

# The Remnant in Zheng Sixiao's Poetry and Paintings

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**Abstract:** A large number of relic painters appeared during the alternation of Song and Yuan dynasties. As an outstanding artist at the end of the Southern Song Dynasty, Zheng Sixiao not only opened a chapter of Yuan Dynasty literati painting and calligraphy, but also set an example for the future generations by his consistent spirit of nationalism, patriotism and loyalty to the emperor. He left many poems and paintings for posterity as a relic painter, and the orchids he painted have become a model for posterity. The unity of poetry and painting conveys his noble relic state of mind. This paper combines Zheng Sixiao's social and historical background, analyses the subject matter, ink and brushwork characteristics, and aesthetic connotation of his works, and combines them with the inscribed poems and seals in his works to explore Zheng Sixiao's nostalgia for his homeland and his transcendent and hidden relics' state of mind embedded in his poems and paintings.

**Keywords:** Remnant; Zheng Sixiao; Ideological Connotation; Ink and Orchid

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Zheng Sixiao (1241-1318), the word Yiweng, the number of the South, is the last years of the Southern Song Dynasty, a temperament of the remains of the painter, good to paint orchids, flowers and leaves in a few strokes without painting the roots of orchids, as a way to express their own homeland was plundered, like floating Ping Pong floating. After the fall of the Southern Song Dynasty, Zheng Sixiao hold on to his patriotic feelings and does not submit to the rule of the Yuan Dynasty. He expresses his feelings of "infatuation and loyalty" to his homeland of the Song Dynasty.

Zheng Sixiao was in the era of internal and external problems, the emperor is mediocre and corrupt, treacherous minister chaotic dynastic programme, the Mongolian Yuan constantly invaded the Song Dynasty border, decades, the Southern Song Dynasty in the internal and external double blow was gradually declining trend, the social changes in this period of institutions, ideas, etc. Massive changes in traditional thinking of the Song Dynasty under the influence of the spirit of the beliefs of the literati suffered a severe blow. Zheng Sixiao experienced the pain of losing the country, witnessed the plundering of the Song Dynasty by the Mongolian Yuan, and saw his father imprisoned for opposing the corruption of the ruler and officials, which deeply aroused Zheng Sixiao's inner heroism, the national feeling of loyalty to the ruler and love for the country and the high and pure spirit of scholars, so that his poems and paintings are full of the zeal and eager will of the people's survivors to create their own ideological connotations in their works and demonstrate their high and pure spirit of style and integrity.

Zheng Sixiao wrote with loving pen and ink about chastity, preferring death to submission, praising the patriotic aspirants of the Southern Song Dynasty and expressing his longing for his homeland. He will transform the life of high winds into poetry, cast in the "story of the heart" book, quite a generous style of sad song, he was hurting his own is a hand of the literary man, powerless to serve the country, although he can not go into battle to kill the enemy, but he also has the pen, a literary man's sharpest, he spent the rest of his life's blood, to write poems, paint ink orchids, can be described as full of tears of the remnants of the people, sobbing the words, he borrowed in the name of the noble orchid to tell the remnants of people the final He used the orchid as a representative of high purity to talk about the final resilience of the remnants.

## 1. Rootless Orchid Expresses Depression and Loneliness

Orchids grow amid slender and elongated leaves. Unlike other flowers that are not as showy, their subtle, open flowers have a long-lasting aroma and have long been favoured by literati and inkers. They also match the noble temperament of the literati and are often used as symbols or images to convey the author's feelings. Later generations also gradually formed words with orchids as beautiful symbols, "Lanzhang", "Lanzhi", "Huizhi Lanxin" as metaphors for noble virtues. At the beginning of the Southern Song and Yuan Dynasties, the rise of literati painting opened the way for the flowering of orchid, and orchids in various forms from the pen of literati painting became the representatives of literati painting. The orchids of Zheng Sixiao reflect his upright and arrogant character. The orchids painted by Zheng Sixiao

are so strange that the roots are exposed and the ground cannot be seen, and only the orchids are in the picture, with no other backdrops as echoes or backgrounds to highlight them, which is an extremely natural and pure gesture, and it is the only one of its kind from ancient times until now. However, the orchid without roots and earth is not a fantasy, but the rooted earth no longer exists.

Zheng Sixiao life love orchids miss the homeland, each painting ink orchids, painting that is destroyed, to the death of their paintings are not ready to fall into the hands of Yuan people, their works survive very little, reliable authentic “ink orchids” to see its power. He transformed his will and scars into the orchid in his heart, which did not merge with the world and bloomed purely in the hidden silence, filling heaven and earth with its fragrance. Later, Ni Zan commented on the image of the ink orchid and wrote: “The autumn breeze has turned the orchid into straw, and the desolation of the southern land has disappeared. Only the heart of the south remains unchanged, and the source of tears and ink writes ‘Li Sao’.” Bada Shanren, one of the four monks in the early Qing Dynasty, also learned from Zheng Sixiao in his painting of the plum blossoms, and the roots of the plum tree were completely exposed to show his feelings for his heritage.

