

The Historical Expression and Aesthetic Trends of Lotus in Literati Painting during the Ming and Qing Dynasties

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Abstract

The lotus, celebrated for its cultural symbolism and aesthetic allure, has been a recurring muse for flower and bird painters in Chinese art history. This article explores lotus paintings during the Ming and Qing dynasties, pivotal periods of ideological liberation and societal complexities. Traditional lotus artworks across dynasties have woven a rich tapestry in Chinese painting. Focusing on the lotus, the article intricately combines symbolic meanings and historical contexts, unraveling the flower's intrinsic artistic essence. It sheds light on the evolving aesthetic qualities within lotus depictions, using this exploration as a lens to understand cross-cultural exchanges and clashes between Chinese and Western influences. Emphasizing the inherent artistic will of lotus-themed painting, the research delves into the nuanced development and aesthetic significance of this genre. By elucidating the beauty expressed in the evolution of lotus images, the study provides valuable insights with contemporary relevance. It highlights the symbolic significance of the lotus in Ming and Qing China, incorporating concrete examples of renowned lotus paintings and artists. This comprehensive approach aims to enhance reader-friendly comprehension and explicitly articulates the contribution of these findings to current artistic practices. The research not only deepens our understanding of lotus culture but also serves as a reference for contemporary lotus-themed creative endeavors, connecting historical expressions with modern artistic sensibilities.

Keywords: Ming and Qing Dynasties, Lotus, Literati Painting, Expression of Intention.

Delving deeper into the intricate tapestry of Chinese art, the symbolism of the lotus unfolds as a pervasive narrative, akin to a meandering stream converging into a vast ocean (Yip, W. L., 1978; Levathes, L., 2014). This enduring motif has left an indelible mark across various artistic mediums throughout Chinese history, from Buddhist murals, caissons, and porcelain shapes to the intricate patterns adorning fabrics, as well as the vibrant scenes depicted in paper-cuts and New Year paintings in folk art (Pan, Y., & Pan,

Y., 2012). Artists across dynasties have passionately embraced the lotus as a thematic focal point, producing an extensive array of paintings that showcase the timeless allure of this revered flower.

Turning our gaze to the rich tapestry of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, spanning over five centuries, we witness an unprecedented blossoming of painting schools, prolific artists, and enduring masterpieces (Mungello, D. E., 2012). The evolution of flower-and-bird

paintings during this era represents not only an artistic transformation but also a significant development in literati paintings (Zhang, X., & Wu, Y., 2018). The landscape of flower-and-bird paintings before the mid-Ming Dynasty was predominantly shaped by court painters, with literati playing a minimal role (Xu, Y., 2020). However, a pivotal shift occurred in the mid-Ming Dynasty when literati actively engaged in the creation of flower-and-bird paintings, establishing a symbiotic relationship between literati and this burgeoning art form (Stanley-Baker, J. 1992; Kao, Y. H., 2010; Peng, Y. C., 2014). The resonance of early Qing Dynasty flower-and-bird paintings echoed through subsequent periods, influencing schools such as the Yangzhou Painting School, "Shanghai School," and "Ju School" in the late Qing Dynasty (Zhong, L., & Phungamdee, S., 2023).

In the late Ming Dynasty, Chen Hongshou's advocacy for the restoration of craftsmanship, inspired by the Tang, Song, and Yuan Dynasties, laid the foundation for the Yangzhou School of Painting in the Qing Dynasty (Stanley-Baker, J., 1992; Boda, Y., 1991). The distinctive styles of artists like Luo Pin and the Shanghai School, characterized by meticulous brushwork and vibrant colors, further enriched the artistic landscape, contributing to the diverse tapestry of Chinese art (Sullivan, M., 2023; Bentley, T. H., & Chen, H., 2012).

The mid-Ming Dynasty witnessed the emergence of two predominant styles in flower and bird paintings: the Yuan style represented by court painters Lin Liang and Lu Ji, and the "Wumen School" led by Shen Zhou, Wen Zhengming, and their disciple Chen Daofu. This period is marked by the dynamic coexistence and alternation of these contrasting painting styles, reflecting the artistic vibrancy of the era (Hays-Gilpin, K., & Hill, J. H., 1999; Silbergeld, J., 2005).

