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GARLIC CHEESE FLAVOR AND CLAM STYLE:  
STUDY ON THE TREND OF ADOPTED STYLE  
OF INNOVATIVE ASSIMILATION OF YUAN QU  
IN YUAN CI

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## **Garlic Cheese Flavor and Clam Style: Study on the Trend of Adopted Style of Innovative Assimilation of Yuan Qu in Yuan Ci**

### **Synopsis:**

#### 1. Introduction

This paper is divided into five parts, would discuss Yuan Qu transformed Yuan Ci into new artistic style clam style and presented with significance and features of time.

#### 2. Qu transformation of langue

The most significant effect of Yuan Qu on Yuan Ci is the great amount of colloquial writing in language.

#### 3. Qu transformation of content

The most common themes in Yuan Ci were the expression of withdrawal from society and criticism of the time.

#### 4. Qu transformation of style

By blending style of Qu in Ci, it enhances diversity of style of Yuan Ci and different styles can result in unique artistic effect.

#### 5. Conclusion

The conflict and exchange between elegant and folk culture led to aesthetic characteristics with the significance of time and features of literature in Yuan Dynasty.

# **Garlic Cheese Flavor and Clam Style: Study on the Trend of Adopted Style of Innovative Assimilation of Yuan Qu in Yuan Ci**

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## **ABSTRACT**

During the period of succession of Sung, Jin and Yuan dynasties, the foreigners invaded and the country was in crisis. Strange foreign language and style significantly influenced traditional Central Plain Culture. With the multiple effects and blending of hierarchic culture and folk culture on language and music, Yuan Ci were transformed into new style of literature, it resulted in the rise of Yuan Qu. Yuan Qu was based on playfulness and it included dialects and slangs. It showed the novelty, humor and excitement. It was rapid, natural and smooth and filled with artistic style of garlic cheese flavor and clam style. This study attempts to explore creative practice of assimilation of Yuan Qu in Yuan Ci from language, content and style.

**Keywords: Yuan Ci 、 Assimilation of Yuan Qu 、 Cross-culture**

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## INTRODUCTION

Yuan Dynasty was an extremely particular era in the Chinese history. It rose from Mongolians in the desert of the north. After conquering Europe and Asia, with the grand momentum, they arrived at the Central Plain with the army and created a dynasty on horses with national fusion. It enormously influenced traditional Chinese history and system of historical relics. Ci is a kind of musical art raised with Sui Tang Yan music. In the development, it formed unique genre and style and became important style of lyric verse which paralleled with classical and modern-style poetry in Tang and Sung Dynasties and showed difference of quality. Ci was derived from emotion and expressed modestly. Therefore, the initial expressive implication was not “to express ambition” or “to convey the truth”. It aimed to demonstrate internal emotional world. Therefore, there was the saying of “expression of emotion relies on Ci” (Yin Jue, 1993). Hence, Ci is one of the styles of writing which is the most appropriate to express sentiment and is the most lyric. Meng Yuan was raised in the north of pasture land and it conquered the Central Plain by the heroic appearance on horses. It implemented suppressive and discriminative governance. Thus, the scholars of the Central Plain were not respected and lost the measures to be promoted. In order to escape from suppression of political environment and express the depression due to lack of promotion, the literati showed their sentiment by poetry and Ci. However, after the peak of development of style of Ci in the Northern and Southern Sung Dynasties, with the special political and social backgrounds of Yuan Dynasty, thinking culture of the whole society was in the multiple fusion and conflict between nomadic & agricultural civilization and elegant & folk literature. It promoted the development of Yuan Ci and resulted in new life energy and new look of era.

