**FORGOTTEN CHINESE MYTHOLOGIES**

**By**

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**ABSTRACT**

Mythology has played an integral part in almost every civilization throughout the world. Prehistoric cave paintings, etchings in stone, tombs, and monuments all suggest that, long before human beings set down their myths in words, they had already developed a belief structure. According to psychiatrist Carl Jung, “Myth is a necessary aspect of the human psyche which needs to find meaning and order in the world.”

My project is to redesign and visualize text-based Chinese mythological characters into animated 3D models, in order to expose lesser known Chinese mythologies to young people. The goal of my project is to preserve and convey the story of the ancient myths in the hope to ignite young people’s curiosity and interest in myth and bring awareness and sustainability in forgotten mythologies. My project includes three components: translation of ancient mythologies, the re-imagination and visualization of mythological characters and an audience engagement platform. The first component of ancient mythologies contains the original text record of the character and its text translation for contemporary audiences. The second component of visualization contains character design, 3D modeling and an animation.

I chose the animated 3D model as my medium because I believe it allows more interaction between the work and the audience. It can show different angles of the model by

the audience's will. In the future application, these 3D models can be used in film, games and VR.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**CHAPTER 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND**

Myths as part of history are an indispensable reference for studying the past. Knowing history allows us to understand our present and our future. Also, myths are a very important artistic creation, they are powerful, symbolic stories that all humans use to interpret the world they live in. Anthropologist Bruce Lincoln defines myth as "ideology in narrative form." Folklorist Alan Dundes defines myth as a sacred narrative that explains how the world and humanity evolved into their present form.

*"A story that serves to define the fundamental worldview of a culture by explaining aspects of the natural world and delineating the psychological and social practices and ideals of a society. "-- Alan Dundes*

Myths not only explore the boundaries between the natural and the supernatural, life and death, right and wrong but they also have a strong aesthetic and cognitive value. They are an indispensable reference for studying and understanding the past. Also, they are a great reference and a source of inspiration as they trigger people's imagination and fascination.

*"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution." --Albert Einstein, What Life Means to Einstein (1924)*

There are many ancient civilizations in the world, such as China, Greece, Egypt, India, etc. In their long history there are abundant myths and legends. China is one of the oldest living civilizations with 3500 years of written history, so there are many complex and diverse

mythologies. These mythology creatures have been a great inspiration in the entertainment industry now. However, compared to the great amount of Chinese mythology, there is only a small percentage of mythology that has been exposed. There are many other not well known or lesser known characters in mythologies, and there are only text descriptions of what these creatures look like. Because of social reform, the age and disconnection from the times, records and texts of mythologies have been lost, and the remaining ancient mythologies mere fragments. Un-like western mythologies with their continuous lineage. Also, all the remaining records and texts were written in ancient Chinese, so it is difficult and time consuming for contemporary audiences to understand the context just by reading the ancient words. Finally, our modern-day faith is that globalization is an overwhelming world trend, and digital technology is driving globalization while eroding national differences in daily life. Therefore, many profound histories contained in the myths and ancient legends are not well known, and are even facing the risk of being lost and forgotten forever by the younger generation.

The objective of my project is to convey and preserve ancient cultural creations by visualizing text-based mythological creatures as animated 3D models, therefore exposing not well known mythological creatures to young people, in the hope of sparking people's curiosity and interest in myths and bring awareness and sustainability to forgotten Chinese mythologies.

My project specifically explores in what ways mythological creatures embody and convey the story of the ancient myths and how to translate these narratives to contemporary audiences.

## CHAPTER 2: PROJECT OVERVIEW

There are 3 components in this project: text translation, visualization, and platform. The first component contains the ancient text record of mythological characters and its text translation for contemporary audiences. This mainly solves the problem of ancient text being hard to read for contemporary audiences.

In the second component (visualization), I will be using time-based media to visualize these text-based creatures, because compared with texts and illustrations, time-based media has duration as a dimension and unfolds to the viewer over time. I will present my characters through animated storyboards with audio.

My third component is a platform proposal for audience engagement. According to statistics on StatCounter GlobalStats(see Figure1.1, 1.2, 1.3), we can see the mobile market share today is greater than desktop market share, which means the number of mobile users today is greater than the number of desktop users. Therefore, the platform for this project I am proposing is a mobile app.

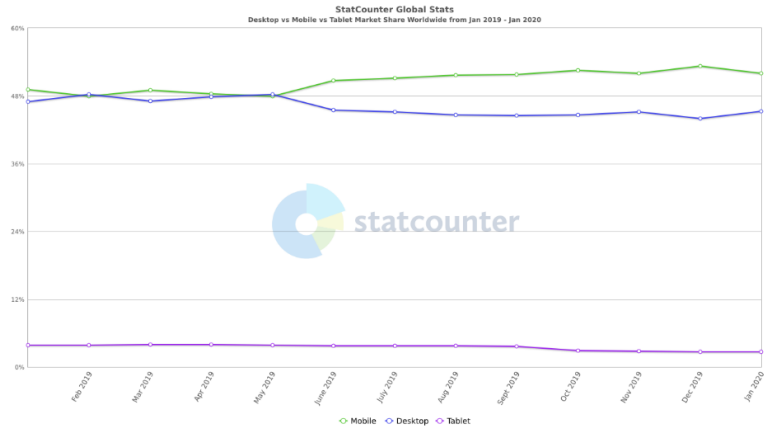



*Figure1.1* *Desktop vs Mobile vs Tablet Market Share, worldwide, from Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2020.*

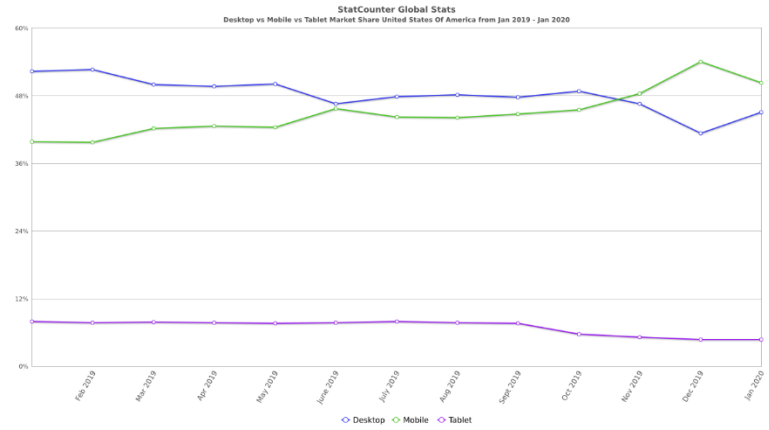



*Figure 1.2* *Desktop vs Mobile vs Tablet Market Share, U.S., from Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2020.*

