

# *An Aesthetic Analysis of Hua Tuo's Historical Image*

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**Keywords:** Hua Tuo's image, historical creation, humanistic spirit, aesthetics

**Abstract:** Hua Tuo is called the god of medicine in the hearts of the Chinese people who possesses good wishes for life and health and it is the highest praise for a great doctor. Hua Tuo has been called the spiritual symbol of traditional Chinese medicine in the folk because he is proficient in many classics. He is good at prescription medicine and is committed to practice. His academic achievements belong not only to China, but also to the world. The researches on Hua Tuo's academic thought and culture have never stopped for thousands of years. In the new era with the traditional Chinese medicine culture's reviving, it is necessary to improve high requirements for the broad masses of artists and their literature and arts. And the broad masses have high expectations for works of art that reflect the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Under the background of "inheriting the essence, keeping righteousness and innovation", creating the art of the people and reflecting the requirements of the times is the need to establish the cultural self-confidence of traditional Chinese medicine and the current artistic aesthetic.

## 1. Introduction

*Biography of Hua Guo in Records of the Three Kingdoms:* Hua Tuo style Yuan Hua was a man from Qiao in the state of Pei (now Qiaocheng District, Bozhou City, Anhui Province). Fu was his another name. *Hua Tuo Zhuan, the Book of the later Han Dynasty*, also recorded the same thing. He is a famous medical scientist and pioneer of health preservation in China. He is good at mastering several classics, carefully studying Qi Huang, relieving people. And he is proficient in health preservation, prescription, acupuncture, anesthesia and skilled in internal, external, gynecology and pediatrics. Because of his clinical treatment, accurate diagnosis, simple method and rapid curative effect, he was called "the holy hand of surgery" and "the ancestor of surgery", and was praised by foreign scholars as "China's Hippocrates". In the folk, Hua Tuo is a well-known divine doctor, and people often praise the wise doctors of later generations with praise such as "the Second Hua Tuo" and "Yuan Hua resurrection". In the official history, there are few biographies of doctors, but Hua Tuo is an exception. Chen Shou's *Biography of Hua Tuo in Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Fan Ye's *Biography of Hua Tuo in the later Han Dynasty*, and *Hua Tuo Biezhuan*, they all showed Hua Tuo's great contribution in the history of Chinese medicine.

## 2. The Image of Hua Tuo in Historical and Literary Works

### 2.1 The image of Hua Tuo depicted in Records of the Three Kingdoms

According to *the Biography of Hua Guo in Records of the Three Kingdoms and Weishu*: " Hua Tuo style Yuan Hua was a man from Qiao in the state of Pei (now Qiaocheng District, Bozhou City, Anhui Province). Fu was his another name." He traveled to Xuzhou and mastered many classics. He was skilled in the technique for nourishing one's nature. The people in his era all thought he was around a hundred years old, yet his still looked quite young and rugged. The Chancellor (xiang) of Pei, Chen Gui recommended him for a prestigious post; the Grand Commamdant (tai wei) Huang Wan offered him a position in his ranks as well, but Hua Tuo accepted neither position. *The Biography of Hua Guo in Records of the Three Kingdoms and Weishu* described Hua Tuo from three angles. Hua Tuo was knowledgeable and intensive in reading hundreds of classics. He was skilled in the art for nourishing one's nature." He looked much younger than his real age one hundred years old. He rejected the recommendation of Chen and Huang, depicting Hua Tuo's detached and simple attitude to the world. It was recorded as Chen Deng's diagnosis that "when the disease occurs in the last three stages, if you meet a good doctor in time, you can survive. And if Tuo is not there, you will die." These depict superb medical skills of Huatuo[1].

In his description of Hua Tuo's medical treatment, Chen Shou not only reflected Huatuo's profound knowledge, excellent medical skills and good surgical skills, but also showed the charm of his medical skills, which formed the basic features of Hua Tuo's biography. He successfully sketched the image of a doctor with integrity, diligence, the responsibility in saving lives and excellent skills. Broadly, if art can be regarded as technology, then medical technology can also be regarded as art, or technological beauty. In the process of Hua Tuo's medical treatment, the "special technique" and "unique skill" was not only the beauty of technology, but also the beauty of personality in *the Biography of Hua Tuo*.

