

## ANTHOLOGY OF SONG-DYNASTY CI-POETRY

Translated, annotated, with an Introduction, by
Huang Hongquan
黄宏苓

PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY
PUBLISHING HOUSE
BELLING 1988

Responsible editor: Lii Yibing Cover designer: Li Rong

## THE ANTHOLOGY OF SONG-DYNASTY CI-POETRY Translated, annotated, with an Introduction by Huang Hongquan

Published by
People's Liberation Army Publishing House
No. 3, Pingan Li, Beijing, China

Copyright 1988 by People's Liberation Army Publishing House, Beijing, China. ISBN 7-5065-0665-3/I-88 定价: 17.50 元

Printed in Beijing by Changcheng and Hongwei Printing Plants

## INTRODUCTION

I

This Anthology of the Song-Dynasty Ci-Poetry, or briefly the Anthology as will be hereafter mentioned in the Introduction, is literally based on Hu Yunyi's Song Ci Xuan (Selected Song-Dynasty Ci-Poems).

Hu's selection comprises 296 pieces. With nine more poems added to it, the *Anthology* contains 305 pieces. ① Here is the reason why these additions are made:

Pan Lang's Yi Yu Hang is a series of five poems of which Hu's selection contains only the second and the fifth. Considering that the omission of the other three will definitely weaken the artistic force of the selected two, to make the series complete, the other three are added in.

Kou Zhun, whose upright character has often been the subject for praise in the Chinese novels, has only one piece in

If the 50 complete pieces included in the Introduction and the appended notes are taken into account, the total number of poems contained in this anthology will amount to 355 pieces. These 355 complete pieces as well as other fragmentary poetry passages are all translated by Huang Hongquan.

Hu's selection. His Yang Guan Yin therefore is included in the Anthology.

Wang Anshi, an eminent figure in literature as well as in politics—his political rival being Su Shi—has only one piece in Hu's selection, whereas the latter boasts of 23 pieces. To somehow improve the balance, besides his Gui Zhi Xiang, three more pieces of his are included in the Anthology.

To Xin Qiji's long list, one more is added and that is his Mu Lan Hua Man, hymning the departure of the mid-autumn moon. Modern ci-critic Wang Guowei observed: "The poet's imagination that the moon revolves around the earth coincides with the theory of the scientists. It's nothing short of divine revelation of a genius!" It would be a pity if this interesting piece should be excluded from the present anthology.

As for the annotation, the translator worked it out independently—though owing a great deal of reference to Hu's work—in order to meet the need of the foreign reading public. For instance, the biographical account of Yue Fei, our national hero, being familiar to almost every reader at home, consists of only a few lines in Hu's selection, whereas the present anthology gives it a more or less adequate space. Similiar is the case with the account of Wen Tianxiang. Besides, a number of classic allusions and poetic anecdotes, though somehow well-known to the average reader at home, which probably accounts for Hu's abridging the relation of them, are nevertheless worthy of detailed expatiation to the foreign reader. On the other hand, a large part of Hu's

annotation is explanation of the classic dictions which, self-explained through translation, need no further annotation in the translated version. For these and some other reasons, the translator has edited the annotation according to his independent judgement.

After the divulgence—to the translator definitely necessary whereas to the general reader quite trivial—of the aforesaid points, the translator here confesses his sincere and respectful obligation to Mr. Hu Yunyi, deceased author of Song Ci Xuan, without the guidance of which the Anthology could not have come into its present shape.

H

Compared with other current anthologies of Song ci, Hu Yunyi's selection excels in that it truthfully reflects the progress of the nation's moral tone throughout that troublesome age. Reading the book through with diligent reference to the ample annotation, one shall relive the golden days of the dynasty, be roused from the grateful reverie by the ever aggravating alarm of the foreign aggression, thrilled with the incessant eruptions of the nation's smothered patriotism, rue the dynasty's eventual fall, and, in the closing pages of the book, share the passionate grief of the vanquished yet heroic peoplethese will be the reader's experiences if the study is complete and in agreement with the chronological order of the poems therein. In short, Hu Yunyi's selection can be regarded as an

epitome, cast in the light of poetry, of the Song-dynasty history.