The early Qing Dynasty, shaped by a distinctive political and humanistic environment, ushered in a cultural renaissance in the realm of painting (Liu, J. C. Y., 2009). The dichotomy

between the official-supported orthodox painting school, with luminaries such as Wang Shimin, Wang Gong, Wang Jian, and Wang Yuanqi, and the anti-orthodox painting school, embodied by the Four Monks (Zhu Da, Shi Tao, Jianjiang, Kuncan) and their followers, encapsulates the diverse artistic expressions of the period (Portal, J., 2005).

An influential figure in flower and bird painting during this era was Yun Shouping (Tong, G. M. K., 1983). Celebrated for his boneless flowers, Yun Shouping not only inherited the tradition of boneless painting from Xu Chongsi but also introduced a refreshing style characterized by vibrant colors and simple pen and ink. His paintings, vividly rendered without excessive brush and ink, garnered widespread acclaim and catalyzed the formation of the "Changzhou School" (Santayana, G., 2019).

At this juncture, the lotus-themed paintings by Tang's father and son, alongside those crafted by Yun Shouping, captivated audiences of refined and popular tastes alike (see Figure 1). This marked a significant shift, as lotus paintings found resonance among the burgeoning civilian class, transcending social strata. These artworks not only found favor among the upper echelons but also satisfied the aesthetic cravings of the common people, symbolizing a convergence of cultural appreciation that transcended societal boundaries (Figure 1).



Figure 1-The lotus stone figure albums and Landscape Flowers Atlas by Chen Hongshou

The beauty of lotus flowers is diverse, ranging from the simplicity of a small lotus showing its sharp corners to the beauty of blooming flowers, and the looseness of fallen flowers (Griffiths, M., 2011). Because of her large body, she is suitable for expressing changes in pen and ink. From ancient times to the present, many people have painted her (Frye, S., 2011). From the special study of lotus-themed paintings, we can realize that in different eras, people expressed the beauty of lotus paintings differently, soaked with traces of that era, expressing the temperament of the people at that time, worthy of our study.

This article researches and analyzes paintings with the lotus as the theme. It uses the cross-integration method of art, history, and other disciplines to analyze traditional traditions through factors such as artistic aesthetics, historical background, political separatism, economic development, cultural impact, and painter's experience. The evolution of the artistic expression of lotus in paintings is summarized and analyzed by combining various materials useful for research, such as literature, works, precious historical documents, and pictures, to summarize and analyze the artistic evolution of lotus in traditional paintings. It is the theme of lotus painting that penetrates the intersection of multiple disciplines. Starting from religious beliefs, image characteristics, art characteristics, and folk culture, we study the image of the lotus from the subject of creation and deeply analyze the evolution of the cultural symbol of the lotus in traditional painting. The research of this article aims to do its best to study the lotus theme in traditional paintings. Through the trial process of this article, the evolution of artistic expression and cultural symbol inheritance of lotus in traditional paintings are intuitively explained, to provide a basis for further research on lotus in traditional paintings in the future. The theme paved the way and enriched the research on lotus culture, further improving the theory system of lotus painting art theory and cultural symbolism.

THE OVERALL BACKGROUND OF LITERATI PAINTING IN THE MING AND QING DYNASTIES

The Chinese Ming and Qing Dynasty realistic flower and bird paintings have a high degree of generalization and humanistic meaning (Chang, Y., Zhou, L., Lu, P., & Yasmeeen, S., 2023). In the development of two thousand years of history, flower and bird painting has realized the change from the natural unity of Song painting techniques to the great ink painting of Ming and Qing Dynasties under the influence of dynastic changes and philosophical spirit (Cheng, M., & Hung, T. W., 2018). Flower and bird painting has a strong Chinese cultural attribute and has continuously adapted to people's aesthetic interests.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the realm of flower and bird painting underwent a fascinating diversification, giving rise to various schools within this artistic genre. Notably, artists such as Bian Wenjin upheld the stylistic traditions of the Song Dynasty court bird and flower painting school. Lin Liang and Lu Ji, on the other hand, exhibited concise and precise brushwork, coupled with intentional and formal writing. Meanwhile, the folk school of painting witnessed the emergence of the Four Families of Wu, inheriting the legacy of the Four Families of Yuan, and Xu Wei, who emphasized the nuanced flavor of ink and brushwork, creating expansive splashes of ink. In the Qing Dynasty, the artistic landscape further evolved with the contributions of the four monks, led by Bada Shanren, the Eight Monsters of Yangzhou drawing inspiration from contemporary life, and Haikai painters like Ren Bonian and Wu Changshuo, who skillfully blended rich colors and ink. These late Qing Dynasty artists injected subjective emotions into their works, resulting in realistic flower and bird paintings that distinctly leaned towards abstraction.

