

Research on Humanism in Japanese Modern Prose Poems

Taking Kusano Simpei and Yoshida Ichihō as Examples*

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Abstract—As an independent literary genre, prose poem has been popular in Japan since the mid-nineteenth century. It has the characteristics of both prose and poetry. In essence, it is still the stylistic form of poetry. Kusano Simpei and Yoshida Ichihō are two famous prose poets in the middle of the 20th century. Their poems have received wide attention and recognition in Japanese academic circles at that time. Their prose poems are consistent in thought, but because of their different origins and life experiences, they are different in terms of language style, emotional mood, and expression techniques.

Keywords—Kusano Simpei; Yoshida Ichihō; humanism; prose poem

I. INTRODUCTION

Kusano Simpei and Yoshida Ichihō are two famous prose poets in the middle of the 20th century. In the poetry creation, Kusano Simpei used more lyrics and metaphors to portray his inner feelings of life and death. His masterpieces include the collection of poems, "The Horn of the Waste Garden", "The Moon", and "The araliae cordatae of polygonaceae", and so on. Yoshida Ichihō cut a figure in the Japanese poetry circle because of the poem "Mother". His masterpieces "Fishing in Heaven" and "Holy Communion" show his lyrical and romantic style. The artistic conception of his later works gradually becomes dark, with the main line of introspection and re-examination. "Sow man", "Bacchus" and other works reflect his anti-war humanism. The great differences in the life experiences of the two poets led to the characteristics of their poetry styles and descriptions. At the same time, as the representatives of contemporary prose poems, they presented the contradictions of Japanese social realism and romanticism in the Showa period to the world.

II. THE DIFFERENCE IN POETIC STYLE

Regarding Kusano Simpei, the famous poet and critic Takaaki Yoshimoto called him "the idle intellectuals without fixed occupations".

Kusano Simpei (1903-1988) was born in

Shangxiaochuan Village, Fukushima Prefecture. His life is as astounding as a masterpiece. At the age of seventeen, he entered Keio University to study, and dropped out after half a year. At the age of 18, he traveled to Guangzhou, China, and was admitted to Lingnan University (now Zhongshan University). At the age of 22, he returned to Japan after the outbreak of the anti-Japanese movement in China, and met with Miyazawa Kenji and Sakutarō Ōgihara. At the age of twenty eight, he opened a barbecue restaurant named "Iwaki" at No. 10 of Azabu Shogaku. When Kusano Simpei was 30, the famous poet Kenji Miyazawa died. He published "mourning for Mr. Kenji Miyazawa", which attracted the attention of the writer Yokomitsu Riichi of New Sensation School. This became the opportunity for later publication of "Kenji complete collection". After that, the unknown poet, Kenji, who has been hidden from the world, appeared in front of the world.

At the age of thirty-two, Kusano Simpei founded the poetry periodical "The Process" and participated in the "Greater East Asian Literati Conference" at the age of 39. At the age of forty-four, he closed the rental bookstore "Tianshan", which have been open for one year. At the age of forty-nine, he started to run an izakaya named "Tianshan" in Xiaoshichuan, Bunkyo District. Three years later, the izakaya "train" opened. At the age of 57, he and Kenzo Ichiro opened a bar called "School" in Shinjuku. At the age of fifty-eight, he moved to Kunitachi City and then moved to Higashi-Murayama City after living in Kunitachi for two years. At the age of 72, he became a member of the Academy of Fine Arts and died at the age of 85.

According to Kusano Simpei's words, he opened izakaya for living. A bunch of barbecues costs two dollars. Excluding the cost of materials, he earns a dollar. However, because of the irritability of the character, he always quarrels with the guests and then be taken away by the police to stay the detention center. Because the profit is very low, even the carbon is bought in only a small amount per night, and there is no money to buy wine, he often drinks the arrack brought by the guests until he is drunk. Once, he went to the place where coal is sold to steal coal after getting drunk. As a result, he was caught by a policeman and beat, and then was thrown to Takadanobaba. During the most difficult time, he didn't even have the firewood to cook. Just when he was

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hungry and cold, he was introduced to do correction work in a publishing house by his friends. He got fifteen yen a month to get his life settled. A star in the Japanese poetry world was made by chance.

In his life, Kusano Simpei was very concerned about the existence and death of human beings. He praised Mount Fuji, and created many poems about frogs. In addition to running the Izakaya "train" and editing Chikuma Shobo version of the book "The Complete Works of Takamura koutarou", he also wrote a literary commentary on "koutarou". At the age of eighty-four, he won the Japanese "Cultural Medal". The poems in the early days of Kusano Simpei had the tendency to cosmopolitanism and anarchism. Therefore, some of the critics had slandered and said that the medal he received was the Medal of Transformation of the Scorpion. The author believes that Kusano Simpei is a multifaceted person. It is inevitably biased to judge his life from a certain aspect of his thoughts.

