

# Moon and Chinese Culture

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# 1. Poems in Tang/Song Dynasty

- a.
- Thoughts in the Still of the Night
- Li Bai
- A pool of moonlight before the bed,
- Took it to be frost on the ground.
- Raised my head to gaze at the moon,
- And lowered it to think of home.

- In the poem, LiBai uses the moon as a bridge between he and his thoughts of the past.
- When he faces the moon in the sky, he begins to recall the happiness and fortune with his family and friends in the past.

# Prelude to Water Melody

## Su Shi

- Bright moon, when wast thou made?
- Holding my cup, I ask of the blue sky.
- I know not in heaven's palaces
- What year it is this night.
- I long to ride the wind and return;
- Yet fear that marble towers and jade houses,
- So high, are over-cold.
- I rise and dance and sport with limpid shades;
- Better far to be among mankind.
- Around the vermilion chamber,
- Down in the silken windows,
- She shines on the sleepless,
- Surely with no ill-will.
- Why then is the time of parting always at full moon?
- Man has grief and joy, parting and reunion;
- The moon has foul weather and fair, waxing and waning.
- In this since ever there has been no perfection.
- All I can wish is that we may have long life,
- That a thousand miles apart we may share her beauty.

- The poem mainly depicts the grievance of Su Shi after he was sent to the deserted areas for political reasons and his longing for his brother.
- However, through his observation and “interaction” with the moon, he feels more relaxed, and wants to relish the real world as a paradise.

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# Spring, the River, Flowers, the Moon Night

- 春江潮水连海平，海上明月共潮生。
- In spring the river swells level with sea,
- The bright moon rise mounting the tide.
- 滟滟随波千万里，何处春江无月明？
- Waters flash with infinite light.
- Where on the spring river is there no bright moon?

- 江畔何人初见月？江月何年初照人？
- When did the moon first shine on men?
- Who first saw the moon from the riverside?
- 人生代代无穷已，江月年年只相似。
- Human beings, generation after generation without end,
- See the same river, the same moon:



- The poem depicts Zhang's thoughts of his lover and strong willingness to to meet her
- The thought becomes the contemplation on how the world thrives and how tiny a human being is when facing the world as the poem develops later on.

# 1d(New)

## Thinking of My Brothers on a Moonlight Night

- Du Fu
- Drums at the watch-towers beat,
- And roads below clear of people;
- I think of the frontier as I

- Hear the wild geese's autumn cry;
- Dew changes to frost, but I feel
- Moonlight is not as bright as it was
- Back in my old home; now my brothers
- Are scattered, and there is no way
- For me to know if they are alive
- Or dead, for letters cannot come
- And the war that keeps us apart
- Seems unending.

# 1e Translation

- Musing on the Moon
- By Zhang Jiuling
- The sea mirrors th' rising moon bright;
- Miles apart, our hearts share tonight.
- Dewy-eyed, I wail this lone night:
- Nostalgia stirs my heart all night.
- The candle doused, brimming is light.
- Dressed in a gown, I' m still dewy slight.
- Too hard to hand you sweet moonlight:
- In sleep, will dreams us reunite?

# 1f Translation

- Anchoring at Guazhou
- Wang Anshi
- Beyond the River lies Jingkou, from which  
Zhongshan
- Is but a span of several mountains away.
- Now that the spring breezes have  
reverdur'd the south bank,
- When will the bright moon see me on my  
homebound way?

- The poem depicts his conflict:
- looking forward to witnessing his new law being employed by the government
- and willingness to free himself from trivial matters

# The sad zither

Li Shangyin

- Why should the sad zither have fifty strings?
- Each string, each strain evokes but vanished springs:
- Dim morning dream to be a butterfly;
- Amorous heart poured out in cuckoo's cry.
- In moonlit pearls see tears in mermaid's eyes;
- From sunburnt jade in Blue Field let smoke rise.
- Such feeling cannot be recalled again:
- It seemed lost even when it was felt then.

- The poem depicts Li Shang Yin's yearning for his wife after she died.
- It is also a recount of the times spent with his wife and an autobiography of his first 25 years



# Summary and findings

- After analyzing and comparing the symbols of moon in 100 Tang and Song Dynasty, we divide the symbols and meanings of moon into 3 categories:

# 1. Yearning

- willingness to return back to hometown;
- “missing” relatives or wife
- e.g. Libai's Thoughts in the Still of the Night
- e.g. Prelude to Water Melody  
Su Shi
- Ratio: 51%

## 2.Longing for nature

- In these poems, moon is used as a symbol to convey poet's willingness to live in nature and affinity for nature.
- e.g. Wang Wei's
- Autumn Evening in My Mountain Abode
- The Moon over the West River
- A Summer Night on My Way Home from the Yellow Sand Bridge(Xin Qi Ji)
- Ratio:26%

# 3.Sentiments for life

- Poets also depict moon to describe their sentiments for life
- the pain of homelessness and loneliness
- e.g.
- BaiJuYi's
- Chant of Twilight River
- &Song of the Lute Player
- Ratio:16%

## 2. Moon in different literature

- 1.<<前赤壁赋>>苏轼
- I asked: "Do you know the water and the moon? Water passing as it, actually doesn't disappear; the moon is subject to change in order to be full and insufficient, eventually it doesn't increase or decrease. Thus, if viewed from the side of change, apparently, between heaven and earth there is no moment which doesn't change, but on the same side of constancy, apparently, all things with their lives are infinite. Should we envy?"