Transitioning to the Ming Dynasty, the flourishing commodity economy reshaped the lifestyle of the citizen class, bringing prosperity to the Jiangnan region. This economic

development engendered a newfound appreciation for art among emerging wealthy businessmen, who often cultivated a passion for calligraphy and painting (Wue, R., 2014). A prime example is depicted in Figure 2, a segment from Qiu Ying's "Ascending the River at Qingming Festival," illustrating the transformative impact of the commodity economy on art and society. This period saw the convergence of literati painting and folk art, breaking down the barriers that once separated them in the middle of the Ming Dynasty. The exchange and integration between these two realms marked a pivotal shift, blurring the lines between "elegant culture" and "vulgar culture."

In conclusion, the Ming and Qing Dynasties witnessed an intricate evolution in flower and bird painting, with diverse schools emerging to enrich this artistic tradition. The Ming Dynasty, influenced by a flourishing commodity economy, fostered a convergence between literati painting and folk art. As the Qing Dynasty unfolded, artists infused subjective emotions into their works, creating abstract expressions within the realm of realistic flower and bird paintings.



Figure 2-Part of "Ascending the River at Qingming Festival" by Qiu Ying

Yangming Psychology advocates for people to break through the ideological limitations of "preserving natural principles and destroying human desires" advocated by Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism. It hopes that people can awaken and form a new and free spirit of liberation, and fully demonstrate themselves in social life by effectively exerting their subjective initiative. the value of. The spirit of equality advocated by Yangming Xinxue had a strong civilian flavor,

which gave rise to the need for the spiritual development of the citizen class at that time, and had a great impact on people's ideas and value orientations towards social life in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. It was under the above background that the techniques and ideas of folk art achieved widespread dissemination and in-depth development, paving the way for the integration of folk art based on human feelings and secular architecture with freehand literati painting based on individual liberation. The literati painters of the Ming and Qing Dynasties did not passively accept the elements of the times, but accepted new elements with a positive attitude, and more actively developed and innovated painting concepts and techniques. Based on fully inheriting the pen and ink of their predecessors, they also improved the form and content of the paintings. More attention is paid to reflecting the characteristics of life and integrating the characteristics of folk art. Therefore, both the commercialization of artistic works and the transformation of creative ideas promoted the popularization of the artistic atmosphere in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, gradually breaking down the boundaries between literati paintings and folk art, and allowing literati painters and folk artists to transform from being separated from each other. To learn from each other.

THE SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE AND EXPRESSION OF LOTUS IN LITERATI PAINTING

Earlier the lotus theme of the paintings is out from the Sichuan Deyang map of the Han Dynasty portrait brick "Lotus", Xindu's "Lotus Pond" bricks, carved with a pond, the pond has a lotus seedling, there are crabs, waterfowl and fish, and there are two canoeing in the pool on the people. To the Wei Jin and North and South Dynasties period, Gu Kaizhi's "Luoshen Fu Figure" volume beautiful way to express the poignant love tragedy, with just as "spring silkworms spitting silk" of the ancient silk depicting the "God writing" of the character

modeling, the line form of a fluent, continuous line, the sense of beauty. The lines are smooth, continuous, and rich in beauty. Compared with the fine and rounded portrayal of the characters, the treatment of the plant painting in this picture cannot help but appear somewhat conceptualized and schematized.

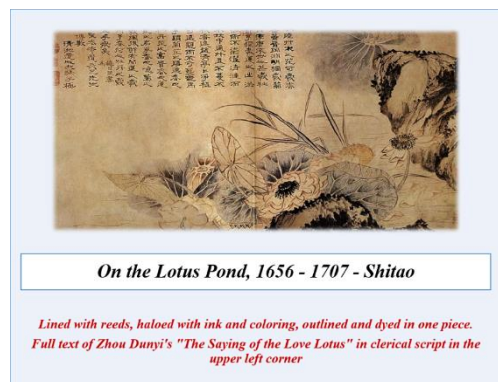


Figure 3-" Love Lotus " by Shi Tao

The symbolism of purity associated with the lotus flower finds its roots in early Buddhist literature, where Confucianism and Buddhism intersected. In this intersection, the lotus became intricately linked with virtues such as benevolence, righteousness, and morality. Rationalists further interpreted Zen through the lens of Confucianism, portraying the lotus as a symbol of personal integrity for scholars and generals, rising "out of the silt and untainted." In "Chushu," the literati's means prototype, lotus flowers take on a profound symbolic role. Literati paintings, emphasizing personality expression, utilize objects to convey emotions. The lotus, endowed with ideological significance, becomes a symbol of the literati's personality, carrying metaphorical weight such as "Its will to be clean so that it is known as a fragrant thing" and "Lotus, the flower of the gentleman also." This elevates the lotus to the status of a symbol representing ethical and moral ontology.

