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EXPLORING THE INNOVATION AND INTEGRATION OF ZHAOQING'S HERBAL CULTURE IN BIRD-AND-FLOWER PAINTING ART

Tang Shina[1], Cao Ziqi[2], He Jianping[3]
[1, 2]*Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing, Guangdong, China*
[3]*Zixing Municipal Middle School, Hunan Province, China*

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ABSTRACT

This research on "Chinese Herbal Medicine and Bird-and-Flower Painting Creation in Zhaoqing" provides an in-depth analysis of the cultural background of Chinese herbal medicines in Zhaoqing region and their integration with bird-and-flower painting art. The paper first explores the historical origins and modern legislative protection of Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicines, highlighting their core value in Lingnan traditional Chinese medicine culture. Subsequently, the paper analyzes the traditional foundation and innovative pathways of Zhaoqing's bird-and-flower paintings, with particular attention to how Chinese herbal medicines inject new cultural elements and artistic vitality into bird-and-flower paintings. Through detailed interpretation of masterpieces throughout history, the paper reveals the unique charm and profound implications of Zhaoqing's medicinal materials in artistic expression. Finally, the paper emphasizes the significant role of Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicine bird-and-flower painting creation in educational popularization, cultural inheritance, social influence, and cultural confidence building. This paper argues that Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicine bird-and-flower painting creation represents not only a paradigm of artistic innovation but also a crucial medium for inheriting and promoting traditional Chinese medicine culture.

KEYWORDS: *Chinese Herbal Medicine Culture, Bird-And-Flower Painting Art, Cultural Inheritance, Artistic Innovation*

1. INTRODUCTION

The cultural background of Chinese herbal medicines and the tradition of bird-and-flower paintings in Zhaoqing region are two brilliant pearls in Lingnan culture, carrying not only rich historical information but also profound cultural heritage.

1.1 Cultural Inheritance and Legislative Protection in Zhaoqing

The cultural background of Chinese herbal medicines in Zhaoqing region has a long history, closely connected with the traditional Chinese medicine culture of the Lingnan region, demonstrating unique and profound foundations.

Regarding legislative protection, the implementation of *Guangdong Province Lingnan Chinese Medicinal Materials Protection Regulations* highlights the emphasis on protecting medicinal materials. Four medicinal materials from Zhaoqing - Patchouli, Morinda officinalis, Buddha's Hand, and Polygonum multiflorum - were included in the first batch of protected species, establishing a solid foundation for their inheritance and development. These medicinal materials are all recorded in ancient medical texts, such as the description of Polygonum multiflorum in *Thunder God's Elaboration on Drug Properties*, proving their significant position in the traditional Chinese medicine system. Zhaoqing, with its unique climate, soil, and other natural conditions, has nurtured many renowned authentic medicinal materials, such as Morinda officinalis, whose specific ecological environment contributes to its remarkable efficacy, making it an invaluable treasure in Chinese medicine and Lingnan culture.

In terms of cultural inheritance and promotion, Zhaoqing City actively organizes events such as "Traditional Chinese Medicine Health Culture Night Market and Paste Festival", aligning with the ancient Chinese medical concept of "treating before illness". Through these activities, traditional Chinese medicine culture is disseminated to the public, enhancing health awareness and revitalizing ancient medical wisdom in modern society. The city's traditional Chinese medicine hospitals carefully create traditional Chinese medicine culture corridors, fostering a rich atmosphere of traditional Chinese medicine culture and promoting the popularization and inheritance of traditional Chinese medicine knowledge. As one of Guangdong Province's important southern medicinal material cultivation bases, Zhaoqing has a long history of medicinal material cultivation in areas such as Gaoyao, Guangning, Deqing, Fengkai, and Huaiji, accumulating rich cultivation experience and management models. Currently, an initial industrial framework has been established, providing strong support for the stable supply of medicinal materials.

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Furthermore, Zhaoqing's Chinese medicine specimen hall displays a diverse collection of Chinese medicine specimens, providing an excellent platform for the public to learn about Chinese medicine in depth, while also offering intuitive research materials for traditional Chinese medicine researchers, promoting the in-depth development of traditional Chinese medicine academic research. In summary, the Zhaoqing region, with its rich medicinal resources, strong protective measures, and diverse cultural inheritance and promotion methods, shines brilliantly in the field of Chinese herbal medicine culture, continuously writing glorious chapters. It has become a model region for inheriting and developing traditional Chinese medicine culture in modern society, and its development model and experience are worthy of in-depth research and promotion on a broader scale, contributing to the revival of traditional Chinese medicine culture.