Following is a rough etching of the history of the tragic dynasty.

In the middle of the tenth century, the Later Zhou (951-960) was favoured with a chance of recovering the lost 16 Yanyun counties<sup>①</sup> in North China then under the rule of the Liao of the Qidan tribe. Yet the chief Later Zhou general Zhao Kuangyin, who afterwards founded the Song Empire, let the chance slip through his fingers; he suddenly abandoned his North Expedition and set about subduing the scattered Chinese states in the South. The general chaos of the Five Dynasties and Ten States Period (907-960) was concluded, to his credit, with a nation-wide reunification, yet the Northern menace that attended the birth of the Song Empire had never slacked till the Empire's final day.

While the Liao constituted the Empire's chief threat in the North, the Western Xia of the Dangxiang<sup>®</sup> tribe never ceased to harass the Empire's western borders. While constant in its high-hand policy towards domestic troubles, the Song court repeatedly sued the foreign aggressors for temporary peace on humiliating terms: as early as 1004 such a policy had cost the Song court an anual tribute of 100, 000 ounces of silver and 200, 000 rolls of silk to the Kingdom of Liao, the first

<sup>(1)</sup> See additional note 1.

<sup>2</sup> or the Tangut, a branch of the Qiang tribe.

<sup>. 4 .</sup> 

instance of a series of abasements afterwards.

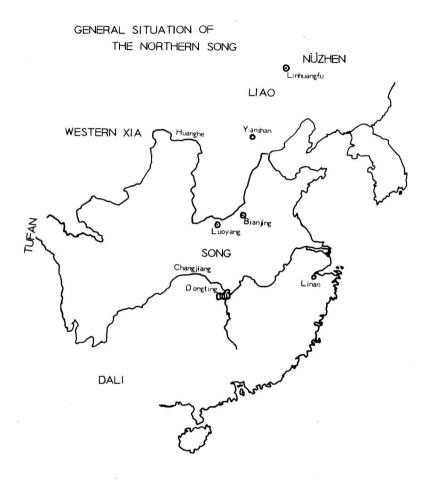
In 1125 the allied forces of the Song and the Jin of the Nüzhen tribe, or the Golden Tartars as the Western historians usually call them, conquered the Kingdom of Liao. But as soon as the wolf was driven out from the front door, the tiger slipped in at the back door. Thenceforth the Nüzhen became the greatest bane to the nation.

In 1127, i.e. the second year of the Jingkang Reign, the Nüzhen captured the Song capital Bianjing (modern Kaifeng, Henan) and carried away the two emperors, Huizong and his son Qinzong, to the North. This is known as the Jingkang Shame which marked the shameful end of the Northern Song.

With the removal of the capital in 1127 to Nanjing (modern Shangqiu, Henan) and two years later to Linan (modern Hangzhou, Zhejiang), began the Southern Song Dynasty. In 1234 the Southern Song forces allied with the Mongols conquered the Kingdom of Jin. Again the "wolf and the tiger" story repeated. In 1279 the Southern Song Empire was finally destroyed by the Mongols who founded the Yuan Dynasty in China.

Such is the bold outline of the Song-dynasty history. Full of woe mostly ensuing from the foreign invasions, tottering through its 319 years's humiliated existence, the Song was the weakest among all the Chinese dynasties. Yet the nation's most debased age also produced the nation's best sons. Besides,

the age is also marked with a fecundity of literary production



• 6 •

in which only the Han and the Tang Dynasties could have rivalled it.

Of the history of the dynasty the review of several points may help the reader to attain a better understanding of the contents of the book.

