

On the Present Situation and Trend of Vietnamese Chinese Poetry Research*

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Based on the analysis of the historical background and current situation of the study of Vietnamese Chinese poetry, this paper analyzes the achievements and shortcomings of the existing research. It is found that although there are a large number of authors and achievements in the study of Vietnamese Chinese poetry in the past 40 years, it still stays in the low level of work elaboration and literature review, and lacks of theoretical and systematic research. The main purpose of this article is to analyze the current situation of Vietnamese Chinese poetry research, and to explore the new path and method of Chinese scholars' research on Vietnamese Chinese poetry through comparative analysis of domestic and foreign research results.

Keywords: Chinese poetry, Vietnam, research status

The research on Vietnamese Chinese poetry in China started in the 1950s, but it was not until the last two decades that there was a breakthrough in the number of researchers and papers. However, the theoretical research level of domestic scholars on Vietnamese Chinese poetry is still at a low level and has little influence. In contrast, foreign researchers started earlier and more continuously than Chinese researchers. Overseas studies of Vietnamese Chinese poetry are mainly Vietnamese local scholars and some Korean and Japanese scholars. The research results of Vietnamese scholars mainly focus on the collation and publication of Chinese poetry literature, while the research of Korean and Japanese scholars pay more attention to the comparison of Vietnamese Chinese poetry with domestic Chinese poetry. The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the current situation of Chinese poetry research in Vietnam, to study the path and direction of Chinese scholars in the study of Chinese poetry in Vietnam, and to explore new ways and methods to break through the existing research.

1. Introduction

1.1. A Brief History and Characteristics of Vietnamese Chinese Poetry

From the Qin and Han Dynasties, Chinese characters were used as a writing tool in Vietnam. It was not until the 20th century that Vietnam officially abolished the writing method of Chinese characters. Before the 20th century, Chinese characters were regarded as the official language. It is used in many aspects, such as historical

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writing, literati literary creation, diplomatic rhetoric and people's daily formal communication. Therefore, the literary form in the feudal period of Vietnam was mainly written in Chinese characters. Vietnamese Chinese literature is divided into two periods, one is the period when Vietnam is under the political jurisdiction of China, and the other is the period after Vietnam established an independent feudal dynasty. The creation of Vietnamese Chinese poetry is also consistent with the development of Vietnamese literary history.

Before the establishment of the feudal dynasty in Vietnam, Vietnam had been under the political jurisdiction of China for more than 1000 years, including two periods: the first period was from the 33rd year of Qin Shihuang (214 BC) to the third year of Tianfu (938) in the Five Dynasties, and the second short period was from the fifth year of Yongle (1424) to the second year of Xuande (1427) (Zhang, 1992, p. 11). During these periods, Vietnam implemented the same policies in culture, education and political measures and so on as other provinces in China. During this period, there were three main groups of Chinese literary creation: officials dispatched by the imperial court, exiled scholars, local scholars and monks. Gao lie listed in his research *On the Literati Living in Annan in the Tang Dynasty* that the literati demoted to Annan in the Tang Dynasty included Chu suiliang, Du Zhenglun, Lu zanyong, Wang Fuzhen (the father of Wang Bo), Wang Bo, Han Siyan and Lang Yuqing, and the officials stationed were Zhao Chang, Pei Tai, Zhang Zhou, Ma Zhen, Li fugu, Ma Zhi, etc (Gao, 2013, pp. 111-117). It can be seen that many famous poets, such as Wang Bo, were one of the four outstanding poets of the early Tang Dynasty. Chinese poetry is also mainly written by these people, such as Du Shenyan's poem "Travel in Annan" was written in the first year of Shenlong (705) (Du, 1982, p. 72), and Shen Quanqi's poem "Early arrival in Huanzhou" after arriving at Annan. During the period of China's administrative jurisdiction, because Vietnam was on the edge of the administrative center, the literary creation of local scholars was very few. In addition, because Vietnam was wet, the paper was not easy to preserve. Only the works of Jiang Gongfu, Jiang Gongfu brothers, Liao Youfang, Du Yingce and poet monk Guangxuan were handed down.

