

Research on the Special Issue of "Poetry of North China"

The Unique Landscape of Inner Mongolian Poetic Circle in the 1980s

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Abstract—Contemporary poetry creation in Inner Mongolia is an extremely important part of Inner Mongolian literary creation. This paper takes the 10 special issues of "Poetry of North China" published by "Grassland, an Inner Mongolia Provincial Literature Journal, from 1986 to 1990" as the research object. Through the analysis of its column setting and writer group, it points out that it has played an important role in participating in the tide of contemporary Chinese poetry, promoting the development of Inner Mongolian Poetry and cultivating poets.

Keywords—"Grassland"; "Poetry of North China"; special issue; Inner Mongolia Poetry Circle

I. INTRODUCTION

Inner Mongolia contemporary poetry creation is an extremely important part of Inner Mongolia literature creation. National flavor and modern flavor coexist in the Inner Mongolia contemporary poetry. There are both minority poets and Han poets. New poets will come to the fore, and develop a strong team with outstanding achievements. These achievements are inseparable from the literary journal "Grassland", which as a provincial literary journal in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, has made great contributions to the cultivation of writers, the promotion of literary works and the prosperity of literature in the Autonomous Region. In the late 1980s, one of the greatest features of "Grassland" was the emergence of a special issue of "Poetry of North China" and the resulting upsurge in poetry creation. During the five years from 1986 to 1990, "Grassland" published 10 special issues of "Poetry of North China"; meanwhile, "Grassland" held two sessions of poetry contest of "Poetry North of China — Star of North China" in 1987 and 1990. These measures greatly promoted the development and prosperity of poetry, trained and strengthened the poem creators, and made the poem creation of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region appear an unprecedented development climax in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

II. COLUMN SETTING OF "POETRY OF NORTH CHINA"

In January 1986, "Grassland" published "Notice to Readers that the monthly literary magazine 'Grassland' will

issue 'Poetry of North China'". In this announcement, the Editorial Department recommended "Poetry of North China" (A Special Issue of Poetry) in an enthusiastic tone. "The column of poetry gathers new poems of new and senior poets both inside and outside the region and shows the brilliant demeanors of many schools in contemporary Chinese poetry circle. It not only shows the unique charm of Inner Mongolia, but also reveals the overall consistency and tacit understanding with the national poetry circle. It is dignified, thick, unique and novel. It has a profound thinking about history and reality, and a eulogy of passion for life and love. A hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend. The cast is big. The strength is strong. They are full of modern atmosphere and magnificence!" [1] It is believed that its appearance "will make the Chinese poetry circle look at Inner Mongolia with great interest". In February 1986, "Grassland" published its first special issue — "Poetry of North China I" since the second issue of "Poetry of North China". It collected 114 poems by 58 writers, including 5 suite poems, 1 poem drama, 1 translated poem, 37 prose poems and 70 others. The special issue of February, 1986 in "Grassland" — "Poetry of North China I" divided the poems into eight columns, "the sun of the plateau", "man and nature", "the wind of the north and the south", "love poems", "new songs of Shele", "prose poems", "winding space-time" and "translated poems" according to the theme and ideological content. The eight columns not only make the form neat and beautiful, but also make the content easier for readers to read and grasp. This arrangement method has been used and enriched in the later "Poetry of North China".

Following the February issue, the issue of September 1986 "Grassland" carried forward "the spirit of exploring, experimenting and pioneering". In line with the principle of "seeking purity, truth, novelty and beauty", it again issued a notice that "Grassland" will continue to release "Poetry of North China": "After the issue of February, 'Grassland' will release the tenth issue of "Poetry of North China". It will lead the trend and explore all unique works, so that poetry can really open up a new world for the spiritual field of human beings." [2] "Poetry of North China II", the issue of October 1986 in "Grassland", is a collection of works of 77 poets, including Chang Yao, Ru Fu, An Mi, Sha Lei, Lin

Mang, Dao Zi, Xi Chuan, Liao Yiwu, Che Qianzi and Shen Tianhong, as well as a number of new works of new poets who want to be famous by it. Four columns, "beautiful mountain and river", "urban symphony", "stars" and "theory", are of diverse themes and colorful contents, which provided a stage for young writers to publish their works. After the two special poetry issues, respectively in Feb. 1986 and Oct. 1986, the poetry pages of "Grassland" in 1987 compiled and distributed four volumes of "Poetry of North China". It is quarterly, respectively published in February, May, August and November. Distinctively, "Poetry of North China" was divided into four volumes according to the time and season: spring, summer, autumn and winter. In "Poetry of North China III", newly add two poetry columns "Towers and Butterflies" and "Face the Contemporary Era" in the volume of "Spring" (the second issue of 1987). In "Face the Contemporary Era", Jia Man's "Anger of The Yellow River" is full of grief and passion. Lin Ran's suite poem "Summer, Love of North China" has become the masterpiece of love poems.

