A narrative of the author’s research interest in Yuan Haowen, as found on pp. 86-89, 85-86, and 106-108 of John Timothy Wixted, “One Westerner’s Research on Chinese and Japanese Languages and Literatures,” *Asian Research Trends* (The Toyo Bunko), New Series 4 (2009), pp. 77-113.

The latter is also available online:

http://www.toyo-bunko.or.jp/newresearch/upload/2010011510213931.pdf

* * *

The future general volume on Yuan Haowen is intended to complement my earlier work on the poet. One major facet of the poet-critic's writing, his literary criticism, was addressed in my earlier study, *Poems on Poetry: Literary Criticism by Yuan Hao-wen (1190–1257)*,[2] which treats Yuan

Haowen's three separate series of poems on poetry and several prose pieces. The volume analyzes Yuan Haowen's series of poems on poetry in three ways: in terms of (A) what views he was expressing, (B) what earlier critical opinion he was drawing upon in formulating his views, and (C) what earlier prose and poetry he was using to form his own poetic expression. Allow me to elaborate. Yuan Haowen is an enormously difficult poet. It is no exaggeration to say that, even at the (far from) elementary level, there are problems simply in understanding the "surface meaning" of his poems, because his expression is so deeply implicated in the earlier tradition. Almost every expression Yuan Haowen uses, if not a direct allusion, at least echoes or has overtones with earlier writing; it is other writing, transformed.

To understand what Yuan Haowen was saying, I used the best then-available commentaries to his poems on poetry—those by Wang Shaosheng 王韶生, Chen Zhanquan 陳湛銓, Ho Sanben 何三本, and Wang Liqing 王禮卿—and also checked *all* the expressions used by him in his series of poems on poetry in *twelve* concordances or other compeniums of usage, including the *Peiwen yunfu* 佩文韻府. My use of these reference works, and of the *Kanshi taikan* 漢詩大觀 in particular (which Chinese commentators had not used), unearthed several examples of related usage by earlier poets, especially Song-period ones, that other commentators had missed. Additionally, I devised a finding list to annotation of Yuan Haowen's poetry. All of this helped both to understand his work and to determine what earlier poets he was drawing on in creating his own poetic expression.

In terms of the history of Chinese literary criticism, Yuan Haowen's series of poems on poetry follow and expand upon a tradition started by Du Fu 杜甫 and Dai Fugu 戴復古.[3] In turn, Yuan Haowen's example was followed not only by Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺, Wang Shizhen 王士禎, and others, but also by Rai San'yō 賴山陽. The use of series of poems enabled authors to take the "intensive" nature of individual *shi* 詩 poems and make them "extensive" by treating a topic in several poems. In other words, series of poems made more sustained argument or discussion possible.

Yuan Haowen treats the preceding one thousand years of *shi* poetry in his poems. So it is also necessary to know the earlier *history of criticism* of the poets he treats, whether they be Cao Zhi 曹植, Meng Jiao 孟郊, or Wang Anshi 王安石. To do this, I had to familiarize myself with the history of Chinese literary criticism, not just through the standard histories of it by Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, Luo Genze 羅根澤, and Zhang Jian 張健, but also through reading *Dianlun Lunwen* 典論論文 by Cao Pi 曹丕, *Shipin* by Zhong Rong, *Wenxin diaolung* 文心雕龍 by Liu Xie 劉勰, and the *Bunkyō* *hifuron* 文鏡秘府論 by Kūkai 空海. Zhong Rong's *Shipin* is so crucial to understanding Yuan Haowen's literary criticism that, as outlined above, my study of the work has taken on a life of its own.

If it is necessary to be acquainted with much of the 1000-year history of earlier *shi* poetry (and earlier criticism) to understand Yuan Haowen, it is also necessary to be well acquainted with the 750-year history of commentary on his poetry since his death. To familiarize myself with the scholarship then available on the poet—everything in Chinese, Japanese, and Western languages—I started compiling a finding list to references to every Yuan Haowen *shi* poem in all of these languages. The result, later published separately, was "A Finding List for Chinese, Japanese, and Western-Language Annotation to and Translation of Poetry by Yüan Hao-wen" [Wixted 1981]. First, the finding list numbers all of Yuan Haowen's *shi* poems from 1 to 1366; then, it correlates them to the standard texts for his work (the *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 edition and the text edited by Mai Chaoshu 麦朝樞); and then, in chart form it indicates *which scholars*—in Chinese, in Japanese, and in Western languages—treat *which poem* on exactly *which page* of their work. 115 studies are analyzed in this way. Needless to say, the result was invaluable for the initial book and has proven most useful for the current book-project. For example, in the standard edition of his poetry by Mai Chaoshu (which includes the commentary by Shi Guoqi 施國祁), Yuan Haowen's Poem #0010 has *one* explanatory footnote (on the term *Duqu* 杜曲); but using the "Finding List," one can find *fourteen* references to the work in secondary studies, some of prime importance in understanding it.

