

Illustrated Texts—— Look at The Reception and Dissemination of Chu Ci's Works from The Perspective of "Nine Songs".

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Abstract: In the long course of history, the dissemination channels of Qu Yuan's works have shown diversified characteristics. In addition to the traditional forms of communication using words as the carrier, such as annotation and research, literary creation, etc., the communication methods using pictures as the medium are also unique, and occupy a place that cannot be ignored in the field of cultural communication. From the Liu and Song dynasties of the Southern Dynasties to the present day, countless paintings closely related to Qu Yuan and his immortal work "Chu Ci" have emerged like bright stars. These paintings are like messengers of time, spanning thousands of years of time and space, presenting the fantastic and magnificent world of Qu Yuan's pen to the world. Among the many paintings on the theme of "Chu Ci", "Nine Songs" is like the most dazzling pearl, which has been favored and sought after by painters of all ages. In particular, the three chapters of "Xiang Jun", "Xiang Lady" and "Mountain Ghost" in the chapter of "Nine Songs" have become popular themes for painters to depict. The number of paintings created around these three works is very large, and the styles are very different, like a cultural puzzle with a unique style, each piece carries the unique understanding and emotional expression of different artists of different eras. The differences between these paintings, as well as the inextricable connections between words and images, serve as a mirror to clearly reflect the reception of the same work in different eras. Through them, we can not only gain insight into the changes in aesthetic fashions in different eras, but also deeply feel the diverse interpretations and unique perceptions of the rich connotations of the Nine Songs text by different reader groups, and appreciate the infinite charm and profound heritage of Chinese culture in the process of inheritance and development.

Keywords: Qu yuan; "Nine Songs"; Picture; text-image relationship; Reception and dissemination.

1. Introduction

In the long river of Chinese history, Qu Yuan is like a towering spiritual monument, and he is a well-known patriotic poet in Chinese history. His sincere image of loyalty and patriotism is just like a shining star, illuminating the firmament of history; The personality charm of the high and clean pine, like the hollow valley orchid, exudes an elegant fragrance; And the achievements of the words that shine with the sun and the moon are like thunder breaking through the sky, leaving a magnificent chapter in the history of literature. His influence spread like ripples, stirring up waves not only in the field of literature, but also in the world of painting art, giving birth to many Danqing paintings closely related to Qu Yuan and his works, like a long and colorful historical scroll, telling a cultural legend across time and space.

For the unique cultural phenomenon of "Chu Ci Tu", scholar Jiang Liangfu has made an in-depth analysis, and he pointed out that "Chu Ci Tu" can be roughly divided into four categories: "One is called the law book, and the ink fragrance is elegant, showing the cultural heritage; the second is called painting, which outlines the fantasy world of Chu Ci in the flow of brushstrokes; The third is the map, and the mountains and rivers hide the historical code of Chu; The four miscellaneous items, such as the mystery of celestial phenomena, the richness of fragrant grass, and the elegance of wine order, are all helpful for interpreting the rhyme of 'Sao'. In the field of view of this study, the focus is on the drawing category of these four categories. According to Jiang

Liangfu's statistics, there are more than 80 kinds of portraits related to Chu Ci in the past dynasties, and this number is like a bright star, witnessing the wide spread and far-reaching influence of Chu Ci culture in the field of painting.

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In Qu Yuan's vast creation, "Nine Songs" is like the most brilliant pearl, which has been favored and sought after by painters of all ages. Countless painters have used the pen as a sword, wielding their unique understanding and emotion of "Nine Songs" on the canvas, leaving behind a vast sea of paintings. Since Li Gonglin painted the "Nine Songs" in the Song Dynasty, this picture scroll has been like a cultural seed, taking root and sprouting in all dynasties and blooming into gorgeous flowers. Zhao Mengfu and Zhang Wu of the Yuan Dynasty, with their exquisite skills, gave new artistic life to "Nine Songs"; Chen Hongshou of the Ming Dynasty, with his unique brushstrokes, outlined the fantastic and magnificent mythological world in "Nine Songs"; Xiao Yuncong of the Qing Dynasty used a delicate painting style to show the delicate emotions and profound artistic conception in "Nine Songs"; In modern times, masters such as Xu Beihong, Fu Baoshi and Li Shaowen have injected a new connotation of the times into "Nine Songs" from a modern artistic perspective. In addition, there are also a group of folk painters, although they are not famous in the annals of history, but with

simple brushstrokes and diverse styles, they have jointly painted the magnificent cultural picture of "Nine Songs", so that the artistic charm of "Nine Songs" can be inherited forever in the world of painting.

