

Connotation of Luo Yingqiu's Art Education Thought

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Abstract: Luo Yingqiu is one of the printmakers with the longest creation time and the largest number of works in the history of modern printmaking creation in China. As a typical representative of the third path of the emerging woodcut movement, his printmaking style is very contemporary and local. He has a certain influence in the history of modern printmaking in China and is one of the leaders of printmaking in eastern Guangdong. Luo Yingqiu has always adhered to the art education thought of “talent cultivation oriented, carving jade into utensils” in his printmaking art creation career of more than 70 years, and cultivated a large number of art professionals with both political integrity and talent for the society. From the perspective of Luo Yingqiu's art education case to his student Chen Qiwei, this paper discusses the connotation and value of Luo Yingqiu's art education thought.

1. Introduction

With the increasing emphasis on art education in China year by year, new requirements are put forward for art education. Many art education thoughts from home and abroad have attracted our attention and reference. The analysis of the connotation of printmaker Luo Yingqiu's art education thought is conducive to our better practice of art education.

2. Introduction to Luo Yingqiu and Chen Qiwei

In August 1914, Luo Yingqiu was born in an ordinary bricklayer family in Xingning City, Guangdong Province. In 1936, Luo Yingqiu published woodcut works such as *The unemployed* and *The homeless kindred* in *The Dagong Daily* in Shanghai, and embarked on the path of tireless woodcut art creation for more than 70 years. Luo Yingqiu created thousands of works, including masterpiece *Jiaying scenery* and *The painting of a hundred cattle*, which are the greatest printmaking in China and even in the world. In 2006, Luo Yingqiu died in Xingning. In his 93 years of life, in addition to the lofty pursuit of printmaking art creation, Luo Yingqiu's art education thought, “talent oriented, carving jade into utensils”,^[1] is also the education thought that Luo Yingqiu always adheres to. Regardless of his identity as a printmaking artist, Luo Yingqiu is a teacher who teaches and educates people conscientiously. Under the guidance of the art education thought of “talent cultivation oriented, carving jade into utensils”, he has successively cultivated Zeng Daozong, Pan Jinbo, Chen Qixuan, Luo Youxin, Chen Weiju Zhang Zhiping and a large number of art professionals, including Chen Qiwei, the inheritor of Xingning printmaking intangible cultural heritage, also one of the many art talents cultivated by Luo Yingqiu.

Chen Qiwei is the inheritor of Meizhou municipal level of Xingning printmaking in Guangdong. He had been influenced by the tradition of Xingning printmaking since childhood and loved literature and art. Because his father's working place was close to the Yizheng primary school where Luo Yingqiu taught at that time, and his father appreciated Luo Yingqiu's printmaking and traditional Chinese painting works, he became acquainted with Luo Yingqiu. Chen Qiwei's printmaking works were selected into the “Guangdong Printmaking Exhibition” for many times, and his printmaking theoretical research, art comments and other achievements were published in *Meizhou Daily*, *Shenzhen Special Zone Daily*, *Nanfang Daily* and other newspapers. He insists on

integrating the spirit of the times and regional characteristics of Xingning printmaking, and has made great contributions to the inheritance and development of Xingning printmaking. He is a representative figure in Xingning area who integrates printmaking creation and theoretical research and promotes the inheritance and development of printmaking.

The teacher-student story between Luo Yingqiu and Chen Qiwei Chen Qiwei recalled, “In 1958, when I was still in the first grade of junior high school in Xingning Xingmin middle school, I was encouraged and recommended by art teacher Li Xilian. I went to Xingning cultural museum to study printmaking from Luo Yingqiu, who was a teacher of printmaking training class. Since then, I have participated in printmaking for many times.” From 1960 to 1963, Chen Qiwei chose the art major when studying in Xingning secondary normal school, and Luo Yingqiu continued to guide him in printmaking art for three years. Since then, Chen Qiwei and Luo Yingqiu have kept in touch and frequently participated in various printmaking art activities together. Chen Qiwei’s achievements are attributed to his love and adherence to art, but also inseparable from teacher Luo Yingqiu’s earnest teaching, oral and personal teaching all the way.

