

# A Study on Ming Poetry and Prose Teaching With Equal Importance on Knowledge and Emotional Intelligence

Sun Lin

School of Humanities Xi'an University 710065

**Keywords:** Ming poetry and prose; humanistic spirit; noble personality; aesthetic taste

**Abstract.** The teaching of Ming poetry and prose has always been grossly underemphasized. This paper starts with the current situation of Ming poetry and prose teaching and then points out the way to solve the problems, namely, achieving knowledge accumulation by clarifying the frame and context of Ming poetry and prose, and then through the analysis of literary works and their authors, extracting the humanistic spirit and realizing the below 3 aspects: noble personality, true feelings and aesthetic taste. Certainly this teaching choice is based on the current status of the subject and students, and I have managed effective teaching methods. However, more or less there are some problems need to continuously solve through actual teaching practice.

Under the premise of constant compression in curricular hours of ancient Chinese literature, the effective teaching methods and content improving selection of the Ming poetry and prose provide students with spiritual experience in the traditional culture and society, cultivate their positive attitude to life and noble righteous view of life, and ultimately improve the overall quality of each individual. Therefore, how to carry out effective teaching improvement should be explored according to the existing problems in the literature teaching in the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties as well as in Ming poetry and prose teaching.

## Error and Current Status of Ming Poetry and Prose Teaching

### The Error Lies in the Ignorance of its Importance

The teaching of Ming poetry and prose occupies few curricular hours in the teaching of Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties in that most of the teachers focused on the teaching of popular literature. This view originated from the words quoted in *the Opera History of Song and Yuan* by Guowei Wang: "Every generation has its own literature: Tales of Woe in Chu Dynasty, Fu in Han Dynasty, Pianyu (Phrases with parallel structure) in the Sixth Generation Dynasty, Tang poetry, Song Ci and Yuan Qu are the literature of one generation, but all the successors fail to inherit them". After the conclusion of ancient literature researchers, novels of Ming and Qing Dynasties have also become a representative of a generation. Therefore, when teaching the Ming and Qing literature, most of the teachers start from novels to explain the various aspects of the four famous books in detail, using abundant and colorful lessons to discuss, conduct role play, and let students make presentation directly when learning these novels. Therefore, the study of literature in the Ming Dynasty pays more attention to novels, while occasionally taking Ming poetry and prose as a secondary teaching position. There is an error in the teaching of Ming poetry and prose, namely, putting it in a relatively secondary place, ignoring its influence on students' spirit courses, life attitude, and their unique life pattern by the Ming poetry. There are not deep analysis of the development of Chinese national spirit at this stage and separate understanding of the positive emotions brought to the students by Ming poetry as well. What's more, the consequence of this neglect is grievous.

### Current Status of Ming Poetry Teaching

First of all, it shows in the consequence of this uneven emphasis. Because of too much attention to the teaching of the novel and the neglect of the teaching of poetry, it results in the incomplete study of the whole Ming literary history. The whole content of the novels can not represent the whole style of literature in Ming Dynasty, while the poetry, as the representative of traditional literature, can better reflect time spirit of the literati. In particular, the Ming poetry can be divided into three periods: Early period, mid period and late period. Poet group of each period has their own characteristics of their time so as to allow us to understand the society of Ming Dynasty. Therefore,

such obvious unequal treatment in teaching lets students learn but not fully grasp the style and features of Ming literature, thus requiring teachers to solve it.

Secondly, Ming poetry is not really understood and examined. Every era has its own literature, and time and literature can not be copied. For the understanding of Ming society, there shall also be study and understanding of the Ming poetry. At present, the study of Ming poetry apparently don't get enough attention, while most of students majoring in Chinese language and literature are not familiar with famous works of this period and think that the Ming poetry can not be compared with the Tang poetry and Song Ci. They do not even know the famous works and authors. These status also also puts the Ming poetry in an awkward position. It is precisely because of the existence of such problems that the teachers of Yuan, Ming and Qing literature need to further think about the teaching of Ming poetry so as to solve the current problems in teaching.