In the vast galaxy where art and literature intertwine, the mystery of when Qu Yuan and his related works and paintings in Chu Ci were born is like a mist that has long lingered in the academic community, sparking heated discussions and controversies among many scholars.

Some scholars have focused their exploration on the Han and Wei dynasties, firmly believing that on the ancient and simple brick paintings, vague figures of such paintings have quietly been left behind. Mr. Lin He, who studies Chu Yue culture, boldly put forward an interesting speculation in his carefully written article "Nine Songs on Han Dynasty Portrait Bricks". He carefully examined a Han dynasty portrait brick and saw a divine figure in the picture, graceful and unrestrained, wearing a mysterious mask, adorned with a lotus leaf as a decoration, and wearing a lotus leaf as a garment. His attire matched the stunning depiction of "lotus leaves on a lotus leaf" in the poem "Nine Songs: Shao Si Ming". Beside the divine figure, a woman with a worried and pitiful expression looked at it carefully. The scene was exactly the same as the scene in the song "Nine Songs: Shao Siming" where she begged for a son from Shao Siming. Mr. Lin He inferred from this that this painting is highly likely to be the one they have been searching for, the "Nine Songs: Shao Si Ming" painting. From the overall picture, it is like a vivid folk sacrificial painting: the wizard wears a mask, dances gracefully with a light posture, recites words in his mouth, as if telling the gods the wishes of the world. Unfortunately, as of now, there is no conclusive evidence to prove that this image was carefully created based on the Nine Songs. This viewpoint, like a lighthouse standing in the mist, emits a glimmer of hope, but lacks a solid foundation and is difficult to fully convince people. Therefore, more research and exploration are still needed to uncover its mysterious veil.

Xiao Yuncong's record in the preface to the Chu Ci painting adds a mysterious and enticing touch to this complex puzzle. He mentioned: "Qu Zi has a stone based portrait of a famous minister, as well as a painting by Zhang Sengyao. Both have a full beard and are not like those who wander the river and pool in a withered and haggard state. We also see Song Dynasty's historical and artistic works such as 'Fisherman's Painting' and Li Gonglin's 'Zheng Zhan Yin Painting', both of which have the Three Lu True Ceremony." Zhang Sengyao, a renowned painter during the Southern Liang Dynasty, is famous for his unique artistic style and superb skills in his paintings. If Xiao Yuncong's statement is accurate, then as early as the Southern Liang period, there were already paintings related to Qu Yuan and the Chu Ci that quietly emerged, like a brilliant pearl shining with a faint but charming light in the long river of history. However, with the passage of time and the vicissitudes of history, many precious clues have long been buried. Nowadays, we lack concrete evidence to support this viewpoint. It is like a distant legend, fascinating but difficult to touch.

Mr. Zhang Kefeng, on the basis of his predecessors, conducted a more in-depth and detailed exploration. He based on Xiao Yuncong's statement, combined with the records of the historical art "Fisherman's Picture" in "Records of Famous Paintings of Various Dynasties" and "Records of Pictures and Observations", and after careful reasoning and analysis, concluded that such paintings had already appeared at least

during the Southern Song Dynasty. Taking into account various factors, this article regards the Southern Song Dynasty as the beginning of the "Chu Ci Map", as if finding the initial coordinates for this unique artistic phenomenon on the map of art.

2. The Visual Representation of the Nine Songs in Various Dynasties

From the Southern Song Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty, it can be regarded as the embryonic stage of the "Chu Ci Map". At this stage, the integration of painting art and the culture of Chu Ci is still in its infancy, and these types of paintings are like seedlings that have emerged from the ground and have not yet received sufficient nourishment and development. What we know now is only the mysterious and unique "Mountain Ghosts" painting by Wu Daozi, which is like a lonely star shining with a faint but firm light in the artistic sky, witnessing the difficult start of the creation of "Chu Ci" paintings during this period.