Sanqu is new lyric style of poetry in Yuan Dynasty. It inherited tradition of classical poetry as well as Tang poetry and Sung Ci. It absorbed folk songs and rich materials of popular speaking & singing and drama in Sung and Yuan Dynasties. It also showed the reform and development and became unique form of poetry in Yuan Dynasty. Wang Shih Chen (1964) *Qu Zao. Xu* says,

Qu is the changed form of Ci. Since Jin Yuan governed China, the foreign music played has been noisy and complicated and Ci could not be applied to the music. Thus, new form was developed to be compatible. (p.25)

Thus, Sanqu is the changed form of Ci of Sung and Jin people. It was formed mainly because style of Ci did not match music. Music of northern minority was gradually popular and it combined with folk songs to lead to unique new style of poetry. It resulted in new life for development and continuity of classical poetry.

Meng Yuan governed the Central Plain as foreigners. At early times of the governance, imperial examination was abolished and the literati were forced to be degraded in the society.

They turned to drama creation and rustic and simple Sanqu thus raised with the folk characteristics, approached literature field where the literati fought to show off their techniques and resulted in vigorous development of folk literature in Yuan Dynasty. In comparison to poetry and Ci, Sanqu was more popular, direct and natural and it reflected lives and dimensions of different levels in society. It broke through vision and limitation of traditional elegant literature and thus was immediately recognized and accepted by the public and became new literature mainstream in Yuan Dynasty. It considerably influenced development of style of Ci. Liu Zi Geng (1982) stated that “four great masters of Yuan Qu, Guan, Ma, Zhen, Bai,……these works of Ci were similar to Qu.” “Similar to Qu” means that in the process of creation and development, Ci was influenced by some artistic characteristics of Sanqu and it referred to Sanqu transformation. The most significant change was to blend natural style of northern opera, combine direct dialect and proverb and express frank emotion in the pieces of Ci and even include the language of playfulness to show the popularity. Since Qu relied on people’s hearing instead of visual written literature, it was direct, common and simple and it considerably adopted dialects and slangs in order to reveal novelty and humor. It was direct and natural and filled with artistic characteristics of “garlic and cheese flavor” (Ho, 2009) and “clam style” (Chung, 2006). Hence, Yuan Qu became “lively literature of the time” (Wang, 1994). In such situation, Yuan Ci was significantly affected by Sanqu. Although it inherited dialects and slangs, it transformed folk into elegant style and created new characteristics. In the following, this study explores creative practice of Qu transformation of Yuan Ci from language, content and style.

## QU TRANSFORMATION OF LANGUAGE

According to Cheng Chien (1972) *Characteristics of Ci and Qu*: “Ci is a gentleman, whereas Qu resembles more or less a bully.” It defines the difference of language style between Ci and Qu. Ci is elegant, quiet and modest, whereas Qu is plain, direct and bold. In Yuan Dynasty, art of Qu was blooming and the most significant effect of Sanqu on Yuan Ci, first of all, was the great amount of colloquial writing in language. The reason was that colloquial language could fully express the meaning and emotion to enhance the playfulness. For instance,

Changbai Mountain comes forward. Please tell me when you came here. You reach to the sky, unwilling to lower your head. I am Zhongan, and you are my friend. The air is so fresh in the morning. Let us have a drink. (Liu Min Zhong, *Po Suan Tzem*, p.776)

Liu Min Zhong personalized mountain and had colloquial dialogue with the mountain as a friend. It was, in fact, the conversation with himself. The words were plain, popular, clear, smooth and interesting.

Besides frequent usage of colloquial language, another classical characteristic of Qu

transformation of Yuan Ci in language is the sophisticated application of “Pai You Ti” of Sanqu in Ci. It strengthens the liveliness and playfulness and demonstrates high degree of game technique in writing. For instance,

### 1. Anadiplosis

“Anadiplosis” means that the first word of the sentence is the last one of the previous sentence. It thus connects the head and end of two sentences. The rhetoric is also called Lian Zhu Ge. In Yuan Ci, Singing of moonlight on Qing Lo of Chang Yu’s *Yi Qing E* says,