1.2 Bird-and-Flower Painting Art: Tradition and Innovation in Zhaoqing

Bird-and-flower painting, as an important component of traditional Chinese painting, has evolved over thousands of years and has been deeply appreciated by people for its unique artistic charm and aesthetic value. Bird-and-flower painting conveys praise for life, reverence for nature, and aspirations for a beautiful life through the depiction of natural flora and fauna.

The bird-and-flower painting tradition in Zhaoqing has deep historical foundations. Li Xiongcai received early training from Chen Jian, a disciple of the renowned Guangdong bird-and-flower painter Ju Lian, and later studied under Gao Jianfu after joining the Spring Sleep Painting Academy, establishing a solid foundation in traditional bird-and-flower painting. The guidance and influence of these artistic masters enabled the inheritance and development of Zhaoqing's bird-and-flower painting tradition.

Bird-and-flower painting in Zhaoqing is not merely an art form but also a manifestation of traditional Chinese medicine culture. Through artistic expression, it aids in spreading Chinese herbal medicine culture, evoking emotional resonance with cultural symbols in people's hearts. This integration not only enriches the connotation of bird-and-flower paintings but also provides new channels for the dissemination of traditional Chinese medicine culture.

The treatment of artistic conception is central to Chinese bird-and-flower painting creation. Artists in the Zhaoqing region incorporate the artistic conception of traditional Chinese medicine culture into their works through detailed depiction of flowers and leaves, creating works with profound cultural connotations and aesthetic value. This treatment of artistic conception demonstrates not only the artists' superior skills but also showcases the unique artistic style of Zhaoqing's bird-and-flower paintings.

Located in the Lingnan region, Zhaoqing possesses abundant Chinese herbal medicine resources. These medicinal materials hold not only medicinal value but also rich cultural connotations. Integrating Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicines into bird-and-flower painting creation can enrich the subject matter of bird-and-flower paintings while injecting new cultural elements and artistic vitality. This integration represents not only an attempt at artistic innovation but also the inheritance and promotion of regional culture.

2. OVERVIEW OF CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINES IN ZHAOQING

As one of the main cultivation areas for southern authentic medicinal materials, the Zhaoqing region possesses rich varieties of southern medicines, with Morinda officinalis, Buddha's Hand, Cinnamomum cassia from Xijiang, and Polygonum multiflorum being particularly renowned authentic medicinal materials.

Patchouli: As one of the authentic Lingnan medicinal materials, patchouli was first recorded in Yang Fu's *Records of Foreign Matters* during the Eastern Han Dynasty, where it was used as a spice. The term "Guangdong patchouli" first appeared in Wang Kentang's *Medical Origins Collection* during the Ming Dynasty, while Ming Dynasty's Cao Bingzhang distinguished between Guangdong patchouli, foreign patchouli, and local patchouli in *Expanded Discriminations of Counterfeit Drugs* to indicate its authenticity, considering Guangdong and local patchouli to have better medicinal efficacy.

Buddha's Hand: As an authentic Lingnan medicinal material, it features large fruits with high peel oil content and superior quality. It has been recorded in various historical herbal texts, and patchouli became commonly used in Song and Yuan Dynasty medical prescriptions. From a geographical perspective, the patchouli produced in today's Guangdong region, particularly from Shipai, Gaoyao, Zhanjiang, and Wanning, is especially renowned.

Cassia bark: Gaoyao District in Zhaoqing is known as the "Hometown of China's Famous and Superior Economic Forest Cassia", with cassia having properties that supplement fire and assist yang. Cassia bark is recorded in *Famous Physicians' Records*, and *Plants of the Southern Regions* also mentions: "It grows in Jiaozhi, Jiuzhen, Wuping, Xinggu, and other regions, where officials and people cultivate it... when dried it becomes fragrant".