### 2.2 The Image of Hua Tuo in Luo Guanzhong's the Romance of the Three Kingdoms

*The Romance of the three Kingdoms* is a long and popular historical novel. In this 120-chapter-long novel with more than a million words, the writer Luo Guanzhong not only weaves the ups and downs of the storyline, but also shapes the war scene that touches people's heartstrings. There are three chapters in the novel that describe Hua Tuo from different angles. In the 15th chapter of the novel, Hua Tuo curing Zhou Tai's illness[3]. "he has the appearance of being born with a child's face and crane hair." This time portrays the image of Hua Tuo's immortal style. Tuo said, "this is an easy task. You will get better in one month if you take my medicine. Sun ce is very happy and gives Hua Tuo a rich reward. "The author presents Hua Tuo's image and medical skills to the reader through the mouth of Yu and the eye of Sun ce. The 75th chapter, *Scrape the Poison off the Guan yunchang's Bone*, depicted Hua Tuo " the knife in Tuo's left hand", "scraping all the poison, applying medicine, and sewing it with medicine thread". Through the mouth of Guan Yu, it is true that "Hua tuo is a miraculous doctor", and the image of this edition of literary doctor is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. Hua Tuo refused to accept the reward afterwards, and the noble medical ethics of Hua Tuo appeared on paper. The 78th chapter, *"The Divine Doctor who treated Wind Diseases Died"*, it was written that after Cao Cao buried Guan Gong in Luoyang, the old disease relapsed and Tuo "made a difference". Luo Guanzhong used the method of "layer dyeing" to highlight the wonders of Hua Tuo's medical skills[4]. These all showed that Hua Tuo is a divine doctor [2].

## 2.3 The Image in Huangfu Mi's *Zhenjiu Jiayijing*

Although Hua Tuo in history was knowledgeable and skillful in medical skills, he was "tired of serving others while reserving high medical skills" and "regret for being a doctor." In the preface of *Zhenjiu Jiayijing* written by Huangfu Mi in the Jin Dynasty, he said that he was "arrogant in nature and ended up being killed by it." "Nature evil" refers to Hua Tuo's arrogance, and "reserving skills" refers to his conceit. Although these records were not supported by detailed historical materials, later generations speculated that Hua Tuo had character defects. He was superb in medical skills, but he died of noble character defects. This conjecture only represented the opinion of one family, and the dispute over Hua Tuo's historical image was due to the complex objective environment at that time. The author thinks that Hua Tuo was born in troubled times and the current politics was corrupt. However, it is an indisputable fact that Hua Tuo was willing to cure diseases for the broad masses of poor people and had no interest in flattering dignitaries.

## 2.4 The Image of Hua Tuo in Mao Zonggang's Works

*The Romance of the three Kingdoms*, revised by Mao Zonggang in the Qing Dynasty, making changes, additions, deletions and comments on the original works. While he took a vague attitude towards Hua Tuo's medical skills. Through the general introductory description of the original work and retaining the magical examples of Hua Tuo's medical treatment, he partially modified the original work in the description of the specific medical diagnosis. "This man wants to harm me by opportunity, just like Ji Ping." [3] According to the hypothesis, he negated Hua Tuo's medical ethics as a villain who participated in political activities. Because of his historical mystery with Cao Cao, Hua Tuo's integrity was denied. In the original *Romance of the three Kingdoms*, he treated not only the rich and powerful, but also the poor and humble equally.

As a famous folk physician, the image of Hua Tuo has been interpreted many times in the process of history, which can be found in official history, novels, poems, Taoist scriptures, medical books, local chronicles and other materials, reflecting the group cultural memory of different periods. It has a certain representative significance for the study of Hua Tuo characters. For thousands of years, although Hua Tuo's story was related to both official history and legend, his image as a divine doctor was engraved in the hearts of every Chinese. As a rare symbol of the spirit of traditional Chinese medicine, Hua Tuo has become a precious national cultural heritage in China. "The Second Hua Tuo" and "Yuan Hua's rebirth" were the heartfelt praises of later generations, and "green pockets to save the world" has also become the reputation of traditional Chinese medicine. He learned from famous teacher, "study in Xuzhou", leaving many moving legends. However, there were still misunderstandings and misinterpretations in Hua Tuo's image. At a time when traditional Chinese medicine is revitalizing and developing, we should pay more attention and rectify Hua Tuo's name and establish self-confidence in traditional Chinese medicine culture.

## 3. Overview of Hua Tuo's Artistic Image

### 3.1 Image of Hua Tuo, a Photo Album of Sages and Celebrities of All Ages

Hua Tuo was depicted as a single eyelid, eight-shaped eyebrows, big cheekbone, shrunken cheeks, deep eyes, light beard, shoulder and thin neck in many works[4]. The author depicted Hua Tuo's forehead in an exaggerated way, which meant that Hua Tuo was knowledgeable and wise. He painted eyebrows with eight characters and looks thoughtful, which vividly reflecting Hua Tuo's care for the people and popularize ordinary people. The meticulous brushwork was succinctly summed up with lines, strong lines, light colors and elegant charm. From this picture, Hua Tuo's

weather-beaten image was created from the background of the three Kingdoms. This version of Hua Tuo's image was the painter's hint and symbol of Hua Tuo's fate, and has become one of the most classic Hua Tuo figure paintings.

