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The Influence of Confucianism and Daoism on the Changes of Chinese Painting Theories

From Figure Painting to Landscape (*shanshui*) Painting

Abstract

This article explains the characteristics of Chinese aesthetics through the basic concepts of original Confucianism and original Daoism. These theories all regard aesthetic activities as a whole integrated with life cultivation. But the Confucian view believes that from the individual to the country, harmony between all people and the imperial power can be achieved through musical education. The Daoist view believes that abandoning secular utilitarian thinking can remove all obstacles to the development of human nature and connect human nature with nature to achieve spiritual freedom. This attitude has become the process of the artist's pursuit of the highest artistic achievement. For further explanation, this article introduces the theories of figure painters Gu Kaizhi and Xie He, and the theories of landscape painters Guo Xi and Jing Hao. The change from figure painting to landscape painting is not only due to the influence of political reality, but also to the development of the theory of artistic creation based on the ideal realm advocated by Confucianism and Daoism.

Keywords

Confucianism, Daoism, figure painting, landscape painting, *shanshui*, Gu Kaizhi, Xie He, Guo Xi, Jing Hao

Introduction*

The main purpose of this article is to explain the ideology behind Chinese painting, which was influenced by the original Confucianism and the original Daoism, as well as the political environment, resulting in some particular statements in aesthetics. Traditional Chinese thought and traditional Chinese aesthetics have a wide range of concepts. In this article, we can only deal with partial problems and cannot consider them completely. Therefore, before proceeding to the main text, the author of this article would like to state some thinking principles related to this article to help readers read and understand the focus:

1. In traditional Chinese culture, there is no independent pure theory of aesthetics that considers the aesthetic idea or artistic creation as an independent taste isolated from daily personality cultivation.
2. In traditional Chinese art, the pursuit of goodness in the taste of the artist and the connoisseur is more important than the pursuit of goodness in the

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work produced. Therefore, the artworks of the highest realm must conform to the highest principles of the philosophy of life in order to be highly appraised.

3. The philosophical thoughts that influence the evaluation of traditional Chinese art are extremely diverse. Original Confucianism, original Daoism, Neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming dynasties, and Chinese Buddhist thought are the sources of ideas that influence the evaluation of traditional Chinese art. This article deals only with the influence of original Confucianism and original Daoism on the selected figure and landscape painters of the Wei and Jin Dynasties up to the Northern Song Dynasty.

1. The Characteristics of Confucianism and Daoism

The original concern of Chinese philosophical thought began with the exploration of the meaning and value of life. The external reason that triggered this problem was that during the era of Spring and Autumn and the Warring States, vassals were conquering each other and people were living a hard life.¹ The internal reason is to rediscover the constant value of life, and thus to explore the practical issues of virtue and find a way to restore human dignity. This path is a path of introspection. This path is not like Greek philosophy, which begins by asking “What is the origin of the universe?” and searching for the elements that make up the universe. This is a path of outward development.

Before Confucius, *ru zhe* (儒者, the Confucian literati) were just a group of masters of ceremonies. They could recite ancient classics and serve as priests of important ceremonies. They rely on these jobs to make a living. However, Confucius saw the spiritual value behind these rituals and classic books. He advocated restoring the ritual and music system of the Zhou Gong (周公) era, and gave this system a deeper humanistic value. Therefore, Confucius made Confucianism (儒家, *ru jia*, school of Ru) formally a philosophical school that influenced the world. According to Zhou Gong’s ritual and music system, it regulates the maintenance of personal self-cultivation to in respect to *parent – child* relationship, as well as the harmony of social relations, and allegiance to the imperial emperor, all moving towards a harmonious world under a system that emphasises ritual and music. Confucius’ further development of the Zhou Dynasty’s ritual and music system lies in his injecting the core concept of *benevolence* (*ren ai* 仁愛), into this system, making Confucianism not stick to the rules of red tape, but the nurturing of a complete personality that emphasises the value of human nature. Therefore, it has become the mainstream thinking of Chinese intellectuals.

Confucianism admires the ritual and music culture of the Zhou Dynasty and urges people to learn the various norms of life within the framework of the ritual and music system. However, not all thinkers agree with Confucianism. The most prominent opposition to Confucianism is Daoism. Laozi and Zhuangzi are the most important representatives of Daoist thought. They recognised that the decline of Zhou culture was due to excessive bureaucracy that distorted the true face of human nature. Therefore, Daoism advocates liberating the shackles that violate human nature and restoring human nature to its natural appearance. There is no dispute with the world, and people are one with heaven and earth.²

Comparing Confucianism and Daoism, Confucianism is dedicated to cultivating a person to become a humble gentleman. To become a gentleman, he

must receive a lot of humanistic education in order to succeed. This is an additive approach to education. Daoism, on the other hand, is just the opposite. Daoism is devoted to restoring a person to become a “real person”. It advocates the removal of various additional restrictions and allows sincere humanity to reveal itself naturally. This is a subtractive approach to education.

Regardless of Confucian philosophy or Daoist philosophy, there is no theory on how to create works of art or pure appreciation. That is, Confucianism and Daoism have no aesthetic theories in the sense of Western philosophy. However, because both Confucianism and Daoism pay attention to people’s self-cultivation skills (*gong fu* 功夫), and this kind of self-cultivation activities do not only rely on purely rational speculative activities, but more importantly, they strive to make people, as a moral practitioner, able to maintain their affection at any time in a state of balance. It can even be reconciled with heaven and earth. This moral practitioner also attains a higher state of his virtue through the proper expression of affection. This state is not only subject to rigid moral precepts, but is a state of fulfilment due to the practice of an action that conforms to human feelings and human nature. This ideology has influenced the representation of Chinese art and the leisure tastes of Chinese people. This attitude to life represents a unique aesthetic view. This aesthetic view is not aestheticism, but an aesthetic view consistent with wisdom and virtue.

2. The Aesthetic View of Confucianism

The aesthetics of Confucianism can be said to be the attitude of affection naturally revealed in the process of aspiring to become a “gentleman”. In the process of cultivating a gentleman, one must undergo long-term regular exercise. Etiquette requires certain laws, just as music also requires certain laws. From these similarities, we can understand why Confucianism pays attention to “the combination of ritual and music”. Therefore,

“Music comes from within, and ceremonies from without.” (*yue you zhong chu, li zi wai zuo* 樂由中出，禮自外作 – 禮記, 樂記, *Liji, Yue Ji*, 11)

The practice of etiquette lies in external performance, and the performance of music comes from inner emotions. Confucianism places great emphasis on the combination of ritual and music, claiming that its effect is to direct

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Mou Zongsan: “Zhou Wen developed into the Spring and Autumn Period and gradually became invalid. [...] I call it ‘Zhou Wen collapsed’ [*zhouwen pibi* 周文疲弊].” – Mou Zongsan, *Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy*, Student Book Co. Ltd., Taipei 1983. The so-called “Zhou Wen” means Zhou Dynasty culture. Zhou Dynasty culture was described as “ritual collapse and music destruction” (*li beng yue huai* 禮崩樂壞) in the Confucian era.

2

Laozi advocates “inaction” (*wu wei* 無為), he said: “When the Great Dao [道, Way or Method] ceased to be observed, benevolence and righteousness came into vogue. [Then]

appeared wisdom and shrewdness, and there ensued great hypocrisy. When harmony no longer prevailed throughout the six kinships, filial sons found their manifestation; when the states and clans fell into disorder, loyal ministers appeared.” (道德經, *Dao De Jing*, 18) Laozi also emphasises following the natural way (to be what it is): “Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Dao. The law of the Dao is its being what it is.” (*Dao De Jing*, 25) Zhuangzi emphasised the unity of man and nature, and he said: “Heaven, Earth, and I were produced together, and all things and I are one.” (莊子, 齊物論, *Zhuangzi, Qi Wu Lun – The Adjustment of Controversies*)

the inner thoughts of learners and their outer behaviour toward consensus. Therefore, a look at Confucian aesthetics shows that Confucianism pays special attention to music education.

