *Journal of Beijing Normal University*, 1986. 6.

²⁰ Zhen Xianchun, Poem Has Its Own Unique Place: A Review of Huailutang Poetics, *Chuanshan Journal*, 1998.1.

²¹ Sun Qingchun, The Poetics of Early Ming Dynasty and Li Dongyang's Gediao Theory, *Journal of Tangshan Teachers College*, 2005.5.

²² Yong Lu, *Yang Wenmin's Collection (volume 170)*, Peking: Zhonghua Book Company, 1965, p. 1484.

the paperwork (供奉文字) focusing on the maintenance of legitimacy and moralization, so most of them were grateful for the courtesy of the court, which led to the easy affinity with official ideology and the intention of writing for praising emperor and beautifying the politics. The relatively closed and narrow upper bureaucratic life also limited their vision of life, resulting in relatively poor material. Besides, since Yongle period, the Ming Dynasty had achieved a stable regime, developing national power as well as a prosperous social situation through the early period of adjustment and treatment, which created an atmosphere of “praising the emperor and the prosperity of the country” (颂上之德而鸣国家之盛) for Taige style. Moreover, in the early stage of Ming Dynasty, the government carried out an overall Rectification Policy (整饬政策), including muzzling the literati culturally. After Mingcheng Emperor, Zhu Di, came into power, he strengthened the control of literati in political and cultural area. He issued the *Encyclopedia of Five Classics and Four Books* (《五经四书大全》) and ordered officials to collect the speech of Confucian scholars in Song Dynasty and compiled them into the *Science Book* (《性理大全》) to build up the ideological project of Confucianism, especially that of Song Confucianism. He also purged the innocent officials in order to reform the spiritual realm. These latent pressures behind social stability and prosperity had a deterrent effect on the literati so that they were afraid to demonstrate the multifaceted social life and express their personal thoughts and feelings in literature.

No poetic system comes from nowhere. The construction of a poetics system must show the need and reflection, the inheritance and revelation of history and the practice and innovation of the individual. Li Dongyang had a high reputation among literati at that time. He was dissatisfied with the imitation of the later Taige style and was clearly aware of its disadvantages, so he criticized the fault of imitation as stealing (极论剿窃模拟之非)²³. However, literature and the times are inseparable. As an important official, he discovered the problem of poetry but still recognized the subtle situation and the cruel government. Therefore, he could only trace back to the original form combining poetry and music together, and analyzed a wide range of comparisons of poetry in Tang, Song and Yuan Dynasty; made a selective choice of poetry and music theory in early Confucian classics such as “Yue Ji” (《礼记·乐记》), “Mao Shi Xu” (《毛诗序》) and “Cang Lang Poetics” (《沧浪诗话》) in the Southern Song Dynasty; summarized and sublimate his own writing experience and unique thinking; and more importantly, used the Gediao theory which seemly just advocating the form of poetry as a method to correct the current problems and lead the trend. From an objective point of view, this theory not only led the Chaling school and made a great improvement to the perplexed poetic circles, but also later enlightened Yang Shen, Gong'an school (公安派), Wang Shizhen and so on. Therefore, the construction of his poetic system is to guide the poetic creation and development in the middle period of the Ming Dynasty. It is more than a poetic theory about the style.

The Innocent Essence: Tao (道心) and Qi (气化)

Gediao theory emphasizes form outwardly, but in fact it is a pursuit of innocence and nature of poetry. According to Li Dongyang's explanation, poetry must be equipped with eyes and ears. The eyes dominate the styles and the ears tunes... Only in this way can I infer the time style from the unknown poem (诗必有具眼,亦必有具耳。眼主格,耳主声。.....予曰:“取所未见诗,即能识其时代格调。”)。 “Diao” (调) is what is called syllable, tune, Pingze, or auditory rhythm that can bring aesthetic feelings. “Ge” (格) has various meanings. First of all, it refers to the style of poetry. For example, ancient-verse and regular-verse are different so they are

²³ Yong Lu, Abstract of Huailutang Poetics, Shanghai:Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1986, p. 1482.