Transitioning to Shi Tao's "Love Lotus," illustrated in Figure 3, the artist skillfully depicts a lotus pond with reeds, employing techniques that seamlessly blend ink and coloring, hook drawing, and dyeing. Shi Tao's agile brushstroke captures the vivid essence of the lotus, devoid of vulgarity, and full of wonder. The upper left corner features Zhou Dunyi's "The Sermon on the Love of Lotus" written in clerical script, praising the lotus as a "gentleman's flower" and extolling its noble quality of emerging "out of the silt and not being stained." The ethereal layout, a fusion of reality and abstraction, exhibits a light and elegant color tone, natural ink generation, and a refreshing brush, ultimately conveying nobility and cleanliness.

In a broader context, artists like Wu Hufan further contributed to the rich tradition of Chinese art. Wu Hufan, a prominent figure in the early 20th century, was known for reviving traditional Chinese painting techniques. His works, such as "Landscapes of the Four Seasons," played a crucial role in bridging traditional and modern artistic expressions.

In conclusion, the lotus flower's symbolic journey from early Buddhist literature to literati paintings showcases its profound associations with virtue and morality. Artists like Shi Tao skillfully use the lotus as a means of expressing aesthetic and philosophical ideals. Wu Hufan's contributions, rooted in the early 20th century, reflect a continued commitment to the preservation and evolution of traditional Chinese painting techniques. Together, these elements weave a tapestry of artistic expression, blending tradition with innovation.



Figure 4-Tang Bi's work "Lotus Picture"

Tang Bian's "Lotus Picture" (Picture 4), crafted during the Qing Dynasty, captures the ethereal beauty of red lotus stems emerging gracefully from the mud, untouched by any stains, and swaying in the gentle breeze. The depiction of lotus leaves varying in height creates a harmonious visual echo. The lotus flowers in different stages – from bud to full bloom – convey a delicate and captivating imagery. Tang Bian skillfully employs various hooking and dotting techniques, creating a vivid lotus scene with a subtle fragrance. The painting reflects the painter's indomitable spirit, mirroring the lotus's resilience against the challenges posed by its aquatic environment. Tang Bian's boneless lotuses, with their unique and clean colors, stand out amidst the impurities and colloids present in traditional Chinese paintings. The artist's meticulous attention to detail, from the neatness of the composition to the lifelike portrayal of lotus growth, showcases a mastery of technique and a deep understanding of the subject matter.

In the broader context of artistic expression, flower-and-bird painters, as seen in Tang Bian's work, weave representational characteristics of natural objects with subjective "meaning" (Zhang, J., Miao, Y., Zhang, J., & Yu, J., 2020). This synthesis of cultural connotations and accumulated consciousness results in diverse

artistic forms that serve as carriers for expressing the artist's intention and achieving the social effectiveness of the work (Stafford, B. M., 2001). Whether employing gongbi or freehand techniques to depict lotuses, the distinction lies merely in form. The artist, through lines and colors, expresses intricate feelings about "reality." The artistic accomplishment and aesthetic foundation of the artist elevate the natural beauty of the lotus into a sublime artistic conception, symbolizing beauty in high art.

In conclusion, Tang Bian's "Lotus Picture" exemplifies the mastery and creativity within the realm of Qing Dynasty flower-and-bird painting. Through meticulous observation and skilled techniques, Tang Bian transcends the challenges of traditional Chinese painting, creating a lifelike representation of lotus growth. This work, like many others in the genre, reflects the artist's ability to imbue natural objects with cultural connotations and subjective meaning, achieving a synthesis of art and reality that symbolizes the timeless pursuit of beauty.