* * *

Another work that grew out of my interest in Yuan Haowen is the translation I did of *Gen-Min-shi gaisetsu* 元明詩概説 by Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎, the English title being *Five Hundred Years of Chinese Poetry, 1150–1650: The Chin, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties* [Yoshikawa 1989]. I felt prompted to put the work into English for several reasons: because it was the only general treatment of the period's *shi* poetry in any language; because Burton Watson had already translated Yoshikawa's *Sōshi gaisetsu* 宋詩概説 into English (indeed, both *Sōshi gaisetsu* and *Gen-Min-shi gaisetsu* have been also translated into Chinese by Zheng Qingmao 鄭清茂); and because I thought it would be a way for me to learn more about both Chinese poetry and Japanese language.

I had no idea what a staggeringly difficult job it is to translate almost anything well into another language. Although individual word choices are certainly of significance, most important when trying to re-create a work in another language (or for that matter, when trying to assess a translation) are the overall tone, style, and rhythm of a rendering. This is not to mention the special problems with this project. One problem was the Chinese poems. Many are only "parsed" with *kundoku* readings in the Yoshikawa original, and so are not really translated into modern Japanese (nor are they translated into modern Chinese in Zheng Qingmao's Chinese-language version).

Another challenge was rendering Yoshikawa's prose into appropriate English. I happen to think that this work by Yoshikawa, although quite good, is not stellar scholarship; why I admire it, more than for its being the first real treatment of the subject in any language, is for two reasons: one, because Yoshikawa has made it interesting (unlike most sinological studies), and two, because his style as an essayist in Japanese is so engaging. The following is what I wrote in the "Translator's Preface" to the volume:

> Many (indeed, most) Japanese scholars of traditional China write works in a turgid style, seldom straying from the use of learned Chinese compounds to write in a Japanese that can seem more intended to impress the reader with the author's earnest scholarliness than to communicate material clearly in what is supposed to be the author's native language.... By the same token, with the admirable intent of writing in a Japanese that contemporary readers can understand, a number of other Japanese sinologists have taken to writing in natural, modern Japanese.... What not infrequently happens [with the latter], however, is that their writing becomes terribly prolix....
>
> Yoshikawa Kōjirō belongs to neither of these categories. Writing in a particularly plain modern Japanese by sinological standards, he does not hesitate to insert the occasional *bon mot* in the form of an apt, but unusual (for modern readers) Chinese compound. Many of his sentences are quite short, being interspersed with longer ones; and occasionally there is the involved or convoluted sentence. The combination makes for fluid pacing. Clearly the author wanted his audience to enjoy what he has to say while reading it. He is never prolix; if anything, he errs in the opposite direction. In a word, he strikes a pleasing stylistic balance. Yoshikawa Kōjirō's renown among Japanese intellectuals in fields totally unrelated to his own stems largely from the informed readibility of his writing.

* * *

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I especially hope that my general book on the poetry of Yuan Haowen sees completion. After finishing my doctoral dissertation on Yuan Haowen's literary criticism, I continued work on the author's poetry, drafting translations of some 200 of his poems that were not included in the dissertation. Twenty-four years later, in 2001 I started to revise the translations, draft some additional poem-translations, write introductions to the series of poems, and write section- and chapter-introductions. For example, Chapter Two of the book manuscript, tentatively entitled "A Darkening World"—since the Mongols were soon to take over North China—has the following six sections, with poems to illustrate each: A) Overview, B)

Lengthening Shadows, C) The Emperor in Flight, D) Post-Capitulation—Palace and Poet, E) Deportation of Women and Poet, and F) Exile and the Bitter End.

For illustration of the current state of one of the poem-translations, please consult Chart I. The poem treated there dates from 1214, twenty years before the fall of the Jin 金 dynasty, and comes from the section "Lengthening Shadows." I here offer a poem that has been translated into Japanese. (Many of the poems in the book have not previously been translated into any language.) The first entire book I read in Japanese, in 1969, was Suzuki Shūji's 鈴木修次 study of Yuan Haowen, a work I still greatly admire. I also read and profited from Oguri Eiichi's 小栗英一 book on the poet. The latter's translation of the selection has been temporarily added here for reader convenience.

Although I ask the reader to note my rendering into English, I would like to stress that the translation *per se* is secondary. What I want to illustrate is a different way of handling the problem that came up with the sample Ōgai *kanshi* translation: how to simultaneously deal with the concrete and implied meanings of a poetic line. Here one finds, for example with Line One, not just a more literal rendering ("Screech, screech—felt-covered carts wind through rocky troughs"), but also a LINE PARAPHRASE ("The screeching wheels of transport wagons in flight from the Mongols can be heard as they try to negotiate the twists and turns in the rutted out stone of the pass road"). Furthermore, wherever necessary or helpful for the understanding of the poem, there is explication (A) of lines (as with Lines 3 and 4), (B) of specific phrases (for example, "jackals and tigers" in Line 6), or (C) of allusions (for example, to the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 in Line 5). The explanation for Line 8, I might note, goes beyond that of any published scholarly treatment.

