

The Art of Lin Chan-mei's Calligraphy and Painting: An Analysis Based on the *Ch'ien-yüan ch'in-yü-ts'ao*

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ABSTRACT

Taiwan became part of the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1684 and for more than one hundred years the development of Taiwanese traditional calligraphy and painting was dominated by Ch'ing officials and their advisors who came from the mainland. Not until the early 19th century, as a result of political, economic, and cultural change, did local Taiwanese elites begin to come to the fore. One such person was Lin Chan-mei, a member of the Lin Hen-mao family of Chu-ch'ien. Lin Chan-mei not only contributed to alleviating natural disasters and quelling rebellions, but also indulged in writing poems during the Tao-kuang (1821-1850) and T'ung-chih (1862-1874) reigns. He was both a prominent social leader and a sentimental and expressionist poet who should not be left out of the history of Taiwanese literature. By analyzing his poetry in *Ch'ien-yüan ch'in-yü-ts'ao*, the poetry of other literati, and the legends and history of the Hsinchu area, we learn that he also earned an excellent reputation for calligraphy and painting.

Because none of his paintings survive, this essay attempts to interpret Lin Chan-mei's aesthetics, creativity, and influence by analyzing his poetry, calligraphy, and official and non-official historical records. The activities of Lin Chan-mei reflect various cultural currents. He originally began in the traditional Literati school style, but developed into the unconventional Min-Che style. Thus, the study of Lin Chan-mei's art and aesthetics helps to clarify and re-construct the history of Taiwanese traditional calligraphy and painting from the 19th to the early 20th century.

Keywords: Literati school, Min-Che school, local culture, Ch'ing dynasty

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