

# An Overview of the Achievements of Modern Research on the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*

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The current academic research on the *Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial* founded in 1884 has been perfected, but there is very little research on the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, which can be said to be derived from *Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial* terms of both content and form, and which was founded by the Haiist painter Wu Youru in 1890 in order to reward the increasing number of admirers, but it is still in the initial stage. *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* consisted of four parts: pictures of ladies in Shanghai costumes, news about current affairs, pictures of animals, and compilations of women, each of which was accompanied by the then popular notebooks, which were popular at the time among the then readers because of the matching of pictures with text and the mixing of narratives and discussions. This paper takes *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* as the main object, summarizes the existing literature about *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, points out the deficiencies of the current research on this basis, and points out the development trend of *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* in the future research.

*Keywords:* *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, *Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial*, Late Qing Dynasty's pictorial

## Introductory

At present, the study of *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* mainly focuses on the motive and purpose of its founding, the image of women in the pictorial, the technique of painting images, the biography of founder Wu Youru and the characteristics of his creative work, and the analysis of a certain issue from the perspective of the different components of the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*.

The study of *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* is of great significance to our understanding of the history, culture, and art of the late Qing society. In terms of history and culture, *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, as a part of the stone printed pictorials of the late Qing Dynasty, reflected the social life, cultural concepts, and the thinking and culture of the lower class in words and images, through which we can deepen our understanding of the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China. At the same time, pictorials combined entertainment and knowledge, and played an important role in spreading knowledge and enlightening the public by reporting various information. In terms of art, the pictorials were beautifully printed using the Western lithography technology introduced at that time, the images were drawn in a combination of Chinese and Western styles, and the backgrounds of the characters were vivid and realistic, with delicate strokes. These features make the pictorials have high artistic value and play an important role in the study of the development of Chinese pictorial art. In terms of academics, through the study of *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, we can sort out the background of

the publication of the pictorial, the process of its creation, the way of operation, painting style, etc., so as to explore the influence of the political, economic, and cultural environment on the painters to create the content at that time, as well as the changes in various aspects of the late Qing Dynasty feudal civilization to the modern industrial civilization. So the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* and the world behind it are worth studying and exploring.

### **A Comparative Study With the *Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial***

In his article, Poon Yiu-Chang gives a detailed account of the life of Wu Youru, the founder of the pictorial newspaper, from the change of geography to the change of the working newspaper, and introduces the more important activities in Wu Youru's life. It is worth mentioning that at present, there are many different opinions about Wu Youru's life and experience, and there are also some doubts about his life activities, which are also clarified in the text. At the end of the introduction of Wu Youru in the *Dian Shi Zhai Pictoria* and *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* in different periods of creation of the characteristics, he concluded that he was "willing to be a pure art painter 'for art's sake'" (Pan, 1994)

Chen Haowen introduced and analyzed the value of *Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial* in the history of the historical facts and its value in the history of China's news. In addition, in the part of the introduction of *Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial*, "Competition with *Wulin Newspapers* and *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*", scholars gave their opposing views and explanations to Wu Youru's resignation due to his "dissatisfaction with Ernest Major's behavior" (Chen, 1994). At the same time also let us understand for Wu Youru's *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, *Declaration Hall* takes the different attitude from *Words and Forests Pictorial* and *Calligraphy Newspaper*, which is very polite, and the pictorial is sold issue by issue on behalf of *Declaration Hall* account office.

Deng Yiran pointed out that the appearance of *Dian Shi Zhai Pictoria* and *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* marked the first prosperous period of arrival of the late Qing dynasty stone printing pictorial. This article takes Wu Youru, the painter who is the most important link between *Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial* and *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, as the starting point, and further combs the relationship between the two in terms of their background of issuance, process of founding, mode of operation, and style of painting, thus exploring the influence of the historical environment on the literati's creation as well as the era of change in the late Qing Dynasty when feudal civilization progressed to the modern industrial civilization. The text quotes many ancient texts, which enable readers to have a direct understanding of the founding of the two pictorials (Deng, 2020).

### **A Study of the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* from an Art's Perspective**

In her thesis, Liu Qihui analyzes the formation process and content characteristics of Chinese commercial pictorials by focusing on the case studies published in the *Pointsize Pictorial*, and understands how Pointsize painters used Chinese painting techniques and learned Western painting techniques to present the increasingly consumerized society of Shanghai. At the end of the thesis, from the cultural monopoly of the late Qing literati and the limitations of the Chinese painters, the paper analyzes the reasons why the Chinese pictorial prints failed to form an independent creative artistic lithograph. In the part of "the blurring of the painter's management strategy and the deviation of the artistic value positioning", in addition to the introduction of the background of the founding of *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, it also elaborates on the reason why Wu Youru innovated the

columns of the pictorial after satisfying the profitability of the pictorial, which was that he hoped to gain the favor of the literati class and the literati sentiments of Wu Youru (Liu, 2020).