Morinda officinalis: Morinda officinalis has a long cultivation history in Gaoyao District of Zhaoqing and is renowned for its superior quality and high medicinal efficacy. It received national "authentic medicinal material" certification in 2012; in December 2015, "Gaoyao Morinda officinalis" obtained China's geographical indication protection product status. It is distributed throughout China and the Indochina Peninsula; within China, it is found in tropical and subtropical regions including Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, and Guangxi. It grows in mountain sparse or dense forests and shrublands, often climbing on shrubs or tree

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trunks, and is also cultivated domestically. Morinda officinalis is a precious Chinese medicinal material, one of the "Four Great Southern Medicines", with the folk saying "ginseng in the north, Morinda officinalis in the south".

Polygonum multiflorum: As one of Zhaoqing's authentic medicinal materials, Polygonum multiflorum was listed as a first-batch protected species in the *Guangdong Province Lingnan Chinese Medicinal Materials Protection Regulations*.

These medicinal materials are not only precious treasures of traditional Chinese medicine but also important components of Lingnan culture. Due to its unique geographical environment and climatic conditions, the Zhaoqing region has nurtured many high-quality authentic medicinal materials. The records of these medicinal materials in ancient medical texts further prove the historical value and cultural significance of Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicines.

3. INTEGRATION AND INNOVATION: REPRESENTATION OF ZHAOQING'S CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINES IN BIRD-AND-FLOWER PAINTINGS

3.1 Current Status Analysis: Expression of Zhaoqing's Medicinal Herbs in Contemporary Bird-and-Flower Paintings

Patchouli, Morinda officinalis, Buddha's Hand (Figure 1), and Polygonum multiflorum, as Zhaoqing's most distinctive Chinese herbal medicines, have indeed been represented in artistic creation. Patchouli is relatively rare in Chinese painting creation; when used as a background, it can add a unique natural ambiance and medicinal plant connotation to the painting. Polygonum multiflorum and Morinda officinalis, as vine plants growing attached to trees, often appear as backgrounds in Chinese paintings, their vines combining with other plants to add layering to the composition. Buddha's Hand has large fruits with rich forms, often depicted with "golden edges and white flesh" in paintings. The unique form and auspicious implications of Buddha's Hand make it a favored painting subject, with the following characteristics:



Figure 1 Buddha's Hand

First, its shape is distinctive, with fruits showing irregular cylindrical forms, remarkably split into multiple finger-like lobes at the front, displaying myriad poses. Sometimes resembling clasped Buddha hands in blessing, sometimes like outstretched palms radiating vitality, seemingly like Guanyin Bodhisattva's sacred hands sprinkling sweet dew. These varying forms open infinite possibilities for artists' creativity, enabling the development of various compositions full of tension and aesthetic appeal.

Second, its colors create striking visual impact. When mature, the golden-yellow peel shines brilliantly, immediately capturing viewers' attention and becoming the focal point of the painting. When contrasted with lush green leaves or subtle backgrounds, the vivid color contrasts create artistic styles that are either magnificent and dignified or fresh and elegant, making the entire painting rich in layers and lasting charm.

Third, it carries beautiful and profound implications. Through its homophonic connection to "fortune and longevity", it naturally embodies people's earnest wishes for auspiciousness, happiness, and longevity. When artists incorporate it into paintings, it's as if they seal these beautiful wishes within, allowing viewers to experience the warmth of aspiration for a beautiful life while appreciating the artistic beauty, greatly elevating the emotional value and cultural connotations of the works.

Fourth, it possesses profound cultural heritage. As a significant symbol in Buddhist culture, it represents compassion and wisdom, as if carrying the morning and evening bells of ancient temples into the paintings. Artists subtly integrate Chan Buddhist philosophy into their brushwork through depicting Buddha's Hand, allowing viewers to seemingly hear Buddhist teachings and purify their minds while contemplating the paintings, adding a transcendent and mysterious charm to the works.

Finally, it adapts to various expressive techniques. In meticulous brush painting, artists use delicate strokes and precise lines to patiently delineate every texture and craft every detail, presenting the exquisite perfection of Buddha's Hand, displaying its delicate beauty. In freehand painting, artists employ bold and unrestrained brushwork, capturing the essence of Buddha's Hand with just a few strokes, endowing it with vibrant vitality. Line drawing techniques use simple and plain lines to outline the pure authenticity of Buddha's Hand, displaying unique minimalist beauty. Through these various approaches, Buddha's Hand shines brilliantly in the painting field.

