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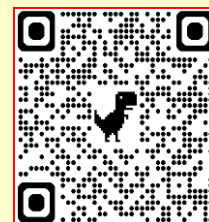
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The Inheritance of Shu Road in the Context of Song Dynasty: A Dialogue Study between Huang Tingjian's Calligraphy Aesthetics and the Stone Carvings of the Great Shu Road

Pei Liu

Sichuan Normal University

Corresponding Author: Pei Liu

Sichuan Normal University

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the dissemination and inheritance of the cultural context of the Song Dynasty along the Shu Road, systematically exploring the intrinsic connections between Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetic ideology and the stone inscription art of the Greater Shu Road. Subsequently, it reveals the path characteristics and historical evolution patterns of cultural dissemination during the Song Dynasty. Firstly, this research conducts a theoretical analysis of the typical characteristics of Song Dynasty culture and the strategic significance of the Shu Road in historical and cultural contexts. Then, it delves into an in-depth analysis of the theoretical framework of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics and carries out empirical research on the cultural connotations and calligraphic artistic features of the stone inscriptions along the Greater Shu Road. By establishing a dialogical relationship between the two, this study uncovers the profound impact of this cultural phenomenon on the development of regional culture and the evolution of calligraphic art.

Keywords: Cultural Lineage of the Song Dynasty; Huang Tingjian's Calligraphic Aesthetics; Stone Inscriptions on the Greater Shu Road; Inheritance of the Shu Road; Cultural Dialogue

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background and significance

The culture of the Song Dynasty shines like a resplendent pearl in the long river of Chinese culture, occupying a pivotal position in the history of Chinese civilization. During this period, the fields of culture and art witnessed an unprecedented flourishing. The rise of Neo-Confucianism infused Song Dynasty culture with profound philosophical contemplation, and its exploration of 'Heavenly Principle' and 'Human Desires' deeply permeated artistic forms such as literature, painting, and calligraphy. Poetry composition

reached a new pinnacle, with the bold and unrestrained style of Su Shi and the delicate and subtle style of Liu Yong, among others, showcasing a dazzling array of works that reflected the rich emotional worlds and remarkable literary attainments of Song Dynasty literati. In painting, whether it was the meticulous and detailed court paintings or the freehand ink paintings pursued by literati painters for their artistic conception, both demonstrated the unique aesthetic sensibilities of Song Dynasty painting. In the realm of music, the development of ci-music (lyrics set to music) forged a

close bond between music and literature, enriching people's spiritual lives. The diversity and refinement of Song Dynasty culture exerted a profound and far-reaching influence on the development of cultural and artistic endeavors in subsequent generations, providing an inexhaustible wellspring of inspiration for cultural creations from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties to modern times.

The Shu Road, as a vital corridor connecting the Central Plains and the Southwest region, not only possesses unique geographical significance but also plays a pivotal role in cultural dissemination. Winding through towering mountains and lofty ridges, it has withstood the test of thousands of years, bearing witness to countless cultural exchanges and integrations. In ancient times, the Shu Road served as an important post road for official decree transmission and military mobilization, as well as an indispensable route for commercial trade. The movement of a large number of people and goods along the Shu Road simultaneously facilitated cultural propagation. Advanced cultures and technologies from the Central Plains were introduced into the Southwest along this route, while the distinctive regional cultures of the Southwest were also fed back to the Central Plains via the Shu Road, fostering mutual understanding and integration among diverse regional cultures.

Huang Tingjian, as an outstanding representative in the calligraphy circle of the Song Dynasty, boasts a unique and distinctive calligraphic art, holding an irreplaceable position within the calligraphy system of that era. His calligraphic style underwent an evolutionary process, transitioning from early-stage learning and imitation to the later development of a self-contained and highly individualistic 'Huang-style' calligraphy. The stone inscriptions along the Greater Shu Road are imbued with rich cultural connotations. From their initial emergence in the pre-Qin period, through the flourishing stages in the Qin, Han, Tang, and Song dynasties, to their continuation in the Yuan, Ming, Qing dynasties, and into modern times, the inscriptions encompass a wide range of content, including religious statuary and literary inscriptions, reflecting the cultural characteristics of different historical periods. A dialogical study between Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics and the stone inscriptions of the Greater Shu Road facilitates an in-depth exploration of the inheritance trajectory of Song Dynasty cultural lineage along the Shu Road, reveals the intrinsic mechanisms underlying the interaction between cultural dissemination and regional culture, and offers new perspectives and approaches for researching the cultural inheritance of the Song Dynasty.

1.2 Research purpose and innovation points

This study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the manifestation and inheritance of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics in the stone inscriptions along the Greater Shu Road, and to clearly elucidate the dissemination pathways and evolutionary processes of Song Dynasty culture along the Shu Road. Specifically, by examining the core elements of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics, such as brushwork techniques, structural composition, and the pursuit of artistic conception, as well as analyzing the calligraphic art within the stone inscriptions of the Greater Shu Road, this research seeks to explore the intrinsic connections between the two. It aims to clarify how cultural elements of the Song Dynasty achieved inheritance and development within the specific geographical context of the Shu Road.

The innovation of this study lies in the organic integration of calligraphic art and regional stone inscription culture, conducted from an interdisciplinary perspective. Previous research has

predominantly focused on calligraphic art itself or merely concentrated on a single aspect of regional culture, with limited attention given to the interactive relationship between calligraphic aesthetics and regional stone inscription culture. This study transcends disciplinary boundaries by comprehensively employing knowledge and methodologies from multiple disciplines, including historiography, archaeology, and art history, to delve deeply into the cultural inheritance lineage that has rarely received attention. It offers a novel research paradigm and approach for both Song Dynasty cultural studies and regional cultural research.

1.3 Research Methods and Framework

This article mainly uses the following research methods:

Literature Research Method: This involves an extensive review of historical documents, academic works, research papers, and other materials related to Song Dynasty culture, Huang Tingjian's calligraphy theory, and the Greater Shu Road. Through the systematic organization and analysis of these documents, we aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of the overall characteristics of Song Dynasty culture, the formative background and developmental trajectory of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics, as well as the status and functions of the Greater Shu Road during different historical periods. This provides a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent research endeavors.

Field Investigation Method: This involves conducting on-site investigations of stone inscription relics along the Greater Shu Road. By personally visiting the locations of these inscriptions, we observe their current state of preservation, morphological characteristics, calligraphic styles, and other relevant aspects to acquire primary data. Additionally, we engage in exchanges with local cultural heritage protection departments and researchers to gather information regarding the historical background and cultural connotations of these inscriptions, thereby compensating for deficiencies in documentary sources and enhancing the authenticity and reliability of our research.