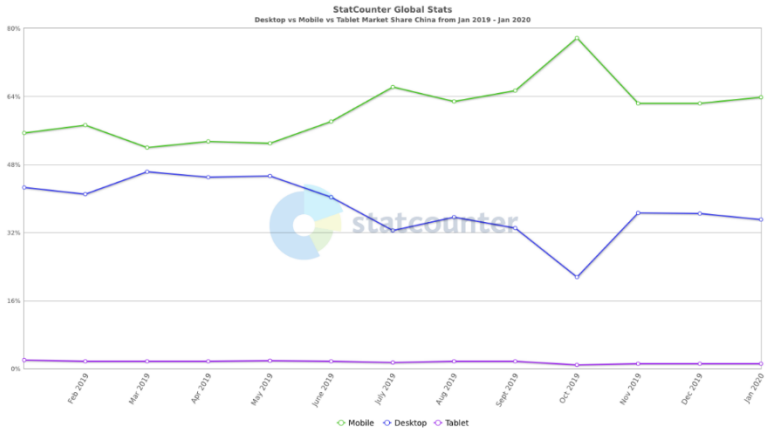



*Figure 1.3* *Desktop vs Mobile vs Tablet Market Share, China, from Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2020.*

**2.1 Historical references: The Classic of Mountains and Seas**

In this project, I used a book called *Shan Hai Jing* or *the Classic of Mountains and Seas (* perhaps more correctly *Guideways through Mountains and Seas)* as my main reference to create my character, and *Huainanzi, Historical Records, Book of Rites* as my supportive text. *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* is a largely fabulous geographical and cultural account of pre-Qin China as well as a collection of Chinese mythology. It's the most complete mythological text record that has been passed down to today. The earliest version of Classic of Mountains and Seas we can find today has existed as early as the 4th century BC and was compiled by Guo Pu ("山海经-中国志怪古籍"). The book is divided into eighteen sections; it describes over 550 mountains and 300 channels. However, it is not a narrative, as the "plot" involves detailed descriptions of locations in the cardinal directions of the Mountains, Regions Beyond Seas, Regions Within Seas, and Wilderness. The descriptions contain historical characters, mythical creatures, medicines, animals, sacrifices, metaphysics and geological features etc. Many descriptions are very mundane, and an equal number are fanciful or strange. Each chapter follows roughly the same formula, and the whole book is repetitious in this way. It contains many short myths, and most rarely exceed a paragraph.

It is said the illustrations in The Classic of Mountains and Seas is the essence of this book, but those illustrations were later lost. The earliest, most widely known illustrations we can find today are from the Ming dynasty artists, Hu Wenhuan and Jiang Yingwei. These drawings are rough and simple, they give indications of how ancient ancestors saw these

mythical creatures but do not visualize the appearance of the creatures well. However, we can't think of this form as characteristic of mature cultures, which knows the world around them, whose order they have recognized and defined. Instead, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* seem to be a typical representation of the primitive cultures, as the imprecise image of the universe limited people to listing as many properties as they can name without trying to establish a hierarchical relationship among them. Many historians use this text as an indispensable reference and archeological evidence for studying and understanding the ancient world. For instance, Shengsheng (see Figure 2), the first creature to appear in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, is described as "he looks like a macaque, but has a pair of white ears, sometimes crawling on the ground, sometimes walking upright like a human. If anyone eats his flesh, he can run fast." According to today's Interpretation, it could be the orangutan we are talking about today, not a monster.

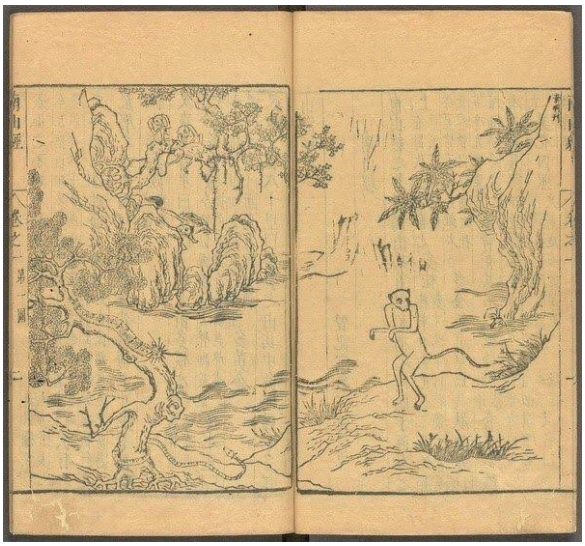


*Figure 2 Sheng Sheng, illustrated by Jiang Yingwei, Ming dynasty.*

However not all the creatures in The Classic of Mountains and Seas can be verified today. More often the creatures in the text are mysterious and strange beasts.

The first time I heard of this book was because of some famous ancient Chinese myths, such as the Jingwei reclamation, Kuafu Chased the Sun, Yu the Great, and etc. It seems that the awareness of mythologies for every Chinese child comes from The Classic of Mountains and Seas. In fact, this book's influence on us is far more than awareness. I found that most of the Chinese fantasy literature and filmography we see today was influenced by The *Classic Mountains and Seas* and use it as the creative source for their works. For example, the nine-tailed fox or fox spirit. It is a mythical creature that first occurs in The *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (see Figure 3): "Three hundred li farther east is Green-Hills Mountain, where much jade can be found on its south slope and green cinnabar on its north. There is a beast here whose form resembles a fox with nine tails. It makes a sound like a baby and is a man-eater. Whoever eats it will be protected against insect-poison (Liu Xiang and Liu Xin 8)." In today's popular culture, nine-tailed foxes are depicted as a familiar spirit possessed of magic powers. These foxes are depicted as mischievous, usually tricking other people, with the ability to disguise themselves as a beautiful woman or man. In the TV series Eternal Love(see Figure 4) the female protagonist is a nine-tailed fox and lives in the Green-


*Figure 3 Nine-tailed fox illustrated by Hu Wenhuan, Ming dynasty.*

*Figure 4 Nine-tailed fox screen capture from TV series Eternal Love.*

Hills Mountain fox tribe. In the video game League of Legends, the champion Ahri is also a nine-tailed fox(see Figure 5). In the animation Love, Death & Robots episode, Good Hunting is an animated version of the myth regarding the nine-tailed fox(see Figure 6).

*Figure 5 Ahri from League of Legends.*

*Figure 6 Fox spirit in Good Hunting, from animation: Love, Death & Robots.*

This book is like a fantasy treasure trove, giving creators a steady stream of inspiration. As mythological literature, *Classic of Mountains and Seas* not only left a reliable text of the relationship between the physical world and mythical world, it preserves a vast number of primitive items with cultural information, and potential mythological value. Hence, I had great interest in this book which is certainly worth exploring.