3.2 Artistic Characteristics: The Artistic Charm of Buddha's Hand in Bird-and-Flower Paintings

Ming Dynasty Xu Wei's *Buddha's Hand Painting* (Figure 2) demonstrates concise brushwork. In this painting, Xu Wei uses simplified brushwork to outline the form of Buddha's Hand, embodying the aesthetic principle of "achieving more with less" in Chinese painting. His ink variations are appropriately balanced

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between light and dark, expressing the three-dimensional sense and texture of Buddha's Hand through ink gradations while conveying an elegant aesthetic. The composition is ingenious; Xu Wei skillfully uses blank space, making the painting feel both substantial and ethereally beautiful. The branches and leaves of Buddha's Hand are arranged in a staggered manner, forming a harmonious whole and creating a profound artistic conception. The painting primarily depicts Buddha's Hand, conveying a sense of transcending worldliness and pursuing spiritual freedom. In Chinese culture, Buddha's Hand often symbolizes wisdom and enlightenment; through this painting, Xu Wei expresses his contemplation of life's philosophy. The painting exhibits a distinctive personal style, with free and unrestrained brushstrokes unconstrained by traditional techniques, displaying his unique personality as a literati painter. In the lower right corner, Xu Wei inscribed "Xu Wei's playful writing", which not only enhances the cultural connotations of the painting but also achieves harmony between calligraphy and painting, demonstrating the characteristics of Chinese literati painting.

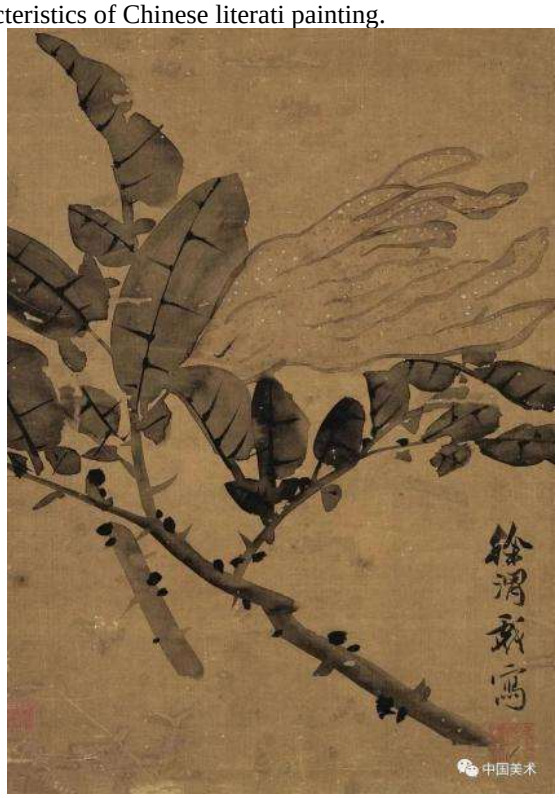


Figure 2 ***Buddha's Hand Painting*** **by Xu Wei, Ming Dynasty**



Figure 3 ***Life Drawing of Buddha's Hand*** **by Jiang Tingxi, Qing Dynasty**

Qing Dynasty Jiang Tingxi's *Life Drawing of Buddha's Hand* (Figure 3) presents exquisitely rendered Buddha's Hand, showcasing the artist's superior painting skills. In terms of form and posture, it achieves photographic realism, precisely outlining the overall contours of the Buddha's hand through excellent life drawing skills, meticulously presenting the flexion of each finger, as if recreating an actual Buddha's hand. It appears natural and vivid; in the painting, the Buddha's hand seems to grow vigorously in nature, with branches and leaves extending and fruits hanging, full of rhythm, demonstrating the artist's keen ability to capture natural forms. Regarding color usage, it is bright and vivid, primarily using golden yellow to present the mature Buddha's hand, both highlighting its inherent color and endowing the painting with an elegant and noble feeling, matching imperial aesthetics. The rich layering, through variations in color depth and light and shadow, such as the treatment of fruit highlights and shadows and foliage color changes, creates round, full Buddha's hands with strong three-dimensionality, enhancing the painting's sense of space and realism. From a compositional perspective, the main subject is prominent, with the Buddha's hand steadily occupying the center of the painting, attracting viewers' gaze, while branches, leaves, and inscriptions surround it, serving as complementary elements. The distribution is appropriate, with fruits and foliage harmoniously arranged, showing proper density and rhythm, avoiding cluttered or empty spaces, perfectly combining the form, spirit, and natural beauty of the Buddha's hand with auspicious implications, conveying aspirations and blessings for a beautiful life.

