

# Poetic Footprints: Lu You's Life Encounters and Emotional Transformations Along the Zhejiang East Canal

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**Abstract:** Lu You (1125-1210), a renowned poet of the Southern Song Dynasty, had his life deeply intertwined with the Zhejiang East Canal and the city of Shaoxing. As one of the most significant waterways in ancient China, the Zhejiang East Canal connected the Qiantang River to the East China Sea, facilitating economic exchanges and cultural integration within the region. Born in Shaoxing, Lu You was nurtured by the local landscapes and rich cultural heritage, which became a crucial source for his literary inspiration. His poetry not only portrays the natural beauty and folk customs of his hometown but also chronicles his personal experiences and emotional transformations—from early aspirations for success in the imperial examinations to later ambitions of resisting the Jin invaders, and finally to a tranquil retirement in his later years. Through the study of Lu You's works, we gain profound insights into the essence and legacy of Yue culture. His poems are more than expressions of personal sentiments; they serve as vital carriers of Yue culture, playing a significant role in promoting cultural exchange and dissemination. This paper explores the intricate connections between Lu You, the Zhejiang East Canal, and Shaoxing. By examining Lu You's life experiences and poetic creations, it highlights the profound impact of the canal and the city on his life and work. Additionally, it analyzes the changes in Lu You's thoughts and emotions across different stages of his life, revealing the importance of his poetry in preserving and spreading Yue culture. The research indicates that Lu You's life was inseparably linked to the Zhejiang East Canal and Shaoxing, and his poetry stands as both an expression of personal emotion and a crucial medium for the inheritance and promotion of regional culture.

**Keywords:** Lu You's Poetry; Zhejiang East Canal (ZEC); Shaoxing City; Yue Culture; Cultural Heritage.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Historical and Contemporary Background of ZEC, Its Riverside Ancient Towns, and Shaoxing

The Zhejiang East Canal, one of the most important canals in ancient China, boasts a long history. Stretching westward from Xixing in Xiaoshan to the Yong River in Ningbo in the east, it connects the Qiantang River with the East China Sea. In ancient times, this canal played a critical role in transportation, economics, and cultural exchange. Numerous ancient towns, such as Keqiao and Anchang, are situated along its banks. These towns thrived due to the canal, developing bustling commerce and deep cultural roots. Shaoxing, an important city in the Zhejiang Eastern region, became a hub for politics, economy, and culture thanks to the convenience of water transport provided by the canal [1].

In ancient times, the Zhejiang East Canal served as a vital route for grain and silk transportation, fostering economic interactions between regions. The prosperity of the canal also spurred the rise of riverside towns, shaping unique waterside landscapes and commercial cultures. Although modern transportation has gradually replaced some of the canal's functions, the historical and cultural value of the Zhejiang East Canal, its ancient towns, and Shaoxing City has become increasingly prominent. Today, they stand as crucial sites for exploring history and experiencing the charm of traditional culture [2].

### 1.2. Lu You's Life and Connection with ZEC and Shaoxing

Lu You (1125-1210), styled Wu Guan and known by his pseudonym FangWeng (Fangweng, translates to "Recluse of Release"), was born in Shanyin, Yue Prefecture (now Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province). His family belonged to the illustrious clans of Yue Prefecture, sharing deep ties with Shaoxing City. The humanistic environment and regional culture of Shaoxing profoundly influenced Lu You's growth [3]. The Zhejiang East Canal was not only a significant travel route for him but also an integral part of his daily life. The vibrant scenes along the canal, the passing merchant ships, and the local customs provided abundant material for his poetry. Raised in Shaoxing, Lu You was nurtured by the local scenery and folk traditions, enriching his literary skills. His experiences living in the countryside near Shaoxing accumulated rich life experiences that fueled his poetic creation, fostering a deep affection for his hometown [4].

Lu You's life was closely intertwined with the Zhejiang East Canal and Shaoxing City. His literary works have become essential references for studying the history and culture of this region. By exploring the relationship between Lu You and these places, we can gain deeper insights into his life, thoughts, and literary accomplishments. Additionally, this study helps us better understand, preserve, and promote Yue culture [5].

## 2. Lu You's Life in Relation to ZEC and Shaoxing and the Cultural Significance of His Poetry

### 2.1. Close Connection between Lu You's Rural Poems and the ZEC and Shaoxing

During his rural life in Shaoxing, Lu You composed a large body of poetry that vividly illustrates his deep

connection with the Zhejiang East Canal and the city of Shaoxing. For instance, in *A Journey to Mount Kuaiji*, the poem captures the grandeur of Mount Kuaiji in Shaoxing and the expansive water system of the Zhejiang East Canal, showcasing the natural beauty and abundant resources of the region. The line “villages build crab traps, and everywhere fish weirs rise” vividly depicts the daily life of the villagers along the canal, reflecting Lu You's keen observation and profound experience of rural life [6].