## **Specific Implementation Methods of the Ming Poetry Teaching**

### **Working out the Context and Frame of Ming Poetry- - the Accumulation of Knowledge**

The Ming Dynasty lasted about 300 years, during which there are a large number of writers and works. First of all, we should ensure that the knowledge framework is comprehensive in our teaching.

#### **The Establishment of the Framework**

Ming poetry can be divided into 3 periods: early period, mid period and late period. Poetry in early period was influenced by the harsh literary limitation, and its main writers and works are respectively Four Scholars of Wuzhong District and Wuzhong" and in Cabinet Style. Among the Four Scholars of Wuzhong District, Qi Wu has the highest achievement, who expresses his life ambitions and spiritual world in his poetry. Song of Qingqiuzi an incarnation of his self-image; Besides, he has a lot of poetry works reflecting the feelings of his trips, *Looking the Yangtze River on the Rain Flower Pavilion* Is the representative of his poems. The Three Yangs of Cabinet Style are civilian officials of the cabinet. They are good at creating dedication poems. In addition, it's during the establishment of a new nation, they embraced with the appreciation for a new nation and naturally wrote down works closely related to the compliment of the new nation. However, due to its lack of artistic innovation, Dongyang Li, although as a cabinet civilian official, saw the drawbacks and managed to change the poetic style. Then another poetry group, Chaling group appears. In the early Ming Dynasty, the representative figures of prose creation were Kuo Song and Ji Liu. Both of them have masterpieces handed down in character biography and allegorical essay. In the middle of the Ming Dynasty, the vigorous literary vintage was carried out. In fact, the restoration is correction and attempts to rectify the defects brought by the poetic style in the early stage of the cabinet style poetry. The Seven Scholars held the slogan of "Better Writing in the Qin and Han Dynasties and Better Poetry in the glorious age of Tang Dynasty", and made effective attempts in poetry and prose. But due to they only remaining on the form learning and not deepening into the inner of literature works, there is little success and their study is eventually fruitless because of superficial feature. In mid Ming dynasty, the particular representatives in poetry and prose were Tang Song Schooling Youguang Gui. Although he is quite different from the literary viewpoints of the other representatives in the Tang and Song schooling, his prose was written deeply and profoundly through the description of ordinary trivia in daily life and ordinary characters to let the readers enter into the works and feel the sincere emotion in his prose. Therefore, he is a writer with relatively high achievements at that time, and left works like *A Record of Xiangjixuan* and *A Record of Sizi Pavillion*, etc. The late Ming poetry and prose were influenced by philosophical thoughts of Yangming Wang. The "innocence theory" of Zhi Li undoubtedly had an important influence on the writers of that era. The Gong'an poetics, represented by Three Yuans, proposed literary point of view of "Independent spiritual expression without any restrictions", affirming the importance of the express of personal feelings in literature. Later Jingling School appeared again to correct the weakness of vulgar and superficialness. The greatest achievement in prose in the late Ming Dynasty was the essay in the late Ming. It is short but with rich content, handsome and meaningful style, expressing daily life and aesthetic life taste of the scholar-officials.

At the end of the Ming Dynasty, the scholar-officials, represented by Zilong Chen, rescheduled the retro slogan so as to save the Ming dynasty from going to the end, and the content of their works has distinctive features of the times.

