

Original Paper

A Study on the Ideological Connotation and Significance of Agricultural Poetry in the Northern Song Dynasty

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Abstract

The agrarian-related poems of the Northern Song Dynasty are far from the realistic creation tradition of the Book of Songs, the Yuefu folk songs of the Han Dynasty, “those who are hungry sing about their food, those who are working about their work”, and the realistic spirit of Du Fu’s “Three officials” and “three different” and Bai Juyi’s New Yuefu Movement, “Only songs live the people’s disease”. Through multiple contrast techniques, they fully show the miserable fate of the peasants under the heavy pressure of land, taxation, labor and other systems in the Northern Song Dynasty. It exposes the social situation of extreme disparity between the rich and the poor and sharp contradictions between classes, and expresses the complex feelings of compassion, hatred and guilt of scholars and literati. Influenced by the social culture of the Song Dynasty, the agriculture-related poems of the Northern Song Dynasty also showed the creative tendency of argumentation and prose culture, which was different from the previous poetry, and demonstrated the unique artistic style of the Song poetry.

Keywords

Northern Song Dynasty, agriculture-related poems, people-oriented thought, agricultural development

Since ancient times, China has been an agricultural country with a large population, and agriculture is the top priority of the national economy and the maintenance of rule. Agriculture-based ideology has long been running through China’s ideological system for thousands of years, “The Book of Shang Junshu” says: “The state can carry out the people, but the one who is strong, and the one who is able to do the forbidden is rich”. “Guanzi” said: “strong basic work, to useless, and then can make the people rich”, and put forward “people do not have the ability to do things, then the land is barren and the

country is poor". "Xunzi" said: "to strengthen the basic and economize, heaven can not be poor". "Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals" said: "so the work of the weaver, think the original teaching also". Ouyang Xiu once said, "Farmers are the foundation of the world". There is nothing for a nation to do. Agriculture is the foundation of the world and the most important thing in the world.

1. A Research on the Creation of Agriculture-related Poems in Song Dynasty

Today, China has already entered the transition from traditional farming civilization to modern industrial civilization, and the traditional production and life have been and are undergoing profound changes, especially with the advent of industrialization and urbanization, farming culture is gradually fading. In today's era, is it necessary to read agriculture-related poems? Where to look in the vast sea of poetry?

Since ancient times, China has been a big agricultural country, from the supreme ruler to the ordinary people, all attach great importance to agricultural production, agricultural activities have a profound impact on the life of our ancient people and our traditional culture. China is also a big country of poetry, and the rich and colorful agricultural activities are reflected in the colorful agriculture-related poems. The ancients often wrote poems to show their concern for social reality and serious and lofty emotions. Therefore, the study of ancient agriculture-related poetry is of great significance to understand the agricultural history, farming culture and agricultural society of our country. The agriculture-related poems mainly include agriculture-related poems, agriculture-related poems and agriculture-related poems, which have different emphases and overlapping contents. As for the agriculture-related poetry, the academic circle generally regards Tao Yuanming as the originator. Most of the agriculture-related poems are self-conscious and show the idealized rural life glorified by the literati. Agriculture refers to agricultural production activities. Therefore, the narrow sense of agriculture-related poetry refers to the poems that focus on the production labor of farmers. In a broad sense, agriculture-related poetry refers to poems that care about farmers, about agriculture, and about farmers' lives. A scholar once pointed out that there is politics in agriculture-related poems. Indeed, since Tao Yuanming, agriculture-related poems have had incomprehensible causes and causes with politics, but in Jin and Tang dynasties, such causes were mostly hidden, that is, poets often participated in the creation of agriculture-related poems under the condition of political frustration, and the appearance of the works seemed to be alienated from politics. In fact, more or less implied their political ideals, dislike of political career, dissatisfaction with political reality, and frustration that their political aspirations cannot be realized. In the Song Dynasty, due to the special political climate and environment, the relationship between agriculture-related poets and politics became closer and more complicated, and the political causes of agriculture-related poems were not only recessive, but also increasingly explicit.