Figure 5-"Red Lotus" by Zhang Daqian

Zhang Daqian's early work, "Red Lotus," depicted in Figure 5, serves as a testament to the painter's aesthetic legacy, seamlessly blending elements from both northern and southern artistic traditions. Demonstrating a synthesis of national tradition and innovative techniques, the painting masterfully captures the essence of the lotus. The ink, delicately infused with a touch of blush, forms exquisite flower shapes, while the coloring

is vibrant and captivating. The tall, straight flower stems and large strokes depicting lotus leaves showcase the painter's meticulous observation of nature, reflecting his profound artistic proficiency.

Artists, drawn to the allure of lotuses, find the plant's straight leaves ideal for expressing ink colors and intricate painting techniques. Yu Jigao's "The Fragrance Overflows the Clear," depicted in an elegant and tranquil setting, portrays a white lotus in full bloom. A bird gazes up at the blossom, seemingly captivated by its enchanting fragrance. The painting exudes a sense of plump harmony, with natural distances and wildness capturing both physical and spiritual dimensions. The leisurely treatment of flowers and leaves, coupled with vibrant colors, breathes life into the canvas, showcasing the artist's mastery of nature's perfect formula and his commitment to aesthetic pursuits.

Wu Hufan, a prominent figure in 20th-century Shanghai painting circles, created the "Lotus Picture" in 1936, as discussed in this article. This type of word meaning painting utilizes pre-pronouns as its subject matter, as seen in Figure 6. The central imagery features two lotus flowers and leaves, with one poised to bloom and the other in bud. The meticulous arrangement of buds and the poised lotus, captured with a lowered head, reveals Wu Hufan's nuanced approach. The painting, a synthesis of image interpretation and text, highlights the artist's commitment to conveying the tranquility and beauty found in nature.

In conclusion, the lotus motif has been a recurring theme in Chinese art, with artists like Zhang Daqian, Yu Jigao, and Wu Hufan offering unique perspectives and techniques. Each artist, through their respective masterpieces, has contributed to the rich tapestry of Chinese art, showcasing the enduring allure of the lotus and its ability to inspire profound aesthetic expressions.



By selecting the words from Zhang Yan's "Red Emotion" for the painting, the corresponding relationship between the meaning of the words and the meaning of the painting was first affirmed from the perspective of word selection.

Figure 6-"Red Lotus Picture" - Modern Works of Wu Hufan

CHANGES AND EVOLUTION OF AESTHETIC TRENDS

During the Ming Dynasty, there was a significant shift in the approach to literati writing flowers and painting lotuses, marked by revolutionary changes in artistic methods (Yun, J., 2019). The transformation evolved from "shape to write shape" to a more refined "to write shape," signifying a proactive initiative by literati in the realm of painting. This transformation established the literati's dominance in bird and flower painting, solidifying their ruling position within this artistic genre.

A notable testament to this transformation is found in the Shang Zun White Lotus Figure housed at the Shanghai Museum. This vase of flowers depicts a rust-stained, antique Shang Dynasty copper Zun, adorned with several branches of white lotus. The painting, executed in ink and water, skillfully captures the fragrance, quality, and antiquity of the Shang Dynasty Bronze Dignity. The accompanying inscription poetically conveys the artist's ideal of immersing oneself in a fragrant city, akin to the world of fragrance described in the Buddhist "Pure Name Sutra." Bai Yang, the artist, skillfully portrays this realm with illusionary characteristics, evoking a sense of unattainable aroma, chest steam, and eternal lotus bloom. The simplicity of composition is intentional, adding a historical dimension to the artwork. The juxtaposition of the ancient Shang Zun and the vibrant lotus symbolizes a bridge between the historical past and the vivid present.

This painting's composition, featuring a bottle and lotus, draws inspiration from Chen Chun's frequent use of the bottle and Shen Zhou's earlier work. Chen Chun, in his sixtieth year, created Bottles of Lotus, echoing Shen Zhou's stylistic choices. The lotus, portrayed with light ink and delicate strokes, exudes a captivating charm, surpassing even the allure of the white lotus in the Shang Zun picture (Figure 7).

In conclusion, the Ming Dynasty witnessed a transformative period in literati painting, particularly in the depiction of flowers and lotuses. The shift from "shape to write shape" to "to write shape" marked a turning point, emphasizing literati dominance in the realm of bird and flower painting. The Shang Zun White Lotus Figure serves as a vivid illustration of this transformation, blending historical elements with the vibrant present and showcasing the enduring appeal of lotus-themed artwork.



