

# Review on *Anthology of Song Ci*

Ruoxi Li

Journal Editorial Department, Sichuan University of Arts and Science, Dazhou, China

Email: 66523362@qq.com

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## Abstract

The *Anthology of Song Ci* by Hu Yunyi is the first choice for the beginners of Song Ci. For long time, scholars have been controversial about *Anthology of Song Ci* annotated by Hu Yunyi. Some pointed out the limitation of the book, thinking that Hu Yunyi's review on the selected works is dogmatic, rigid and subjective, while others deem that the selected Ci in this book is full of literary merit and easy to understand. They regard it as the endorsement of Song Ci. In this thesis, the *Anthology of Song Ci* will be evaluated from three aspects, the overall value, shortcomings and advantages in order to reveal its real value, so as to help the beginners of Song Ci to understand and appreciate *Anthology of Song Ci*.

## Keywords

*Anthology of Song Ci*, Song Ci, Advantages, Limitation, Hu Yiyun, Review

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## 1. Introduction

The Ci works in the *Anthology of Song Ci* were chosen by Hu Yunyi and he added his annotations. The selected edition of the book in this thesis was published by Shanghai Classics Publishing House and it was remastered by Hubei People's Press in March, 1978. At present, the research articles related to the *Anthology of Song Ci* mainly includes Wan Yunjun's "On the Evaluation of the Graceful School and the Bold School of Song Ci and the Comment on the *Anthology of Song Ci*" and "The Evaluation of *Anthology of Song Ci* by Hu Yunyi" (Wan, 1979) (Wan, 1980). The two theses are basically of critical attitude and they are the earlier research results about the *Anthology of Song Ci*. Since then, Zeng Daxing published the article "The Contribution of Mr. Hu Yunyi to the Ci-Study" (Zeng, 2006), which introduced Hu Yunyi's ideology and his contribution to the study of Ci poetry in detail. This article is mainly of affirmative and praised attitude towards the *Anthology of Song Ci*. After that, the related re-

search on the book has gradually increased. The master's theses mainly include "Theory Feature and Contribution of Hu Yunyi's Ci-Study" by Chen Lili and Li Zhujun's "Study on the School of Ci Poets for Sao-Style Elegance in the Commentary View of the Ci of the Republic of China" (Chen, 2008) (Li, 2016). The doctoral dissertation principally includes Xu Jufang's "On the Significant Anthologies of Tang-Song Ci since the Republic of China" (Xu, 2012). The above studies all involve Hu Yunyi's *Anthology of Song Ci*, but this is not the whole study. This book is only a small part of these researches. The objective and fair evaluation and analysis of Hu Yunyi's *Anthology of Song Ci* can not only restore its own value, but also do help to the researchers. It also helps the beginners to have better understanding of the *Anthology of Song Ci*, and make more achievement with less effort. *Anthology of Song Ci*, a reference book for the beginners of Song Ci, is of great importance to the researcher of Song Ci, because this book's objective review can help those researchers to understand and appreciate *Anthology of Song Ci* better.

## 2. The General Comment on *Anthology of Song Ci*

*The Anthology of Song Ci* has long time been a controversial collection of Song Ci. On the whole, most of the selected works in this book are representative, and emphasizing the unity of the ideological and artistic quality is the principle for Ci selecting of this book. Most of the chosen creations in this book are classic works of their writers, which represent the author's overall style. Then the works of different styles of the same Ci writer are also included. So the collection is relatively reasonable and comprehensive, which is worthy of affirmation. But the author, Hu Yunyi, only takes Marxist philosophy as the criterion of his criticism on these Ci, which seems strained in some way. If we ossify the Marxist philosophy and directly add it to the Ci evaluation, it will be biased. But the historical limitations also matters, we should try to understand the environment of the author's time. We can choose the traditional Chinese writing theories as the standard of Ci evaluation, such as Qing Jing Jiao Rong (it refers to the expressing of feeling and the depicting of environment is happily blended) and Xu Shi Xiang Sheng (it is the feature of artistic conception. It refers to the virtual part and the reality are in mutual complement).

Virtual part is an imagined space triggered by the reality (Reality the root of virtual space while the virtual part is the ideal model for reality). It would be better.

