

# Literature and History Are Inseparable: The Great Yu in Poetry

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**Abstract:** As a significant figure in the mythological period of the Chinese nation, the Great Yu was recorded in all Four Categories (*sibu* 四部) of classics. Under the influence of Disputing Antiquity movement, (*Gushi bian* 古史辨), existing studies mainly focus on factual aspects. Moreover, scholars from the perspective of transmitted documents further give priority to the categories of Confucian classics, history and philosophy. In fact, poems and lyrics in the Category of Literature also contain plentiful records concerning the Great Yu, but they are unfortunately neglected by the present academia. In this paper, I present some narrations written by imperial China poets who treated Great Yu as an important sage-emperor in Chinese History. This paper finds that the themes of poetry about Great Yu are very broad, including Great Yu's story, legend, governing, taming the flood, heritage, tomb, temple as well as marriage. Many famous poets are also willing to write poems with the theme of Great Yu. The paper focuses on the poetry about the Great Yu in the Category of Literature to explore this mythical character in ancient intellectual's poetic expressions, so as to add to studies about the Great Yu.

**Keywords:** Poetry on Yu, Great Yu, Category of Literature

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## 1. Introduction

The Great Yu, upon whom laid the credits of taming the flood, dividing the Chinese territory, suppressing the feudal princes' insurrections, and leading the ancient Chinese people into Xia Dynasty, was a significant character in Chinese history. In the field of history, records about the Great Yu were contained in all Four Categories of Classics. Previous scholars, however, used mainly the categories of Confucian classics, history and philosophy as research sources. Literature and history were inseparable in ancient China. Plenty of records about the Great Yu are in the world of poetry and lyrics. These records may not reflect historical truth, but are of great value in studying the history of the Great Yu's reception.

## 2. Poetry on Yu

Poets and literati in Chinese dynasties produced voluminous literary works to praise the Great Yu. One could find 126 poems and lyrics singing of him in literary works from *Shijing* (詩經 the Book of Songs) to the Category of Literature in the Qing Dynasty, [1] most of which expresses

feelings about visiting sites concerning the Great Yu. From the Tang and Song dynasties, the image of this figure was generally finalized. One could classify these poems and lyrics into 13 categories by their titles (see Table 1).

In general, poems dominate the literary works on the Great Yu. Poems in Song Dynasty carried forward the characters of those in Tang Dynasty and entered a new stage featured by the diversification of themes.<sup>1</sup> Up to Jin Dynasty, historical poems outdistanced those of Liao Dynasty in both quantity and quality, [2] so it is not surprising that there were hardly any works on the Great Yu in Liao. Ming and Qing Dynasties, although produced about ten more poems on the Great Yu than the Song Dynasty, actually accounted for a smaller proportion of these poems as these two dynasties had a longer history, of over five centuries, than the Song Dynasty. The titles of poems in Ming and Qing, however, developed significantly in comparison with those in the Song Dynasty. Not only were these titles varied markedly, but more importantly, there were

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, poems on history were quite prevailing in the Song Dynasty. The Volume of Art and Literature in the History of Song records plenty of collections on this theme specifically. Unfortunately, most of these collections were lost.

more poems entitled “Mausoleum of Yu” 禹陵 than any other period in Chinese history. It was probably related to the kings’ worshipping Yu in Mausoleum of Yu, which represented a top-down veneration and reception of the Great Yu. In addition, 6 out of 13 themes (87 poems and over 70 percent) were about the relic of the Great Yu, suggesting that these poems were inspired by a visit to the relics.

In comparison, the Great Yu’s achievements, such as taming the flood and meeting feudal princes, are rarely seen in the titles of poems. The reason of this phenomenon was not that poets were indifferent to, or made little of, Yu’s contributions, for most of the literary works singing of him focused on “the burial stone,” (墓石) “jade and silk,” (玉帛) and “clan of Fangfeng” (防風). “The burial stone” originally referred to the stones used in funeral. Nowadays, there is a two-meter-tall stone in the Pavilion of Burial Stone. It is said to be the particular stone that was used in the burial of the Great Yu, [3] which seems corresponding to the saying that “Yu travelled east to instruct the Nine Wild Tribes, died on trip, and was buried in Kuaiji Mountain 會稽山 with three layers of burial gowns in a three-inch paulownia coffin” [4] in *Mozi* 墨子. Xu Weinan 徐蔚南 (1900-1952) recorded that “every time when women in Yuezhou 越州 walk pass the pavilion, they target the small hole in this burial stone with peddles. It is said that those who made a hit would have sons, while those who failed would have daughters”. [5] Such a pseudoscientific saying passed down from generation to generation, suggesting that people in Yuezhou (Kuaiji) viewed it as a symbol that coincided with the representation of stones in reproduction worship.

