

Inheriting Mi Fu's Legacy: Mi Fu's Family and the Endeavor in Preserving and Glorifying His Cultural Heritage

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Abstract

The heritage of artifacts requires long lasting constructing and sculpting on the part of promoters to be established as a paradigm. These promoters are usually neglected through history, but they played an important role in how people in later periods interpret the image and figure of a paradigm. In the process of establishing a paradigm, the way of preserving and inheriting can be the most vital thing that needs to be dealt with, no matter the promoter or the researcher. The family members and close friends of the artist were doubtless often the first and most indispensable characters for researchers to consider.

The present study focuses on Mi Fu's (1051-1107) family as an example. By researching Mi Fu's family members and their activities, we can not only know about Mi Fu's ancestors and their environment but also how the descendants of Mi Fu collected and organized his heritage. The descendants of Mi Fu regarded Mi Fu as the centre of their family culture, which simultaneously established Mi Fu's image and tradition. The assiduous efforts of Mi Youren (1074-1151) are well known due to his calligraphy and painting style inherited from Mi Fu, and so was his connoisseurship for Song Gaozong (1107-1187, r. 1127-1162). Similar activities were continuous till Mi Fu's great grandson. The endeavors of Mi Fu's descendants included collecting Mi Fu's calligraphies and verse, book publishing, epitaph carving, and calligraphy style learning. All of these were intended to preserve and propagate Mi Fu's artworks that were scattered during the Jingkang Incident. The Mi family constructed Mi Fu's image based on their family tradition and memories by means of these efforts. The fruitful results have had a prodigious and unremitting influence on how people interpreted Mi Fu, which is worth of researching and emphasizing.

Keywords: Family of Mi Fu, Mi Youren, Mi Youzhi, Mi Xian, Mi Jurong, *Supplements to the Anthology of Mi Fu, Calligraphy Compendium of the Hall of Pine and Sweet Olive*