Beginning with emperor Ding's claim to the throne, Vietnam entered the era of vassal China and fully absorbed the political system, science, technology and culture of the mainland court. After the development of Li Dynasty, Li Dynasty, Chen Dynasty and the resurgence of Li Dynasty, Vietnam's Chinese poetry creation has not only reached popularity among officials, but also showed a high creative level, with skilled Chinese poetry writing and distinctive artistic personality. In Vietnamese Chinese poetry, the most remarkable is the large number of seven character rhythm poems. It not only appeared in the literary friendship between Vietnamese monarchs and ministers, but also in the presence and chanting of Vietnamese literati. Seven character rhythm poetry has become an important criterion to measure the poetic skills of Vietnamese Chinese poets. Naturally, seven character rhythm poetry has gradually become the most attentive poetic style created by poets in the later Li Dynasty. The unique situation of seven character rhythmic poetry in Vietnamese Chinese poetry is formed in such an era and cultural background.

1.2. Current Research Abroad

Before the founding of the Republic of Vietnam (1945), although Vietnam was still in a feudal society under French colonization, Vietnamese literati began to sort out their own Chinese poetry from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. Because the Vietnamese literati hoped to awaken their people's national enthusiasm and resist the colonial rule of France with the help of Chinese poetry. They serialized

Chinese poetry through newspapers and magazines. For example, every issue of Nanfeng magazine published ancient and modern Chinese poetry. Many Chinese poems have been preserved in this way.

After the founding of the common state of Vietnam, Vietnam did not achieve north-south reunification, and half of the land in the south of Vietnam is still controlled by French colonial forces. Before Vietnam realized the unification of the north and the south in 1975, the Vietnamese people were still struggling for the reunification of the country, and the Chinese characters completely withdrew from the life of Vietnamese literati after they were officially abolished in 1945. During this period, Vietnamese literati could not consciously study or sort out Chinese literature. Therefore, from 1945 to 1975, although a small number of scholars still talked about Chinese poetry in newspapers, they rarely sorted and studied it. But in fact, some people who are proficient in Chinese characters are still writing Chinese poetry, including Chairman Hu Zhimin. After Vietnam realized the unification of North and South in 1975, culture and education were put on the agenda. During this period, the literary and artistic creation of ancient Vietnam was consciously protected, including the collation of Vietnamese Chinese poetry. Vietnam has also set up a special organization for the protection and research of ancient books, the “Han Nan Research Institute”. This period has yielded fruitful results. A large number of Chinese poetry materials have been sorted out and protected.

Since 1980, the literature collation and publication of Vietnamese local scholars have been uninterrupted, and the research work has been carried out accordingly. In 1996, Hanoi culture and communication Press published 192 Chinese poems by Ruan you; Hanoi Literature Publishing House published selected translations of Wu Shiren’s poems in 1986 and Hanoi Social Sciences Publishing House published Duan Ruan Jun’s poems and Essays (Hai Weng’s poems) in 1982. Ruan Shifeng’s research on Ruan Ti Poetry (*Han Nan magazine*, No. 88, 2001), Ruan Shiyin’s Deng Tingxiang: envoys and poets (general collection of Vietnamese literature, 2008), Ruan Jinrong’s Pan Qing Jian envoy Cheng Poetry (Master’s thesis of Ho Chi Minh University of Humanities and Social Sciences in 2014), etc. However, it can also be seen that they mainly focus on sorting and studying the poetry collections of some famous poets.

Korean scholars discussed the exchange of Chinese poetry between envoys to China, such as park Xiangui’s “poems for envoys from Vietnam and North Korea” in the selected poems of emperor Yue (in the collection of studies on overseas Chinese books (Volume I, Zhonghua Book Company, 2005). An analytical perspective of Jin Yingzhu’s “integration of Vietnamese Chinese Yanxing documents”—centered on the literati exchange of Korean and Vietnamese envoys recorded in “xingcha Chronicles” and “later episodes of Huacheng” (*Research on Chinese Characters*, No. 7, 2011), etc.

