

Review Essay

On the Sources of Lu Xun's Treatise on Māra Poetry:
Some Issues and a Few Answers

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Rojin Bungaku no Engen wo Saguru: 'Mara Shi Ryoku Setsu' zaigenkō 鲁迅文学の淵源を探る: 「摩羅詩力説」材源考 [An Enquiry into the Origins of Lu Xun[s] Literature: A Study of the Sources for 'On the Power of Māra Poetry'], by Kitaoka Masako 北岡正子, Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 2015, xxi + 650 pp, ISBN 9784762965517

'Mara Shiriyoku setsu' zaigenkō nōto 「摩羅詩力説」材源考ノ一ト [Notes for a Study of the Sources for 'On the Power of Māra Poetry'], by Kitaoka Masako 北岡正子, *Yasō* 野草 (Wild Grass) 9–56 (October 1972–August 1995)

Moluo shi li shuo caiyuan kao 摩罗诗力说材源考 [A Study of the Sources for 'On the Power of Māra Poetry'], by Beigang Zhengzi 北冈正子 (Kitaoka Masako), trans. He Naiying 何乃英 with Chen Qiufan 陈秋帆, Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1983

Moluo shi li shuo 摩羅詩力説 (On the Power of Māra Poetry) is a lengthy nine-part treatise on Chinese and comparative literature written by Lu Xun 鲁迅 (the pen name of Zhou Shuren 周樹人, 1881–1936)—generally considered the founder of modern Chinese literature—in 1907 at the age of 26, after he had given up the study of medicine in Sendai and returned

to Tokyo to embark on a literary career. The title comes from a deprecatory remark by Robert Southey, Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom, about Lord Byron, whom Southey referred to as 'chief of the Satanic school, inspired by the spirit of Moloch and Belial',¹ which Lu Xun rendered into Chinese as *Moluo shi* 摩羅詩 (the Māra school of poetry), invoking the transliterated name of the Hindu deity rather than the more common word *sadan* 撒旦 (Satan), because he considered Byron's poetry a clarion call for rebellion against the status quo and justice for the oppressed peoples of the world.

Kitaoka Masako 北岡正子 (b. 1936) first published her widely admired series *'Mara Shiriyoku setsu' zaigenkō nōto* 「摩羅詩力説」材源考ノ一ト (Notes for a Study of the Sources for 'On the Power of Māra Poetry') in 24 instalments in the Japanese journal of modern Chinese literary studies *Yasō* 野草 (Wild Grass), numbers 9–56, from October 1972 to August 1995.² These modestly titled *Nōto* ノ一ト (Notes) trace the numerous Japanese and European sources Lu Xun used while writing 'Māra'. Kitaoka completed her graduate studies in Chinese language and literature at Tokyo University and eventually came to serve as Professor in the Faculty of Literature at Kansai University. She has been a leading figure in what Zhao Jinghua 趙京華 of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences terms the 'empiricist school' (*shizheng pai* 實證派) of Lu Xun research in Japan,³ and has attained near-legendary standing among Lu Xun scholars in China. This set of 'Notes' was abridged and translated as a single volume into Chinese by He Naiying 何乃英 (b. 1935),⁴ producing a useful (but partial) translation of the more extensive 1972–1982 portion of the Japanese series. But this 1983 Chinese translation omits numerous quotations from Japanese- and Western-language sources that were included in the original Japanese 'Notes', as published in the journal *Yasō*—these are given by He Naiying and Chen Qiufan 陈秋帆 only

1. This is from Roden Noel, *Life of Lord Byron* (London: Walter Scott, 1890), 165. See also Southey's preface to *A Vision of Judgement* (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821).

2. The journal *Yasō* is still being published by Chūgoku Bungei Kenkyūkai 中国文芸研究会 (Japanese Association for Chinese Literature and Art Studies).

3. Zhao Jinghua 赵京华, *Zhou shi xiongdi yu Riben* 周氏兄弟与日本 [The Brothers Zhou and Japan] (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 2011), 70–84.