Yoshida Ichiho (1898-1973) was born in rikonai, Hokkaido, and his father was the fisherman of the carp farm. Born in such a wealthy family, as the eldest son, Yoshida Ichiho was very arrogant and even violent, and was expelled from school because beating high school classmates. At the age of fifteen, he came to Tokyo with 200 yen from family, lived a poor life in a small rental house with milk and bread. When he was 20, he was admitted to English major of Waseda University. However, three years later, the original wealthy family declined because of a fire. The fishery that lasted for three generations was finally abandoned. The mother opened a grocery store in his hometown to maintain livelihood, which was later closed down. Yoshida Ichiho lost the money received from his home, so he had to withdraw from Waseda University in 1920.

The family misfortune changed Yoshida Ichiho's life track, and also had a major impact on his character. The pressure of life made him decide to be a poet to make a living. In 1926, together with Mitsuharu Kaneko, he founded the Japanese Poet Association. The main poetry collections include the first collection of poems "The Madonna of the Sea" (1926), the second collection of poems "The Book of the Homeland" (1930), the third collection of poems "The memoirist of barnyard grass" (1936), and the fourth collection of poems "In The Future" (1948), the fifth collection of poems "Rose of Luodian" (1950), the sixth collection of poems "Poems of Yoshida Ichiho" (1952) and so on.

"The elegant distance

Such a distant view

The other side of sorrow

In the middle of the night, I try to find the weakest voice of the mother." [1]

This prose poem titled "Mother" is one of the masterpieces of Yoshida Ichiho's young period. He used the combination of virtuality and reality to express his feeling to the mother in the invisible romantic mood. Although Yoshida Ichiho's poems is comparable to that of Kusano

Simpei, he has not been recognized by high-level people in the early years, nor accepted by the public, so he can only indulge in self-admiration, and struggle on the edge of "starvation". His second collection of poems, *The Book of the Homeland*, was published in the five years of the Showa era. When he was 32, he wrote in the poem of volume header "The Industry":

"The desire in my heart has been scorched by the noise of reality and negation." The artistic conception of poetry is gray, and there is no lyricism when writing "Mother". Introspection and examination have become the main line of his creation. In "Fisherman Village", Yoshida Ichiho said: "I have been using poetry to describe the darkness for forty-five to six years. This is an incurable disease. It may be cured after death by the second creation of later generations. The preface poems of "The Poems of the Homeland" are all prose poems, full of descriptions of his lonely sense of existence.

In the 19th year of the Showa era, Yoshida Ichiho's younger brother, Tadao died in the East China Sea, and his father was killed in the battle. His mother died in the 22nd year of Showa. The successive deaths of his relatives have given a heavy blow to Yoshida Ichiho. Since then, he often used alcohol to drown his sorrows and find the true self in the chaotic world after drinking. In the 44th year of the Showa era, he died in hunger, disease and despair.

III. THE "ANTI-WAR" HUMANISM

Yoshida Ichiho and Kusano Simpei live in the same era, and have experienced war, hunger and poverty. Therefore, the humanistic thoughts embodied in their poems are very strong. Yoshida Ichiho was extremely disgusted with the war. When the Pacific War broke out, description of the anti-war thoughts appeared in the poem "The Sowing Man": "there are no livestock, no one", "there is no grain particles remained", "starvation", and "the war is still going on", etc., which also shows that Yoshida Ichiho has been on the verge of survival. The word "starvation line" was also created by Yoshida Ichiho, because he struggled and wandered between the virtual and real line of the starvation. In the memoirs of Hasegawa Shiro, when he visited the family of Ichiho in the same year, his mother always said, "go there with salt," which shows that the embarrassment of life is really miserable.

Purple sunset,

Round grape fruit,

Harvested scythe,

Wind blow over the barn.

This is his work in the 15th year of Showa. Struggling on the verge of starvation, he still sees the grapes shining in the purple sunset. In the 22nd year of the Showa era, after his brother, father, and mother passed away, he often drowned his sorrows over a beer. He wrote in the poem "The Bacchus" (17th year of Showa):

Strew flowers on the way I walk!

There are congratulations of new cereals and grapes.

There is always spring water flowing from somewhere,
Toasted bread,
The bees have pure amber excitement,
Waiting for the golden color of the grain
The sun has already brewed the fragrance of the grapes.