3. Connotation of “Talent Cultivation Oriented, Carving Jade into Utensils”

3.1 Embodiment of the Connotation of “Aesthetic Education”

In 2020, the general office of the CPC Central Committee and the general office of the State Council issued the *On Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education in the New Era*. It is pointed out that aesthetic education is not only aesthetic education, sentiment education and spiritual education, but also education to enrich imagination and cultivate innovative consciousness, and it can improve aesthetic quality, cultivate sentiment, moisten soul and stimulate innovation and creativity. ^[2] In Luo Yingqiu’s art education thought of “talent cultivation oriented, carving jade into utensils”, the “cultivation” not only refers to the education of students’ single art skills, but also includes the connotation of “aesthetic education”. Students can have the ability to fully feel the real beauty and artistic beauty, correctly treat the social beauty and feel the natural beauty.

In terms of art skill education, Luo Yingqiu has always adhered to the “hand-in-hand” teaching. In 1973, when Luo Yingqiu taught printmaking in Xingning Cultural Museum, he asked each student to complete a printmaking work, and Mr. Chen Qiwei created a woodcut printmaking work - *Fierce-browed, I coolly defy a thousand pointing fingers* (Fig. 1). The creative inspiration of this work comes from the poem “Fierce-browed, I coolly defy a thousand pointing fingers; headbowed, like a willing ox I serve the children.” of Lu Xun’s seven-character poem *Self-mockery*. The whole work is 60 cm long and 48 cm wide. The picture takes Lu Xun’s portrait as the main body, depicts the image of Lu Xun holding a pen in his right hand and firm eyes. The work expresses Lu Xun’s anger at the people who have lost all conscience and whom thousands of people are pointing at, expresses the emotion of bending down and being willing to be an ox for the common people, shows the determination to never yield to the enemy and be willing to serve the people. The background of the picture is virtual and real, and the integration with the subject is appropriate.



Fig.1 Fierce-Browed,I Coolly Defy a Thousand Pointing Fingers (the Picture is Taken by the Author)

It is worth mentioning that the background of this work is demonstrated and portrayed by Luo Yingqiu. Chen Qiwei introduced that when the work of *Fierce-browed,I coolly defy a thousand pointing fingers* had just been completed, he took the original woodcut to teacher Luo Yingqiu and asked for his modification opinions. After reading the work, Luo Yingqiu gave an evaluation of “insufficient treatment of the relationship between virtual and real in the background”. At the same time, he picked up the carving knife on one side, personally demonstrated and taught the key points of how to “push the background far”. Soon, the background part was finished. Luo Yingqiu’s education on students’ art skills is meticulous and comprehensive, ranging from how to draft and compose the picture, to the application of carving techniques, the selection of color and the selection of coloring methods, to whether a certain part of the picture should be depicted with a round knife, a triangular knife or a flat knife, to the final printing link. Almost all of these skills are taught, explained and demonstrated in detail by himself.

During the teaching process, Luo Yingqiu repeatedly stressed to the students, “It’s meaningless to engage in artistic creation and admire yourself. It’s beneficial to let everyone understand it. The real skill of a painter is to constantly discover and create extraordinary artistic beauty in ordinary life. I need to do more works and sing praises to the people, so as to be worthy of the broad masses of the people.”^[3] Luo Yingqiu takes root in the land of eastern Guangdong, where every plant and tree and people’s sorrow and joy are the source of his creation. Luo Yingqiu also imparts to his students his ability to feel the beauty of reality and art, correctly treat the beauty of society and feel the beauty of nature.

