

Research on the Future Development of Contemporary Chinese Northwestern landscape Painting from Dong Qichang's "Theory of the Southern and Northern Models" to the "Theory of Northwestern Models"

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ABSTRACT

The Chinese landscape painting in the northwest region was developed in modern times based on the unique natural environment and humanistic environment in the northwest China. It is an important part of Chinese landscape painting. Affected by Dong Qichang's "theory of the South and North models", it is generally believed that Chinese landscape painting is divided into the Southern model and the Northern model. Later, the Chinese master Rao Zongyi put forward his unique theory of the "Northwest model" in writing, which helped the development of Chinese landscape painting in Northwest China. Because the landscape of northwest China is a subject that ancient painters never touched on, there are few ready-made pens and ink paradigms that can be used for reference, and they have been ignored for a long time. In order to improve the status of Chinese landscape painting in Northwest China, this article will use the paintings of Cui Zhenkuan and Zhao Zhenchuan, the representative figures of Chinese landscape painting in Northwest China, as the research objects, learn from the successful development experience of "Southern model" and "Northern model", and explore the future development direction of Chinese landscape painting in Northwest China, and propose development strategies.

Keywords: contemporary Chinese northwestern landscape paintings, theory of the Southern and Northern Models, Northwestern Model, development strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

Chinese landscape painting has been divided into the southern model and the northern model since Dong Qichang. Dong Qichang promoted the southern model and condemned the northern model, so that Chinese painting was called "Southern Painting" for a period of time. [1] Southern model Chinese landscape painting with Dong Yuan as its founder has always occupied an important position. The northern model Chinese landscape painting represented by Guo Xi only flourished for more than three hundred years. In 2006, the master of Chinese studies Rao Zongyi wrote an essay at the invitation of Fan Jinshi, known as the "Daughter of Dunhuang", and put forward the unique theory of "Northwest model" and proposed the new three-distance method of " vast and far, deep and far, empty and far ". [2] The northwestern region of China is vast, with different topography and landforms from the south and north. It is far away from the Central Plains.

In ancient times, the transportation was inconvenient. Many painters could not reach the northwest to paint these mountains and rivers. Zhao Wangyun's "Northwest Travel Sketch" in the 1930s and 1940s was the starting point of contemporary Northwest landscape painting. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Northwest region in China developed. The rise of the "Chang'an School of Painting" in the 1950s and 1960s marked the emergence of contemporary Northwestern landscape paintings. In the 1980s and 1990s, with the introduction of the theory of "searching for cultural roots", famous Chinese landscape painters such as Zhang Ding, Zhou Shaohua, and Wang Wenfang traveled to the northwest, which promoted the development of contemporary Chinese landscape painting in northwestern China. Northwest art creation has attracted more and more attention from Chinese painters, and the craze has begun to emerge. At this time, a large number of art works depicting the scenery

of the northwest have been created. [3] Cui Zhenkuan and Zhao Zhenchuan are among the best contemporary Northwest landscape paintings.

Cui Zhenkuan is a native of Chang'an, Shaanxi, and is dedicated to northwest landscape painting. His style of landscape painting is not the beauty of the southern mountains and rivers, but closely revolves around the integrity and honesty in Confucianism to express the magnificent landscapes of the west. Cui Zhenkuan used heavy pen and ink to describe the mountain peaks to make them look like a whole. The mountain peaks in his paintings are "strong and powerful".[4]

Zhao Zhenchuan only painted landscapes in western China, and called this his "unfinished business." Zhao Zhenchuan is the son of Zhao Wangyun, the founder of the Chang'an School of Painting. He inherited his father's ambition and devoted himself to portraying the landscape of Northwest China for many years. When many people gave up Northwest art, Zhao Zhenchuan used decent style, cordial emotion, and grand ideology to bring Northwest landscape paintings back to people's attention. Zhao Zhenchuan advocated that we must first go deep into life and have a clear understanding of the essence of life. He believes that Chinese painting is a comprehensive description of the objective world, from physical phenomena to biological phenomena, and from geographic phenomena to plant phenomena. But more important is practice. Personal practice is the most important part of raising awareness. In practice, he concluded that the beauty of the western landscape is "high-pitched, agitated, thick, and solemn." It is part of the Chinese national spirit. Zhao Zhenchuan believes that only the traces of the writing brush can show the masculine beauty of western China. Therefore, he practiced the pen technique hard and focused on the western landscape. [5]

This article takes Cui Zhenkuan and Zhao Zhenchuan's landscape paintings depicting the Northwestern landscape as the research object, draws on the successful development experience of "Southern Model" and "Northern Model", explores the future development direction of Northwestern landscape painting, and proposes development strategies.

