A STUDY OF SU SHI’S INFLUENCE TO ANCIENT KOREAN LITERATURE

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTION

There is no boundary to the influence of the literary works by Su Shi from the Northern Song dynasty, which can be observed from both the longitudinal and latitudinal perspectives. With reference to the ancient literary documents, Su Shi’s significant role in the literary circles has since been frequently discussed in the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties.

However, being influenceable does not conclude that Su Shi and his literary works were entirely positively received by the Korean literati. Korean literary works depicting Su Shi’s image and reviewing Su Shi’s poems, correspondences and essays displayed their affirmation of Su Shi’s integrity and ability. On the other hand, Korean literati’s criticism of Su Shi’s literary quotations and inclination for Buddhism were highly noticeable as well. Similarly, there were opposing opinions among the Korean literati towards Su Shi’s literary propositions too.

Furthermore, the Battle of Red Cliffs became a notable subject matter for the Korean literati after it was adapted by Su Shi to express his emotions and philosophy in three of his classic literary works. At least a minimum of two hundred literary works titled “the Battle of Red Cliffs” (“Chi Bi”) were created by the Korean literati. Interestingly, instead of purely illustrating the historical battle fought at the end of the Han dynasty prior to the Three Kingdoms period in Chinese history, these literary works comprise varied creative intentions yet to be explored. The emphasis and discussions based on the Red Cliffs (landscape), the battle (incident), the warlords (people) and Su Shi’s literary works (object) in the Korean literary works resulted in the succession, transformation, enrichment and development of the imagery of the Battle of Red Cliffs in Korea.

In addition, the approach to literary creation in Korea was also inspired by Su Shi, which is visible in at least three hundred pieces of responsorial poems to Su Shi in Korea. Nevertheless, these poems not only expressed similar emotions to that of Su Shi, but also conveyed different purports as well. The creation of such a substantial amount of responsorial poems deserve analytical and exhaustive study for logical deduction of the responsorial impulse and its relation to the cultural context.

In a few words, this study aims to investigate the influence of Su Shi and his literary works to ancient Korean literature by exploring the topics as follows:

I. Korean literati’s assessment of Su Shi’s image and literary works.
II. Korean literati’s acceptance of Su Shi’s literary propositions.
III. The vitality of the imagery developed from classic literary works by Su Shi in Korea.
IV. The significance of Korean literati’s responsorial poems to Su Shi.

SCOPE OF WORK FOR SELECTED PHD STUDENT

This study focuses on both the Chinese and Korean texts, in two main categories of literary works:

I. Su Shi’s literary propositions, including his principles of essay writing, his views of the distinguished poets, writers, calligraphers and painters, his literary representations of the Battle of Red Cliffs, as well as poems that Korean literati referred to upon the creation of responsorial poems.

II. Korean literary works on Su Shi’s image, literary propositions, imagery of the Battle of Red Cliffs and responsorial poems to Su Shi.
Chinese literary works on Su Shi’s image, literary propositions, imagery of the Battle of Red Cliffs and responsorial poems to Su Shi will be appropriately raised to complement analysis, discussion or comparison.