1.3. Domestic Research Status

Chinese scholars study Vietnamese Chinese poetry relatively late. Huang Yiqiu was the first to pay attention to Vietnamese Chinese poetry. He compiled a book called a brief introduction to Vietnamese Chinese poetry in the 1950s. But at that time, not many people paid attention to the situation of Vietnamese Chinese poetry. Then, it was not until the 1980s that scholars in Guangxi Province, which borders on the mountains and rivers of Vietnam, paid attention again. For example, Luo Changgen and others mentioned the situation of Vietnamese Chinese poetry when studying the history of Vietnamese literature and culture. However, it was not until the 1990s that China and Vietnam established friendly relations and scholars from the two countries exchanged freely that many

research achievements of Chinese scholars appeared one after another, such as the catalogue of Vietnamese Chinese poetry included in the catalogue of Vietnamese literature compiled by Wang Xiaodun and others.

In particular, He Qiannian and Yan Ming promoted the study of Vietnamese Chinese poetry. As a student of Wang Xiaodun, He Qiannian began to receive the collation of Vietnamese literature from the beginning of the 21st century. Later, he expanded on Vietnamese Chinese poetry in many aspects, such as comments on Vietnamese ancient poetics (He, 2002), research on Vietnamese poetry before the Mo Dynasty (He, 2003), etc., while Yan Ming gave a complete introduction to the history of Vietnamese Chinese poetry from the perspective of Chinese poetry in East Asia (Yan, 2018). In particular, it focuses on the in-depth study of Vietnamese rhythm poetry (Yan, 2012).

2. Significance and Deficiency of Current Research

2.1. The Significance of the Current Study of Vietnamese Chinese Poetry

Chinese poetry is an important part of Ancient Vietnamese literature. Vietnamese Chinese poetry inherits the literary style of ancient Chinese poetry in both creative content and creative mode, so it is also an important part of the history of Chinese poetry. However, because Chinese characters have been abolished in Vietnam, the current Vietnamese language is far from Chinese characters, and because the attitude towards Chinese characters has been applied to the relationship with China by some contemporary rulers, Vietnamese Chinese literature has been regarded as “foreign literature” and erased or ignored from Vietnamese literature for a long time in the 20th century. Even today, Vietnamese Chinese literature is still placed in an insignificant position in the literary history compiled by Vietnam, but these works account for more than 90% of Vietnam’s ancient literary works. Vietnamese Chinese poetry accounts for more than half of the Vietnamese Chinese literary works. It can be seen that the study of Vietnamese Chinese poetry can restore the true position of Vietnamese Chinese literature history in history. At present, the Chinese poetry materials sorted out by the academic circles play an important role in protecting the Chinese contribution of Vietnam.

Vietnamese Chinese literature is an integral part of the whole Chinese literature and occupies an important position in the circle of Chinese literature. Vietnamese Chinese poetry does not exist in isolation in the Chinese cultural circle, but interacts with Chinese poetry, Korean Chinese poetry and Ryukyu Chinese poetry. The study of Vietnamese Chinese poetry also enriches the breadth and depth of literary research in the whole Chinese cultural circle. Now, some scholars have made a positive exploration on the history of literary exchange in the Han cultural circle to a certain extent by studying the poetry communication between Vietnamese poets and Chinese poets, Korean poets and Ryukyu poets.

2.2. The Deficiencies in the Research on Vietnamese Chinese Poetry

At present, there are still many deficiencies in the study of Vietnamese Chinese poetry. Due to the influence of its domestic political environment, contemporary Vietnamese local Chinese poetry research pays more attention to the content of National Poetry, while ignoring the close relationship between Vietnamese Chinese poetry creation and Vietnamese Chinese poetry cultural matrix. Their existing studies pay more attention to the bottom literature, such as Nom poetry, but do not talk about the excellent Chinese poetry creation of scholar bureaucrats. Of course, because contemporary Vietnamese scholars only learn Chinese as a foreign language, which is different from the way that ancient Vietnamese scholars directly learn Chinese as their mother tongue,

contemporary Vietnamese scholars are obviously insufficient in their ability to understand and appreciate Chinese poetry. The above three phenomena are more obvious in contemporary Vietnamese Chinese poetry research works and various poetry anthologies, which hinders the in-depth development of Vietnamese Chinese poetry research in Vietnam to a great extent. China's research on Chinese poetry in the Chinese cultural circle has shown a grand trend, but there is not much research on Vietnamese Chinese poetry, which is still in the exploratory stage.