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Qing Dynasty Wu Changshuo's *Vase Flowers and Buddha's Hand* (Figure 4). Wu Changshuo created numerous paintings of Buddha's Hand, and this work is highly representative of his depictions. In terms of brushwork, this painting employs appropriately balanced ink variations to express the texture and three-dimensionality of objects through variations in ink depth. His brushstrokes are bold and powerful, full of rhythm, embodying the unique charm of Chinese painting's brushwork. In compositional layout, elements such as vase flowers, Buddha's hand, and teapot are rationally arranged, forming a harmonious whole. The use of blank space makes the painting feel both substantial and ethereally beautiful. In color usage, it employs relatively subtle tones, such as pink for the vase flowers and yellow for the Buddha's hand; these colors are both vivid and harmonious, giving a fresh and transcendent feeling. In terms of artistic conception, this painting conveys a quiet, elegant lifestyle interest through the depiction of still life. The vase flowers and Buddha's hand symbolize auspiciousness and longevity, reflecting the auspicious implications in Chinese traditional culture. The painting incorporates calligraphic elements, such as the inscription on the left, which not only enhances the cultural connotations of the painting but also achieves harmony between calligraphy and painting, demonstrating the characteristics of Chinese literati painting. Wu Changshuo's works possess a distinctive personal style, his paintings often carrying an unrestrained momentum while not lacking in delicate brushwork, a style fully embodied in *Vase Flowers and Buddha's Hand*.



Figure 4 *Vase Flowers and Buddha's Hand* by Wu Changshuo, Qing Dynasty



Figure 5 *Life Drawing Album: Buddha's Hand and Vermillion Orange* by Yun Shouping, Qing Dynasty

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Figure 6 ***New Year's Painting*** **by Ren Bonian, Qing Dynasty**



Figure 7 ***New Year's Pure Offerings Painting*** **by Ju Chao, Late Qing Dynasty**



Figure 8 ***Pure Offerings Painting*** **by Xu Gu, Late Qing Dynasty**

Qing Dynasty Yun Shouping, renowned for his life-drawing flower paintings, was known for his fresh, elegant style with bright colors and delicate brushwork. *Life Drawing Album: Buddha's Hand and Vermillion Orange* (Figure 5) is one of Yun

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Shouping's life drawings. His life drawing works emphasize the true representation of natural objects; in this painting, the Buddha's hand and vermillion orange appear lifelike, with meticulous detail treatment, demonstrating the artist's deep observation of nature. The colors in the painting are vibrant yet elegant, with the yellow of the Buddha's hand contrasting sharply with the red of the vermillion orange, enriching the painting while enhancing visual impact. Yun Shouping employed delicate brushwork in this painting, expressing the texture and three-dimensionality of the Buddha's hand and vermillion orange through variations in ink and color gradation. The composition of Buddha's hand and vermillion orange is rational, forming a harmonious whole. Yun Shouping skillfully uses blank space, making the painting feel both substantial and ethereally beautiful. Through the depiction of Buddha's hand and vermillion orange, the painting conveys a fresh, tranquil artistic conception, reflecting Yun Shouping's praise and pursuit of natural beauty. On the left side of the painting, Yun Shouping inscribed verses, which not only enhance the cultural connotations but also achieve harmony between calligraphy and painting, fully displaying literati style.

Ren Bonian was a famous painter of the late Qing Dynasty, renowned for his figure and bird-and-flower paintings. *New Year's Painting* (Figure 6) is one of Ren Bonian's works. *New Year's Paintings* typically use Spring Festival as the background, possibly including festival-related elements such as flowers and fruits to express New Year blessings and expectations. This painting employs rich colors, such as red flowers symbolizing festivity and auspiciousness, while other color combinations enhance the painting's visual effect. The elements in the painting are rationally arranged, forming a harmonious whole. Ren Bonian skillfully uses blank space, making the painting feel both substantial and ethereally beautiful. The work is characterized by fluid brushwork and powerful lines, using delicate strokes to depict the forms of flowers and strong lines to express the texture of branches. The details of flowers and fruits in the painting are meticulously depicted, demonstrating the artist's deep understanding of natural objects and superb skills. The elements in the painting often carry specific cultural implications, such as flowers possibly symbolizing the arrival of spring and the prosperity of life, collectively forming a painting rich in cultural connotations.