FIRSTLY, Wang Anshi's reforms and the persistent party conflict ensuing therefrom. Originally intended for the interests of the peasantry, his Oingmiao Fa (Green Crops Law) granted low-interest state loans to the peasants if the latter should find themselves in economic straits before harvest time, and his Mianyu Fa (Service Exemption Law) stipulated the taxation of the wealthy for their exemption from labour services. The enforcement of these laws, in its initial stage, had yielded some encouraging results, but soon these laws became deteriorated in quality and especially in the hands of the notorious chief minister Cai Jing, were finally turned into an expedient for aggravating the exploitation of the poor. Besides, the incessant mutual suppression of the two parties, one in support of the reform policy and the other against it, had infinitely exhausted the energy of the empire, which, as some historian believes, contributed to bring about the Jingkang Shame. From the biographical account of the poets, the reader will find so many of them such as Wang Anshi, Su Shi, Huang Tingjian, Qin Guan and others were involved in the energy-consuming party struggle.

SECONDLY, the corrupt rule of Emperor Huizong was one of the immediate causes of the fall of the Northern Song.

To show his bad rule, one instance will suffice. As the emperor had an eccentric love for rare flowers and picturesque stones, his chief minister Cai Jing had arranged for numerous boats to transport these things from Zhejiang to the capital. This is known as *Hua Shi Gang* (Flower and Stone Programme), a preposterous practice that augured the impending catastrophe of 1127.

The emperer, Zhao Ji by name, impotent in politics but gifted in poetry, wrote Yan Shan Ting (poem XCIV) in praise of the beauty of the apricot flewers seen on his northward journey as a prisoner:

After the toilet's careful labour

Their beauteous form and soft perfume

Even blush the fairies in the Flower-Pearl Palace.

Even in his captivity he could not well have forgot his flowers and stones!

A hundred years later the poet Wen Jiweng when roaming on the Tai Lake poured his lament on the memory of the emperor's eccentricity, for which refer to poem CCLXXVII and its relevant notes.

THIRDLY, from Yue Fei's Man Jiang Hong (poem CLII) and its relevant notes, the reader may get a glimpse of the nation's general situation around 1140. Due to the nation-wide heroic resistance under the ever victorious banner of Yue Jia Jun (Yue Fei's Army), a complete victory over the

Nüzhen appeared to be a surety. Especially after the Zhuxianzhen Battle, the utterly routed Nüzhen literally lost their sway over the vast regions to the north of Huanghe: there they could not even enroll a single Chinese to replenish their greatly weakened forces. Jin Wuzhu, then in command of the Nüzhen generals, who could no longer control his subordinates, pleaded with them: "Be patient just now. As soon as Yue Jia Jun comes, we'll surrender." When this highly promising prospect was unfolding itself before the nation, Yue Fei was suddenly called back to the court, and accused of rebellion through the intrigue of Qin Hui, Wangshi (Qin Hui's wife), Moqi Xie, and Zhang Jun, was executed after a few months' imprisonment.

Very soon the Nüzhen swept down the Central Plain of China with redoubled vigour and the lost chance was never to favour the nation again.

The Chinese people have been in the habit of laying the blame on the notorious traitor Qin Hui. Yet what part did Emperor Gaozong play in the tragedy of our beloved hero Yue Fei? Let Ming-dynasty poet Wen Zhengming's Man Jiang Hong--commenting on Gaozong's imperial inscription on a stone of Yue Fei's merit, answer the question.

I cleansed the broken stone,
Vaguely discernable is the imperial edict.
O that on Yue Fei such fortune be once lavished,
And such bane be later descended!

Is it because of his singular merit

That he merits a cruel death?

Now in direction the wind has veered,

E'en the praise of yore can save him, no more.

Yet most cruel is the persecution

In the Fengbo Pavilion, of the heroe!

Did His Majesty forget the holy land by far reduced?
Did His Majesty forget Hui and Qin's welfare?
Yet be Hui and Qin returned,
On what throne shall himself be seated?
Alas! for its removal to the South
Let not posterity blame the court,
For sincere was His Majesty's dread
Of the recovery of the North.
A petty wight Qin Hui was,
How could he have wrought the nation's bane?
The answer is, he knew where to flatter
His Majesty's most secret desire.

Wen's poem convincingly argues that in the selfish heart of the emperor half of the nation's territory and millions of people's fate meant nothing in comparison with the keeping of his throne and sceptre. That great tragedy of the nation is gone by, yet when has history ceased repeating it in altered forms?