## 2. The pen and ink contains the meaning of patriotism and loyalty to the emperor

Every art form has its own artistic language, and painting also has a formal language, aesthetic concepts, and artistic spirit, which together form a complete system of painting. Since the Wei and Jin Dynasties, Chinese painting has always been about form and spirit, about liveliness. Xie He’s “Six Methods” form the Southern Qi Dynasty introduces the “ Bone Method of Brush Use “ and “Responding to the Object and Emulating the Form” emphasising the importance of the basic language of form in painting, while Gu Kaizhi’s “Writing God in Form” emphasises the importance of the language of painting. Gu Kaizhi’s “Writing God into Form” emphasises the expression of the spiritual meaning of painting. Zheng Sixiao’s “Ink Orchid” is a few strokes, but each stroke reflects the beauty of the meaning of Chinese painting, this painting is mainly in writing, the emphasis of the book in the painting, using the calligraphy brush to write a few orchid leaves, hard and stretching, do not cut each other, the use of the brush, orchids, two, high and proud, the image, although abbreviated, but added to the image of the rhythm of calligraphy, the combination of lines and the strength of calligraphy, a direct expression of the author’s implied emotions. In addition, the work also combines lines and ink, highlighting the ink and brush in the image. The entire volume is written in thick ink, with heavy black instead of other colours, revealing a light and elegant temperament, The skimmed orchid leaves are clearly in black and white, which brings out the charm of the orchid by changing the intensity of the ink, the ink black of the orchid leaves and the white background of the painting form a sharp contrast, and the ink and the brush merge, and the fleeting strokes, however, are extremely visible, and the form and the spirit are both, although the plants but Although the orchid is a plant, it has the strong and upright momentum of the high mountains and steep hills, without losing the beauty of flexibility. It can be seen that Zheng Sixiao borrows its shape to symbolise his own patriotic heart, and conveys the spirit of freedom of the subject through objective objects. Zheng Sixiao uses the orchid as a metaphor for his own temperament as a gentleman, and uses changes in brushwork and intensity of ink to create an artistic world beyond the image and express the inner spiritual world.



Figure 1 Zheng Sixiao’s Ink Orchid, Osaka Museum of Art, Japan

### 3. Poetry, calligraphy, painting and seal as a whole express the firm idea of relics

In the Song Dynasty, poems on paintings were fully developed under the continuous research of painters, and reached its peak in the Yuan Dynasty, when the aesthetic trend of literary painting was dominated by “poetry and painting”, forming a literary painting style of poetry, calligraphy, painting and printing. Zheng Sixiao’s poetry is not only rich in content, but also has its own artistic characteristics. He combines the background of the era he lived in with the depiction of history and objective objects, satirising the cruel reality, with the meaning of praise and criticism shining through between the lines, and joy, anger, sorrow and indignation overflowing in the works. He wrote the book “History of the Heart”, which describes the process of the destruction of the Song Dynasty by the Yuan and the heroic struggles of the patriots and traitors of the Southern Song Dynasty, and tells of his passionate concern for the nation and the people, his longing for home, his perseverance and faith, and his determination to die rather than give up. His poems use the simplest and plainest language to great effect. “I would rather die with the fragrance on the branch than blow away in the north wind ,” he writes of chrysanthemums that do not bloom with other flowers. In this way, he captures the chrysanthemums’ habit of not wilting to show their pride of character and not going with the flow , as well as the author’s determination to die rather than submit to the yuan. The flowers and plants in Zheng Sixiao’s work are only chrysanthemums, orchids and bamboo that represent the Lord, and there are no other flowers and weeds. In his art world, weeds are the representatives of the villain, and the chrysanthemums in the poem that hold the fragrance and die, represent his unyielding spirit of survivorship, while the north wind represents the power of the Mongolian Yuan in the north, and he symbolises his own image of a lonely minister in the chaotic world by the image of chrysanthemums.

In addition, Zheng Sixiao uses poetry, calligraphy, painting and seal as one of the literary painting styles in his paintings to reflect his thoughts and feelings, “Ink and Orchid” from the orchid, the left and right sides of the painting have a poem and seal, the orchid as the main part of the poem and the inscription is placed in the background of the blank space, so that it becomes a part of the picture to fill the background of the blank space and increase the harmony of the picture. The right side of the painting is inscribed with a poem, “I have always lowered my head and asked Hsi Huang, who are you to come to this land? I never opened my nostrils in front of the painting, but the sky is full of ancient fragrance.” Zheng Sixiao refers to himself as an orchid. This is a metaphor for the sentimental feelings of a lonely wandering relic.

Another poem is engraved on the left: “There is no place to find the fragrant grass, and the dream is separated from the wind and rain on the Xiangjiang River. Weng is still willing to be a flower of Chu, and I will also dance for Weng Chu.” The poem expresses the author’s loyalty to his homeland and shows that the temperament and painting of the ink orchid complement each other, adding to the artistic influence of the work. The painting with sound and the poem without sound deepen the mood of the picture and sublimate the poetic meaning of the poem, allowing the viewer to play a role in the auditory and visual simultaneously, creating a deeper level of emotion.

In addition to the visible paintings and poems, vermilion seals are also scattered on the screen, including the vermilion seal of “Shonan Weng” and the white seal of “ Searching is not allowed, not searching or with, the old eyes of empty space, the breeze of the past and the present”, the combination of poetry, calligraphy, seals and painting gives the image a richer content. The use of seals not only enhances the texture of the paintings and the sense of beauty, but also plays a role in optimising the composition and layout. Combining poetry, calligraphy, painting and seals in ink and orchid, every detail shows Zheng Sixiao’s skill in brushwork and painting and his steadfastness as a relic.

Zheng Sixiao expressed his sense of relics in painting as a representative of the plastic arts and in poetry as a representative of the literary arts, reflecting at the same time the aspirations and aesthetic standards of the literati during the Song and Yuan dynasties. His poems and paintings reflect the essence and tradition of the era, and the deep sadness and anger they contain reflect the patriotic spirit and national cohesion of a certain historical period, and his unique artistic skill and aesthetic ideas constitute his life’s work, which is widely recognised by later generations, and influenced many painters of the Ming and Qing dynasties, who painted in the capacity of relics.

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