However, while reading the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* I encountered great difficulties. One of the biggest difficulties is the original text was written in ancient Chinese, so I had to read the text translation to understand the context. Another difficulty was it is time consuming and a little boring to read all the text because there is no “plot” in this book. Also,

because most of the illustrations are rough and simple without coloring, it is not exciting for readers to see those creatures in visuals.

The versions I am using are a 2003 version by Xiang Liu and Xin Liu (see figure 7.1) and a 2018 version by Ze Shan and Chao Liang (see figure 7.2). The 2003 version has collections of the earliest illustrations, which are simple sketches without any color, and the 2018 version has the most recent illustrations with colors.

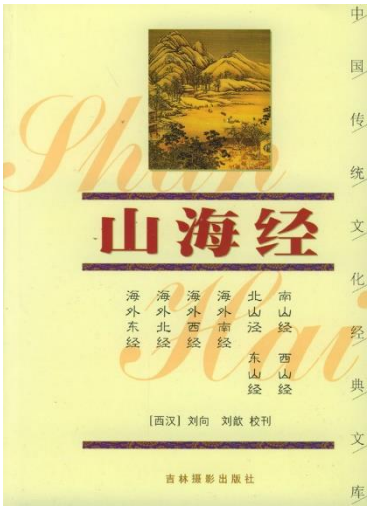



*Figure 7.1* *2003 Version Shan Hai Jing by Liu, Xiang and Liu, Xin, and illustrations examples.*

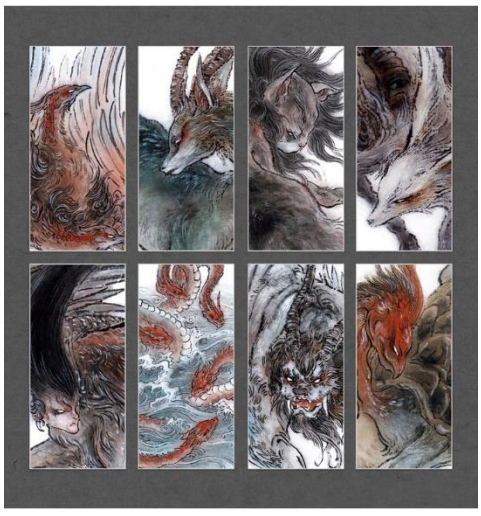



*Figure 7.2* *2018 Version the Classic of Mountains and Rivers by Shan, ze and Liang, Chao and illustrations examples.*

## 2.2 Contemporary references

### Medium example

Phoenix bird (see figure 8) is a contemporary interactive 3D model animation loop created by artist Norberto Aguilera and it informs how my character will be presented. Audience members can click and drag the model to view from different angles and see the animation played in different positions. Because the audience can drag and rotate the character to different angles, it also integrates sound in the medium. Once the window is open, the flying animation auto play is activated. These animations are supported with the FBX, glTF and Blender file formats. FBX is one of the best-known formats for animated 3D models and most software can export to it.

*Figure 8 Phoenix bird animated interactive 3D model by Norberto Aguilera.*

I am using this animated model as my medium in my project because this medium integrates three parts: character design, 3D model and animation. It can demonstrate characters from all angles, and by using FBX format, the audience can drag and rotate the model, which provides audiences a better visual understanding of the character design. Also, narrative storytelling is presented by animating the model. It breaks the language boundaries, because it doesn't require the audience to know a certain language to understand this creature.

**Interface example**

In the video game League of Legends, each champion in the game has a profile description on the web, as for example Heimerdinger, the Revered Inventor (see figure 9). This web page contains three sections, the top section is Heimerdinger's profile picture and his information described in text, as well as his background story. The next section is a gallery for various skin designs of Heimerdinger. The third section contains multiple animation videos and text description showing users how to play and control Heimerdinger's ability.

The combination of text, illustrations and videos informs my platform interface. Since my project is constituted by three components; the story, visualization and audience engagement, I will have a similar medium combination as the webpage.

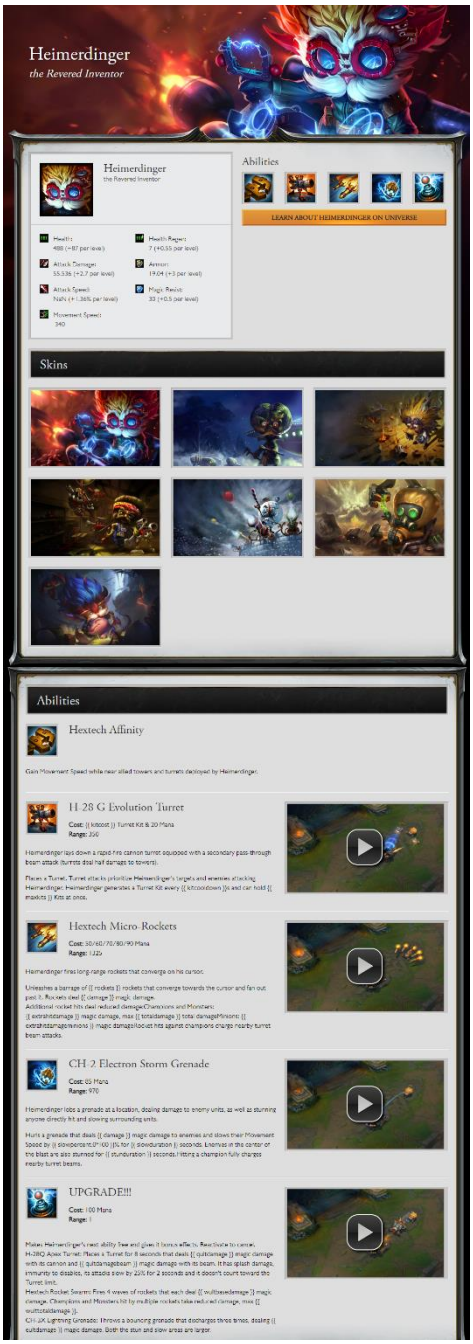



*Figure 9 Heimerdinger webpage interface.*

**2.3 Theoretical framework**

**Remediation**

A theory underpinning my project is the Remediation Theory from J. David Bolter and Richard A. Grusin's book Remediation: *Understanding New Media*.

In *Immediacy, Hypermediacy, and Remediation,* Bolter and Grusin focus on three different topics, each of which involves how media is portrayed, represented, and presented. Immediacy is our need to have media that reflects our reality as close as possible. Hypermediacy can be defined simply as multiple forms of media combined in a viewing experience. Remediation focuses on the incorporation or representation of one medium in another medium. Remediation is a defining characteristic of new digital media because digital media is constantly remediating its predecessors. In other words, reformatting the medium (eliminating the interface which lends to a distorted perception of the thing) can affect people's point of view.

