

**Classical Chinese Poetry in China and Japan Through the Perspective of Parallelism:
Focusing on the Usage of *Ryūsuitsui*.**

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Kanshi (classical Chinese poetry) is a literary form that traces its origins to China, and is distinct from that of *waka*. However, *kanshi* also flourished in Japan during the 7th century, when Sino-Japanese cultural exchanges prospered following Japan's practice of sending envoys to ~~China~~ ~~China~~, known as *kenzuishi* and *kentōshi*, to China. Therefore, these literary forms, created by the ancients of both countries, are important keys for a comparative study of Chinese and Japanese literature.

*Tsuiku*¹ or 'parallelism' is a very important method of expression in the formal construction of *kanshi*. Moreover, following the development of *kintaishi*², different variations of parallelism started to appear. Among them, one such form was *ryūsuitsui*, which was complicated and yet sophisticated. The word *ryūsuitsui* is a compound of '*ryūsui*' (flowing water) and '*tsui*' (parallelism). Hence, in contrast to an ordinary parallelism, in *Ryūsuitsui* the top and bottom phrases of the couplets are tightly bound in diverse logical relationships, where the meaning of the entire poem is understood only when the top and bottom phrases are read together as a couplet, and not as independent phrases. This form is seen as a unique method of expression and has attracted the attention of many scholars in China. However, in the field of classical Chinese literature in Japan, one hardly comes across any research work done on *ryūsuitsui* from the Nara and early Heian Period. Therefore, in this paper, I wish to discuss the ancient classical Chinese poetry that developed in Japan through the perspective of *ryūsuitsui*, focusing on the classical Chinese literature of Japan from the Nara and early Heian period.

For this research, I started with the reading of ancient theories on poetics. Then, based on the available descriptions of Chinese *ryūsuitsui*, I tried to define and bring to light the character and usage of *ryūsuitsui*.

The basis of the formation of *ryūsuitsui* is deeply related to the process of maturity of *kintaishi*,

¹ *Tsuiku* refers to a unique method of expression in the Chinese poetics. It is a couplet where the words used in both the top and bottom phrases are in a parallel and contrastive relationship, both in meaning and intonation.

² This is a Chinese poetic form that came into existence during the Chinese Tang Dynasty.

whereby Chinese poets sought changes in the expression of parallelism.

To further investigate *ryūsuitsui* in Japan, I analyzed *Kaifusō*, dated 751 A.D, which is a representative work from the Nara Period and the oldest compilation of classical Chinese poetry of Japan. I also analysed the early ninth-century work *Bunka Shureishū*, compiled in 818 in the Heian period; and *Denshi Kashū* and *Kanke Bunsō: Kōshū*, representative texts from the late ninth century. As a result, I found out that:

1. There are no examples of *ryūsuitsui* in the Nara period. However, it gradually came into use during the early Heian period.
2. Also during the Heian period, there appeared a clear difference in the number of *ryūsuitsui* in the classical Chinese poetry of Japan between the first and the second half of the ninth century.

If these findings are considered in the light of the formation and evolution of *kintaishi* in the literary history of Chinese poetry in Japan, it may be understood that with the process of increased usage of *kintaishi*, *ryūsuitsui* also came into existence, and started to appear more frequently. Moreover, it can be said that the usage of *ryūsuitsui* brought about a variation in the expression through parallelism of classical Chinese poetry in Japan and, further, that it paved the way for a mature form of *kintaishi*, and holds a special position in the history of early Heian-period classical Chinese poetry. In conclusion, it can be said that in the literary history of Chinese poetry both in China and Japan, similar patterns of formation and evolution of *ryūsuitsui* may be observed.