2.2.1 The overall level of research on Vietnamese Chinese poetry is low

Some existing works involve the history of Vietnamese Chinese poetry. Because they can not fully grasp the relevant literature or for political considerations, they can only make fragment appreciation and simple comments on the poets' poems in the history of Vietnamese Chinese poetry, which is difficult to form a complete discussion on the history of poetry. As an ancient cultural heritage of Vietnam, Chinese books are mainly retained in the Han Nan Research Institute in Hanoi, Vietnam, and a few ancient Chinese books will be retained in some universities. In the absence of digital materials, any scholar who wants to engage in the collation and research of Vietnamese Chinese nationality must see the original. Whether Chinese scholars or Korean scholars, even Vietnamese local scholars, it is not easy to see Chinese nationality. Therefore, the current researchers' mastery of Vietnamese Chinese literature is still not rich enough, which will inevitably lead to difficulties in the research. Even wrong conclusions will be drawn because of incomplete data or poor understanding. For example, some contemporary scholars believe that the development of Vietnamese Chinese poetry history is completely similar to that of Chinese poetry, and some Vietnamese scholars describe Vietnamese Chinese poetry history as completely dependent on the rise and fall of the successive dynasties of Vietnam. Such a conclusion is obviously far from the actual situation of the history of Chinese poetry in Vietnam.

2.2.2 Lack of in-depth study of Vietnamese Chinese poetry theory

There has been a lack of in-depth research on the poetic theory of the development of Chinese poetry in Vietnam. For example, Vietnamese Chinese poetry creation is influenced by Vietnamese language; The relationship between the development of Vietnamese Chinese poetry and the political system, especially the imperial examination system; The cognitive construction of Vietnamese scholars on the history of their native Chinese poetry; The relationship between Vietnamese poetics theory and Chinese poetry creation; The promotion of the political exchanges between China and Vietnam on the creation of Vietnamese Chinese poetry; The living state and creative mentality of Vietnamese poets and so on. Generally speaking, the study of Vietnamese Chinese poetry should be placed on the space-time platform of the whole Chinese cultural circle, especially in the system of Vietnamese social environment, study its many interactions with the local elements of Vietnam, communicate and influence with the Chinese poets of other countries in the Chinese cultural circle, and then make a realistic interpretation of the process of the history of Vietnamese Chinese poetry.

3. Future Research Trends

In the Chinese culture circle and the Chinese character culture circle, Vietnam accepted the Chinese system earlier.

3.1. Comprehensively and Deeply Combing the Literature of Vietnamese Chinese Poetry

For a long time, researchers have always believed that Vietnamese Chinese poetry follows the footsteps of Chinese poetry, and the artistic achievements of Vietnamese Chinese poetry are far from reaching the level of Chinese poetry, so the academic evaluation of Vietnamese Chinese poetry is relatively low. Generally speaking, the development of Vietnamese Chinese poetry has not kept pace with China, nor has it followed enthusiastically. Vietnamese Chinese poets are different from those in ancient Korea and Japan. Vietnamese poets are often happy to be alone and have a unique choice tendency of self marginalization. This consciousness tendency often appears in Vietnamese Han poets in previous dynasties because they are easily restricted by many factors, such as the concept of political consciousness, Sinology cultivation conditions, local language habits and so on. As a result, the art of Chinese poetry can often be seen to get rid of political influence in Japanese poetry, but it is rare in Vietnamese poetry. Future research needs to dig out the local characteristics of Vietnamese Chinese poetry, combined with Vietnam's history, nationality, region and other factors, multi angle cross research. Only in this way can Vietnamese Chinese poetry move forward to depth.