The creation of agriculture-related poems in Song Dynasty has some implicit or explicit causal relationship with politics. In the fierce political struggle of the two Song Dynasties, the literati and

literati had the experience of being marginalized politically, but the idle period was the peak of their creation of agriculture-related poems, which achieved a large number of poets and works, and continued and enriched the hidden political and cultural connotation of the agriculture-related poems of the Jin and Tang Dynasties. More importantly, the Song Dynasty poets made use of agriculture-related poems to express their political stand, which became an effective tool and carrier of political struggle, and then formed an explicit causal relationship with politics.

2. A Study on the Characteristics and Ideology of Agricultural Poetry in the Northern Song Dynasty

Song poetry from Wang Yucheng began to pay attention to learning from Du Fu, Bai Juyi. In the middle period of the Northern Song Dynasty, the poetic and literary reform movement promoted the development of poetry towards realism. Mei Yaochen, Zhang Yu, Wen Tong, Wang Anshi, Su Shi, Zhang Shunmin, Huang Tingjian and Zhang Wei all wrote some good works reflecting the rural situation. Especially Mei Yaochen wrote more, reflecting a wider range of life. His works such as “Tian Jia Yu”, “Rufen Poor Girl”, “An Poor”, “Village Hao” and “Little Village” have profound social significance in describing the rural situation at that time, narrating the fate of Yi people who were in the midst of natural and man-made disasters, and revealing the class contradictions in rural areas. This paper takes two important poets in the Northern Song Dynasty as the objects of interpretation.

2.1 Mei Yaochen's Agriculture-related Creations

Mei Yaochen's agriculture-related poems comprehensively reflect the rural blight, the suffering of people's livelihood and the various malpractices in administration of the Northern Song Dynasty, and reveal the deep root of the complete impoverishment of peasants. It also comprehensively recorded the agricultural production, rural economic conditions and folk customs in the middle of the Northern Song Dynasty, which has high historical value in the history of agriculture, politics and science and technology. Its unique literary personality lies in: different from the previous generation of agriculture-related poems, the songs are the peasant life itself, or to express their own political feelings; He often used a large group of poems to express a complete process of farm production and life, or a panoramic view of rural scenery, and his unique vision of observing problems and innovative spirit made him become the “ancestor of Song poetry” in agricultural poetry.

Mei Yaochen's rural poems are different from those of the previous generation. They are not intended to express hermit-like leisure or retreat thoughts (Wang Wei's “Weichuan Tian Home”), but a series of rural genre paintings with a rich flavor of life. The rural scenery under Mei Yaochen's pen is also particularly fine and dense, going deep into every detail of rural life, and appearing full of farmhouse flavor, such as “Tianjia House on the pot”: “Repair vine house head hanging, big pot eaves heavy”. The dry leaves are still bitter, and the wind has not moved the roots. Close to the smoke, open charging late. A cheap life is useless, but there will be a precious daughter”.

Mei Yaochen also often uses large groups of poems to express a complete process of farm production and life, or a panoramic view of rural scenery. There is compassion for the hard work and poverty of farmers, but also praise for the large-scale labor tools such as “water wheel” and “Yang Fan”. His book *He Sunduansuo Sericulture Set Fifteen Pieces* systematically describes the complete process of sericulture production from “planting mulberry in the original” to mulberry gathering, sericulture, cocoon setting, silk reeling and spinning. In addition, Mei Yaochen’s depiction of rural scenery is often permeated with concern for the people’s livelihood, or political accommodation. There are a large number of poems describing the rural scenery in *Wanling Collection*. One of the obvious characteristics of these works is that they never forget their concern for agriculture and compassion for people’s livelihood. Such as “Hope”: “The new Qing Yi hope, the favorite is the front of the mountain”. Near and far flowers and bamboo, high and low water patting field. Call birds countless, ask the name of the guest for many years. Here spring ploughing late, Wu Niu sleeps under the tree”.

2.2 *Ouyang Xiu’s Agriculture-related Creations*

He is best known by the public for his famous landscape travelogue, *The Drunkard Pavilion*. For the description of landscape, Ouyang Xiu does not pay attention to the description of personal feelings or feelings of play, but focuses on the description of landscape and lake scenery, and has a detailed description of the scenery. “If the sun rises and Linfei opens, the clouds return to the rock caves, the dawn changes, the mountains also”. Wild Fang hair and fragrance, good wood show and numerous Yin, wind and frost noble, water and stone out, four times in the mountains. The four times are different, and the joy is endless”. Another example is another classic prose “Autumn Song Fu” in the shape of the autumn: its color is bleak, the smoke is cloudy; Its appearance is clear, the day high crystal; Its chilling, biting flesh and bone; its meaning is depressed, the mountains and rivers are lonely”. The bleak autumn is not directly expressed, but through the expression of images, colors and sounds to illustrate the decline and fall of autumn.

