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Author(s)	Komiyama, Haruka
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Sociality in Classical Chinese Poetry

Haruka Komiyama, The University of Osaka, Japan

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Abstract

This article takes as its point of departure the *Great Preface* of the *Mao Shi*, which outlines the overarching principles of the *Shijing*, the earliest extant poetry anthology in China, and examines how the notion that poetry allegorically represents society was inherited and transformed in later poetic traditions. Chapter 2 refers to both the text of the *Great Preface* of the *Mao Shi* and the commentary by Kong Yingda, confirming that poetry composed by the people was understood to reflect the goodness or badness of politics in its own time, and that poetry was interpreted as mirroring political conditions and broader social trends. Chapter 3 investigates how poetic terms and motifs found in the *Shijing* were employed in later poetry. It points out, for example, that in cases such as “wolves and tigers”, terms or motifs that originally appeared merely as elements surrounding evil figures came, in later usage, to function as allegorical expressions directly representing such figures themselves. It also highlights cases such as “bamboo”, in which the same motif is used allegorically across periods while signifying entirely different states or conditions. It has often been assumed that the language of the *Shijing* can be interpreted wholesale in terms of allegory. However, rather than treating the allegorical vocabulary of the *Shijing* and that of later periods as forming an undifferentiated continuum, it is necessary to examine the characteristics and transformations of individual terms with greater precision. This article represents one attempt to clarify that point.

Keywords: Chinese poetry, *Shijing*, the “Great Preface” of the *Mao Shi*, the allegorical nature of poetry, poetic diction

1. Introduction

The *Shijing* (Book of Songs 詩經) is the oldest anthology of poetry in China and one of the *Five Classics* 五經, alongside the *Shujing* (Book of Documents 書經), *Yijing* (Book of Changes 易經), *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals 春秋), and *Liji* (Book of Rites 禮記).

Although traditionally attributed to Confucius (Kong Zi 孔子), its compiler remains unknown.

The anthology contains 305 poems composed from the early Western Zhou 西周 period (around the 11th century BCE) through the Eastern Zhou 東周 and Spring and Autumn 春秋 periods (around the 7th century BCE), most of which are anonymous.

In the early Han 漢 period, three schools of interpretation—*Qi Shi* 齊詩, *Lu Shi* 魯詩, and *Han Shi* 韓詩—collectively known as the "Three Schools of the *Shi*" (*Sanjia Shi* 三家詩), emerged to study the *Shijing*. In addition to these, the *Mao Shi* 毛詩 version, compiled by Mao Heng 毛亨 and Mao Chang 毛萇, later became dominant. Among these four traditions, only the *Mao Shi* has survived in its entirety; therefore, the *Shijing* today is often referred to as the *Mao Shi*.

A distinctive feature of the *Mao Shi* is that each poem is preceded by a preface. The long preface attached to the first poem “*Guanju*” 關雎 is known as the “Great Preface” (*Daxu* 大序), which outlines the fundamental philosophy of the entire *Shijing*. According to the *Daxu*, poetry reflects politics and social customs, serving as a mirror of the world. This conception of poetry profoundly influenced later Chinese views of literature and its social role.

This article explores the relationship between Chinese classical poetry and society, starting from the *Daxu* of the *Mao Shi*, and examines how the allegorical nature of poetry was inherited in later poetry.

2. How the “Great Preface” Explains Poetry

How is poetry explained in the “Great Preface” of the *Mao Shi*? To examine this question, I will focus on the following passage¹:

治世之音、安(1)以樂(2)、其政和(3)。

(The style of such pieces in an age of good order is quiet, going on to be joyful; —the government is then a harmony.)

乱世之音、怨(4)以怒(5)、其政乖(6)。

(Their style in an age of disorder is resentful, going on to the expression of anger; —the government is then a discord.)

亡国之音、哀(7)以思(8)、其民困(9)。

(Their style, when a State is going to ruin, is mournful, with the expression of [retrospective] thought; —the people are then in distress.)

故正得失、動天地、感鬼神、莫近於詩。

(Therefore, correctly to set forth the successes and failures [of government], to move Heaven and Earth, and to excite spiritual Beings to action, there is no readier instrument than poetry.)

Regarding this passage, the commentary *Mao Shi zhenyi* 毛詩正義 by the early-Tang literati Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) states that “Poetry expresses the thoughts of the people, and music sings the poetry of the people; therefore, the goodness or badness of the politics of an age is manifested in musical pieces”², thereby indicating that the goodness or badness of politics in a given age is reflected in the poetry of the people.