As historical poems thrived since the Tang and Song dynasties,<sup>2</sup> [6] [7] some poets entitled their works “Chanting History,” and many of these poems were on the Great Yu. Wang Yucheng 王禹偁, Shi Zhiyuan 釋智圓 (976-1022), Wang Shipeng 王十朋 (1112-1171) and even Yang Weizhen 楊維禎 (1296-1370) in the Yuan-Ming transition composed poems not only on the Great Yu. [8] As shown in the Table 2, most of all 95 poets who chanted on Yu in the Category of Literature were from Zhejiang Province, followed by those who came from Jiangsu.

39 poets in these two provinces had composed poems or lyrics on Great Yu, about 40 percent of the total number. Not only are the two provinces adjacent geographically, but Kuaiji and Yuezhou, two places teem with relics of Great Yu, are also locate in Zhejiang, which suggests that poets were fond of writing about relics of Yu in their own province or its adjacent areas. In fact, many poets, whether they came from this province or not, were somehow related to Kuaiji and Yuezhou. For example, Song Zhiwen 宋之問 (ca. 650-ca. 712, Tang

Dynasty) served as Administrator (長史 *chang-shih*) of Yuezhou (namely, Kuaiji); [9, 10] Meng Jian 孟簡(?-822) was appointed Provincial of Yuezhou, [11] Xue Ping 薛苹 was the Surveillance Commissioner (觀察使 *kuan-cha shih*) in the East Area of Zhejiang; [12, 13] came from Anhui, Li Shen 李紳 (772-846), whose father served as District Magistrate (縣令 *hsien-ling*) of Wuxing County in Zhejiang, was himself Regional Chief (刺史 *tzu-shih*) of Yuezhou and then Surveillance Commissioner in the East Area of Zhejiang; [14, 15] Zhang Boyu 張伯玉 (1003-ca. 1070, Song Dynasty), a Fujian person who composed several poems on Yu, was a Director of the Bureau of General Accounts (度支郎中 *tu-chih lang-chung*) of Yuezhou; [16] the Jiangsu person Qian Gongfu 錢公輔 (1023-1074) served as Controller-general (通判 *tung-pan*) of Yuezhou; a native of Zhejiang; [17] Liu Yizhi 劉一止 (1078-1161) was appointed Instructor (教授 *chiao-shou*) of Yuezhou; [18] Gao Side 高斯得 (1199-?) served as Controller-general of Shaoxing; [19] Wu Wenying 吳文英 (1200?-1260?), who was also from Zhejiang, lived in Yuezhou for a long period; [20] Chen Zilong 陳子龍 (1608-1647, Ming Dynasty) was the Judge (推官 *tui-kuan*) in Shaoxing; [21] Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695), a Zhejiang person, lectured in Shaoxing; Jiang Pingjie 蔣平階 (1616-1714, Qing Dynasty) lived in Kuaiji in his later years; [22] the Jiangsu person Ruanyuan 阮元 also served as the Zhejiang Province governor (巡撫 *hsun-fu*). [23] This shows that poets chanted Yu were either natives who lived in Kuaiji and Yuezhou for a long time, or came from other provinces and served official positions, lectured or settled down around Jiangzhe area. Considering that the themes of poems were mainly inspired by a visit to the relics of Yu, one can discern that poems and lyrics on Yu were beyond the limitation of region, identity and dynasty.

There was no lack of ingenious works on Yu that reflected the poets’ unique understandings and emotions towards this figure. In the Tang Dynasty when poems thrived, Du Fu’s 杜甫 ‘Temple of Yu’ was a typical poems on Yu:

禹廟空山裡, Yu’s Temple in the deserted mountains,  
秋風落日斜。autumn wind, the setting sun slants down.

荒庭垂橘柚, A weed-grown courtyard, hung with tangerines,

古屋畫龍蛇。ancient chambers, painted with dragons.  
云氣噓青壁, Cloudy vapors puff slowly over green cliffs,  
江聲走白沙。river sounds speed across white sands.