This theory is fundamentally comparative and assumes that media does not possess autonomous formal or technical specificity, but it exists only in relation to other media forms and practices. Remediation may or may not present a connection to the original source. The theory also argues that new media does not present a historical break or rupture with the past, but rather it defines their newness through the refashioning of present media forms. Bolter and Grusin also argue that new visual media achieve cultural significance by refashioning earlier media. According to them, remediation operates in two directions: older media tries to appropriate and refashion digital media and digital media tries to refashion older media. Bolter explains in his article 'Remediation and the Desire for Immediacy' that new media are best understood by examining the way in which they remediate older forms.

The objective of my project is to convey and preserve forgotten mythology to contemporary audiences by redesigning text-based medium into animations. Because the mythologies' text record considered as the original media were written in old Chinese, it is hard for people today to understand it, therefore it is necessary to translate old Chinese into modern language. However, translating the ancient text is not enough to gather audiences. Text medium requires high participation from readers, which means the same written story can be interpreted in many ways depending on the reader's point of view. Therefore, by reformatting text based into illustrations and animations, the creativity happens. We can give the audience a better visualization of the character and artist creation. In terms of targeting the audience, and compared to text medium, animations don't require readers to know a certain language and therefore are better suited to a mass audience.

**Symbolic Interactionism**

One of the major components in my project is the visualization of mythological creatures, and my character design decisions are supported by symbolic interactionism theory. In Wikipedia's definition, "Symbolic interactionism is a sociological theory developed from practical considerations and alludes to people's particular utilization of a dialect to make images and normal implications, for deduction and correspondence with others." In other words, it is a frame of reference to better understand how individuals interact with one another to create symbolic worlds, and in return, how these worlds shape individual behaviors. Symbolic interactionism is a framework that helps to understand how society is preserved and created

through repeated interactions between individuals. The interpretation process that occurs between interactions helps to create and recreate meaning. It is the shared understanding and interpretations of meaning that affect the interaction between individuals. Individuals act on the premise of a shared understanding of meaning within their social context. Thus, interaction and behavior are framed through the shared meaning that objects and concepts have attached to them.

Symbolism is the practice or art of using an object or a word to represent an abstract idea. An action, person, place, word, or object can all have a symbolic meaning. Instead of objectivity, symbolism prefers subjectivity, using a strong and powerful symbol to imply various ideas to audiences. The specific implementation will be discussed in my character design process in the next chapter.

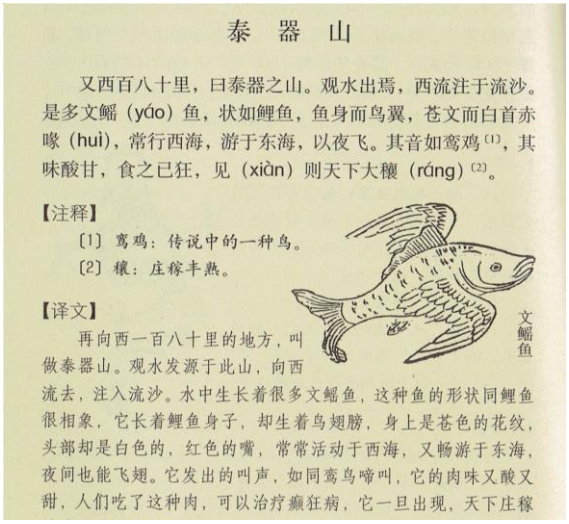
## CHAPTER 3: DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The numbers of characters I am creating in this project could be countless, however creating one well defined character will be enough to show the idea. Then the rest of the characters created are just a matter of repeating the same techniques. The tools I am using in my development are Photoshop, Maya and Premiere. Techniques include character design, storyboard, 3D modeling, animation and UI.

### 3.1 1st character - Wenyao fish

The first character I am creating is a flying fish called Wenyao. It is a kind of flying fish which is a sign of bumper harvests. The text indicates that Wenyao fish have the appearance like a carp, with fish body and bird wings, dark pattern marks, with white heads and a red mouth. They are commonly found flying at night and make a sound like a phoenix-bird and can cure madness. They are a sign of bumper harvests(Liu Xiang and Liu Xin 42).

Figure 10 is the original text description from the Classic of Mountains and Seas in chapter Classic of the Mountains: West, and my translation to English is: “Traveling west for another hundred and eighty li, there is Taiqi Mountain. The Gaze River is also here, which pours down into the flowing sands. There are many Wenyao fish, which have the appearance like a carp, with the body of a


秦 器 山

又西百八十里，曰泰器之山。观水出焉，西流注于流沙。是多文鳐（yáo）鱼，状如鲤鱼，鱼身而鸟翼，苍文而白首赤喙（huì），常行西海，游于东海，以夜飞。其音如鸾鸡[1]，其味酸甘，食之已狂，见（xiàn）则天下大穰（ráng）[2]。

【注释】

〔1〕鸾鸡：传说中的一种鸟。

〔2〕穰：庄稼丰熟。

【译文】

再向西一百八十里的地方，叫做泰器山。观水发源于此山，向西流去，注入流沙。水中生长着很多文鳐鱼，这种鱼的形状同鲤鱼很相象，它长着鲤鱼身子，却生着鸟翅膀，身上是苍色的花纹，头部却是白色的，红色的嘴，常常活动于西海，又畅游于东海，夜间也能飞翔。它发出的叫声，如同鸾鸟啼叫，它的肉味又酸又甜，人们吃了这种肉，可以治疗癫狂病，它一旦出现，天下庄稼

文鳐鱼

*Figure 10 Wenyao fish description from Shan Hai Jing by Liu Xiang and Liu Xin.*

fish and the wings of a bird, dark pattern marks, white heads, and a red mouth. Thus, they are commonly found traveling in the Western Sea and swimming in the Eastern Sea, by means of flying at night. They make a sound like the phoenix-bird, and their flavor is both sour and sweet. The meat can cure madness when eaten, and when they are seen they portend great bumper harvests in all the lands beneath heaven."