The classic landscape poetry is always full of the meaning of recreation and solution, the meaning of seeking detachment from the landscape, full of the meaning of “wine” and “drunkenness”, such as “wild birds look at me drunk, streams and clouds let me sleep” (“*Chuzhou Drunkard Pavilion*”). However, Ouyang Xiu’s agriculture-related poems are not like this. The image of “wine” hardly appears, let alone the meaning of “drunkenness”. Although it also contains a large number of environmental descriptions, it has other meanings, which can be analyzed in the following paragraphs.

Ouyang Xiu’s career has ups and downs in his life, Chuzhou, Fuyang, Bozhou period is the most profound and colorful. Taking his poems in Chuzhou as an example, in addition to the poems about caring for mountains and rivers, there are also two types of poems about giving to friends and relatives, worrying about the country and loving the people, which are also the aspects that Ou poems focus on, and this part of worrying about the country and loving the people contains the agriculture-related poems about the theme of this paper. Compared with “old steed bones strange heart is still strong, green

pine years old color more than new” (“Send Zhang Sheng”). Lao Ji, Qing Song, such as containing the meaning of the ambitious metaphor, “a foot of snow, a few feet of mud, mud deep wheat seedling spring fertilizer” (“Yongyang Snow”) snow, mud, wheat seedlings and other simple visible things can be directly into the poem, such as other periods of the shirt farmer works, “a day of rain, full and abundant”. Happy Rain, “When people are idle and happy with their friends, birds know the season” (Snow Clear). Ouyang Xiu puts the most ordinary things into poems, focuses on pointing out the current problems and reflecting the people’s livelihood in the ordinary, and experiences the ordinary daily life of the people from the small and accessible things and examples.

Liuyi Poetry is a poetic theory work created by Ouyang Xiu, which not only expresses his poetic view, but for him, poetry is not a pure “idle talk”, but to discuss poetry, express emotion and lyric emotion by means of things, making poetry more philosophical and lyric. As in “I hear Yin and Yang in heaven and earth, rising and falling all the time poor”. The loop has to miss, so the year is impermanent. If the ancient government knew this, it would have benefited the diligent people” (“Answer Yang Bi Xiyu Long Sentence”), straight book its matter, without too much comparison, direct use of Fu techniques to expose the Northern Song Dynasty. “Official sell taste village wine thin, day drink official wine sincere cola. Do not see Tianzhong seed waxy people, pot without millet porridge degree winter and spring”. (“Eating People’s Bad”) compares officials and farmers through narration, frankly compares officials’ drinking “honest cola” with farmers’ buying bad food, and directly expresses various unreasonable phenomena.

In constructing his own narrative structure, Ouyang Xiu mostly adopts the method of writing as poetry. This is not only reflected in the specific subject matter content, but also reflected in the artistic expression techniques. Most poets express their pent-up emotions in a thousand turns when they write poems, but Ouyang Xiu does not use the traditional way to express emotions, but uses the way of Fu. For example, “Bianhu” “The family is Bianhu, and they are always prepared every year. The sons to mentor him are saddle-horses, while the women are able to bend arcs”. Directly describe the resistance and struggle of the border people against the Khitan before Chanyuan’s alliance. In addition, in general, the ancient literature is more free and inclusive in the system, which Ouyang Xiu found. He used function words properly and skillfully wrote the levels and transitions of poetry with function words, while maintaining the narrative characteristics in the rigorous logic. For example, “I know that although there are many evil worms, it is not difficult to hate the evil” (“Answer Zhu CAI’s poem on Locust hunting”) “I have done it in service, how can I take a wipe?” The “Nai” and “trace” in “After the Dismissal of the Office, Returning Xiangcheng’s Mischiefness to the Ten rhymes and Sending back to Luozhong Old Liao” enhanced the rhythmic texture of the poem, while strengthening the sense of rhythm and the lyric atmosphere in the narrative.