Figure 7-"Bottles of lotus" and "White Lotus" by Chen Chun

"Nine Sections of Ink Flowers" depicts freehand ink paintings of flowers of the four seasons, and each section has a self-titled Qi Jue poem. As shown in Figure 8, the title of the lotus section is: "The red fragrance fills the mirror lake, and the lotus pickers are quiet and lonely under the bright moon. I have a free hand of Xu Xi, cleaning up the scenery and painting." The lotus leaves and lotus leaves are painted without any background. The lotus, lotus flowers, and lotus leaves have "declined", but there is no trace of "defeat", showing unyielding vitality together with the water plants. The wonderful thing is that the flowers and leaves are cleverly arranged, and the changes of lotus flowers and lotus leaves are in various ways. Among the existing flower and bird paintings, there are about 23 paintings of lotuses, which shows that Xu Wei was a lotus lover. The lotus flowers in his works often show the helplessness and struggle of suffering from hardships and unfulfilled ambitions.

The unique political and humanistic environment of the early Qing Dynasty produced a splendid and brilliant culture (Liu, J. C. Y., 2009). The painting appeared with the official support, of Wang Shimin, Wang Ji, Wang Jian, and Wang Yuanqi as the mainstream of the orthodox school of painting and to the four monks (Zhu Deaf, Shi Tao, gradient Jiang, scalding) and other relics as the mainstream of the anti-orthodox school of painting. At this time, the status of flower and bird painting was

so high that it could be separated from landscape painting to the extent that flower and bird painting together with landscape painting became the mainstream of the painting world.



Figure 8-Nine sections of beings partial Xu Wei, Ming dynasty

Yun Ge, also known as Shouping or Nantian, and later by aliases such as Yunxi Geshi and Baiyun Geshi, resided in the eastern part of the city and earned the moniker Dongyuan Caoyi. Alongside the Four Kings and Wu Li, Yun Ge comprised the renowned "Six Famous Artists of the Early Qing Dynasty," serving as a stalwart figure in bird and flower painting during this period. Drawing inspiration from the Song dynasty bird and flower painting school of Xu Xi, Yun Ge studied the works of Xu Chongsi, Zhao Mengfu, Shen Zhou, and Chen Chun. By imbuing the spirit of sketching into his creations, he crafted a distinct style characterized by cleanliness, elegance, and vibrant colors, pioneering bone-less flower paintings in the Qing dynasty. Yun Ge became the founding master of the Changzhou School of Painting, influencing artists like Ma Yuanzhu, Yun's nephew Zhang Zifu, and his daughter Yun Bing.

Yun Shouping, renowned for his bone-less flowers, inherited Xu Chongshi's bone-less method, infusing a fresh style with bright colors and simple brushwork. During his time, Yun Shouping's influence was widespread, with families from the Jiangnan River region adopting

his paintings, leading to the formation of the "Changzhou School." Diverging from traditional methods, Yun Shouping introduced the "Yun style" of flower painting, characterized by transparent brushwork, clear colors, and an elegant aesthetic, earning recognition as the "School of Authenticity in Sketching." His boneless flower paintings departed from the outlined approach, relying on color to convey soft, pliable shapes. Yun Shouping's commitment to chiaroscuro and the pursuit of elegance ushered in a departure from the boldness of the Ming Dynasty, garnering widespread acclaim for his vibrant and graceful compositions.

One of Yun Shouping's masterpieces, "Landscape Painting of Flowers and Atlas," showcased in Figure 9, played a pivotal role in reshaping aesthetic concepts during the 17th and 18th centuries. This painting exemplifies Yun Shouping's innovative approach, employing gentle lines, bright colors, and meticulous details to captivate the viewer. The introduction of chiaroscuro techniques by Yun Shouping not only marked a departure from the flower paintings of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties but also laid the groundwork for a new era in Chinese art.

In broader historical context, artists like Wu Hufan continued to build upon the legacy of Yun Shouping, contributing to the evolution of Chinese painting in the subsequent centuries. Wu Hufan, renowned for his calligraphy and paintings, played a significant role in bridging traditional Chinese art with modern influences, embodying a spirit of innovation while maintaining reverence for classical techniques.

In conclusion, Yun Shouping's contributions to the Changzhou School and the transformation of flower and bird painting during the Qing dynasty underscore his pivotal role in shaping the aesthetic landscape of his time. The Yun style, characterized by its transparent brushwork and elegant colors, left an indelible mark on the trajectory of Chinese art, influencing subsequent generations of artists like Wu Hufan.