I also found another source reference describing Wenyao fish in Shan Ze and Liang Chao's The Classic of Mountains and Rivers. It said, there is a story about Wenyao fish in the Maps of Xi Zhou(see Figure 11). My English translation: "It is said that there is a large stream under the Red Ridge in Xi Zhou. The local people want to build a dam in Red Ridge. Wenyao must fly from Red Ridge in the middle of the night. People were catching fish by net, and when the Wenyao flew over, some of them passed through the net, but many of them did not pass through the net, and they became stones. Even today, when it rains, those stones will turn red, and Red Ridge is named after it (Shan and Liang, 56)." There is also a fun fact about Wenyao fish indicated on the same page, Wenyao was one of the Fuwa design archetypes in the mascots of the 2008 Summer

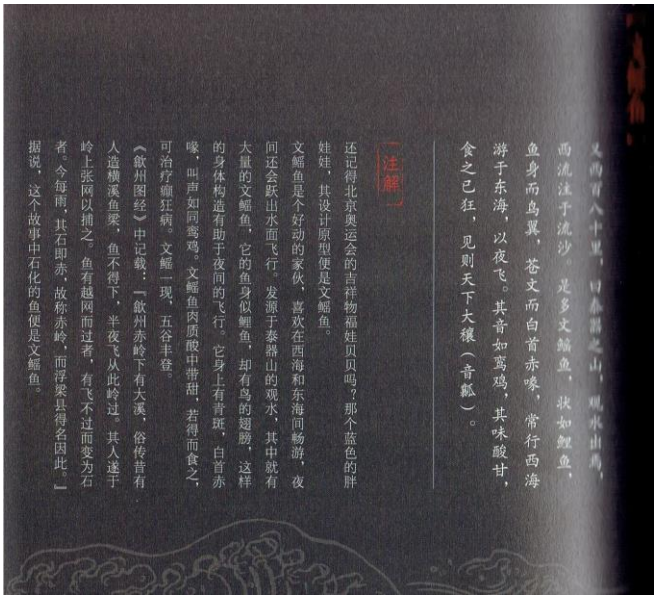



*Figure 11 Story about Wenyao fish in the Maps of Xi Zhou from The Classic of Mountains and Rivers by Shan, ze and Liang, Chao.*

Olympics in Beijing called Beibei (Shan and Liang, 56). Beibei represented the ideal of prosperity. In this design, Beibei was designed in blue to convey water elements.

Besides the above sources, there are many other sources online about Wenyao fish. Therefore, according to the sources, I wrote Wenyao's profile: This character is a kind of flying fish, it can bring harvest and represent the ideal of prosperity. It has the appearance like a carp with approximately 30cm body length, dark pattern marks, white heads and a red mouth. It is a friendly character and sounds like a phoenix-bird, it is afraid of lights, so they only fly at night. When it sees lights, it will turn into a red stone.

An interesting coincidence: we can indeed find a similar fish in real life today, named: Sailfin flying fish.

**3.2 Character Design process**

My character design process includes sketch, color, texture, and background painting, all done in Photoshop. I started my design by looking at some precedents and seeing how other people have visualized this creature. (See Figure 12) These images are precedence designs of the same character I was going to create. They are earlier illustrations of Wenyao. They informed me of the overall look of this character. Through their designs, we can easily see this creature is a flying fish.


*Figure 12 Precedence designs of Wenyao, from left to right: illustration in Shan Hai Jing by Liu Xiang and Liu Xin; illustration in The Classic of Mountains and Rivers by Shan, ze and Liang, Chao; illustration found in Sina Blog named "Shan Hai Jing Continues"(in Chinese"再续《山海经》"); illustration by Shen, Xin.*

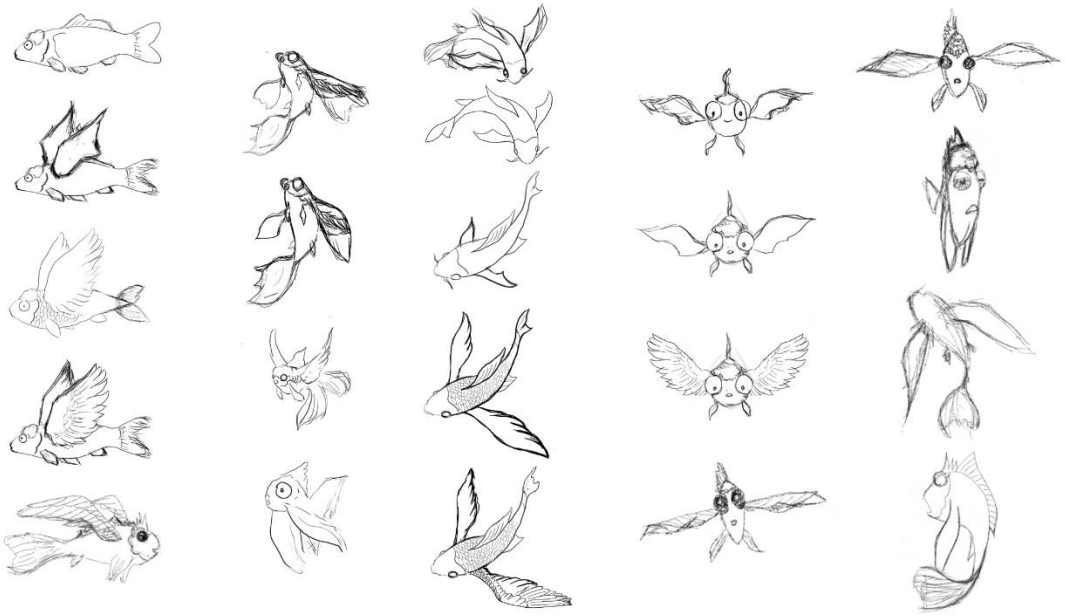


*Figure 13 My character design process sketches.*

According to the text, "they have the appearance like carp", I sketched out three shapes of carp; the common carp, koi fish, and goldfish which is also a relative of the carp family (see Figure 13). I decided to use Koi fish as the shape design, according to the symbolic interactionism theory. In traditional Chinese culture, Koi symbolizes good fortune, success, prosperity, courage, and they also are associated with perseverance in adversity and strength of

purpose. Since Wenyao fish is a sign of good harvest, and it represents prosperity, the use of Koi shape communicates the ideal of Wenyao as a good character and can bring good fortune to people.

I also sketched some different wing shapes( Figure 14). Based on a handout by The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, there are four general wing shapes that are common in birds: Passive soaring, active soaring, elliptical wings, and high-speed wings(*"Birds and their Wing Shapes"*). According to the paper, long and narrow wings are well-adapted for the strong, constant winds over parts of the ocean. Its up-and-down flight style allows it to use small differences in wind speed to go long distances without using a lot of energy. Since Wenyao is a creature who can fly in the sky and move fast, the wing shape will be designed as long and narrow.