The Song and Yuan dynasties were undoubtedly the golden age of the flourishing development of "Chu Ci" paintings. Li Gonglin of the Northern Song Dynasty was like a dazzling star, emerging as a pioneer in using "Nine Songs" as a painting theme for creation. With his exquisite skills, profound artistic insights, and unique creative perspective, he carefully drew immortal works such as "The Nine Songs" and "The Lady of Hunan". Once these paintings were released, they were like a strong spring breeze, quickly blowing through the world of literati painters. They highly admire the painting "Nine Songs" and use their pens as swords to freely express their love and understanding of it on the canvas. This has led to the widespread dissemination and development of "Nine Songs" and sparked a magnificent creative wave in the long river of art, leaving behind countless breathtaking art treasures.

2.1. Scene Description and Line Drawing Art of Li Gonglin's "Nine Songs" in the Song Dynasty

Li Gonglin, with the courtesy name Boshi, originally lived in seclusion on Longmian Mountain, so he called himself Longmian Mountain Man. He comes from a prestigious family and has been immersed in a vast ocean of knowledge since childhood. He not only excels in poetry and literature, but also demonstrates extraordinary talent in the field of painting, making him a giant in the art world of his generation.

The seventh volume of the Xuanhe Painting Manual records that his father was obsessed with collecting famous paintings and books on the law, and the family had a dazzling array of treasures. Li Gonglin was able to explore these artistic treasures when he was young, and through daily observation and reflection, he quickly grasped the exquisite charm of ancient brushwork. When he writes, his brushwork is vigorous and his style is unique with the ancient and elegant charm of Jin Song Kai script; In the field of painting, he has achieved remarkable success, and his paintings are regarded as treasures by the world and highly respected. The calligraphy is like that of people from the Jin and Song dynasties, while the paintings follow the footsteps of Lu. Such praise is a high affirmation of his artistic achievements.

Li Gonglin has been closely associated with the paintings of famous masters since childhood, copying a large number of classic works and absorbing the essence of his

predecessors' paintings like a sponge, thus proficiently mastering painting techniques and forming a high ancient and elegant artistic style. At the same time, he studied under Wu Daozi and inherited and developed Wu Daozi's unique "white painting" technique. Throughout his life, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the creation of white painting.

His paintings have delicate and meticulous brushstrokes, with even and smooth lines that are round and full, just like the flowing stream in spring, lively and full of vitality. Also, due to his proficiency in small regular script calligraphy, the lines in his pen contain a strong and unyielding spirit within their roundness, combining hardness and softness, complementing each other. Among Li Gonglin's numerous figure paintings, the "Nine Songs" is the most famous, with numerous versions and wide circulation, many of which are copied by later generations.

Since Li Gonglin, the form of painting with "Nine Songs" as the theme has been like a brilliant seed, taking root and sprouting in the soil of art, spreading and constantly developing and growing. During the Yuan Dynasty, Zhao Mengfu and Zhang Wo were the most famous artists who showcased their talents in the field of creating "Chu Ci" paintings, promoting the further development of this art form.

Zhao Mengfu inherited Li Gonglin's white sketching technique in figure painting, using simple and smooth lines to outline the form of characters, giving the painting a unique artistic vitality. He firmly opposed the mainstream of courtyard paintings at that time, which were characterized by rich and exquisite colors, and vigorously advocated the style of imitation of antiquity, learning from the traditional artistic essence of the Tang and Northern Song dynasties. He admires Li Gonglin to the extreme and spares no effort in imitating his paintings. Through long-term practice, he constantly explores and innovates, making the technique of white drawing more mature and perfect. The painting "Nine Songs" by Zhao Mengfu is similar in style to Li Gonglin's work, mainly using white drawing as the main expression technique. The lines are simple and expressive, and the characters are lifelike, as if stepping out of the painting and engaging in a dialogue that transcends time and space with the viewer.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the painting "Nine Songs" was still the main subject matter that many painters competed to depict. Although there were many painters and works, there was a certain degree of similarity in style. Therefore, this article only conducts in-depth analysis of representative and breakthrough works of painters, exploring their unique contributions and innovations in the field of "Chu Ci" painting, in order to provide useful references and inspirations for future generations to study this artistic phenomenon.