Table 1. A Journey to Mount Kuaiji

稽山行（陆游） jī shān xíng (lù yóu)	<i>A Journey to Mount Kuaiji</i> By Lu You
稽山何巍巍，浙江水汤汤。千里亘大野， 勾践之所荒。春雨桑柘绿，秋风粳稻香。 村村作蟹椴，处处起鱼梁。 jī shān hé wēi wēi, zhè jiāng shuǐ shāng shāng. qiān lǐ gèn dà yě, gōu jiàn zhī suǒ huāng. chūn yǔ sāng zhè lǜ, qiū fēng jīng dào xiāng. cūn cūn zuò xiè duàn, chù chù qǐ yú liáng.	How majestic are the peaks of Kuaiji Mountain, how vast flows the waters of Zhejiang. Stretching for a thousand miles over the great plains, where once Goujian wandered. In spring, mulberry trees and elms turn green; in autumn, rice fields emit fragrance. Villages build crab traps, and everywhere fish weirs rise.

In *A Visit to Shanxi Village*, the poem portrays the simple folkways and picturesque landscapes of Shaoxing's countryside. Although the Zhejiang East Canal is not directly mentioned, the life of the countryside was closely linked to the canal's water transport. The canal facilitated communication between the villages and the outside world,

allowing the countryside to maintain its rustic charm while achieving some economic development. The line “flutes and drums follow as spring festival approaches, simple attire and ancient customs preserved” reflects the unique folk culture of Shaoxing's countryside, which thrived within the cultural atmosphere created by the canal and the city [7].

Table 2. A Visit to Shanxi Village

游山西村（陆游） yóu shān xī cūn (lù yóu)	<i>A Visit to Shanxi Village</i> By Lu You
莫笑农家腊酒浑，丰年留客足鸡豚。山重水复疑 无路，柳暗花明又一村。箫鼓追随春社近，衣冠简朴 古风存。从今若许闲乘月，拄杖无时夜叩门。 mò xiào nóng jiā là jiǔ hún, fēng nián liú kè zú jī tún. shān zhòng shuǐ fù yí wú lù, liǔ àn huā míng yòu yì cūn. xiāo gǔ zhuī suí chūn shè jìn, yī guān jiǎn pǔ gǔ fēng cún. cóng jīn ruò xǔ xián chéng yuè, zhǔ zhàng wú shí yè kòu mén.	Do not laugh at the turbid New Year wine of peasants; in years of plenty, guests are treated to enough chicken and pork. Mountains upon mountains and rivers winding as if there is no path, willows dark and flowers bright reveal another village. Flutes and drums follow as spring festival approaches, simple attire and ancient customs preserved. From now on, if allowed leisure to ride under the moon, I would lean on my cane and knock on doors at night without hesitation.

Table 3. Heavy Rain

大雨（陆游） dà yǔ (lù yóu)	<i>Heavy Rain</i> By Lu You
今年景气佳，有祷神必答，时时虽闵雨，顾盼即 沾洽。绵地千里间，四月秧尽插。季夏雨三日，凄爽 欲忘箠。潴水如塞河，决水如放闸，几席乱蛙龟，庭 除泳鹅鸭。舍边鱼受钓，户外鸥可狎。飞萤最得意， 终夕自开阖。萧萧菰蒲声，恍若船入夹。嗟予亦耐 事，坚坐书满榻。悬知罢亚收，已足供伏腊。会约张 志和，清风泛苕霅。 jīn nián jǐng qì jiā, yǒu dǎo shén bì dá, shí shí suī mǐn yǔ, gù pàn jí zhān qià. mián dì qiān lǐ jiān, sì yuè yāng jìn chā. jì xià yǔ sān rì, qī shuǎng yù wàng shà. Zhū shuǐ rú sài hé, jué shuǐ rú fàng zhá, jǐ xí luàn wā miǎn, tíng chú yǒng é yā. shě biān yú shòu diào, hù wài ōu kě xiá. fēi yíng zuì dé yì, zhōng xī zì kāi hé. xiāo xiāo gū pú shēng, huǎng ruò chuán rù jiá. jiē yǔ yì nài shì, jiān zuò shū mǎn tà. xuán zhī bà yà shōu, yǐ zú gōng fú là. huì yuē zhāng zhì hé, qīng fēng fàn sháo zhà.	This year's weather is excellent, prayers answered by the gods. Though rain may sometimes be scarce, it quickly saturates the earth. Over a thousand miles of fertile land, all rice seedlings are transplanted by April. Midsummer rains last three days, refreshing and cool enough to forget fans. Stagnant water blocks like rivers, released water rushes like gates opening. Mats and seats are filled with frogs, courtyards swim with geese and ducks. Fish can be caught beside the house, seagulls play outside the door. Fireflies revel in their freedom, opening and closing throughout the night. The rustling sounds of reeds and bulrushes resemble boats entering narrow channels. Alas, I too am patient, sitting firm with books piled high on the bed. Knowing well the harvest is assured, it suffices for winter provisions. Meeting Zhang Zhihé, we drift on the clear winds of the River Tiaoxi.