Among Luo Yingqiu’s many works recording the beauty of the countryside, there are many works with round-dragon house, a unique building in Hakka area, as the main depiction. Taking his *Colorful Hakka Village* (Fig. 2) created in 1972 as an example, the work is 61 cm long and 59.5 cm wide. The picture composition is full, the main building is finely and accurately depicted, and vividly depicts the images of cattle and ducks. Through the depiction of the environment, it renders the atmosphere of natural beauty, and shows the lush state of trees to the greatest extent under the “fast, accurate and ruthless” knife method of Luo Yingqi. The whole work has a strong local flavor and great vitality.

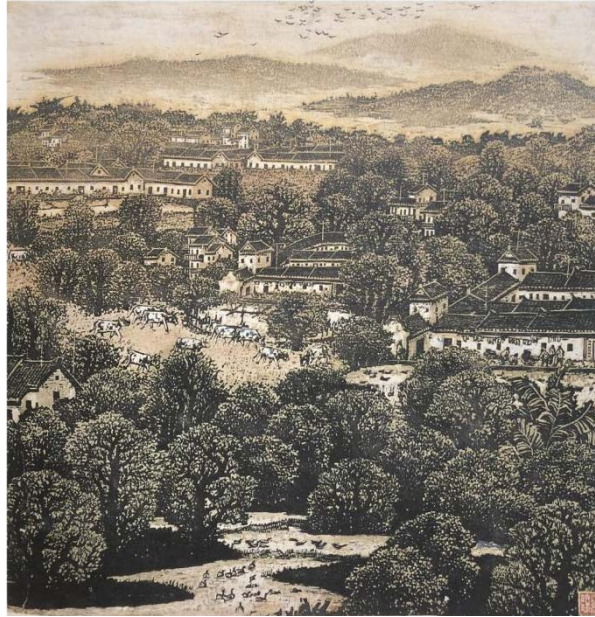


Fig.2 Colorful Hakka Village (Taken from Carving Time - Luo Yingqiu's Printmaking Art,P.141)



Fig.3 -1 Hakka Mountain Village (Picture Provided by the Author)



Fig.3 -2 Hakka Mountain Village (Picture Provided by the Author)

The watermark and chromatic woodcut work Hakka Mountain Village (Fig. 3-1 and Fig. 3-2), created by Chen Qiwei in the 1980s, is also depicted around the Hakka rural scenery. The work is 60cm long and 42cm wide. It is printed one version with warm and cold colors respectively. The picture depicts lush trees around the houses where people live, and there are villagers passing by cattle herding on the rural path. It shows the pleasant scenery in the countryside and the leisurely and complacent scene of people. Comparing the expression forms of trees in Luo Yingqiu's Colorful Hakka Village and Chen Qiwei's Hakka Mountain Village, it is not difficult to see the similarities between the two. Chen Qiwei has created many works full of local flavor through extensive study and reference to Luo Yingqiu's expression methods of trees and the treatment

methods of tree shapes, combined with his own understanding of natural beauty and realistic beauty. Chen Qiwei's love for his hometown and ability to feel the beauty around him in ordinary life is the best embodiment of the connotation of "aesthetic education" in Luo Yingqiu's art education thought in his students.

3.2 Pay Attention to the Educational Practice of Young Students

In Luo Yingqiu's art education thought of "talent cultivation oriented, carving jade into utensils", young students are compared to a piece of jade, which needs a long time to be carved to make it a reusable instrument. Luo Yingqiu attaches great importance to the education of young students.



Fig.4 Painting a Lovely Hometown (Taken from Carving Time - Luo Yingqiu's Printmaking Art,P.69)

In addition to teaching in the printmaking training class of Xingning Cultural Museum, Luo Yingqiu was also invited to students' homes or invited students to his own home for teaching activities. At the same time, Luo Yingqiu also set up an after-school art creation team in his school to lead art lovers to go deep into life and collect folk art in the countryside. In his black-and-white woodcut work *Painting A Lovely Hometown* (Fig. 4) created in 1958, he recorded the scene of young students collecting art. The work is 42.8 cm long and 21.7 cm wide. In the picture, some students sit on the grass slope and some surround the teacher. They hold a drawing board and concentrate on the scene of landscape sketching. Luo Yingqiu's education for students is not only in the current teaching activities, but also in the inheritance of knowledge and love for students. In 2002, Chen Wang presented his album *Fifty Years of Chen Wang Printmaking* to Luo Yingqiu. Due to selfless love for students, Luo Yingqiu transferred this album to Chen Qiwei and continued his knowledge through this transmission.