Image Analysis Method: This approach involves employing image analysis techniques to study the calligraphic images inscribed on the stone relics along the Greater Shu Road. Through an examination of aspects such as calligraphic character forms, stroke morphologies, and structural compositions, it aims to uncover the artistic characteristics of the stone inscription calligraphy. Furthermore, by comparing these findings with Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics, it seeks to explore the similarities and differences between the two.

2. The historical origins of the context of the Song Dynasty and the Shu Road

2.1 Overview of Cultural Characteristics of the Song Dynasty

2.1.1 The Influence of Philosophical Thought in the Song Dynasty

The philosophical thought of the Song Dynasty centered on Neo-Confucianism, with the ideas of Neo-Confucian scholars such as Zhou Dunyi, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, and Zhu Xi exerting a broad and profound influence on the culture and art of the era. Neo-Confucianism emphasized the supremacy of the 'Heavenly Principle' and advocated exploring this principle through the method of 'investigating things to attain knowledge'. Reflected in the realm of culture and art, this philosophical concept led Song Dynasty artistic works to place greater emphasis on the expression of the inner spirit. In painting, artists pursued the conveyance of profound understandings of nature and life through brush and ink, striving for

a realm of 'harmony between humanity and heaven'. For instance, Guo Xi's landscape painting *Early Spring* (Figure 1) depicts, with delicate brushstrokes, the vitality and transformations of mountains and waters during early spring, embodying the artist's profound insights into the laws of nature and his comprehension of the 'Heavenly Principle'. In calligraphy creation, calligraphers also focused on expressing their states of mind and self-cultivation through the application of brush and ink, pursuing an inner 'rhythm'.



Figure 1 (Northern Song Dynasty) Guo Xi's *Early Spring Picture*, collected by the National Palace Museum in Taipei, 158.3cm × 108.1cm

2.1.2 The prosperity of the literary field

Song Dynasty literature made remarkable achievements in the realm of poetry and ci-poetry creation. Ci-poetry, as an emerging literary form, reached its zenith during the Song era. Liu Yong, renowned for his gentle and nuanced ci-poetry style, depicted a wide array of themes, including urban life and romantic entanglements between men and women. His work, such as *Yulin Ling - The Mournful Chirp of Cold Cicadas* with lines like 'Holding hands, we gaze into each other's tear-filled eyes; speechless, we choke with sobs', vividly captures the essence of parting emotions, earning widespread admiration. Su Shi, in contrast, pioneered a bold and unrestrained ci-poetry style, initiating the heroic ci-poetry school. His *Nian Nu Jiao - Reminiscing the Past at Red Cliff* featuring verses like 'The great river flows eastward, washing away all the renowned figures of ancient times' showcases a vast historical perspective and a heroic spirit. In terms of poetry creation, Song poetry forged a distinct path on the foundation of Tang poetry, emphasizing the use of words, erudition, and argumentation as poetic elements, reflecting the

profound knowledge and discursive abilities of Song Dynasty literati.

2.1.3 Achievements in other art forms

The painting art of the Song Dynasty exhibited a diverse range of styles. Under the advocacy of Emperor Huizong Zhao Ji, court painting emphasized realism and technical proficiency, with artists rendering objects with exceptional delicacy. For instance, Emperor Huizong's *Auspicious Cranes* (Figure 2) depicts a scene of cranes in flight with exquisite craftsmanship, rendering the image vividly lifelike. Literati painting, on the other hand, stressed the aesthetic charm of brushwork and ink and the expression of artistic conception. Scholars such as Su Shi and Wen Tong championed 'literati painting', advocating that paintings should convey the artist's subjective emotions and ideological realms.



Figure 2: (Northern Song Dynasty) *Rui He Tu* by Emperor Huizong of Song, collected by Liaoning Provincial Museum, 51.8cm × 138.5cm

2.2 The Transportation and Cultural Status of Shu Road in the Song Dynasty

2.2.1 Evolution and Importance of Transportation Routes

During the Song Dynasty, the Shu Road evolved in its routes while inheriting aspects from previous dynasties. It primarily comprised the Jinniu Path, Micang Path, and Litchi Path, among others. The Jinniu Path served as a crucial conduit linking the Central Plains with the Sichuan Basin and remained an integral part of the official post road system in the Song era. A substantial volume of official documents and the movement of officials were facilitated through this path. The Micang Path, on the other hand, played a significant role in commercial trade, becoming a vital commercial route connecting the Sichuan and Shaanxi regions. Although the Litchi Path's original function of transporting litchis diminished during the Song Dynasty, it still remained an important transportation artery. As an official post road, the Shu Road ensured the swift transmission of imperial decrees and the smooth execution of military operations; as a commercial thoroughfare, it facilitated the exchange of goods between the Central Plains and the southwestern regions, spurring economic development along its route.

2.2.2 Development of cities along the route

The cities along the Shu Road experienced prosperity and development during the Song Dynasty. For instance, Hanzhong, as a crucial nodal city on the Shu Road, enjoyed a strategically advantageous geographical location, serving as a transportation hub connecting Guanzhong and Sichuan. During the Song era, Hanzhong witnessed rapid economic growth, with thriving commerce and a large population. Numerous commercial facilities, temples, and

other architectural structures were constructed in the city, fostering a rich cultural atmosphere. Guangyuan was also an important city along the Shu Road, leveraging its convenient transportation conditions to become a distribution center for goods. In terms of culture, Guangyuan's stone carving art reached new heights during the Song Dynasty, with a multitude of Buddhist statues and literary inscriptions appearing on its cliff carvings, reflecting the religious beliefs and cultural exchanges of the time. These cities emerged as vital nodes for cultural dissemination, where cultures from different regions converged, interacted, and integrated.

2.2.3 Cultural exchange between literati and literati

During the Song Dynasty, literati and poets frequently traversed the Shu Road, injecting vitality into cultural exchanges. Su Shi made multiple journeys along the Shu Road throughout his life, and his experiences and observations there became significant sources of inspiration for his literary creations. In his poem *Nanxiangzi - Farewell to Shugu*, the lines 'Looking back, I see a tumult of mountains; no residents in sight, only the city wall' vividly depict the landscapes and cityscapes along the Shu Road, expressing the poet's sentiments of parting. Lu You also served in Sichuan and composed numerous poems during his travels on the Shu Road. For instance, in *Encountering Light Rain on Jianmen Pass Road*, the lines 'Am I destined to be a poet? Riding a donkey through Jianmen Pass in the drizzle' showcase the natural beauty of the Shu Road and the poet's state of mind. The literary works left by these literati and poets along the Shu Road not only disseminated Central Plains culture but also brought back regional cultures from the southwest to the Central Plains, fostering mutual understanding and integration among different regional cultures.