“The Master said, ‘It is according to the rules of propriety’, they say. ‘It is according to the rules of propriety’, they say. Are gems and silk all that is meant by propriety? ‘It is music’, they say. ‘It is music’, they say. Are bells and drums all that is meant by music?’” (論語, 陽貨, *The Analects, Yang Huo*, 11)

From this sentence, it is clear that the etiquette and music valued by Confucianism is not the extrinsic ostentation or the high-end quality musical instruments that play music that determine the value of ritual and music. Thus, the “combination of ritual and music” to which Confucianism pays attention is not based on material conditions or external forms. So is the requirement of “combination of ritual and music” a condition that emphasises spirituality? Confucius pointed out that this spiritual condition lies in the cultivation of “benevolence”.

“The Master said, ‘If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with the rites of propriety? If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with music?’” (論語, 八佾, *The Analects, Ba Yi*, 3)

This also shows that Confucius believes that artistic cultivation is not related to material and external behaviour. Confucian musical education is not only in personal cultivation, but must also be extended to the actual promotion of governmental affairs. One of Confucius’ disciples, Zi You (子游), hold public office in Wucheng (*wu cheng* 武城). Confucius went there and heard people playing music and singing everywhere (論語, 陽貨, *The Analects, Yang Huo*, 4) Confucius was very happy and believed that his disciples had governed the city in line with Confucian ideals.

To enter the aesthetic world of Confucianism, Confucius pointed out that *the Book of Poetry* (詩經, Shi Jing) is the best guide for artistic education. The poems in the *Book of Poetry*, from a literary point of view, including the life and emotional expression of people from all walks of life. On the other hand, they also include combining music to sing verses with music.

“The Master said, ‘It is by the Odes that the mind is aroused. It is by the Rules of Propriety that the character is established. It is from Music that the finish is received.’” (論語, 泰伯, *The Analects, Tai Bo*, 8)

The study of the *Book of Poetry* can arouse the emotion and interest of Confucians. Music education is the completion of Confucian education. It can be said that the study and development of Confucianism are related to affection at the beginning and end. Why does Confucius pay special attention to the *Book of Poetry*?

“The Master said, ‘My children, why do you not study the *Book of Poetry*? The Odes serve to stimulate the mind. They may be used for purposes of self-contemplation. They teach the art of sociability. They show how to regulate feelings of resentment. From them you learn the more immediate duty of serving one’s father, and the remoter one of serving one’s prince. From them we become largely acquainted with the names of birds, beasts, and plants.’” (論語, 陽貨, *The Analects, Yang Huo*, 9)

Confucius saw that the function of the *Book of Poetry* is “to stimulate the mind”, “to interest the self-contemplation”, “to teach the art of sociability”, and “to regulate feelings of resentment”. Its content includes the life content and life attitude of people of all strata in ancient times, and it is related to

ethics, aesthetics, and knowledge. Thus, this is an important teaching material for Confucian education. Regarding the emotions conveyed from the *Book of Poetry*, Confucius pointed out “innocence” and “emotional peace”.

“The Master said, ‘In the *Book of Poetry* are three hundred pieces, but the design of them all may be embraced in one sentence – ‘Having no depraved thoughts.’” (論語, 為政, *The Analects*, *Wei Zheng*, 2)

“The Master said, ‘The *Guan Ju* is expressive of enjoyment without being licentious, and of grief without being hurtfully excessive.’” (論語, 八佾, *The Analects*, *Ba Yi*, 20)

This is exactly in line with the Confucian attitude of the mean.

Confucius was both a connoisseur and a true performer for his musical attainments. Confucius reviews Emperor Yao and Emperor Shun’s music and Zhou Wuwang’s (*zhou wu wang* 周武王, King Wu) music, then he said:

“The Master said of the *Shao* [*shao* 韶, the music of Emperor Yao (*yao* 堯) and Emperor Shun (*shun* 舜)] that it was perfectly beautiful and also perfectly good. He said of the *Wu* [music of King Wu] that it was perfectly beautiful but not perfectly good.” (*The Analects*, *Ba Yi*, 25)

King Wu of the Zhou Dynasty relied on force to overthrow the tyranny of Shang Zhou. Although he obeyed the law of heaven and listened to the pleas of the people, his music was inspiring but not perfect because of the killing. The music of the Yao and Shun periods reflects the peace of the world at that time, so it is perfect. These words reflect Confucius’ belief that supreme beauty consists not only in possessing sensitive pleasure, but also in preserving both: sensitive beauty and moral goodness.

Confucius’ appreciation for the Shao music (韶樂, the music of Emperor Yao and Emperor Shun) in Qi State (*qi guo* 齊國) was recorded in *The Analects*, *Shu Er* (*lun yu*, *shu er* 論語, 述而) and *Shuoyuan*, *Xiuwen* (*shuo yuan*, *xiu wen* 說苑, 脩文)³ the latter has a more complete description of the scene:

“Confucius arrived at the gate of King City of Qi [*Qi guo men* 齊郭門] and saw a child carrying a hip *flask* and walking in synchrony with Confucius’ carriage. The child’s eyes were focused, his mental integrity was upright, and his behaviour was upright. Confucius told the master of carriage driving the carriage to speed up. At the beginning of the music of Shao, Confucius went to the place where the music was played. After listening to the music of Shao, he still missed the melody of Shao for a long time (about three months), and even ignored the delicious taste of meat. So, music is not just to enjoy myself, but also to have fun with others; music is not only to correct my own behaviour, but also to correct the behaviour of others! For this music, I never imagined so beautiful.”

When Confucius heard *Shao Yue*’s performance, he sighed that “for three months did not know the taste of meat”. “Three months” is not an accurate time length, but it means that the time span is quite long.⁴ In the ancient diet, meat was not always available, and meat had to be present at special banquets

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The Analects (論語) is a record of Confucius’ disciples what Confucius taught them during his lifetime. The whole book contains 20 volumes, and *Shu Er* (述而) is the name of one of them. *Shuoyuan* (說苑) is a collection of novels written by Liu Xiang (劉向) in the Han Dynasty. It contains some historical stories and legends from the pre-Qin to the Western Han Dynasty. The whole book is composed of 20 volumes, and *Xiuwen* (脩文) is the name of one volume.

4

Zhu Xi believes that Confucius’ so-called ignorance of meat tastes is because listening to this music makes him concentrate on the music itself, so he completely loses interest in other things. He uses this metaphor to praise the composer of this music to be a saint in order to have the realm of this music. Cf. Xi Zhu, *Annotations to the Four Books*, The World Book Co., Ltd., Taipei 1974, p. 44.

or ceremonies. Meat is considered a delicacy and eating meat is a high form of food enjoyment. Compared to music, the enjoyment of *Shao* music is the highest enjoyment of listening. For Confucius, the pleasure of listening to *Shao* music is greater than the pleasure of eating meat, which means that music with cultural significance exceeds mere appetite. Confucius pointed out that music is not only personal entertainment but can also entertain others. Music not only corrects a person's behaviour but also corrects the behaviour of other people who listen to the music.