3.3 Inheritance of the Artistic Spirit of Luo Yingqiu's Printmaking

If the interpretation of "utensils" in the connotation of "talent cultivation oriented and carving jade into utensils" is the single understanding of "art professional talents", it is not comprehensive. The educational practice under the guidance of Luo Yingqiu's art education thought has imperceptibly affected the students' creative spirit and personality quality.

Luo Yingqiu often said, "Literature and art is the spiritual food that reflects the spirit of the times and enriches the people's ideological life. It has strong characteristics of the times. All works that leave social reality, leave life, art for art, absurd and bizarre will produce adverse social effects. It will eventually be submerged and eliminated by the torrent of the times." [4] Luo Yingqiu's thousands of works reveal his strong creative spirit of "for the society and the people". His works

reflect the current social situation and attack social problems. They are not only a vivid record of history, but also a hymn to praise the people.

Ideology and the times are the creative themes that Luo Yingqiu closely focuses on when creating printmaking works, Chen Qiwei said, “I think Mr. Luo’s prints pay great attention to the ideological nature of the theme and keep up with the times. He doesn’t do anything romantic. One of his works is called *Border Flowers* (Fig. 5). Although they are wild flowers, they are very sunny and have a firm will to survive.” Luo Yingqiu’s chromatic woodblock work *Border Flowers*, created in 1962, is 17 cm long and 29 cm wide. The picture mainly depicts lush wild flowers. Through the description of wild flowers, Luo Yingqiu shows resolute vitality, inspired student Chen Qiwei and inspired the people at the same time.



Fig.5 *Border Flowers* (the Second Painting in Series of Paintings) (the Picture is from Luo Yingqiu Art Research Network)

Luo Yingqiu lived a frugal life. Chen Qiwei recalled, “In the past, teacher Luo didn’t even have a decent bookcase at home.” Although Luo Yingqiu’s family was not rich, it didn’t affect his determination to adhere to printmaking. When printing, Luo Yingqiu was different from other printmakers. He was used to making detailed rubbings with spoons and knife handles. The works printed in this way are evenly colored, exquisite and durable, but compared with tools such as Ma Lian, which are often used by other printmakers, it takes a lot more time and energy. This pursuit of work quality has had a great impact on Chen Qiwei. Until today, with the rapid development of printing and painting tools, Chen Qiwei still insists on printing and painting with spoons and knife handles. Chen Qiwei’s insistence on printmaking art and the inheritance of Luo Yingqiu’s printmaking spirit are to create works with ideology and modernity for the society and the people, and adhere to rigorous printing and painting technology.

4. Conclusion

Luo Yingqiu’s art education thought of “talent cultivation oriented and carving jade into utensils” is not limited to a single art skill education, which also fully cultivates students’ ability to discover, feel and record beauty, and cultivates students’ professional skills and aesthetic quality. At the same time, the educational practice under the guidance of the art education thought of “talent cultivation oriented and carving jade into utensils” meets the basic requirements of China’s socialist schools for aesthetic education, and Luo Yingqiu’s hot love and persistence in printmaking art also has a

profound impact on groups of art professionals.

Luo Yingqiu once wrote the poem *My Heart* at his nineties, "... In 90 years, I have always been a grass. Opening bright flowers one after another and adding a little color to the hundred flower garden is not only my wish, but also my happiness." Today, this grass, which is willing to contribute and fearless of wind and rain, has long left a colorful scene in the land of the motherland. ^[5]

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