Late Qing Dynasty Ju Chao's *New Year's Pure Offerings Painting* (Figure 7) is one of Ju Chao's works. Typically, "New Year's Day" refers to the first day of the lunar month, while "pure offerings" refers to elegant items displayed during festivals, such as flowers and fruits, to add festival atmosphere. In this painting, the Buddha's hand, as one element, often symbolizes auspiciousness and longevity in Chinese culture. Ju Chao's depiction of Buddha's hand in *New Year's Pure Offerings Painting* conveys New Year blessings and aspirations for a beautiful life. In the painting, the Buddha's hand's colors are vivid, contrasting with surrounding flowers and fruits, highlighting its auspicious implications. The Buddha's hand employs delicate brushwork to express its texture and three-dimensionality, with fluid yet powerful brushstrokes, displaying its natural form. In *New Year's Pure Offerings Painting*, the Buddha's hand forms the composition along with other items such as chrysanthemums and strange rocks, creating a harmonious whole, emphasizing the relationships between items and spatial layout to create a balanced visual effect. Through the depiction of elements like the Buddha's hand, it demonstrates literati pursuit of natural beauty and attention to festival culture, conveying expectations for the New Year and wishes for a beautiful life.

Late Qing Dynasty Xu Gu's *Pure Offerings Painting* (Figure 8) has a minimalist style, with few elements in the painting, but each carefully selected and arranged to convey profound artistic conception. The painting demonstrates skillful brushwork techniques, with fluid and powerful lines and appropriately balanced ink tones, displaying the artist's superior control of brush and ink. In terms of color, it employs subtle tones, making the painting fresh and transcendent, reflecting the aesthetic characteristics of traditional Chinese painting. Elements such as vases, flowers, and fruits in the painting are rationally arranged, forming a harmonious whole. Xu Gu skillfully uses blank space, making the painting feel both substantial and ethereally beautiful. The profound artistic conception conveys a sense of transcending worldliness and pursuing spiritual freedom, reflecting the artist's inner cultivation and artistic pursuit. *Pure Offerings Painting* is not only a manifestation of Xu Gu's artistic achievement but also an important marker of the development of Qing Dynasty painting art. Through this painting, we can sense Xu Gu's pursuit of natural beauty and inheritance of traditional culture.

Late Qing Dynasty Zhao Zhiqian's *Pure Offerings Painting* (Figure 9) fully demonstrates his unique artistic style and profound cultural foundation. In this painting, Zhao Zhiqian uses his exquisite brushwork techniques, steady yet varied brushstrokes, and distinct ink gradations to skillfully express the texture and three-dimensionality of objects. His color usage is elegant yet rich, achieving harmony and layering through color contrast and modulation. In composition, Zhao Zhiqian emphasizes balance and symmetry, rationally arranging elements in the painting, highlighting the main subject while coordinating supporting elements to form a harmonious whole. His personalized style is fully embodied in the work, with brushstrokes containing deep understanding of natural objects and personalized artistic expression. Zhao Zhiqian also skillfully combines calligraphy with painting; the inscription on the left not only enhances the cultural connotations but also demonstrates the characteristics of Chinese literati painting. Emotional expression is another feature of Zhao Zhiqian's paintings, with his brushstrokes containing love and praise for natural objects, allowing viewers to sense the artist's emotional world. The elements in *Pure Offerings Painting*, such as flowers and fruits, possess not only natural beauty but also cultural implications, symbolizing the arrival of spring and the prosperity of life,

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collectively forming a painting rich in cultural connotations. While inheriting tradition, Zhao Zhiqian also demonstrates his innovative spirit. His paintings breakthrough in both form and content, showing his exploration and innovation as an artist, whether in brushwork usage or compositional innovation. *Pure Offerings Painting* is not only a manifestation of Zhao Zhiqian's artistic achievement but also an important marker of the development of Qing Dynasty painting art. Through this painting, we can sense Zhao Zhiqian's pursuit of natural beauty and inheritance of traditional culture, as well as his artistic innovation and exploration.