3. Analysis of Huang Tingjian's Calligraphy Aesthetic System

3.1 Huang Tingjian's Calligraphy Life and Creative Style Formation

3.1.1 The influence of life experiences

Huang Tingjian (Figure 3) was born into a literati family in Xiushui, Jiangxi, and received a solid cultural education from a young age. In his early years, he studied calligraphy under Zhou Yue, whose rigorous and standardized calligraphic style laid a firm foundation

for Huang Tingjian. However, Huang Tingjian was not content with merely imitating Zhou Yue's calligraphy. During his subsequent studies, he extensively explored classical calligraphic masterpieces by ancient calligraphers such as Wang Xizhi, Yan Zhenqing, and Huai Su. His official career also had a significant impact on his calligraphic creation. Throughout his life, Huang Tingjian experienced multiple demotions and endured a turbulent official path. During his periods of exile, his state of mind underwent profound changes, which were reflected in his calligraphic works. For instance, in *The Letter to the Eminent Monks* (Figure 4), which he created during his exile to Yizhou, his calligraphic style became more unrestrained and free-spirited, embodying his open-minded and detached demeanor amidst adversity.



Figure 3: (Northern Song Dynasty) Portrait of Huang Tingjian, collected by the Palace Museum

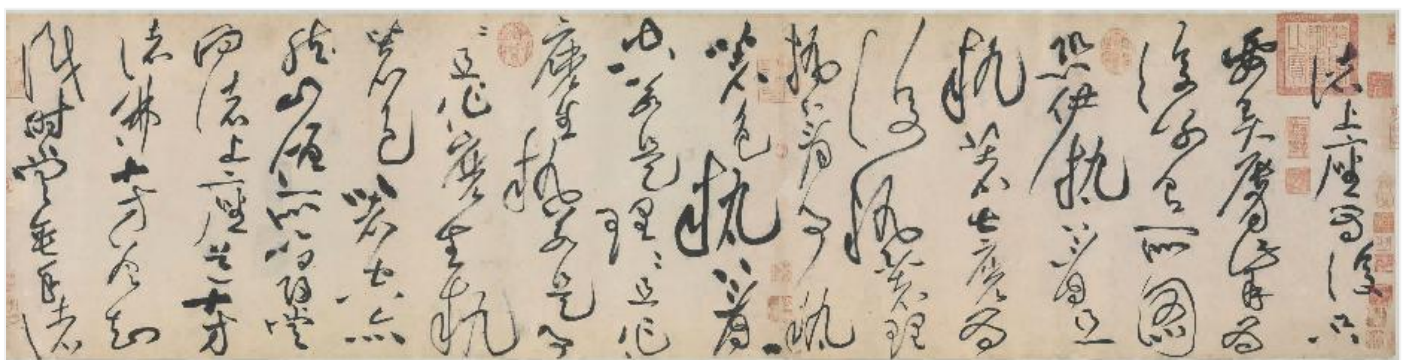


Figure 4: (Northern Song Dynasty) Huang Tingjian's *Zhu Shang Zuo Tie* (partial), collected by the Palace Museum, 33cm × 729.5cm

3.1.2 The process of style evolution

Huang Tingjian's calligraphic style underwent a transformation from early imitation to the eventual formation of his unique 'Huang Style' in the later period. In his early phase, his calligraphic works were influenced by Zhou Yue and calligraphers of the Tang Dynasty in terms of brush techniques and structural composition, presenting a relatively regular and standardized style. As he conducted in-depth

research and gained profound comprehension of classical calligraphic masterpieces, he gradually embarked on the exploration and development of his own distinctive style. During the intermediate stage, some unique stroke forms and structural layouts began to emerge in his calligraphic creations. For instance, the bold and sweeping momentum akin to long spears and great halberds in strokes gradually became evident. In his later stage, his 'Huang

Style' reached full maturity. His brush techniques became even more free-flowing and unrestrained. Regarding structural composition, he placed greater emphasis on the contrast in density and the harmonious interplay between characters and between lines, thereby forging a unique artistic allure.

3.2 The core elements of Huang Tingjian's calligraphy aesthetics

3.2.1 Characteristics of Writing Techniques

Huang Tingjian's calligraphic brushwork is highly distinctive, with his strokes often taking on the formidable forms reminiscent of long spears and great halberds. He excelled at integrating the central-tip and side-tip brush techniques, imbuing his strokes with both an upright and robust vigor as well as a dexterous and versatile quality. During the act of writing, the starting and ending strokes in his

calligraphy frequently display a wealth of variations. At times, he would adopt the hidden-tip starting approach, which is understated and restrained; on other occasions, he would employ the exposed-tip starting method, showcasing a sharp and prominent edge. For instance, in his *Poem Inscription at Pine Breeze Pavilion* (Figure 5), the long left-descending stroke of the character resembling the concept of 'pine' is executed with the central-tip brush technique, yielding a straight and powerful line, akin to a long spear thrusting out. Meanwhile, the right-descending stroke of the character, similar to the notion of 'pavilion' is initially written with the central-tip brush, and then, at the end, the side-tip is used to spread the brush hairs, creating a wavy, undulating effect that is full of allure. This unique application of brushwork fills his calligraphic works with a sense of dynamism and a feeling of strength.

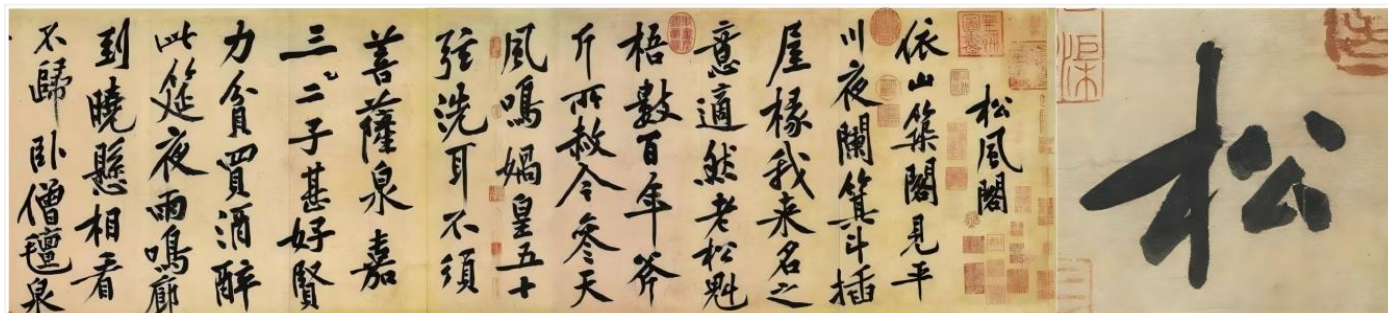


Figure 5: (Northern Song Dynasty) Huang Tingjian's 'Song Feng Ge Poetry Collection' (partial), collected by the National Palace Museum in Taipei, 32.8cm × 219.2cm, with the character 'Song' illustrated

3.2.2 Structural layout

In terms of structural composition, Huang Tingjian emphasized the contrast in density and the harmonious interplay between characters and between lines. His characters often deviated from conventional structures, with some strokes being exaggerated and deformed to achieve a unique visual effect. For example, in *Letter of Floral Fragrance Overwhelming People*, the upper part of the character resembling 'flower' features relatively compact strokes, while the vertical stroke in its lower part is elongated, creating a contrast in density with the adjacent character akin to 'qi' (air or vital energy). Between lines, he also paid attention to the use of white space and the interweaving and yielding of characters, ensuring a smooth flow of qi (vital energy in calligraphy) throughout the entire work and imbuing it with a sense of rhythm.