Confucius learning music performance not only learns performance skills but also deeply understands the author's spirit. According to the record of *Kongzi Jiayu, Bian Yue Jie* (孔子家語, 辯樂解),⁵ Confucius learned the zither (*gu qin* 古琴) from his teacher (Shi Xiang 師襄). Confucius learned to play the zither not only with proficiency, but also thinking about the meaning of the song from the playing, the composer's personality, and Confucius' feelings the tunes he learned were those made by Zhou Wen Wang (周文王), and Shi Xiang was shocked and admired by Confucius' intuitive ability. This story shows that Confucius' attitude towards music is not a superficial presentation of skills, but a deeper understanding of the meaning of the work in order to grasp the essence of art.

The highest value of all aesthetic appreciation is to obtain pleasure, which Confucius called "le" (*joy 樂*). Confucius praised his most favourite disciple Yan Hui;

"The Master said, 'Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui! With a single bamboo dish of rice, a single gourd dish of drink, and living in his mean narrow lane, while others could not have endured the distress, he did not allow his joy to be affected by it. Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui!' (論語, 雍也, *The Analects, Yong Ye*, 11)

Confucius did not appreciate Yan Hui's poor life, but he saw that even though Yan Hui lived a poor life, he was not affected by external influences at all, and he was happy to discuss about the so-called "Great Way" (*da dao* 大道) with the teacher. Therefore, what makes Yan Hui joyful is not the material conditions of poverty, but the spiritual joy that he feels for pursuing the "Great Way" is not affected by the lack of material.

"The Master said, 'The wise find pleasure in water; the virtuous find pleasure in hills. The wise are active; the virtuous are tranquil. The wise are joyful; the virtuous are long-lived.'" (論語, 雍也, *The Analects, Yong Ye*, 23)

This is Confucius' explanation of the highest state of his education. Both wise people and people with benevolent heart have the direction to obtain spiritual satisfaction. For Confucians, they are both wise and benevolent. The happiness of their spiritual world as high as a mountain, as deep as water, and thus obtain the happiness of life. And the things that Confucius feels happy are the same as what his disciple Zeng Dian once said:

"'In this, the last month of spring, with the dress of the season all complete, along with five or six young adult men, and six or seven boys, I would wash in the Yi [*yi shui* 沂水 – Yi river], enjoy the breeze among the rain altars, and return home singing.' The Master heaved a sigh and said, 'I give my approval to Dian.'" (論語, 先進, *The Analects, Xian Jin*, 26)

To sum up the above statement, Confucius' aesthetic view is not purely restricted to artistic activities in a narrow sense but develops life aesthetics. In daily life, although you abide by the etiquette and laws, you can find the spiritual joy⁶ of the etiquette and music life in the life of the rules.

3. Daoist Aesthetics

Central to Daoist thought is the advocacy of nature and the liberation of the soul. This thought is on the opposite side of Confucianism and rejects any intentional creation. It seeks integration with heaven, earth and nature and allows the spirit to float freely between heaven and earth. Daoist aesthetics was developed based on this ideal. If the aesthetics of Confucianism is closely related to musical activities, the aesthetics of Daoism is more closely related to spatial landscape activities.⁷

In Daoist thought, apart from “Dao” or “Heaven” as the absolute basis of metaphysics, other changes in the natural world or human preferences are all relative. Nothing is absolute in the environment of our daily life. From a variety of different perspectives, everything can be seen in relative nature. Those who can see this relativity, imitate Dao is everywhere, and are willing to accept all kinds of possibilities, are those who conform to Daoist ideals. The basic spirit of Daoism lies in conforming to the original nature of things, “nature”, and not deliberately imposing a property that is irrelevant to its nature with personal will. This is the so-called “doing nothing” (*wu wei* 無為), allowing things to develop toward their natural nature. Daoism itself is not intended to create a theory dedicated to aesthetic consciousness, but the examples of Daoism or the display of Daoism spirit happen to meet the attitudes required for artistic creation and art appreciation, so we can sort out an aesthetic attitude starting from Daoism.

Regarding the application of the nature of “Dao” to the aesthetic attitude, Laozi said:

“It is because everyone under Heaven recognizes beauty as beauty, that the idea of ugliness exists. And equally if everyone recognized virtue as virtue, this would merely create fresh conceptions of wickedness. For truly Being and Not-being grow out of one another. Difficult and easy complete one another. Long and short test one another. High and low determine one another. Pitch and mode give harmony to one another. Front and back give sequence to one another. Therefore, the Sage relies on actionless activity, carries on wordless teaching. But the myriad creatures are worked upon by him; he does not disown them. He rears them, but does not lay claim to them. Controls them, but does not lean upon them. Achieves his aim, but does not call attention to what he does. And for the very reason that he does not call attention to what he does. He is not ejected from fruition of what he has done.” (道德經, *Dao De Jing*, Ch. 2)

Regarding the application of the nature of “Dao” to the aesthetic attitude, Zhuangzi said:

“[The operations of] Heaven and Earth proceed in the most admirable way, but they say nothing about them; the four seasons observe the clearest laws, but they do not discuss them; all things have their complete and distinctive constitutions, but they say nothing about them. The sages trace out the admirable operations of Heaven and Earth, and reach to and understand the distinctive constitutions of all things; and thus, it is that the Perfect Man (is said to) do nothing and the

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Kongzi Jiayu (孔子家語) is a work written by scholars in the Han and Qin dynasties describing Confucius' thoughts and life. *Bian Yue Jie* (辯樂解) is the title of one of them.

6

Xu Fuguan believes that Confucianism hides in the depths of life with conscience (*liang xin* 良心), conscience and emotion merge, and through the expression of music, life is artistic

and moral at the same time. Cf. Fuguan Xu, *The Spirit of Chinese Art*, Student Book Co. Ltd., Taipei 1984, pp. 26–27.

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Xu Fuguan believes: “The influence of Zhuangzi's spirit on literature has never been purely in painting.” – *Ibid.*, p. 134.

Greatest Sage to originate nothing, such language showing that they look to Heaven and Earth as their model.” (莊子, 知北游, *Zhuangzi, Zhi bei you – Knowledge Rambling in the North*)

Zhuangzi's thoughts have vivid descriptions of the realm of music and painting. For example, in the story of “Paoding jie niu” (庖丁解牛, “Chef slaughter cattle”) (*Zhuangzi, yang sheng zhu* 莊子, 養生主), it is mentioned that Paoding's (the Chef) knife used to kill cattle has been used for 19 years, but the sharpness of the blade is the same as that of a newly sharpened knife because he never uses a knife to chop the bones of cattle. Use a knife to cut the gap between the cattle's joints so that the blade will not be dull. When Paoding was killing the cattle, he only saw the part that the knife was going to pass, but he didn't see the whole cattle. And he kills cattle based on his intuition, and the whole process is as smooth as a court dance and music. In the end, even the slaughtered cattle did not realize that it had been dismembered.

The story of Zhuangzi emphasises the elimination of the opposition between subjective and objective, and the contradiction between technology and object. Engaging in technical work has advanced to the realm of “Dao”. This means that the highest level of artistic expression is no longer just an immutable technique, but rises to the realm of the unity of the creator and the spirit of heaven. Technique is an ability that can be acquired through learning, but art surpasses technology. Artists must cultivate the ability of intuitive nature and apply this intuition to artistic creation. This state is regarded as the most advanced expression of Chinese art.