Figure 9 ***Pure Offerings Painting*** **by Zhao Zhiqian, Late Qing Dynasty**

Pure Offerings paintings were an important subject matter in Qing Dynasty literati painting, displaying cultural taste and festival atmosphere. They integrated elements of blessing and antiquity appreciation, becoming part of artistic innovation and social cultural life, embodying people's aspirations for a beautiful life. Buddha's hand, symbolizing auspiciousness, frequently appears in Pure Offerings paintings, adding meaning and beauty to the compositions, which will not be analyzed individually here.



Figure 10 ***Buddha's Hand Scroll*** **by Chen Shizeng, Modern - Contemporary**

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Chen Shizeng, a renowned modern - contemporary Chinese painter and art educator, demonstrated personal artistic style while inheriting tradition in his works. In *Buddha's Hand Scroll* (Figure 10), the brushwork flows naturally, with fluid and powerful lines effectively expressing the form and texture of the Buddha's hand. The composition is simple and clear, with the Buddha's hand prominently displayed as the main element, while the background remains blank, making the subject more distinct. In terms of color, it employs subtle tones, making the painting appear fresh and transcendent while reflecting the aesthetic characteristics of traditional Chinese painting. The inscriptions harmonize with the painting, with calligraphic strokes echoing painting brushwork, demonstrating the characteristics of Chinese literati painting. The painting conveys a sense of transcending worldliness and pursuing spiritual freedom, reflecting the artist's inner cultivation and artistic pursuit.

3.3 Modern "Art Praising Eight Treasures — Lingnan Chinese Medicine Culture Themed Art Exhibition" and Zhaoqing's Medicinal Materials

The "Art Praising Eight Treasures — Lingnan Chinese Medicine Culture Themed Art Exhibition" represents a deep integration of art and traditional Chinese medicine culture. Through artists' creations, it displays the aesthetic value and cultural significance of Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicines. Using the "Lingnan Eight Treasures" as cultural symbols, the exhibition aims to innovate while inheriting and promoting traditional Chinese medicine culture, allowing viewers to understand the form and properties of Chinese medicines while appreciating art, recognizing their nature and characteristics.

Eight artists approached from different perspectives, refining and transforming, exercising their respective artistic expressiveness to demonstrate the diversity and richness of the "Lingnan Eight Treasures". Chen Zhonglin uses ink to express the elegance of the Eight Treasures, Tian Aihua's depictions are fresh and graceful, Chen Zhihan's freehand brushwork conveys magnificent qualities, while Huang Yongyin focuses on expressing the beauty of Chinese herbs in different growth states. The artists emphasize depicting the natural
spirit and essence of Chinese herbs. Tian Aihua, while focusing on the external morphology and characteristics of medicinal materials, also attends to their life forms, emphasizing artistic aesthetic principles.

Furthermore, the exhibition represents an interaction between art and science. Cai Haibiao conducted in-depth research on the microscopic tissue structure of the Eight Treasures medicines, expressing their microscopic beauty through unique ink effects and comprehensive materials. The legends and emotions associated with Lingnan Chinese herbs are also integrated into artistic creation. He Yi incorporates his deep feelings and unique understanding of Chinese herbs into bird-and-flower painting creation, making Chinese herbs not merely specimens but part of thematic creation, creating new artistic realms.

Through these works, the exhibition not only displays the natural beauty of Lingnan Chinese herbs but also conveys the artists' understanding and respect for traditional Chinese medicine culture, as well as their exploration of combining art and science. Such artistic presentation not only provides viewers with a visual feast but also offers new forms and pathways for the dissemination and popularization of traditional Chinese medicine culture.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF ZHAOQING'S CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE BIRD-AND-FLOWER PAINTING CREATION

In today's context of flourishing multicultural development, Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicine bird-and-flower painting creation shines like a brilliant pearl, radiating unique brilliance. Its significance is profound and extensive, spanning crucial areas including educational popularization, cultural inheritance and innovation, social influence, and cultural confidence building.

4.1 Educational Beacon for Knowledge Dissemination

Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicine bird-and-flower painting creation, with its unique artistic charm, has become a key to popularizing Chinese herbal medicine knowledge and opening the door to public understanding of traditional Chinese medicine culture. Artists serve as knowledge dissemination ambassadors, deeply mining wisdom treasures from traditional Chinese medicine classics such as *Compendium of Materia Medica*, carefully selecting representative and common Chinese herbs such as ginseng, mint, and clove as creative materials, and using refined Chinese painting techniques to vividly present them on scrolls.