4. See Beigang Zhengzi 北冈正子 (Kitaoka Masako), *Moluo shi li shuo caiyuan kao* 摩罗诗力说材源考 [A Study of the Sources for 'On the Power of Māra Poetry'], trans. He Naiying 何乃英 with Chen Qiufan 陈秋帆 (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1983).

in their own Chinese translation. Kitaoka then rewrote what amounts to an abbreviated version of these *Nōto* as useful translator's endnotes (*yakuchū* 訳注) to the Japanese translation of 'On the Power of Māra Poetry' for the 20-volume *Rojin Zenshū* 鲁迅全集 (The Complete Works of Lu Xun [in the Japanese translation]) (Tokyo: Gakushū Kenkyūsha, 1985), Volume 1. Like the Chinese translation by He Naiying, however, *Rojin Zenshū* omits the numerous Western-language quotations in its endnotes. Kitaoka's long-awaited 2015 monograph *Rojin Bungaku no Engen wo Saguru* is a new work produced on the basis of the 'Notes' but with substantially different contents.⁵ Although it is a product of the twenty-first century, it is (remarkably) set entirely in traditional, full-form *kanji* within the Japanese text (as well as the quoted Chinese passages). More importantly, it restores the English- and other European-language quotations within the Japanese text.

Lu Xun begins 'Māra' by discussing the decline of the world's ancient civilisations (he places China together with India, Israel and Iran) into shadows of their former selves (*ying guo* 影國), which he links to a decline in their literary vitality (*wenshi shiwei* 文事式微). He then stresses the importance of the role a newly energised literature can play in revitalising a people's spirit (for example, Dante's role in Italian history). In that way, much of what Lu Xun writes in classical Chinese in 'Māra' presages the agenda of the New Literature (1917) and May Fourth (1919) movements by some 10 years. Qu Yuan 屈原, Liu Xie 劉勰 and Chinese approaches to poetry in *Wenxin Diaolong* 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons) are all critically evaluated. Lu Xun then moves on to draw inspiration from Nietzsche and Gogol but, in a more major way, from the *engagé* Romantic poets Byron and Shelley, and to trace their inroads to Germany, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and Russia through the various writers and poets they influenced, including Körner, Ibsen, Pushkin, Lermontov, Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krasiński and Petőfi.

Lu Xun's sources were numerous but, according to Kitaoka (2015), he drew on several works on the literature of Russia and Poland by the Danish

5. Kitaoka Masako 北岡正子, *Rojin Bungaku no Engen wo Saguru: Mara Shi Ryoku Setsu' zaigenko* 鲁迅文学の淵源を探る: 「摩罗诗力说」材源考 [An Enquiry into the Origins of Lu Xun[s] Literature: A Study of the Sources for 'On the Power of Māra Poetry'] (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 2015), xxi. This volume contains an eight-page bibliography and a useful nine-page index of personal names, titles of works, terms and events.

critic Georg Brandes and John Addington Symonds's *Shelley* (1878) as well as the major Japanese works on Byron and Shelley at that time.⁶ The latter included: Kimura Takatarō 木村鷹太郎, *Bairon: bungeikai no dai maō* バイロン: 文芸界の大魔王 [Byron: Great Satan of the Literary World] (Tokyo: Daigakukan, 1902); Kimura Takatarō, *Kaizoku* 海賊 [The Corsair], an early Japanese-language translation of Byron's poem; Yoneda Minoru 米田実, *Bairon* バイロン [Byron] (Tokyo: Minyūsha, 1900), a laudatory biography written in an archaistic style; Hamada Yoshizumi 濱田佳澄, *Shierei* シエレレー [Shelley] (Tokyo: Minyūsha, 1900), another laudatory treatment in book form by a pioneering scholar of Western literature in Japan—this was the main source for Lu Xun's section on Shelley in part six of 'On the Power of Māra Poetry'; Emil Reich, *Hungarian Literature: An Historical & Critical Survey* (London: Jarrold & Sons, 1898); Frederick Riedl, *A History of Hungarian Literature*, trans. C.H. Ginever (London: William Heinemann, 1906); Georg Brandes, *Poland: A Study of the Land, People and Literature* (London: William Heinemann, 1903); Georg Brandes, *Impressions of Russia*, trans. S.C. Eastman (London: Walter Scott, 1889); Petr Kropotkin, *Russian Literature* (London: Duckworth Co., 1905); Sándor Petőfi, *Gedichte von Alexander Petőfi* [Poems of Alexander Petőfi], trans. J. Goldschmidt (Leipzig: Reclam, 1883); and Sándor Petőfi, *Der Strick des Henkers* [The Hangman's Rope], trans. Johann Kömödy (Leipzig: Reclam, 1876). It is noteworthy that Lu Xun could work in Japanese and German. His brother, Zhou Zuoren, helped him with English sources and in Tokyo they also took Russian-language lessons.