The ripening rice fields of Jiangnan symbolized prosperity across the land. Lu You's poetry frequently depicted scenes of transplanting rice seedlings, as seen in *Heavy Rain*. The line "over a thousand miles of fertile land, all rice seedlings are transplanted by April" clearly illustrates the bustling agricultural activities of the time.

Moreover, Lu You often referenced historical sites in

Shaoxing in his poems, such as Shen Garden. In *Two Poems on Shen Garden (I)*, he writes: "On the city walls, the setting sun casts long shadows, and the sound of horns fills the air in sorrow. Shen Garden is no longer the old pond and terrace. Beneath the heartrending bridge, the spring waves are green, once reflecting the fleeting beauty of a startled swan."

Table 4. Two Poems on Shen Garden (I)

沈园二首 (其一) (陆游) shěn yuán èr shǒu (qí yī) (lù yóu)	<i>Two Poems on Shen Garden (I)</i> By Lu You
城上斜阳画角哀，沈园非复旧池台。 伤心桥下春波绿，曾是惊鸿照影来。 chéng shàng xié yáng huà jiǎo āi, shěn yuán fēi fù jiù chí tái。 shāng xīn qiáo xià chūn bō lǜ, céng shì jīng hóng zhào yǐng lái。	On the city walls, the setting sun casts long shadows, and the sound of horns fills the air in sorrow. Shen Garden is no longer the old pond and terrace. Beneath the heartrending bridge, the spring waves are green, once reflecting the fleeting beauty of a startled swan.

Located within Shaoxing, Shen Garden was where Lu You met his former wife Tang Wan. Through describing the changes in Shen Garden, this poem expresses Lu You's inner pain and nostalgia for past love. As a cultural landmark of Shaoxing, Shen Garden not only carries Lu You's emotional memories but also serves as an important source for his poetic inspiration. This demonstrates how the humanistic landscapes of Shaoxing influenced Lu You's creative output and how his poetry has added unique charm to the city's culture [8].

## 2.2. Lu You's Deep Affection for ZEC and Shaoxing

Lu You's poetry profoundly conveys his deep affection for

the Zhejiang East Canal and Shaoxing. He integrates the landscapes, people, and customs of his hometown into his works, expressing his love and nostalgia for home through every line. For example, in *Autumn Night Thoughts on Wu*, he writes: "On an autumn night, I light a lamp to read the Chuci; the ancients did not deceive me with their words. Even more so by water or climbing mountains, it is as if living afloat, a house on the canal. The wine of Ba cannot dispel the guest's sorrow; only the sorcerers of Shu know when I will return. How many willows are there at the Bridge of Ba? Who thinks of sending a branch to the traveler?"

Table 5. Autumn Night Thoughts on Wu

秋夜怀吴中 (陆游) qiū yè huái wú zhōng (lù yóu)	Autumn Night Thoughts on Wu By Lu You
秋夜挑灯读楚辞，昔人句句不吾欺。更堪临水登山处，正是浮家泛宅时。巴酒不能消客恨，蜀巫空解报归期。灞桥烟柳知何限，谁念行人寄一枝。 qiū yè tiǎo dēng dú chǔ cí, xī rén jù jù bù wú qī。 gèng kān lín shuǐ dēng shān chù, zhèng shì fú jiā fàn zhái shí。 bā jiǔ bù néng xiāo kè hèn, shǔ wū kōng jiě bào guī qī。 bà qiáo yān liǔ zhī hé xiàn, shuí niàn xíng rén jì yì zhī。	On an autumn night, I light a lamp to read the Chuci; the ancients did not deceive me with their words. Even more so by water or climbing mountains, it is as if living afloat, a house on the canal. The wine of Ba cannot dispel the guest's sorrow; only the sorcerers of Shu know when I will return. How many willows are there at the Bridge of Ba? Who thinks of sending a branch to the traveler?

