

## **Azalea Blooming in the Countryside**

### **--Study of Kim Sowol's Poem "Azalea Flower"**

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#### **Abstract**

**Kim Sowol, as one of the main founders of Korean modernist lyric poetry, is known as "National Poet" and "Local Poet". His poems have been translated into Chinese, English, French, Russian and other languages. In 1986, Korea also established a literary award named after him "Kim Sowol Literature Award". Kim Sowol's poems are pure and sincere. The folk poems created by Kim Sowol are famous for their lyrical and sentimental style, which is very popular among Korean people. Among them, "Azalea Flower" is the most famous. This article first examines the personal tragic experience of Kim Sowol's poems and the melancholic temperament in the poems. Kim Sowol wrote poems from his own point of view, and got the people's understanding of his sympathy. Next, this paper explores the connection between the poetry and the people in the language, content, thoughts and feelings of the poetry of "Azalea Flower", thus getting the reason why Kim Sowol is highly regarded by the people.**

#### **Keywords**

**Kim Sowol; Korean Language Education; National Poet.**

#### **1. Introduction**

Kim Sowol is the most popular lyric poet in Korea since modern times. His poems are sincere and pure and move people's hearts. The folk poems he created are known for their sadness and are of great value in the history of literature. From 1920 to 1934 is his literary creation period, during which he created 268 excellent poems (according to incomplete statistics). His most influential work during his lifetime was "Azalea Flower" published in "Student World" magazine in 1922, which was highly praised at that time. In 1925, he published the only collection of poems of the same name during his lifetime, which also established his position in the history of Korean literature. To this day, Kim Sowol still enjoys a good reputation in the literary world, and the number of research papers about him far exceeds that of his works. His poems have such vitality. He is also known as the "popular poet" of Korea, and he has become the most influential poet in the history of Korean literature. This paper will study Kim Sowol's own experience and the language, content, thoughts and feelings of the poem "Azalea Flower".

#### **2. Kim Sowol's Bitter Life**

"The Aesthetic Relationship between Art and Reality" wrote: "Tragedy is human suffering or death. Even if this suffering or death does not show any infinitely powerful and invincible power, it is completely enough to fill us with terror and sympathy. No matter whether the cause of human suffering and death is accidental or inevitable, suffering and death are always terrible." Probably Kim Sowol has become an eternal regret in people's hearts because of the tragic end of his life, and will be missed forever because of his regret.

Kim Sowol, born in 1902 in a wealthy farmhouse in North Ping An, Korea, as the eldest grandson of the clan, he was very smart by nature and loved by his family since he was a child. At the age of three, due to his father's mental disorder, he lived with his grandfather. Although my grandfather loved Kim

Sowol very much, but the long-term lack of paternal love, coupled with the gradual decline of the family line, increasingly promoted Kim Sowol's melancholic and sensitive character. My grandfather loved little Kim Sowol very much. Under the influence of his grandfather who was very knowledgeable in Sinology, the young Kim Sowol read a Chinese private school. At the same time, Du Fu's worry about the country and the people, and Li Yu's feelings of losing his country were planted in Kim Sowol's heart. From 1910 to 1945, Japan underwent colonial rule on the Korean Peninsula. From birth, Kim Sowol faced the situation of losing his country without being a country. During the Japanese occupation, the people were displaced, their homes were lost, and they suffered humiliation and suffering. At the age of 13, Kim Sowol entered North Korea No. 5 Middle School. The Fifth Middle School was founded by Cao Wanzhi, a heroic figure who was full of national spirit at the time. The school itself was bred with national struggle consciousness and patriotism. The cultivation and nurturing of the school's ideas has also become the source of thought for the consciousness of national resistance in Kim Sowol's poems in the future. While in school, Kim Sowol also participated in the "March First Movement". Unfortunately, the "March First Movement" ended in failure. After that, Kim Sowol traveled to Japan to study, and dropped out of school when the Kanto Earthquake returned to China. After returning to China, Kim Sowol worked as an elementary school teacher and also worked in the branch of Donga Daily. Although Kim Sowol has a certain reputation in the industry, he still lives by writing poetry, and his life is still very embarrassing. In the end, the newspaper did not manage well, and he committed suicide by taking opium in a difficult situation.