2.2. The Character Form and Narrative of Chen Hongshou's "Nine Songs" in the Ming Dynasty

Chen Hongshou, also known as Zhanghou and Laolian, is like a shining star in the artistic sky. He not only has a profound knowledge of poetry and prose, but can also express the peaks and valleys in his heart with a lively pen. He also excels in the field of painting, freely galloping between mountains, waters, flowers, and figure paintings. Among these many painting themes, figure painting is undoubtedly the most brilliant pearl on his artistic crown, with the most dazzling achievements.

Chen Hongshou is well aware of the principle that "if you

take the method from above, you can only get it; if you take the method from below, you can only get it below". He always advocated that painting should learn from the ancients and regarded copying the paintings of ancient celebrities as an important way to improve his skills. He is like a devout practitioner, searching for the true essence of art in the vast sea of ancient paintings, copying a large number of masterpieces of ancient celebrities, and integrating various techniques and styles into his own use through daily contemplation and practice. In the end, he developed a unique and charming painting style - ancient and elegant, containing exaggerated and bizarre charm, like a picture scroll interwoven with antiquity and fantasy, which is breathtaking. For this reason, he is praised as the first among many artists with a completely unique personal style that emerged in the 17th century, leaving a significant mark in art history.

Chen Hongshou's handed down works are like scattered stars, mainly presented in two forms: original paintings and woodcut illustrations. In the field of traditional scroll paintings, he has achieved remarkable results, and each painting seems to be a reflection of his soul, showcasing the artist's talent and wisdom through his brushstrokes. However, in terms of printmaking, his achievements are like a dazzling meteor, cutting through the night sky of art and shining brightly.

He boldly broke through the barriers of traditional thinking, like a brave pioneer, skillfully integrating his talents with folk creative art. He delved into the fertile soil of folk art, drew nourishment from it, and created a large number of uniquely styled and richly themed printmaking works. These printmaking works are like a fresh spring breeze, blowing into the world of printmaking industry, greatly promoting the development of printmaking industry, and making printmaking this art form radiate new vitality and energy.

It is worth mentioning that the pioneering use of printmaking as illustrations for Chu Ci began with Chen Hongshou. He opened up a new path for the dissemination and interpretation of Chu Ci with his unique artistic perspective and innovative spirit.

The Nine Songs Chart was created by Chen Hongshou at the young and vibrant age of 19. At that time, he was studying Chu Ci with Lai Fengji in Xiaoshan, immersed in the fantastic and magnificent world of Chu Ci. Inspiration surged like a spring, and he splashed his brush and ink to create this set of 11 "Nine Songs" paintings, with an additional painting of Qu Yuan. In front of the painting, Lao Lian personally wrote a preface, revealing his profound understanding and love for Chu Ci between the lines.

Compared with the previous generation's "Nine Songs", Chen Hongshou's "Nine Songs", although also using the white stroke technique, is like an artistic innovation storm, completely subverting the image creation patterns of previous generations such as Li Gonglin, Zhang Wo, and Zhao Mengfu. He took a unique approach and used artistic techniques to shape the images of immortals into a more "secular" and "exaggerated" form. Those immortals seem to have descended from the lofty altar and merged into the human world, carrying a touch of ordinary joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness; At the same time, through exaggerated styling, they are endowed with extraordinary and fantastical colors, rich in bizarre style. This unique artistic style highlights the profound influence of folk prints and New Year paintings on his paintings, as if it were a perfect encounter between folk art and literati painting, colliding to create brilliant artistic

sparks. Under his pen, "The Nine Songs" is no longer just a simple painting, but has become an artistic epic that carries folk culture and literati sentiment. It has been passed down in the long river of history for a long time and exudes eternal charm.