2. THE CONNOTATION OF CHINESE LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS IN NORTHWEST CHINA

Northern model's paintings are more about the vigorous natural scenery of northern China, while southern model's paintings are more about the soft and beautiful Jiangnan scenery in the south. However, in fact, southern model and Northern model do not refer to the south and the north, which are separated by the Qin Mountains and the Huai River. They are two creative paradigms of Chinese landscape painting analogous to

the two different Buddhist methods of "Southern Zen" and "Northern Zen". [6] Buddhism was introduced into China, and Zen appeared after its localization. Zen is a method of Buddhism. During the Tang Dynasty, Zen Buddhism split into two schools: Northern Zen with Shenxiu as its founder and Southern Zen with Huineng as its founder. Northern Zen advocates gradual enlightenment, while Southern Zen advocates sudden enlightenment. Southern Zen believes that the Buddha is in everyone's heart, so if you want to become a Buddha, you can only rely on your own enlightenment. At the same time, because your nature is an indivisible whole, you can only suddenly enlighten. This sudden realization is through intuition, which leads to a sudden change of mental state.

The laws of Northern Model landscape painting are strict, and they must be trained for a long time. Only through diligent practice can they gradually get better and better. This process is more similar to the gradual enlightenment of Northern Zen Buddhism. As long as you keep improving little by little, you will succeed in the end. Southern model's landscape painting pays more attention to literary artistic conception. It is not a success that can be achieved through hard practice, but relies on innate understanding. It can be seen that Dong Qichang's theory of South and North models can spread so widely because of the analogy between the Chinese landscapes painting in Southern and Northern China and the familiar Southern and Northern Zens, so that people can well remember the temperament characteristics of the Chinese landscapes painting in South and North China. The landscape paintings in Northwest China have been famous in the Chinese painting circles as early as around 1985. In 2006, there was the term "Northwest Model", but until now, the northwestern landscape has only spread within a limited area in the northwestern region. [7] One of the reasons is that there is no simple and resounding expression in northwest landscape painting. The other is that although the term "Northwest Model" is very loud, it lacks the spiritual core consistent with the northwestern landscape. The Southern and Northern Zen Buddhism has spiritual connotations, and it is consistent with the spiritual temperament of the Southern and Northern Buddhism landscape paintings. However, "Northwest Model" is just based on the word "Northwest" in the northwest region, and has no spiritual content.

Speaking of the "Northwest" region, we will add a "great" word in front of "Northwest", which means "Great Northwest". The word "great" not only refers to a vast area, but also refers to the philosophical thinking about the relationship between "heaven" and "person", and it also refers to a broad mind and temperament like heaven and earth. Cui Zhenkuan's northwest landscape painting closely revolve around the integrity and honesty in Zhou Li and Confucianism. The core culture of Zhouli is self-improvement, loyalty, people-

centeredness, and courtesy first, which are the connotations of northwest landscape paintings. [8] Zhouli culture can make Northwest landscape paintings have deeper cultural connotations. At the same time, the Northwest landscape painting helped to spread Zhou Li culture widely.

In addition to Zhouli culture, Han and Tang cultures are more representative of the Northwestern landscape style. First of all, "the Han inherited the system of the Qin Dynasty." Han culture originated in the two provinces of Shaanxi and Gansu in northwestern China. Later, the Tang culture was based on the Han culture, incorporating Buddhism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and other religions from the Western Regions. Whether Han culture or Tang culture has a natural geographical connection with Northwestern landscape painting. Secondly, the Han and Tang cultures are heavily influenced by the ethnic minorities in the Northwest. They are simple, straightforward, bold, and vigorous in style. These styles are derived from the life in the northwest region and are the artistic sublimation of the life in the northwest. Then, Han culture is very tolerant and willing to absorb foreign cultures, thus enriching its own cultural connotation. Tolerance is also a strong guarantee for the future development of Northwest landscape painting. Finally, Han and Tang culture is an open culture. The social atmosphere of the Han Dynasty was heroic, confident and open to the outside world. Especially in the Tang Dynasty, people were sent to the Western Regions and Tianzhu for many times, frequently sending or introducing foreign students to improve women's social status, and finally formed a self-confident, lively and prosperous Tang society. The open style of Han and Tang culture is also an important quality required for the future success of Northwest landscape painting.