A boat is small but it is a shelter for me. A shelter for me. I sit on the boat, looking at misty rains for days and nights. I sail out of a bridge and find myself surrounded by mountains. I enter the city and get disturbed by mundane life. I am disturbed by mundane life. Wearing a straw rain cape and hat to sail is better than being trapped in human society, isn’t it? (p.916)

Besides, Shao Heng Zhen’s *Gu Diao Xiao Ling* says:

Two swallows, two swallows. They fly over willow branches and are nowhere to be seen. The world is not the same as it was. Looking back, I see the setting sun and smoke at dusk. So dusky, so misty. Grass and fallen flowers cover the road. (p.1075)

### 2. Word embedded style

“Word embedded style” means to delicately inlay specific words in Qu of the work. There are generally two measures. One is to embed the same word in all sentences and the other is to respectively inlay words in different sentences as the whole. For instance,

I ascend the tower tonight in the moonlight. The moon is close to me. She is my friend. I invite her to drink and sing with me. The moon is round and people get united. People get drunk by moonlight. I watch the moon every year. I hope life can be as long as the moon. (Pai Pu, *Nian Nu Jiao*, p.631)

The youth left. The clothes broke. Old things are gone. My interest remains the same and my old friends know. Flowers are beautiful either in spring or in autumn. It is good to see flowers every day. How much does it cost to buy drinks and flowers in lifetime? (Hsieh Ying Fang, *Que Qiao Xian*, p.1070)

The autumn is coming. It comes early this year. I am already sorrow before autumn arrives. Now autumn has come and my sorrow is not less. (Han Yi, *Ye Jiang Men*, p.1156)

### 3. Zhong Ju Ti

“Zhong Ju Ti” means sentences are commonly applied in one work with the same manner of description. The sentences are partially overlapping. In Sanqu, Xiao Ling is frequently

applied in this style. Overlapping sentences or rhymes in Ci were originally required in Ci Pai. With the effect of Sanqu, Yuan Ci considerably blended overlapping rhymes and it was common in short Xiao Ling. For instance,

Blue sky has infinite breadth and days are countless. Green rivers are everywhere. I stand on the Baling Bridge and look over Xichuan eight thousand miles way. The spring comes late and the autumn leaves soon. A man seldom lives to be seventy years old. How many springs and autumns can one spend before he dies? (Xian Yu Shu, *Que Qiao Xian*, p. 820)

I dreamed of arriving in Yangzhou. Twelve buildings stand in the moonlight but there is no one in the street. Whom am I concerned about? Whom am I worrying about? My hair turns white in the spring breeze. I am shammed to see flowers. (Hsu Yu Jen, *Chang Xiang Si*, p.983)

The fire in Kunlun Mountain last year burned jade and stones. Let nature take its course. God knows evil and goodness. I can have a happy life with my wife and children this year. I sing; I dance. I spend money like water; I get drunk like a fiddler. Do not waste the good time. (Hsieh Ying Fang, *Yi Jian Mei*, p.1070)

Based on work of Yuan Ci by Sanqu Pai You Ti, in terms of style of anadiplosis, word embedded and overlapping sentences, the most significant characteristic is the plain, direct and simple language. Upon the previous figure of speech of Pai Ti, it formed unique melody and it combined elegant and folk characteristics to present elegant and lively sentiment which is easy to be sung.

## QU TRANSFORMATION OF CONTENT

With the unique background in Yuan Dynasty, the most common themes in Yuan Qu were the expression of withdrawal from society and criticism of the time. They were also common in Yuan Ci. Withdrawal from society and expression of ambition, in particular, were critical in Yuan Ci. It was the sentiment expressed by the literati with the same destiny at the same time after they were frustrated by reality. Therefore, the content was affected by Yuan Qu and it was not limited to elegant characteristic and the themes were changed. One of them was the work which criticized the world and stated the withdrawal from the society. For instance,

Time is long and the sky is vast. I laugh at myself about my ambition. I lay in the bed like Chen Den however the world may change. I pay tax and have enough to eat and wear. Sometime, I farm the east field and look at green mountains. I am not like