- Moreover, between heaven and earth, all things have their own ascription. If a thing does not belong to me, even the slightest amount I can't take. Only the bracing wind on the river and the bright moon in the mountains, which make in our ears a pleasant sound and in our eyes dreamy color, will be never spent, and may be freely used. They - the immeasurable treasure, given to us by our Creator, which you can enjoy with me."

- The article starts from the relish he gains from visiting the great river. Then, he considers the sob as a component of life.
- Finally, he returns the joy obtained from the spirit.

- Through the change between joy and sob, he investigates into where the meaning of human lies in, showing the attitude that can keep calm and comfortable even through the puzzle of the author



# 记承天寺夜游

- 2. Yuanfeng six years on October 12 .evening, Untie clothes to sleep, moonlight from the window-in, I have the pleasure to walk together. With no thought to their own pleasure of the people, so to Chengtianshi to find Zhangfumin. Zhangfumin no sleep, we walk in the yard.
- Moonlight as in the yard, Xiangshuiyiyang Vacant clarity, the shadow of bamboo and cypress like algae, as Limnanthemui nymphoides staggered in the water aspect. Which does not moonlight night, and where no Cuibai bamboo, but the lack of having this lull as people ah!

- Theme: It depicts the beautiful scenery of night with moonlight to convey his sorrow of demotion and the depression of being homeless

# 3(New)

- Ode to the Autumn Sound
- OuYangXiu
- Ode to the Autumn Sound was a good model of the article with the ode style in the Song Dynasty. In the first paragraph the author wrote that he heard the autumn sound in his night reading, thus he spread out the description of the autumn sound in detail. The second paragraph described further the autumn sound and commented on the sough autumn air.

# Translation

- The sound was also like the trotting soldiers, who hold the gags in the mouths and go to fight the enemy. I could not hear the orders but only heard the sound of the marching troops. I asked my young servant, "Where the sound comes from? Go out and see around!" Soon He returned, and answered, "The stars and the Moon are still bright and clear; the Milky Way is still in the sky. Nobody is around; the sound comes between the trees!"

# Why do poets like to depict moon?

- 1. It reflects their distinctive home consciousness, comforting their loneliness
- 2. Poets pine their philosophy of life on moon, considering the philosophy time and history
- e.g. wax and wane of moon remains a mystery for people at that time, promote their thoughts

- 3. Poets make use of moon to question the god, deeming the concepts of life and the universe
- The moon hangs high in the sky, which can be seen but can never be reached, existing permanently and peacefully. This can trigger the thoughts of poets as the quality of moon can be comparable to that of life.

- Indeed, the love and respect for moon is not confined to Chinese ancient poets
- Moon can represent the benevolence and love of women.
- It can represent aesthetics of neutral and harmonious, nature and change.

- 3. Moon religion





阴阳  
“Yin Yang ”Theory

Yang: Sun, Male  
catastrophe

Yin: Moon, Female fortune

Yang: Warm, power,  
humans

Yin: Ghost, softness, cold

Pray for Moon Goddess

- What moon goddess can bring:
- Romance
- gynaecology health
- good weather and climate
- agricultural gain

# Moon in modern society

# 4.Dances and songs

- 1.月光 Cyndi Wang
- Cyndi loves you 2004
- 2.水仙 Cyndi Wang
- Red Cyndi 2008
- 3.王菲 水调歌头
- Wang 1999
- 4.寄明月 赖美云

- 5. Moon in modern life--"Moon with u"



Kaguya



zhuiyueshen

Blue moon



# Modern Literature on Moon

- examples:
- Bianzhilin's 《Torn Passage》
- 《Bright Moon》 WeiZhiRan
- ZhangAiLing's various articles describing various features of moon



# Moon Influence on Modern Design

- 1. Psychology Symbolism
- In Chinese, especially in the field of classical poetry and painting, the reason why the moon image appears frequently lies in its rich symbolic meaning and emotional connotation. "Although the images focused on expression are different, the vast majority of audiences can naturally understand the images and emotions that the author wants to express."

## 2. Analogy Symbolism

- The moon is the pronoun of love and the ideal sustenance of a stable and harmonious life. The essence of people's yearning for the Moon Palace comes from their desire to live in seclusion. Chang'e rushes to the moon, far away from the noisy world, and escapes from the life of the world. What the soul leaves behind is the true yearning for the world forever.

# 3. The aesthetic relevance function of the moon

- This is a bit like the "Zen scene" in Chinese design. In fact, the essence of Zen is to achieve the harmony and unity of the subject self and the object nature through self-regulation, and to achieve spiritual detachment and peace. This mood in the furniture design is to meet the needs of the Zen practitioners through simple materials and simple furniture modeling.