Three new poem columns, "Hada and Rainbow", "Mountain & Flowing Water", "Prose and Reportage", were added to the volume of "Summer" in "Poetry of North China IV" (No. 5, 1987). The theme of poems and the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region reflected each other well. Poems such as Buhe's "Fourteen Poems" and "My Praise" by Yang Zhilin, Han Yanru's "Inner Mongolia is a treasure trough", Bai Chaorong's "Grassland is a Dream", were created to praise Inner Mongolia and eulogize the new life in the grassland. The volume of "Autumn", "Poetry of North China V" (No. 8, 1987) added three new poetry columns, "Narrative Poetry", "Old Style Poetry" and "Autumn Pottery" and planned to organize a poetry contest, issuing a notice that the magazine would host the Star of North China Poetry Competition, which would have special prizes and first, second and third prizes. The work was published in the special issue, and all the awardees were certified. At the same time, it was decided to release "the Special Issue of Award-winning Works in North China Poetry Competition". Following the volume of "Winter", "Poetry of North China VI", the third issue of 1988, "Poetry of North China VII" published "the Award List of Star of North China Poetry Competition". Naturally, "Poetry of North China VII" became the special issue of completion works in "Star of North China" in 1988. Among them, Bing Lan's "Snow", Zhang Tiannan's "Water Ballad" and Menggen Gaole's "Death of the Hunter" were among the list of award-winning works. The holding of the "Star of North China" Poetry Competition contributed to an unprecedented large-scale poetry convention and played an important role in the development of poetry in the autonomous region.

It is worth noting that since the issue of "Poetry of North China VIII" (the seventh issue of "Grassland" in 1989), the editorial work of "Grassland" has changed greatly. The influential poem issue of "Poetry of North China" has been changed to "Kan Zhong Kan". With the publication of each issue of "Grassland", it was mainly used to publish the award-winning works in "Star of North China" Poetry Competition. It also showed that the influence of "Poetry of

North China" was cooling down. From the eighth issue of "Grassland" in 1989 to the ninth issue of "Grassland" in 1990, the special issue of "Poetry of North China" was cancelled, and poetry was published in the form of "Kan Zhong Kan" instead. It was not until the tenth issue of 1990 that it appeared again as "the Special Issue of Award-winning Works in Star of North China in 1990" (i.e. Poetry of North China X). Since then, it has never appeared again. It was transformed from a special poem issue into a poem column in "Grassland". From 1986 to October 1990, it has published 10 special issues in five years. It is self-evident that it has made great achievements. Despite the disappearance of the special issue of "Poetry of North China", it is fortunate that it has not disappeared as a poetry column. It has been continued in the magazine "Grassland". To this day, "Poetry of North China" is still one of the indispensable parts of "Grassland", which is compiled with each issue of "Grassland".

III. AUTHOR GROUP OF "POETRY OF NORTH CHINA"

In the late 1970s, with the end of the Cultural Revolution, a new historical stage appeared in front of the world, and provided the poets with unlimited creative space and freedom. "Poetry creation in Inner Mongolia has stagnated for more than 20 years in this free and open era of youth. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, another climax appeared. People call this climax the revival stage of poetry. Its remarkable sign is that poets who have been silent for more than 20 years, such as Ba Brinbeihe, Ge Fei and An Mi, Jia Man, Zhou Yuming, Han Yanru and Ji Zhengmin have returned to the stage of poetry." [3] Continuing the revival of Inner Mongolian poetic circle in the early 1980s, in the middle and late 1980s, especially in the era of "Poetry of North China", "Grassland", the older generation poets such as Jia Man, Zhou Yuming and Ba Brinbeihe are still the mainstay of the poetry circle. They published many excellent works on the special issue of "Poetry of North China". Poems such as Cheng Zi's "Lonely Dusk", Jia Man's "Anger of the Yellow River", Han Zuorong's "Northern Wilderness" are masterpieces in the Inner Mongolian poetry circle and even in the contemporary Chinese poetry circle.