Zhuge Liang who sang Liangfu chasing after fame and dreams. (Liu Ying, *Que Qiao Xian*, p.780)

Everyone pursues fame and interests. Even they get them, they are just lucky. I grow old and understand that entering politics is arranged by god. People should enjoy themselves to the utmost. I drink and recite poems in the moonlight. I am 55 years old and travel extensively like a rolling stone. After I settle down and retire from the world, I will plant trees and grow flowers following Tao Yuanming. (Chang Chu, *Dong Xian Ge*, p.1015)

Liu's *Que Qiao Xian* applied colloquial language and he mocked himself as "being courageous in life" without accomplishing anything. Thus, he realized the affairs of the world, followed Chen Deng's boldness to freely lie on the bed or returned to nature, cultivated the field of the east, appreciated the mountain leisurely and never had the intention to obtain the official post. It seemed that he was transcendent and open-minded. In fact, however, he was profoundly depressed and frustrated by the lack of opportunities. Chang Zhu was talented as a young person. He was honest and wild and in early times, he was affected by Buddhism. Since he was not recognized in official post, he intended to escape from the society. In *Dong Xian Ge*, by colloquial words, it depicted the author who did not realize the ambition to obtain official position even at 55 years old. With the frustration, he complained about the destiny and said, "we should enjoy life!" Thus, he had no choice but to escape from the world by "appreciating the moon" and "having rustic life".

The other kind is the work which mocks oneself or others. For instance, in Wu Chen's *Qing Yuan Chun*,

Men and women work hard and exhaust themselves every day. They arrive at a new place and regard it as their hometown. They are treacherous hypocrites in chase of benefits. Tricks they play are beyond count. Time is limited but work is endless. People work like horses. When does this end? I wake up and listen to time flowing. Many outstanding people have been chasing for negligible fame and interests. Looking back the history, I was made prime minister three times and conferred a dukedom twice and now I pick chrysanthemum and plant melons beside the fence. But it makes no difference. People all end up buried in a mound. Wake up! Everyone becomes skeleton after they die. (p.936)

The Ci of Wu Chen depicted skeleton and the words were straight forward without polishing. He directly wrote colloquial terms such as "father and mother", "Niu Ban" and "superficial body" and sighed for short life and meaningless pursuit for official rank. At the end, we were all skeletons and part of earth. It was the mock for those who made efforts to pursue wealth and



official rank. He significantly expressed his detestation to official post and cynical attitude. In the work, the taunts were colloquial and it revealed the direct style of northern opera.

## QU TRANSFORMATION OF STYLE

Yuan Qu was based on broad and multiple themes, plain and direct language, lively description and natural style. It stood out in Yuan Dynasty and was the mainstream. Hence, besides language and content, Yuan Ci was affected in style and there was Qu orientation. According to Ren (1984), Ci was mostly elegant and stated the expression of sentiment. It was based on reality and style was graceful. Qu was popular and simple. It adopted slangs and the style was bold. By blending style of Qu in Ci, it enhances diversity of style of Yuan Ci. Appropriate combination of two kinds of poetry with similar systems and different styles can result in unique artistic effect. For instance, in Liu Ying's *Nan Xiang Zi*,

The carriage is downstairs and children are reading booking outside. I reap the fruits and share them with children and the old. I devote myself to academics and teaching in the peaceful world but have made no result. I laugh at myself. I drink and sing, giving up making a living. (p.783)

The first part of this Ci depicted a tranquil image of family life by highly sophisticated writing. The second part mocked Han Gaozu Liu Bang who accomplished the empire simply by drinking and indulging. However, he also realized that the empire was destined and could not be demanded. However, the common family life of “the sharing between the elderly and children” was not accessible in the family of emperor.

