

The humble opinion of the Causes about Guo Xi's Functional View of Landscape Painting

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Abstract: Guo Xi was a well-known landscape painter in the Northern Song Dynasty. In *Linquan Gaozhi*, he proposed the functions of landscape painting as "pleasant" and "getting my heart." Through Guo Xi's identity and the idea of "Confucianism and Taoism", a large number of literati were selected and appointed in the Song Dynasty, forming a social background of "the prosperous era of literary rule", advocating the erudite style of writing, and the maturity of Song Dynasty landscape paintings and popularization among literati and officials. Wait for a while to explore the reasons for the functional view of Guo Xi's landscape painting.

1. Introduction

Guo Xi is a master of landscape paintings in the Northern Song Dynasty. In the first sentence of *Linquan Gaozhi*, he talked about the function of landscape painting by asking questions. Gentlemen love landscapes because they can travel between mountains and rivers to their heart's content without go out. Therefore, the original meaning of painting landscapes is "pleasure" and getting my heart". Guo Xi goes beyond the traditional aesthetic value traditions of "using landscape paintings to find Taoist ideas" and "removing miscellaneous desires" in landscape painting, and summarizes the functions of landscape painting as "pleasant" and "getting my heart", breaking the inevitable connection between landscape painting and hiding mountains and forests. The change from the hermit position to the position of the scholar-official class has made landscape painting as an image of actual landscapes become a substitute for the literati-officials who could not personally travel the landscape in their official business hours and a comfort item for the tedious life. Thereby, the aesthetic meaning of landscape painting is transferred from the external world of "using landscape paintings to find Taoist ideas" to the heart of the artist, so that landscape painting returns to its natural nature. Looking at the changes in the aesthetic function of Guo Xi's landscape paintings, this article will explore its causes from three aspects: Guo Xi's personal thoughts, the social and cultural background of the Song Dynasty, the development of the Song Dynasty landscape paintings, and the "Linquan" complex of scholars.

2. Guo Xi's identity and the idea of "Confucianism and Taoism"

As a court painter, although Guo Xi is well-known, and as a painter, Guo Xi's social status is not

high. There is a lack of information about his life experience and his artistic activities and thoughts can only be through the *Lin Quan Gaozhi*. Recorded and scattered in the history of individual paintings and the poetry of literati who had contacted during his lifetime. It is an indisputable fact that Guo Xi was appreciated by Shenzong in historical records. A glimpse of the many court paintings drawn by him. According to the *Linqun Gaozhi*, he painted the screen of Zishuaicaidian, the screen of Xiaodianzi, the screen of Yuqian, and the two screen of Yuzuoping. The number of large or small screens is unknown. In accordance with the imperial decree, he made pictures to the king of Qi and Goryeo and so on. Guo Si described Song Huizong in his *Lin Quan Gaozhi* when he met him and said: "the palace is filled with your father's paintings now" With the love of the Shenzong emperor, Guo Xi naturally felt extremely satisfied and supremely glorious. In "Linqun Gaozhi", it is said that during the peaceful and prosperous day of the dynasty, the hearts of the kings and relatives are growing, and it is the emperor's holy grace. This situation determines the difference between Guo Xi and the literati hermit painter's outlook on life, values and creation. Guo Xi did not evade reality, but actively created landscape paintings in the palace with a true aesthetic vision to meet the psychological needs of the scholar-official class of "traveling between mountains and rivers to their heart's content without go out..

Like many ancient Chinese landscape painters, Guo Xi's artistic career has been somewhat influenced by Taoism. His son Guo Si revealed in the preface of *Linqun Gaozhi* that he traveled with his father for a long time, and introduced Guo Xi's experience of "lessly learning from Taoism" and "traveling outside", indicating that Guo Xi was influenced by Taoism in his early years.) As Li Cheng said, "Instinctively loves mountains and rivers, is happy with one's own mood, and does not pursue official career." [1] Guo Xi's landscape paintings learn from Li Cheng, and Li Cheng's landscape paintings express a secluded mood. Guo Xi learned from Li Cheng and explained that the aesthetic appeal of his landscape paintings is more consistent with Taoist thought. In the practice of landscape painting, Guo Xi is consistent with the "Taoist" thinking. For example, Guo Xi's *Linqun Gaozhi* proposed that the landscape should be viewed with the heart of Linqun. "Linqun's Heart" removes utilitarian education and maintains a quiet state of mind. It is a necessary aesthetic attitude for landscape painters. Guo Xi also quoted Zhuangzi's theory of "Free oneself from fetters" and emphasized the importance of the state of painting creation. As we all know, the original intention of "Free oneself from fetters" is not to paint. It is the idea of "remitting nature" from Taoism and not being bound by secular rituals. When applied to painting, it refers to the mental state in which the painter can remove the obstacles between the object and the self, and the object and the self are merged into one.