早知乘四載, Long I’ve known that he rode on four vehicles,

疏鑿控三巴。his dredging and cutting brought the Three Ba regions under control. [24].

The poem celebrated the Great Yu’s spirit of overcoming difficulties to bring benefits to the people. The second couplet that describes the scenery of Yu temple implies the achievements of Yu,<sup>3</sup> while the last couplet sings of his

<sup>2</sup> As classical poems reached its peak in Tang, poems on history enjoyed a golden development. Plenty of outstanding poets and works emerged, and the contents of poems diversified: some were on the narration of the poets’ thoughts, some targeted the contemporary problems, some were to express feelings, and some others were like statements. The styles also developed from five or seven words of the ancient style in Wei and Jin to that contains four or eight lines. Poems on history witnessed an unprecedented flourishing in the Song, and the styles such as four-character and six-character ancient and new styles began to appear.

<sup>3</sup> According to *Shangshu* 尚書 [Venerated Documents], “The bundles contained small oranges and tangerines.” 厥包橘柚錫貢 (Kong Yingda, annotated.: *Shangshu Zhengyi* 尚書正義 [Correct Meaning of the Elevated Documents], vol. 6, p. 149), the wild people of the islands presented withered pomelos to Yu after the flood was tamed; *Mengzi* 孟子 [Master Meng] recorded: “Yu drove the snakes

contribution in taming the flood so that the Ba County (present Sichuan) was saved from being submerged. Similarly, Zhou Tan's 周曇 'Yu of the Xia Dynasty' 夏禹 was also a magnum opus themed on Yu's achievement of controlling the flood.

堯違天孽賴詢謨，Yao violated the destiny so sought consult,  
頓免洪波浸碧虛。immediately presented the waves from flooding the green land.  
海內生靈微伯禹，All souls in the territory, if without Boyu,  
盡應隨浪化為魚。would have become fish in the waves. [25].

The poem begins with the legend of flood in Yao's time and exaggerated on the situation, saying that the flood surged up into the sky. Only Yu could tame the water so that lives on land were out of the crisis of being drown in the water.

Water conservancy project went unintermittently in Chinese history, people placed hopes and imaginations upon Yu's success of taming water. This phenomenon was discussed in Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846)'s 'Expressing my heart when I travel from Shuijiang to the gate of Dongting Lake' 自蜀江至洞庭湖口有感而作:

江從西南來，浩浩無旦夕。長波逐若瀉，連山鑿如劈。  
千年不壅潰，萬姓無墊溺。不爾民為魚，大哉禹之績。  
導岷既艱遠，距海無咫尺。胡為不訖功，餘水斯委積？  
洞庭與青草，大小兩相敵。混合萬丈深，淼茫千里白。  
每歲秋夏時，浩大吞七澤。水族窟穴多，農人土地窄。  
我今尚嗟嘆，禹豈不愛惜！邈未究其由，想古觀遺跡。  
疑此苗人頑，恃險不終役。帝亦無奈何，留患與今昔。  
水流天地內，如身有血脈。滯則為疽疣，治之在鍼石。  
安得禹復生，為唐水官伯？手提倚天劍，重來親指畫。  
疏河似剪紙，決壅同裂帛。滲作膏腴田，踏平魚鱉宅。  
龍宮變閭里，水府生禾麥。坐添百萬戶，書我司徒籍。

Writing My Feelings Stimulated by the Travel from River Shu to the Gate of Lake Dongting,  
the river comes from southwest, running magnificently days and nights.

Big waves drifts like pouring, joint mountains look like chopped, it had never blocked or destroyed for thousand years, so ten thousand people were never drown.

Commoners did not become fish in the water, which was an enormous achievement of Yu.

It was so difficult to dredge the Mountain Min, and it was distant from the sea.

But why he cannot continue to dredge down to the sea, but the water of the Yangtze River would accumulate here?

The Lake Dongting and grass, were about the same size.

Ten thousand zhang of water converged, and white waves stretched over thousands of miles.

In autumn and summer every year, the water swallows and connects seven lakes.

Aquatic animals occupy plenty of caves, while farmers

could till only on narrow lands.

Today I still sigh, that did Yu not cherish these people?

Being confused, I did not chase its reason, thinking about the past, I observe the relics.

I guess the Miao people were obstinate, they relied on such a danger.

The Emperor had no alternative, but to leave the trouble unsolved.

Water running under the sky and on the earth, is like blood travelling over the body.