Figure 9-Landscape painting of flowers and atlas Yun Shouping

Yun Bing, the character Qing Yu, active in the mid-Qing period from the Kangxi to the early Qianlong period, is the great-granddaughter of Yun Shouping's family among the "Four Kings Yun" of the early Qing Dynasty. Her flower and bird paintings are vividly modeled, and her flowers and leaves pay attention to dealing with the relationship between yin and yang, which is why people say that her works are "exquisite in using powders, and her flowers have a light that meets the sun." She devoted herself to the creation of flower and bird paintings since her childhood, mastering expressive techniques from Yun Nantian's paintings in her family's collection, and observing the gestures of grasses, trees, insects, and fish from nature. Yun Bing's greatest impetus for flower and bird painting was her creative solution to the coloring problem that Yun Nantian failed to deal with. The painting theory of "the use of powder is exquisite, and the flowers have light when they welcome the sun" has played an important role in the development of bird and flower painting. Figure 10 shows Yun Bing's work, "Pu Tang Qing Qu Figure".

The painting theory of "using exquisite powder and welcoming the sun with flowers shining" plays an important role in promoting the development of flower and bird painting



Figure 10-Pu Tang Qing Qu Figure Yun Bing

The "Eight Monsters of Yangzhou" were active during the Qianlong period, an important period in the development of the art of bird and flower painting. The "Eight Monsters of Yangzhou" were mainly bird and flower painters. Each of them had his own style, and they utilized their creativity with the methods of Xu Wei, Chen Daofu, and Shitao, and with a large amount of strange ink and brushwork. Their creation was also due to the change in the atmosphere of the times. During the Qianlong period calligraphy art in style interest opened up a new road, long respected by the dynasty and field of the "Thessalonian", that is, from Wang Xizhi, Wang Xianzhi, father and son of the book since the repertoire of carving and into a variety of "law post", people turn to ancient stone tablets and stones, and Especially in the Wei, Jin, and North and South Dynasties, when the Regular Script was in its infancy. This is strong and vigorous and has lost the vitality of the "Taigu style" The calligraphy style is completely different, this change in calligraphy has a profound impact on the development of aesthetic interest. This change of interest is directly manifested in the painting style of the Yangzhou School, their painting style is full of personality, breaking through the traditional boundaries of beauty and ugliness, with the significance of anti-orthodox. Hua Man, who appeared during the Kangxi and Qianlong periods, can be considered the last influential painter to represent the orthodox style of bird and flower painting. His style has been described as "loose and

elegant" and "graceful". He is one of the most important painters outside of the Yangzhou School who contributed to the advancement of the art of bird and flower painting.

CONCLUSION

This paper delves into the historical context of literati painting during the Ming and Qing dynasties, highlighting the lotus's prominence within this period. A meticulous exploration of the lotus's symbolism and visual representations reveals its status as not just an artistic motif, but also a medium reflecting the literati's profound considerations on morality, spirituality, and the essence of existence. The shift and development of aesthetic trends, particularly those pertaining to lotus paintings, evidence the consistent innovation and refinement in the techniques and aesthetic sensibilities of these painters.

During the Ming dynasty, lotus paintings were primarily characterized by their realistic portrayal and delicate brushwork. However, as we transition to the Qing dynasty, a more assertive and abstract artistic style emerged. This evolution was not just a stylistic choice; it was a direct reflection of the changing social and cultural landscapes and the evolving ideologies

of the literati. The bold strokes and abstract compositions of Qing dynasty lotus paintings not only pushed the boundaries of traditional painting techniques but also resonated deeply with the era's quest for individual expression and intellectual freedom.

Moreover, the lotus, as a recurring theme in literati paintings, often served as a vehicle for expressing their philosophical and moral perspectives. The purity and resilience of the lotus, growing untainted amidst murky waters, were often invoked as metaphors for the unwavering ideals and moral principles of the literati.

Looking ahead, there is ample scope for further research on how the lotus, as a canonical motif in Chinese art, continues to influence and inspire contemporary artists. Additionally, exploring the intersection of lotus paintings with other artistic trends and cultural movements could yield valuable insights into the evolving role of traditional motifs in modern art.

In conclusion, this paper has demonstrated the enduring significance of the lotus in literati painting, its transformation through the Ming and Qing dynasties, and its deep connection to the ideological and moral tenets of the literati.

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