### **The Relationship between Ming Society and Poetry**

Yuanzhang Zhu, the emperor and the founder of the Ming Dynasty, saw the importance of ideological control and therefore implemented a high-pressure cultural system. Literary inquisition suppressed the thought of scholars and brought to a series punishment for their embroilment of works. Therefore, in the early Ming Dynasty, poetry was produced in a peaceful environment, showing a graceful, elegant, peaceful and prosperous appearance, then the Cabinet Style came into being. And such a cultural strategy changed the freedom and seclusion of scholars for thousands of years, for if they can't be used for the court, it is better to kill them. Therefore, in order to avoid the calamity, the literati went retro. With the improvement of the imperial examination system and the practice of Eight shares of the people, the literati completely had the characteristics of "slavery". In fact, this feature was also given by the society of Ming Dynasty. With the influence of Yangming Wang's psychology, Zhi Li proposed in *Theory of Sincere Emotion* that with the surge of "sentiment theory" in the literary creation, the prose creation also went towards personalization and down-to-earth. It can be seen from this that the appearance of various genres of Ming poetry and prose is closely related to the Ming society.

### **The Humanistic Spirit in the Ming Poetry and Prose -Influence of Emotional Intelligence**

In the course of Ming poetry and prose teaching , the first thing we should do is to introduce the complete teaching frame of Ming poetry and prose to the students. Under the premise of understanding the basic general situation of the literature history, we should select some of the representative writers and works, which not only have the classic readability, but also can be learned precious personality, how to deal with things, the courage to deal with difficulties from the ancients, and then edify their emotional intelligence. This teaching principle, that is, through the clear "skeleton" of poetry and prose and "content" full of flesh and blood to achieve the dual teaching effects of learning knowledge and accumulating emotional intelligence.

### **Independent Options of Noble Personality**

There are many writers, works and abundant contents in Ming poetry and prose. So teachers should give timely advice, under the premise of students' understanding of the basics, and build a clear and complete system of poetry knowledge. The analysis of poetry content should exert the initiative of students as much as possible, so as to let them participate in the classroom, and thus form a good class atmosphere. *Parting Words for Mr. Ma of Dongyang County* by Lian Song is selected as the work in the teaching of Ming and Qing poetry and prose. It shows us how humble, open-minded and hardworking Lian Song was. His study experience of early years was exceptionally difficult. There is no persuasion in the full text, but it vividly express the success of one's career lies all in the personal effort, instead of talent and external conditions. This kind of serious learning attitude is worth studying for today's students, of course, there are inadequate aspects, we should have selective learning. This article not only shows the author's profound literary talent, on the other hand, it let us understand the author's own values. From the study of the article, we can learn the noble personality of the author and persons in the article. *Words Said by Orange Vendor* by Ji Liu reveals the profound truth that "All is not gold that glitters" in a kind of sophistry tone, of course, the following discussion is close to sophistry. *There Were Persons Who Make a Living by Raising Worms* reflect the problems existing in real society via this allegory. In terms of poetry, there are *Song of Qingqiuzi* and *Looking the Yangtze River on the Rain Flower Pavilion* by Qi Gao. The former shows the poet's life interest and his pursuit of spiritual realm with rich personal style. The latter recalls the past from a history-overlook perspective with various atmosphere and broad-mind. Then there is *A Record of Xiangjixuan* by Youguang Gui. Although it has been learned in high school textbooks, but we will have a different experience in the university stage. *Self Praise* by Zhi Li in the late Ming Dynasty seems to belong the same category as *Song of Qingqiuzi* by Qi Gao which describes his own pursuit of life. Of course, it expresses his personality

independent from the real world, his frankness and sincerity. No matter the noble personality, unique independent personality or sincerity, are all precious personality we should learn from the ancient literary works. Therefore, the study of poetry and prose in the Ming Dynasty plays an important role in improving individual personality of the students and establishing a correct life view and world view.

