

Basic Landscape Paradigm in Zhang Daqian's Landscape Painting

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Abstract. Zhang Daqian's landscape painting is based on Chinese traditional painting and the landscape pattern of his landscape painting abides by traditional Chinese landscape paradigm, i.e., Xumi, Kunlun Mode, One Pool Three Mountains Mode and Hutian, Jiezi Mode. These three paradigms are both the ideal landscape mode of Huaxia ancestors and the constitution foundation of landscape painting. On the basis of these basic modes, our ancestors summarized and completed them and finally developed them to Taoyuan Mode that expresses reclusion life, which can be seen from Zhang Daqian's landscape painting.

Chinese landscape painting originated before the Warring States period, grew in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, set up in Southern and Northern Dynasties and thrived in Sui-tang Dynasty. Later, after Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing Dynasties, it developed maturely and formed complete system in aspects such as brush-and-ink techniques, painting theories, aesthetic thoughts and so on. Landscape painting becomes a unique carrier of Chinese humanistic spirit. It not only records and expresses the relationship between human beings and nature, but also conducts profound spiritual discussion and yearning behind nature. Zhang Daqian learned from Shitao and ancient artists, and he obtained much traditional essence.

Landscape paradigm of Zhang Daqian's landscape painting

Zhang Daqian's landscape painting can be divided into three aspects: germination stage, generation stage and maturity. Its major characteristics are as follows. In the beginning period, his copying and learning from Shitao formed the basic structure of his landscape painting and understanding of traditional landscape paradigm; in the middle period, after travelling and experiencing famous mountains and great rivers, he utilized the advantages of various schools and made breakthroughs, thereby finally forming the unique artistic effects of splashed ink and colors.

Landscape art is an aesthetic counterpart of Chinese philosophic thinking. The generation of its culture deposits dense Chinese cultural thoughts. Huaxia ancestors' attention on the natural world was deposited in the comments of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Their exploration of natural instincts and understanding of mountains, rivers and humanity formed unique natural and landscape viewpoints.

In Chinese culture, "landscape" is a word with unique intentions. From ancient times to the present, our ancestors have formed their ideal basic mode of landscape painting. According to their different characteristics, we can see three landscape modes from Zhang Daqian's landscape painting and they can be divided into: Xumi, Kunlun Mode, One Pool Three Mountains Mode and Hutian, Jiezi Mode. Under these three modes, there is our ancestors' endless imagination of the immortal mode and they are mixed with the security feeling and sense of belonging of enclosure, quarantine and seclusion, which are needed for survival and development.

Basic prototype of landscape paradigm

Firstly, it is Xumi and Kunlun mode. Mount Xumi is the center of Buddhism world while Mount Kunlun was always described as an immortal world in historical mythology and Taoism legends. People's ideal life modes could all be realized here. In *Huai Nan Zi· Topography* written by Liu Anbian, it said "..... The Yellow River originated from the North Eastern foothills of Mount Kunlun, then it runs through a grand ocean as well as Mount Jishi that Yu the Great dredged..... These four rivers are the sacred spring of God. He used them to produce various medicament to moisten everything.....Climb up Mount Kunlun, you will reach Mount Liangfeng. If you climb up Mount Liangfeng, you can be immortal. Continue climbing, you will reach Mount Xuanpu, on which there are gods who can do anything they want. Continue climbing and you will reach the forbidden kingdom, where you can be celestial and that is the place that God live in..... " All the ideal things in the mortal world can be seen here and there are strange flowers and fruits that can keep living things immortal.

In summary, we can come to ideal landscape characteristics: firstly, spatial towering can create the effects of seclusion; secondly, surrounding water can form effects of shielding and protection; thirdly, there is door protection, which emphasizes opening the west door to welcome strong wind; fourthly, there are abundant resources and luxuriant trees.

Guo Xi from the Song Dynasty once proposed the method of three distant: high and distant, deep and distant and flat and distant. The former two methods are most appropriate to describe Xumi and Kunlun modes. As to frame forms, this mode is represented as: lonely and towering peaks are used to symbolize Mount Xumi, or stretching mountains are used to connect Mount Kunlun. *Tour in Mount Xi* painted by Fan Kuan is the best model of the mode. The painting is of great momentum; the towering and magnificent main peak is tall and rugged. The two-meter-high painting is the painter's yearning for Xumi and Kunlun. Later, this mode became a typical mode of traditional landscape and was repeatedly used by painters, such as Guan Tong, Li Cheng, Ju Ran, etc. Landscape constitution method of this painting symbolizes the maturity of landscape painting.

The most centralized representation of the mode in Zhang Daqian's landscape painting is after Dunhuang tour, when he collected works of Dong Ju successively. Getting in touch with ancient masterpieces again, Zhang Daqian had great interest in the delicate and fine Song landscape paintings. For example, *Qing Cheng Sheng Gai Tu* in 1945 was a marvelous imitation of landscape of Kunlun and Xumi mode. The main peak is in the middle of the painting with surrounding mountains, waters and luxuriant trees and grass. At the left bottom corner, there is a cluster of thick trees, then you will see the mountain gate; from the bottom to the top on the painting, the paths are the guides to the top. The work is of distinct Kunlun and Xumi mode; the northwestern mountain in the picture is an opening, which welcomes strong wind. We can find almost all the characteristics of the mode in the painting. In a later period, landscape paintings reflect painters' repeated estimation of the mode, such as *Yun Shu Gao Zong*, *Xi Shan Yun Ai*, *Dao Jiang Sheng Jing Tu*, etc.