Moreover, in explaining the previously cited passage of the Great Preface, Kong Yingda adduces concrete examples from within the *Shijing*: the corresponding passages from the *zhenyi* for items (1) – (9) in the above-cited section of the Great Preface are as follows³.

¹ Legge, 1960, p.34

² The text of *Mao Shi zhenyi* is based on Ruan Yuan (1989, p. 564). The English translation was prepared with reference to Okamura (1986, p. 128).

³ The text of *Mao Shi zhenyi* is based on Ruan Yuan (1989, p. 564). The English translation was prepared with reference to Okamura (1986, p. 127,128) and Legge (1960).

(1) 良相云、百室盈止、婦子寧止、安之極也。

(That *Liang si* states “Those hundred houses being full, The wives and children have a feeling of repose”⁴, indicates the utmost state of peacefulness.)

(2) 湛露云、厭厭夜飲、不醉無歸、樂之極也。

(That *Zhan lu* states “Happily and long into the night we drink; —Till all are drunk, there is no retiring”⁵, indicates an extreme state of enjoyment.)

(3) 天保云、民之質矣、日用飲食、是其政和也。

(That *Tian bao* states “The people are simple and honest, Daily enjoying their meat and drink”⁶, refers to the actual condition in which political governance is well ordered.)

(4) 蓼莪云、民莫不穀、我獨何害、怨之至也。

(That *Liao e* states “People all are happy; —Why am I alone thus miserable? ”⁷, indicates an extreme degree of resentment.)

(5) 巷伯云、取彼譖人、投畀豺虎、怒之甚也。

(That *Xiang bo* states “I would take those slanderers, and throw them to wolves and tigers”⁸, indicates an extremely intense expression of anger.)

(6) 十月云、徹我牆屋、田卒汙萊、是其政乖也。

(That *Shiyue* states “He has removed our walls and roofs, And our fields are all either a marsh or a moor”⁹, indicates the concrete reality of a disordered political condition.)

(7) 苕之華云、知我如此、不如無生、哀之甚也。

(That *Tiao zhi hua* states “If I had known it would be thus with me, I had better not have been born”¹⁰, refers to an extremely intense expression of sorrow.)

(8) 大東云、瞻言顧之、漣焉出涕、思之篤也。

⁴ Legge, 1960, p.605

⁵ Legge, 1960, p.276

⁶ Legge, 1960, p.257

⁷ Legge, 1960, p.352

⁸ Legge, 1960, p.348

⁹ Legge, 1960, p.323

¹⁰ Legge, 1960, p.423

(That *Da dong* states “When I look back and think of it, My tears run down in streams”¹¹, refers to an intense and earnest depth of feeling.)

(9) 正月云、民今之無祿、天夭是椽、是其民困也。

(That *Zheng yue* states “But the people now have no maintenance. For Heaven is Pounding them with its calamities”¹², refers to the actual condition in which the people are suffering.)

With the exception of *Liang si* 良耜, all works listed above are classified under the *Xiaoya* 小雅. According to the “Great Preface” to the *Mao Shi*, poetry can be broadly classified into six categories¹³, and the *Xiaoya* corresponds to the *Ya* among these six classes 六義—the *Feng* 風, the *Fu* 賦, the *Bi* 比, the *Xing* 興, the *Ya* 雅, and the *Song* 頌¹⁴. Moreover, regarding the *Ya*, the Great Preface states “*Ya* means correct. They tell the causes why royal government decays or flourishes. In government there are great matters and small, and hence there are the small *Ya* and the great *Ya*¹⁵”, indicating that the *Ya* is treated as a political designation. From this, it can be said that Kong Yingda, having understood the *Xiaoya* poems of the *Shijing* within a political context, reinforces the previously cited passage from the “Great Preface” of the *Mao Shi* through concrete examples, thereby elucidating the social nature of poetry as something that reflects political conditions and social trends.

3. Poetry and Society in Later Periods

As has already been confirmed through the *Great Preface* of the *Mao Shi* and concrete examples from within the *Shijing*, poetry has been understood as possessing the capacity to reflect social conditions. The idea that poetry mirrors political circumstances and social trends, and can thus serve as a reflection of society, continued to be inherited in later periods.

