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# Value of Teaching Materials of Shimazaki Toson's *The First Love*

CHEN Zhiqing\*

Shimazaki Toson's *The First Love* has appeared in the Japanese Language Textbooks since 1959, with a history of more than 60 years. In middle school textbooks, this poem became a staple since the 1980s and is now rock-solid. It was once included in high school textbooks, but has been rarely used since the 1990s. This poem has a long history of materialization, but as far as I can tell, there are few previous studies on its value as a teaching material. This paper discusses the value of *The First Love*, aiming to research the meaning of poetry teaching materials.

This paper, firstly introduces and interprets *The First Love*. Secondly, it carries out a concrete study on the situation of materialization of this poem in the middle and high school textbooks. thirdly, there is a examination about the reason why the poem was re-focused in the mid-1970s. Lastly, this paper discusses the value of this poem as a teaching material by considering the Japanese Language Textbooks of middle school and their instruction books.

Enjoying the beautiful rhythm of fixed verse is one of the important values of this poem which been emphasized. It was mainly read aloud for comprehension, however, in the 2000s, emphasis was on reading aloud for expression.

The next important value is experiencing the feeling of first love that was sung in the poem. Having students think about love, was considered an important reason why the poem was re-focused in the mid-1970s.

Finally, the historical value of literature is one of the major reasons why this poem is used in textbooks. Also, the content of its literary historical value has changed within time. In the 1970s, the great role of poetry in the liberation of individuals was emphasized, but the degree of emphasis has decreased since then. In the 2000s, the emphasis was based more on nurturing the attitude to enjoy and also to inherit and develop the traditional literary culture. Under this background, as a classic in modern poetry, this poem has been widely recognized as a work worthy to be inherited.

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## Key words

Shimazaki Toson, *The First Love*, value of teaching materials

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\*The United Graduate School of Education, Tokyo gakuhei University