

# Study on the Ecological Connotation of the Four Seasons Landscape Painting in Song Dynasty

Zhuoqing Zhang

Northwest University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, 710075, China

**Keywords:** Song dynasty, four seasons landscape, Ecological connotation

**Abstract:** The Song Dynasty was a period of prosperity and development in the creation of landscape paintings in the Four Seasons, and there were many pioneering works in terms of creative crowd, performance subjects, and painting techniques. The development of the four-time landscape painting in the Song Dynasty is characterized by stages. It is influenced by the region and time and space, and contains rich ecological information and ecological ideas. It is not only the discovery of the natural things by the Song people outward, but also the inner hearts of the Song people to the individual. The affectionate exploration is the exploration and expression of life consciousness and emotion.

## 1. Introduction

The Song people are keen on understanding and discovering nature. They also pay great attention to nature in their paintings, and have established a standard for art criticism based on "nature". Based on such a painting attitude that advocates nature, the Song people changed the Tang Dynasty's paintings to advocate Buddhism and pursue the magnificent style of painting. Instead, they were passionate about portraying the changes of nature's four seasons and their interest in life, and formed many related to the four seasons. Painting works and painting theories, the creation of landscape paintings flourished at one time and four o'clock. It is precisely because of the focus on the four seasons of nature that the Song people's landscape consciousness has gradually become prominent. In the aspect of painting creation, it expresses the beauty of the four seasons landscape by the changes of the four-time scenery, and in the theoretical elaboration, it shows the "four seasons". The enrichment and expansion of the connotation of painting ideas. In short, the painters of the Song Dynasty portrayed the changes of the landscapes in the four seasons with vivid visual shapes, conveyed rich ecological information, showed the coexistence of man and nature, the fusion of human emotions and seasonal features, and contained rich ecological ideas. However, at present, there is still little discussion on the ecological meaning of the four-time landscape painting in the Song Dynasty, and it is necessary to carry out more clear and in-depth research.

## 2. Creation of Landscape Paintings at the Four Times in the Song Dynasty

The Four Seasons landscape painting is mainly a Chinese painting that mainly depicts four seasons of mountains and rivers. It reflects man's understanding of nature and the relationship between man and nature. Its development has been profoundly influenced by ancient philosophy, especially the idea of "sensation between man and nature". This kind of thinking believes that changes in the natural world can often lead to corresponding changes in the human body's internal physiology and psychology. Among them, the changes in the natural seasons of glory and dryness have a particularly obvious impact on people. The creation and theory of the four-time theme paintings have developed before the Song Dynasty. For example, Emperor Yuan Yuan Xiao interpreted the words "There are four seasons in wood: spring and summer shade, autumn hair and winter bone" "Four Seasons" said. In the Song Dynasty, under the influence of Neo-Confucianism, the painting of the Four Seasons theme has developed more comprehensively and prominently. Not only are there many people who are good at painting, but also the content, form and theme of the expression are more abundant.

The painting theorists in the Song Dynasty listed the “Four Times” as a special category, and essays recorded the four-time picture questions that could be used for painting creation. Only the four-time picture titles listed in “*Linquan Gaozhi*” include 16 kinds in spring, 18 kinds in summer, 18 kinds in autumn, and 15 kinds in winter. They believe that the beauty of painting lies not only in the four-season glory of silence, but also the interaction of people and nature through the four-season landscape, which depicts the natural order of the landscape and emphasizes the novelty in drawing materials and styles. .

In the market at the time, this four-time landscape painting was quite popular. According to historical records, the Song Dynasty's four-season landscape paintings in groups and sets were very popular. For example, the landscape paintings of the Four Seasons in the Northern Song Dynasty are some Gaotang large-axis works, which are hung on the wall for viewing; others are painted on the screen for the interior decoration. The original preface of Sun Shaoyuan's “*Sound and Picture Collection*” once mentioned that the four-time change in the picture can allow people to see the four-time change, beautiful flowers, rare birds and rare animals and other worlds without leaving the house, and has an irreplaceable role.

### **3. The Ecological Information in the Landscape Paintings of the Four Times in the Song Dynasty**

Four o'clock brings people the most intuitive feeling is the seasonal nature of nature, and one of the functions of painting creation is to show this change in all things. According to the paintings passed down in the Song dynasty, quite a few of the paintings are based on the theme of depicting the four seasons and contain rich ecological information.