At the height of the war, he also praised the wine, reflecting the thought of Yoshida Ichihō that he wanted to escape from reality. At the same time, he expressed his anti-war thought through his critique of the life of the war, and also expressed his inner loneliness.

In 1946, Kusano Simpei was sent back to Japan by Guangdong, China. He created "Farewell, China" as a theme to express the thoughts that he had to leave China:

"I don't know when I got another hometown in addition to a hometown. The two are different, but they are born in the same lifeline."

After returning to Japan, Kusano Simpei made a living by operating izakaya and bar. After closing the izakaya "train", he opened a bar named "school." The opening day was the day when the "Japan-US security was re-established", Kusano Simpei was unable to treat the guests, but participated in the parade against security to used his personal actions against the war.

On the founding of the magazine "Course", Kusano Simpei wrote: "We hope that even the poems published in "Course" can be accepted and unimpeded even if they are translated into different languages in the world, and stimulate people with conscience in other countries. I hope that such poems will emerge in endlessly in the "Course". We always consider Japan's poetry from a global standpoint. As a magazine, we have neither a banner nor a political party, but just focus on poetry itself. "[2] This expressed his high degree of anarchism and cosmopolitanism.

The concept of life and death of Kusano Simpei also influenced his poetry creation. Because he served as the chairman of the Japan Modern Poetry Association, he has served as the host of friends' funeral for many times. At this time, he will never cry. For him, the close relatives of the poetry are not dead, but live forever. They only temporarily disappeared in front of the eyes. Facing friends who are not there, he holds a funeral as holding a banquet. This is his view of life and death.

When friend Masao Nakagiri died, 80-year-old Kusano Simpei sent his mourning with such a prose poem:

"Kusano Simpei, hope you can a live long life!"
This is the last sentence I heard from you.
Nakagiri, even if I wil go to the world anyway.
It is a dark tale, and you and I may also get lost.
No, we can never meet again...

After the memorial meeting, he drunk and even lost his shoes. He also said that he would "run back to Tokyo

wearing slippers and spend the rest of his life with memories." As he said, friends who are close to each other will never meet again once they die. After this memorial meeting, Kusano Simpei's understanding of life and death may also undergone some changes.

Kusano Simpei loves to write poetry, but he opened an izakaya for making a life, but his hot-blooded personality is simply not suitable for operating an izakaya. The more he pursues the purity and perfection of poetry, the easier it is to conflict with people with different ideas. Even so, Kusano Simpei open the izakaya to maintain his own nature and drink alcohol, eating meat and talk with friends. He feels that he will never see the people after they die, so he has to find a proof of his living. This is also the attitude of Simpei towards poetry, eating, and life.

In "The araliae cordatae of polygonaceae", Kusano said: "I found the araliae cordatae when walking in polygonaceae plateau. Pushing aside the red clay of the rockfall, I see the fresh shoots towards the sun. I take the leaves with the lanugo back to the house in mountain and cook it. I go down the mountain road to buy some tofu to make tofu miso soup and cold bean curd. I chop the leaves; pour the juice in the bowl to it, and then the black bowl in my hand suddenly exudes a strong fragrance that makes you feel refreshed. At this moment, I remembered the group of greedy friends, and then said to myself: Hey, what should I do? I want them to taste it too." This kind of description that he really wants to share with friends makes people feel that his treatment of friends is true and pure. The exquisiteness in poetry and the roughness of reality form a sharp contrast, which makes people have endless aftertastes.

IV. THE COMPARISON OF LANGUAGE EXPRESSION TECHNIQUES

Yoshida Ichihō's poetry has a variety of linguistic forms. He tried three-character poems because of the beauty of the haiku, of which the language style is subtle and subtle. The poetry collection "In the Future" published in 1948 has finally been widely recognized by the Japanese academic community and is known as the man drinking moon in Japan. At the age of thirty-eight, Yoshida Ichihō's sister died, and he was so sad that he wrote "on the fourth day of February, the news came from the hometown that my sister died. Staying up all night, he burnt wood to dawn and made this three-word poem as a sacrifice:"

No bird track
Picking up driftwood
Burn fish
Burn unstrained liquor
Wave sound roar
Wave cut hole

This "Lamentation" was later renamed "Fishing Song". The whole poem did not use complex rhetorical techniques and gorgeous words, but only polish the simple language into poems. Compared with other forms of poetry by

Yoshida Ichiho, his three-word poetry excludes the unconscious vernacular language, uses more concise vocabulary to express emotions, and constructs an inseparable organic whole with fragments of language, giving people more cohesive strength. Just as someone asked Yoshida Ichiho "what is life?" his answer is only the word "destiny." This "fishing song" was engraved on the poem tablet of the entrance of the Itsukushima Shrine in Guping Town, Hokkaido. The poem is full of uneasiness, stubbornness and loneliness that the Hokkaido man is born with.

