

# The Enlightenment of the Mountain God Image in "The Classic of Mountains and Seas" to the Art of Modern Picture Books

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**Abstract:** *The Classic of Mountains and Seas is a masterpiece of ancient Chinese culture. Its content is quite complex, covering different aspects such as geography, property, sacrifice, and mythology. It has traces in almost every discipline. From the perspective of image research, this article discusses the inheritance and relevance of the illustrated version of the Classic of Mountains and Seas. Taking the image of the mountain god in "Shan Hai Jing" as the starting point, it explores its connection with the picture book, and expounds the characteristics of the image of the mountain god in "Shan Hai Jing" and its innovative application in the picture book.*

**Keywords:** *"Shan Hai Jing", picture book, image of mountain god*

The development time of picture books in my country is still short, and most of the picture books in the initial market are excellent works imported from abroad. Create the base. The Book of Mountains and Seas has become the source of artistic creation because of its fantasy. There are some excellent works in many picture books, such as Zeshan's "Viewing the Mountains and Seas" and Liu Liwen's "Beasts of the Mountains and Seas", but most of the works are deliberate imitations and scribbled expressions. Most of these works are just to cater to business, and do not analyze and study the profound meaning behind them, which leads to the fact that the true connotation of Shanhaijing cannot be fully expressed. The article mainly analyzes the connection between Shanhaijing and picture books, so as to explore the enlightenment of Shanhaijing to picture books. Good inheritance and development of China's excellent traditional culture.

## 1. Overview of picture books

Picture books are a type of story-reading books with paintings as the mainstay and a small amount of text attached. As a new book form with both literary temperament and painting rhyme, picture books create a relaxing reading space by combining pictures and texts.<sup>1</sup> With the development of the economy and the change of lifestyle, we are now facing an "information age". Information expansion, fragmented reading methods, and image-based visual communication methods are more and more popular among people today. With the rapid development of science and technology, people's reading habits are undergoing great changes. Picture books cater to people's reading habits with their unique art form combining pictures and texts, and picture books do not target specific groups of people and have the characteristics of being extensive. Visual factors play an important role in the process of cultural dissemination and development. The popularity of picture books is a reflection of visual culture in this era.

## 2. Inheritance of the Book of Mountains and Seas

The completion of Shanhaijing is complicated. It is generally believed that it was basically completed in the Warring States Period, and was revised and supplemented in the Han Dynasty, and some of its contents were produced in the Western Zhou Dynasty or even earlier.<sup>2</sup> The Classic of Mountains and Seas was originally an ancient classic with text and pictures, but the ancient pictures have long been lost. Tao Yuanming, a poet of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, also wrote in the first chapter of "Reading the Thirteen Songs of the Classic of Mountains and Seas": "Look at the biography of the King of Zhou, and view the pictures of mountains and seas. Looking down at the final universe, what if you are not happy." This confirms the picture of the "Shan Hai Jing" the existence of this. The ancient pictures of "The Classic of Mountains and Seas" have been lost since the two Jin Dynasties. The "Book of Mountains and Seas" has

not been valued by the literati class because of its fantasy. Until the Ming and Qing Dynasties, some literati realized the importance of "The Classic of Mountains and Seas", so a group of excellent Many scholars annotated the "Shan Hai Jing", and some excellent painters invested in the work of redrawing the "Shan Hai Jing" map, and redrawn about 16 versions. Among the many editions, the author believes that the most representative is the "Shan Hai Jing" drawn by Hu Wenhuan and Jiang Yinghao in the Ming Dynasty. Although the ancient pictures of the "Shan Hai Jing" have been lost, according to historical records, the "Shan Hai Jing" pictures drawn in the Ming and Qing Dynasties are actually in the same vein as the ancient pictures. According to the "Zhongxing Bibliography", "The Book of Mountains and Seas has a total of ten volumes. It was painted by Zhang Sengyao. Shu Ya saw this book in the collection place and repainted it into a new ten-volume version." The earliest ancient map recorded in historical data was drawn by Zhang Sengyao of Liang in the Southern Dynasty, and Shu Ya of the Later Song Dynasty repainted ten volumes on this basis. The manuscripts of Shanhaijing drawn by these two people have all been lost. The Qing Dynasty "Siku Quanshu Zongmu" records the inheritance relationship between the "Shan Hai Jing Jing Guang Zhu" drawn by Wu Renchen and Zhang Sengyao and Shu Ya's ancient pictures. Although the earliest manuscripts of "Shan Hai Jing" painted by Zhang Sengyou and Shu Ya have been lost, traces of ancient pictures can still be seen in the Ming and Qing painting manuscripts. The author selected Hu Wenhuan's "Shan Hai Jing Tu" and Jiang Yinghao's "Shan Hai Jing Painting Complete Image" among many illustrations in the Ming and Qing dynasties, because these two editions follow the ancient pictures and the next editions since the Ming and Qing dynasties, "Shan Hai Jing Tu". The Book of Classics is a representative one among many editions.