In addition, Zhuangzi's discussion on the effort of cultivation is the most valued *xinzhai* (心齋, fasting of the mind) and *zuowang* (坐忘, sitting and forgetting sensation and conception). The original text of *xinzhai* is as below:

“Maintain a perfect unity in every movement of your will, you will not wait for the hearing of your ears about it, but for the hearing of your mind. You will not wait even for the hearing of your mind, but for the hearing of the spirit. Let the hearing of the ears rest with the ears. Let the mind rest in the verification of the rightness of what is in the will. But the spirit is free from all pre-occupation and so waits for the appearance of things. Where the proper course is, there is freedom from all pre-occupation; such freedom is the fasting of the mind.” (*Zhuangzi, Renjianshi* 莊子, 人間世 – *Man in the World*)

The original text of *zuowang* is as below:

“My connexion with the body and its parts is dissolved; my perceptive organs are discarded. Thus leaving my material form, and bidding farewell to my knowledge, I am become one with the Great Pervader. This I call sitting and forgetting all things.” (*Zhuangzi, Dazongshi* 莊子, 大宗師 – *The Great and Most Honoured Master*)

Although *xinzhai* and *zuowang* are two different terms, their fundamental meanings are the same. According to the Daoist analysis of the cognitive function of ordinary people, there are two sources, one is sense perception and the other is the understanding of reason. Sense perception relies on the perceptual stimuli of the body and rational understanding relies on concepts and symbols. Both methods are human-based ways of understanding. However, Daoism believes that there is a third way of knowing, which is to eliminate the senses and reason, eliminate the prejudices in the mind, and let all things between heaven and earth communicate directly with the mind so that the mind can receive the great knowledge of heaven and earth. *Xinzhai* and *zuowang* are regarded as the spiritual cultivation efforts of Zhuangzi's thought, and such skills are regarded by traditional Chinese artists as the highest state of art.

4. The Theories of Figure Painting: Gu Kaizhi and Xie He

Confucianism became the official philosophical thought in the Han Dynasty, which contributed to the stability of the imperial government. Confucianism became a tool of the ruler, and even used the dogma of Confucianism to stifle political critics. Thus, at the end of the Han dynasty, the opposing intellectuals criticised the court and politics and evaluated the court and opposition figures and their personalities in a *qingtan* (清談, *pure conversations*)⁸ way. This triggered a greater political struggle.

This dark struggle lasted into the following Wei and Jin dynasties. In order not to be killed, the opposition's intellectuals shifted their evaluation of characters from the realm of morality to the realm of beauty, paying attention to the beauty of the characters' temperament and spirit. The formation of the aesthetics of characters in this atmosphere also promoted the development of figure painting and the aesthetic theory of figure painting in art.

Xu Fuguan's comment on the times as below:

"In a nutshell, the artistic performance of human ethic evaluation at that time was inspired by Xuanxue [玄學, Mystic learning], and actually was inspired by the spirit of Zhuangxue [莊學, ideas of Zhuangzi]. It was necessary to grasp the person's spirit by one's behaviour; that is, to be based on the first natural form of man, in order to discover the second natural form of man, the beauty of man's artistic form is achieved. And the beauty of this artistic form is based on the life sentiment of Zhuangxue as its content. Human ethics evaluation [*renlun jianshi* 人倫鑑識] has completely got rid of the practicality of morality and the practicality of politics and has become the taste and appreciation of the beauty of human appearance by the family nobles at that time."⁹

Xu Fuguan also pointed out:

"Although painting has a very ancient history, the self-consciousness of painting and the completion of the artistic self-discipline of painting cannot but be said to have started from the Wei and Jin Dynasties. [...] Gu Kaizhi in the Jin Dynasty, [...] can best represent the above-mentioned conscious content derived from the human ethic evaluation."¹⁰

Due to political factors encouraged the literati in the Wei and Jin Dynasties to evaluate officials in the court in a way of so-called *qingtan*, and contributed to Liu Shao's (劉邵, ca. 168 – ca. 249) *Renwu Zhi* (人物誌, *On Character*) in philosophical thinking. Liu Shao's evaluation is that "moderation and peace" (*zhonghe* 中和) is the highest, and he is bland and tasteless, and he is a saint.¹¹ The so-called *zhonghe* lies in the two levels of "bland" and "intelligent". Intelligent is the talent, while bland is the realm of life. It is not only the level of moral cultivation but also the aesthetics of "full range of humanity".¹² Artists, intellectuals, and court officials were active in the same social class,

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Qingtan means: Intellectuals' philosophical discussions in the Wei-Jin era used Laozi's and Zhuangzi's thought as the content and did not involve any practical matters.

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F. Xu, *The Spirit of Chinese Art*, p. 157.

10

Ibid., p. 158.

11

Liu Shao, *Renwu Zhi*, Bk. 1, *Jiu Zheng*. See also Jiaju Wu, *Commentary on Renwu Zhi*,

San Min Bookstore Co. Ltd., Taipei 2003, pp. 7–8.

12

Mou Zongsan believes that *Renwu Zhi* is to appreciate people's lives and personality. It appreciates the person as person wholly, as he is. This book is an insight into "full range of humanity". And, it is an aesthetics about humanity. See: Zongsan Mou, *Talent and Metaphysics* [*Caixing Yu Xuanli* 才性與玄理], Student Bookstore, Taipei 1974, pp. 44–46.

and were influenced by the tastes of the characters, so the popular trend of figure painting emerged.

According to Xu Fuguan's theory,¹³ painting should be produced at the same time as human history and culture, but the painter's consciousness of painting began in the Jin Dynasty. In his theory he mentioned "the first natural form of man" and "the second natural form of man". The first arises from the natural appearance of man, while the second arises from the moral reflection of man and the appearance of self-knowledge of the character of the body. This change makes painting not only a craft art of description but also an action according to criticism and reflection. To praise and highlight the qualities of the person. With this way of thinking, the person who makes the portrait becomes a true artist of painting.

4.1. Gu Kaizhi (顧愷之)

Gu Kaizhi (345 – 408) was born in the Jin Dynasty. About his characteristics, some people put forward:

"There are three marvelous features of Kaizhi: paintings, talents, and infatuation."¹⁴

The so-called "the marvelous of paintings" refers to his exquisite painting. The so-called "the marvelous of talent" refers to his versatility in literature and art. The so-called "infatuation" refers to his wisdom, exaggeration, and joker.¹⁵

The main proposition that Gu Kaizhi puts forward in figure painting is "Chuan shen xie zhao" (傳神寫照, vivid portrayal). According to the concept of character evaluation at that time, everyone is consisting of two parts: "physical" (or body shape) and "spirit". From the visible posture of a person, we intuitively feel this person's spiritual characteristics, which is in line with the theory of Liu Shao's *Renwu Zhi*. However, in the practice of creating paintings, the painter can only use brush and ink to depict the external image of the characters. How to express a person's spirit from a figure painting is exactly what Gu Kaizhi is concerned about. Gu Kaizhi believes that the key lies in "the expression of the eyes" of the characters. Gu Kaizhi had a conversation about this viewpoint:

"Gu Kaizhi painted figure paintings, often were putting aside for several years, and the eyes of the figures were not completed. Someone asked him why. Gu Kaizhi replied: Whether the body's hands and feet are beautiful [*si ti yan chi* 四體妍蚩] has nothing to do with the success of a figure painting. To achieve a vivid portrayal, the key is to grasp the eyes of the characters." (世說新語, 巧藝, *Shishuo xinyu, Qiao yi; Essays and Criticism, Exquisite Craftsmanship*)

Gu Kaizhi's painting theory can be summarised as:

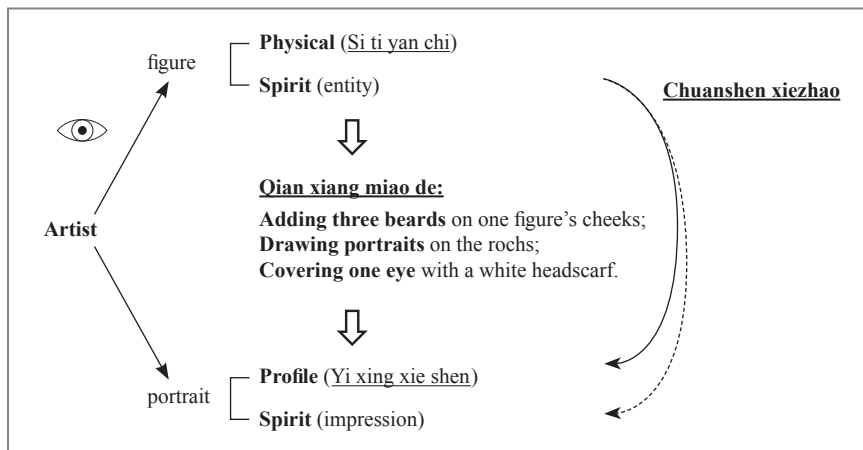
- A. The painter looks at a person and sees that he has both "posture" and "spirit" at the same time, and the "eyes" of the character can best express the "spirit" of this person.¹⁶
- B. The painter's figure paintings also need to show both the "posture" and the "spirit" of the character in the picture. This technical requirement is called "Yi xing xie shen" (以形寫神, depict the spirit by posture). The main point of this action is that the eyes of the characters should meet together, which is the so-called "wu dui" (晤對, looking at each other).¹⁷
- C. How does an artist achieve "Yi xing xie shen"? He must use his imagination to express the spirit of the realistic characters on the body lines of the figure paintings through the method of association. This method is called

“Qian xiang miao de”¹⁸ (遷想妙得, the wonderful achievement of association of ideas).

The specific cases of Gu Kaizhi’s so-called “Qian xiang miao de” include:

- A. Adding three beards on one figure’s cheeks: Pei Kai (裴楷) is praised “smart and verve”, Gu Kaizhi added three beards to his cheeks on Pei Kai’s portrait to emphasise his character.
- B. Drawing portraits on the rocks: Courtier Xie Kun (謝鯤) thought that he had a great idea of cultivating his temperament in the countryside, so Gu Kaizhi painted his portrait on the rock.
- C. Covering one eye with a white headscarf: Yin Zhongkan (殷仲堪) was blinded one eye by an accident, and he was unwilling to let Gu Kaizhi portray him. Gu Kaizhi suggested putting a headscarf on his blind eyes to cover it, which relieved Yin Zhongkan’s worries.

Gu Kaizhi’s “Chuan shen xie zhao” can be illustrated by the following diagram:



¹³ Cf. footnote 10 and footnote 11.

¹⁴ Yanyuan Zhang (張彥遠, Tang Dynasty), 歷代名畫記 [Annals of Famous Painters of Successive Dynasties], Bk. V, The Commercial Press Ltd., Taipei 1965, p. 171.

¹⁵ Tianshou Pan, “Gu Kaizhi”, in: Tianshou Pan et al., *Criticism and Biography of Painters in Past Dynasties: Before Tang*, China Bookstore Hong Kong Branch, Hong Kong 1979, ²1986, p. 1.

¹⁶ Cf. Yiqing Liu (劉義慶, Southern Dynasties), *Shi Shuo Xin Yu: Qiao Yi*, Shijie Bookstore, Taipei 1974, pp. 449–450.

¹⁷ The words “Wu Duei” mean looking at each other. Gu Kaizhi believes that the eyes of the characters in a painting must meet each other to make the picture alive and unity. Cf. Yanyuan Zhang (Tang Dynasty), *Annals of Famous Painters of Successive Dynasties*, Bk. V, The Commercial Press Ltd., Taipei 1965, pp. 182–183.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 178. The Phrase “Qian xiang miao de” means “get wonderful results through association”.

4.2. Xie He (謝赫)

Xie He's proposition of "Qi Yun Sheng Dong" (Vivid spirit and rhyme) is an important statement that has influenced Chinese painting thought for thousands of years. This proposition is derived from Xie He's "Gu Hua Pin Lu Xu" (古畫品錄序, *Preface to the Evaluation of Painters from Antiquity*).¹⁹

Xie He put forward the "six methods" in this preface, namely: 1. "qi yun sheng dong" (氣韻生動, vivid spirit and rhythm); 2. "gu fa yong bi" (骨法用筆, method of constructing framework and using brush); 3. "ying wu xiang xing" (應物象形, matching the object and image), 4. "sui lei fu cai" (隨類賦彩, matching the object species and colours), 5. "jing ying wei zhi" (經營位置, consider the completeness of the composition), 6. "chuan yi mo xie" (傳移摹寫, appropriation and mimesis). These six methods are proposed to serve as a standard for appreciating or evaluating portrait paintings.

"Qi Yun Sheng Dong" is the overall effect of appreciating figure painting, which can only be revealed after the completion of the work. The following five requirements are all technical items required in the production process of the figure painting.

Before Xie He, there were separate concepts of *qi* (氣) and *rhyme* (韻) in Chinese philosophical thinking. The concept of *qi* can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn Period. Both Confucianism and Daoism have theories about the concept of *qi*. In contrast, the concept of *rhyme* came out relatively late. But Xie He is the first person in history to combine *qi* and *yun* to form the term *qi-yun*. However, the literature that has been handed down so far has no explanation on how Xie He defines the meaning of *qi-yun*. Therefore, later generations have produced many various interpretations of the meaning of *qi-yun*.

Confucianism basically believes that moral character is equivalent to academic attainment, and Guo Ruoxu (郭若虛) further combines character and painting quality on this theoretical basis.²⁰ That is to say, learning, morality, and art are not independent fields, but the performance centred on moral cultivation.

5. The Turn from Figure Painting to Landscape (*shanshui*) Painting

The intellectuals in the turbulent times can draw no spiritual comfort from the aesthetic evaluation of the literati. The "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove",²¹ the most typical representatives of the intellectuals in the Wei and Jin dynasties, adopted an uncooperative attitude toward the Jin court. They did not adhere to rituals and laws in their lives, were silent and practised inactivity. They gathered for drinking and singing in the bamboo grove. Their works expose and satirise the hypocrisy of the Sima (司馬) court, but in the end, they were either killed or submitted to the court and are eventually dissolved separately. This phenomenon makes the intellectuals understand that the ultimate value of aesthetics is not in the erratic life. It caused the intellectuals to be more negative towards politics, to turn to the life in the mountains and forests, to stay away from the hustle and bustle, and to seek a spiritual union with nature. This awakening of the intellectual world affected the themes of artistic creation, and the creative interest of artists shifted from figure painting to landscape painting.

Xu Fuguan pointed out:

“Although the consciousness of the vividness of figure paintings beginning in the Wei and Jin Dynasties – that is, Vivid spirit and rhyme – is influenced by Zhuang Xue; however, the artistic spirit of Zhuang Xue must not be satisfied by painting with figures as objects; nature, especially it is the natural landscape that is the place where the Zhuang Xue spirit unexpectedly comes down.”²²

Landscape (*shanshui* 山水) painting, although its pictures have landscape layouts such as mountains, woods, trees, stones, small bridges, running water, fisherman and woodcutter, trails, etc., but as a display of the spirit of Zhuang Xue, it is just like the unreal scenes as in fables of *Zhuangzi*. The plots in the fables such as Monster fish “Kun” and “Da-peng” (大鵬, Great roc) in *Zhuangzi*, *xiao yao you* (莊子, 逍遙遊),²³ do not really exist in the real world, but the infinite expansion of imagination. In the same way, the picture of Chinese *shanshui* painting is not a real-world sketching of any real scenes. It is the artist’s use of imagination to combine elements of landscapes from various places to create a spiritual home for a hermit. In the inner world of traditional Chinese literati, there is a desire to retreat to the mountains and forests, but the limitations of the real world make it impossible for most literati to hide in the mountains and forests. Through the scenery of *shanshui* painting, at least these literati who have no chance to hide in the mountains and forests can use their artistic imagination to transform themselves into the figures in the paintings and swim in nature, thereby satisfying the needs of the soul.