If it stocks, it would become Gangrene warts; the solution is to use a needle-stone.

How could Yu resurrect, and serve as the Consul Aquarium of the Tang Dynasty?

To hold the Heaven Sword in his hand, and to command by himself.

To dredge rivers as if to cut paper, and to burst the obstruction as if to tear silks apart.

To let water seep through fertile fields, and to trodden down shelters of fish and turtles.

So that the Dragon Palace would change into village, and the water fields become arable lands for millets and wheats.

Million households would increase and settle, the statistics can also increase the population accordingly. [26].

This poem fully reflects Bai's imagination. He not only expressed his hope of Yu's resurrection, but also highly praised his achievement. Li Shen 李紳, a Tang poet who promoted the poetic style "New Yuefu" with Bai Juyi, also left a poem entitled 'The Temple of Yu' 禹廟 among his numbered works:<sup>4</sup> [27].

削平水土窮滄海，To hew the mountain and to the end of the sea,

畚鍤東南盡會稽。to deploy dustpans and spades and to exhaust the Kuaiji Mountain.

山擁翠屏朝玉帛，Jade and silk faced the Mountains of green screens,

穴通金闕架雲霓。the tomb leads straight to the treasure hall erected in clouds.

秘文鏤石藏青壁，Secret articles were carved on stones hidden in indigo walls,

寶檢封雲化紫泥。seal the secret articles with purple clay.

清廟萬年長血食，The quiet temple has been worshiped for ten thousand years,

始知明德與天齊。only then did I know his virtue stand as eternal as heaven. [28].

The poem vividly reflected The Great Yu's feats and vigor, and combined natural environment and historical legend to celebrate his morality in the past and the present. Similarly, Qian Zong's 錢宗 (Hongzong 弘宗, King of Zhongxun 忠遜王 in the Wuyue 吳越 Kingdom, 925-975, reigned in 947) 'Inscribing in the Yu Temple' 題禹廟 was on a similar theme:

千古英靈孰令論，Who could discuss about the great spirit that last for thousands of generations,

西來神宇壓乾坤。the holy temple from the west suppress

and dragons to the marshland," 禹驅蛇龍而放之菹 (Sun Shi 孫奭, annotated.: *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏 [Commentary of Master Meng], in *Shisanjing zhushu*, vol. 6, p. 2714) so that these animals could never cause flood.

<sup>4</sup> One could find the three-volume *Xiyou shi* 昔遊詩 and one-volume *Ya shi* 雅詩 by Li.

the heaven and the earth.

塵埃共鎖梅梁在, Dust and the beams are still exist here,  
星斗俱分劍韞存。constellations were divided and the  
sword case left.

蟾殿夜寒搖翠幌, The toad palace in the moon has green  
flags waiving in the cold night,  
麝爐春暖酬瓊樽。the musk burner warms the wine vessel  
like spring.

會稽山下秋風裏, In the autumn wind under the Kuaiji  
Mountain,  
長放松聲入廟門。the sound of pines always runs through  
the gate of the temple. [28].

Qian's magnificent poem expressed people's homage to  
the Great Yu over thousands of years. Without referring to  
The Great Yu directly, these two seven-character octaves  
alluded and reflected the author's honor to him. Besides,  
some poem's that singed of Yu were about uncommon  
themes, such as Fan Zhongyan's 范仲淹 (989-1052) 'The  
Xia Hou' 夏后氏:

景命還將伯益傳, The mandate of Heaven goes to Boyi,  
九川功大若為遷。the achievement in nine rivers was so  
great to be removed.

謳歌終在吾君子, The mission of chanting rests finally  
upon us,

豈是當時不讓賢。was he not relinquish his post to  
someone better qualified? [29].

With its title referred to the Great Yu, this poem considered  
that his passing power to Qi 啟 conformed to the will of the  
people. The author first claimed that to grant the throne to Boyi,  
who contributed greatly to tame the flood, was mandate of  
Heaven, however, it was the Great Yu's son Qi that people want  
for the throne. The theme is to recognize the righteousness of the  
Great Yu's deed and to deny his selfishness, which is rarely seen  
in numerous poems chanting Yu. Moreover, Mao Qiling's 毛奇齡  
(1623-1716) 'The Temple of Yu' 禹廟 was one of the  
poems that recorded the Great Yu's feats to the most:

夏王四載告成功, The emperor of Xia succeeded after  
four years' efforts,

別禪苗山起閭宮。met the feudal lords in Miaoshan's  
temple.

