

# Monk-painter—Dan Dang’s Different Kinds of Aesthetic Feelings to Landscape Painting

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**Abstract.** As a famous monk painter in late Ming and early Qing Dynasties, Dan Dang kept the same fame with those famous painters as Shi Tao (a famous painter in Qing Dynasty) Badashanren—Zhu Da ( a famous painter in Ming Dynasty) , Kun Can (a famous painter in Qing Dynasty), Hong Ren, (a famous painter in Qing Dynasty) et . Based on ancient methods of Chinese painting, his language in landscape paintings cast his understanding of Zen Aesthetics and great beauty realm, either from the visual or the psychological aspects, which can give a person profound meanings unexpectedly and with reasonable base. Dan Dang’s landscape painting aesthetic characteristics play a powerful representative Zen Chinese painting aesthetics. “No law is law” is an important characteristic of his thought bearing in his paintings, which is the embodiment of different kind of feelings of his unique aesthetic thought in Chinese paintings as the impressionistic and his artistic characteristics.

## Introduction

Yao Zui said, "Although the nature of his paintings bore ancient style", “the paper changed them into modern feelings with understandable and reasonable changes as well as artistic skills and strategic efficiency, " They expressed that at different times, with different background, their artistic forms and contents of expression varied with identity, which was also an interpretation of innovation in previous cases. Dan Dang also proposed that painters should not adhere stubbornly to the established law while painting, and should not rigidly imitate ancient ways of painting. From the perspective of Chinese painting practice, Dan Dang emphasized the artistic creation of originality and ingenuity. The lost art creation is the lost vitality in art creation. At that time, as the representative of the ancient Zheng, with the fashion of ancient imitation, Dong Qi Chang embodied his idea in " support of painting in copy old-fashioned wraparound ". Set the Da cheng, strike out a new path for oneself ". Dan Dang did not find teachers to be taught and left, he was to find the road, "taking nature as his teacher". As what was said in his poem: "Cao Yan matter collapse old beauty, rouge don't dye the next year spring. Although Xi Shi has energy-saving, haggard due to a mimic". It is shown here that artistic creation and innovation were the most important. He tactfully pointed out that art originality was even more important,. Originality was one of the necessary precondition for the development of art. Creation was the motive power of development, sticking in the mud could only take the road to go more and more narrow.

Schiller said: " Poet is nature in some way or he seeks something natural. In the sense of former, he is a plain poet; in the sense of later, he is a sentimental poet." He put art into two categories "plain" and "sad" . The two concepts can be extended to the aesthetic style of art or aesthetic form. The art of painting from Dan Dang contains the two--- the sentimental and plain. Sad mood is the

historical product of the heart of compassion he repressed, simple elements are his state of mind traveling after the words with thought. Never sad life went through sadness, nor regret and simple life went with the experience. His art life shone the light of the original dark ahead. Later on he found that not only one way you can walk out of being lost. The kind of pioneering and creation spirit came from the pursuit of the spirit of life instinct; from constantly thinking about questioning rough experience; from the whims of natural bold attempt of the fear of failure. As he was with these personalities, Dan Dang developed his own Zen painting art only in his own way along the road out of the inheritance of previous shadow. He unlocked the inherent fetters, from complex to mist into a natural himself.

### **Inner needs**

Dan Dang's most valuable cost lies in that he could clearly distinguish their own inner needs, dare to challenge the previous ancient law of paintings. He had the courage to challenge the novelty of the idea. This is also the reason for his achievements in painting art amazing. The more you wanted to go in-depth in understanding, the more elusive fancy you found. One might arise such kind of feeling that his spirit of painting was clearly in sight, but he did not know what it was exact. Dan Dang created his life trajectory constantly, at the same time, he also created a totally different Zen painting world., but seemingly are somewhat alike with others', a new world and the Guinness harmony of the art world that originated from his own inner melted world and mixed feelings, all came from his heart, but from his spirit, new world that was continued to create new things.

The creation itself is a kind of self psychological comfort. And it also is curable medicine that can cure mental distress or frustration. By constantly questioning and abandoning the understanding to old painting ideas and art forms, one can establish a new self position in the art world, which is a strange sound voiced to the spiritual rich and colorful world. In this case he can bathe in the glow of brand-new thought, get broader mental care in spiritual depth.