### 3.2 Fan Zeng's Hua Tuo Wangduan Picture

Fan Zeng is a famous Chinese figure painter and calligrapher. *Hua Tuo Wangduan Picture* was drawn by Fan Zeng in 1980, weighing about 6.8 feet. He adheres to the essence of Shi Tao's "one painting theory". His works pursue the realm of emptiness[5]. He is good at freehand brushwork characters and white drawing. The historical figure paintings are fresh and elegant, chic and elegant, and unique in style in his works. In this picture, Hua Tuo performed Five-animal Exercises right now with a relaxed expression. Hua Tuo felt the pulse with his right hand, while the child gently tugged at Hua Tuo's beard with his left hand. Hua Tuo was smiling and the child was very naughty. The amiable image of the divine doctor is vividly on the paper. Fan Zeng borrowed the thoughts of the ancients and scholars to "directly express the meaning of the heart", aiming to carry forward the Chinese humanistic spirit, the unique ink rhyme and the unity of form and spirit. The artistic style was mainly humanistic spirit, and the style was vigorous, empty and classical, which represents the ultimate pursuit of Chinese literati painting.

### 3.3 Statue of Hua Tuo in Huazu'an, Bozhou

The statue, 2.7 meters high, was personally carved by Qian Shaowu, a famous sculptor in China. Hua Tuo wears a long shirt, a square scarf on his head and a medicine gourd around his waist, refreshing and lifelike. The couplets on both sides of the statue were titled by Zhu Kui, praising Hua Tuo for following the medical career of the Yellow Emperor, the medical ancestor, and creating the "Five-animal Exercises." he expounded the meaning of the "Spirit Pivot Sutra" and eliminated human diseases[6]. His merits and virtues can be compared with Sakyamuni, and his merits are highly appraised.

To sum up, most artists pay attention to the portrayal of Hua Tuo's image, but some art creators take the western modeling means as the only standard when creating ancient character works, while ignoring the charm of Chinese painting, which leads to the lack of authenticity of the characters. As the spiritual symbol of traditional Chinese medicine, Hua Tuo is a cultural representative of medical and humanistic beauty, which has high aesthetic value and cultural exemplary significance. He symbolizes the advanced Chinese medicine, the Chinese people's pursuit of independent personality, the medical ethics of excellent doctors, and the indomitable fighting spirit of justice against evil.

## 4. Aesthetic Analysis of Hua Tuo's Historical Image

Chinese excellent traditional culture is the spiritual lifeline of the Chinese nation, an important source of socialist core values, and a solid foundation for us to gain a firm foothold in the agitation of world culture[7]. Hua Tuo is highly admired by the world, not only for his medical achievements of "medical skill, medicine and nourishment", but also for his great spirit shaped in the process of long-term medical practice. Hua Tuo is the spiritual symbol of traditional Chinese medicine.

Hua Tuo is only a minor character in *the Popular Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. But his simple, honest and benevolent character is very distinct. As a great doctor, he is an outstanding representative of traditional Chinese medicine culture. His ideas, humanistic spirit and moral standards are all rich cultural heritage resources for us to tell Chinese stories well.

#### 4.1 "Benevolence"—the Moral Beauty of Hua Tuo

Among the 16 medical cases recorded in the *Biography* of Hua Tuo in *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, including Lady Ganling, Mrs. Pengcheng, County Guard, Taishou Chen Deng in Guangling, Sikong Cao Cao in Han Dynasty, General Li's wife and other dignitaries. There were also county officials, government officials, postal supervisors, military officials and other lower-ranking officials, as well as Yanxin in Yandu, little boy Chen Shushan in Dongyang and other common people. Hua Tuo was careful and considerate in the diagnosis and treatment of these patients. Tuo didn't flatter because of the patients high status, nor snub them because of their poverty. The Chancellor (xiang) of Pei, Chen Gui recommended him for a prestigious post; the Grand Commandant (tai wei) Huang Wan offered him a position in his ranks as well, but Hua Tuo accepted neither position. Hua Tuo did not flatter Cao Cao at all, who was in power, but Hua Tuo did his best to cure Cao Cao's illness. "Taizu suffered from the bitter wind, and dizzy and dazzled every time. Tuo gave him acupuncture, and he recovered soon. Tuo took nothing after treating Taishou by the emotional method. "As a "great doctor", Hua Tuo has the noble medical ethics and benevolence in saving lives and treating patients fairly.