### **The true expression of Emotional Factor**

As for the selection of the mid-Ming poetic and prose works, I will focus on the works of Youguang Gui. As a representative of the literati in the Tang and Song dynasties, he learned both Qian Sima and various scholars in Tang and Song dynasties. He is good at portraying the main features and traits of characters by his ordinary trivia in his daily life. He describes carefully and conveys his feelings in real life. Emotional factors are strongly reflected in his works, making people feel immersive and touching in reading his works. For example, in *the Events Record of My Deceased Mother*, there is description of his mother in daily life, while the most touching one is "The Person whose mother deceased is woeful". This sentence manifests his love for his mother and his grief of his mother's decease, which should be the ultimate expression of affection. Of course, *Sizi Pavilion*, expresses the grief of parents who lost their child. Both express the deep love of family affection. In his early poem creation, Ji Yang, one of the Four Scholars of Wuzhong District, described the joy of encountering in foreign land after their departure in his poetry *Memory of Our Gathering for Zhongheng Yang*. It is narrated slowly but sincerely. Emotional factor is one of the most striking part in literary works that can arouse a sympathetic chord of the readers. Therefore, by classifying and analyzing the works which express sincere emotions, the students experience the emotions directly. Perhaps their current feelings are not same as these emotions, but it can also improve their personality from the emotional aspects, so that they can be persons often full of love and affection.

### **Elegant Refinement of Aesthetic Taste**

The late Ming Dynasty is a characteristic era. The essay came into being in this era and mainly changed the viewpoint of "writing with methods" in the past prose. The minor trivia in life and personal aesthetic taste were all reflected in the essay. Therefore, later Ming scholars are better at discovering beauty, describing beauty and enjoying beauty. Artistic style of creation and the pursuit of a better life show the individual option of literati, full of the charm of Weijing Style. Among these works, the most representative work was *Mid July of the West Lake* by Dai Zhang, expresses his point of view through depicting the status of the person who watches the the moon in the West Lake in Mid July and depicting various meticulous figures. The original context is described as: "Good friends are invited to sit down and watch the moon, which is hiding under the shadow of trees, or escaping in the lake. People don't see the intentional movement of the moon watcher but they are actually enjoy the glorious full moon.

I see that with the development of society, pluralistic choices make college students face greater temptation in the forming of their personality. They are confused about the future, lacking beliefs, pursuing material enjoyment, lacking of organizational discipline, addicted to the virtual online world, becoming tired of school, highly critical of the world, and unable to communicate with others. In fact, the study of poetry and prose has the function of cultivating students' self-controlling ability and their emotional intelligence. Only by learning can students face life with a healthy psychology. Therefore, the teaching attempts about Ming poetry and prose in this paper is enlightening for the entire ancient literature teaching. It is the conduction of such teaching attempts, testing through the classroom practice, that it is ultimately improved and changes are continuously made and complied with the requirements of the times.

### **References**

- [1] Guowei Wang. *The Opera History of Song and Yuan*, Shanghai Ancient Classics Press, Shanghai, 2008.
- [2] Xingpei, Yuan. Chief Editor of *History of Chinese Literature*, Higher Education Press, Beijing, 1999.

- [3] Xiaolu Feng. *Argument and Study on Ming Poetry*, Yunan People's Publishing House, Kunming, 2006
- [4] Gonghong Yin. *The History of Ming Poetry*, Social Sciences Academic Press, Beijing, 2012
- [5] Shulu Chen. *The Evolution of Ming Poetry*, Jiangsu Education Publishing House, Nanjing, 1996
- [6] Zhenghong Chen. *The Research History of Ming Poetry*, Shanghai Cultural Publishing House, Shanghai, 2000
- [7] Daxing Zeng&Dejun Ji, Chief Editors of *Teaching Innovation and Construction of College Students' Ability in Ancient Literature Teaching*, Guangdong Higher Education Press, Guangzhou, 2006
- [8] Xiaoyin Ge&Xianshen Zhou, *Selected Comments on Chinese Ancient Literature Works*, Peking University Press, Beijing, 2002
- [9] Author: Youguang Gui(Ming Dynasty), Selectively Comment by Botao Zhao. *Literary Collections of Youguang Gui*, Suzhou University Press, Suzhou, 2001
- [10] Author: Dai Zhang(Ming Dynasty), *Complete Works of Zhang Dai, Four Books*, Zhejiang Ancient Books Publishing House, Hangzhou, 2017