Taking artists like Wan Fu as examples, their Chinese herbal medicine bird-and-flower paintings are far from simple botanical copying. Every leaf texture, every flower pistil's posture is depicted meticulously, demonstrating both the natural appearance of Chinese herbs and artfully incorporating artistic vitality and spirit. When viewers stand before these paintings, they seem able to touch the vibrant life force of Chinese herbs through the canvas, sensing the thousand-year-old medical wisdom they carry. This intuitive and highly infectious presentation method breaks down the barriers of traditional Chinese medicine knowledge learning, allowing the public to easily absorb Chinese herbal medicine knowledge while appreciating artistic beauty, imperceptibly raising their understanding of traditional Chinese medicine culture, and laying a solid foundation for further exploration of the traditional Chinese medicine world.

4.2 Solid Bridge for Cultural Inheritance and Innovation

In the river of culture, bird-and-flower painting, as an important branch of traditional Chinese painting art, has a long history. The rise of Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicine bird-and-flower painting creation has injected new vitality into this ancient art

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form, building a solid bridge for inheriting and innovating Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicine culture.

On one hand, artists maintain reverence for traditional culture, integrating Chinese herbal medicines, elements with strong local characteristics, into bird-and-flower painting creation, continuing the artistic tradition of expressing ideas through objects and emotions through scenes in bird-and-flower painting. Through precise grasp of Chinese herbs' forms and characteristics, they create unique artistic conceptions in paintings, expanding traditional bird-and-flower painting subjects and bringing new vitality. For example, the emergence of the *Hundred Herbs Collection* bird-and-flower painting collection, as the country's first bird-and-flower painting collection themed on Chinese herbs, carries heavy historical heritage and cultural expectations. It not only faithfully records the external appearance of Chinese herbs but also perfectly combines traditional Chinese medicine cultural connotations with artistic aesthetics, becoming a vivid example of traditional Chinese medicine culture inheritance.

On the other hand, this creative form boldly breaks through traditional painting's expressive boundaries, encouraging artists to reinterpret Chinese herbs using modern aesthetic concepts and innovative painting techniques. From bold attempts in color usage to ingenious compositional layouts, each innovative exploration is like injecting new blood into the veins of traditional Chinese medicine culture inheritance, ensuring that ancient Chinese herbal medicine culture keeps pace with the times, entering modern people's vision with a new appearance, ensuring it never fades in cultural tides.

4.3 Powerful Engine for Social Influence and Cultural Confidence

Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicine bird-and-flower painting creation acts like an invigorating cultural spring breeze, sweeping through all corners of society, playing an immeasurable role in enhancing public love for traditional Chinese art and boosting cultural confidence.

Artists like He Yi pour their deep emotions and profound insights about Chinese herbs into every bird-and-flower painting work. In his creations, Chinese herbs have transcended the realm of mere botanical specimens, ascending to become artistic themes with profound connotations. Through the paintings, viewers can deeply sense the artists' reverence and love for traditional Chinese medicine culture, triggering emotional resonance. These works frequently appear in various exhibitions and cultural exchange activities, attracting audiences of different ages and backgrounds to stop and appreciate. They act like cultural magnets, sparking public curiosity and desire to explore Chinese traditional art, motivating more people to actively visit museums and art galleries, study traditional Chinese medicine classics, and engage in traditional art learning and creation.

As the influence of Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicine bird-and-flower painting continues to expand, social attention to traditional Chinese medicine culture has risen accordingly. While appreciating traditional artistic charm, people have begun to re-examine the profound depth of Chinese traditional culture, feeling proud to be children of China. This confidence, stemming from cultural identity, in turn provides continuous spiritual momentum for the inheritance and innovation of traditional Chinese medicine culture and the development of Chinese traditional art, forming a virtuous cycle that propels the entire society toward cultural prosperity and flourishing.

Zhaoqing's Chinese herbal medicine bird-and-flower painting creation is far more than a simple artistic endeavor; it carries the important task of educational popularization, shoulders the mission of cultural inheritance and innovation, and serves as a key force in stimulating social cultural vitality and building cultural confidence. In its future development journey, it will continue to radiate brilliance, writing more colorful chapters, helping Chinese excellent traditional culture set sail in the new era.

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