Despite being far from home, Lu You still longs for Wu (the area around Shaoxing). The line "even more so by water or climbing mountains, it is as if living afloat, a house on the canal" vividly depicts scenes from life along the Zhejiang East Canal, revealing his yearning for the lifestyle of his hometown [9].

In *Spring Rain Clears After the First Shower in Lin'an*, Lu You writes: "The tastes of the world have become as thin as silk; who made me ride a horse to the capital? Listening to spring rain all night in a small tower, tomorrow morning apricot blossoms will be sold in deep alleys. On short paper, I idly write grass script; in the sunny window, I playfully divide tea. Do not sigh over dust and wind in plain clothes; the Qingming Festival is yet to come, and I can still return home."

Although this poem describes life in Lin'an (modern-day Hangzhou), the final line "yet to come, and I can still return home" expresses his desire to return to his hometown of

Shaoxing. This longing for home runs throughout Lu You's life, making Shaoxing his eternal haven even when he was far away [10].

Nourished by the waters of Mount Kuaiji and Lake Jian, from the time of Yu the Great's flood control to the abundant cultural influences of the Jin and Tang dynasties, Lu You composed tens of thousands of poems in his lifetime, one-third of which were related to Lake Jian. In his later years, he lived by the lake and its three surrounding mountains. "For fifty years I have resided by Lake Jian," he wrote, declaring, "No need to spend a fortune on paintings; listen to my long song about Lake Jian," expressing his deep affection. This sentiment is also evident in *Early Summer Thoughts on My Hometown Mountain* (初夏怀故山 chū xià huái gù shān): "In April, Lake Jian is clear and harmonious, with white pagodas, red bridges, and small boats passing by (镜湖四月正清

和，白塔红桥小艇过。jìng hú sì yuè zhèng qīng hé, bái tǎ hóng qiáo xiǎo tǐng guò.)” and in *Missing My Hometown Mountain* (思故山 sī gù shān): “The beauty of the lake and

mountains cannot be fully described; let me tell you about my humble abode (湖山奇丽说不尽，且复为子陈吾庐。hú shān qí lì shuō bú jìn, qiě fù wéi zǐ chén wú lú.)”

Table 6. Spring Rain Clears After the First Shower in Lin'an

临安春雨初霁 (陆游) lín ān chūn yǔ chū jì (lù yóu)	Spring Rain Clears After the First Shower in Lin'an By Lu You
<p>世味年来薄似纱，谁令骑马客京华。小楼一夜听春雨，深巷明朝卖杏花。矮纸斜行闲作草，晴窗细乳戏分茶。素衣莫起风尘叹，犹及清明可到家。</p> <p>shì wèi nián lái bó sì shā, shuí lìng qí mǎ kè jīng huá。 xiǎo lóu yí yè tīng chūn yǔ, shēn xiàng míng cháo mài xìng huā。 ǎi zhǐ xié xíng xián zuò cǎo, qíng chuāng xì rǔ xì fēn chá。 sù yī mò qǐ fēng chén tàn, yóu jí qīng míng kě dào jiā。</p>	<p>The tastes of the world have become as thin as silk; who made me ride a horse to the capital? Listening to spring rain all night in a small tower, tomorrow morning apricot blossoms will be sold in deep alleys. On short paper, I idly write grass script; in the sunny window, I playfully divide tea. Do not sigh over dust and wind in plain clothes; the Qingming Festival is yet to come, and I can still return home.</p>

### 2.3. The Significance of Lu You's Poetry in Uncovering, Inheriting, and Promoting Yue Culture

Lu You's poetry is a treasure trove for studying Yue culture. His works contain rich depictions of Yue's local customs, dialects, products, and more, providing invaluable insights into ancient Yue culture. For instance, his references to Shaoxing's wine culture, tea culture, and agricultural practices reflect the social life and cultural characteristics of the region at that time. Through the study of these poems, we can delve deeper into the essence of Yue culture and understand its unique value [11]. As seen in *Village Feast* (村饮 cūn yǐn): “Not visiting the eastern neighbor then the western one, elderly villagers welcome each other with laughter. Trying to recount the pleasant events of old age, pouring village-brewed wine while listening to frogs croak. (不来东舍即西家，野老逢迎一笑哗。试说暮年如意事，细倾村酿听私蛙。bù lái dōng shě jí xī jiā, yě lǎo féng yíng yì xiào huá。 shì shuō mù nián rú yì shì, xì qīng cūn niàng tīng sī wā。)” The term “village wine” refers to homemade wine by villagers, distinct from official brewery wines. This “village wine,” though simple and sometimes sweet-sour, is beloved by farmers, and Lu You himself enjoyed it immensely.