For instance,

I plant plum blossom and bamboos. I chisel a pool. The pleasant scenery accompanies with my poetry. Time passes like water. People bustle and toil like wild horses. I wave my hands, seeing clouds drifting in the sky. (Chou Chuan, *Shui Diao Ge Tou*, p.882)

Mountains shine in the setting sun; waves reflect rosy clouds. Beside the forest, bamboo fences and hay-thatched mud cottages are the home of a fisherman. Egrets fly by the bank; crows fly in the mountain. Laugh and voices come from reed catkins. I offer wine in exchange for fish and shrimps. (Lee Chi Hsien, *Wu Shan Yi Duan Yun*, p.1028-1029)

Throughout the ages, everyone says staying at home idle is pleasant. But I am busy rather than leisure. Green mountains must have been laughing at me. My health is poor and appearance is aging. I suddenly find autumn comes early. My thatched study is small and almost knocked down by wind and rain. (Hsieh Ying Fang, *Dian Jiang Chun*, p.1068)

I see picturesque mountains everywhere. Isn't it better than eminent status? I wear a hat made of deerskin and cotton clothes all the year. Forget it. Forget it. I have nothing to worry about. (Hsieh Ying Fang, *Ru Meng Ling*, p.1071)

The previous pieces are based on colloquial narration and the lyrics are lively without polishing. They are natural and show the playfulness in withdrawal life and are filled with melody. It was direct and plain and it matched the style of clam of Yuan Qu.

## CONCLUSION

Meng Yuan governed the Central Plain as foreigners and due to their neglect and ignorance of culture of the Central Plain, Han culture was severely affected and damaged. Han literati were discriminated and suppressed under the tyrannical governance of Meng Yuan. With the extreme dissatisfaction, they began the self-awareness and reflection on creation of poetry and drama. They broke through the traditional limitation and pursued simple, plain and real sentiment. In traditional literature, difference between Ci and Qu has been definite and strict. In Chen's (2005) *Bai Yu Zhai Ci Hua*, "Ci might include the style of poetry; however, it can never be Qu". However, with the effect of time, the blending among different genres is natural. Upon cultural and social influence, Yuan Ci successively became popular. The reason can be in that Mongolians' rough and straight-forward aesthetics influenced the whole society and it turned from elegant to folk style. In addition, in Yuan Dynasty, levels of social class were severe and it was difficult for the literati to obtain official rank. They were forced to create drama in grassroots society and influenced by popular culture. Thus, the style was changed. However, it was caused by fashion of the time. Furthermore, Ci was originated from folk songs and it included great amount of popular language. Afterwards, with the literati's engagement, it resulted in elegant literature. Likewise, Yuan Qu absorbed folk songs, and new lyric poetry such as singing & speaking and drama in Sung and Yuan Dynasties. In early times, it was popular with the folks. Subsequently, the literati participated in the creation and it approached the desks of the scholars. By expressive techniques of poetry, it pursued the beauty of form. Thus, creation of Sanqu became elegant and it gradually lost the popular and rough style. The conflict and exchange between elegant and folk culture resulted in new style of literature in Yuan Dynasty and led to aesthetic characteristics with the significance of time and features of literature in Yuan Dynasty.

According to research finding of Teng (2006), although Sanqu transformation of Ci, to some degree, resulted in shallow conception, it developed new prospect of Ci style. The previous pieces are Yuan Ci with natural and colloquial language of northern opera. They blended slangs in elegant Ci and created new life strength to Ci which was originally elegant and dignified. They became lively and combined folk with sophisticated style to lead to natural and direct new style and reveal aesthetic characteristics of natural, elegant and popular of Yuan

Ci. Hence, Ci circle of Yuan Dynasty, with the effect of prevalence of northern opera, encountered severe challenge and pressure due to change of Ci style. However, they pursued innovation and change. After blending playfulness of Qu in Ci, it reinforced the circle of Ci. It transformed Yuan Ci into new artistic style filled with garlic and cheese flavor and clam style and presented with significance and features of time.

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