### **Weird**

Therefore, Dan Dang's "Three Extremes" can not be matched with his "One Weird". His strangeness lies in the usage of pen strokes which are so swift like waves, but his movement is like walking of Chinese gentle woman with micro steps. His style of painting is so stiff that it's like stone. It is like that it can set up high mountains and overwhelm seas. His strangeness lies in the use of Chinese ink, the ink drop drips like rain and cataracts, the invasion of Jose marsh, rocky gully, worldly purifying heart. His strangeness lies in that he admired the old and branches of residual root of trees in painting; His plainness painting style over-passed both Ma Yuan and Xia Gui. His use of pen in thinning could match that of clouds and forests, which absolutely surpassed Badashanren.

Zhang Feng, a famous painter in Qing Dynasty said: "Generally speaking, seen from near one can only see its trivia or fragment in his paintings, yet seen from far one can see its whole view. Paintings works, if seen from near are fine, and if seen from far are interior, than those are not excellent paintings. Therefore the whole arrangement of them is very difficult. Ancient people said the painting school of Bai Yuan usually painted in casual strokes, without any ordinal layers. But when you saw their paintings from far places, you could see the contents of them, such as villages, smoke, fences, moving cloudy, sands and trees. The wonderful layers of landscapes are obviously appeared in sight. This style of paintings belongs to those that their outstanding comes out of mixtures. So his preferable painting idea is that painter does not know exactly what he wants to paint. But what one can see in nature and paint it casually, out of sudden, in natural brush, paint

freely with free strokes and from the heart.” Based on this principle, one can see the unusual function of integration combined with fragments, the importance of their global frame. In freehand brushwork of traditional Chinese painting, the outstanding one is out of the excellent integrity, the spiritual excellence, with casual trivia free strokes, or vice versa. The most wonderful spirit of the painter is immersed in his natural, free, out-of sudden brush strokes, forming one integrated whole frame. One may see the main spiritual pole of the painter in his paintings. The bearing of his paintings, drawing rhyme, idea, landscape, ink and strokes go through his paintings. Therefore, Dan Dang’s paintings, once seen, one might have the sense of huge mess, thin and out of order. Especially in his later works, they are even more than that. In the fragments of his paintings one may see the grasses, woods, mountains and stones among them, yet one can’t see the harmonious landscape of their combination. Therefore one can see his movements of the strokes---active, free, jumping and lively landscape, which are so vivid and natural that one has to step into the real world of agricultural fields, and go into the depth of his spiritual field---the wonderful realm with understanding of his plain soul, which can produce a natural view of river water flowing naturally and freely, flowers blossoming in seasons--- a natural landscape of nature with natural features. Like what has been said, going back to the real nature as it is plain, going back to the realm as happy as the character of children. As Sushi once said “On the painting to the shape, you see neighbors and children” This reappearance of natural matters in paintings is the fundamental stage of paintings.. Any painting beginners may have such experience. Yet many famous painters in Chinese history all went back to their children realm trying to find true nature of the world at their old, while-hairy age. Of course here children’s realm does not refer to what Sushi mentioned above. Qi Bai Shi’s old-age paintings are most contented with Children’s interest ones. All were led from children’s heart and freehand brush. Paintings such as “All Small Fish Come Here”, “ The Mouse is Stealing the Oil”, and “ People Scold Me, I Scold People, too” demonstrated this tendency. As far as the writer is concerned, while painting there, he totally cast the worldly ideas out of painting works, free from people’s over warning words, going back to the real children’s realm, out of their interests. Another example is Wu Guan Zhong’s print works. They produced the most beautiful effect aesthetic appreciation through the form of symbolization, forming the formation of black and white colors, which shows the great change between his early print style and his old-age art works.

It also reflects the nature of the innocence of the old and new. Moreover, Bada’s works as "Solitary Bird Map", "Painting of Fish and Stone", " Eyes Staring at the Sky" can be viewed as a class, which had subverted the traditional schema and ideographic method. Although there are diversified factors in their works, yet the "interest" is so strong with flavor, as well as the taste represents of "real" realm. Thus, the artist subjectivity and the true nature of natural “Xing” now, make the works look simple, but they can be felt and appreciated by everyone , who may burst into smile while taking a look at them.