Then, it is the so-called One Pool Three Mountains Mode. If we say Mount Kunlun takes mountain as major carrier, water plays more roles here. The so-called One Pool Three Mountains refers to three immortal mountains in myths, which are Peng Lai, Fang Zhang and Ying Zhou in East Sea, and there were elixir here. If someone ate it, he would be immortal with nature. According to *Shih Chi · Biographic Sketches of The First Emperor of Qin*, "There was a man named Xu Fu in Qi. He submitted a statement that there were three immortal mountains in the ocean, which were called Peng Lai, Fang Zhang and Ying

Zhou, and gods lived here. Then, he requested a fast and prayed with boys and girls together. Then, the emperor sent Xu Fu with thousands of children to the sea to ask for the immortal.” Later, they never found the mountains, so “Lan Chi Palace” was built and three islands were set up in the lake, symbolizing Peng Lai, Fang Zhang and Ying Zhou. Later, the mode became a classic in traditional landscape design and has been used repeatedly.

Besides improving the important role of water, the mode is similar to Xumi and Kunlun mode in landscape characteristics. The mode emphasizes the importance of water and the safety curtain role brought by isolated containment. In Peng Lai, Fang Zhang and Ying Zhou, we always see a corner of the mode. The painter either takes a corner of the mountain and water, or a small boat in the lake. The landscape paradigm usually has sky at the top and water at the bottom with islands and trees interspersing, such as *Peng Lai Shan Shui Tu*, *Ying Hai Quan Gui Tu*, *Kun Ming Hu*, etc.

Hu Tian originates from *Hou Han Shu · Fei Chang Fang Zhuan*. The story tells that Fei Changfang met a medication old man and followed him into a medication calabash; finally, he learnt arts of necromancy. Jiezi is also called Jie Caizi; Xumi is the transliteration of Sanskrit and is a famous mountain in ancient Indian myth; it is also called “mandala” in Buddhist texts. Jiezi accepting Xumi is a phrase in Buddhism. Meaning tiny Jiezi can accommodate giant Mount Xumi.

Such a mode also points out the landscape pattern of little opening and large space. Compared with the above two patterns, such a paradigm embodies a mode of social isolation. Such a pattern does not ask for giant space anymore; rather, it turns to the situation that image the big from the small. The residential model of ethnic groups turns to experiences and setting of independent space. The mode is most commonly seen. Artists go through a tiny opening and then manage their own space and follow their own inclinations. There is always the essence of the paintings. Take the painting of *Rui Ao Dao Zhong* for example. The view goes through a narrow and small space with cliffs on three sides and then falls on a flat rock face. The cottage is on a rock. Two men are chatting freely under the cliffs when walking slowly. A fall goes down directly to the mountain stream. The painting forms an excellent space experience. The opening is small but the inside is huge, which is in a reasonable effect.

It is not difficult to see that these three modes have distinct characteristics in Zhang Daqian’s landscape painting. Xumi and Kunlun mode emphasizes the seclusion of the mountains, and the One Pool and Three Mountains Mode emphasizes seclusion of the immortal island in the sea as well as the seeing huge from small in Hu Tian and Jiezi mode. From Hu Zhong Dong Tian to Jiezi including Xumi, these three modes are all linked with one another, reflecting painters’ appeal to ideal landscape painting.

Projection feedback of landscape paradigm prototype

If the above three immortal modes were the ideal life state of our ancestors, the most direct feedback to artists is the expression of works. The ideal state in myths is difficult to know, but to artists, they can find ideal projection. For example, Tao Yuanming, a literati who went out of the officialdom, he constructed an eternal topic for later generations in *Peach Blossom Spring*, “.....He ran into a peach blossom forest. There were no forest within several hundred steps of the stream.....At the end of the forest, there was some water and a mountain. There seemed to be an opening in the mountain and light seemed to come out from the opening. Then, he abandoned the boat and entered the opening. At first, the opening was narrow for just one person. After some time, it became very broad. The land was plain and houses were organized. There were also fertile land and luxuriant bamboos. The little lanes intersected and chickens and dogs

were singing. Men and women were farming in the land and their clothes were just like people outside. Both the old and the young were living happily.....After several days, he left... He went the previous way but was lost, never to find the way.”

The Peach Blossom Spring is a highly ideal landscape model. It mixes all ideal modes of people. The secluded entrance symbolized isolation from the world while the narrow path symbolized its real existence. After the sudden opening, it turned out to be a perfect world. This is a calabash landscape mode and obtained everlasting and wide resonance of artists, indicating Chinese culture’s pursuit for seclusion. Xumi and Kunlun mode are upside-down calabash, One Pool and Three Mountains mode is a floating calabash, while Hutian and Jiezi mode are impending calabash. The Peach Blossom Spring is a calabash in real mountains.

Based on the above characteristics, it is almost the same when appreciating Zhang Daqian’s landscape painting. The painters either centralize the whole painting, or emphasize one or two points. Some typical landscape paradigms are repeatedly painted by painters. Firstly, calabash opening, trees and narrow lanes, bridges and flowing water, mountains and stones are all spatial starting points; then, it is calabash cavern and an opening interior space. Several profound scholars and cottages build a secluded ideal land. Seclusion represents extreme pursuit of the inner world and they are usually the ultimate pursuit of artists. They are expressed repeatedly and finally form a fixed landscape paradigm.

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