Due to the above conditions, *shanshui* painting has become the most important type of painting in Chinese painting tradition. Appreciation of this kind of painting must be combined with Daoist thought to realise the mystery inside the painting. In this kind of painting, man and nature must be combined. All *shanshui* paintings do not show uninhabited wild places. There must be traces of human activities in the paintings, such as a wooden bridge, a boat tied to the shore, a roof corner behind a forest, etc. Everywhere this scene is a world where man and nature intersect, a world that makes the soul calm and pure.

19

Xie He, “Gu Hua Pin Lu Xu”, cited from: Yu Kun (ed.), 中國畫論類編, *Zhongguo Hua Lun Lei Bian* [Collected Articles of Chinese Painting Theory], Taipei, Huazheng Bookstore, Taipei 1977, p. 355.

20

In Song Dynasty, Guo Ruoxu (郭若需) said: “If one’s personality [*ren pin* 人品] is already high, then the rhyme of life (*qi-yun* 氣韻) of the portrait cannot but high proportionally.” – In his view, a successful figure painting does not lie in the achievement of skills, but in the height of the painter’s subjective cultivation. This view can find relevant theoretical basis in both the self-cultivation of Confucianism and the self-cultivation of Daoism (*Tuhua Lianwen Zi* 圖畫見聞志, *A record of what one sees and hears about paintings*).

21

The seven sages of the bamboo grove (*Zhu Lin Qi Xian* 竹林七賢) include: Ruan Ji (阮籍), Liu Ling (劉伶), Ji Kang (嵇康), Ruan

Xian (阮咸), Shan Dao (山濤), Wang Rong (王戎), and Xiang Xiu (向秀). The term of “seven sages of the bamboo forest” were first seen in the *Biography of Ji Kang* in the *Book of Jin Dynasty* (晉書·嵇康傳). See Xuanling Fang (房玄齡), *Jin Shu* (晉書), The Commercial Press, Taipei 2010, p. 5305.

22

F. Xu, *The Spirit of Chinese Art*, p. 228.

23

The word *Xiaoyao* (逍遙) originally meant *unfettered*. Zhuangzi realised that all the pursuits of fame and fortune in life restrict the attainment of spiritual freedom, so he advocated treating everything with an attitude of “doing nothing” (無為) and “no expectancy” (無待) in order to obtain spiritual freedom. Being able to achieve this kind of accomplishment is to be able to spiritually “travel” (遊) all spiritual ideal worlds.

6. The Theories of Landscape Painting: Guo Xi and Jing Hao

6.1. Guo Xi (郭熙)

The Song Dynasty painters brought the works of shanshui painting and the theory of shanshui painting to a new historical height high point. One of the most famous representatives is Guo Xi (Ca. 1000 – 1087). His theories on Shanshui painting are assembled in “Linqan gaozhi” (林泉高致), which he completed together with his son. He explains why ordinary literati like Shanshui painting in this book, which also contains the spirit of Confucianism and Daoism.

Since ancient times, Chinese intellectuals have had the concept of

“The student, having completed his learning, should apply himself to be an officer.” (*xue er you ze shi* 學而優則仕; 論語, 子張, *The Analects, Zi Zhang*, 13)

They studied the classics of Confucianism and its principles and internalised them as their own principles of dealing with others. Guo Xi believed that the literati had a responsibility to support their parents, take care of their wives and children in the family, and also had a further responsibility to serve the country. But returning to a natural and simple life was always an inner voice. In this dilemma, a painter who is good at painting can paint a *shanshui* work so that he (the literate person) does not have to leave his surroundings and can look at the works as if already sitting next to the waterfall and could hear the sounds of the monkeys, the singing of the birds, and the images of the mountains and water that fulfil his own vision. This situation makes him very happy. Guo Xi believed that the standard for appreciating *shanshui* paintings is that this work can awaken my love for the mountains, forests and springs, and this is a work that has been highly praised. On the other hand, if you look at the work from the point of view of the price of money, it has little value.²⁴

Guo Xi believed that the most affirmed argument in the world is that the conditions for a good *shanshui* painting are: you can walk along (*ke xing* 可行,) in the scenery, you can look up (*ke wang* 可望) in the scenery, you can go sightseeing (*ke you* 可遊) in the scenery, and you can live in (*ke ju* 可居) this scenery. Shanshui painting that meet these four conditions are amazing works. But “can live in” and “can go sightseeing” are better than “can walk along” and “can look up”.²⁵ Guo Xi extends from the appreciation of paintings to reality, connecting the appreciation experience of the works to the appreciation experience of the real landscape. In the final analysis, he believes that this is the result of human preference.

From Guo Xi’s commentary on why literati love *shanshui* paintings, it is clear that he and many literati were deeply influenced by Confucianism. The purpose of studying and learning is to serve public affairs, but the inner world still hopes to live a dull and comfortable life. Such ideas come from Confucianism. These ideas are similar to the attitude and aspirations of Confucius and his disciples discussing life in *Analects*.²⁶

Confucius and many of his disciples talked about their own ambitions. Most people wanted to apply Confucius’ teachings to various political careers. Only Zeng Xi (曾皙) wanted to live a quiet life, and Confucius also agreed with this attitude to life. Such an attitude shows that Confucianism not only has the ideal of actively serving the public but also has a peaceful attitude of personal self-cultivation of the body and mind. This attitude towards life, especially the attitude towards private life, reached a new level during the Song

Dynasty. From Guo Xi’s explanation of why literati love *shanshui* painting, it can be seen that this is a moderate attitude that regulates positive outward service and the calmness of private life.

6.2. *Jing Hao* (荆浩)

According to Xu Fuguan’s textual research, it is believed that Jing Hao’s (ca. 850 – 911) work *Bi Fa Ji* (筆法記, *Notes On the Techniques of the Brush*) has two characteristics:

“One is that completely creative works that do not follow old works and simulate them, get rid of the influence of traditional figure painting theory, and create pure landscape painting theory. The second is to make a brief and profound criticism of the development of landscape painting in the Tang Dynasty.”²⁷

There are five topics in Jing Hao’s *Bi Fa Ji*. The first two topics are more similar to those discussed in this article: “Tu Zhen Lun” (圖真論, The Theory of Truth of Painting) and “Liu Yao Lun” (六要論, The Theory of Six Principles). “Tu Zhen Lun” explores the *shanshui* paintings express the “likeness” of the object image or the “truth” of the object; “Liu Yao Lun” explains the six creative skills and realms needed to achieve the truth of pictures. The author of this article believes that Jing Hao’s painting theory has been completely separated from the influence of Confucianism. As a painter, he is not limited by the notion of loyalty to the country and serving the people. His thinking transcends the secular and leans towards Zhuangzi’s Daoist thinking. This subsection intends to compare Zhuangzi’s “xinzhai” and “zuowang” with Jing Hao’s “Tu Zhen Lun” and “Liu Yao Lun”, echoing the levels of Daoist cultivation ranking in different artistic realms. In order to facilitate the reader’s comparison and understanding, I offer the following chart. The left side of the chart shows the three levels of Zhuangzi’s Xinzhai and Zuowang, and the right side of the chart shows the three levels of Jing Hao’s Six Principles.

