

An analysis on Traditional Chinese Painting Art Characteristic

A Case Study of “Qunxian Zhushou Tu”

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Abstract—The traditional Chinese painting is the unique art treasures of China even of the east countries, it is the treasure of Chinese ancient cultural legacy. Chinese painting takes line as the main modeling methods, and combines time with space. Flexible ink is used to show that it is artistically smooth, clever and affectionate, coexistence of nature and humanity on the picture. From the form of artistic expression and artistic characteristics, the traditional Chinese painting and western painting are totally different: western painting stresses on morphology while Chinese painting emphasis artistic conception; western painting stresses on reappearance while Chinese painting emphasis representation; western painting mainly uses light and color to paint, while Chinese painting uses lines for modeling method, etc. These differences make the two different kinds of painting in the world art system and show the unique charm of traditional Chinese painting to the world.

Keywords—*manifestation modes of traditional Chinese painting; aesthetic features*

I. INTRODUCTION

Traditional Chinese painting, also called Chinese painting, belongs to traditional art forms unique to the east painting style. It passes on the artistic thinking of the Chinese nation. This article mainly analyzes and studies traditional Chinese painting from its forms and aesthetic characteristics to find the diverse changes of the traditional Chinese painting produced by using tools and materials; Its special composition method makes its form break through the constraints of time and space, making it comfortable and free and easy; its inclusiveness makes it full of artistry and gives it plenty of manifestation modes. All of the characteristics compose unique beauty of traditional Chinese painting.

The traditional Chinese painting is the unique art treasures of China even of the east countries, it is the treasure of Chinese ancient cultural legacy. Chinese painting takes line as the main modeling methods, and combines time with space. It uses flexible ink to show that it is artistically smooth, clever and affectionate, coexistence of nature and humanity on the picture. From the form of artistic expression and artistic characteristics, the traditional Chinese painting and western painting are totally different: western painting

stresses on morphology while Chinese painting emphasis artistic conception; western painting stresses on reappearance while Chinese painting emphasis representation; western painting mainly uses light and color to paint, while Chinese painting uses lines for modeling method, etc. These differences make the two different kinds of painting in the world art system and show the unique charm of traditional Chinese painting to the world.

II. MANIFESTATION MODES OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE PAINTING

A. Selection of tools and materials

The primary characteristics of manifestation modes of traditional Chinese painting are produced by its particular tools and materials. Tools refer to Chinese traditional four jewels of scholar (writing brush, ink stick, ink slab and paper). Because it is painted by writing brush, skills of using “brush and ink” become important in Chinese painting. “Brush” refers to use brush with different techniques depicts kinds of beautiful lines. Different brushes show different effects: soft brush paints homogeneous without trace while hard brush is commonly used to delineate outline in a plain sketch image of people. Pointed brush has the characteristics of soft brush and hard brush, combining softness and hardness. “Ink” mainly refers to its color, by using different techniques to show the change of different inky shades to achieve the expected effect. This is what we often mentioned five colors or six colors in the ink, these differences endow traditional Chinese painting unique artistic charm.

B. Selection of content

Contents and focuses of traditional Chinese painting are changed with the development of the painting. They are mainly divided into three kinds: Landscape painting, flowers and birds painting, figures painting. Among them, The figure painting requires distinct personality characters, reflect the character's personality vividly. The main approach is to put the characters in atmosphere and environment. For example: the Luo Shenfu Tu by artist Gu Kaizhi in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420), is both coherent and lifelike and vivid. Landscape painting mainly depicts landscapes of mountains and waters, reflects the harmonious integration of man and nature, landscape painting requires

integration of poetry and painting, produces a profound artistic conception, combines emotion and nature to give emotion and soul to landscape. As the name suggests, flower and bird painting paints birds and flowers, reflects the life of nature. Three kinds of different theme paintings complement each other, embody the essence of the traditional Chinese painting.

C. Various painting methods

There are diverse methods in painting. Traditional Chinese painting usually adopts Scatter perspective, making picture view more vast, the composition more flexible, breaking the shackles of time and space. The "Kuang Lu Tu", masterpiece of Jing Hao a painter in the five dynasties period, is a panoramic landscape painting of silk scroll. From the whole picture we can see the high mountain, waterfall, garden, boat, pedestrians and other sights, giving people various and well-proportioned feeling in composition. Different from limitation of time and space that strictly followed by western countries, in Chinese paintings, there may appear things of different time and space in the same picture, like using a camera to put different scenes together. For example, the Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival painted by Zhang Zeduan in the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), using Scatter perspective, puts the long scenery of two sides of Bian river in a picture, panoramic composition shows streets bustling scene of Bian city in the northern song dynasty vividly on the paper.

