

- **Introduction 1-2 minutes**

- 1599 (Late Ming dynasty) by Tang Xianzu
- Du Liniang
 - falls in love with a man in a dream and dies. She resurrects for her love, finds the man from her dream and they get married.
- One of the major plot devices that brings the two together is a portrait DU Liniang paints of herself.
- In this plenary session, we will discuss the portrayal of women in Ming Dynasty Paintings and the unusualness of the portrait of Du Liniang

Values of Ming Dynasty China 3-5minutes

- The evolution of this degradation of women began with the rise of neo-confucianism.
 - Daoism, the other prominent religion of the Ming Dynasty revered women
 - The natural order of the universe
 - “Everyone’s mother” Everything stems from women
 - Gender equality regardless of status
 - Neo-Confucianism came in and took the balance and interpreted gender differently, yin is weaker than yang, thus women weaker than men. They created an argument that the natural order places women below men.
 - Women’s sexuality was essentially stripped to a utilitarian nature
 - With that, so too was their individuality stripped creating a conventional group of women that could entertain and rear children as needed but not act autonomously
- Not a great time period for women to live
 - Servitude
 - Entertainment courtesans
 - Childbearing wives/concubines
- Filial Piety
 - The most important virtue for women (really anyone but especially women)
 - Parents/husband/inlaws->Sovereign->Self; Family always comes first. Wants, desires, and dreams do not matter

Ming Dynasty Women 6-7 minutes

- Conventions of women
 - Confined to home
 - Chaste until marriage
 - Bound Feet, a symbol of status and beauty while restricting movement
 - Face shape ideals:
 - Oval

- jiuwo (pit of wines) dimples
 - cherry-like lips
 - black pupils in upcurved eyelids
 - Eyebrow sexiest feature, thin slightly curved and long
- In Paintings
 - Women are represented by a neutral, conventionally attractive figure, not differentiated from other women
 - Sexuality is expressed through objects in the environment around the figure. Flowers, fruits, and plants help meanings
 - Women “should be portrayed as beautiful but submissive, demure and amiable, unassertive and pleasant, agreeable and good-natured”
 - Divinities, such as goddesses, bodhisattvas, and legendary beings were individualized most often as it was necessary to identify the individual identities being portrayed

Why did DLN paint? 9-10

- Good Time to transition into Du Liniang’s Painting
- The Purpose of the Painting
 - She is sick
 - She decides to paint a self-portrait before it’s too late as a testament to the world of her beauty after she dies
 - Dream man, since she can’t paint him as that is terribly suspicious, she composes a poem with a riddle to “one who might understand”
- How the painting is described
 - Cherry mouth
 - Long eyebrows “lost in hair at temples”
 - “Eyes with light of autumn stream / personify the sitter” Individuality (69)
 - Bearing in hand “a green sprig of apricot”
- Liu Mengmei’s Reading (honoring the painting)
 - First interpretation: misinterpreted as a goddess, then as a fairy
 - Wondering if the subject is a mortal
 - Recognized her in his heart
 - Masterful artwork, poetry, and calligraphy
 - Says her skills rival three legendary figures, one of painting, one of poetry, and one of calligraphy.
 - Says he has also studied but she is more talented than him
 - Decided it was a self-portrait
 - Falls in love with the subject
- The Expressiveness of the Painting **11-12**
 - Her maid comments, “Easy to sketch/freshness of youth/ hard to portray/ the pain at heart” -Fragrance (68)
 - Fragrance says she portrays the “rare individual self” like the moon on water
 - Liniang has portrayed herself expressively and as an individual
 - “Expression of love’s longing between her brows”

- Du Liniang simultaneously performs as the ideal of a Chinese woman while maintaining her individualism and expressiveness even in her art