Furthermore, Lu You's poetry has played a crucial role in inheriting Yue culture. With vivid language and sincere emotions, his poems vividly portray the folkways of Yue, allowing future generations to feel the charm of Yue culture. These poems have been widely circulated among the people, becoming important carriers for the inheritance of Yue culture. For example, the famous lines from *A Visit to Shanxi Village*: “Mountains upon mountains, rivers winding as if there is no path, willows dark and flowers bright reveal another village (山重水复疑无路，柳暗花明又一村。shān zhòng shuǐ fù yí wú lù, liǔ àn huā míng yòu yì cūn。),” are not only of high literary value but have also become a cultural memory of Shaoxing's rural scenery and attitudes, passed down from generation to generation [12].

Additionally, Lu You's poetry has significantly contributed to promoting Yue culture internationally. Over time, the influence of his poetry has expanded beyond China's borders. Through the research and dissemination of his works, Yue culture can reach a broader global audience, introducing more

people to its unique allure and fostering cultural exchange and integration [13].

## 3. Lu You's Life Encounters Along ZEC and Related Poetic Narratives Changes in Emotional Landscape

### 3.1. Journey to the Capital for the Imperial Examinations

Lu You was exceptionally intelligent from a young age, diligent in his studies, and harbored lofty ambitions. He traveled along the Zhejiang East Canal to the capital to take the imperial examinations, hoping to enter government service and fulfill his political ideals. During this journey, he experienced the diverse landscapes along the canal and encountered various people and social phenomena, enriching his life experiences [14].

Although there are not many direct accounts of this period in his poetry, later works reveal his youthful aspirations and commitment to serving the state. Influenced by Confucian thought, Lu You yearned to contribute to his country and society. His poems often express concern for the nation's fate and a desire for achievement, as seen in lines like “Riding out to strike the wild barbarians, dismounting to draft military dispatches (上马击狂胡，下马草军书。shàng mǎ jī kuáng hú, xià mǎ cǎo jūn shū。),” which reflect his youthful valor and set the stage for his future choices [15].

### 3.2. Official Career and Resistance Against the Jin

After passing the imperial examinations, Lu You embarked on an official career and actively participated in the resistance against the Jin invaders. He held various positions and remained vigilant about national security and border conflicts. In office, he actively advised and contributed strategies to help the Southern Song court reclaim lost territories [16]. This period saw him create numerous poems related to the anti-Jin cause. For example, in *Book of Frustration* (书愤 shū fèn), he writes: “In my youth, I knew little of the world's hardships; looking north to the Central Plains, my spirit soared like mountains. Ships at night under snow at Guazhou Ferry, iron horses in autumn wind at Dasha Pass. Vainly promising to be the Great Wall of the frontier, my white hair appears early in

the mirror. The memorial for launching an expedition is truly famous in the world; who can match it across a thousand years? (早岁那知世事艰，中原北望气如山。楼船夜雪瓜洲渡，铁马秋风大散关。塞上长城空自许，镜中衰鬓已先斑。出师一表真名世，千载谁堪伯仲间。 zǎo suì nà zhī shì shì jiān, zhōng yuán běi wàng qì rú shān. lóu chuán yè xuě guā zhōu dù, tiě mǎ qiū fēng dà sǎn guān. sài shàng cháng chéng kōng zì xǔ, jìng zhōng shuāi bìn yǐ xiān bān. chū shī yì biǎo zhēn míng shì, qiān zǎi shuí kān bó zhòng jiān.)” This poem reflects on his early anti-Jin efforts and expresses frustration over unfulfilled dreams of reclaiming the Central Plains. The lines “ships at night under snow at Guazhou Ferry, iron horses in autumn wind at Dasha Pass” depict the bravery of Song troops and highlight his deep memories of that era [17].