#### **3.1 The Natural Landscape in the Four O'clock Landscape Painting**

Many of the four-time landscape paintings in the Song Dynasty are based on the theme of depicting the four-time natural landscape. In the creation of paintings, the Song people advocated that the painter can only be “listed in his chest” when creating, only when he has eaten enough. The Song people had a more intuitive impression of the mountains and rivers in various places. Guo Xi pointed out: “The Mountains in the southeast are wonderful, the mountains in the northwest are thick, the Songshan is good for streams, the Huashan is good for peaks, the Hengshan is good for Biexiu, Changshan. How good is Xiu Xiu, Taishan is especially good for the main peak. “In addition, Tiantai, Wuyi, Lu, Wuxia, Wangwu, Wudang and other famous places have all entered the painter's field of vision. On this basis, the Song people often created according to the four-season landscapes in different areas. From the perspective of the landscape paintings handed down in the Song Dynasty, on the one hand, it has distinct regional characteristics, including the four-time landscape of the majestic mountains and rivers in the north, and the portrayal of the beautiful four-season landscape in the south; Most of his creations have majestic and magnificent mountains and rivers. In the Southern Song Dynasty, the preference was for the elegant lakes and mountains in the south, emphasizing the different artistic conceptions of the four seasons. The pen is simple and clear, easy to use, good use of strong and powerful, mixed with the wing of the pen, and the simple and simple method of creation, often with a single rendering to complete the effect of ink and ink.

#### **3.2 The Phenological Changes in the Mountains and Rivers in the Song Dynasty**

The creation of the seasonal characteristics in the four-season landscape paintings of the Song people is achieved by depicting the phenological changes in different seasons, that is, by depicting the changes of the four-season landscapes, plants, animals and clouds, to create different visual effects of the four seasons. Song Dynasty's painting theories often mention that mountains have four-time color, water has four-time color, and wood has four-time color change. The Song people specifically discussed the four-season scene, put the four-season landscape painting theory in the specific creation, and elaborated the natural laws of the four seasons and twilight in the mountains and rivers that the painter should pay attention to when creating the landscape painting.

In the specific paintings, the Song Dynasty painters will express the seasonal theme of the

picture through the ecological elements with seasonal characteristics and the appropriate color application. For example, Liu Songnian's "Four Scenery Landscapes" is divided into four paintings of spring, summer, autumn, and winter, and the scenery of the landscape depicts the leisure life of the scholars living in the pavilion between mountains and lakes. The full-volume lines are vigorous and vigorous, the brush and ink are delicate and delicate, and the seasonal atmosphere is very decent: the green willow swaying in the spring scene, the bright blooming flowers. The lush flowers and trees in the summer landscape, the newly exhibited new lotus trees, the frosted red trees in the autumn landscape, the autumn colors are very strong, the white snow in the winter landscape, the cold wind, the blossoming plum blossoms, and the green cypress. The artist vividly and accurately displayed the changes of the seasons by depicting the phenology changes at four o'clock clearly and three points into the wood.

In terms of painting style, the landscape paintings of the Four Seasons in the Song Dynasty has a tendency to change from realistic to poetic. In the Northern Song Dynasty, Li Cheng, Fan Kuan, Dong Yuan and others described the landscapes of the Four Seasons more objectively, and most of them accurately described the seasonal changes of the landscapes of the Four Seasons. In the Southern Song Dynasty, the style of painting gradually changed. The landscape paintings of the Four Seasons carried more subjective emotions. The paintings also showed a simple poetic tendency, and gradually formed the simple style of the landscape paintings of the Four Seasons. By reading the simple image and color of the Song painting, it can also reveal the meaning of the four times, so as to feel the deep meaning of the painter behind the picture. For example, the cold winter in autumn and winter is expressed in the cold woods of miscellaneous trees, and the quietness of the quiet cen is depicted in the dead wood in the gravel. The recognition of the small things in the season can give insight into the infinite change of the four o'clock, which also opens up a new realm for the development of the four o'clock painting in the Song Dynasty.

### **3.3 Meteorological Changes in Landscape Paintings At the Four Times in the Song Dynasty**

The Song people not only paid attention to the four-season changes of landscapes themselves, but also emphasized the depiction of different meteorology at the four-season. In terms of movement form, the mountain rock is fixed and relatively stationary; the weather is changing and relatively moving; in terms of external form, the mountain rock is real and the weather is virtual. The Song people think that although the two seem to be unrelated, they are interdependent and indivisible. It is precisely through the contrast and unification of movement, reality, and reality that painting creation can achieve the ideal picture effect.