D. Combination with traditional arts

The traditional Chinese painting has deep roots with seal cutting and calligraphy art, poetry and other traditional culture, formed the unique beauty of traditional Chinese painting. Such as the poem written on paintings and signature in traditional Chinese painting, demonstrate perfect combination of painting and poem and philosophy. Various methods of expression determines the traditional Chinese painting creation may not just pursue similarity in form, but combination with emotion of the creator on the basis of the similar form and achieve aesthetic expression in spirits. The combination of the traditional Chinese painting and poetry, improves artistic expression and appeal of the traditional Chinese painting, making the traditional Chinese painting different to others. If we say, the body of the traditional Chinese painting is ink lines, the poetic meaning gives the soul to traditional Chinese painting, And final inscribe of the paintings often embodies the art of calligraphy. Many painters are also calligraphers, so a pair of good painting not only has beautiful landscape, vibrant flowers and birds, lifelike characters, but also has unruly or beautiful or elegant handwriting. After the rise of literati paintings, the painter is no longer just a simple painter, they make the traditional Chinese painting and the ancient traditional art culture achieving mastery through a comprehensive study, give the traditional Chinese painting abundant emotion and imagination and poetic meaning, pushing the traditional Chinese painting art to the perfect artistic realm.

III. AESTHETIC FEATURES OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE PAINTING

A. Beauty of implication

Traditional Chinese painting doesn't advocate focusing on image, seizing the spirit of things instead of describing the appearance reflects implicit beauty of the traditional Chinese painting. The painters of traditional Chinese painting pursue "spirit likeness" as the pursuit of art, not deliberately pursue similarity in form. Famous painter Gu Kaizhi put forth displaying spirit by form. For example, in "Lidai Diwang Tu" (a picture with many emperors painted on), Yan Liben used many details to depict characteristics and images of Emperor Wen of Sui Dynasty (With dissociative eyes showing his character of the trap of thinking you have something to lose.), this also shows the beauty of implication of traditional Chinese painting. spirit likeness should be based on similarity in form, because only achieving spirit likeness can make the implicated beauty hide in scenery and figure's expression and give viewers a feeling of beauty. Just as Qi Baishi put, too similar paintings are Kitsch, too dissimilar paintings are cheating people, the best is between similarity and dissimilarity.

B. Beauty of space

Western painting holds the view "separating objects from figure", its attitude towards space is control and exploration, so space in western painting is stable and ordered. Traditional Chinese paintings feel space by painters themselves under the influence of ancient philosophy, making the natural objects fluent wholly. Beauty of space is embodied on the beauty of time. Because of the painters perspective of sense space is constantly changing and dynamic, so the space appears rhythm in the process of perception. For example, looking at a landscape painting, we see rock and stream first of all, moving up sight we see a bottomless ravine, then looking up the towering mountains in the distance. This is space consciousness that the painter wants to show. Painters of traditional Chinese painting understand whether vision or the size of the pictures is limited, we can only use people endless imagination to show infinite space under limited conditions, and paint a picture outside works, making the viewers not only see the picture, but also carry on the infinite imaginary extension with it.

C. Beauty of rhythm

Traditional Chinese painting is a typical representative of eastern painting art, it combines traditional Chinese art theory, mode of thinking and philosophical thought, making it a high generality and full of imagination. Making abstract lines, points, ink above the limitation of time and space, to render the rhythm of the music and dance posture. Though painting is a visual art, but it is not just a simple expression of picture, it can give a person the feel of the rhythm of music through flowing picture. Through the expression of the traditional Chinese painting, natural pulsation gives people beauty of rhythm, conveys the rhythm of life. Lines in the picture are various, thick or thin, hard or soft, long or short, straight or curve, just as the high and low, strong ad

weak rhythm of music. The combination of lines and color is like interweave of rhythm and sound, making the whole picture a touching song. In "Molan Tu" (a picture of *Cymbidium sinense*) by Zhao Mengjian of the southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), he used fluent lines to show great vitality of *Cymbidium sinense*. Painters put emotions into painting, showing the beauty of power and grace by thick and thin lines, subliming their hearing and seeing by synaesthesia, which makes traditional Chinese paintings break the barrier of painting and music.

D. *Beauty of artistic conception*

In traditional Chinese aesthetic ideology, both literature and art stress artistic conception. Traditional mode of thinking of Chinese people determines the demonstrative ways of it. Painters combine the beauty of nature, art and life on picture through following the theory that "Outside nature, heart source"(means the artistic creation comes from the imitation of nature, but the beauty of nature does not automatically become the beauty of art, for the conversion process, the artist inner thoughts and structuring is indispensable) and establish the charm of picture to appeal emotional appreciation of viewers on aesthetic perspective. The artistic conception embodied by traditional Chinese painting is commonly the beauty of misty atmosphere and ethereal poetry. Like Su Shi's appraisal to Wang Wei's poetry works "poetry of Mo Jie, are poetry in painting, paintings of Mo Jie, are painting in poetry". The "Xiaoxiang Tu" painted by Dong Yuan in Southern Tang dynasty, dense trees and grand mountain ridges are on pictures; The forest cottage are partly hidden and partly visible; Specific and magnificent. The whole picture gives a person a kind of broad and luxuriant feeling, making the viewers as if personally on the scene and unforgettable.