The multiple graphic narrative patterns of the late Qing *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* in Zhao Jianlei's article are of significant research value for the evolution of modern popular art. The logic of popularization in the pictorials will further trigger a reflection on the popular paintings of the late Qing dynasty from the perspective of national subjectivity (Zhao, 2023). Although the article also starts from the general theme of fine arts, it is different from the previous one in that it no longer starts from the line drawing of a particular picture in the pictorials, but takes the setting between pictures and the retranslation of Western-style images in the pictorials as a new research point, which is innovative in terms of research perspective.

### **Use Some Content of the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* as an Entry Point**

The successive founding of the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, *Flying Shadow Pavilion Picture Album*, and *Flying Shadow Pavilion Picture Album* has also been described in detail by scholar Chen Haowen. Through the differences between Wu Youru's work at the *Dian shi zhai Pictorial* and his work at the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, the text briefly explains to us in what ways Wu Youru's talents failed to materialize in the confessions he made in founding the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, giving us an additional layer of understanding as to why Wu Youru founded the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* (Chen, 1990).

Scholar Dong Huining in the article from the *Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial* as an entry point, provided detailed analysis and interpretation of the origin, painting content, and characteristics of *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, which, from all aspects, helps us with understanding of the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* and provides a good reference value; at the same time, the article made an objective evaluation on the existing *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* research materials (Dong, 2011).

Scholars Xiao Siyang and Hui Xuewu start from the background of the late Qing dynasty, which was an extraordinary period in Chinese art history, and introduce the necessity of the appearance of pictorials, the introduction of new technologies, and the characteristics of the ration of the Haiku school painter Wu Youru, and then in the following article, they introduce the content of the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, which favored the hearsay of the village and the life of the women of Shanghai. It also used a lot of words to introduce women's life from the aspects of women's costumes, duties, and material life. From this, we can see that *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* is an important material for the study of the customs and folklore of old Shanghai (Xiao & Hui, 2014).

### **A Critique and Prospective on the Study of *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial***

From the above introduction of the current state of research we can know the main aspects of the current research, however, these studies have put forward some important ideas and theories at the same time. Yet, there are still some problems that need to be solved, only by solving these problems can we make our research on the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* more in-depth, and have a more comprehensive understanding.

From the above, we can see that there are the following deficiencies: first, the research on the introduction of new lithographic technology and its application in pictorial newspaper is not deep enough. The use of lithographic technology and the publication of pictorial newspaper is inseparable, in the current research on the introduction of western lithographic technology and the commercial application of lithographic technology has a certain introduction, but for the lithographic technology for the publication of pictorial newspapers and the

importance of the convenience of in-depth research. Secondly, there is a lack of research from multiple perspectives. For example, there is insufficient research on the selection of topics and the organization of manuscripts. Throughout the above articles, there is almost no analysis and research on why Wu Youru, the founder of the newspaper, chose these topics for creation and matched them with relevant texts. *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* was also very popular among readers at that time, and research in this area can give us some reference to the creators' grasp of the readers' psychology and the editors' planning of selecting topics at that time.

As scholars pay more attention to the study of late Qing society and popular culture, as well as readers' needs for artistic images, easy-to-read text, and interesting illustrations and explanations, the study of the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* points to the following directions: first, to increase the number of comparisons and to emphasize their different characteristics. At present, *Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial* is the one that is most compared with the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, issued by its founder as the main creator; the two have a lot of similarities in the content and form, so it is inevitable to put them together and compare, but this also limits the possibility of more research on the *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*. In the same period, there were also many different types of pictorials, such as *Children's Pictorial* and *Truth Pictorial*. By comparing and analyzing with different pictorials, we can have a more comprehensive understanding of the development of pictorials in different aspects in China. Secondly, the content of the pictorials is further classified to refine the research object. At present, the classification of the content of *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* stays on the news page and three kinds of accompanying pages, but there are different contents in the news page, such as Western insights, Western science and technology, strange rumors, folk stories, etc. Each kind of subdivided content will be used as the object of study and the medium of reference to understand the social culture and customs of the time.

### Concluding Remarks

Finally, it is foreseeable that, as we continue to dig out the stories behind the images and words of *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, and study in-depth the images and stories of the different characters in *Flying Shadow Pavilion Pictorial*, it will serve as a link connecting us in the 21st century with the social and cultural customs, social hotspots, and the life experience, and creative philosophy of the founder Wu Youru in the late Qing Dynasty. At the same time, it will not only increase our understanding of the society at that time, but also enable us to absorb some of the excellent experiences and bad lessons in the process of content creation and business operation in the publishing enterprises, and bring these experiences and lessons to the present publishing industry, which to a certain extent can also play a role in promoting the healthy development of the publishing industry, so that the publishing industry can continue to thrive and develop healthily.

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