2.3. The blending of white lines and ancient meanings in Xiao Yuncong's "Nine Songs" painting from the Qing Dynasty

Xiao Yuncong, with the courtesy name of Jimu, the literary name of Wumian Daoren, and the self given name of Shiren, is like a shining star in the artistic galaxy. With his unique style of "ancient, light, high, clear, sparse, and smooth", he has become the founder and pioneer of the "Gu Shu School of Painting", injecting a clear and profound artistic atmosphere into the art world.

Compared to many painters of previous generations, Xiao Yuncong is like a sober guardian of art, deeply dissatisfied with and criticizing the creative style that does not follow the meaning of the text and uses brushstrokes at will. As he said, "Upon closer inspection of the Nine Songs painting, it's not much of a surprise, but rather a change of direction; and Tianwen also wrote a sketch." This rigor and persistence in artistic creation prompted him to do a lot of meticulous and in-depth work before starting to paint. As a devout scholar, he not only made a thorough study of Qu Yuan's life story, thoughts and feelings, as well as the profound connotation of his poems, but also extensively dabbled in the works of "Songs of Chu" in the past dynasties, examined the advantages and disadvantages of them with keen artistic insight, selected the essence, and eliminated the dross, striving for innovation in inheritance and breakthrough in reference.

With this reverence and persistence for art, Xiao Yuncong created 9 images of "Nine Songs" and 54 images of "Tianwen", and combined "Buju" and "Fisherman" into one, totaling 64 images. This series of works, like a precise surgical knife, effectively corrected the negative trend of not following the literary meaning in painting creation at that time. It is particularly worth mentioning that he carefully attaches the original text and annotations after each picture, like a patient mentor, explaining his drawing intention to readers, leading them through time and space, and deeply understanding the inherent connection between the painting and the poem, greatly reducing the threshold for readers to understand the artwork.

Xiao Yuncong's "Nine Songs" is like delicate and profound historical paintings, with characters as the core and cleverly complemented by elements such as dragons, snakes, clouds, flowers, trees, and weapons. His brushwork is ancient, every stroke and stroke seems to carry the sediment of time and the weight of history, with profound meaning, as if telling the endless worries and deep affection for his family and country in Qu Yuan's heart. In terms of composition, he demonstrates extraordinary creativity, focusing on depicting the scenes and atmosphere presented in the pictures. In the picture, the solemn and dignified sacrificial scenes in the existing works make people feel as if they are in an ancient sacrificial ceremony, and feel the reverence and piety towards the gods; There are also graceful and mysterious mythological characters with vivid and lively movements, either soaring through the clouds or dancing gracefully, as if they have traveled through the world of mythology. At the same time, Xiao Yuncong cleverly integrated the spiritual connotation of

Qu Yuan into it, making the painting more faithful to the original work, achieving a perfect fusion of artistic beauty and literary beauty. This fusion is like the harmony of the qin and the se, playing a moving artistic movement that has had a profound impact on future generations.

In addition, Xiao Yuncong ingeniously incorporated folk printmaking elements. In his paintings, the image of immortals is no longer lofty or unattainable, but intertwined with the joyful scenes of the human world, depicting vivid scenes of people and gods enjoying each other. This innovation not only adds a strong sense of life and interest to the paintings, but also brings art closer to the public, allowing more people to feel the unique charm of the "Chu Ci" painting, and enabling this art form to be widely spread and inherited among the people.

3. The Enlightenment of Modern Design from the Nine Songs of Various Dynasties

Entering the modern era, the ancient art form of "Chu Ci Tu" has not dimmed with the passage of time, but has continued to develop in the tide of the times, blooming with new brilliance. At this time, painters involved in the creation of "Chu Ci" paintings shone brightly like stars, among whom Xu Beihong, Zhang Daqian, Fu Baoshi, Cheng Shifa, Liu Danzhai, Li Shaowen, and others were all well-known and outstanding. They use their pens as swords, unleashing their talents and passion on the stage of art, injecting a continuous stream of vitality into the development of "Chu Ci Tu".