3.2.3 Pursuing artistic conception

The pursuit of artistic conception in Huang Tingjian's calligraphy reflects the influence of Song Dynasty philosophical thoughts, embodying the concepts of 'rhyme' and 'Zen-like tranquility'. His calligraphic works are not merely combinations of brush and ink but also contain profound cultural connotations and spiritual realms. Through the application of brush and ink, he conveys a state of mind that transcends worldly concerns and seeks peace and far-reaching vision. For instance, in his cursive script work *The Letter to the Eminent Monks*, the flow and transformation of strokes are as natural and unrestrained as floating clouds and flowing water. Although they appear casual, they do not lose their proper rules and standards, manifesting the Zen-inspired realm of "acting without premeditation".

3.3 The Status and Influence of Huang Tingjian's Calligraphy Aesthetics in the Calligraphy World of the Song Dynasty

3.3.1 Comparison with the style of contemporary calligraphers

Compared with his contemporary calligraphers such as Su Shi and Mi Fu, Huang Tingjian's calligraphic style possesses distinct uniqueness. Su Shi's calligraphic style is characterized by its plump and undulating quality, with relatively flat-shaped characters. In terms of brushwork, he emphasizes the use of the central-tip brush, resulting in round and full lines. His work, such as *The Cold Food Observance Scroll from Huangzhou*, is imbued with profound emotional expression. Mi Fu's calligraphic style, on the other hand, is unrestrained and free-spirited, with a highly variable brushwork technique. He is adept at employing the brush from multiple angles to create sharp edges. His work, exemplified by *Shu Su Scroll*, exhibits rich variations in the lifting and pressing, as well as the turning and twisting of strokes. In contrast, Huang Tingjian's calligraphy stands out with its strokes resembling long spears and great halberds, unique structural composition, and the pursuit of an artistic conception that embodies "rhyme" and "Zen-like tranquility". This sets him in sharp contrast to Su Shi and Mi Fu, establishing him as a distinctive figure in the calligraphy circle of the Song Dynasty.

3.3.2 The impact on future generations (Figure 6)

Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics exerted a profound and far-reaching influence on the creation and theoretical development of calligraphy in later generations. During the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, numerous calligraphers drew inspiration from and innovated upon his calligraphic style. For instance, although Zhao Mengfu of the Yuan Dynasty was renowned for his regular and semi-cursive scripts, his calligraphy was also somewhat influenced by Huang Tingjian in terms of brushwork and structure. On the basis of inheriting traditions, Zhao incorporated certain elements from Huang's calligraphy into his own works, rendering them more vivacious. In the Ming Dynasty, calligraphers such as Zhu Yunming

and Xu Wei conducted in-depth research and study on Huang Tingjian's cursive script style. Zhu Yunming's cursive script works exhibited similarities to Huang's in terms of the unrestrained nature of strokes and structural variations. Xu Wei's cursive script, while inheriting the style of Huang Tingjian's cursive script, was even more wild and uninhibited, pushing the artistic expressiveness of

cursive script to new heights. In the realm of calligraphy theory, some of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic concepts, such as his discussions on brushwork, structural composition, and artistic conception, provided crucial theoretical references for calligraphers of later generations.