The preface of this book divides the Song Ci from origin to development into four parts: the Tang and Five Dynasties, the Northern Song Dynasty, the Southern Song Dynasty and the Southern Song Dynasty, which forms a clear development context as a whole. It introduces all the writers who have made great contribution to the development of Ci as it is almost a brief history of Song Ci. In addition, it is of great academic value and can help readers to clear their minds. At the same time, in the introduction of the Ci writers, the development of a cer-

tain style of Ci is summarized. The preface of the book lists some writers, such as Liu Yong, Qin Guan, Zhou Bangyan. The features of their writing lie in Ge Lv Hua (Ge Lv is an intensive collection of the beautiful form and thought-provoking content of Chinese classical poetry. In terms of form, it pays more attention to the beauty of the rhyme and Antithesis, resulting the standards and requirements. It involves many disciplines such as Chinese stylistics, phonology, lexicology, musicology, etc. It is the product of the Chinese ancients' high attention to formal beauty) and they are masters at the art of creating Ci. The production of Ci is closely related to music. Yan Yue, a newly produced music in the Tang Dynasty (Yan Yue is a dance music for entertainment and enjoyment in the banquet of the court from Sui and Tang Dynasties to the Song Dynasty, which is artistic and also known as the music for banquet) provides a fertile soil for the production of the Ci. It also produces Qu Zi Ci and Ci is the abbreviation of this emerging lyrics. Min Jian Ci (part of the Dun Huang Ci, it is the Ci the Tang and Five Dynasties found in the Tibetan Buddhist Scriptures (known as Dunhuang Stone Chamber) in the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, Gansu Province in the late Qing Dynasty (1900). It was written in the 8th - 10th centuries. Most of them are works of anonymous, including some folk creations. There are also very few creations of literati that can identify who the authors are. They are important material for the origin and development of the research of Ci) is mentioned in the preface (Hu, 1987) 1 as well. It provides the overall appearance of the Ci development and provides the readers with a clear route of the Ci. However, since the poetry of Tang Dynasty is mentioned, especially the Ci in the Tang and Five Dynasties, they are not included in this anthology. It is a regret. All the classic works are collected but the Ci of Tang and Five Dynasties are missing. This deficiency is like a well-dressed man with his face missed, making us feel weird. If we look at the macroscopic context of the development of the Ci, we will expand the selection into the "Anthology of Tang and Song Poetry". It will be more complete in the reflection of the overall development of Ci.

### 3. The Highlights of Anthology of the Song Ci

In the introduction of *Anthology of the Song Ci*, it summarizes the main style of the Ci of the poets, and the poets with various styles are listed, especially those who have made outstanding contributions to the development of the Ci. They are introduced at length, such as Xin Qiji and other famous poets. At the same time, it also explains the masters who have made great contribution to the Ci, such as Liu Yong's development of the Ci with gracious style and the richness of the lyrics, Su Shi's improvement of the status of the Ci and the writing skill of the Ci with poetic style, Xin Qiji's writing technique of the Ci with transferred article writing methods and the development of the artistic conception of Ci. The readers can have a holistic understanding before appreciating the specific works to avoid blindness when reading the works and they can understand them with less effort. It would be better to introduce the theory of "Bie Shi Yi Jia" (it

shows that the Ci is an independent literary form which is different from article and poetry). In the introduction, Hu Yunyi also pointed out the advantages and disadvantages of the creation of Ci, and enumerated the well-known comments of previous researchers (those who had studied Ci before), which provided readers with sufficient reference and broadened their horizons.