3. THE REGIONAL AND HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF NORTHWEST LANDSCAPE PAINTING

Studying the theory of North and South models, we will find that the regionality is very obvious [9], and it has a certain historical context. Fan Kuan, who lives in the majestic Zhongnan Mountains, would not paint the soft Jiangnan scenery, and if Fan Kuan painted Zhongnan Mountain as a flowery garden scenery, he would not have made such a great achievement. Landscape painters classified as northern model include Wang Wei, Jing Hao, Guan Tong, Dong Yuan, Ju Ran, Huang Gongwang, Ni Zan, etc. Wang Wei mainly depicts the scenery of Wangchuan, Zhongnan Mountain, with "Mangchuan Map". Because Wangchuan has many strange peaks and beautiful waters, it is a place where literati and poems gather and the scenery is extremely beautiful, so Wang Wei's landscape paintings also use poetry into the painting, and the artistic conception is

beautiful [10]. Jing Hao's works mainly depict northern landscapes, such as Taihang Mountain and Lushan Mountain in Jiangxi. Taihang Mountain has many horizontal valleys in the east-west direction, many majestic peaks, and many waterfalls, so the mountains and waters in his works are majestic [11]. Guan Tong lives in Guanzhong, Shaanxi, and mainly depicts the mountains and rivers on both sides of the Yellow River. Therefore, cold forests, deserted villages, wild ferries, fishing villages, and post stations are the main objects of description in his paintings [12]. Dong Yuan and Ju Ran portray the scenery of the south of the Yangtze River, so the pictures often show the scenery of lakes and mountains, and have the fun of leisure [13]. Huang Gongwang lived in the Fuchun River in his later years, so he used brushes to describe the scenery on both sides of the Fuchun River [14]. Ni Zan was discouraged, ran away his wealth, and lived in a small boat in Taihu Lake. The Taihu Lake is huge, and it is like a flat boat in the vast universe. Therefore, there are many sparse forests and desolate scenes in his works [15]. In addition to the painters of the southern model, the painters of the northern model also showed obvious regionality in their creation. Northern model painters include Li Sixun, Li Zhaodao, Liu Songnian, Ma Yuan, Xia Gui, Li Tang, etc. In order to avoid Wu Zetian's persecution of Li Tang's clan, Li Sixun gave up official positions and lived in the mountains for 20 years. Because of this kind of experience and living environment, Li Sixun and Li Zhaodao painted the residences of gods. At the same time, the status of the royal family also makes their paintings colorful, resplendent and gorgeous [16]. Liu Songnian, a native of Lin'an (now Hangzhou), was a court painter during the Southern Song Dynasty Xiaozong, Guangzong, and Ningzong periods. He mainly painted Hangzhou West Lake. The West Lake is beautiful and there are many gardens, so his paintings all depict garden scenery, which are dense woods and bamboo forests, bright mountains, and beautiful water [17]. Xia Gui was born in Lin'an and lives in the Yangtze River, Qiantang River and west lake areas. He looked at the divided territory, (The Southern Song court could not regain the northern territory.) he only arranged the scenery on one side, known as "Xia Banbian". Because he was full of anger, he used his pen vigorously and boldly. His painting is thick with ink and dripping with moisture [18]. Ma Yuan was also a native of the Southern Song Dynasty. He changed the panoramic composition of the Northern Song Dynasty and adopted the corner composition, known as "Ma Yijiao" [19]. Li Tang lived at the end of the Northern Song Dynasty and the beginning of the Southern Song Dynasty. He experienced the "Jingkang Change" and returned to Lin'an, the capital of the Southern Song Dynasty. He likes to use a "big axe to chop the chaos" when he paints. There are many cliffs in his painting, and the style is strong [20]. In summary, the achievements of the painters mentioned in the theory of

the Southern and Northern Models are inseparable from regional factors and special historical circumstances.