The author selects the divine beast Emperor Jiang in "The Classic of Mountains and Seas" as an example, and compares the ancient pictures of "The Classic of Mountains and Seas" represented by Hu Wenhuan and Jiang Yinghao with the pictures of "The Classic of Mountains and Seas" depicted by contemporary painters represented by Shan Ze and Liu Liwen. By comparing and analyzing the connectivity and differences. "Shan Hai Jing" records: there is a spirit, its shape is like a yellow sac, red like a red fire, six feet and four wings, and it has no face. The painting style of the ancient pictures in "The Classic of Mountains and Seas" represented by Hu Wenhuan and Jiang Yinghao is relatively simple. However, there are also obvious differences between the two. Jiang Yinghao's "Shan Hai Jing" was originally in the form of an illustration. The text often appeared in the illustration, and the background environment was described, and the picture was very rich (Figure 1). The "Shan Hai Jing" illustrated by Hu Wenhuan often appears as a single image without text description or background depiction. Hu Wenhuan pays more attention to the fine description of the image, and the lines are very smooth and natural (Figure 2). The picture book of The Classic of Mountains and Seas written by Hu Wenhuan and Jiang Yinghao faithfully reflects the painting characteristics and aesthetics of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. But I have to say that the illustrations of Shanhaijing drawn in the Ming and Qing dynasties are now outdated. Although they have ancient meanings, the pictures are really less beautiful. Few people will buy or read carefully the ancient Shanhaijing illustrations. Today, picture books are moving towards the next stage, which is different from the quaint picture book illustrations of the past, and is emerging in a new form.



*Figure 1: Jiang Yinghao's version*



*Figure 2: Hu Wenhuan's version*

Contemporary, contemporary painters represented by Shan Ze and Liu Liwen have carried out innovative development on the basis of ancient drawings. The two painters continued to use the unique ink painting form of the East to paint, and they both carried out the painting in the form of illustrations in the "Shan Hai Jing" picture book. creation. Judging from the presentation results of the picture books, there is also a big difference between the two. Liu Liwen adopts a combination of Chinese and Western painting methods, and adopts a Western three-dimensional representation in the composition and detailed depiction of the images of the beasts (Figure 3). On the background of the picture, it is expressed in the way of traditional oriental ink and wash landscape painting. This contrasting contrast greatly attracts people's attention, which is also the unique feature of Liu Liwen's "Beasts of the Mountains and Seas" compared to other versions of the "Shanhaijing" picture book. Zeshan's main expression technique in the performance of the "Shan Hai Jing" picture book is to anthropomorphize and aestheticize the images of gods and beasts (Figure 4). Zeshan is one of the most well-known painters at the moment. He often creates ghosts and ghosts as the theme. "Viewing the Mountains and Seas" is one of his representative works. From his pictures, we can see the unique aesthetic style of Yaozhi after the anthropomorphic image of the beast, and endows it with human emotions and appearance, which can easily arouse the empathy of the viewers. It can be seen from the pictures that what is drawn in the contemporary era is not completely separated from the ancient pictures, but is actually a relationship of inheritance and development. The content of the performance is still based on the image of the ancient pictures, without departing from the big framework of the ancient pictures, but in the A breakthrough has been made in performance techniques.



*Figure 3: Liu Liwen's version Figure*



*Figure 4: Shirtless version*

### 3. The advantages of importing the image of mountain gods into picture books in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*

The Book of Mountains and Seas is not large in length, about 31,000 words, and its content is extremely diverse. Scholars of all dynasties in China have expounded this book from different disciplines and fields. In "Han Feizi", "In the ancient world, there were few people and many animals. The ancestors were under the threat of the wild world where wild animals and raptors were rampant. This situation did not change much in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, and the ancestors were still in the unfamiliar and terrifying wild world. In the ancient society with low level of science and technology, the ancestors always faced one after another insurmountable cognitive barriers about nature. The Classic of Mountains and Seas reflects the worship of mountain gods by ancestors living in such an ancient society based on their cognition and judgment of the surrounding world. Ancestors used "all things have animism" to explain the world around them. As recorded in the "Shan Hai Jing", there are beasts, whose shape is like a yu and four ears, which can be seen in the floods of the county and county; there are beasts, whose shape is like a man As for the mana, when you see it, there is a big rut in the county . The ancestors used different beasts to predict different bad omens. There are many images of beasts with certain special functions in the "Shan Hai Jing", and among the many images, there is a type of beast that is special. The ancestors worshiped them as the protector of the tribe, and this strong emotion was condensed in the images of these mountain gods, which were not real objects, but imaginations generated by concepts. This kind of strong emotion is difficult for us living in the current society to understand. But at that time, the ancestors had strong expectations for life in the image of the mountain god. The mythical beasts in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* are the crystallization of the imagination of the ancestors, a reflection of the pre-Qin era, and the fantasy world imagined by the ancestors has become the source of inspiration for contemporary creators. The picture book combines illustrations and texts, and the pictures and texts complement each other, so that readers can have fun in the process of reading "Shan Hai Jing", and make readers feel tranquil in the clutter. The "Shan Hai Jing" picture book is not a book for learning, but for feeling And explore the understanding and expression of the world by people in ancient times who have left us. The ancestors did not use science to explain the world, but more used their own imagination to express this bizarre world. The picture book conveys the world of "Shan Hai Jing" to readers in visual language rather than written language, which greatly promotes the popularization of "Shan Hai Jing".

### 4. Conclusion

In the context of Chinese literati, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* was once regarded as a book of strange power and chaos, and it was ignored for a long time. In recent years, through the efforts of creators in different industries, "Shan Hai Jing" has returned to our vision in various ways. This requires creators to actively improve their personal cultural accomplishment, and they should uphold the attitude of innovation and inheritance towards traditional culture. The content and form of picture books are unique compared to other types of books. The illustrations of picture books are no longer attached to words. Illustrations play an independent role in expressing artistic language in books and have their own independent life. The visual method presents the ancestors' feelings and cognition of the world, so that people today can feel the crystallization of the ancestors' thoughts and the beautiful inheritance of the national spirit.

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