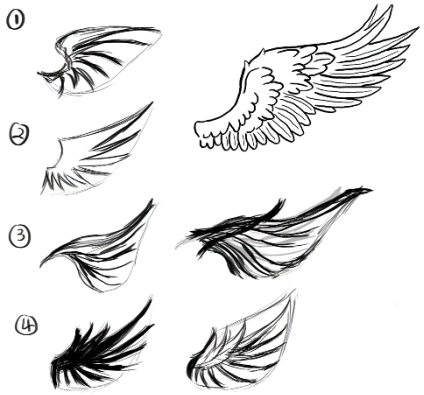



*Figure 14 Wing sketches.*

The text also said that Wenyao "make a sound like phoenix-bird", so to convey it, I added phoenix-bird crest in the visual, as well as an audio to translate the text (see Audio 1). I sketched different crest looks. In Figure 15, I used celosia as my shape reference. My final choice is using a wheat shape crest to imply the idea of harvest. Figure 16 are my colorized environment drawings, which is an under-moonlight sea scene, indicating this creature flies at night.

*Figure 15 Wenyao design versions.*

*Figure 16 environment drawing, night background.*

### 3.3 Storyboard

To show the unique qualities and the story of this character, I created a storyboard (see figure 17) and an animated storyboard(see video 1) to tell the narrative. I also added sound effects to create an environmental atmosphere. Audio 2 is an underwater sound effect, where I integrated this sound when the character swims underwater; Audio 3 is a sea wave sound, and Audio 4 is background music for my animation.

I also gave an option of voice over explanation in the storyboard to better help the viewer to understand the unique character features.

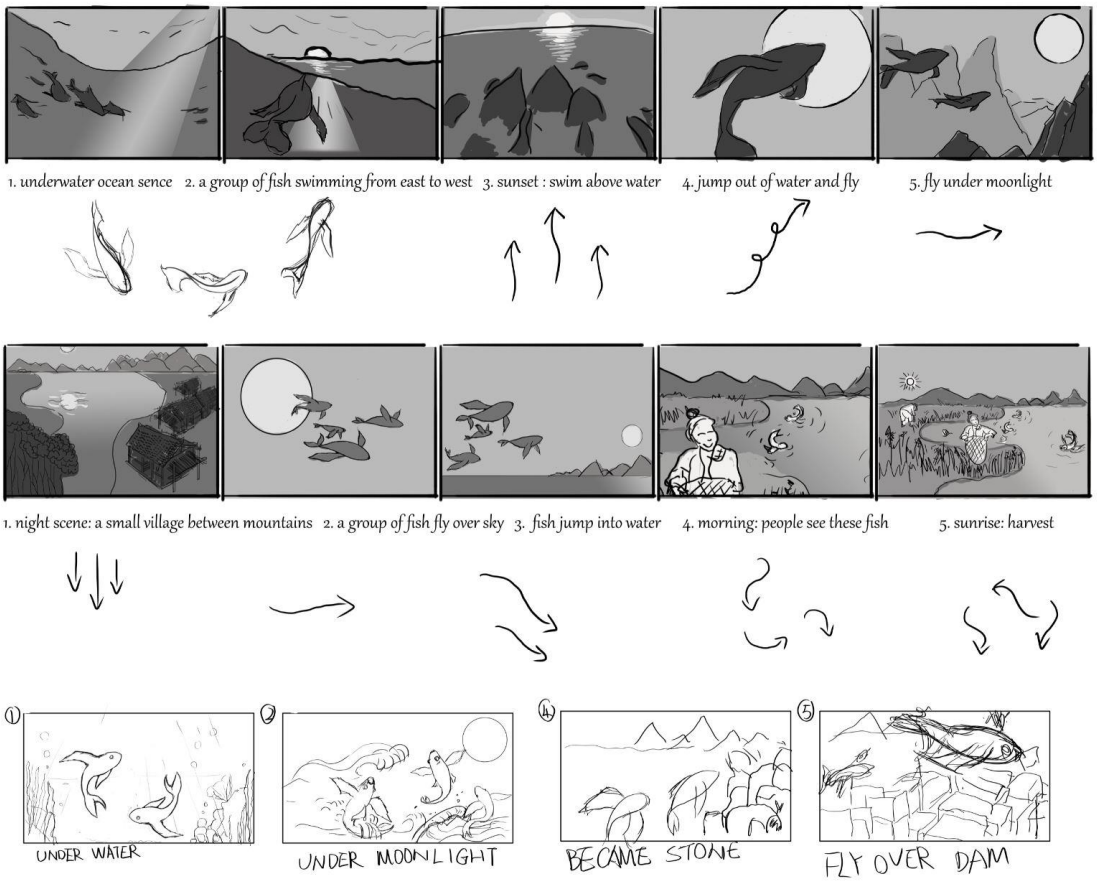



*Figure 17 Storyboard.*

### 3.4 3D modeling & animation

Once I had my character design and storyboard, I started making them 3D. I use Maya software to do the modeling and animation. Before using Maya, I tried sculpting models in ZBrush, but I was not very satisfied with the result. In Maya, I came up with a model resembling my character design(figure18.1). I learned how to do UV mapping(figure 18.2), rigging(figure 18.3), weight painting through online tutorials and help from my committees. Finally, I was satisfied with the result.

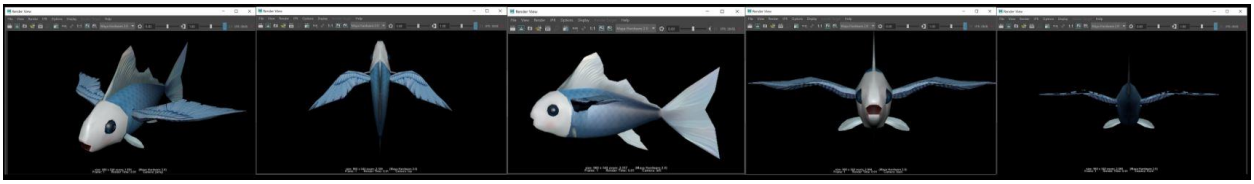


*Figure 18.1 Wenyao 3D model in five views (perspective, top, side, front, and back view).*