Northwestern landscape painting naturally depends on the special topography, unique customs, and certain historical circumstances of the northwest region. The northwestern region is far from the sea, with sparse rivers, drought and little rain. It includes the vast areas of northwest China such as the Tianshan Mountains, Qilian Mountains, Kunlun Mountains, Qinling Mountains, Hexi Corridor, Tarim Basin, Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Loess Plateau, Taklimakan Desert, Turpan Basin, and Guanzhong Plain. The geographical features are the Gobi, large mountains, deserts, many abandoned passes, and city wall ruins. In order to express the vastness and desolation of the northwestern region, most of Cui Zhenkuan's works do not draw people to show desolation. At the same time, he repeatedly draws mountains in a full composition to show the vastness of space and the monotony of life, which has a formalistic meaning. While Zhao Zhenchuan's northwest landscape paintings are more lifelike. He described the daily life of people in the Northwest region. At the same time, he pays attention to life and can accurately depict life scenes in the Northwest. As a result, we found that only by closely focusing on the characteristics of the northwest region and the lives of the people in the northwest, observing from multiple angles and expressing them in multiple ways, can northwest landscape painting be successful.



Figure 1. Cui Zhenkuan, "The Plain," Chinese painting 180cm×480cm, 1993

4. THE WRITING BRUSH AND INK OF CHINESE NORTHWESTERN LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS

Chinese painting is a generalized painting. Writing Brush and ink is an abstract language, including lines, brush texture, rubbing, dots, dyeing and so on. Commonly used writing brush includes center brush, brush-side technique, or against brush. The ink method is also called the "blood method", which is the rule and method of using ink. Chinese painting is based on ink and water. Commonly used ink methods include breaking ink, accumulating ink, flushing ink, and so on. [21] No matter what kind of ink method, it is to obtain rich layers, natural and changeable ink, to achieve the rich and natural beauty. To use ink, "the ink can be thick but also flexible, and the ink can be light but also rich."

[22] In addition to being proficient in the basic pen and ink methods, painting schools and painters who have survived the ages are all because they have created unique pen and ink programs.

For landscape painting, techniques of brush texturing is the most important pen and ink language. The Southern Model is a system of "Brush texture of linen.", including brush texture of cirrus cloud, brush texture of lotus leaf, brush texture of the cow's hair, etc., while the Northern Model is a "brush texture of axe chopping" system, such as brush texture of big axe chopping, brush texture of small axe chopping, brush texture of raindrops, brush texture of folded straps and so on. [23] In order to express the earthy mountains overgrown with plants, Southern Model often uses linear textures with full ink. In order to express the hard rock mountain, Northern Model often used blocks and surfaces with a sense of volume, and the brush was powerful and fast. In the theory of the Southern and Northern Models, the successful Chinese landscape painters have one thing in common, that is, they all combine the scenery they are depicting to create uniquely recognizable techniques of brush texturing. Dong Yuan created a linen-like texture to express the gentle earthy mountains in Jiangnan area [24]. Li Sixun created an axe-like texture to express hard, straight-edged rocks [25]. Fan Kuan created a brush texture like raindrops [26]. Ni Zan likes to use the brush texture like a folded belt to express the exquisiteness of the rock [27]. Guo Xi invented the brush texture like cirrus clouds [28]. Mi Fu and his son Mi Youren created a dot-like texture saturated with water and ink, which is mainly used to express the scene of mist and rain in Jiangnan area [29].

The modern painter Huang Binhong attaches great importance to writing brush and ink. He summarized his writing brush as: "When using the brush, the force is even, neither weak nor frivolous. When turning, be round and strong, and don't randomly create sharp corners. The brush should be subtle, not hurried or slow. Use the pen calmly and forcefully." [30] As a student of Huang Binhong, Cui Zhenkuan inherited the teacher's tradition of attaching importance to brush and ink, and applied it to the creation of Northwestern landscape paintings. The steep Huashan Mountain and the vast Hexi Corridor affected Cui Zhenkuan's pen and ink. Cui Zhenkuan changed the traditional dripping ink and feminine brush techniques to explore new pen and ink language suitable for the Northwestern landscape. Cui Zhenkuan made some attempts in his works, using dry brush, burnt ink and his Self-created brush texture similar to an axe chisel to express Huashan, and using densely grouped calligraphic lines to express the undulating Loess Plateau. Affected by the "85 thought", Cui Zhenkuan began to explore the modernization of pen and ink. When expressing the Northwestern landscape, he drew on the painting forms of

Impressionism, Abstraction, and Expressionism. He no longer only focuses on realism, but uses more formal points, lines, and surfaces to express the scenery. At the same time, Zhao Zhenchuan, another representative of Northwest landscape painting, is also exploring pen and ink formulas that express the style of the Northwest. Like Cui Zhenkuan, Zhao Zhenchuan also attaches great importance to pen and ink. Instead of using dry brushes, he uses smooth and lively brushwork to draw moist, relaxing effects. Zhao Zhenchuan is extremely capable of controlling water, ink, and lines. He can easily draw long and coherent lines.