Moreover, Lu You criticized the Southern Song court’s policy of compromise with the Jin in *The Moon Above Guanshan Mountain* (关山月 guān shān yuè): “For fifteen years since the peace treaty was signed, generals do not fight but only patrol the borders. Aristocratic doors remain closed in revelry, while stabled horses grow fat and bows break. Watchtowers sound the hour as the moon sets, thirty years of military service now turn to white hair. Who knows the hearts of brave soldiers through flutes? Only the bones of soldiers lie exposed on the sandy shores. Wars in the Central Plains have been known since ancient times, how could rebels pass down their descendants? Surviving civilians endure death, hoping for recovery; tonight, tears fall in several places. (和戎诏下十五年，将军不战空临边。朱门沉沉按歌舞，厩马肥死弓断弦。戍楼刁斗催落月，三十从军今白发。笛里谁知壮士心，沙头空照征人骨。中原干戈古亦闻，岂有逆胡传子孙？遗民忍死望恢复，几处今宵垂泪痕。 hé róng zhào xià shí wǔ nián, jiāng jūn bù zhàn kōng lín biān. zhū mén chén chén àn gē wǔ, jiù mǎ féi sǐ gōng duàn xián. shù lóu diāo dòu cuī luò yuè, sān shí cóng jūn jīn bái fà. dí lǐ shuí zhī zhuàng shì xīn, shā tóu kōng zhào zhēng rén gǔ. zhōng yuán gān gē gǔ yì wén, qǐ yǒu nì hú chuán zǐ sūn ? yí mín rěn sǐ wàng huī fù, jǐ chù jīn xiāo chuí lèi hén.)” This poem reveals the harm caused by the court’s peace policy, expresses sympathy for border soldiers and civilians in occupied areas, and conveys his own frustrations of unachieved ambitions [18].

### 3.3. Participation in Military Councils

Lu You served in multiple military councils, gaining deeper insights into military and political affairs. He closely associated with patriotic generals and discussed anti-Jin strategies. During this time, his life was relatively stable, yet he remained deeply concerned about the nation’s future [19]. While in the council, he composed poems reflecting military life and scenes. In *Gold-Inlaid Knife* (金错刀 jīn cuò dāo xíng), he writes: “A gold-inlaid knife with jade embellishments shines through the night window. At fifty, a man has yet to achieve great deeds, holding the knife alone, gazing at the vast horizon. In the capital, I befriended extraordinary men, vowing to share life and death. It would be shameful to leave no name in history; with loyalty, I serve the emperor. Now serving in Tianhan by the river, the morning snow on southern mountains looks like jade peaks. Alas! Even three households in Chu could overthrow Qin; how could a grand China remain empty of heroes!

(黄金错刀白玉装，夜穿窗扉出光芒。丈夫五十功未立，提刀独立顾八荒。京华结交尽奇士，意气相期共生死。千年史册耻无名，一片丹心报天子。尔来从军天汉滨，南山晓雪玉嶙峋。呜呼！楚虽三户能亡秦，岂有堂堂中国空无人！ huáng jīn cuò dāo bái yù zhuāng, yè chuān chuāng fēi chū guāng máng. zhàng fū wǔ shí gōng wèi lì, tí dāo dú lì gù bā huāng. jīng huá jié jiāo jìn qí shì, yì qì xiāng qī gòng shēng sǐ. qiān nián shǐ cè chǐ wú míng, yì piàn dān xīn bào tiān zǐ. ěr lái cóng jūn tiān hàn bīn, nán shān xiǎo xuě yù lín xún. wū hū! chǔ suī sān hù néng wáng qín, qǐ yǒu táng táng zhōng guó kōng wú rén!)” This poem expresses his patriotism and determination to achieve greatness. Lines like “at fifty, a man has yet to achieve great deeds, holding the knife alone, gazing at the vast horizon” convey his midlife reflections on unfulfilled ambitions, while “befriended extraordinary men, vowing to share life and death” portrays camaraderie with fellow patriots [20].

### 3.4. Appointment to Sichuan

Lu You was appointed to serve in Sichuan, an experience that significantly influenced his life and literary creation. The landscapes and culture of Sichuan differed greatly from his hometown of Shaoxing, providing new inspiration for his poetry. In late 1170, he sailed along the canal to Kuizhou to assume his post. Over the next five months, he recorded his observations and impressions in *Records of Entering Sichuan* (入蜀记 rù shǔ jì). In Sichuan, he held multiple positions and continued to serve diligently [21].

During his travels and residence in Sichuan, Lu You wrote extensively. In *Encountering Light Rain on the Way to Jiamen Pass* (剑门道中遇微雨 jiàn mén dào zhōng yù wēi yǔ), he writes: “Travel dust and wine stains mingle on my clothes, far from home, every place brings sorrow. Am I destined to be a poet? Riding a donkey in the drizzle, entering Jiamen Pass. (衣上征尘杂酒痕，远游无处不消魂。此身合是诗人未？细雨骑驴入剑门。 yī shàng zhēng chén zá jiǔ hén, yuǎn yóu wú chù bù xiāo hún. cǐ shēn hé shì shī rén wèi? xì yǔ qí lú rù jiàn mén.)” This poem captures his journey, highlighting the hardships and complex emotions of travel, as well as his contemplation of his identity as a poet [22].