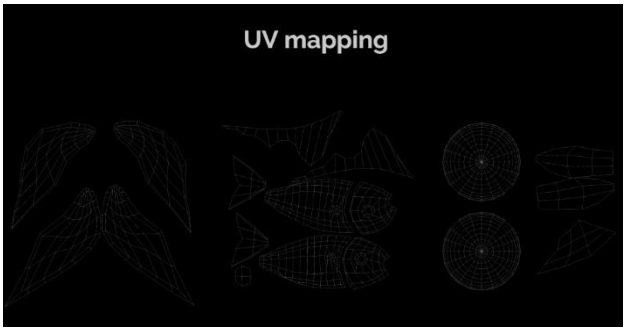



*Figure 18.2 UV mapping.*

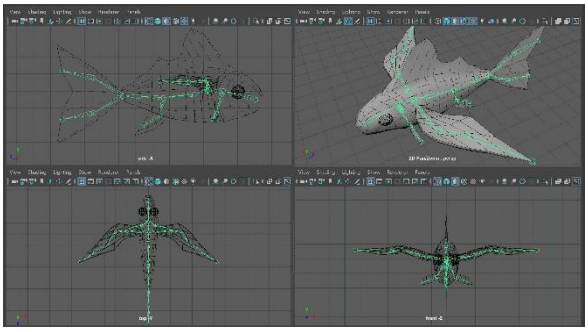


*Figure 18.3 Rigging in four views.*

For the surrounding environment, I used Boss Editor on the Bifrost Fluids in Maya. I choose to do my character in 3D because it has a wide range of use in future applications compared with 2D. 2D is "flat", using the horizontal and vertical (X and Y) dimensions, so the image has only two dimensions and if turned to the side becomes a line. 3D adds the depth (Z)

dimension. This third dimension allows for rotation and visualization from multiple perspectives. Therefore 3D models are not only suitable for animation films, having more flexibility to show different angles to the audience, it allows interaction between the model depending on the application you are developing, such as using it in games, Augmented reality, Virtual Reality and all sorts of other interactive applications.

### 3.5 Project platform

As I mentioned earlier in Chapter two, the platform I am proposing is an app, so I started with designing the user interface first and then the schematic flow chart. Interface assets include app icon, title animation, character gallery, category, etc. Basically, the app shows all my project components: the record and text translation, visualization of characters, and contemporary adaptations about this character. The user schematic flow chart maps out how users navigate the app and the various interactions users would experience on the app(see figure 19). To present the platform idea better I made a schematic video(see video 2).