In view of the important role of brush and ink in the formation and development of the North and South Models, the author believes that we should focus on exploring the unique brush and ink of Northwestern landscape painting, and develop a brush texture that can represent the Northwest Model, and begin to develop its variants, and gradually form a system of brush and ink. Composition is an important element in the Western art system, but it is not the core of Chinese painting. Brush and ink are the core of Chinese landscape painting, so Chinese painting cannot be explored only from composition.

5. THE RIGHT TO SPEAK OF NORTHWEST LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS

The northern Model painters are mostly academies painters. The painters of the academy have received strict training and passed strict examinations. Their drawing process and drawing technique are strict. Dong Qichang also believes that Northern Model's "painting techniques are difficult to master". Li Xiuyi, a literati painter, wrote in the "Little Penglai Pavilion Painting Book": "Why do literati admire Southern Model? I think: Northern Model has many and strict regulations. So the literati painters who prefer Southern Model do not despise Northern Model, but feel that Northern Model's paintings are too difficult to learn well." [31]

Dong Qichang demoted Northern Model and promoted Southern Model, thinking that Northern Model's paintings are not as good as Southern Model in style. In fact, later generations believed that Dong Qichang demoted the Northern Model based on his personal preferences, which caused the fine paintings in the Northern Model to be regarded as dross, which was unfair. The reason for this unfairness is that most of the Southern Model painters are literati, and they are able to explain and justify their paintings on a theoretical level, and disseminate them in words, which will be passed on from generation to generation. However, Northern Model is mostly professional painters. Their painting skills are very high, but it is difficult to rise to a theoretical level, and they do not have the awareness and ability to expand the influence of painting through words.

The right to speak of the Northwest landscape painter refers to that the painters give themselves the power to criticize his paintings through words. Obtaining the right to speak depends on the artist's wisdom, knowledge and painting ability. Therefore, if we want to gain the right to speak in Northwest landscape painting, we must sum up the unique theory of Northwest landscape painting creation. In terms of theoretical exploration, Cui Zhenkuan pays attention to the exploration of inspiration, thinking, attitude, and concepts, and applies them to the practice of landscape painting.

6. CONCLUSION

The conclusions are summarized as follows:

1 Northwest landscape paintings need not only a resounding name, but also a profound cultural connotation. The culture of Han and Tang Dynasties can represent the landscape of the Northwest. The first is that it has a natural geographical connection with the northwest landscape painting. Secondly, the simple and vigorous style of Han and Tang culture fits the style of the northwest region. Then, the inclusiveness of Han and Tang culture is a strong guarantee for the future development of Northwest landscape painting. Finally, the openness of Han and Tang culture is a necessary quality for the success of Northwest landscape painting in the future.

2 Northwest landscape paintings must be created closely around the unique culture of the Northwest region. The northwest region has special topography, unique customs, and unique history. If these "unique" regional factors are aside, the northwest landscape painting will not develop.

3 The northwest landscape painting must explore its own pen and ink formula, especially techniques of brush texturing, and develop variants, and finally form a system. Chinese paintings are abstract paintings. Brush texturing, rubbing, dotting, dyeing and other pen and ink are abstract languages. The painting schools and painters that have survived the ages are all because of their unique pen and ink formulas. For Chinese landscape painting, the method of brush texturing is the most important language of pen and ink, so that Models of southern and northern are divided by the method of brush texturing. In view of the important role of brush and ink in the Southern and Northern Models, we should focus on exploring the brush and ink of Northwestern landscape painting, and develop a method of brush texturing that can represent the Northwestern Model, and enrich its variants, and finally form a system.

4 Northwest landscape paintings should form their own theories, so as to increase the right to speak. The painters of the Northwest Model should learn more from

the painters of the South Model, be able to explain their own paintings on a theoretical level, and be aware of the importance of the right to speak and actively improve the right to speak.

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