3. The Classification and Creative Significance of Agricultural Poetry in the Northern Song Dynasty.

3.1 Show the Rural Scenery

Because of its specific way of life and production, the countryside has formed a unique natural and cultural landscape, which is quiet away from the hustle and bustle, the harmony of people and nature, and the wealth of products brought by farmers' hard work. Most of the poems about rural scenery in the agricultural poems are rich in earth and life, showing the poet's praise and love for the countryside. Such as "new sunny to hope, love is the front of the mountain". Near flowers and bamboo, high and low water patting field. Call birds countless, ask the name of the guest for many years. Here spring ploughing late, Wu Niu sleeps under the tree" (Mei Yaochen's "Wild Hope") shows the typical rural scenery and expresses the farmers' hardships and joys.

3.2 Show the Simple Feelings of the Countryside

In the laborious and difficult farming activities, only by helping each other can farmers obtain limited survival resources in the struggle to transform nature. Farming culture has created the quality of farmers' practical diligence. The difficult living conditions have contributed to the interdependence between people in rural areas and the friendship among villagers. Mei Yaochen's "And Folk Music", written after the end of a day of farm work, farmers together drinking, talking and laughing, happy scene.

3.3 The Joys and Pains of Farming

The expression of Tian Jiaku's agricultural poems more about natural disasters, war corvee brought disaster to the farmers, the expression of Tian Jiale's agricultural poems more about the joy of farmers in good years. "Old man 70 from the waist sickle, ashamed spring mountain bamboo shoots fern sweet. I have forgotten about the taste and have eaten without salt recently in March". (Su's "The Five Wonders of Mountain Villages" (Part 3)) shows the poet's concern about the peasants' lack of salt to eat. Fan Chengda's "After urging rent" shows that after waterlogging disaster, the old farmers encountered the government to urge rent, had to sell for money rice miserable situation. Yang Wanli's "Compassion for farmers", "rice clouds do not rain much yellow", shows the drought brought famine to farmers. Zheng's book "Locust Harvesting" said that locusts were so numerous and dense that they overwhelmed wheat and reproduced so quickly that farmers simply saw the fruits of their labor go out of reach. Zhang Lei's "Tian Jia", "A thousand miles of dry locust autumn fields", shows the scene of pastoral desolation after the locust plague and Mei Yaochen's "Wounded Mulberry" writes that the frost disaster has damaged mulberry leaves, leaving silkworms without food sources, and silkworm farmers have suffered. Lidon's "The Father of the Field" is a poem that shows how poor the farmer is after paying the rent. Bai Juyi's "Guanjia", "the husband seed wife and children gain, the strength of bitter fatigue, clothing and food long thin", truly describes the reality of farmers who are tired for years but have no food and clothing.

4. Summary

There is an important relationship between the agriculture-related poems and politics in the northern Song Dynasty. Implicit or explicit role of politics in the Song Dynasty

Secondly, the agriculture-related poetry not only continued the political causes of the Jin and Tang dynasties of the Song Dynasty to express the political ideal, express the political distress and other traditional connotations, so that the agriculture-related poetry of the Song Dynasty formed a distinct artistic characteristics.

Compassion for farmers and compassion for farmers is the tradition of Chinese poetry. Earlier, there were famous works such as “hoeing at noon, sweat dripping down the soil” and “There are frozen bones on the stinking road of wine and meat in Zhumen”. There were also agricultural poets such as Tao Yuanming, who hidden themselves in the pastoral landscape, and expressed the meaning of broad hermits in the chest. China is a big agricultural country, agriculture-related poetry has been emerging endlessly, more than 5,000 years of farming culture, more than 2,000 years of agricultural poetry history. Starting from the Book of Songs, he created the realistic tradition of singing about farming, with “those who are hungry sing about their food and those who are working about their work”. Later, the pastoral poetry school of Tao Yuanming, Wang Wei and Meng Haoran was a famous representative, which developed for a long time in the Northern Song Dynasty and made great achievements. Until the Ming and Qing Dynasties, such themes continued to spread. There is a large group of agriculture-related poems, and the academic circle has been discussing the ideological and artistic nature of them.

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