Among the many meteorological elements, the shaping and accentuation of meteorological changes such as clouds, smoke, fog and mist are the most important. The Song people have realized that mountains and rivers have different shapes not only under the influence of spring, summer, autumn and winter. The Song people even thought that the weather of the four seasons could affect the four-season color of mountains, water, forests, etc., so there is "the color of the four-season water, with the air of the four-season". The Song people regarded the four-season meteorology as a non-negligible part of the four-season landscape picture. By accurately grasping the relationship between the four-season scenery and the four-season meteorology, the different charms of the four-season landscape were brought out.

## **4. The Ecological Ideas in the Theory of Landscape Painting in the Four Times of the Song Dynasty**

The creation of the Four Seasons landscape in the Song Dynasty is based on the Song people's understanding of the Four Seasons ecosystem. It is the result of the Song people's overall grasp and investigation of the external natural environment, and it is also a summary of the experience of the Four Seasons landscape painting creation. It not only reflects the ecological understanding and artistic expression of the four-time artists in the Song Dynasty, but also highlights the changes in the creative characteristics, style and painting ideas of the Song Dynasty paintings, but also reflects the Song people's reflection on the relationship between man and nature, and contains a rich

ecology, thought.

#### **4.1 Respect for Nature**

The Song people's four-season landscape painting embodies the spirit of respecting nature. As Zheng Zhenduo said in the Preface to the Song Dynasty Album: "The themes painted by the painters in the Song Dynasty are multifaceted, almost all-encompassing, from the magnificent scenery of nature to the small wild grass and idle flowers. The beetles were all caught in the paintings, but they were meticulously crafted and exquisite, so they became a grand view. "In terms of the creation of landscape paintings, the Song people hope that the creation of paintings will be used to "take the spirit away from creation, and imagine that if you have something to see in the exhibition", this requires the painter to pay attention to the different appearances of mountains and rivers under different weather conditions at four times.

The Song people paid attention to the objective appearance of landscapes, forests and other landscapes in the Four Seasons, mainly in terms of color, shape and weather. For the living plants and flowers, the Song people also paid attention to their four seasons. For example, "Pictures and Knowledge" advocates that paintings should follow the natural nature of creatures, "drawing flowers and fruits and trees, there are four seasons, yin and yang, back and forth, old and tender bamboo shoots, and bracts first, catch all garden vegetables and weeds, salty Unearthedness ". In addition, the image of the landscape at four o'clock is also affected by weather changes, so even if the same mountain is portrayed, different environments such as four o'clock, wind and rain, light and dark, and evening and dusk must be considered. These conclusions have become classics in painting theory, and it also fully shows that the landscape paintings of the Four Seasons in the Song Dynasty have gradually matured.

#### **4.2 Adapt to the Time**

The landscape of the Song Dynasty landscape painting creation emphasizes on adapting to the times, that is, the changes of color and life rhythm in the eyes of the author in the spring, summer, autumn, and winter are presented to the viewer through different compositions, brushes, inks and color settings. When the Song Dynasty painters chose the four-time theme for creation, although they all used landscapes, plants, and animals as the main elements, they often consciously chose some scenes or life forms with distinctive seasonal characteristics to express the four-time theme. Such as painting finches, fishes, insects, flowers and butterflies in spring, summer forests, lotuses, blackbirds, and gulls, etc.; in autumn, paintings of miscellaneous trees and cold forests, Zhenghong group of frogs, etc.; in winter, paintings of dense snow, Ting, etc. Pan, Snow Bamboo, Plum Blossom, etc., are essentially a concrete, sensual, and visual expression that intuitively expresses the painter's fresh impression of the four changes of nature. The painting consciousness of the painters of the Song Dynasty promoted the development of the four-time theme.

#### **4.3 Unity of Heaven and Man**

As a member of the natural world, man's production practice activities are both the adaptation to nature and the transformation of nature. The four-season scenery is inseparable from the four seasons activities of man. For example, Han Zhuo believes that "to appraise the scenery of the four seasons must be clear about physics and to a wide range of personnel", that is, to create and evaluate the landscape paintings of the four seasons, we must not only create the painting according to its own physical principle, but also take into account the principle of personnel. In the creation of landscape paintings at the four o'clock, the Song people advocated the creation of "four-time" paintings, which should not only depict the four-season sceneries of landscapes, but also integrate the activities of the characters and the four-season scenes to depict the life scenes of people at four o'clock. As mentioned in "The Complete Works of Shanshui", you can draw scenes such as spring trips and plowing mountain springs in spring, summer vacations in summer, water floats, and other scenes. In autumn, you can draw water chestnuts, raccoons, ramblings, ascending, and chrysanthemums. In winter, you can draw scenes such as Xueli Hantong, mules, grain transport, and Xuejiang ferry. At present, the Song people paint more pictures of spring travel and spring

