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Preface

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The long-history Chinese classical literature came to extraordinarily grand prosperity in Tang Dynasty (618-907), with outstanding achievements in poetry. Literates were still main composers at that time but were no longer the only ones. Instead, people from different social strata, including emperors, generals, ministers, imperial concubines, maids in imperial palace, small tradesmen and porters, song-and-dance and comic entertainers, Buddhists, Taoists, were all keen on writing poems. Poetry was widely used in many fields of daily life. Memorials to the throne, official and private letters, allegories, travel notes, narrative literature with alternate prose and rhymed lines, storytelling and ballad-singing literature could all be presented in the form of poetry. Thus, modern poet and scholar Wen Yiduo (1899-1946) points out: "People tend to speak of 'Tang poems,' but I'd like to talk about 'Poem's Tang,' which means the Tang Dynasty (flourishing period) in poetry history." (Selected from *Wen Yiduo on Tang Poems*)

The prosperity and achievements of poetry in Tang Dynasty can be first shown in its huge number. Many things have changed with the lapse of over 1,000 years, but more than 50,000 poems from over 2,300 Tang poets are still handed down to today. Tang Dynasty was an