The revival of Confucianism in the Song Dynasty, Guo Xi lived in the palace thinking about landscape painting issues, and naturally he could not escape the influence of Confucianism. Mr. Zhu Liangzhi believes: "Guo Xi's thoughts are based on Confucianism, and Confucianism is the soul of *Linqun Gaozhi*. Guo Xi's discussion of painting intentions, painting concepts, painting concepts, and painting topics is all Confucianism serves as the basis for his argument." [2] It is not an exaggeration. For example, *Linqun Gaozhi*•*Shan Shui Xun* has repeatedly quoted the theory of Confucian classics. Guo Xi also put forward the function of art to "make people understand the ritual and music of the world". He used the example of Dai Andao in "Linqun Gaozhi•Painting Skills" to discuss the fact that candidates did not consider the characteristics of the era during the recruitment of painters, and pointed out from both the pros and cons that "the original intention of the ancients to learn painting" is "knowing rituals and music". This view inherits the utilitarian view of predecessors' painting and education, and is in the same line with the Confucian proposition of "be used for reference". Although Guo Xi did not aim at landscape painting, he somewhat reflected his artistic utilitarianism. It can be seen that most of Guo Xi's creative ideas of landscape painting are derived from Confucian classics. To sum up, although Guo Xi has both Confucianism and Taoism, as a

painting school painter who is deeply loved by the emperor, Confucianism still occupies the core position.

3. The social and cultural background of the Northern Song Dynasty's "the prosperous era of cultural governance"

In the Song Dynasty, the glory of Han and Tang dynasties has long been gone, but their cultural and academic self-confidence is no less than that of Han and Tang. "The culture of the Chinese nation has evolved over thousands of years, and has been created in the Zhao and Song dynasties." [3] In the first few decades of the establishment of the Song Dynasty, the posture of Yanwu Xiuwen adopted by the royal family catalyzed the growth of the literati class. Respecting Confucianism and learning, and advocating liberal arts, creates a style of writing that advocates erudition and broad knowledge, and forms the social and cultural background of "the prosperous era of cultural governance".) Mr. Zheng Wuchang said, "Painting is a kind of art, and it should be described in terms of its artistic evolution process and genre. However, its evolution is often determined by the ideology, literature, art, politics, and other environments at the time to determine its development direction and development process; and this all kinds of environments change over time." [4] For this reason, when we study a kind of painting art under the cultural system, we cannot surpass the characteristics of the times and divorce from its social and cultural background.

The complete imperial examination system in the Northern Song Dynasty laid the foundation for the growth of the literati class."The first imperial promotion since Emperor Taizong of Song Taiping ascended the throne in the second year of the reign of Song Taiping (977), greatly increasing the number of admissions for scholars and other disciplines. Each held at least hundreds, many thousands of reach". [5] Once a scholar is elected, he does not need to be recommended by the dignitaries, that is, he enters the official career and is granted official positions. In this way, "the perfection of the imperial examination system has enabled some really learned and poor lower-class intellectuals, such as Lv Mengzheng, Kou Zhun, Fan Zhongyan, Ouyang Xiu, etc., to enter official careers. If they were not involved in competition under the principle of basic equality, I am afraid that there is little hope of being named on the gold list." [6] The well-educated scholars of low social origin strengthened the literati class and became the main body of cultural acceptance, creation and dissemination in the Song Dynasty, and also provided the possibility for the artistic appreciation and creation of the literati class. In addition, after Guo Xi entered the court, he kept in touch with many members of the literati class. On the one hand, it shows that this class can satisfy its demands for art through Guo Xi's art. On the other hand, the development and growth of the literati class has in turn affected the development direction of landscape art. The knowledge, thought, and belief system expressed by the intellectual class not only effectively construct the national political and ethical order, but their religious, philosophical, literary, and aesthetic views have also constructed the cultural thoughts of the entire era. This spirit Infiltration and expression in literature, philosophy, history, art, etc.became the internal driving force of the cultural development of the Song Dynasty.

The "right text" policy not only expanded the selection and appointment of a large number of literati, but also restored the cultural confidence of the intellectuals, and the aesthetic psychology also began a new stage of development. In contrast with the chaos of the Five Dynasties, the people of the Song Dynasty removed metaphysical thinking, advocated reality, and paid attention to rational thinking. Transform the past possession and exploration of the external material world into the feeling and experience of the internal spiritual world. Therefore, Guo Xi suggested that when the dynasty was peaceful and prosperous. The scholar-official class does not need to escape from the world in the mountains and forests because of the war. It is just a place of spiritual longing for the scholar-official class after being fettered by reality. So the "hands-painted" landscape paintings make longing for the

mountains and forests no longer a "dream". People "don't go down to the hall", they can still "sit in the poor springs and gully". Longing for mountains and rivers, without having to live in seclusion between them. Guo Xi built the aesthetic subject on the basis of the integration and unity of the individual and society, man and nature, so that the landscape painting can satisfy the gentleman's love for landscape on the one hand, and on the other hand, it can also adapt to the duality of the "hidden" and "official" of the Scholar-officials at the time. The needs of character cater to the life mentality of literati.