Compared with Yoshida Ichiho, the language style of Kusano Simpei's poetry is more simple, popular and bright, such as:

"Although my right eye is blind, the sky is clear.

The stars in the sky are wrapped in darkness.

This is just a point on the earth,

It is impossible to see the whole world, but it extends the world.

It is a big circle like a rainbow,

so distant star side." [3]

Yoshida Ichiho and Kusano Simpei deserve the title of outstanding representatives of Japanese poetry in the middle of the 20th century. Their poems have their own artistic styles. Yoshida Ichiho is so depressed, while Kusano Simpei is bright and elegant. However, they all show strong personality strength and personal charm in poetry, which have made important contribution to the development of Japanese poetry literature and influenced Japanese later poetry until today.

Although Yoshida Ichiho was poor and life-stricken, the image in his poetry was very romantic. When Yoshida Ichiho visited Baiqiu in Odawara's "Owl Manor", he wrote "Mother" at the age of 23. At that time, he was very close to "Wakayama Bokusui" who liked drinking. During this time, he was introduced by "Katayama shin" and submitted articles to the childhood magazine. He has the ability to write originals, and there are many opportunities from publishers. Therefore, during this period he wrote a lot of fairy tales and nursery rhymes to get some meager income. For example, "Youth Club", "Girls Club", "Youth Friends" and "Women's Club" are works of this period.

This is a fairy tale written by Yoshida Ichiho to the child: a bat that sleeps sideward flies to steal honey accompanied by moonlight at nightfall. The bat ignores the warning of the spider "Don't break the spider web" and insists on stealing honey. Finally, it was caught by the bees. It turned to the spider for help, but the spider did not save it. The locust shouted at the bat with only half life: "The idle people who did bad things ask others to save themselves, which is just finding trouble for others! Go to work yourself!" After listening to this, the bat began to fall into reconsideration. It regretted doing the bad things so far. Even the little fireflies can extract fragrance from the evening primrose to make perfume and make wine. After that night, the bat began to

use the triangular prism to analyze the moonlight, and focus on study the dropping rosin. Finally, it made delicious wine from the moonlight. Perhaps, the bat can survive only by drinking the incredible delicious moonlight wine.

The bat here is actually Yoshida Ichiho. The fairy tale is just a reflection of him. Baiqiu said that although Yoshida Ichiho can't do in reality, he writes in fairy tales. This experience of writing fairy tales for literary association has a great influence on the romantic image of Yoshida Ichiho's poetry writing in the late period. At the age of thirty-seven, he published a prose poem "Holy Communion":

We are harvesting grapes,

The big scythe harvest grains into the warehouse,

The bright purple light of sunset,

Singing after a full meal,

The wine in the cellar is just right.

The grand scene depicting the harvest is written in the extremely embarrassing period of life of Yoshida Ichiho. The wife said that there was no grain of rice, but he was not worried. He started to paint the grapes and finally made this poem. Obstinate and unruly, he lives in the intoxication of himself; it is quite a mood in the "Poverty Quiz" of the mountains.

Yoshida Ichiho is also known as the talent of imaginative cuisine. In the poor life, he is also full of poetic soul, using his unique imagination to create a lot of incredible recipes, "Fishing in heaven" is one of them.

Silver microwave,

In the river of sea girl,

What fish is hooked?

In this regard, Yoshida Ichiho also has a narration: "Sitting by the water all day, but I can't catch a fish." He struggled in fierce contradiction, stunned, and played with the looming clouds in the water. The thinkers who have been thinking in front of the sea since ancient times are all unexpectedly not Japanese. [4]He believes that there is no rhetorical expression. The simple description cannot be called the art of poetry. He even wants to catch a "dream" when sleeping.

In the era of material poverty, Yoshida Ichiho lives on eating illusion in as the gods. The so-called eating illusion does not mean eating desperation, but the act of being eaten by greed. When imagining eating delicious food, he squats on the edge of the "starvation line". At the same time, he also cultivated rice, green peas, and hunted in snowfield with gun. He once said: "I have always felt that the hesitation of the flesh is that of the spirit. When I have a dream, I am hit by reality, and my consciousness is broken."