This was clearly a major undertaking. If Lu Xun, in his youth, could be said to have written a thesis on literature, this would definitely be it. In the past, there have been different interpretations of what it represents, as well as what Kitaoka's scholarship on it implies, or what Zhao Ruihong's 赵瑞蕻 and my own work thereon has intended.⁷ Zhao, Foundation Professor

6. Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885–1967), Lu Xun's middle brother and close collaborator, wrote in his memoirs that Brandes appealed to the brothers Zhou because he was an oppositional figure vis-à-vis the establishment.

7. Zhao Ruihong 赵瑞蕻, *Lu Xun Moluo Shi Li Shuo: Zhushi, Jinyi, Jieshuo* 鲁迅《摩罗诗力说》: 注释·今译·解说 [Lu Xun's 'On the Power of Māra Poetry': Annotations, a Vernacular Chinese Translation and Explication] (Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 1982, 2nd ed. 1986). The 1986 edition is corrected, expanded and includes a new afterword by Zhao. For more on this and other classical-style

of Chinese and Comparative Literature at Nanjing University, viewed it as the first work in the field of comparative literature in China and Lu Xun, consequently, as the founder of that field. I have seen it as a blueprint for Lu Xun's own literary career. Kitaoka approaches it basically from the angle of locating the sources, which she has done admirably, but still not completely after 45 years of searching. Kitaoka has always emphasised that Lu Xun had his own agenda in compiling 'On the Power of Māra Poetry', saying:

What I would like to point out here is that Lu Xun, in tracing the line of 'Satanic poets' that began with Byron in England, did not look for them among the various other countries of Western Europe, but rather in fact he sought them from among the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe per se. In the meantime, it could be predicted that the question that would invariably come forth in the course of events was that of the desire for national independence of those people who had suffered from backwardness and oppressive rule.

ここで指摘しておきたいことはイギリスのバイロンに始まった「悪魔派」詩人の系譜を、魯迅が、他の西欧諸国にではなくこれらの中・東欧諸民族の中に求めたことそれ自体に、すでに後進性と圧制に苦しみ民族独立を願う人々の問題を引き出さざるを得ない成行きが予想されるということである。⁸

In other words, it is using foreign things for a Chinese agenda (*yang wei Zhong yong* 洋为中用), which Lu Xun himself says (in different words), at the outset of 'Māra': 'That I now propose to suspend, for the time being, a more exhaustive treatment of ancient matters and instead to seek for new voices from alien lands is, in fact, motivated by a reverence for our own past' (今且置古事不道，別求新声于异邦，而其因即动于怀古).⁹

Some scholars in China have come to the hasty conclusion that the point of Kitaoka's scholarship is to demonstrate that Lu Xun was plagiarising. Li Zhen 李震, in an otherwise inspirational article, plainly states:

[Such a position] is to view 'On the Power of Māra Poetry' as a translation or even as a plagiarised work. This view originates from the Japanese scholar Kitaoka Masako. She considers 'On the Power of Māra Poetry' to be something he translated from other people's work while he was in Japan: of the nine

essays by Lu Xun, see the forthcoming work by Jon Eugene von Kowallis, *Warriors of the Spirit: Lu Xun's Early Wenyan Essays* (Berkeley: University of California, Institute of East Asian Studies, China Research Monograph Series).

8. Kitaoka Masako, "Mara Shiryoku setsu" zaigenkō nōto, sono nana' 「摩羅詩力説」材源考ノート(その七) [Notes on the Sources for 'On the Power of Māra Poetry', #7 (On Petōfi)], *Yasō* 17 (1975): 75.

9. Lu Xun, *Lu Xun Quanji* 鲁迅全集 [Complete Works of Lu Xun], Volume 1 (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1991), 65.

sections that comprise 'On the Power of Māra Poetry', [she holds that] section four to the end of the first half of section nine can be considered translated text, the first three sections are an introduction to the translation and the second half of the ninth section is an afterword to the translation. This sort of misreading is obviously biased.