4. The evolution of landscape painting and painting theory and the "Linqun" complex of the scholar-official class

The art of Chinese landscape painting has sprouted in the Jin and Song Dynasties. From the early days of Gu Kaizhi's painting of landscape backgrounds to the rise of metaphysics in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, literati began to pursue landscapes in order to appreciate mystery. Insufficient vision of landscape love, so he chanted poetry and painted. Landscape painting changed from a vassal to an independent art. During the Sui and Tang Dynasties, landscape paintings such as Zhan Ziqian, Li Sixun, Li Zhaodao, Wang Wei and Zhang Wei developed rapidly. The Five Dynasties Jing, Guan, Dong, and Ju contributed to the flames, and landscape painting in the Northern Song Dynasty had become a great sight, with complete techniques and famous artists. According to *Xuanhe Painting Book*, there are more than 3300 pieces of Song people's works in the 6396-axis works collected by the royal family, and the works of Xuanhe period are not counted. Among them, there are 823 landscape works, accounting for a quarter of the total number of works by Song people. It can be seen that landscape painting was quite famous in the Song Dynasty. Mr. Xu Fuguan once objectively commented: "Guo Xi believed that landscape painting was sufficient to make up for the contradiction between the official life of scholar-officials and the sentiment of the mountains and forests. On the one hand, he was born in the heyday of the Northern Song Dynasty. Although he visited mountains and rivers when he was young, he went into official career. In the Taiping era, it has become popular among scholar-officials, and it has become a trend." [7]

With the development of landscape painting, the aesthetic understanding of landscape painting began to sprout, and eventually rose to a theoretical level. The Southern Dynasty Zong Bing first put forward the concept of "Changshen" of landscape painting in "The Preface of Painting Landscape", which improved the aesthetic value of landscape painting by a big step. However, Zong Bing believed that "landscape presents Tao in form" is a manifestation of "Dao" and failed to abandon the Wei-Jin "xuan" thinking about landscape. Wang Wei's "Surgical Painting" puts forward the aesthetic feelings of landscape painting, focusing on the nature of landscape painting in terms of pleasant temperament. During the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the aesthetics of landscape paintings gradually tended to be natural, we can feel the aesthetic conception conveyed by the landscape paintings from Zhan Ziqian's *Spring Tour* and the green landscapes of Li and his sons. In the chaotic times of the Five Dynasties at the end of the Tang Dynasty, literati and doctors retreated to the mountains and forests, composing poems and paintings. The landscape painting at this time is the external reality of the literati and the humanized landscape. Landscape paintings are branded with the hermit style of "eliminating miscellaneous desires". As Hegel said: "Natural things can achieve a greater completeness, only when man incorporates the qualitiveness of his soul into natural things and implements his will into the external world. Therefore, man has humanized his environment, and he has shown that the environment can satisfy him, and he cannot maintain any independent power for him. Only through this realized activity can a person become realistic to himself in his environment and feel that the environment is a home where he can live in peace." [8] Since most literati in the Song Dynasty could enter official careers through imperial examinations, people's concept of landscape changed, from

being far away from reality to being close to reality, from living in seclusion to the city, the aesthetic ideal of Song people is no longer the illusory fairy mountain and Qiong Pavilion, but Visible hills, forests, hills, streams and springs. The preaching color of landscape painting in Song Dynasty is relatively weakened, and more emphasis is on cultivating temperament. From the pursuit of the life value of external actions to the pursuit of the cultural cultivation of the creative subject, the emphasis is on the expression of inner emotions and the exploration of the humanistic spirit, emphasizing the affinity, completion and coordination between man and nature, and emphasizing man's obedience to real life. This is why Guo Xi has gone beyond the traditional aesthetic value of landscape paintings and boldly proposed the functions of landscape paintings that are "pleasant" and "getting my heart".

The literati's living environment and status changed after enter the official position in the Song Dynasty, and they had to face a lot of administrative trivial matters all day long, and the days when they wanted to enjoy the natural scenery as they pleased no longer exist. The yearning for "Linqun" has become a lingering complex in the hearts of the literati class. In order to balance the relationship between the "hidden" and "officials" of the literati class, and the pursuit of spiritual seclusion while taking into account "to the emperor and the people", landscape painting has undoubtedly become the object of the literati in the Song Dynasty. "Although the work of art constitutes a coordinated and complete world by itself, as an individual object of reality, it does not exist for itself but for us, for the audience who observes and appreciates it." [8] (p335) In addition to landscape paintings, repairing gardens became another spiritual retreat for scholar-officials in the Song Dynasty. As recorded in Su Shi's *Lingbi Zhang's Garden and Pavilion*, Zhang's ancestors chose the location of the building's residential planting garden between Bianshui and Surabaya. In the meantime, this place is the main point for officials to come and go. All the needs of food and clothing, the pleasure of drinking and feasting, can be satisfied without deliberate pursuit. It takes only a few steps to let their children and grandchildren go out of the house and go to the court to become officials. They can sit and lie down in the mountains after they close the courtyard and go home to live in seclusion. Therefore, whether landscape painting or garden, as a spiritual carrier from the hustle and bustle of officialdom to returning to the tranquility of the countryside, it is the way of existence for the people of Song Dynasty to pursue spiritual seclusion. This is exactly the conclusion of Guo Xi's "the original intention of the noble husband in painting landscapes", and it is also the result of the social atmosphere of the Song Dynasty.

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