E. *Beauty of mien and demeanour*

The famous painter Xie He in the Southern Dynasty put forth "six methods" in his book "Guhua Pinlu", the first method is "mien and demeanour". It plays a vital role in the Chinese traditional art. Mien refers to perennial vitality of natural environment; Demeanour refers to emotional expression of things. While in traditional Chinese painting, mien refers to spirit of the picture, it is the combination of nature and life breathing of the painter, giving the picture a vivid life. Demeanour refers to rhyme or tone, emphasizes aesthetic feeling of the works. Both mien and demeanour are related to spirit, so it also calls spiritual mien. The mien and demeanour is hidden in the works so we can sense it by organs, it is the soul of the art works and the climax of Chinese traditional arts. Mien and demeanour in traditional Chinese paintings are closely linked, so the painter not just focus on a single object in the painting, but also need to embrace the whole, grasp all the feelings of history and life. A scattered stone, and a few scattered pole bamboo, a few of birds, etc, show the vicissitudes of history and thick life, outlining the vast heaven and earth like big bang, making the picture "understanding without saying".

IV. ANALYSIS OF ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS IN QUNXIAN ZHUSHOU TU (MEANS PEOPLE CELEBRATE BIRTHDAY FOR HOLY MOTHER)

A. *Deep and simple theme*

Theme is essential to painting, it determines the mien and demeanor of pictures and the direction of color, shape and painting skills. Taking the birthday of Holy Mother as the theme, "Qunxian Zhushou Tu" (means people celebrate birthday for Holy Mother) describes the harmonious scene of celebrating, expresses propitious, happy and long-lived wishes. The creation of the picture stands on daily life of common people, making the picture full of local flavor and embodying the customs of celebrating birthdays in traditional Chinese culture. It is the spirits of Chinese painting arts. Pictures put unique flowers and herbs, rare wild animals, gourmet cuisine, pavilions, clouds and wind that means wealth and auspicious happiness in all folk moral objects scattered on it, with rich material life scene to improve kindness of works and to fully consider the interest of the people in the painting conception.

B. *Implicit and brief composition*

Composition, or called arrangement, refers to the process of determining the position of objects on the basis of the theme. "Qunxian Zhushou Tu" (means people celebrate birthday for Holy Mother) by Ren Bonian reached the climax in basic composition and detail composition. The picture is huge in size with complicated people dividing the picture into figure and objects. The basic composition puts distant view, mid-shot and close shot in order, cloud in distance, flowers nearby and trees and rocks in middle composed three scenery lines, giving people a peaceful and broad visual feeling. In terms of figure layout, figures are showed in "S" type, diagonal lines, arcs, etc, characters array randomly and naturally, Thin or thick crowd and high or low compose harmonious contrast, compromising the linear composition effect of objects well. In horizontal landscape composition, the jade pool, rocks, trees and so on form a variety of triangle composition, complementing a linear drab feeling of the basic composition.

C. *Rustic and vivid posture*

There are plenty of complicated figures and objects in "Qunxian Zhushou Tu" (means people celebrate birthday for Holy Mother), but characterization of them is very careful and lifelike. These are showed in two respects: anthropomorphic objects and materialized figures. The characters in the "Qunxian Zhushou Tu" can be roughly divided into three categories, respectively are people on the sea, people flying in the sky and people performing at jade pool. In character model processing, putting the expressions in daily life, the most usual behavior into the characters, making the characters full of flesh and blood and vitality. In landscape model, Ren Bonian gives flowers and plants, rocks, rare animals rich emotions, making them a twinkle in eyes and looking around, like offering birthday felicitations to Holy Mother, jubilant and lovely.

D. Coordinating painting skills

Painting skills are material support to all of the painting elements. In “Qunxian Zhushou Tu”, painters paints rugosity as ancient silk, string of a musical instrument or iron wire, or uses all of them together, they also introduce complex Gou Bi method into the creation to increase dimension sense and texture of objects, improving the object shade change of color , making the objects more vivid. From this we can see that Fugou method(painting with different tools), could display the advantage of elaborate-style painting, it not only can effectively remove the rigorous, rigid effect brought by the traditional Chinese realistic painting, but also can break through the depressing feeling brought by pigments of traditional Chinese painting mine materials themselves, making works dynamic.

V. CONCLUSION

All in all, the connotation of spirit of Chinese painting will be thought as to the highest standards in both forms and aesthetic features, which demonstrates inclusivity of Chinese culture, therefore, forms and aesthetic characteristics of traditional Chinese painting and Chinese national thinking habits relates to cultural tradition closely. If we want to truly understand Chinese painting forms and beauty of art, we need to further research the Chinese culture and art concept.

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