thinking in spring; more cool summer and cool summer in summer; more theme of grazing and spring watching in autumn; more of life scenes such as homing and fishing in snow in winter. The characters in the landscape paintings of the four seasons in the Song Dynasty can have different activities, and they must be adapted to the seasonal characteristics of the four seasons.

The two Song dynasties have different characteristics of the life scenes expressed in the landscapes of the Four Seasons. Taking the travel theme as an example, the Northern Song Dynasty multi-painting hermits did not fear the hardships and climbed the high mountains and deep valleys alone, that is, they focused more on expressing the majestic mountains and rivers travel; while the Southern Song Dynasty was more enthusiastic about the elegant lakeside leisure in the West Lake area, in order to convey the leisure taste of the literati. And feelings.

## **5. Conclusion**

In general, most of the four-day landscape paintings in the Song Dynasty are depictions of the natural landscape environment, and their development has certain stage characteristics: in terms of content, the majestic mountains and rivers focused on the paintings of the Northern Song Dynasty changed into the beautiful lakes and mountains in the Southern Song Dynasty; In the Song Dynasty, the landscape painting styles of the Four Seasons of the Song Dynasty gradually simplified, and the size of the works also showed a trend of gradually becoming smaller. It changed from the large axis or long scroll of the Northern Song Dynasty to the fan surface and sketches of the Southern Song Dynasty. Landscapes and landscapes developed into sketches on the side of the southern half of the Song Dynasty; in terms of ideological connotation, from the middle and later stages of the Northern Song Dynasty, the painter emphasized the subjective feelings of people in the four seasons. This tendency became more prominent in the Southern Song Dynasty, and painters often took close shots. Focusing on the four-point natural scenery in one corner, the distance between the viewer and the scene is shortened, which makes it easier to feel in it. This kind of change makes the landscape paintings of the Four Seasons in Song Dynasty gradually incorporate more of the emotional expressions of authors and viewers, and the creation gradually has a tendency to be imaged and poetic. This trend puts more emphasis on the expression and appreciation of the artistic conception in the picture. This requires that the artist should not be limited to faithfully describing the scenery when painting, but should also be determined to be outside the painting.

The stage characteristics of the four-time landscape painting development in the Song Dynasty were mainly affected by time, space and region, and contained rich ecological information and ecological ideas. Chinese culture regards four o'clock as the four major life plates. Spring life, summer long, autumn harvest and winter storage reflect the four stages of natural life development, and each season has unique life characteristics. The Song Dynasty landscape painters drew important inspirations from the life of the heaven and earth by showing the different life forms of the four-time natural creation, showing the changes of the four-time look, recording the beauty of the four seasons in winter and spring, and the sorrows and sorrows of the sun, reflecting the Song people's views on nature. It is a vivid and vivid impression, which is concrete, sensual, visual, and full of inner vitality. These life forms gradually accumulated in the development of painting after Song Dynasty and became the classic paradigm of the four-time landscape painting. At the same time, the Song people's description of the changes in the "look" of the four seasons is to explore the physical interest, the metaphor of the four seasons of life, and the way of expressing inner feelings through the description and evaluation of the four seasons. People's discovery of all things in nature is also the Song people's in-depth exploration of the hearts of individuals. It is also the exploration and expression of life consciousness and emotion.

## **Acknowledgment**

In 2019, the Henan Provincial Social Science and Technology Project "Construction and Dissemination of Imagery of the Landscape in Song Paintings", Project Number: SKL-2019-1819.

The 2018 Philosophy and Social Science Planning Project of Henan Province "Layout Design,

Editing Strategies and Knowledge Spread of Daily Books in Song and Yuan Dynasties”, Project Number: 2018CYS032.

## **References**

- [1] Wang Wei, (translated) Wang Senran, Landscape and Landscape. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1962.
- [2] Yu Jianhua, Chinese Painting Theory. Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1986.
- [3] Lu Fusheng, the Complete Book of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, vol. 3, Shanghai: Shanghai Painting and Calligraphy Press, 2009.