The journey to the wisdom of transcendence	The journey of xinzhai (Zhuangzi)	The journey of zuowang (Zhuangzi)	The real work is full of spirit and material (真者氣質俱盛) (Jing Hao)	
			Subject	Object
The realm of Dao.	Dao dwells in the emptiness (fasting of the mind).	Become one with the Great Pervade (sitting and forgetting all things).	Observe the image of things and extract the truth (度物象而取其真).	The so-called picture is to draw (畫者畫也).

24
Jian-Hua Yu, *Classified Collection of Ancient Chinese Painting Theory*, Ren Min Fine Arts Publish, Bei Jing 1988, p. 632.

25
Ibid.

26
Confucius agrees with Zeng Dian’s attitude towards life, which can be regarded as the Confucian attitude towards life that is close to nature. Cf. *Analects*, *Xian Jin*, 26.

27
F. Xu, *The Spirit of Chinese Art*, pp. 283–284.

Knowing by Intuitive.	“Qi” free from all pre-occupation; waits for the appearance of things.	Leaving the concrete image and eliminating intelligence.	The first principle of “qi” (<i>yi yue qi</i> 一曰氣).	The second principle of “yun” (rhythm) (<i>yi yue qi</i> 二曰韻).
Knowing by Concept.	The mind is limited by the concept (or symbols).	Dismiss the intelligent.	The third principle of “si” (thinking) (<i>san yue si</i> 三曰思).	The fourth principle of “Jing” (scene) (<i>si yue jing</i> 四曰景).
Knowing by sensation.	Ears depend on hearing (sound).	Abolish the senses.	The fifth principle of “bi” (brush) (<i>wu yue bi</i> 五曰筆).	The sixth principle of “mo” (ink) (<i>liu yue mo</i> 六曰墨).

The left half of this chart analyses the triple cognition and spiritual realm of Xinzhai and Zuowang; the right half analyses the corresponding triple painting skills and painting realm of the theory of truth of painting and the theory of six principles.

The concept of *Qi* in Zhuangzi’s thought, especially its role in *xinzhai* and *zuowang*, deserves our attention. Just like the analysis of *xinzhai* and *zuowang* in Section 3 of this article, from the perspective of cognitive process, there are generally only perceptual knowledge and conceptual knowledge. In Zhuangzi’s philosophy, there is a higher level of transcendental intuition. It can be definitely affirmed that it is contacting everything through *qi*, and it can also negatively exclude perception and conceptual cognition. This state can only be achieved through *xinzhai* or *zuowang*. The so-called “by listening” and “by bodily contact” are both in the range of sensory perception; the so-called “in mind” and “in intelligent” functions are both at the level of conceptual cognition. When it comes to the level of *qi*, there is no concrete image, no abstract ideas (or innate ideas) are used to identify the objects to be known, the subject’s mind is kept empty so that the object directly enters the mind. There is no boundary between the mind and the object, to aim is to “become one with the Great Pervade”.

Jing Hao’s “Tu Zhen Lun” mentioned:

“... [*hua zhe hua ye* 畫者畫也] the so-called “picture is to draw” and it is also to observe the image of things and to extract the truth. Miscellaneous things are captured its complexity, and Simple things are captured its simplicity [...]. The real work is full of spirit [*qi*] and material (*zhen zhe qizhi ju sheng* 真者氣質俱盛).”²⁸

The proposition of “*hua zhe hua ye*” (the so-called picture is to draw) should not be interpreted as simply “tautology”. The second word “to draw” is not only a verbal, it also contains Jing Hao’s understanding of the essential meaning of “painting”. The so-called true “painting” is no longer just a noun or a mark, it contains the artist’s grasp of the essential meaning of painting, and the essential connotation of “painting” is summed up with the word *hua* (*painting*). Therefore, the connotation of the word *hua* has been enriched. It is no longer just an ordinary word in everyday language, but must be understood through a deeper theoretical level. The proposition of “*hua zhe hua ye*”

expresses the content that is not changed by any subject's mind, so this is an objective statement based on the existence of "hua".

Jing Hao must further define the "hua zhe hua ye" in the following discussion. This is what he called "observe the image of things and extract the truth". The word *du* (observe) is a verb that means survey and cogitate. *Du* is an action derived from the subject's initiative. This process of survey and cogitation is not exaggerated, distorted, or ignorant of the variation of facts, but is actually based on the true presentation of the object image, that is, "miscellaneous things are captured its complexity, and Simple things are captured its simplicity. Don't be paranoid about thinking that miscellaneous things are simple things". "The miscellaneous things" is an objective existence, and "capture" its miscellaneous is an action of the subject.

The definition of "Liu Yao" (六要, six essentials) is as follows:

There are six essentials in painting, the first is "qi", the second is "rhyme", the third is "thinking", the fourth is "scene", the fifth is "brush", and the sixth is "ink".

Following the principle of "qi", the mind does not presuppose the concept, and the movement of the brush moves with the object, and the captured object is clear. According to the principle of "rhyme", leaving no deliberate traces, highlighting the image of things, with all the details but not vulgar. According to the principle of "thinking", simplify the main features of things and carefully examine the shape of things. According to the principle of "scene", the framing must be in line with the season, collecting wonderful sceneries to create a real state. According to the principle of "brush", although following the regularity, the operation has to be various, but it is not too stereotyped and not too fancy, showing a leap and vivid picture. According to the principle of "ink", the color of ink has changes in intensity, light and dark, expressing the spatial changes of things, with natural levels, and no traces of strokes can be seen.

These six essentials do not have to be equal to six stages of different levels, but can be formed in groups of two to form three stages, in contrast to the above-mentioned three stages of Zhuangzi's "Xinzhai" and "Zuowang", to reach the overall transcendence of knowledge. In this way, the contrast relationship formed. This is the highest stage with *qi* – the first stage is *rhyme*, *thinking* – *scene* is the second stage, and *brush* – *ink* is the lowest stage. In each phase of comparison, you can find the part that is inclined to the subject and the part that is inclined to the object. In the process of aesthetic appreciation, or the creation of art works, there is a side that belongs to the subject and a side that belongs to the object. The subject side is the active, internal, intentional starting point, and the judgmental subject. The object side is as passive, explicit, the end of intention, and created output. The integration on the opposite sides of the subject and the object is the so-called "the real work is full of spirit and material".

From the perspective of an appreciator, we can look from top to bottom, that is, to look at the overall realm first, and directly enter the "realm of contemplating Dao". In Zhuangzi's words, it means "Dao dwell in the emptiness"

and “become one with the Great Pervade”. For Jing Hao, it means “the so-called picture is to draw, and observe the image of things and extract the truth”. Among them, to “observe” the image of things and to extract the “truth” is to examine the object image mainly with spiritual activities, and the goal is to achieve the “truth”. For this reason, “to observe the image of things and extract the truth” can be regarded as the activity of the subject. “The so-called picture is to draw” focuses on defining the meaning of “picture”, which is for a work that has already been released, so it can be regarded as an objective result.

Among the three stages of the “six essentials”, the highest stage of *qi – rhyme*, presents the knowledge that is just as Knowing by Intuitive: “free from all pre-occupation; waits for the appearance of things” and “leaving the concrete image and eliminating intelligence”.

In the next stage of *thinking – scene*, it is obvious that “thinking” means the subject side, and “scene” means the object side. The definition of “thinking”: simplify the main features of things and concentrating the shape of things. It emphasises the operation of conceptual thinking. Both “simplify” and “concentrating” are one kind of abstraction. The definition of “scene”: the framing must be in line with the season, collecting wonderful sceneries to create a real state. They all show the true connotation of the object world. In this world expressed through images, there are many “wonderful” and “real” scenes that present a variety of colours, which require an aesthetic mind to reproduce.