For example, in the history of Chinese literature, the well-known Tang-dynasty poets Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) and Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846) composed poems that gave voice to the dissatisfaction of the people in response to corrupt social conditions. Such poems are known as *New Yuefu* 新樂府. Although *New Yuefu* gradually declined, the notion that poetry responds to social and political conditions and possesses an allegorical nature became a fundamental principle of Chinese classical poetry.

¹¹ Legge, 1960, p.353

¹² Legge, 1960, p.320

¹³ Ruan Yuan, 1989, p. 565

¹⁴ Ruan Yuan, 1989, p. 568

¹⁵ Legge, 1960, p.36

To say that poetry has the capacity of reflecting social conditions also implies, conversely, that poets are able to express the state of society through their own poetry and to convey their views to those in power through poetic expression. This aspect as well was inherited by later poets. Here, I would like to examine how poetic terms found in the *Shijing* were employed in later poetry.

3.1. "wolves and tigers" 「豺虎」

The earliest example of the term “wolves and tigers” can be found in "*Xiang bo*" 巷伯, a poem included in the *Xiaoya* 小雅 section of the *Shijing*. The relevant passage is as follows.

彼譖人者、誰適與謀。取彼譖人、投畀豺虎。豺虎不食、投畀有北。有北不受、投畀有昊。

(Those slanderers! Who devised their schemes for them? I would take those slanderers, And throw them to wolves and tigers. If these refused to devour them, I would cast them into the north. If the north refused to receive them, I would throw them into the hands of great [Heaven] .)¹⁶

Xiang bo is one of the ten poems that constitute the *Jie Nanshan zhi shi* 節南山之什, all of which are said to be “sharp satirical songs composed by scholar-officials who, living in a time of disorder, grieve over and resent the state of the world.¹⁷” The *Poem Preface* (*xiaoxu* 小序) attached to this poem states, “*Xiang bo* satirizes King You. A eunuch, injured by slander, therefore composed this poem”¹⁸, while the *Shi ji zhuan* 詩集傳 records, “At the time, there was a person who, having encountered slander and been subjected to castration, became a *xiangbo* and composed this poem”¹⁹. Although the objects of interpretation differ, both commentaries agree that the poem expresses anger at having suffered from slander.

In this poem, “wolves and tigers” is depicted as a ferocious wild beast to which evildoers should be fed, and in Kong Yingda’s *zhenyi* it is explained as “That wolves and tigers devour humans, and that the cold regions freeze things, are not actions carried out with discrimination. Therefore, to say that they do not devour or accept them indicates that the degree of evil is exceedingly severe”²⁰. In other words, although “wolves and tigers” originally refers to a fierce beast that devours humans without distinguishing between good and evil, it is used here to

¹⁶ Legge, 1960, p.348

¹⁷ Mekada, 1991, p. 99

¹⁸ The text of *xiaoxu* is based on Ruan Yuan (1989, p. 978).

¹⁹ The text of the *Shi ji zhuan* is based on *Shi ji zhuan* (compiled by Zhu Xi; ed. Zhao Changzheng, 2017), p.224.

²⁰ The text of *Mao Shi zhenyi* is based on Ruan Yuan (1989, p. 979).

express the extreme hatred toward slanderers—that is, evildoers—by suggesting that they are so detestable that even such “wolves and tigers” would refuse to consume them.

This poetic expression, “wolves and tigers,” can also be found in later works. As relatively early examples of its usage, I would like to cite the following poems²¹.

"Two Poems on the Seven Sorrows 七哀詩二首" No. 2 by Wang Zhongxuan 王仲宣
西京亂無象 The western capital Chang'an is thrown into chaos and disorder
豺虎方遘患 Wolves and tigers—evil men—lie in wait, poised to unleash disaster

"Two Poems on the Seven Sorrows 七哀詩二首" No. 1 by Zhang Zai 張載
季世喪亂起 At the end of the Later Han, the realm fell into turmoil
賊盜如豺虎 Rebels and bandits raged like wolves and tigers

Both of these poems are included in the “Aishang” 哀傷 section of volume 23 of the *Wen xuan* 文選, and they depict a world in turmoil at the end of the Later Han 後漢, in which vicious individuals run rampant. In the annotation by Li Shan 李善 (?–690) attached to Wang Zhongxuan’s poem cited above, a passage from the “Xu zhuan” 叙傳, the lower part of 70 of the *Han shu* 漢書—“Seizing control of states and contending for power, they in turn become wolves and tigers”—is quoted. Considering that this phrase is used together with the character “disorder” 亂, which indicates social disorder, it can be said that “wolves and tigers” here functions as a metaphor for fierce and wicked individuals. By contrast, in the earlier case of “*Xiang bo*” from the *Shijing*, “wolves and tigers” were employed merely as representative images of ferocious animals, with moral evil attributed solely to the slanderers themselves. In these later examples, however, “wolves and tigers” has itself become a poetic expression endowed with allegorical significance, a development that is particularly noteworthy.