In the same year of Yue Fei's death, i. e. 1141, peace

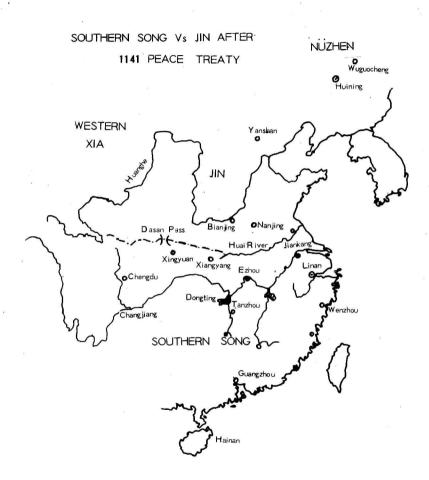
was bought on humiliating condition<sup>①</sup>: Emperor Gaozong submitted to the Jin chief as his subject, the Jin chief in return crowned him emperor; the Song court would pay the Jin an annual tribute of 250, 000 ounces of silver and the same number of rolls of silk; on New Year's Day and on the Jin chief's birthday, the Song court would send congratulating envoys<sup>②</sup> to the Jin court; the boundary was drawn along the Huai River in the east and across Dasan Pass in the west; etc. And just imagine that all these terms were gained right after Yue Fei's great victory in the Zhuxianzhen Battle!

The fellowing six decades saw three major campaingns between the Southern Song and the Nüzhen--Wanyan Liang's invasion (1161), Zhang Jun's North Expedition (1163-1164) and Han Tuozhou's North Expedition (1206-1208), yet none of these had greatly altered the general state in which the Southern Song Empire had found itself after the Shaoxing Peace Treaty. To demonstrate that state, let Zhang Xiaoxiang's Liu Zhou Ge Tou (poem CLXX) be quoted here:

When I gaze towards the Huai River, I see fortresses lost in wild forest, And cloud of dust darken the sky.

① Known as the Shaoxing Peace Treaty, Shaoxing being the title of Gaozong's reign from 1131 to 1161.

② Compare notes 516-571.



Now the frosty wind blows amain,

And border regions are quiet.

Alas! it rends my heart to recall the past.

Maybe Providence wills it so

That no human effort can alter.

On the Zhu River and Si, renowned for culture,

The odour of goats' sweat stinks.

Yea! only across the river

Lies the stinking land,

Where cattle graze in the sunset,

And muddy huts strew the river bank.

Lo! the proud king is hunting at night:

His horsemen's flying torches set the whole river ablaze,

His mournful flutes and drums e'en freeze the listeners' blood.

Then I consider pendent at my waist

Those arrows in their quiver and sword in its scabbard:

Alas, they are either worm-eaten or covered with dust:

Little achievement they have made.

Yet how time flies!

Though my heart is young,

My life is approaching its close,

And the holy city is yet in the alien hands!

Alas! how our dancers, to flatter our foe,

Abuse spear and feather in such a frolic show!

The beacon-fires are extinct,

And the weapon useless stored away,
And the imperial envoys pass to and fro,
Assiduously seeking for peace,
Long forgetting, alas! their sense of shame!
Yet I hear how the old men in the Middle Plain,
Ever looking towards the South,
Expect the imperial chariots,
That are decked with green feather,
Or fly rainbow-coloured standards.
Thus pondering, the traveller is choked
With smouldering wrath,
His tears pouring like rain.

FOURTHLY, a successive study of the account of Jia Sidao and the biography of Wen Tianxiang would help the reader to visualize the situation of the dynasty in its last days. When Xiangyang, a city of strategic importance, had been besieged by the Mongols for three long years, the notorious chief minister Jia Sidao still kept his hours light-heartedly occupied with watching the cricket-fight. One day Emperor Duzong asked him what was to be done to relieve the city, he lied to the emperor that the Yuan forces had long withdrawn. On learning it was a female court official who had revealed the Xiangyang situation to the emperor, Jia had her executed on some other pretext. "The Western Han prospered only because the emperors placed trust in the honest officials and kept away the dishonest; the Eastern Han declined only