At this moment, the composition of the "Nine Song Chart" is as diverse as a kaleidoscope, and its form is constantly changing. There are elegant and poetic sketches that, with just a few strokes, outline the charm of characters and the atmosphere of the scene, as if it were a silent poem, telling the tranquility of time; There are rich and colorful settings, and the colors bloom on the canvas like brilliant fireworks, giving a strong visual impact and making people feel as if they are in a fantastic and magnificent world; There are free flowing freehand paintings, where the painter expresses their inner emotions and unique insights into the "Nine Songs" with bold brushstrokes and dynamic lines, like a passionate melody playing the melody of art; There are also classical oil paintings that use delicate brushstrokes and rich color layers to showcase the three-dimensional sense of the characters and the authenticity of the scenes in "Nine Songs", as if taking the audience into a real mythological world.

Most of these paintings are the result of a clever combination of Chinese and Western painting techniques. Painters boldly borrowed bold color techniques from Western painting, allowing colors to collide and blend on the canvas, producing stunning visual effects; By applying the principle of perspective, the image becomes more spatial and three-dimensional, as if opening a door to the mythological world for the audience; Drawing on optical structures and sketching techniques, accurately capturing the form and demeanor of characters, making every detail vivid and lifelike. At the same time, they cleverly integrated the artistic conception pursued by Chinese painting, making the paintings not only have external formal beauty, but also contain profound cultural connotations and spiritual realm, presenting a new artistic style.

However, in this trend of innovation, it is inevitable that some discordant notes have emerged, and some works have

shown a tendency towards secularization and vulgarity. Taking the "Two Xiang Paintings" and "Mountain Ghosts Paintings", which have been depicted by many painters, as an example, in the works of artists throughout history, most of them have remained faithful to the original works, carefully depicting the noble, refined, and passionate fairy nature of Xiang Jun and Xiang Madam. They are like fairies who do not eat the smoke and fire of the human world, floating in the clouds of mythology; The mountain ghost is a passionate and wild woman, "led by Xue Lixi with a female Luo", "led by Shi Lanxi with Du Heng", "riding on a red leopard with a literary raccoon", and "thinking of the young master with a wandering heart". Although painters have mostly painted her as a semi naked figure since Li Gonglin, the focus is on highlighting the mountain ghost's demeanor and background atmosphere, showing a mysterious and charming temperament.

Acknowledgment

In summary, Qu Yuan's creation of the "Nine Songs" is like a brilliant artistic pearl, interwoven into a colorful literary picture with its distinct and unique themes and ethereal beauty of imagery, which has captivated countless people.

In this long creative process, although the "Nine Songs Chart" inevitably presents a certain degree of standardization, as if it is a fixed melody flowing in the long river of history, there are also some eye-catching innovative measures. These innovations, like dancing notes, inject new vitality and vigor into this traditional theme. They vividly demonstrate the reception characteristics of the Chu Ci text in different eras through unique artistic perspectives and expressive techniques. Painters of each era are like messengers of culture, carrying the imprint and atmosphere of their own era, leaving unique brushstrokes in the "Nine Songs" painting, reflecting the distinct differences in personal styles and eras of different painters.

From the perspective of art dissemination, the creations of painters undoubtedly have immeasurable value. They are like magical magicians, skillfully transforming the abstract textual imagination in "Nine Songs" into vivid and intuitive visual images with their superb skills and rich imagination. The mysterious atmosphere, complex emotions, and vivid scenes that were originally hidden behind the text have become accessible and clear at a glance under the painter's pen. This transformation process is like building a bridge across the textual divide for readers, greatly reducing the difficulty of understanding "Chu Ci" and making those obscure and difficult to understand words vivid, easy to understand, and relatable.

At the same time, these exquisite "Nine Songs" are also like cultural seeds, taking root, sprouting, blooming, and bearing fruit on a wider scale with the powerful infectious power of

visual art. They have broken through the limitations of textual communication and conveyed the charm of "Chu Ci" to more people in a more intuitive and vivid way, enhancing the dissemination effectiveness of "Chu Ci" and allowing this ancient literary classic to radiate new vitality and vigor in the soil of the new era, continuously continuing its cultural bloodline and artistic charm in the long river of history.

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