supposed to follow corresponding form to qualify “Ge”. The regular-verse can sometimes meet the ancient style while the ancient one cannot be regular...If the regular-verse wants to be ancient, it must achieve harmony (古诗与律不同体, 必各用其体乃为合格, 然律犹可间出古意, 古不可涉律。.....乃律间出古, 要自不厌也). Ancient-verse is simple and elegant; regular-verse is smart and beautiful. The style of ancient-verse will be farraginous if is mixed with regular-verse. Secondly, it refers to the poet's style. Poets always show their own spiritual appearance in their works, such as Zhong Rong's assessment of Tao Yuanming's poem as “net and terse” (文体省净, 殆无长语). Thirdly, it also refers to times style. For example, the poetry of Han, Wei, Six Dynasty, Tang, Song and Yuan Dynasty has different forms; the dialects of Qin, Jin, Wu, Yue, Min, Chu have different tunes and rhythms which cannot be mixed with each other (汉、魏、六朝、唐、宋、元诗, 各自为体。譬之方言, 秦、晋、吴、越、闽、楚之类, 音殊调别, 彼此不相入). In sum, the combination of “Ge” and “Diao” is the differentiation of the aesthetic characteristics of poetry, which is the emotion expressed by the poem, the time, the region and the individual style of the poet, etc. That is to say, “Gediao” is the overall grasp of the aesthetic characteristics of the poem. The reason why Li Dongyang used Gediao theory to resist the Taige style is that he wanted to highlight the noumenon of literature with the application of Tao and Qi.

Tao as “Ge” (道心为格)

The Gediao theory uses “Diao” to convert “Ge”. Li Dongyang regarded tunes as a sensory manifestation of the rhythm of poetry, depending on whether the emotion is aptly expressed or not. The emotion can be expressed by the sound so the sound must include real feelings. In this way, the feelings can be inferred by the sound of poets and thus, tunes become a method of expressing. Tune is the most superficial reflection of inner emotion and is the first part that known by readers. On the one hand, different emotions show different tunes and tunes convey emotions. On the other hand, the various tunes of regions are formed naturally, related to geography, history, culture and mode of production, but emotional expressions are not hindered. According to Li Dongyang's opinion, the Qi between heaven and earth moves and generates voice, whatever the time and place, existing no difference and chaos. Then, will it be difficult if people who are limited in Qi want to transcend the times and place (天地间气机所动, 发为声音, 随时与地, 无埃区别, 而不相侵夺。然则人囿于气化之中, 而欲超乎时代土壤之外, 不亦难乎)²⁴ ? Tunes don't have decisive effects. Although it's impossible to go beyond the current situation, it is possible to express the feelings that transcend the space-time limits based on common emotions. The reflection and communication of motions contained in the poems of different regions will not be cut off by tunes, which is also the basis of poetry communication.

This common humanity that spans time and space is Tao. Li Dongyang said: “Later scholars considered Tao as ‘the same resource of fundamental structure and practical use and the close integration of recessive and dominant traits’. The so-called ‘same resource’ is a collection of fundamental structure and practical use, not the collection outside them. The ‘close integration’ means Tao exists in objects not for objects (后人论道者曰: “体用一源, 显微无间。” 夫所谓“一源”者, 谓即体而用在, 非体之外别有一源也。所谓“无间”者, 谓道寓乎物, 而非因物以为理也)²⁵.” Tao is both the source and the essence of all things, that is to say, reason and Tao are not suspended from things but exist within things. Fundamental structure and practical use become one; Tao and objects become one. To understanding things is to seek Tao on the basis of things. When it comes to specific aesthetics of poetry, Li Dongyang emphasized that real poetry comes from nature expression, as it is

²⁴ Li Dongyang, *The complete works of Li Dongyang*, Hunan: Yuelu Press, 1985, pp. 544-545.

²⁵ Li Dongyang, *The complete works of Li Dongyang*, Changsha: Yuelu Publishing House, 2008, p. 1087.

