

The Chinese Poetry of Soseki Natsume: An Analysis of Nouns and Adjectives Related to the Features of Scenery

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1. Introduction

Soseki Natsume is a famous literary scholar well known in East Asia such as in China, Taiwan Area, and Korea. Soseki's excellent writing was deeply influenced by Chinese literature. Chinese poetry accounted for a large proportion of Soseki's work, even larger than Haiku. In this study, the objective is to examine the features of scenery depicted in his Chinese poetry by analyzing the relevant nouns and adjectives.

2. Study Methods

Soseki Natsume wrote a total of 208 Chinese poems. The poems that were selected for analysis featured in Soseki Shichu (Poetry Note) by Kojiro Yoshikawa in 1967. Nouns and adjectives related to scenery were the primary focus. In my other research, mainly nouns were analyzed. But in this research, adjectives related to scenery in the following categories were included:

Positive adjectives, such as "high," "full," and "bright"

Negative adjectives, such as "alone," "desolate," and "empty"

Neutral adjectives, such as "green," "distant," and "red"

Only those adjectives that appeared twice or more were counted. The percentages mentioned in the article indicate the frequency of appearance of the adjectives in the 208 poems. A cluster analysis (Ward's Method) was performed for the further analysis of nouns, and JMP software was applied for statistical analysis.

3. Results

3.1 The frequency of the appearance of adjectives related to scenery

Within the 208 poems, the following adjectives related to scenery were used, in order of frequency of appearance: green (27%), distant (13%), alone (12%), desolate (11%), empty (10%), red (9%), old (9%), high (9%), idle (9%), cold (9%). The sum total of adjectives related to scenery was 541. Positive adjectives resulted in the following percentages: high (9%), full (8%), bright (7%), vast (6%), huge (6%). The total number of positive adjectives was 159, and they constituted 29% of all the scenery-related adjectives. As for negative adjectives, the total number was 236 (44%), with the following breakdown: alone (12%), desolate (11%), empty (10%), old (9%), idle (9%), cold (9%), silent (8%), and secluded (8%). The neutral adjectives totaled 146 (27%): green (27%), distant (13%), red (9%), yellow (5%), natural (5%). Lastly, 122 adjectives were related to color (23%), and 27 were related to sound (5%).

3.2 A cluster analysis of the combination of nouns related to scenery

As a result of a cluster analysis of the combination of nouns related to scenery, we divided 208 Chinese poems into 13 groups. Group 1 included 17 poems, 94% of which had content about water, clouds, and mountains. All 15 of the poems in Group 2 had content about mountains (100%). 60% of them included water, and 40% of them included wind. In Group 3, the percentage of poems (15) that included content about the moon was 100%, and 67% of the poems included content about water. As for other groups, please see the chart at the end of this paper.

4. Considerations

The nouns and adjectives that were related to scenery in Chinese poems written by Soseki Natsume were analyzed. Negative adjectives accounted for a large proportion (44%) of his Chinese poems. We can therefore draw the conclusion that Soseki Natsume preferred scenery with negative elements,

such as desolate places, empty houses, and secluded gardens. Positive adjectives also appeared in his Chinese poems to some degree (29%). He depicted beautiful things, such as bright moons, new grass, and splendid flowers. Soseki was good at using adjectives related to color and sound. According to the result of the cluster analysis, the particular scenery that can most frequently be imagined is a vast view of water in the foreground with steep mountains in the distance and clouds floating above them. A bird flying in the vast sky among several leisurely clouds can also be imagined.

Keywords: Chinese poetry, Scenery, Soseki Natsume, Adjective

Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
poem number	17	15	15	6	12	18	13	12	15	8	16	13	12
2water	94%	60%	67%	0%	25%	33%	54%	0%	13%	0%	0%	0%	100%
3cloud	94%	13%	7%	83%	100%	100%	23%	0%	0%	0%	19%	0%	25%
4mount.	94%	100%	27%	17%	0%	17%	31%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%
5flower	6%	0%	27%	50%	75%	0%	23%	25%	7%	0%	0%	100%	75%
6rain	53%	0%	13%	33%	25%	0%	0%	8%	7%	0%	100%	8%	50%
7moon	47%	0%	100%	17%	50%	6%	15%	25%	0%	0%	13%	8%	8%
8autumn	18%	7%	20%	17%	25%	0%	100%	25%	20%	25%	19%	0%	8%
9willow	12%	13%	27%	0%	8%	6%	15%	33%	0%	13%	0%	38%	50%
10bird	0%	7%	13%	100%	8%	11%	23%	0%	0%	0%	13%	54%	33%
11sky	41%	0%	13%	100%	0%	6%	46%	17%	0%	0%	0%	15%	8%
12spring	24%	20%	13%	0%	0%	0%	8%	8%	20%	13%	0%	46%	25%
13bamboo	0%	7%	13%	17%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	100%	19%	15%	17%
14sunset	24%	13%	13%	0%	8%	17%	8%	0%	27%	0%	0%	15%	25%