Moreover, when one surveys other occurrences of the term and motif “wolves and tigers,” it becomes apparent that they are relatively often used together with words such as “disorder” and “warfare” 兵, suggesting that they function within a broader context of social turmoil. This tendency can also be observed in the following poem by Du Fu²².

"On Departing Langzhou 閬州" by Du Fu
前有毒蛇後猛虎

²¹ The Chinese text follows Liu Yuejin (Ed.) and Xu Hua (Rev.), *Wenxuan jiu zhu jicun*, p. 4340-4348. The English translation was prepared with reference to Uchida Izunosuke and Ami Yuji, *Shinshaku Kanbun Taikei*, vol. 14, p. 227–233.

²² For the cited text and the English translation, I consulted Shimoda and Matsubara (Eds.), *Du Fu quan shi yizhu*, vol. 2, p. 684. The Japanese translation of the relevant poem is by Kato Satoshi.

(Before me lie venomous snakes, behind me prowl fierce tigers.)

溪行盡日無村塢

(After a whole day moving through mountain streams, no village where people dwell comes into sight.)

江風蕭蕭雲拂地

(Cold and desolate is the wind that crosses the river, clouds hang low, sweeping close to the earth.)

山木慘慘天欲雨

(The mountain woods grow dim; rain seems ready to fall.)

女病妻憂歸意急

(With my daughter ill and my wife weighed down by worry, my heart urges me to hasten back.)

秋花錦石誰能數

(How can I pause to count autumn flowers or patterned stones on the road home?)

別家三月一書來

(Three months have passed since I left my home—at last, a single letter has come from my family.)

避地何時免愁苦

(When, at last, will I escape the suffering of this life in flight?)

In this poem, the expression “wolves and tigers” does not appear; however, the “fierce tiger” 猛虎 in the first line likewise denotes a ferocious beast, and in this respect the usage can be regarded as comparable. When we consult the *Commentaries of the Nine Schools* (Jiujia zhu 九家注) regarding this line in Du Fu’s poem, it states: “At that time, bandits were rampant throughout the land, official labor obligations and levies were heavy, and the people could not live in peace”²³. In other words, the depiction in the opening line of being surrounded before and behind by ferocious beasts is interpreted as an allegorical expression that intimates a situation in which evildoers were rampant and the people was unable to live in security²⁴.

²³ For a discussion of this point, see Shimoda and Matsubara’s commentary, *Du Fu quan shi yizhu* (vol. 2, p. 685). The relevant annotation can be found in *Jiujia zhu* (vol.9), included in the *Wenyuan Pavilion Siku Quanshu* edition.

²⁴ Incidentally, in “Twenty-one Poems on the *Li Ling lu bie* 李陵錄別詩二十一首”, poem no. 9—generally regarded as a work from the period after the Eastern Han—there also appears the line, “豺狼鳴後園、虎豹步前庭” (“Wolves howl in the rear garden; tigers and leopards pace the front courtyard”)[Lu, 1983, p. 339]. In depicting a situation in which one is surrounded on all sides by ferocious beasts such as jackals and tigers amid an age of warfare and displacement, this poem shares a clear affinity with the Du Fu poem discussed above.

Moreover, as a work that takes into account the first line of the Du Fu poem cited above, one may also point to the following poem by Wang Yuyang 王漁洋(1634–1711) of the late Ming–early Qing 清 period²⁵.

"A Short Poem on Arriving at Huangba 黃壩 Post Station at Night" by Wang Yuyang

氏道森沉十日雨

(The Di Road is thick with trees and dim with shade, for ten long days the rain has continued to fall.)

石林冥冥斷行旅

(Steep rocks crowd together and rise in jagged ranks, the darkness all around makes passage hard.)