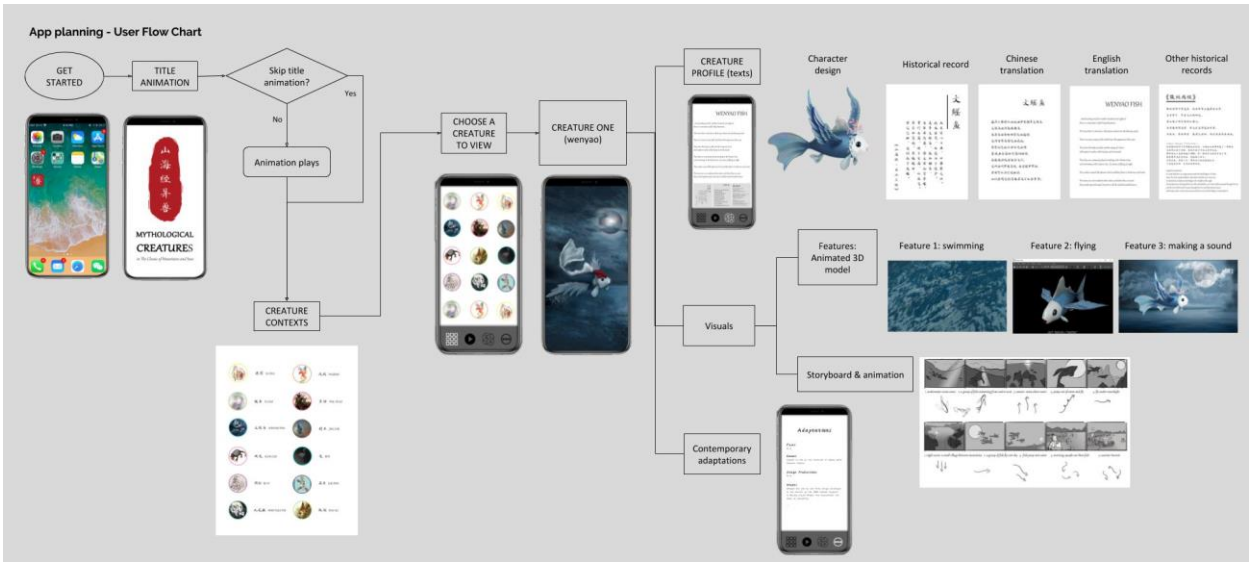



*Figure 19 App planning, User Flow Chart.*


*Figure 20.1* *Title page and interface.*

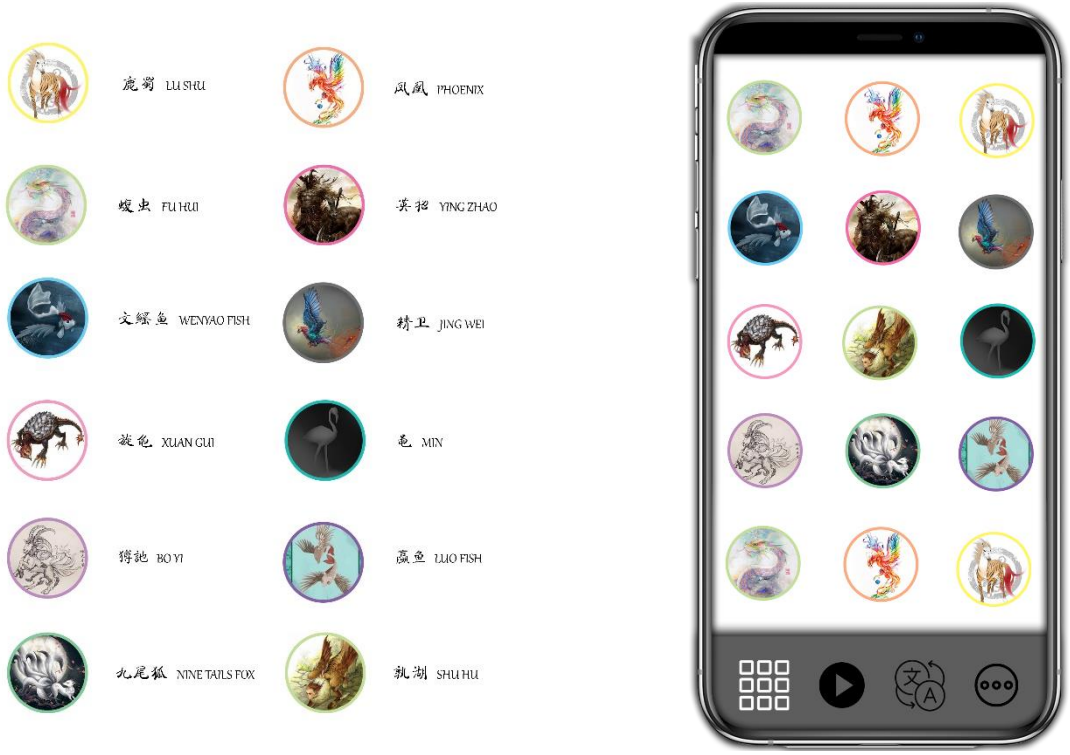



*Figure 20.2* *Content Category and interface.*

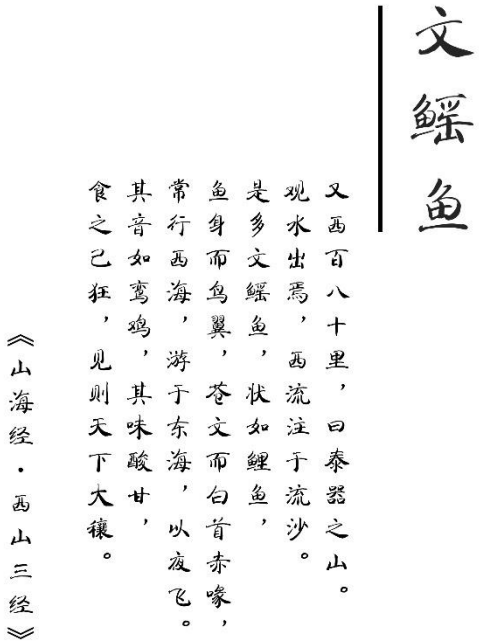



*Figure 20.3* *Wenyao text record in ancient Chinese.*

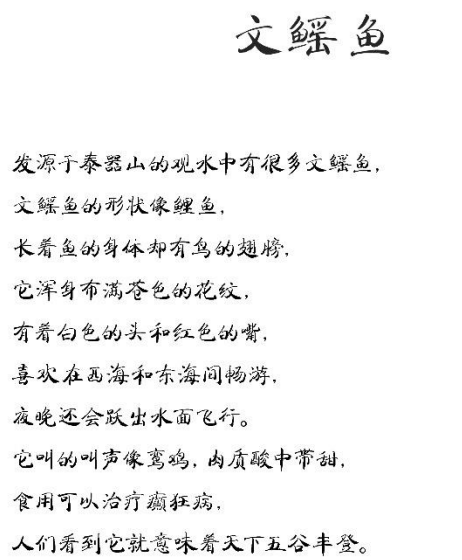



*Figure 20.4* *Contemporary Chinese translation.*

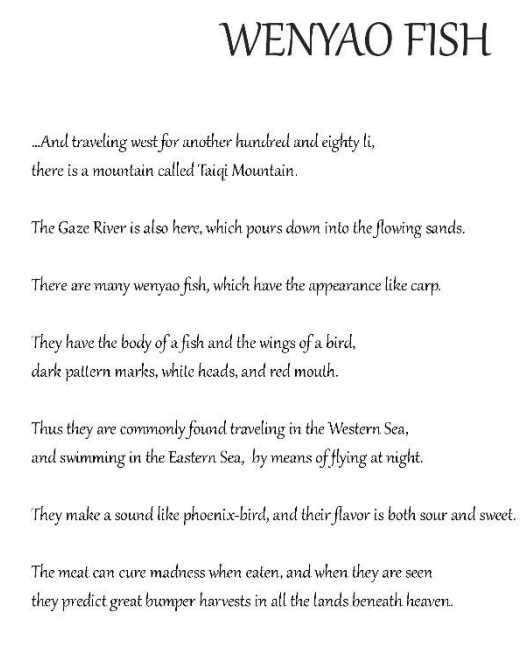



*Figure 20.5* *English translation.*

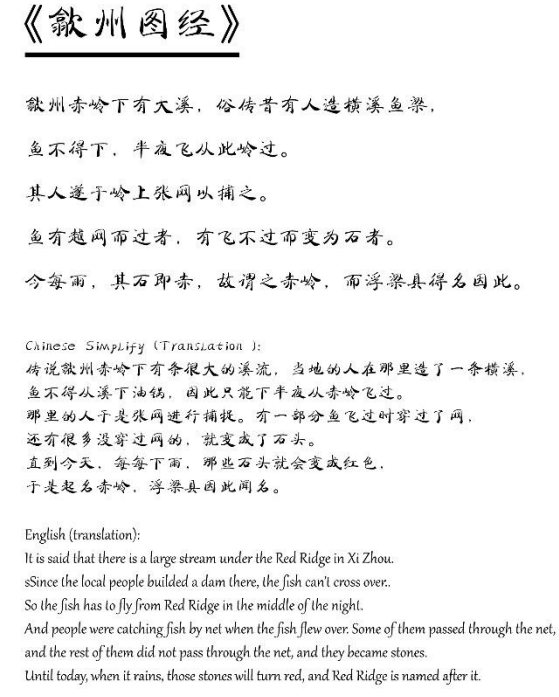



*Figure 20.6* *Other source records.*

## CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

My next steps are to expand project contents, bring more characters alive and refine the platform, such as expand the app platform to a webpage to increase audience retention.

The inheritance of cultural creations needs to keep up with the times, otherwise it will be forgotten and eliminated. This project aimed to bring awareness and sustainability to forgotten Chinese mythologies, based on 3 aspects: text translation, visualization and audience engagement platform. Visualizing ancient myth through animation by reformatting old media into new media can better expose not well-known mythological creatures to young people and show the capability to embody and translate the story of ancient myths to contemporary audiences.

This project can be a great data source of Chinese mythologies for creators to use. At this point the project was developed in Chinese mythology because of my cultural background and identity. However, by using the same formula, this project can also adapt Greek, European, and Western myths. It is a wonderful way to expose people to new tastes and experiences and increase cultural diversity.

Overall, through this project I learned how to use Design Thinking to solve a problem, create an animation, from pre-production, production to postproduction. I have practiced my skills in digital drawing, 3D modeling and video editing etc. I believe the knowledge and skills I gained through my project will have an immense impact on my future work in the game or film industries.

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**GLOSSARY**

| | |
|---|---|
| Shan Hai Jing | "Shan" literally means Mountain, "Hai" means Sea. Shan Hai Jing or The Classic of Mountains and Seas, is a Chinese classic text and a compilation of mythic geography and beasts. Versions of the text may have existed since as early as the 4th century BC, but the present form was not reached until the early Han dynasty a few centuries later. It is largely a fabulous geographical and cultural account of pre-Qin China as well as a collection of Chinese mythology. |
| *Huainanzi* | *The Huainanzi is an ancient Chinese text that consists of a collection of essays that resulted from a series of scholarly debates held at the court of Liu An, Prince of Huainan, sometime before 139 BC. The Huainanzi blends Daoist, Confucianist, and Legalist concepts, including theories such as yin and yang and Wu Xing theories.* |