# 4. The association function of the moon image

- The eternal spirit of the moon myth prototype contains a kind of life continuity and a kind of national spirit. The moon, from ancient times and today, is full of ups and downs. It starts again and again. Compared with the short life, the moon is moving, eternal, but eternal. "Today people do not see the ancient month, this month has been according to the ancients."

# Conclusion

- There are profound cultural and historical reasons for the formation of the image of "Moon" and its connotation. In the long-term cultural development and evolution process, a mode of cultural thinking that integrates all ethnic groups at the same time has finally formed a mythical prototype of the image of the moon.

# 6. Moon symbolism

- 1. female
- 2. reunion of family
- 3. philosophy value
- 4. Silence
- 5. Pray and Fortune
- 6. Tidiness
- 7. Romance

# 7.5 Moon Festival in Chinese Society

- 1.Lantern Festival
- Time: the fifteenth day of the first lunar month



Originated  
In Han  
Dynasty:  
People pray  
in front of  
Buddha  
with lantern





## 2. Flower Festival

- (Not celebrated significantly as Lantern Festival)
- The fifteenth day of Second Lunar Month



People mainly go out for picnic and enjoy various blossoms

# 3. Zhongyuan Festival



Time:  
15th of the seventh lunar  
month;

For rituals, Buddhists  
and Taoists hold  
ceremonies to relieve  
ghosts from suffering



- In Chinese culture, the fifteenth day of the seventh month in the lunar calendar is called Ghost Day and the seventh month in general is regarded as the Ghost Month (鬼月), in which ghosts and spirits, including those of deceased ancestors, come out from the lower realm. Distinct from both the Qingming Festival (or Tomb Sweeping Day, in spring) and Double Ninth Festival (in autumn) in which living descendants pay homage to their deceased ancestors, during Ghost Festival, the deceased are believed to visit the living.

## 4. Mid-Autumn Festival

- The Mid-Autumn Festival (中秋節) is a harvest festival celebrated notably by the Chinese people. The festival is held on the 15th day of the 8th month of the lunar calendar with a full moon at night, corresponding to mid September to early October of the Gregorian calendar.



5.



- Today is the day to pray for your misfortune to be dispelled according to Daoist beliefs. Today is the birthday of the god of water (水官) as it falls on the 15th day of the 10th month on the traditional Chinese calendar. In contrast to a human birthday, the god will grant you wishes on the day commemorating his holy birth.

# Moon in other culture

- 1.Japan:
- “The moonlight is beautiful tonight. =  
I love you~





## 2.Thailand



City  
of  
Moon  
"Zhu  
Wen"

Place  
where  
Yutu  
Lives

# 3.Korea

- Indeed, Korean also celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival



# 4. Phillipines

- In Phillipines, people are not allowed under moon.
- On a full moon night, people will suffer from schizophrenia, if they bath under the moonlight.
- On a new moon night, people will die if they bath under the moonlight.

# Women and beauty



- Already with thee! tender is the night.

And haply **the Queen-Moon** is  
on her throne.

the moon has become synonymous with a beautiful woman.

**Clustered around by all her starry  
Fays.**

《Ode to a Nightingale》

## Reproduction and life

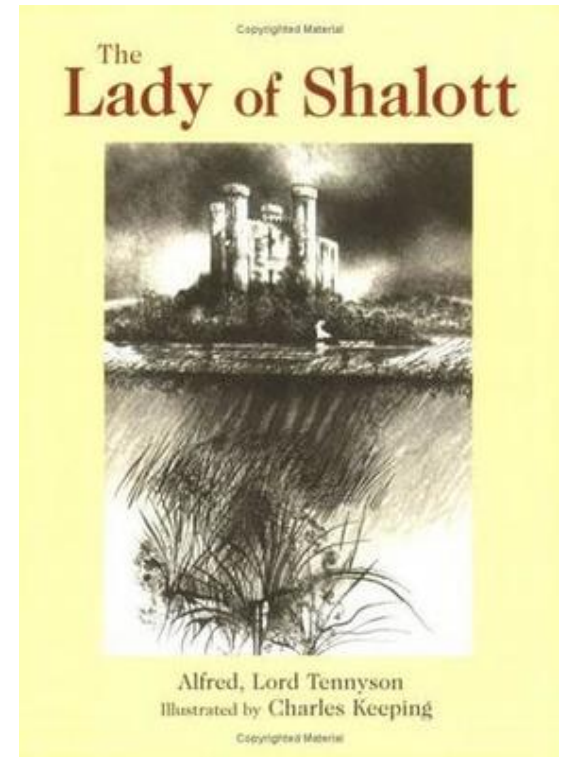


**Artemis** is the king of the gods Zeus and night goddess Reto's daughter .

She can make women have more children, alleviate the suffering of their birth, and she is a protector of women and babies.

# Love and marriage

When the moon was overhead  
Come two young lovers lately wed



《夏洛特夫人》

**Thank you**