

Tzu-ko poetry (since its burgeoning) in Parallel with the Development of Tzu-ko Shrine in Chung-nan Shan*

Huang, Yu-Xi**

ABSTRACT

Tzu-ko Shrine is enshrouded in Chung-nan-shan, built in about the early Tang Dynasty, but it was burnt down during the first to the sixth T'ung-chih years (1862-1867) of the Ch'ing Dynasty because of Moslem uprising. In 1942, in clearing up the site of the ruined Ta-pau-en Temple for the construction of Tao-ho Shrine, the Japanese Army unearthed the skull relics of Hsuan Chuang's cremated body. An examination of the holy relics revealed that a monk called Ko-cheng of Ta-pau-en Temple (later changed to Nanking Chang-kan Temple) had brought them back from Chung-nan-shan; Tzu-ko Shrine. Henceforth, Tzu-ko Shrine has overspread its name.

Tzu-ko Shrine is nestled in the Chung-nan mountain chain, Tzu-ko-shan, which is sublime, towering, and gorgeous. The sacred retreat attracted hosts of high-ranking or learned monks for religious meditation or moral cultivation, including Fa Tsang in the Northern Chou era as well as Tao Hsuan, Chu Chin, Fei Hsi, Hui Chao, etc., during the Tang Dynasty. In addition, many poets saluted the sacred place with laudatory poems, including Li Po, Tu Fu, Wei Ying-Wu, Po Chu-I, Chang Chi, Tao Ho, Ku Fei-hsiung, Chang Pin, etc.

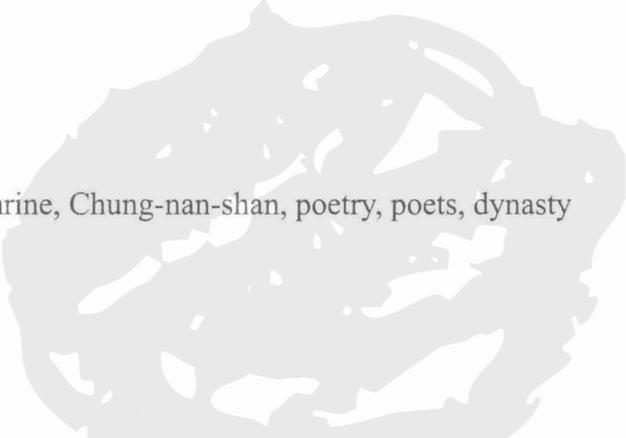
Up to the opening era of the Sung Dynasty, Tzu-ko Shrine or monastery was little mentioned in the biographical accounts of celebrated monks, but myriads of poets paid tribute to the place, including Lee Tao, Ch'eng Hao, Chang Tun, K'ang Hai, Wang Chiu-kao, Hsiung Tzu-hsiu, Han ch'I-wei, Wang Chiu-feng, Hsueh Ch'ang-chao, Wang Hsin-ching, Chang Sung Chu Shih, Lan Ku, etc.

*This paper was first presented at "The First Buddhism & Literature Symposium," at Hsuan Chuang College of Social Sciences and Humanities, in April, 2003. This paper is a revised version.

**Huang, Yu-Xi, Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Hsuan Chuang University

This paper has explored the Tzu-ko Poetry (since its earliest beginning), covering all the interrelated historical documents and, therefore, conjuring up a panoramic view of the rising of Tzu-ko Shrine. This study can also shed light on the invaluable Buddhist legacy passed on to us by our supreme mentor-Hsuan Chuang.

Key Words: Tzu-ko shrine, Chung-nan-shan, poetry, poets, dynasty



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