玉帛千秋新裸薦, Jade and silk recommend the post for  
thousands of years,

衣冠萬國舊來同。clothes and hats were the same from ten  
thousand states.

金書瘞井封泥紫, Characters on the tomb were golden and  
the stamped mud purple,

窆石懸花映篆紅。flowers hung on the burial stone shine  
upon the Zhuan characters in red.

一自百川歸海後, Since the hundred rivers merged in the sea,  
長留風雨在江東。wind and rain were left in the east of the  
river. [30].

It recorded Yu's taming flood, meeting feudal princes in  
Kuaiji Mountain, as well as his burial in Jiangnan. Not only  
did the author mentioned Yu's contributions, but he also used  
the story of 'those who holds jade and silk in his hand reigns  
ten thousand kingdoms' [31] to emphasize that Yu's  
achievements were all over the territory. 'The Zhuan

characters in red' should refer to the Goulou Stele 岫巖碑  
next to the Mausoleum of Yu, but it is difficult to verify  
whether the characters were in Zhuan style. [32] Similarly,  
the Qing female poet Song Shengshen 宋盛慎 also wrote  
about the Goulou Stele in her poem entitled 'The Legendary  
Yu's Stele' 神禹碑:

岫巖碑峰峨, 萬仞出雲霧。禹碑在其巔, 攀陟疑無路。  
千古篆文垂, 八年心迹著。山徑積苔蘚, 埋沒匪朝暮。  
不有樵者知, 空對蒼蒼樹。憶昔隨刊初, 昏墊民無措。  
四載履艱阻, 豈無神天助。石赤字復青, 風雨長呵護。  
我讀今文書, 伏女傳無誤。我驚此碑文, 先後爭譯註。  
已非蝌蚪書, 況殊典謨句。如何元圭錫, 別有奇文附。  
明德懷終古, 下拜心悚懼。

The towering Goulou Stele stands, ten thousand mountain  
tops shoot above clouds and mists. The stele of Yu is the peak  
among them, which seems there is no way to climb up. The  
seal scripts last for thousands of generations, and the mind has  
been recorded in eight years. The trail is covered with moss, it  
is not within a day and night that it becomes so buried. The  
trail is not known even to woodcutters, but only to some green  
and vast trees. I think of the past when it was first inscribed,  
commoners were helplessly trapped in the flood. [Yu]  
overcome difficulties within four years, how was he not  
assisted by gods and the Heaven? The stone turned red while  
the characters become green, wind and rain have been  
protecting it all along. I now read the historical documents, and  
find that Daughter of Fu Sheng recorded it so correctly without  
a mistake. I was astonished by the inscription, cannot wait to  
translate and explain it. It is neither pollywog calligraphy, nor  
like sentences in Shundian or Dayumo. There attached a  
remarkable piece of work of record rewarding the jade. The  
illustrious virtue would be remembered by all generations, I  
bend with heartfelt reverence. [33, 34].

In addition to Mao Qiling, Gu Yanwu's 顧炎武 'the  
Mausoleum of Yu' 禹陵 also recorded plenty of Yu's deeds:

大禹巡南守, 相傳此地崩。禮同虞帝陟, 神契鼎湖升。  
窆石形模古, 墟宮世代仍。探奇疑是穴, 考典或言陵。  
玉帛千年會, 山河一氣憑。御香來敕使, 主守付髡僧。  
樹暗巖雲積, 苔深壑雨蒸。鵲鷗呼塚柏, 蝙蝠下祠燈。  
餘烈猶於越, 分封竝杞鄆。國詒明德昨, 人有霸圖稱。  
往者三光墜, 江幹一障乘。投戈降北固, 授子守西興。  
沖主常虛己, 謀臣動自矜。普天皆晉祿, 無地使賢能。  
合戰山回霧, 窮追海踐冰。蠡城迷白草, 鏡沼爛紅菱。  
樵采岡陵遍, 弓刀塢壁增。遺文留仆碣, 仄徑長荒藤。  
望古頻搔首, 嗟今更撫膺。會稽山色好, 淒惻獨攀登。