洪濤殷地四山動

(Raging currents thunder against the ground, the surrounding mountains quake on every side,)

百折盤渦噤難語

(layer upon layer of swirling eddies twist, leaving the mouth involuntarily agape.)

前有蝮蛇後豺虎

(Before me are venomous serpents, behind me wolves and tigers,)

紅鶴哀號奮毛羽

(ibises cry mournfully, their feathers trembling.)

吾生胡為狎此曹

(Why did I ever draw myself so close to such danger,)

命輕如毛爭一縷

(when life is as light as a single thread?)

妻孥飄泊寄京國

(My wife and child wander, lodging in the capital,)

欲歸不歸在何所

(Longing to return, yet unable to do so—where does this journey lead?)

鄉關迴首四千里

(Turning back toward my native land, I see it lies four thousand away,)

縱有苦辛誰告汝

(Even if there is suffering and hardship, who will ever tell you of it?)

This poem was composed by Wang Yuyang at Huangba Post Station, in what is now Hanzhong 漢中, Shaanxi 陝西 Province, when he was traveling to Sichuan 四川 to take the provincial examination in the eleventh year of the Kangxi 康熙 reign. It depicts the harshness of

²⁵ The Chinese text follows *Yuyang jinghua lu jishi* (ed. Li Yufu, Mou Tong, and Li Maosu), p. 821.

nighttime travel in the Shu 蜀 region, separation from family and hometown, and the melancholy of journeying. In Hui Dong 惠棟 (1697–1758)’s annotation to the fifth line, the first line of the Du Fu poem cited above is quoted; in light of this, the phrase “wolves and tigers” here may therefore be interpreted as carrying an allegorical meaning rather than functioning solely as a description of the landscape.

Thus, as shown above, at the stage of the *Xiangbo* poem in the *Shijing*, the poetic term and motif “wolves and tigers” are employed to depict ferocious beasts appropriate to the setting surrounding evildoers, and at that point the term itself does not yet possess an allegorical meaning. In later periods, however, the poetic term and motif “wolves and tigers” come to be used as elements that themselves carry allegorical significance.

3.2. "bamboo" 「竹」

Next, this article turns to an examination of the usage of the term and motif “bamboo.” It first considers the poem “*Sigan* 斯干” from the *Xiaoya* section of the *Shijing*²⁶.

秩秩斯干、幽幽南山。如竹苞矣、如松茂矣。兄及弟矣、式相好矣、無相猶矣。
(By the graceful sweep of these banks, With the southern hill, so calm in the distance, [Has the palace arisen] , firm as the roots of a clump of bamboos, [With its roof] like the luxuriant head of a pine tree. May the brothers [here] Be loving among themselves, And have no schemings against one another!)

The poem is accompanied by The *Poem Preface* (*xiaoxu*), which states that “King Xuan 宣王 built a new palace”²⁷, while the *Shi ji zhuan* explains that “a palace was constructed and completed, and a banquet was held to consecrate it; therefore, the event was sung of”²⁸. Although the two commentaries differ as to whether the subject is explicitly identified as King Xuan, the poem is generally interpreted as a song of blessing celebrating the completion of a new residence²⁹.

In the poem “*Si gan*”, Zheng Xuan 鄭玄(127–200)’s commentary states that “The abundance and prosperity of the people at that time are described as being like bamboo shoots growing successively from the roots, and their fine and admirable condition is expressed as being like pines and cypresses growing freely and luxuriantly”³⁰. According to this interpretation,

²⁶ Legge, 1960, p.303–304

²⁷ The text of *xiaoxu* is based on Ruan Yuan (1989, p. 933).

²⁸ The text of the *Shi ji zhuan* is based on *Shi ji zhuan* (compiled by Zhu Xi; ed. Zhao Changzheng, 2017), p.195.

²⁹ Mekada,1991, p. 93

³⁰ The text of Zheng Xuan 鄭玄(127–200)’s commentary is based on Ruan Yuan (1989, p. 934).

“bamboo” signifies a populous citizenry—that is, a state in a favorable and well-ordered condition.

In considering this interpretation of “bamboo,” I will examine the following poem by Du Fu³¹.

"Five Poems Written on the Way to the Thatched Cottage in Chengdu 成都, First Sent to Lord Yan Zheng 嚴鄭公" No.4 by Du Fu.

常苦沙崩損藥欄

(At the thatched hall, I have long suffered as sandy embankments collapse and the fences of the herb garden fall into disrepair.)