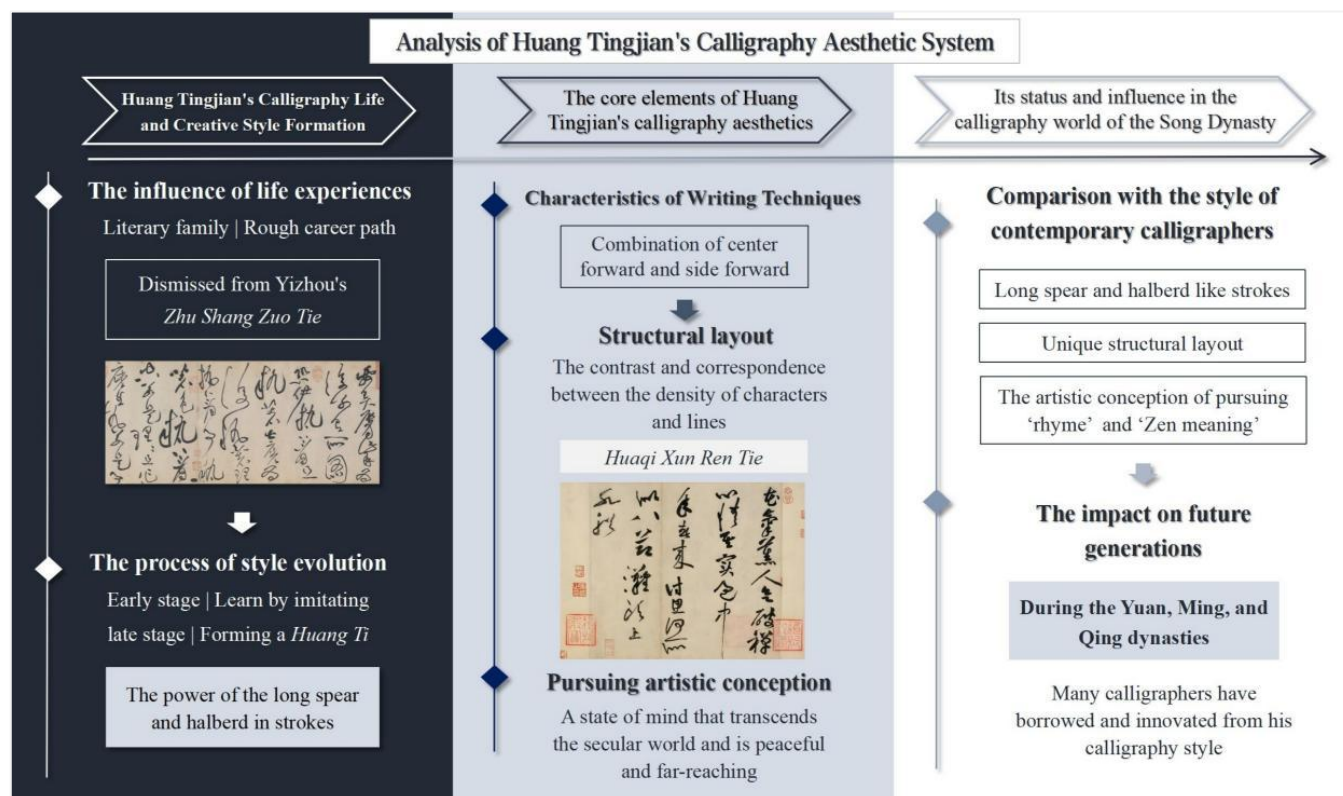


Figure 6: Analysis of Huang Tingjian's Calligraphy Aesthetics System

4. Dialogue between Huang Tingjian's Calligraphy Aesthetics and the Stone Carvings of the Great Shu Road

4.1 The embodiment of calligraphy aesthetics in stone carvings

4.1.1 Drawing inspiration from brushwork: traces of the use of long spear and halberd brushwork in stone inscriptions

In some Song Dynasty stone inscriptions along the Great Shu Road, the influence of Huang Tingjian's brushwork resembling long spears and great halberds is clearly discernible. For instance, in some large characters on cliff inscriptions, the starting strokes feature a heavy and concealed tip, as if accumulating immense power, akin to the reverse-entry starting technique in Huang Tingjian's calligraphy. During the process of stroke execution, the strokes are upright and extended, with precise control over the strength and speed of the lines. They traverse the stone surface with the sharp and formidable quality of long spears and great halberds, presenting a strong sense of dynamism. At the ending strokes, some are bold and decisive, while others are subtle with a return of the brush tip, highly similar to the ending-stroke treatments in Huang Tingjian's calligraphy. The application of this brushwork enables the stone-inscribed characters to break free from the monotony of conventional writing, adding a touch of grandeur and vigor as well as liveliness. This allows viewers to not only appreciate the content of the stone inscriptions but also experience the unique artistic charm brought by the calligraphic brushwork. It clearly demonstrates the permeation and

influence of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics on the stone-carving art along the Great Shu Road.

4.1.2 Structural imitation: similarity between the layout of stone-carved characters and the structure of Huang Tingjian's calligraphy

Among the typical stele inscriptions in the stone carvings along the Great Shu Road, such as *Ode to Shimen* (Figure 7), many works exhibit structural similarities to Huang Tingjian's calligraphy in terms of compositional layout. Numerous stone-inscribed characters break away from the traditional square and symmetrical structural patterns, adopting an oblique and angled approach to create a sense of momentum. Within individual characters, the strokes are ingeniously arranged in terms of density, length, and height. Through the offset of the center of gravity and the interweaving and yielding of strokes, a dynamic balance is achieved. For example, in some stele inscriptions, the left-right or top-bottom structures of characters are no longer arranged in a regular manner. Instead, they echo and complement each other in a staggered yet harmonious way, much like the inter-character relationships of mutual regard in Huang Tingjian's calligraphic works. This endows the entire text of the stone inscriptions with a sense of liveliness and rhythm. This imitation of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic structure is not a simple copy - and - paste. Rather, it is a re-creation that takes into account the characteristics of the stone-carving material and spatial constraints. It bestows a unique artistic style upon the stone-inscribed characters along the Great Shu Road, enabling them to display a vivid and lively calligraphic artistic effect on the static stone-carving medium.

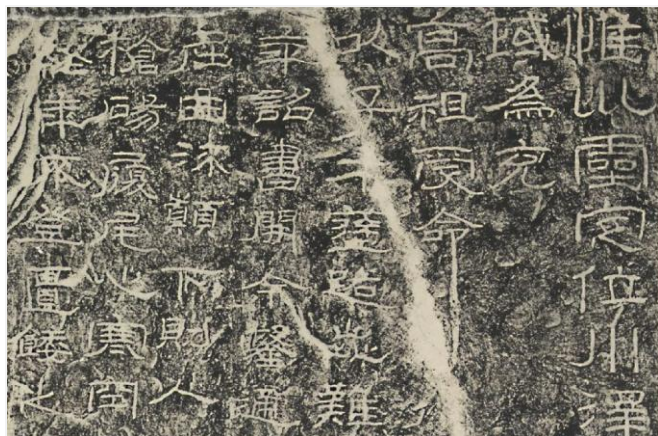


Figure 7: (Eastern Han Dynasty) Wang Rong's *Ode to Shimen* (partial), collected by Hanzhong Museum, 261cm × 205cm

4.1.3 Rhyme Communication: The Literary Rhyme Reflected in Stone Carvings is Related to Huang Tingjian's Calligraphy

The realm of 'rhyme' pursued in Huang Tingjian's calligraphy is also profoundly embodied in the stone carvings along the Great Shu Road. The inscribed poems and essays in these carvings, from their textual content to their writing styles, exude a strong scholarly charm, sharing a common lineage with the literati temperament inherent in Huang Tingjian's calligraphy. The calligraphers of these inscribed texts, whether local literati or traveling scholars, were often influenced by the cultural atmosphere of the Song Dynasty during the creation process, particularly by the literati calligraphy style represented by Huang Tingjian. Their writing emphasizes the aesthetic pleasure of brush and ink, with smooth and varied lines. The interplay of dark and light ink shades reveals a sense of leisure and elegance, akin to the unpretentious, refreshing, and refined qualities exhibited in Huang Tingjian's calligraphic works.

4.2 The Influence of Da Shu Road Stone Carvings on the Spread of Huang Tingjian's Calligraphy

4.2.1 Geographical dissemination: Expanding the scope of calligraphy dissemination through stone carvings along the Shu Road

As a vital communication artery linking the Central Plains and the Southwest regions, the Great Shu Road witnessed its stone carvings along the route becoming an important vehicle for the dissemination of Huang Tingjian's calligraphy. During the Song Dynasty, with the frequent travels of literati, scholars, merchants, and travelers along the Shu Road, stone carvings featuring characters in Huang Tingjian's calligraphic style were widely spread. These stone carvings were distributed at various crucial locations along the Shu Road, such as passes, post stations, and temples. Whether passers-by made a brief stop to admire them or resided there for an extended period and were influenced by them, they were all exposed to Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics to a certain extent. Originally confined to specific literati circles or regional areas, Huang Tingjian's calligraphy reached a much broader region through the special medium of the Great Shu Road stone carvings. This enabled more people to appreciate the charm of his calligraphic art, facilitating the spread and diffusion of Huang Tingjian's calligraphy in the Southwest region and even beyond, thereby expanding the scope of influence of his calligraphic art.

4.2.2 Audience Expansion: Different social classes come into contact with Huang Tingjian's calligraphy through stone carvings

The audience for the stone carvings along the Great Shu Road is exceedingly broad, encompassing people from various social strata. For the local ordinary populace, these stone carvings are common cultural landscapes in their daily lives. Whether it's catching a glimpse of cliff inscriptions from afar while working in the fields or closely observing stele inscriptions when praying at temples, they have opportunities to come into contact with characters in Huang Tingjian's calligraphic style. Although these people may not possess professional knowledge of calligraphy, their long-term exposure to such carvings enables them to develop a certain level of recognition and perception of this unique calligraphic style.