### **Childlike**

Picasso said: "I have painted in childhood as the masters’ like Rafael, but I have spent my whole lifetime to learn how to paint like a child." The reason why he says like that is because he has found it rather difficult to seek the noble and suitable naivety in the practice of art life. That’s so-called going from simple to complex is easy, but going from complex to simple is hard. This is a pair of contradiction which makes people uncomfortable, and which cannot be stopped in the passage of natural time. So true romantic innocent childlike truth and interests cannot be sought back once lost in the course of the knowledge cognition due to the its increasing process gradually. Once it get lost, how can it be easy to trace back ?

As for Dan Dang, "weird" and "chaos" are his appearance of art works, his painting idea burst into formation while painting as well as changing constantly. His brush is so cliffy and powerful that no one can find a way to imitate. His painting is full of Godlike spirit. The poems matching his painting works are immersed with the full air of his real personality. "I am myself, different from any other being. As in the painting of "Drunkard ",going along with it is the poem: "Chasing girls and flattering women look like a mad man, life of being poor and broken seems as a heavenly being. The most annoying thing is his stone that wakes him up, it teaches us to waste our money hanging on the sticks." There is another one which says : "In the face of good mountain, do not go to west or east; keeping good sense, do not care who comes as well as goes, no matter Hus or Hans." Which is not difficult to appreciate the strong sense of Zen and cynical attitude taste. If the text is just like poetry painting ink, then as Dan Dang's paintings have bits of cynical mood partly hidden and partly visible. His chaos of sparse brush style and pen ink usage, for the majority of the literati artists, blindly antique learning ancient ways of painting without change, is a kind of criticism and satire. He has long time lived, traveled and in meditation among the forests, mountains, valleys and gullies. Therefore his paintings works deeply take on the mental feelings of the combination of the rustling breeze, red soil and hot sun. He obviously challenged to satire those untruly minded, those who were stuck in the book club within the acid pen tweaking the literati painters. Real feeling comes from long-time life experiences and inner accumulation of feelings. It also comes from the love and understanding of that land as well as the environment. Living in that red plateau---special environment for several tens, Dan Dang knew well that walking along the paths of mountains, red muddy soil, rainy foggy dust will wet his shoes; red dust, foggy smoke, frost will paint his hair, while walking along; he might hear birds chirping, beasts howling while stepping into the woods; and he was always alone at the foot of mountains, at the side of Canger lake in his single shadow. Walking back and forth among the forests and woods, though accompanied by monk friends, one can still feel vast and mysterious nature as well as an individual tiny and lonely. Let alone the case of one alone in the deep woods, his real feelings can be well understood by one with the same real experiences. Thus the weird in Dan Dang's works has its real weird meanings, his mess strokes also keep his deep understandings to nature. The strange and variety of mountains, the constant flow of water, the daintiness of trees and splitting and chisel boulders, are rooted and branded in the depth of his heart. That's why he painted them so free, his strokes are just like real situations.

## **Summary**

As to produce such a painting style, it is a style to different with the art phenomenon. Like and do not like is actually the aesthetic purpose of different types, it is the artist's aesthetic thought, which is a complementary aesthetic feelings. Ink splashes of pure sexy, close to the true reality and truth, there are different forms of the ideographic language, context, different symbols play emotional preferences which are not the same. As the late style tend to play lines as the main symbol of freedom, the freedom like abstract expressionist painter Pollock early has not started before the splash of color style of painting creation, symbols, lines all have the flavor of aboriginal art, simple and pure and fresh. Both are very close in temperament, in spirit, must also have a certain internal correspondence. Can imagine, the early abstract expressionism is such a state of mind. The impromptu play with elements of regional culture, some of the familiar with the more primitive, more long-term, more real. And the kind of calm, cautious ideographic language, thinking more like similar philosopher reflected Mondrine mature period works the same, excessive pursuit of philosophy, will lose the true temperament, it is not the true artist pleasure or pain reflects. Walk improvised lines is for the whole picture of the composition of services, it has been embedded into

the audience calmly, aesthetic appreciation to the vision, the audience can sense the feeling of the artist, is differ from man to man.