called “the natural sound of heaven and earth (诗者，天地自然之音也) .” This kind of natural sound isn't limited by the Nature style (自然之体) of Shanlin literature. As long as the poetry is the expression of real emotion, it is natural. The subjects of poetry are varied, so are the rhythm and expression. Poetry varies from person to person, but the deeper aesthetics is the same. Poets are hearted by things; hearts generate emotions; emotions constitute words; spoken words compose poetry. “The tune of people who song poems nowadays were different in weight, voicing, length, priority and urgency...Masters can give examples, but they can't make people ingenious. ‘Lü’, also called rule. When it becomes tune, it exists ingenuity (今之歌诗者，其声调有轻重、清浊、长短、高下、缓急之异。.....大匠能与人以规矩，不能使人巧。律者，规矩之谓;而其为调，则有巧存焉) ²⁶.” ‘Lü’ is the rule of writing poems. What makes masters really outstanding is “When it becomes tune, it exists ingenuity”. Li Dongyang learned from ancient people who song poems (古之歌诗者), and followed the principle of “Emotion is generated so it can make sounds (情动于中，故形于声)” and “harmonious voices lead to harmonious sounds (人声和则乐声和)” in “*Yue Ji*”. Li Dongyang also said “Since the birth of poetry, countless people had spoken countless words but still can't find the ending. It is because the rules of objects are endless so the Tao of poetry is endless too (自有诗依赖，经几千百人，出几千万语，而不能穷。是物之理无穷，而诗之为道亦无穷也).” In this way, he regarded poetry as the carrier of the author's thoughts and emotions and the reflection of the real world. The fundamental of his theory is still the “Tao” and “emotion”, so the reason why he spoke highly of metrical patterns is to look for ways for poets to express Tao better, on the basis of the original attribute of the unity of poetry and music.

As a result, Li Dongyang preferred Tang poetry to Song poetry. The seventh term of *HuaiLuTang Poetics* said “Tang poets didn't talk about the rules of poetry; The rules are mostly put forward by Song poets, but Song poets achieved nothing about poetry. The rule is only about antithesis and rhetoric. It isn't able to illustrate innocence and interest (唐人不言诗法，诗法多出宋;而宋人于诗无所得。所谓法者，不过一字一句对偶雕琢之工，而天真兴致，则未可与道).²⁷ “Tang poets realized the relationship among ability, knowledge and insight so Tang poetry is natural. Li Dongyang emphasized innocence and nature is because this is what Tang poetry advanced Song poetry. He said “Song poetry is deep, but is far from Tang poetry; Yuan poetry is shallow, but is close to Tang poetry(宋诗深，却去唐远;元诗浅，去唐却近)²⁸.” He paid attention to “free from vulgarity” but opposed dreamy and grotesque at the same time. To sum up, the beauty of neutralization is his ultimate pursuit, just as what he said, “What is the meaning of ‘Hibiscus fades under dew, willow is sparse in the moonlight’? It's poetry language(“芙蓉露下落，杨柳月中疏”有何深意?却自是诗家语)²⁹.”

“Qi” as a Method (气化)

Tao is elucidated by Qi. Zhang Zai, Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi and other neo-Confucianist divided human nature into innate “nature” and acquired “temperament”. The former is beyond body, while the latter is formed according to culture, environment and learning. According to Li Dongyang's theory, “The Qi from heaven changes and forms human beings and objects. The heaven takes charge of living and the earth formation. Times and fortune belong to heaven. Mountains and rivers are what beautify earth. Times and earth are different so human beings and objects are different. Human beings get the spirit of Qi and the saint get the most spiritual one (窃惟天也之气，絪縕变化，为人为物。天主生，地主成，时运岁月属乎天，山川土壤丽乎地。时与

²⁶ Li Qinli, *Collated and Annotated of HuaiLuTang Poetics*, Peking: People's Literature Press, 2009, p. 63.

²⁷ Li Qinli(2009), p. 27.

²⁸ Li Qinli(2009), p. 33.

²⁹ Li Qinli(2009), p. 63.

地各异,而所以为人物者不同。人得气之灵,圣人又得其最灵者)³⁰。” He saw the form of objects as the result of Qi (气化为之)³¹ and human beings are born by the Qi among heaven and earth. Since nature is kind, human nature is kind (人之善,皆性乎天)³². However, people's temperament still differs according to the times and place of their birth.