4.3 The relationship between the two from the perspective of cultural integration

4.3.1 Integration and Innovation of Calligraphy Art and Stone Carving Art

The calligraphic aesthetics of Huang Tingjian and the stone-carving art along the Great Shu Road achieved integration and innovation through mutual interaction. From the perspective of artistic expression forms, the brushwork, structure, and artistic conception of calligraphy have been incorporated into stone carvings, elevating the inscribed characters from mere practical recording symbols to entities with higher artistic and aesthetic value. Simultaneously, the material properties and carving techniques of stone-carving art have also exerted a counter-effect on calligraphic art. The hardness of the stone material demands that calligraphers pay more attention to the strength and texture of strokes during the creation process. Moreover, the application of knife techniques in the carving process offers new ideas for the expression of calligraphic lines. For instance, in some stone carvings, after being carved, the calligraphic lines exhibit a unique mottled texture. Instead of undermining the aesthetic appeal of the calligraphy, this texture adds a sense of primitive simplicity and time-worn charm, creating a unique artistic effect born from the fusion of calligraphy and stone carving.

4.3.2 The Integration of Song Dynasty Culture and Shu Road Regional Culture in Their Relationship

The Song Dynasty culture represented by Huang Tingjian's calligraphy and the regional culture of the Shu Road achieved profound integration in the stone carvings along the Great Shu Road. The Song Dynasty culture, with its emphasis on literati's aesthetic tastes and the calligraphic style that prioritized artistic conception, was incorporated into the regional culture of the Shu Road through the manifestation of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics in the stone carvings. Meanwhile, the regional culture of the Shu Road, such as the unique folk customs, religious beliefs, and aesthetic concepts of the Bashu region, also exerted a profound influence on the stone-carving art. In Buddhist stone carvings, characters in the Song Dynasty calligraphic style were combined with Buddha statues and illustrative Buddhist scripture murals featuring Bashu characteristics, demonstrating the fusion of religious culture and calligraphic culture under regional influences. From the perspective of commemorative stone carvings, texts recording local affairs and social life in the Shu Road region were written in a style embodying Song Dynasty calligraphic characteristics, reflecting the dissemination of Song Dynasty culture in the Shu Road area and its impact on local forms of social documentation. This cultural integration has made the stone carvings along the Great Shu Road a crystallization of the mutual exchange and influence between Song Dynasty culture and the regional culture of the Shu Road. It has enriched the connotations of Chinese culture and vividly illustrated the interactive development between regional culture and mainstream culture throughout history.

5. Deep Analysis of the Inheritance of Song Dynasty Culture on Shu Road

5.1 Exploring the Cultural Transmission Mechanism of the Song Dynasty from Calligraphy and Stone Carvings

5.1.1 The Migration of Literati and Cultural Communication: The Role of Huang Tingjian and Other Literati 'Activities on the Shu Road in Cultural Communication

During the Song Dynasty, due to a variety of factors such as politics and economy, literati experienced frequent relocations. Huang Tingjian himself, owing to setbacks in his official career, was exiled to the Shu region multiple times. His activities along the Shu Road played a crucial role in promoting the dissemination of Song Dynasty culture. During his exile, he engaged in frequent exchanges with local literati through activities such as poetic duets and calligraphy creation, thereby spreading advanced cultural concepts and literary and artistic styles of the Song Dynasty. As he created and taught his calligraphy along the Shu Road area, his calligraphic aesthetic concepts were learned and imitated by local literati, subsequently influencing the development of calligraphy art in the Shu Road region. Meanwhile, his poetic works also spread to a wider area through the communication networks of the Shu Road, enabling more people to gain insight into the thoughts, emotions, and literary achievements of Song Dynasty literati. In addition to Huang Tingjian, numerous other literati also traveled back and forth along the Shu Road. Together, they constituted a significant force in the dissemination of Song Dynasty culture. Through interpersonal communication, they sowed the seeds of Song Dynasty culture in every corner along the Shu Road, facilitating the exchange and integration between Song Dynasty culture and the regional culture of the Shu Road.

5.1.2 The roles of official and folk forces in cultural inheritance

In the process of the cultural heritage of the Song Dynasty being passed down along the Shu Road, both official and non-governmental forces played crucial roles. At the official level, the government's high regard for the Shu Road prompted the renovation and upkeep of the route, ensuring the unobstructed movement of people and the smooth dissemination of culture. Meanwhile, some cultural activities organized by the authorities, like setting up stelae at vital passes and post stations to document official affairs or propagate official cultural ideologies, frequently adopted the prevalent calligraphic styles of the era. Among them, the influence of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic style was not rare, thus spreading the cultural and artistic forms recognized by the Song Dynasty officialdom to the Shu Road area. On the non-governmental side, the general populace's enthusiasm for culture and their desire for its inheritance drove them to actively engage in the creation and preservation of stone-carving culture. Skilled folk artisans, with their superb carving skills, engraved characters written by literati and painted patterns onto stones, providing a physical carrier for the inheritance of Song Dynasty culture.

5.2 The Influence of Shu Road Environment on the Inheritance of Huang Tingjian's Calligraphy Aesthetics

5.2.1 Natural Environment: The Influence of Mountains and Rivers on the Inspiration and Style Evolution of Calligraphy Creation

The unique natural environment of the Shu Road region, such as its majestic and perilous mountains and rivers, as well as its winding watercourses, has exerted a profound influence on the inheritance of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics. During his travels along the Shu Road, Huang Tingjian personally witnessed the grandeur and wonder of the natural landscapes there, which served as a wellspring of inspiration for his creative endeavors. The awe-inspiring momentum and ever-changing forms of the towering mountains and great rivers along the Shu Road led him to place greater emphasis on the expression of the strength and vigor of brushstrokes in his calligraphy creation. It is possible that the application of his bold and unrestrained brushwork technique was inspired by this natural environment. Meanwhile, the serene and tranquil scenery, along with the peaceful ambiance of the Shu Road, endowed his calligraphic works with an ethereal and quiet artistic conception amidst their powerful and imposing aura. For later inheritors, the natural environment of the Shu Road has become a vital source for them to comprehend and appreciate Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics.