It is human nature to sympathize with the tragedy of death. Especially for a talented person who died young, the extent of his tragedy is directly proportional to the extent to which he is remembered by later generations. His works exude brilliance, and at the same time, the tragic ending of his untimely death also evokes sympathy and compassion in the hearts of the people to some extent. Reading his poems, and pushing the poet to a new height, become a way for future generations to miss the poet, and it is also a form of releasing one's inner identity and pity for the tragedy. Therefore, Kim Sowol, a brilliant star, lost prematurely, prompting the people to sympathize and sympathize with sorrow. From then on, it has become the eternal regret and miss in people's hearts, and this has precisely achieved his status that will be remembered forever.

### 3. Specific Researches into "Azalea Flower"

"During the development of Korea's modern poetry, Kim Sowol's poems are representative examples of personal poetic pursuits and unique achievements. The new forms of poetry he discovered are derived from the combination of traditional folk songs and a sense of local language." In his poetry creation, Kim Sowol skillfully combined his own poem themes and folk songs to create a lot of modern folk poems that are rich in rhythm and beauty. His poems contain true feelings, fierce fire, cold night, romantic style and unique national imagination, forming a distinctive folk song in unyielding resistance and self-struggling.

Among the poems based on "Azalea Flower", the most famous from ancient times to the present is probably Kim Sowol's "Azalea Flower". The language of poetry has national characteristics, and the metrical form is easily accepted by the public. Before and after the March First Movement, the Korean poetry scene showed a tendency to escape reality due to the infestation of sentimentalism. In this atmosphere, Kim Sowol chose the combination of folk music and modernist poetry to integrate the nation into the world, and fight against the deprived culture with the national spiritual heritage. In the poetry collection "Azalea Flower", he borrowed the metric of traditional folk songs, combined the traditional folk songs with the metric and the sense of local language, blended into the poetic nature of modern people, and created many modern folk poems with rich metric beauty. "Kim Sowol's folk poems have become the highest state of Korea's modern poetry, forming the characteristics of national creation." This kind of folk poems are taken from the folk and have a melodious rhythm. When they are recited, they can easily evoke a sense of rhythm and story. Therefore, this kind of poetry is more easily accepted by people.

When you are tired of me / leave me / I will send you away silently with pious heart

Azalea Flower on Medicine Mountain / I will pick a bunch / Sprinkle on your way  
 Every step I take you away / Step on gently / Azalea Flower I picked for you  
 When you are tired of me / leave me / even if you die / I won't cry

This is Kim Sowol's famous work and one of the representative works of folk poetry. Azalea Flower symbolizes long-term prosperity, joy and happiness. In this poem, the poet uses Azalea Flower, which symbolizes eternity and happiness, as a pavement, to bring out the unspeakable hatred in the poet's heart. It starts with "When you are tired of me, leave me", and ends with the same sentence, sing three sighs, and the remaining sound curls up. "Even if I die, I won't cry." It's not as good as stepping on your heart every step you leave, and your painful heart is like torn petals over and over. Although there are no tears, it is torn apart and has long been broken. Such a cry, like a step up, melodious and long.

This poem is the most representative poem in Korea's modern poems about parting. It is the sublimation of parting style poems. Moreover, Confucianism can be reflected in scattered flowers of merit and love without sadness. This poem tells the love and pain of the parting of people in love. Due to the influence of Western literary thoughts, the poet's works have become revolutionary masterpieces in Korean national culture and contemporary Korean literary works.

The poem is composed of quartets. The first page stated that although you were tired of me, I had no grievances when you left. The second page expresses not only that, but I have sprinkled Azalea Flower on the famous Medicine Mountain on the way you left, implying my blessings to you. In the third series, every step you take is stepping on the path of the Azalea Flower I sprinkled for you, forming the emotion of the poem, which is the climax of the whole poem. In the fourth part, it is emphasized again that although you are tired of me and leave me, because of love, you have to hold back your feelings and not let you see me shed a tear. I want to show you the most beautiful face.