It is said that when Dayu toured to the south, and died here.  
He followed the rite of Emperor Yu to climb, and fitted his  
mind to raise the Dinghu. The burial stone has an ancient  
figure, and the ruined palace is standing over generations. I  
explored with curiosity and suspected that it could be a cave,  
while the text said it was a mausoleum. Jade and silk have  
been together for a thousand years, the mountains and rivers  
run without a break. The ambassador came with offering, the  
security guard the tomb. Trees dimmed and clouds thickened,  
moss grow deep and the rain vaporized from the gully. Owls  
called from the tomb cypress, bats fled from the lamp. The  
legacy left in Yue, feudalize in Qi and Zeng. The nation was

well governed and his virtue spread, he had the ambition to reign. Both northern and southern capitals have fallen, The river has a barrier can be defensive. He threw the dagger-axe to suppress the stubborn in the north, and appointed armies to guard the west. A strong dominator always reserve himself, counselors boasted himself. There were virtuous people everywhere, but there was no place for them to fulfill their talents. They battled even to the mist rose in the mountain, and pursued on the icy ocean. White grasses suffused Li town. Water Caltrops planting full of Jingzhao. Cut trees to build warships to resist enemy invasion. These records are inscribed on the stone tablet, narrow path covered with rattans. I scratched my head frequently when look back to the pass, and comforted my breast when sigh over the present. The scenery on Kuaiji Mountain was terrific, but I was grieved to climb up alone. [35].

This poem started with Yu's feats, including the inspection tour to Jiangnan and his demise in Kuaiji. By adding the story in Dinghu 鼎湖, the author made a metaphor that the king rode on dragons to the afar,<sup>5</sup> [36] and 'burial stone' and 'palace' in the next couple also referred to The Great Yu's burial site. The poet also recorded Yu's meeting feudal princes in the Mountain Tu 塗山, singing of his unparalleled vigor, and stressed that people in Ming Dynasty still paid honor in Yu's burial site,<sup>6</sup> [37] expressing that the 'vigor of Yu's spirit' still remained unchanged for thousands of years and he still had descendants.<sup>7</sup> [38] Unlike other poems on Yu, this one expressed the author's thought about Yu's burial in Kuaiji without mentioning his feat of taming the flood.

In the quantitative aspect, Su Shi 蘇軾 composed more poems and essays on Yu than any other poets, many of which expressed his praise:

夫言有大而非夸，達者信之，衆人疑焉。孔子曰：「天

之將喪斯文也，後死者不得與於斯文也。」孟子曰：「禹抑洪水。孔子作《春秋》而予距楊、墨。」蓋以是配禹也。文章之得喪，何與於天？而禹之功與天地並，孔子、孟子以空言配之，不已夸乎。

Words that talk about the huge events without exaggeration were believed by the eminent and doubted by commoners. Confucius said: "It is heaven's order that these writings would lose, and later generations will never have these writings again." Mencius said: "Yu tamed the flood. Confucius wrote the *Chunqiu* to distinguish himself from Yang and Mo." Therefore, his words were to match the deed of Yu. How was the loss or achievement of writings granted by heaven? Yu's contributions stand with the heaven and the earth. Confucius and Mencius's empty words were indeed exaggeration. [39].

The reason why Su Shi considered 'Yu's feats stand with the heaven and the earth' must be related to his contribution in taming the flood:

禹治洪水，排萬世之患，使溝壑之地，疏為桑麻，魚鼈之民，化為衣冠。

Yu, by taming the water, solved the problem of ten thousand generations, and turned gully into farms, and fishes into clothes and hats. [40].

From a Confucian perspective, Su Shi believed that 'the virtues of Yu, Tang, Wen and Wu also represent the extreme achievements of a Confucian' 禹、湯、文、武之威德亦儒者之極功. [41] Yu's extreme achievement laid not only in water-taming, but also in treating people with benevolence and righteousness:

堯、舜、禹、湯、文、武、成、康之際，何其愛民之深，憂民之切，而待天下以君子長者之道也。

Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, Cheng, Kang, how much they loved the people, cared for people, and treated people with the philosophy of treating gentlemen and the elderly. [42].

In Su's opinion, Yu's feats was well worth praising. In the poem entitled 'Living in Faxi Temple in Hang, and Remembering Scholar Sun Shen when I Watch the Mountains in the Greenfield Pavilion behind the Temple' 宿餘杭法喜寺後綠野亭望吳興諸山懷孫莘老學士, Su wrote:

徙倚秋原上，淒涼晚照中。水流天不盡，人遠思何窮，問諫知秦過，看山識禹功。

I leaned on the autumn plain, feeling the desolation in sunset. The river runs endless to the boundless sky, and our thoughts also travel unlimitedly. Ask books to find faults with Qin, watching the mountain, we recognized Yu's contribution. [43].