It was also in the 1980s that "obscure poetry", "New Sensation School" and "Imagism School" once influenced the Chinese poetry world. Especially under the influence of the trend of "obscure poetry", poets of new generation such as Cheng Zi, Chen Guangbin, Zhao Jianxiong, Zhang Kuo, Menggen Gole, Zhang Tiannan, Du Qiaomu, Bai Tao, Yan Bei and Ta Na have entered the poetry stage of the autonomous region. "This generation, just as they bid farewell to their childhood or innocent teenagers, has been involved in the great storm of ten years of catastrophe, grew up in a broken and lost era, experiencing the frenzy, riot, confusion and disappointment of unrest. After waking up from a nightmare in the morning, they began to rethink and examine everything, to make painful and profound discussions, and finally found out the self and the world, the value of human beings and new aesthetics. Thus, they dare to challenge what is natural, traditional and things people are used to. They have entered a new realm in thought and art,

and highlighted their self-expression. They have made multi-level and multi-angle exploration and change in feeling, thinking mode and method, as well as in expression techniques." [4] Politically enlightened and literary and artistic flourishing, the contention of a hundred schools of thought affected the entire Chinese literary arena, and also affected the poetry circle of Inner Mongolia. Under the leadership of a large number of new generation poets, the poetry circle of the autonomous region appeared an unprecedented awakening trend in the late 1980s. This momentum is embodied in the creation of "Poetry of North China" in "Grassland", which is manifested in the dual liberation of the content and form of poetry, the broad and profound theme of poetry, the sincere expression of poetry emotions and the wide application of artistic techniques. Shen Tianhong's suite poem "River under the Sky" presents us with hazy artistic images and philosophical thinking: "bare feet / stepping on / the river for the second time / the waves scorch my feet / memory of no shore / no shore for the first and second time / there are only / the circular eyes of migratory birds". [5] Lin Mang's "Starlight and Tree" leaves us with a bleak emotional experience: "When I spend my leisure / looking for books / I know / I'm not at that age of reading any longer / I'll never turn over 600 pages a day and put them on my desk one by one / I'm reading myself." [6]

In addition to awakening, the life of Inner Mongolian native people with rich national characteristics and their beautiful and magnificent natural features are also topics never exhausted by Inner Mongolian poets in the new era. "The poets chanted the soul of Inner Mongolia with their unique and sincere voice and tried their best to depict the beautiful scenery of their hometown [7], which made the poems present unique and long-lasting national characteristics and local sentiments. Every issue of "Poetry of North China" contains some works of a few poets [8], which reflect the distinct national and regional characteristics of Inner Mongolia. The poet Cheng Zi's suite poem "Are you Going to Gallop or Solidify? My Aoluguya River", the whole poem is divided into "the leisure thinking of the northern forest", "the wedding in Ewenke", "a landscape brought back from the depth of the Xing'anling Mountains", "the time of migration", which shows the life of Aoluguya River panoramically from different angles, but also expresses the poet's love for Ewenke, his anxiety about the disappearance of ethnic culture and his confusion about finding a way out. "Sob of another world / coming from the ancient forest / time / flows backward — along beautiful and melancholy stories / as if in the distant past/ clouds float slowly / with many sorrows ... Pick up your shotgun / go with us / cross one mountain / and then another mountain / go through the forest/ mountains multiply and streams double / streams multiply and mountain double / with deer bells ringing / feel the breath of the blue stars in the distance! My dear Amin, what are you thinking about?" "The poems of Inner Mongolian literature are not mainly based on the profound artistic conception, the implication of emotion or the brilliance of rationality, and not clinging to the strong lust and the revival of poetry creation. The most striking feature is its sincere, simple and natural nature. The poetry beauty of Mongolian literature starts from here, stops here,

and finds its destination from here." [9] In fact, this destination is its real, natural and indelible national and local characteristics. In these poems, the desert plateau, flying sand and rocks, blue sky and eagles, grassland and horses, herdsman and felt houses and other poetry images with national and local characteristics emerge in endlessly. These poems describe the national customs, mountains and rivers, and local feelings from different aspects. While praising and describing the "scenic spots" of the autonomous region, the poets also hold the consciousness of the times and ponder deeply on the history and destiny of the nation.