… 将《摩罗诗力说》当做一部翻译，甚至剽窃之作。此见出自日本学者北冈正子。她认为《摩罗诗力说》是鲁迅在日本期间转译别人的文字，全文的九个部分中，第四部分到第九部分的前半部分可以算译文，而前三部分是译序，第九部分的后半部分是译跋。这种误读显然是偏狭的。¹⁰

But Kitaoka already addressed the question of plagiarism in her *Nōto* #7, writing:

I would like to add that as for 'On the Power of Māra Poetry', in following the lineage of the poets of the 'Satanic school', we now have the sources that nearly every section is based on. [But 'Māra'] is not the type of thing the essence of which can be summarised by telling how its sources are used, and so on. If I explain this in language that is *au courant*, these are circumstances in which the question of plagiarism might also arise; [but I think] the examples [I have] cited so far will clarify this. However, as for the way Lu Xun traced the lineage of the 'Satanic school' among the Slavic and Magyar peoples and the things he constructed, I would decisively and unequivocally emphasise that it was not 'plagiarism'. To understand Lu Xun's true intention in writing 'Māra', I think one must interpret it precisely on the very basis of its structure. An additional point is that **one must differentiate the way Lu Xun selected materials and used them to address his own questions from the way other people's contributions are relied upon to elucidate the matters that are under discussion.**

10. See Li Zhen 李震, "Moluo shi li shuo" yu Zhongguo shixue de xiandai zhuanxing' 《摩罗诗力说》与中国诗学的现代转型 ['On the Power of Māra Poetry' and the Modern Transformation of Chinese Poetics], in *Yan shuo bu jin de Lu Xun yu Wu Si: Lu Xun yu Wu Si Xin Wenhua Yundong xueshu yantaobui lunwen ji* 言说不尽的鲁迅与五四: 鲁迅与五四新文化运动学术研讨会论文集 [Lu Xun and the May Fourth Movement: The Proceedings of the Symposium on Lu Xun and the May Fourth New Culture Movement], ed. Li Jikai 李继凯 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 2011), 181. Li Zhen cites He Naiying's 1983 Chinese translation of *Nōto*, but does not give a page number. Kitaoka's position is that 'the sources used' in that segment of 'On the Power of Māra Poetry' can now be determined, not that it is a translation; Kitaoka, *Rojin Bungaku no Engen wo Saguru*, xiii–ix. Furthermore, in the same work, Kitaoka clearly states: '[On the Power of Māra Poetry] is an essay in nine parts written in literary Chinese (*wenyan* 文言). From part one to part three we have a portion that might be called a preamble (*joron* 序論) or a general introduction (*sōron* 總論). From part four to the first half of part nine we have individual treatments (*kakuron* 各論), corresponding to the various individual poets and the second half of part nine constitutes a conclusion (*musubi* 結び); *ibid.*, viii.

ついでながら、「摩羅詩力説」は、「悪魔派」詩人の系譜を辿ったほとんどの部分に根拠とした材源がある。その材源の用の方が趣旨を要約して述べるなどという種類のものでなく、当世風に解釈すれば盗用問題も起りかねないような態のものであることは、これまでに述べて来た用例によって明らかであろう。だが、魯迅が「悪魔派」の系譜をスラヴ民族、マジャール民族の中に探ろうと構想したことは断じて如何なる「盗用」でもないことを強調したい。魯迅が「摩羅詩力説」を書こうとした真の意図は正にこのような構想の中にこそ読みとられねばならないと私は考える。駄目押しあぐが、魯迅は自分の問題に即して材料を選びそれを使ったのであって、語るべきものを明瞭にし得ぬが為に他人の力に凭るのとは区別されなければならない。¹¹

All this may serve to give an indication of how seriously 'Māra' and Lu Xun's other early essays have been taken by scholars both within¹² and

11. Kitaoka, "Mara Shiryoku setsu" zaigenkō nōto, sono nana', 75–76 (my emphasis). To be fair to Li Zhen, I have not been able to locate this important passage in the 1983 translation into Chinese by He Naiying, on which Li may be relying.