5.2.2 Cultural Environment: The Influence of Folk Customs, Religion, and Other Factors in the Shu Road Region on the Acceptance and Inheritance of Calligraphy

The rich and diverse humanistic environment of the Shu Road region, encompassing unique folk customs and profound religious beliefs, has exerted a significant impact on the reception and inheritance of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics. From the perspective of folk customs, the folk art forms in the Shu Road area, such as folk paintings, carvings, and paper-cuttings, boast strong local characteristics. The aesthetic concepts and expressive techniques embedded in these art forms share certain commonalities with Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics in some aspects. When local people come into contact with and appreciate Huang Tingjian's calligraphy, they can more easily understand and accept his calligraphic style based on their familiarity with the aesthetic values of folk art. In terms of religion, Buddhism, Taoism, and other religions are prevalent in the Shu Road region. The construction of religious sites and the conduct of religious activities have provided a platform for the dissemination of calligraphic art. Stone carvings, as an important carrier of religious culture, have integrated Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics under the influence of the religious atmosphere. The veneration and study of the inscribed characters by religious believers have facilitated the spread and inheritance of Huang Tingjian's calligraphy within religious communities.

5.3 The contemporary value of the inheritance of the Shu Road in the context of the Song Dynasty

5.3.1 The significance of cultural heritage protection: providing a new perspective for the protection of Shu Road stone carving culture

Researching the inheritance of the Song Dynasty cultural lineage along the Shu Road, especially the connection between Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics and the stone carvings of the Great Shu Road, offers a fresh perspective for the conservation of the Shu Road stone-carving culture. Previously, the protection of Shu Road stone carvings primarily focused on their historical and artistic values. However, through the study of the inheritance of the Song Dynasty cultural lineage, we have come to recognize the historical trajectory of cultural dissemination and exchange underlying the Shu Road stone carvings, as well as their crucial role in the process of cultural integration. This realization prompts us to not only pay attention to the physical form of the stone carvings themselves

during conservation efforts but also emphasize the excavation and inheritance of their cultural connotations. For instance, when restoring stone carvings, it is necessary to take into account the integrity of the calligraphic styles and the stone-carving art, striving to restore their historical and cultural appearances as much as possible to ensure the continuity of the Song Dynasty cultural lineage within the stone carvings. This new conservation perspective contributes to enhancing the scientificity and comprehensiveness of the protection of the Shu Road stone-carving cultural heritage, enabling it to be better passed down through generations.

5.3.2 Value of cultural tourism development: helping to create distinctive cultural tourism routes

The inheritance of the Song Dynasty cultural lineage along the Shu Road offers abundant resources and unique charm for cultural tourism development. The stone carvings along the Shu Road, as the crystallization of the blending between Song Dynasty culture and the regional culture of the Shu Road, possess extremely high cultural appeal. Leveraging these stone-carving resources and integrating the historical anecdotes of Song Dynasty literati such as Huang Tingjian along the Shu Road, we can create distinctive cultural tourism routes themed around Song Dynasty cultural experiences. During their

travels along the Shu Road, tourists can not only enjoy magnificent natural scenery but also gain an in-depth understanding of the allure of Song Dynasty culture by visiting stone carvings and learning about Song Dynasty calligraphy art and cultural inheritance.

5.3.3 Artistic creation inspiration: providing reference for contemporary calligraphy and sculpture art creation (Figure 8)

The fusion and innovation between calligraphy and stone-carving art demonstrated during the inheritance of the Song Dynasty cultural lineage along the Shu Road offer invaluable references for contemporary calligraphy and sculpture art creation. In contemporary calligraphy creation, artists can draw inspiration from the dialogue between Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics and the stone carvings of the Great Shu Road. They can learn his unique approaches to brushwork, composition, and artistic conception, as well as his experience in expressing calligraphy on different materials, thereby expanding the forms and connotations of calligraphy creation. For sculpture art, the carving techniques, plastic arts, and the methods of integrating with calligraphy art in the stone carvings of the Great Shu Road provide contemporary sculptors with a wealth of creative materials and ideas.

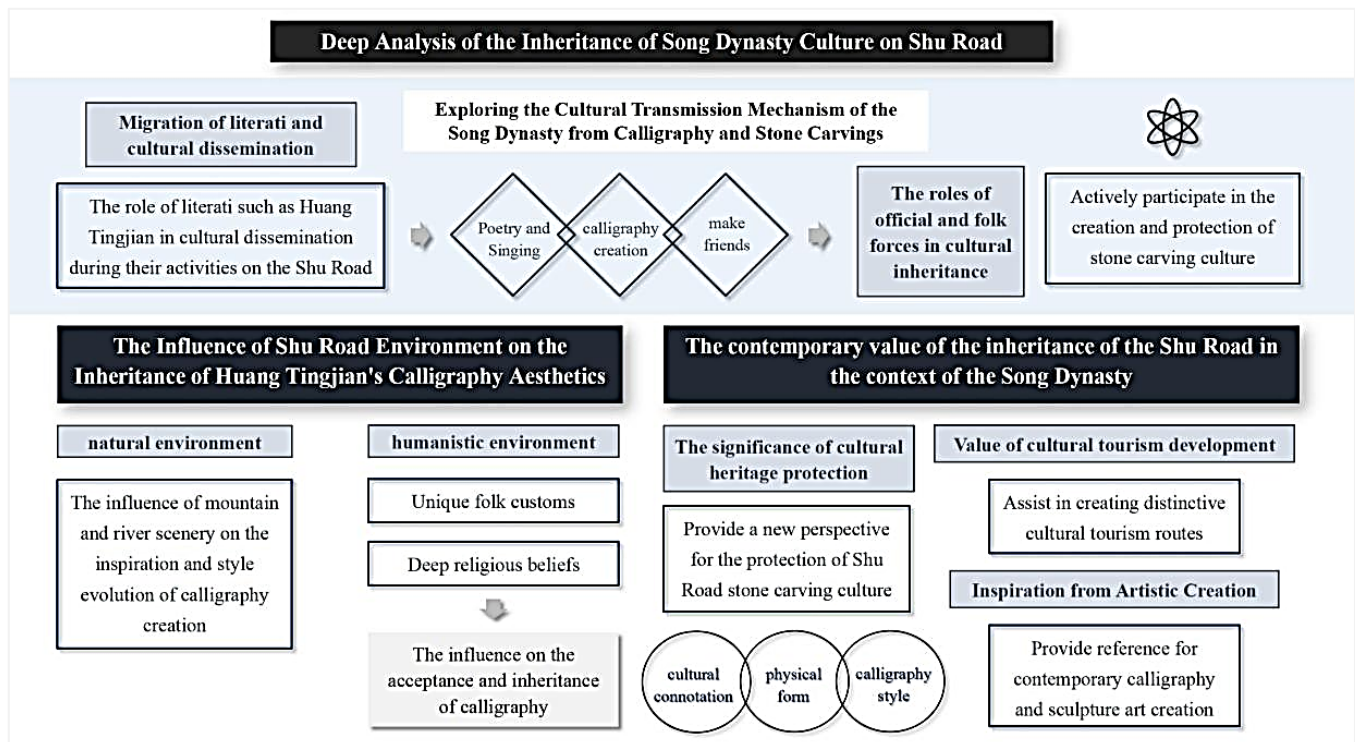


Figure 8: A Deep Analysis of the Inheritance of Song Dynasty Culture on the Shu Road