The third stage *brush – ink* is the result of starting from the level of perceptual knowledge. On the subject side it is “brush”, on the object side it is “ink”. The subject moves the brush while leaving the ink marks the object on the picture.

7. Conclusion

From the beginning, the author of this article believes that in the traditional Chinese thought, there is no intention to create a unique aesthetic taste or develop a unique aesthetic theory (they do not have aesthetic theories in the sense of Western philosophy).²⁹ Chinese traditional aesthetic thought originated from original Confucianism and original Daoism. The original starting point of these two mainstream ideas is to find a way to settle down for all people who have experienced painful lives in times of turmoil. This path does not deal with specific life issues in a manner similar to pragmatism. They deeply reflect on the meaning of life and the value of life. Whether it is proposing the Confucian thought of “*ke ji fu li*” (克己復禮, to subdue one’s self and return to propriety) or the Daoist thought of “being natural” (*yin ren zi ran* 因任自然) and “the state of inaction, in which it accomplishes everything” (*wu wei er wu bu wie* 無為而無不為), they all propose a “philosophy of life” from a larger perspective, establishing the direction of life from the perspective of the whole person.

Since Confucianism and Daoism are both philosophies of life, it is not just a technical guide to life, but a comprehensive examination of the value of life. The result of this review is bound to answer how to face knowledge, ethics, and emotional attitudes. The most exquisite part of human emotions lies in thinking and experiencing content related to aesthetic taste. Confucianism adopted a moderate attitude toward this, and it adopted an attitude of “to go beyond is as wrong as to fall short” (*guo you bu ji* 過猶不及) regarding the strength and kinds of emotions. Daoism, on the other hand, takes liberation

to deliberately distorted human nature and restores human nature to the baby-like nature. Not only to restore humanity but also to follow the nature of everything and allow it to develop naturally.

As Confucianism and Daoism took their own stances on issues of human nature, subsequent developments naturally brought their own proposals in the area of aesthetic interest. This kind of aesthetics, derived from philosophical thought, was not associated with artists until the Wei and Jin dynasties. Painters and musicians realised that their artistic theories needed a philosophy of life to support them, and eventually triggered numerous aesthetics on painting and music.

Based on the above considerations, this article gives examples of the theories of early figure painting and *shanshui* painting, and introduces two representative figures of painting theory in each field. The author hopes that readers can understand the basic reason why Chinese painting theory started with figure painting theory but later turned to *shanshui* painting theory. During this period of change, both Confucianism and Daoism had a decisive influence on the creative techniques and theoretical foundations of the artists of that time. In short, the author hopes that, through this article, readers can understand that the theories of Chinese painting were deeply influenced by philosophical thoughts from the very beginning. This understanding is also an important key to understanding Chinese art.

Huang Chieh Yu

**Utjecaj konfucijanizma i daoizma
na promjene u kineskim teorijama slikanja**

Od slikanja ljudskih figura do slikanja pejzaža (*shanshui*)

Sažetak

Ovaj članak objašnjava karakteristike kineske estetike kroz osnovne koncepte izvornog konfucijanizma i izvornog daoizma. Ove teorije promatraju estetske aktivnosti kao cjelinu integriranu s kultivacijom života. No, konfucijansko gledište vjeruje da se od pojedinca do države sklad između svih ljudi i imperijalne moći može postići glazbenim obrazovanjem. Daoističko gledište vjeruje da napuštanje sekularnog utilitarnog mišljenja može ukloniti sve prepreke razvoju ljudske prirode i povezati ljudsku prirodu s prirodom radi postizanja duhovne slobode. Ovaj je pristup postao proces umjetnikove težnje za najvišim umjetničkim dostignućem. Za daljnje objašnjenje, ovaj članak predstavlja teorije slikara figura Gua Kaizhija i Xiea Hieja, te teorije pejzažnih slikara Gua Xija i Jinga Haoa. Promjena od slikarstva figura do pejzažnog slikarstva nije samo posljedica utjecaja političke stvarnosti, već i razvoja teorije umjetničkog stvaralaštva utemeljene na idealnom području koje zastupaju konfucijanizam i daoizam.

Ključne riječi

konfucijanizam, daoizam, slikanje ljudskih figura, slikanje pejzaža, *shanshui*, Gu Kaizhi, Xie He, Guo Xi, Jing Hao

Huang Chieh Yu

**Der Einfluss von Konfuzianismus und
Daoismus auf die Veränderungen chinesischer Maltheorien**

Von der Figurenmalerei zur Landschaftsmalerei (*shanshui*)

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel erklärt die Merkmale der chinesischen Ästhetik anhand der Grundkonzepte des ursprünglichen Konfuzianismus und des ursprünglichen Daoismus. Alle diese Theorien erachten ästhetische Aktivitäten als ein Ganzes, das mit der Kultivierung des Lebens integriert ist. Jedoch glaubt die konfuzianische Sichtweise, dass vom Einzelnen bis zum Land Harmonie zwischen allen Menschen und der imperialen Macht durch musikalische Bildung herbeigeführt werden kann. Die daoistische Sichtweise widerspiegelt die Überzeugung, dass die Verwerfung des säkularen utilitären Denkens alle Hindernisse für die Entfaltung der menschlichen Natur beseitigen und die menschliche Natur mit der Natur verbinden kann, um spirituelle Freiheit herzustellen. Diese Gesinnung ist zum Prozess des künstlerischen Strebens nach höchster künstlerischer Errungenschaft geworden. Zur weiteren Erläuterung stellt dieser Artikel die Theorien der Figurenmaler Gu Kaizhi und Xie He sowie die Theorien der Landschaftsmaler Guo Xi und Jing Hao vor. Der Wandel von der Figurenmalerei zur Landschaftsmalerei ist nicht nur dem Einfluss der politischen Realität geschuldet, sondern auch dem Ausbau der Theorie der künstlerischen Schöpfung auf der Grundlage der von Konfuzianismus und Daoismus vertretenen Idealsphäre.

Schlüsselwörter

Konfuzianismus, Daoismus, Figurenmalerei, Landschaftsmalerei, *shanshui*, Gu Kaizhi, Xie He, Guo Xi, Jing Hao

Huang Chieh Yu

**L'influence du confucianisme et du daoïsme sur
les changements dans les théories chinoises de la peinture**

De la peinture de figures humaines à la peinture de paysages (*shanshui*)

Résumé

Cet article explique les caractéristiques de l'esthétique chinoise à travers les concepts élémentaires du confucianisme originel et du daoïsme originel. Ces théories abordent l'activité esthétique en tant que totalité intégrée avec l'art de cultiver la vie. Or, selon la perspective confucéenne, l'harmonie entre tous les hommes et le pouvoir impérialiste, de l'individu à l'État, peut s'atteindre par l'éducation musicale. Selon le point de vue daoïste, l'abandon de la pensée séculaire utilitariste permet d'écarter tous les obstacles qui freinent le développement de la nature humaine, et de lier la nature humaine à la nature en vue d'atteindre la liberté spirituelle. Cette approche est devenue le processus de la quête de l'artiste pour le plus grand accomplissement artistique. Afin d'approfondir l'analyse, cet article présente les théories du peintre Gu Kaizhi et Xi He et les théories des peintres de paysages Guo Xi et Jing Hao. La transformation d'une peinture de figures en une peinture de paysages n'est pas seulement une conséquence de l'influence politique, mais également de l'évolution des théories de la création artistique fondées sur le domaine idéale que représentent le confucianisme et le daoïsme.

Mots-clés

confucianisme, daoïsme, peinture de figures humaines, peinture de paysages, *shanshui*, Gu Kaizhi, Xie He, Guo Xi, Jing Hao