So what is the meaning of Azalea Flower in this poem? First of all, the speaker in this poem is expressed as a woman. Therefore, Azalea Flower is a female identity that can sacrifice herself to love, and can be connected with a female identity that can sublimate feelings through love.

The leaves of Azalea Flower are very soft, slender and weak, but they can drill out on hard ground and bloom beautiful flowers, showing strong vitality. Therefore, Azalea Flower can be compared to the strong vitality of women, and it also shows a beautiful, simple, and youthful female face. This face is the face of traditional Korean women, that is, strong and feminine, with rigidity in softness and softness in rigidity.

"Azalea Flower" is a lyric poem about parting. Since ancient times, there have been many parting poems, but this poem has its special charm when read. The poet wrote in the first person the tone of a broken-hearted woman: "When you are tired of me/leave me away", at the beginning, he set a sad tone for us. A weak woman whose lover is tired of herself and wants to abandon herself and leave, no matter who it is, her heart cannot be peaceful and peaceful. And how do "I" behave? "I" didn't cry, didn't hold back, or even asked anything, "I just sent you away quietly with pious heart", and even picked Azalea Flower from the mountain and sprinkled it on the way "you" left, letting "you" step on it. "Azalea Flower" in Chinese refers to "Rhododendron flower", commonly known as "azalea". In Korea, it is a kind of sacred flower, which represents steadfastness, honesty and courage, and contains the joy of love. So in this poem it is a symbol of love. The other party "stepped" on Azalea Flower to leave. In fact, what he was stepping on was not the petals, but the shattered and withered heart of "I". It was also the ignorance, indifference and trampling of the pure love of "I"! The last paragraph of the poem reads: "When you are tired of me/leave me/I will hold back tears with heart." The word "forbearance" vividly portrays the heroine's strong restraint of her emotions and the inability to weep in grief. This is not only an emphasis on the meaning of the first paragraph "with piety and silence", but it also implies the intense emotional fluctuations in her heart. "I" forbearance, sadness, dedication to love, enthusiasm, sincerity, and the pain of being unable to love, are all vividly expressed. Moreover, the repetitions of "when you are tired of me" and "leave me" are related to each other end to end, forming a symmetrical and quiet artistic effect. In addition, "I" and "you", people

and flowers, love and indifference, the lightness of external behavior and the strong internal feelings form a strong contrast, and the writing is delicate and profound. Therefore, this poem makes people never tire of reading it, and in the silence, I feel that there is a flow of emotions surging, which is deeply moving. This beauty constitutes the unique charm of poetry.

Looking at this poem alone, it is generally regarded as a pure love poem. Combining the background of the times, we will find that it was created in 1924, when Korea was under Japanese imperialist aggression and the entire country was reduced to a colony. The poet Kim Sowol witnessed the tragic state of subjugation and experienced the feeling of being a subjugated slave, so he wrote many poems to express his strong patriotic feelings. It can be seen that "Azalea Flower" actually expresses the strong patriotism of a person who has lost his motherland. "You" symbolizes an occupied and devastated country beyond recognition. Even though "I" am so sad and forbearing, I still don't lose my nostalgia and deep love for it! The poet's patriotic sentiment can be seen from here.

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper focuses on the miserable life of the poet Kim Sowol and the melancholic temperament in his poems, focusing on the specific research of "Azalea Flower", and summarizes the reasons why Kim Sowol was awarded the "National Poet" of Korea. In that era of wars and the destruction of the country, Kim Sowol used his life to sing national ballads. He cried and sorrowed throughout his life, but used poetry to gather strength and hope, and use his wisdom to touch the people of that era and us today. "I hope that one day, the world will always be spring." This is the poet's wish and the seed of hope he left to the world. He left, but left an eternal treasure in the history of literature, becoming the most dazzling Azalea Flower blooming in the countryside.

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