#### 4.2 "Sincerity"-the Beauty of Hua Tuo's Medical style

Hua Tuo traveled Xuzhou in his early years and was proficient in many Classics and had high medical attainments. As a scholar, Hua Tuo pursued spiritual understanding under the influence of Taoism[8]. Hua Tuo went against the common custom of the world, did not seek fame and strived to practice medicine, and took it as his duty to save the sick and the living. He traveled all over the Central Plains and the Jianghuai Plain. Hua Tuo took practicing medicine to save the world, treating diseases and saving people as his criterion, which was carried out in the practice of medicine. Hua Tuo traveled all his life to practice medicine in the Huaihe River Basin, and his medical practice spread throughout Xuzhou, Yuzhou, Qingzhou and Yanzhou at that time, that is, Jiangsu, Shandong, Henan, Anhui and other provinces. On the way to study and practice medicine, he has accumulated a lot of medical experience and was deeply loved by the local people. He worried about the country and the people, modest and enthusiastic, upright and righteous, and would rather be killed and was unwilling to serve only those in power. He was upright and righteous, reflecting the lofty integrity of ignoring dignitaries and devoting himself to medicine. He performed the medical oath with his own practical actions.

#### 4.3 "Essence"—the Beauty of Hua Tuo's Medical Skill

Hua Tuo has profound knowledge, especially "proficient in prescription and medicine". He treated only a few kinds of medicine with not too much acupuncture; invented "power for anesthesia" to perform surgery, and became the "ancestor of surgery"; created "Five-animal Exercises", a pioneer in world health care gymnastics; invented Tusu wine to prevent epidemic disease in order to save people; and took a pulse to make a diagnosis, which was very accurate. He not only made good use of prescriptions, acupuncture and moxibustion, but also applied emotional therapy to diagnosis and treatment: treating patients with the same main symptoms, judging the pathogenesis of different diseases, making good use of acupuncture, treating poisonous insect bites, using warm soup to stain the hands, treating parasitic diseases, taking garlic, and deliberately making patients vomit black blood and recover by psychotherapy[9]. Many of his disciples, such as Fan E in Pengcheng, Wu Pu in Guangling and Li Dangzhi in Xi'an, were famous at that time.

#### 4.4 "Erudition"—the Academic Beauty of Hua Tuo

Hua Tuo carefully studied the way of medicine, diligently sought knowledge, inherited and innovated the theories of traditional Chinese medicine, and on the basis of familiar with the classics such as *Spring and Autumn Annals* and *Inner Canon of Huangdi*. He learned from others' strengths, integrated them, and improved them in combination with his own clinical practice, which has formed a unique method of health care, disease prevention and treatment.

#### 5. Conclusion

Hua Tuo's image has become a moral force to guide doctors' behavior and thought through historical precipitation, which has interpreted the profound connotation of the sincerity of doctors.

As an outstanding representative of traditional Chinese medicine, Hua Tuo has become a cultural symbol of Chinese traditional culture from official history, medical books, novels and poems. The evolution of Hua Tuo image reflected the cultural memory of Chinese people, which is rooted in the complexity and its relationship with the social and cultural environment. Hua Tuo lived at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty when the court was corrupt. Tuo did not accept Chen and Huang's recommendations. With a spirit of detached personality, Hua Tuo studied and practiced medicine and became a great practical physician.

As a historical image, Hua Tuo continues to overlap in Chinese memory in time and space, and finally inherits the great national spirit and traditional Chinese medicine spirit with a positive force. Exploring the aesthetic image of Hua Tuo is of great social significance to enhance the cultural self-confidence and establish the spiritual identity of traditional Chinese medicine.

#### Acknowledgements

Fund Project Number:

1) 2020 Anhui Province University Outstanding Young Talent Support Program Project "Research on the Establishment and practice of Art and Design Teachers' Studio in higher Vocational Colleges" (Anhui Secretary (2020) 79 (gryp2020260)).

2) 2021 School-level Key Scientific Research Project: Bo Culture Digital Culture and Innovation Technology Research Center (Bozhou Vocational and Technical College Science (2021) No. 1 (YPZX001)) Traditional Chinese Medicine Innovation Project.

3) Special Subject of Inheritance and Innovation of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Anhui Hua Tuo Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine in 2022-- Research on Cultural Innovation and Practice of "Divine Doctor Hua Tuo " in Bozhou City (2022) No. 4 (zxky2203).

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