6. Conclusions and Prospects

6.1 Summary of Research Results

Through an in-depth analysis of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics and the stone carvings of the Great Shu Road, this study has achieved research findings in multiple aspects. In terms of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics, it comprehensively sorted out the influence of his life experiences on his artistic career, provided an in - depth interpretation of the core characteristics, such as the bold and unrestrained brushwork, the inclined and dynamic composition structure, and the pursuit of the artistic conception of 'Yun' (rhythm or charm), and clarified his significant position within the calligraphy system of the Song Dynasty. Regarding the stone-carving culture of the Great Shu Road, it elaborated in detail

on its historical trajectory and cultural significance, systematically analyzed the distribution and characteristics of different types, including religious stone carvings, historical record stone carvings, and inscriptions, as well as the artistic style features such as carving techniques, plastic arts, and cultural connotations. Of particular importance, this study revealed the close connection between Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics and the stone carvings of the Great Shu Road. In the dialogue between the two, it discovered the manifestation of calligraphic aesthetics in stone carvings including the borrowing of brushwork, the imitation of composition structure, and the conveyance of artistic conception. It explored the impact of the stone carvings of the Great Shu Road on the dissemination of Huang Tingjian's calligraphy, such as the expansion of geographical dissemination scope and the broadening of the audience. From the

perspective of cultural integration, it analyzed the fusion and innovation between calligraphy and stone-carving art, as well as the blending of Song Dynasty culture and the regional culture of the Shu Road. In the in-depth analysis of the inheritance of the Song Dynasty cultural lineage along the Shu Road, it clarified the cultural dissemination mechanism of the Song Dynasty from the perspectives of calligraphy and stone carvings, including the roles of literati migration, official, and non-governmental forces. It expounded on the influence of the natural and humanistic environment of the Shu Road on the inheritance of Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics. It also demonstrated the contemporary value of the inheritance of the Song Dynasty cultural lineage along the Shu Road in terms of cultural heritage protection, cultural tourism development, and inspiration for artistic creation.

6.2 Research Shortcomings and Prospects

Despite having achieved certain results, this study still has some limitations. In terms of research materials, some of the historical documents from the Shu Road region during the Song Dynasty are missing or scattered, resulting in less - than - precise textual research on certain historical details. Regarding research methods, although a combination of literature research, field investigations, and comparative analysis has been employed, interdisciplinary research needs to be further strengthened. For instance, in-depth analysis has not been adequately conducted by fully integrating research findings from disciplines such as archaeology and cultural geography. Future research can be carried out in the following directions. First, further excavate and collate relevant historical documents, and enhance the study of the history and culture of the Shu Road region during the Song Dynasty. Newly discovered historical materials can be used to supplement and improve existing research results. Second, deepen interdisciplinary research by integrating resources from multiple disciplines. This will enable a more comprehensive exploration of the relationship between Huang Tingjian's calligraphic aesthetics and the stone carvings of the Great Shu Road, as well as the inheritance mechanism of the Song Dynasty cultural lineage along the Shu Road. Third, expand the research scope by extending the research objects from the Song Dynasty to other historical periods. This will facilitate an investigation into the evolution and inheritance of the stone-carving culture and calligraphy art along the Shu Road in different eras, providing more abundant cases and theoretical support for a comprehensive understanding of the dissemination and development of ancient Chinese culture across regions.

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Reference Plate

Figure 1: *Early Spring* by Guo Xi (Northern Song Dynasty), Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, 158.3 cm × 108.1 cm

Figure 2: *Auspicious Cranes* by Emperor Huizong of Song (Northern Song Dynasty), Collection of the Liaoning Provincial Museum, 51.8 cm × 138.5 cm

Figure 3: Portrait of Huang Tingjian (Northern Song Dynasty), Collection of the Palace Museum

Figure 4: *Zhu Shangzuo Tie* (a section) by Huang Tingjian (Northern Song Dynasty), Collection of the Palace Museum, 33 cm × 729.5 cm

Figure 5: *Songfengge Shitie* (a section) by Huang Tingjian (Northern Song Dynasty), Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, 32.8 cm × 219.2 cm

Figure 6: Analysis of Huang Tingjian's Calligraphy Aesthetics System

Figure 7: *Shimen Eulogy* (a section) by Wang Rong (Eastern Han Dynasty), Collection of the Hanzhong Museum, 261 cm × 205 cm

Figure 8: A Deep Analysis of the Inheritance of Song Dynasty Culture on the Shu Road

Personal Profile

Pei Liu, female, born in 1990, holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Education and Technology. She is a full-time faculty member at the School of Fine Arts and Calligraphy, Sichuan Normal University. Her primary research interests encompass art education, digital aesthetic education research, and the application of artificial intelligence. She has undertaken advanced studies in the Aesthetic Education Training Program at the Academy of Arts & Design, Tsinghua University. She has served as a guest speaker at the National Academic Seminar on Painting Studies Literature. Additionally, she is a reviewer for the international journal *Higher Education Research*. Pei Liu holds several important positions, including Director of the Basic Calligraphy Education Branch of the National Education Calligraphy and Painting Association, Deputy Secretary-General of the Calligraphy Education Professional Committee of the Sichuan Education Society, Executive Director of

the Art Education Professional Committee of the Sichuan Education Society, Director of the Film and Television Education Professional Committee of the Sichuan Education Society, member of the Expert Database of the Sichuan Education Evaluation Institute, and Secretary-General of the Chengdu Young Calligraphers Association. She has presided over key research projects on calligraphy education science funded by the Sichuan Higher Education Association and key projects of the Sichuan Provincial Federation of Social Sciences' Chinese Culture Research Institute (Traditional Craft Research Institute). She has also been a principal researcher for the "School Physical Education and Aesthetic Education" special task of the Department of Physical, Health and Arts Education, Ministry of Education, as well as major projects under the Sichuan Provincial Education Science Planning. Moreover, she has participated in projects of the high-end think tank of the Ministry of Education, among others. She has published over 20 English articles in international journals such as IJSSH, ELTLS, and IJEMH in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Dubai, and over 30 Chinese articles on education and art in national and provincial core publications. She has co-authored the Chinese book *Artist's Manuscripts - Van Gogh* and authored the English monograph *Research and Practice of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture Education*. Proficient in calligraphy, traditional Chinese painting, and photography, her various artworks have been exhibited and collected in domestic and international exhibition halls.

Mailing Address

Huarun Xingfu Lane Phase 2, Shizishan Street, Jinjiang District, Chengdu City, Sichuan Province