Yoshida Ichiho is good at using the idealized principle to shape the image, using exaggerated deformation and galloping imagination to achieve the perfect expression of ideal. He has always deliberately ignored real life, and made an understanding smile in moonlight when snoring because

of hunger. This world of poetry is in sharp contrast to the real life he has experienced.

The Japanese are very particular about food. Especially due to the lack of materials led by the outbreak of war in the early 20th century, people cherish and enjoy food. There are a lot of descriptions and imaginations about food in the poems of Yoshida Ichiho and Kusano Simpei. Because Kusano has been living on the izakaya for a lifetime, these descriptions are more reflected in the other works of Yoshida Ichiho. In the book "The Beef Tongue", Kusano Simpei said: "It is his good dish to use hot water to boil the beef tongue and add pepper, sweet juice and soy sauce. The soy-flavored beef tongue was cut into pieces, and added mustard, which was his signature dish of the izakaya — the train. If the soup used for blanching tongue is added the mushroom and salt, I like it more than the beef tongue. There are countless things like this. For example, he goes to the fish shop to buy only the head of the salmon goes to the butcher shop to buy 10 grams of minced meat and then says: "The fried shrimp tail is delicious." He insist to use the remaining shrimp tails, salted mushrooms, sugar-roasted radish leaves and shredded kelp to make Chazuke, or puts olive oil on seaweed to toast it; after the squid is peeled, he adds soy sauce and sweet juice, etc. to smash it into mud, or after peeling, he adds lemon, salad oil and matcha powder to stir; the scad sashimi is boned with a knife tip, beat with a knife blade and added green basil, so as to make it into a mass and then eat with lemon juice. The squid is mixed with vinegar after adding broccoli. The root bending bamboo is boiled in salty water and poured with French salad sauce. Akebiaquinata is steamed after smearing the miso on the surface after eating the fruit, or fried with salad oil and cutting into a ring. These are all Kusano Simpei's recipe. The mustard leaves are cut into two centimeters and mixed into a cold dish by adding two or three cups of vinegar or soy sauce. He also adds the mustard to the sliced dried skipjack and adds a drop of whiskey. The ingredients of cuisine are extremely rich, including wild chive, the stem of the butterbur, the sauerkraut, the celery, the spinach, the ginkgo, the okra, the turnip, the lotus root, the arrowhead, the garlic, the water shield, the spring grass, and potamon. Regarding the potamon, he said: "It is best to eat directly boldly with your eyes close. First, we should hold the back of the small crab, use the big head part of the two chopsticks to open it, taste it and then eat it all slowly. People who are worried about trematode will not have to worry anymore by drinking kreosote after eating. It can be said to be simple and rude.

In "The Four Seasons", Kusano Simpei also described his own delusional food such as "Rose Sandwich". It is said that the sandwiches such as the iris sibirica sandwich, wisteria sandwich, rose sandwich, and cuckoo sandwich are not in the menu of the western restaurant, but in my mind. Not just in my head, I also personally do it myself. If you are deft, you can use iris sibirica, wisteria, lotus, and azalea to replace the ham in ham sandwiches. People say that life in the Taishou Period is really leisurely and happy, but he said that "the period from the end of the Taisho period to the early days of the Showa period was completely dark for me. Especially when the sleet, snow, and hail falling at the end of the year,

the snow will increase, which is really unbearable... The throat is blocked and it is even difficult to breathe [5]. It may be that only those who have actually operate the izakaya can understand his helpless suffering of wine bowl and the poor health.

Kusano Simpei uses more metaphors. In the poem "The Trumpet of the Waste Garden" (the Twelfth Year of Taisho), there is a poem "Moon":

Soaking in the tub late at night,

The glamorous moonlight like the virgin flows in from the window,

And touches my body faintly,

So charming, so gentle, so lingering.

He often uses metaphorical expression techniques to compare moonlight to women. In addition, Xinping has the magical technique of integrating scenery, grass, wind, light, wine, people and other things. In addition, he writes poetry with the theme of frogs all his life, known as the "frog poet". In this field, he used various kinds of different words to express frogs, in addition to a number of attempts of pioneering poetry.

V. CONCLUSION

In summary, from the background, birth and life experience of Yoshida Ichiho and Kusano Simpei, this paper describes two representative poets of Japanese poetry in the early and mid-20th century, which is different in poetic language style and imagery. At the same time, the humanistic thoughts conveyed in the works of the two poets were compared and analyzed, and the similarities between the two poets with different personalities in poetry creation were discovered. As the French writer Roman Roland said, "There are always two streams in the creation of great writers. One merges with their time movements, and the other is much deeper than the wishes and needs of that era. Until now, it nourishes a new era." [6]

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