Although human nature is based on heaven, people have different temperament and will be influenced by family, custom and other factors, which leads to the difference of good and evil. However, since human beings are the spirit of all living things, they can also change their temperament by learning. It is written in *Rebuilt the education of Chaling* (《重建茶陵州学记》) that “Human beings are born according to the characters of heaven and earth, so their good is same. Still, they are different due to temperament and custom. Only by learning can they change their temperament and become wiser and stronger(人禀天地之性以生,其善同也。或为气质所限,又移于习俗之偏,则不能以不异。惟学者能变其气质,愚可使明,柔可使强)³³.” Therefore, Li Dongyang emphasized the importance of learning and education. As said in *Jing Yan Sermon* (《经筵讲章》):

Human being's nature is given by the heaven and their differences are temperament. Saints can study their fundamental nature so they can see others' nature and help them to study fundamental nature. If someone is unkind, then teach him kindness; If someone is unrighteous then teach him justice; If someone is unwise, then teach him wise, so that he can learn and live. This is called “trace back to one's temperament, then learn the human nature”. (在人的性,也是同受于天的,只是禀得气质有不同处。圣人能尽自己的性,故能真见那人的性,与我办,使他亦能尽其性。如不仁的,教他尽得仁;不义的,教他尽得义;无理无智的,教他尽得礼智,都无不能知,不能行处。这是“能尽其性,则能尽人之性”)³⁴

In Qing Dynasty, poetry didn't separate from music. Ancient people educated people with artistic and aesthetic methods. *Yue Ji* is the collection of Confucian music education. Li Dongyang said “Looking at the pronunciation part of *Yue Ji*, then you will understand poetry(观《乐记》论乐声处,便识得诗法)...but the rhythm and tones of ancient poetry haven't been inherited(古诗歌之声调节奏,不传久矣)³⁵.” Thus, it can be seen that Li Dongyang was quite familiar with the “organic whole of music and poetry” of ancient poetry and paid attention to the aesthetic pleasure brought by the differences in weight, voicing, length, priority and urgency of tones. He didn't aim at continuing the discussion about the Pingze in Qi and Liang Dynasty, instead, he inherited the tradition of music education to “trace back to one's temperament, then learn the human nature”.

Furthermore, Qi is also a factor that causes poetic style differences. As what Li Dongyang said “Poetry of Han, Wei, the Six Dynasty, Tang, Song and Yuan Dynasty have their own characters... the Qi between heaven and earth moves and generates voice, whatever the time and place, existing no difference and chaos. Then, will it be difficult if people who are limited in Qi want to transcend the times and place (汉魏六朝唐宋元诗,各自为体.....此可见天地间气机所动,发为音声,随时与地,无俟区别,而不相侵夺。然则人囿于气化之中,而欲超乎时代土壤之外,不亦难乎?)³⁶.” This kind of poetic style that varies from time to time, also called “Times Style”, is influenced by the Qi among the heaven and earth according to Li Dongyang's opinion. Since the poets will absolutely be affected by the era and its Qi, and they can't avoid this influence and limitation of time,

³⁰ Li Dongyang, *The complete works of Li Dongyang*, Changsha: Yuelu Publishing House, 2008, p. 1018.

³¹ Li Dongyang (2008), p. 484.

³² Li Dongyang (2008), p. 517.

³³ Li Dongyang (2008), p. 1009.

³⁴ Li Dongyang (2008), p. 1404.

³⁵ Li Qinli (2009), p. 27.

³⁶ Li Qinli (2009), pp. 544-545.

their experience will be inflected in their "Times Style". This still seems extremely correct today. Because of the creation of any poet is related to his own social life, customs, fashion, cultural psychology and other factor. He can only show the times in which he lives, and can only examine life, discover life and show life with the cultural values and aesthetic eyes of his time and thus, his works are imprinted with the era and will never leave his era. Li Dongyang found out why Gediao of different times are different, as well as why poems in the same time are limited by the time, achieving both diversity and identity.

Conclusion

Li Dongyang's Gediao theory isn't as close as modern theories nowadays, and the argumentation isn't clear and incisive enough. Beside, in today's point of view, his understanding of the emotion of poetry hasn't break through the limitation of traditional concept of Confucianism, and his proposal of "organic whole of music and poetry" is not entirely in line with the actual development of poetry. However, these are related to the edification and restriction of philosophical thinking of that time. Li Dongyang's Gediao theory is put forward to complain about Taige style and to deal with the current problems under a subtle circumstance. It is a product of time, but in fact he aimed at putting renewed emphasis on the essence of Tao and the aesthetic pursuit of innocence and nature of poetry by Gediao theory. He ultimately proposed the functional activity of Qi as the method of expressing Tao and combined the tradition of poetry music to express human nature, which makes Gediao theory a temporal and innocent poetry theory.

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