3.2. Deeply Constructing the History of Vietnamese Chinese Poetry

Although there are works on the history of Vietnamese literature in Vietnam and China, the existing research basically stays on the surface because of the lack of in-depth analysis of Vietnamese literature. Therefore, the discussion on Vietnamese Chinese poetry is only a general display, lacking logic and depth. However, no one has tried to sort out the special history of Vietnamese Chinese poetry. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze Vietnamese Chinese poetry from a historical perspective in the future. The compilation of the history of Chinese poetry has rich experience, including the history of poetry compiled according to fixed dynasties, such as the history of poetry of the Tang Dynasty (Xu, 1994) and the Song Dynasty (Zeng, 2016), as well as the overall history of poetry compiled according to the times, such as the history of Chinese poetry. Therefore, Chinese scholars have more reference when compiling the history of Chinese poetry in Vietnam, and the advantages of Chinese scholars' mother tongue also have more advantages in understanding Chinese poetry.

3.3. Constructing Vietnamese Chinese Poetry Theory

In the Chinese culture circle and the Chinese character culture circle, Vietnam accepted the Chinese system earlier. After independence, under the tribute system of the Chinese culture circle, all aspects are still restricted and influenced by China for a long time. Therefore, it is not surprising that Chinese poetry has been popular in ancient Vietnam for a long time and reached a high writing level. Future research should comprehensively sort out the existing Vietnamese Chinese poetry literature, construct a time continuous, clear primary and secondary, and discuss the exact development history of Vietnamese Chinese poetry, and make appropriate theoretical explanations on the driving force of the development of Vietnamese Chinese poetry and the influence of social factors. Our future research ideas and methods should follow the academic tradition since the 20th century and combine the methods of artistic analysis and social analysis in combing and discussing the development history of Vietnamese Chinese poetry. Taking the artistic development of Chinese poetry as the main criterion for judging the history of poetry, this paper outlines the development clue of the history of Chinese poetry in Vietnam. When analyzing many phenomena in the history of Vietnamese poetry, we should put them in a specific historical situation to explore the practical impact of the poet's experience, ideology, political events, economic

basis and language on the creation of Chinese poetry. For example, when discussing the prosperity of the creation of Chinese poetry in Ruan Dynasty, we should take into account the development of the publishing industry of market bookstores and the wide spread of books at that time. In addition, when exploring the choice of different poetic styles in the history of Vietnamese Chinese poetry, we should also include the functional theories of different languages and styles, which is more conducive to draw a realistic conclusion.

3.4. Compare Vietnamese Chinese Poetry with Those of Other Countries in the Chinese Cultural Circle

The main reason for the long-term development of Chinese poetry is that poetry creation not only has the function of ideology, but also has the significance of personal expression; It is not only nourished by the written literary tradition of previous dynasties, but also can breathe the artistic aura of fresh spoken poetry. The creation of Vietnamese Chinese poetry completely depends on ancient Chinese (the official written language of Vietnam) and lacks local spoken language as a source of fresh water, which limits the development of Vietnamese Chinese poetry art. In the history of Chinese poetry in Vietnam, the concept and group function of Chinese poetry have been valued for a long time due to the promotion of rulers, which has become the norm in the Chinese poetry circles in Vietnam. In Vietnam, Chinese poetry is mainly linked to the personality of Confucianism and also serves the imperial examination. Therefore, the creative ability of Chinese poetry has become an important symbol of the quality cultivation of Vietnamese Confucianism. Such political constraints and social needs also lead Vietnamese Chinese poets to express their ideas less in Chinese poetry than Chinese poets in their daily life. However, Chinese Poetry Classics have always been the source of Vietnamese Chinese poetry. Therefore, paying attention to the acceptance and inheritance of Chinese Poetry Classics has formed the tradition of Vietnamese Chinese poetry creation in previous dynasties.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, Vietnamese Chinese poetry is an important part of the Chinese cultural circle, but the existing research still stays in the collection and sorting of literature, the superficial display in the discussion and the lack of in-depth analysis. In the future researchers, Chinese scholars should not only learn from the existing research results of foreign scholars, but also integrate the previous sporadic and fragmented literature sorting methods to sort out systematic literature. On this basis, combined with Vietnam's unique national and regional forms, this paper makes an in-depth and cross research on Vietnamese Chinese poetry, and puts forward a poetry theory with Vietnamese local characteristics and in line with the development of Vietnamese Chinese poetry, as well as a complete history of Vietnamese Chinese poetry.

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