

Remembrance and Mourning: Taking the History of Poetry and on the Burning of the Old Summer Palace by the Anglo-French Forces as the Core of the Research

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Abstract : This paper is based on the burning of the Old Summer Palace by the Anglo-French forces. The Old Summer Palace, Yuanmingyuan, is an imperial garden located outside Beijing, but it was looted and burned down by the Anglo-French troops. Hundreds of guards died, and Emperor Xianfeng also fled from the back door to the Chengde Mountain Resort in a hurry. It is a very shameful piece of Chinese imperial history. At that time, it was well known that the capital was almost occupied. However, the detailed process of the whole incident and the subsequent accountability was regarded as a national shame, which was omitted in the historical records and rarely mentioned by scholars, especially under the rulings of Xianfeng and Tongzhi. Due to this, the researcher explored how the incident was documented in historical poetry and how the war was recalled and evaluated from different perspectives so that rich and diverse historical interpretations can be constructed. The issues explored and discussed in this paper are divided into two parts: (i) the historical writing of the Incident in Gengshen Year, which mainly focuses on the Historical Poetry on the Burning of the Old Summer Palace by the Anglo-French forces, and (ii) the different identities of poets and their perspectives of mourning, which leads to the homogeneity or heterogeneity of their interpretations.

Keywords : Anglo-French expedition to China, the Incident in Gengshen Year, burning of the Old Summer Palace, historical poetry

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