IV. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF "POETRY OF NORTH CHINA"

"Poetry of North China", as a special poem issue with unique national and local characteristics, is a unique landscape in contemporary poetry circles in Inner Mongolia and has great significance for the development of contemporary poetry in Inner Mongolia.

From the special issue of "Grassland" in February 1986 to that in October 1990, there were totally 10 issues of "Poetry of North China". In just four years, it has successfully published about 1008 poems with the help of "Poetry of North China", which is more than the total number of poems published in the past or present ten years by "Grassland" ("Poetry of North China", as "Kan Zhong Kan", has published about 8 poems in each issue along with "Grassland"). Among these poems, there are 69 suite poems, accounting for more than one fourteenth of all poems. It can be said that the special poem issues of "Poetry of North China" absolutely dominate in the total number of poems. In addition, the compilation and editing of "Poetry of North China" is original and fresh. Each issue of the Poetry Magazine compiles and edits poems according to their themes, forms, ideological contents, schools and poets' regions. It has newly created 36 poetry columns, such as "the sun of the plateau", "urban symphony", "love poems", "new songs of Shele", "translated poems" and "theory". Both in content and form, poetry has been enriched and innovated unprecedentedly. The emergence of "theory" not only enriches the theoretical creation of poetry, but also points out the direction of the development of poetry in the future. In the issue of February 1987, "Grassland" published the article "Response in the Distance — Letters from Readers from Different Regions to Talk about 'Poetry of North China'". Gong Liu, Lin Mang and others expressed their praise for "Poetry of North China". Lin Mang thinks that "Grassland" plays an important role in the rise of the New Poetry Tide in China". Mei Yu, author of "Poetry of China", said "the great wish of 'Lhasa River' shines in your hands". Zhang Xiaobo of the Chinese Department of Shanghai East China Normal University stated that "there are many local journals but no one can rival 'Grassland'". Yan Jiafa, editor of "Star", a magazine of Sichuan Chengdu, spoke that "the poems of 'Grassland' are very distinctive and of pursuit" and "have made great contribution to the prosperity of the poetry world". [10]

In addition to its creative achievements, the unique contribution of "Poetry of North China" is also manifested in

the cultivation of writers, especially the rise of native poets in Inner Mongolia, and its great contribution to the discovery and cultivation of national poets. Most of the poets who were active in "Poetry of North China", at present, still stick to the poetry world and become the backbone of poetry creation in Inner Mongolia. These poets are Bai Tao, Du Qiaomu, Bai Liping, Meng Yuan, Menggen Gole, Cheng Zi, Xing Yuan, Wang Ran, Yin Shuyi, Yi Lete, Zhang Zhongtao, Zhang Tiannan, Yu Xiaoying, Guo Chunfu, Siri Guleng, Wu Yuanqing, Wang Ye, Yan Bei, Nan Yu, Yang Hao, Zhang Gaijuan, Bing Lan, Fang Yanni and so on. Among the more than 1000 poems, there are 122 poems written by Mongolian writers, accounting for more than one eighth of the total number. For example, Mengen Gaole, Bai Tao and Fang Yanni were all prolific poets in the periodical "Grassland" at that time. In addition to the Mongolian poets, there were quite a number of other minority poets appearing in "Poetry of North China", such as Miao poet He Xiaozhu, Manchu poet Ge Fei, Daur poet Su Yong and so on. It can be seen that in the "Poetry of North China" period of "Grassland", the national poets played a decisive role. It is an indispensable force in poetry creation. These works show the unique temperament of Inner Mongolia. They not only reflect on the history and reality, but also eulogize the life and love, as well as the natural things. They are not only deep and broad, but also fresh and elegant. Modern and national flavors coexist. As some commentators have said, "Inner Mongolia native poets and works reflect a kind of "rise". These poets are close to life. Their language is simple and natural. At the same time, they are novel and unique with no affectation and stereotype. They also have a wide range of themes. This is where it is better than "Western Poetry Group". [11]

V. CONCLUSION

Looking back at the special issue of "Poetry of North China" which appeared in the late 1980s, it can be said that the period of "Poetry of North China" is a golden period for the development and harvest of Inner Mongolian poetry. With the expansion of the poet group and the prosperity of poetry creation, it has had extremely beneficial and far-reaching effects in participating in the tide of contemporary Chinese poetry, displaying Inner Mongolian culture, promoting Inner Mongolian poetry, participating in social reform, uniting national forces and promoting social progress. All in all, it has contributed a lot to the development of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and modern and contemporary Chinese poetry circles.

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