12. Here I have in mind Wang Shijing 王士菁, *Lu Xun zaōqi wupian lunwen zhuyi* 鲁迅早期五篇论文注译 [Five Early Essays by Lu Xun with Annotations and Translations into Vernacular Chinese] (Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 1978, 2nd printing 1981), 267, which includes the 1903 essay 'Shuo Ri' 說鉅 [On Radium]; and the 1907–8 essays 'Ren Zhi Lishi' 人之歷史 [A History of (the Evolution of) Humankind], 'Kexueshi Jiaopian' 科学史教篇 [Lessons from the History of Science], 'Wenhua Pianzhi Lun' 文化偏至論 [On Imbalanced Cultural Development] and 'Moluo Shi Li Shuo' 摩羅詩力説 [On the Power of Māra Poetry]. Each essay is introduced by a short preface (*tijie* 題解) by Wang, himself a prominent biographer of Lu Xun, and an afterword assessing the significance of the essays from a Marxian perspective. The afterword, completed in June 1977, was slightly revised in August 1980 (see pp. 248–67 of the 1981 printing). Notable in this volume is the exclusion of Lu Xun's 1908 essay 'Po E'sheng Lun' 破惡聲論 [Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices], which must still have been deemed too controversial. For that essay, see the *neibu* 内部 volume (for internal circulation only): *Lu Xun wenyan lunwen shiyi* 鲁迅文言论文试译 [Lu Xun's Classical-style Essays, a Provisional Vernacular Translation] (Nanjing: Nanjing Shifan Xueyuan Zhongwen Xi Ziliaoshi, 1976), compiled by a group (including 'Hu Feng rightists' such as Hong Qiao 洪橋) at the Resources Centre at the Department of Chinese of Nanjing Normal College 南京师范学院中文系资料室. This volume contains vernacular Chinese (*baihua* 白话) paraphrases of six of Lu Xun's early essays set on opposite pages from the *wenyan* text, a most convenient format, but (unlike Wang Shijing's and Zhao Ruihong's volumes) it does not furnish annotations for individual phrases and terms; these six essays are 'Ren Zhi Lishi', 'Kexueshi Jiaopian', 'Wenhua Pianzhi Lun', 'Moluo Shi Li Shuo', 'Po E'sheng Lun' and 'Ni Bobu Meishu Yijian Shu' 擬播布美術意見書 [A Proposal for the Promotion of the Fine Arts]. An appendix (pp. 260–85) gathers remarks about these early essays from Lu Xun and his contemporaries: Xu Guangping 許廣平, Tang Tao 唐弢, Li Jiye

outside China. At the very least they shine a light on many of the formative influences on the young Lu Xun. As such, they are a key to understanding the development of his thought, even if they are considered a product of his formative (and therefore) immature period.

Elsewhere I have speculated on the reasons for their neglect in China up until the late 1970s (and actually a good deal later).¹³ This had in part to do with their arcane language, but I believe had more to do with subversive ideas introduced in their texts and controversial sources, such as Nietzsche, who until recently was regarded as a proto-fascist (not just in China), and Lu Xun's condemnation of the suppression of the rights of the individual and the minority by the majority or, still worse, those who claim to rule on behalf of the majority. In terms of literature and thought, they strike out in a bold new direction that is critical of elements in China's literary, cultural and political past without being iconoclastic. And while they champion Western learning and intellectual freedom, they decline to posit the West as the penultimate model. As such, they make a mature attempt at mapping a path for China then and now, advocating internationalism, self-reflection and the precedence of ideals over materialism.

李霁野, Wang Yejiu 王冶秋, Li Helin 李何林 and Sun Yong 孙用, among others, and a two-page bibliography lists journal articles about these essays from 1946 to the 1970s. An English translation by Jon von Kowallis of 'Po E'sheng Lun' appears in 'Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices', *boundary 2: an international journal of literature and culture* 38.2 (2011): 39–62, accompanying an article in the same issue by Wang Hui 汪晖 on the same essay.

13. See Jon Eugene von Kowallis, 'On the Critical Reception of Lu Xun's Early Classical-style Essays of the Japan Period', *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 3.2, Special issue ed. David Der-wei Wang (2016): 357–99; Jon Eugene von Kowallis, 'Re-contextualizing Lu Xun's Early Thought and Poetics in the Journal *Henan*', *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China* 12.3 (2018): 388–423; and Jon Eugene von Kowallis, 'From America to Australia with Lu Xun', in *Lu Xun and Australia*, ed. Mabel Lee, Chiu-Yee Cheung and Sue Wiles (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2016), 112–14.

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SPECIAL ISSUE

WHAT'S IN A NAME? AFTER *ORIENTALISM*

Guest Editors

OLIVIER KRISCHER AND MEAGHAN MORRIS

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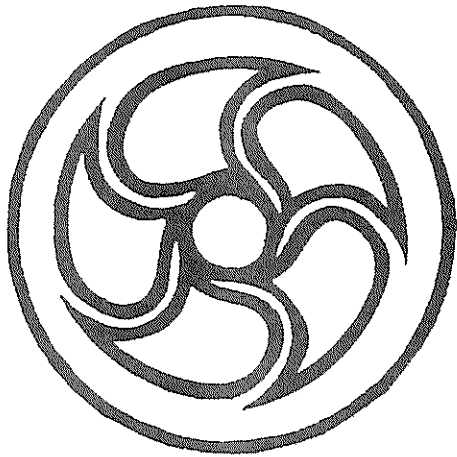
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