也從江檻落風湍

(And the balustrade facing the river is left as it is, though fierce, wind-driven waves strike against it.)

新松恨不高千尺

(The pines may be growing, yet sadly they will never reach a thousand.)

惡竹應須斬萬竿

(The evil bamboo has grown too thick—surely ten thousand stalks must be cut away.)

生理祇憑黃閣老

(With no choice, I must depend on a minister of the Huang Pavilion for my livelihood.)

衰顏欲付紫金丹

(And entrust this withered face to the elixir of immortality, the Purple-Gold Pill.)

三年奔走空皮骨

(After three years of flight, I return in vain, reduced to skin and bone.)

信有人間行路難

(Indeed, to live out one’s life in this world is truly difficult.)

With regard to the third and fourth lines of this poem, the Qing-dynasty literati Shen Deqian 沈德潛(1673–1769) writes in *Dushi pingchao* 杜詩評鈔 that “there is an implicit intention to

³¹ For the cited text and the English translation, I consulted Shimoda and Matsubara (Eds.), *Du Fu quan shi yizhu*, vol. 2, p. 776. The Japanese translation of the relevant Du Fu poem is by Koike Ichiro.

support the worthy and restrain the corrupt”³². Here, as in the *Shijing* poem “Sigan”, “bamboo” is used in parallel with pine, but it is not simply bamboo; rather, it is described as “evil bamboo.” This conveys a situation in which the proliferation of wicked people obstructs the “pine,” that is, upright and decent individuals. In other words, whereas in the *Shijing* poem “Sigan” bamboo was interpreted as representing a favorable condition of the state—namely, the prosperity of the people—Du Fu employs “bamboo” to signify the spread of corrupt individuals. In classical Chinese poetry, examples in which bamboo—an image that generally carries positive connotations—is described explicitly as “evil bamboo” appear, as far as I am aware, to be no earlier than the Du Fu poem discussed above.

Thus, there are also cases in which poetic words or motifs that, at the stage of the *Shijing*, represented favorable conditions of society are employed by later poets as terms possessing an allegorical function to express negative or unfavorable conditions.

4. Conclusion

In the foregoing, starting from the principle articulated in the “Great Preface” of the *Mao Shi*—namely, that poetry reflects the conditions of society and politics—I have examined how this characteristic was transmitted to later poetry. There are cases, such as that of *wolves and tigers*, in which words or motifs that initially referred merely to elements surrounding evildoers came, in later usage, to be employed as allegorical terms directly representing evildoers themselves; and there are also cases, such as that of *bamboo*, in which the same motif is used allegorically while signifying entirely different conditions. While it is only natural that poetic diction already imbued with allegorical meaning should be inherited as such, it is particularly noteworthy that terms which originally lacked allegorical force in themselves later came to acquire allegorical significance, or that the situations they imply came to differ entirely. Perhaps because the influence of the “Great Preface” of the *Mao Shi* has been so strong, the language of the *Shijing* has traditionally tended to be interpreted wholesale in terms of allegory, and individual lexical usages have not always been examined with sufficient care. Rather than loosely treating the vocabulary of poems that express allegory in the *Shijing* as continuously equivalent to that of later periods, it is necessary to attend carefully to the specific character of individual words. This article represents one attempt to clarify that point.

Now, just as the *New Yuefu* gradually declined because of its overtly political assertions, the tendency to read excessive political meaning into poetry also became a target of criticism. However, what deserves attention here is the mode of Chinese classical poetry in which poems

³² The relevant passage can be found in *Dushi pingchao*, vol.4.

are born out of people's lived activities within society, reflect social and political conditions, and in turn help to shape society itself. Even in considering the "meanings beyond the words" that appear in Shen Deqian's critical remarks discussed in this study, reading poems with the allegorical nature of poetry in mind can be seen as a useful approach. In particular, when interpreting works produced in periods in which authors were likely constrained—by historical or political circumstances—from stating their views explicitly, attempting to grasp such "meanings beyond the words" by taking into account the hermeneutical framework of the *poetry prefaces (shixu)*, which themselves sought to uncover implicit meanings, may provide valuable assistance in understanding these works.

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Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

In this paper, generative AI and AI-assisted technologies (ChatGPT, version 5.2) were used to assist with translation from Japanese and Chinese into English.

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Contact email: u530533j@ecs.osaka-u.ac.jp