In Sichuan, he also composed poems depicting local scenery and life. For instance, in *A Visit to Chengdu* (成都行 chéng dū xíng), he writes: “Leaning on a brocade zither, striking a jade pot, a mad scholar from Wu visits Chengdu. Ten thousand peach blossoms in Chengdu, unmatched in splendor. Mounted on a white horse with golden reins, evening sends me chasing after famous beauties. Rouge fades to reveal jade skin, green hair half undone, charming without combing. Writing letters on Wu silk for guests, small characters densely written; ink flows gracefully, neither dry nor thin, each stroke unique. Moonlight soaks through silk robes during clear nights, flower shadows cover me as I drink until supported by others. Joy brought from the east falls into emptiness, sitting alone, mourning new frost on my temples. Easy to find pearls in Hepu, hard to catch two carp in the Jinjiang River. (倚锦瑟，击玉壶，吴中狂士游成都。成都海棠十万株，繁华盛丽天下无。青丝金络白雪驹，日斜驰遣迎名姝。燕脂褪尽见玉肤，绿鬓半脱娇不梳。吴绫便面对客书，斜行小草密复疏；墨君秀润瘦不枯，风枝雨叶笔笔殊。月浸罗毅清夜徂，满身花影醉索扶。东来此欢堕空虚，坐悲新霜点鬓须。易求合浦千斛珠，

难觅锦江双鲤鱼。yǐ jīn sè, jī yù hú, wú zhōng kuáng shì yóu chéng dū。chéng dū hǎi táng shí wàn zhū, fán huá shèng lì tiān xià wú。qīng sī jīn luò bái xuě jū, rì xié chí qiǎn yíng míng shū。yàn zhī tuì jìn jiàn yù fū, lǚ huán bàn tuō jiāo bù shū。wú líng biàn miàn duì kè shū, xié xíng xiǎo cǎo mì fù shū ; mò jūn xiù rùn shòu bù kū, fēng zhī yǔ yè bǐ bǐ shū。yuè jìn luò hú qīng yè cú, mǎn shēn huā yǐng zuì suǒ fú。dōng lái cǐ huān duò kōng xū, zuò bēi xīn shuāng diǎn bìn xū。yì qiú hé pǔ qiān hú zhū, nán mì jīn jiāng shuāng lǐ yú。)” This poem vividly portrays Chengdu’s opulence and unique cultural atmosphere, showcasing Lu You’s appreciation for Sichuan and love for life [23].

### 3.5. Dismissal from Office and Return Home

Due to political reasons, Lu You was dismissed from office multiple times. Upon returning home, he settled back in Shaoxing along the Zhejiang East Canal, leading a reclusive life. Despite the setbacks in his career, his love for life and passion for poetry never waned [24]. During this period, he produced a large volume of poetry reflecting his secluded life and inner world. For example, in *Secluded Living in Early Summer* (幽居初夏 yōu jū chū xià), he writes: “At the finest spot by lake and mountain lives Old Man Fangwēng, paths slant through willows and locust trees. Sometimes watching egrets by the water, nowhere without frogs croaking among thick grass. Bamboo shoots have already passed their first sprout, the wood sorrel still blooms its first flower. Sighing that old age sees friends depart, who shares tea with me at noon? (湖山胜处放翁家, 槐柳阴中野径斜。水满有时观下鹭, 草深无处不鸣蛙。箛龙已过头番笋, 木笔犹开第一花。叹息老来交旧尽, 睡来谁共午瓯茶。)” This poem depicts the tranquil beauty of early summer at his home in Shaoxing, with lines like “sometimes watching egrets by the water, nowhere without frogs croaking among thick grass” illustrating the peaceful rural life. It also conveys his feelings of loneliness due to aging and the departure of old friends [25].

## 4. Lu You’s Inner Thoughts and Emotions in His Later Years After Returning to His Hometown

### 4.1. Enjoyment and Reflections on a Leisurely Life

In his later years, after returning to his hometown, Lu You led a leisurely rural life. His poetry vividly depicts his daily activities such as reading, drinking wine, and taking walks, showcasing his enjoyment of this tranquil lifestyle. For example, in *Reading Books* (读书 dú shū), he writes: “Though I may not have five acres of land, my heart returns there; the purpose of reading is for the common people. Though my eyesight by lamplight is not what it once was, I still read twenty thousand fine characters. (归志宁无五亩园, 读书本意在元元。灯前目力虽非昔, 犹课蝇头二万言。guī zhì níng wú wǔ mǔ yuán, dú shū běn yì zài yuán yuán。dēng qián mù lì suī fēi xī, yóu kè yíng tóu èr wàn

yán。)” This poem expresses his continued dedication to reading despite his advanced age, with the goal of caring for the people. The line “though I may not have five acres of land, my heart returns there” reflects his contentment with the pastoral life in his hometown [26].