The original annotation to this sentence reads: 'Yuhang, the living boat of the first Empire..... It is tied to the mountain when the flood surged during Yao's time. 餘杭，始皇所舍舟也.....堯時洪水，繫舟山上' [44] Su Zhe's 蘇轍 'Mountain Tu' 塗山 quoted above reflected not only the significance of this area in Chinese culture, but also expressed the author's evaluation of The Great Yu:

娶婦山中不肯留，He married a women but refused to stay in the mountain,

會朝山下萬諸侯。and went to meet feudal princes.

古人辛苦今誰信，who could believe in the ancient's

<sup>5</sup> The *Shiji* 史記 [Records of the Historian] records: "Emperor Huang collected bronze and casted tripod under Mountain Jing. When finished, a dragon laid down its beard to pick up Emperor Huang. Emperor rode on, so did seventy some ministers and people in the imperial harem, then the dragon went flying. Others who did not ride the dragon then caught its beard. The dragon pulled back its beard, fell it, and dropped Emperor Huang's bow. The commoners looked up and saw him fled into the heaven, held his bow beard, and yielded. Therefore, the later generation named this place Lake Ding 鼎湖, and his bow Wuhao 烏號."

<sup>6</sup> The *Mingshi* 明史 [The History of Ming] records: "In 1370, Emperor Hongwu 洪武 appointed ambassador to visit all mausoleums, ordered provinces to contribute maps of them, and later found 79 mausoleums. The official of protocol examined those who achieved greatly. They are: Fuxi, Shennong, Emperor Huang, Shaohao, Zhuanxu, Tangyao, Yushun, Xiayu; Tang, Zhongzong, Gaozong in Shang; Emperors Wen, Wu, Cheng, and Kang in the Zhou Dynasty; Gaozu, Emperors Wen, Jing, Wu, Xuan, Guangwu, Ming, Zhang in the Han Dynasty; Emperor Wen in the Later Wei; Gaozu in the Sui; Gaozu, Taizong, Xianzong, Xuanzong in the Tang; Shizhong in the Zhou, Taizu, Taizong, Zhenzong, Renzong, Xiaozong, and Lizong in the Song, 36 in total. Hongwu then made hats and fragrant coins for each of them, ordered Secretary Tao Yi 陶誼 and others to go host worshipping ceremony, and wrote words of worship by himself. He granted each place 25 liang of gold to prepare sacrificial offerings, and ordered to amend the damaged ones, to repair the temples, or to prepare a altar at those mausoleums that without temples. He also ordered to forbid woodcutting. The worship ceremony held during the seasons, and used cows, goats, and pigs as offerings." So Yu was worshiped by emperors in early Ming.

<sup>7</sup> Sima Qian said: "It is the Yu's spirit that resounded down to be the feudal nobilities."

painstaking nowadays?

只見清淮入海流。Seeing only the clear water of Huai running into the sea. [45].

The author considered Yu's leave right after marriage a sacrifice for people, and stressed his efforts in taming water. This poem is typical in celebrating Yu's spirit of sacrificing self-pleasure and family for people and the nation.

Additionally, in his poem entitled 'Amidst the Road of Danyang,' Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727-1814) turned against the tradition that criticized Emperor Yang 煬帝 of Sui (Yang Guang 楊廣, 569-618, r. 604-618), comparing him to the Great Yu who the author highly praised:

疏鑿痕猶見，Trace of dredging and pitching are still visible, 舟行似峽中。the boat travels in the canyon.

岸高帆少力，Banks are so high that sails are less deployed, 潮逆櫓無功。adverse current fails the function of sculls.

畚鍤當年集，Dustpans and spades were gathered in those years,

舟衍萬古通。to make boats sail through ages to eternity.

莫嗤隋煬帝，Do not sneer Emperor Yang of Sui, 此舉禹王同。he's deed was similar to that of King Yu. [46].

The author focused on Empire Yang of Sui and considered his canalage a great contribution to thousands of generation. Zhao improved the evaluation of this empire by comparing him to Yu, which reflected that the author highly celebrated the achievements of Yu.