The problem here is partly one of presentation: how visually to communicate a great deal of information, but not in such a way as to confuse the reader. The CIRCUMSTANCES of the poem, for example, are explained just under the poem-title.

For the poem presented here and others in the book, apart from additional revisions, I will include romanization of the Chinese text (including tone-marks), note additional allusions to Chinese texts, and fill in cross-references to other relevant poems by Yuan Haowen.

* * *

CHART I

石嶺關所見

As Witnessed at Stone-Ridge Pass

“Stone-Ridge Pass” (Shilingguan): a pass south of Yuan Haowen’s native Xinzhou 忻州, in Xiurong Prefecture 秀容縣, on the road to Yangqu 陽曲 (modern Taiyuan 太原).

CIRCUMSTANCES: The poem describes the panic of people fleeing when the Mongols attacked Xinzhou in the third month of 1214. Yuan Haowen’s brother died in the disturbances, and perhaps is being referred to in Line Five.

軋軋旃車轉石槽
2 故關猶復戍弓刀

Screech, screech—felt-covered carts wind through rocky troughs,

LINE PARAPHRASE: The screeching wheels of transport wagons in flight from the Mongols can be heard as they try to negotiate the twists and turns in the rutted out stone of the pass road. "Rocky troughs": i.e., "stone horse-troughs" formed by the elements—the working of rain, snow, and ice—and the recurrent passage of vehicles. (The term is also used to describe the "bladder" of a lute, and has been taken to refer to such a shape here.) "Felt-covered carts": carts covered in felt to protect their contents from the weather and depredation; here, they could be the wagons of refugees or of military transports; see Favored Expressions (*zhanche*).

The ancient pass is still guarded by bow and blade.

LINE PARAPHRASE: At the time-honored pass, our troops still hold on.

連營突騎紅塵暗
4 微服行人細路高

A string of camps, lightening cavalry—red dust darkens;

LINE: Describes the continuous incursions of fast-moving Mongol cavalry. (Cf. Poem #xxx, for more description of Mongol mounted units.) "Red dust darkens": the dust kicked up by the Mongol cavalry, "red" here having undesirable connotations of heat and danger.

People in disguise, on the run—narrow paths steep.

LINE: People on the run (i.e., refugees) take narrow paths higher up than the routes used by transport wagons; they are disguised as being sick, aged, or crippled, probably to avoid being pressed into service by roving Mongol bands. The poet could be referring to himself and/or others.

已化蟲沙休自歎
6 厭逢豺虎欲安逃

That some have become insects or grains of sand, do not lament;

"Insects or grains of sand": *Taiping yulan* (ch. 47) and *Yiwen leiju* (ch. 90) versions of the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子: "Whereas 'gentlemen' become gibbons or cranes, 'nobodies' become insects or sand"; Yuan Haowen's brother, who died in the disturbances at about this time, may be referred to here, in bitter terms. "Do not lament," because it is useless to lament.

Tired of running into jackals and tigers, where can one flee?

"Jackals and tigers": the Mongols.

青雲立玉三千丈
8 元只東山意氣豪

In clouds of blue, upright as jade, three thousand lengths high—

“Lengths”: about ten feet each. “Upright as jade”: see Favored Expressions (*li-yu*).

All that is left is East Mountain, its élan heroic.

LINE PARAPHRASE: Only East Mountain remains basically proud. It does so because the name (that of a mountain in Zhejiāng) is associated with the hermit, Xie An 謝安 (320–385), who stayed there in retirement; when he did emerge, however, his family defeated Fu Jian 符堅 and saved the (Jin 晉) dynasty. By the same token, might our East Mountain nurture such heroic deeds?

“East Mountain”: nearby “Boat-Mooring Mountain” (Xizhoushan 繫舟山), according to Hao Shuhou.

小栗英一訳：

ぎしぎしと音をたてて物資を満載した車が、石の桶（おけ）のような地形を通っていく、昔の関所のあとに今もなお弓や刀をもって我が軍がまもっている。

かなたの敵の布陣は、とべ出す騎兵で砂ぼこりはくろく、身をやつしていく難民たちの行く手はきわめてけわしい。

戦死して虫や砂と化してしまった兵士たちは歎いてもむだだろうが、わたしは恐ろしい猛獣のような奴らにはいやというほどあった、これからどこへ逃げたらいいか。

この戦乱のさなかにも大空の青雲に犯しがたくそびえる三千丈の山、ああ、この東山だけがむかしどおり不安をはねのけるように意気盛んに見える。