However, while enjoying this peaceful life, Lu You also laments the passage of time and his own aging. In *Instructions to My Son* (示儿 shì ér), he writes: “Knowing well that all things end with death, I grieve only that I will not see the unification of the nine provinces. When the imperial army secures the Central Plains, do not forget to inform your father during the family sacrifice. (死去元知万事空, 但悲不见九州同。王师北定中原日, 家祭无忘告乃翁。sǐ qù yuán zhī wàn shì kōng, dàn bēi bú jiàn jiǔ zhōu tóng。wáng shī běi dìng zhōng yuán rì, jiā jì wú wàng gào nǎi wēng。)” Written as his final testament, this poem conveys his lifelong desire to witness national unity, a wish that remained unfulfilled even in his twilight years.

## 5. Lu You’s Connection with the Zhejiang East Canal and Shaoxing City, and Their Significance

Lu You was born in Shaoxing and, from an early age, was deeply influenced by the rich cultural heritage of the region, laying the foundation for his future as a distinguished poet. His life was intricately intertwined with the Zhejiang East Canal and Shaoxing City, each shaping and enhancing the other. The gentle waters of the canal and the profound culture of Shaoxing not only formed the backdrop of his life but also provided an inexhaustible source of inspiration for his poetry. His footsteps traced along the canal, leading him from his hometown to broader horizons, and then back home after navigating the ups and downs of officialdom. The canal was not only a crucial travel route but also an integral part of his life, with its bustling scenes and local customs serving as inspiration for his poetic works.

During his rural retreat, Lu You used his delicate brushstrokes to depict the landscapes and folkways of his hometown, expressing deep love and nostalgia for his roots. Whether recounting his ambitions in traveling to the capital for examinations, his fervor in resisting the Jin invaders, strategic planning in military councils, or explorations in Sichuan, all these experiences were recorded in poetry, becoming vivid annotations of his life and times. Even after being dismissed from office and returning home, his passion for creation did not wane, and his later leisurely life and inner reflections are fully captured in his poetry. Poems like *A Journey to Mount Kuaiji* and *A Visit to Shanxi Village* vividly portray the natural beauty and abundant resources of the Shaoxing area, reflecting his love for his hometown. Even when far from home, Lu You expressed deep longing for his homeland through poetry, as seen in *Autumn Night Thoughts on Wu* and *Spring Rain Clears After the First Shower in Lin’an*. His poetry not only conveys personal emotions but also carries the unique charm of Yue culture, providing valuable insights into the social landscape of ancient Yue.

Lu You’s poetry serves as both an expression of personal sentiment and a treasure trove for the inheritance and promotion of Yue culture. The rich elements of Yue culture embedded in his works offer glimpses into the social and cultural characteristics of ancient Yue, playing an irreplaceable role in cultural preservation. Over time, the

influence of his poetry has expanded, laying the groundwork for Yue culture to reach a broader global audience. His poems vividly depict the customs and sentiments of Yue, ensuring their transmission through generations. For instance, the famous lines from *A Visit to Shanxi Village*: “Mountains upon mountains, rivers winding as if there is no path, willows dark and flowers bright reveal another village,” have become a cultural memory of the rural scenery of Shaoxing.

## 6. Conclusion

Lu You’s career experienced multiple ups and downs, including key phases such as traveling to the capital for examinations, serving in official positions while resisting the Jin, participating in military councils, and being appointed to serve in Sichuan. Throughout each period, he documented his life experiences and inner feelings through poetry, creating important historical records for studying his evolving thoughts. In his later years, after retiring from office and returning to his hometown, Lu You embraced a leisurely rural life but never lost his concern for the nation's fate or his passion for poetry. In his final poem *Instructions to My Son*, Lu You expressed his yearning for national unity, embodying his lifelong patriotic spirit.

In summary, Lu You’s connection with the Zhejiang East Canal and Shaoxing City enriched his literary creations and significantly contributed to the inheritance and development of Yue culture. Today, we should value Lu You’s poetic legacy, delve into its cultural significance, and allow his spirit and the charm of Yue culture to continue thriving in the new era, promoting cultural exchange and prosperity. By re-examining Lu You’s relationship with the canal and Shaoxing, we can draw wisdom and strength from his life journey and appreciate the value of his poetry in cultural inheritance and development. Moreover, the growing international influence of Lu You’s poetry promotes the global spread of Yue culture, fostering cultural exchange and integration.

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