With this most direct, most instinct, the most simple means to stimulate the inner potential out of things, his works in a certain period of time can produce emotional outburst type creation effect. Different from the rational painting, put pen gentle dancing is not every day when they appear, this feeling is there is a time of year natural play. The heart of the walking is a kind of accumulation stage, full need one-time release, the release of finished and need time accumulation. This is one of the reasons to play constantly traveling in the mountains between the flood. There is no such experience figure walking there would be no more profound inner walk, will not have the unique and different from the past emotional convergence, it will not be the only significant personality emotion pulse moment of painting creation. There is a strange smell which is why as paintings, but alive.

"Shi Tao painting quotations:" says: Sir, your paintings show the most flexible style to paint the natural world inseting its law, the most wonderful elite paintings of mountains and rivers with authenticity , the best cultivation of the ancient and modern creation, bearing the most popular female and male spirit . By using the ink to paint the things in nature, he wrote for the world of his own ." "As I am free, I am me" How can a word "I", shows the artist my early personality traits. No matter what it is , philosophy or speculator, or, Shi Tao, Zhu Da and Dan Dang, as a kind of distinctive monk painters, not limited to groan in the inherent in model specification, informal beam on the previous ancient law only following their ways of paintings, but they recognize the important sense of self initiative and the prospective presence, in order to discover the art subject thought, the technique of expression and spiritual experience, the weird and extreme of the place. They are brewing a maverick personality spirit and glorious bloom; they enjoy reveal sensitive passionate, they prefer literati temperament relieved; true experience, naturally emotional outburst. All the world famous painters there clearly understand the word of "change", "the fundamental mode the world change and development" , painting is without exception. Painters only produce new ones, the painting world will show new buds, reborn. Paintings can show the spirit of mountains and rivers' real case, which is they see people's heart, touching their spirit, thawing human feelings, understanding the nature of all things. They are personalized, humanized, with people's emotions. Whatever is pushing, transitive oneself to things, expressing one's emotion through things, or forgetting oneself into things, all natural co-creation are expressed through painting media and, passing the gods.

Shi Tao "In Painting Quotations" the third chapter "Change" says: "To understand people fully in paintings has no laws. Actually it does not mean without laws. No laws are laws. This is the law toward people" The idea of "No law is actual a law was in the process of artistic creation in existence. The so-called " no law is law" means "Don't bind one in fixed laws. Following natural laws is totally natural. Dan Dang's ways of ink painting method are not the very ways that calligraphers and painters usually followed. They are for the heart, they are obvious expression of outburst his personality of true nature and his authenticity. They reveal his. unconscious natural, pure, pain, simple, the innocent, but returned to the baby pure embodiment.

## References

- [1] Schiller, [Germany] Jiang Kong yang translated. "Poetry and sentimental simple poem" [M] volume. Shanghai: Shanghai literature and Art Publishing House, 1979

- [2] Cao Zhi " On the Goddess of Luo River": "Her body and light body Czech fly up water birds like Xun sensitive, such as the gods like floating illusion. She has the light, walking in waves of rags, Yan Shui misty like the Luo silk stockings raised dust. Roselle action without rules, and sometimes is breathtaking, and sometimes seemed comfortable; also There's no telling her to advance and retreat, as if to leave but also seems to turn back. Between her eye is on the move, exposing the sprightly looks, looks like smooth moist like jade. Her words did not export, it emits orchid like fragrance. Her flower looks and gentle attitude, let me Zheng Chi and forget to eat." Here the analogy bear strong extraordinary painting style of Dan Dang, whose works are just like "movement of the Goddess described in Cao's poem. His brush is walking on air, strange and unnatural God clever.
- [3] Northern Zhou. Yu Xin "Ni Lian Zhu" " A gift with ability to rule the country, only the power of remove the mountains and overturn the seas. " Here the analogy refers to Dan Dang's painting's strokes which are cliff excel.
- [4] [Qing Dynasty] Zhou Liang Gong "Letters in a New Banknotes" Volume I "With Zheng Ru Qi"
- [5] [Song Dynasty] Su Shi. " Collection of Su Dong Po" in Volume Sixteen Sets Before