The *Anthology of Song Ci* provided a detailed explanation of the allusion, especially the well-known historical characters, social regulations and the legends. We can exemplify that the Taiping Yulan time series quoted the “plum blossom mask” from “The Book of the Five Elements” (Hu, 1987), the 29 “Yiwen Collection: Bird Department” quoted the “Ji Chuang” from “You Ming Lu” and the quotation “Xian Ren Yu Lu” in the 40 “San Fu Story” (Hu, 1987). For the uncommon allusions, the book has detailed annotations, most of which can be found in the explanation of the Ci of the Later Song Dynasty. It also has clear explanation in the quotation of previous literati, such as the sentence in Du Fu’s work “A Poem to Vice Grand Counselor in Chief with 22 Rhymes”, “Facing the given leftovers and left wine, I sighed that how rough my life is”, is the reference of Yan Shu’s sentence “Having the leftovers and left wine, I have my soul burned” in the “Willow by the Pavilion. A Singer in the West of Shaanxi”. Ou Yangxiu’s creation “Her eyebrows penciled with beautiful line that they naturally vanished by the temples” in his “A Southern Song-Golden Ribboned Hair” is a transferring of Zhu Qingyu’s work, “To an Examiner on the Eve of Examination”. Liu Yong consulted the Ci of Xie Tiao, Wen Tingyun and created his sentence “For many times I mistook the passing ship on the skyline for my coming beloved” in the “Gan Zhou Lyrics” (Hu, 1987). The explanation can help readers understand the creations. Unlike some collections of Ci which have a general interpretation of the Ci without the explanation of specific words, phrases and allusions, the *Anthology of Song Ci* retained the unique charm of the Ci. One reads those collections as one is chewing wax. However, the *Anthology of Song Ci* sometimes also explains the simple words and tries to be popular, which is not necessary.

In the annotation of the Ci, this book has a record of the interpretations of the predecessors, and they are not limited to the words of one litterateur. Instead, they strive to maintain the original meaning of the Ci and try to make the readers close to the creations, restore the word, and make the readers have their own understanding. So the readers feel the Ci poetic imagery that can not be expressed by words.

In the *Anthology of Song Ci*, most of the selected works have a summary, conciseness and accuracy. It has a new introduction of the evaluation of the predecessors and pointed out whether the creations are overrated. All kinds of evaluations of predecessors are included, such as the “A Twig of Blossoms. Fragrant Lotus Blooms Fade, Autumn Chill Mat of Jade” by Li Qingzhao (Hu, 1987). As for the Introduction to the writing background, there is the “Song of the Southern Country. When Does the Flickering Moon Rise Again?” by Su Shi (Hu, 1987). The contentious annotation of words are also listed, such as Zhao

Ji's sentence "He Meng Ye Xin Lai Bu Zuo" in his "Hillside Pavilion. Well-Cut Silk of Ice-White". In this sentence, "Xin Lai" can be written to "You Shi". And in (Hu, 1987) Lu You's "Jiu Tu Yi Yi Qu Feng Hou" of the "Magpie Bridge. Once upon a Good Time in a Gorgeous Light", "Yi Yi" can be written to "Yi Ban" (Hu, 1987). In Xin Qiji's sentence "Lu Zhuan Xi Tou Qiao Hu Jian" of the "The Moon over the West River. Startled by the moonlight, magpie left the branches", the "Qiao" can be written to "Tou" (Hu, 1987). We can find that the author is trying to restore the original form of these selected works.

#### 4. Conclusion

Nothing is perfect in the world, so is book. This book is no exception. Driven by the idea of "patriotism first", Hu Yunyi chose some works that express the suffering of social upheaval in earlier Song Dynasty and the depression of inability to serve the country, and these works are created by anonymous authors. Only the work "Zhang Jiujun" with nameless litterateur is the imitation of folk songs. At the same time, it seems that he overestimated the status of the Ci in early Southern Song Dynasty and selected some works of class struggle instead of classics. He highly praised those works and it is obvious that he influenced a lot by ideology. As for Xin Qiji and litterateurs of the poetic school of Xin Qiji, he paid much attention to them and the content of their works instead of forms, Ge Lv and techniques when selecting. It is hard for us to agree with that. In addition, he regarded the spirit of freedom and being free of earthly cares in the works as negative thoughts. On the contrary, for the Ci creations with patriotic thoughts, almost all of them are selected, which is quite disappointing.

However, because this book has published for long time, it was inevitable that the book was affected by the ideological thoughts of the literary and art circles at that time. Under the specific historical conditions, Hu Yunyi, under the cover of words in line with the mainstream of his times, subtly introduce the beauty of Song Ci to many classical literature lovers. At the end, the author wants to express his respect to the academic achievements of Mr. Hu Yunyi.

#### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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