### 3. Conclusion

Historical poems and lyrics were important literary genres that combine literature and history. As a legendary hero of the Chinese people, The Great Yu undoubtedly became an inspiration of historical poems and lyrics. Scholars have focused on transmitted documents, especially categories of Confucian classics, history and philosophy, for a long time, which means records about Yu in the Category of Literature have long been neglected.

Table 1. Titles of Poems and Lyrics on Yu.

Titles	Da Yu, Xia Yu, Yu Wang (大禹/夏禹/禹王, Great Yu/ Xia Yu/ King Yu)	Yu miao (禹廟, temple of Yu)	Yu xue (禹穴, tomb of Yu)	Yu si (禹寺, temple of Yu)	Yu ling (禹陵, mausoleum of Yu)	Yu ji (禹迹, sites of Yu)	Yu ci (禹祠, ancestral hall of Yu)
Pre-Qin Period							
Han and Jin Dynasties		1					
Tang Dynasty	2	10	1				
The Five Dynasties		1					
Song Dynasty	3	15	4	3	4		4
Jin and Yuan Dynasties		2	1				
Ming and Qing Dynasties	6	16	5		19	1	
Total	11	45	11	3	23	1	4

Table 1. Continued.

Titles	Kuaiji (會稽)	Bianshi (斂石, burial stone)	Longmen (龍門, gate of the Dragon Hall)	Zhishui (治水, tame the water)	Tushan (塗山, Mountain Tu)	Others	Combination <sup>8</sup> [45]	Total
Pre-Qin Period						5		5
Han and Jin Dynasties								1
Tang Dynasty					1	3		17
The Five Dynasties								1
Song Dynasty	2				2	7		44
Jin and Yuan Dynasties								3
Ming and Qing Dynasties	2	2	1	1	1	3	2	59
Total	4	2	1	1	4	18	2	130

Table 2. Origins of the Authors of Poems on Yu. <sup>9</sup>

	Hunan 湖南	Hubei 湖北	Shandong 山東	Shanxi 山西	Jiangxi 江西	He'nan 河南	Hebei 河北	Jiangsu 江蘇	Fujian 福建
Pre-Qin Period									
Han and Jin Dynasties						1			
Tang Dynasty	1		1	2		2			
The Five Dynasties									
Song Dynasty				1	2	1		2	3
Jin and Yuan Dynasties				1			1		
Ming and Qing Dynasties	2	1	1	1	3		1	7	
Total	3	1	2	5	5	4	2	9	3

<sup>8</sup> Combination refers to the two poems that could be categorized into two or more columns, namely, Huang Jingren's 黃景仁 "The Temple of Yu in the Mountain Tu" 塗山禹廟 and Ruan Yuan's 阮元 "Visiting the Mausoleum of Yu in the Mountain Kuaiji" 會稽山謁大禹陵. Therefore, 130 poems are counted in this table, although there are only 126 in the Category of Literature.

<sup>9</sup> This table does not consider the historical changes of provinces, but to regard the provincial division in the present day as the authors' origins.



Table 2. Continued.

	Zhejiang 浙江	Guangdong 廣東	Sichuan 四川	Anhui 安徽	Gansu 甘肅	Liaoning 遼寧	Shaanxi 陝西	Unknown	Total
Pre-Qin Period									
Han and Jin Dynasties									1
Tang Dynasty	2			1			1	3	13
The Five Dynasties	1								1
Song Dynasty	9		3	3	1		1	5	31
Jin and Yuan Dynasties	1								3
Ming and Qing Dynasties	17	2	1	1		2		7	46
Total	30	2	4	5	1	2	2	15	95

As shown in these poems and lyrics, The Great Yu was generally shaped as a saint in Tang and Song dynasties. Poets not only praised his contribution of taming the flood, but also valued his historical importance as a virtuous sage. In order to promote the unity of Confucian ideology, govern a unified empire, and consolidate the Chinese people after the Qin-Han period, The Great Yu has become a significant role model. That literati shaped The Great Yu into a common ancestor of the Chinese people and a wise king also conformed to the government's policy. Developing The Great Yu as a saint in poetic media to promote national consolidation was a soft and common way used by intellectual elite.

China is a nation of poetry. Poems on Yu reflect the tradition of combining literature and history, so these works have insightful contents and moving embellishment. The purpose of composing on Yu was mainly to celebrate his feats and virtues. These poems show an integration of historical facts, narration as well as emotional expression, and therefore they are of great values in understanding the authors' opinion on the Great Yu.

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