

Chinese Philosophical Thought and Chinese Painting Creation

Yi Li

City College, Wuhan University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China

Keywords: Five Elements Theory; Chinese Painting; Painting Creation; Chinese Philosophy

Abstract: The paintings of Chinese painting, after thousands of years of vicissitudes, still have such a shocking and touching charm. The reason is because of its rich internal cultural connotations and unique external forms. The philosophical thinking of the Five Elements and China's political economy, ideology and culture for thousands of years have influenced and infiltrated each other, which has become the core and skeleton of traditional Chinese culture and has had a major impact on the spread and development of Chinese painting. The various constituent elements of Chinese painting creation can be divided into five aspects: conception, content and subject matter, style, composition, and technique. If corresponding to the theories of the five elements, the corresponding relations are: "Fire" corresponds to "conception", "Soil" corresponds to "content and subject matter", "wood" corresponds to "style", "metal" corresponds to "composition", and "water" corresponds to "techniques". The profound relationship between the philosophy of five elements and Chinese painting art has become the ideological orientation of Chinese painting theory.

1. Introduction

The theory of the Five Elements was accepted and used by the ancients after the emergence of the pre-Qin period and continued development and improvement until the introduction of Western culture in the late Qing Dynasty. As one of the important contents of Chinese traditional culture, it was bred in the Shang and Zhou dynasty and formed in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period. It has long been widely used in politics, culture, science, and number of operations. After long-term use and recognition, the Five Elements theory has infiltrated all aspects of the ancients' understanding of activities and ideological concepts, it has become a cultural foundation that dictates ancient social psychology. The theory of the Five Elements has an important historical position in traditional Chinese culture and has had a profound influence on Chinese traditional culture, which has its own unique connotation, especially in the field of traditional Chinese painting.

2. Text

The reason why Chinese painting has such a shocking and moving charm is because of its rich internal cultural connotations and unique external forms. The philosophical thinking of the Five Elements and China's political economy, ideology and culture for thousands of years have influenced and infiltrated each other, which has become the core and skeleton of traditional Chinese culture and has had a major impact on the spread and development of Chinese painting. The various constituent elements of Chinese painting creation can be divided into five aspects: conception, content and subject matter, style, composition, and technique. If the properties of the "metal, wood, water, fire and soil" of the Five Elements Theory are matched with the characteristics of the constituent elements of Chinese painting creation, the corresponding relationship can be as follows:

Fire –the conception of the Chinese painting;

Soil –the content and subject matter of the Chinese painting;

Wood –the style of the Chinese painting;

Metal –the composition of the Chinese painting;

Water –the technique of the Chinese painting.

Next, we will elaborate on this relationship separately.

3. Fire of the five elements –the conception of the Chinese painting

The "fire" is said the "hot and up". The "hot and up" means "warm, rising, bright, sporting, release" and so on. In ancient China, everything that has the functions or properties of warm, rising, bright, moving, and releasing, etc. in nature belongs to the "fire" of the five elements.

Ancient Chinese people believed that the heart of the human body belongs to "fire", and the cultivation of "fire" is in the people's mind. Therefore, in the traditional Chinese ancient thought, the "fire" in the picture of the painting works comes from the "conception" of the author's mind and it shows the author's ideological spirit and brilliance. The excellent Chinese painting must exhibit a very strong artistic appeal, and which is the "fire" of the work. This artistic appeal is expressed as a picture atmosphere, which is the majestic, or innocent, or bold, or bright, clear, or calm, or quiet, regardless of which kind of atmosphere, gives people a mood, a style, a style of artistic feelings.

Chinese painting pursues the artistic spirit and artistic conception of the painting. Through the painting, it expresses the artist's ideological connotation and spiritual realm. Chinese painting works embody the artist's brilliance and humanistic ideals. The highest realm of Chinese painting is the artist's passion based on strong cultural accomplishments. The cultural connotation and character of the personality are used to pursue the "vividness and vigor" of the picture. This kind of charm and impetus showed in Chinese artist's painting creation, which is the characteristic of "fire" in the five elements.



Figure 1:Wan-Valley Pine Wind Map Northern Song Dynasty Li Tang

The "fire" of Chinese paintings mainly reflects the author's pursuit of the artistic conception and meaning of the paintings in Chinese painting creation. The artistic conception has always been the soul of Chinese painting. It can be said that the creation of artistic conception is the highest stage of Chinese painting. The artistic conception of the painting not only requires the artist's skill and knowledge in brush and ink, composition, modeling, color, and the processing of virtual and real relationships, but more importantly, it needs the painter's thoughts, feelings, opinions, cultivation and even psychological quality. As early as the Song Dynasty Guo Ruoxu's work, "Tu-Hua Jian-Wen Zhi", the painter put forward the argument that the taste of the painting is proportional to the taste of the person. He believes that the artist's artistic conception and artistic pursuit convey the author's thoughts, feelings, and humanistic ideals. Only with noble character can a painter show the depth and breadth in the artistic conception of painting. That is to say, the level of conception of the painting works depends on the cultivation of the artist's own "heart".

In other words, the conception of Chinese painting creation comes from the artist's "heart", and the level of the "heart" determines the level of conception of the painting. In the five elements of philosophical theory, the "heart" of the human body belongs to "fire". The conception of painting creation have the characteristics of "warm, rising, ascending, bright and moving", which is consistent with the nature of the "fire" in the five elements. Therefore, the conception of painting creation is attributed to the "fire" in the five elements.

4. Soil of the five elements – the content and subject matter of the Chinese painting

The "soil" is said the "farming and harvesting", it means the soil will help with planting and harvesting. That is to say, "soil" is a kind of can make all things "biochemical, loading, permissive" ability, such as spoken in the book of changes "hold world with virtue". Soil is an important basis for the growth of all things. There is a saying that the soil is the mother of all things. In ancient China, everything that has the functions or properties of growth, cultivate, bearing and receiving, etc. in nature belongs to the "soil" of the five elements.

For the content and subject matter of Chinese painting creation, China's famous painting of the northern and southern dynasties, sheikh, said in his painting theory book "ancient painting records" that the "six methods" "should be in accordance with the image of the object", which means that the content and subject matter of painting creation must be like what is painted, the shape must be like what is painted, the image must be accurate, deep and meticulous, which is the most basic requirement of painting.

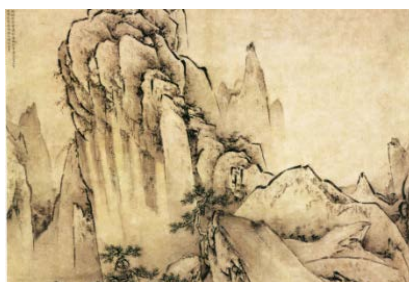


Figure2: Huashan atlas Ming Dynasty Wang Lv

"According to things" is actually a matter of content and subject matter of Chinese painting creation. For the content and subject matter of Chinese painting, the painter can choose the content and subject matter with profound meaning and vivid images to express the author's thoughts and feelings and artistic pursuit by approaching life and expressing life. Therefore, the subject matter of the painting has the function of accepting the painter's thoughts, feelings, and spiritual ideals, just as "soil" can bear the survival and growth of receiving all natural things. It is the most basic foundation of the conception, technique of expression and composition of painting creation. It plays an important role in carrying and accepting the creative techniques of painting, such as conception and skills.

It can be seen that the characteristics of "bearing, receiving, and biochemistry" in the content and subject matter of Chinese painting express the nature of "soil" in the five elements. We attribute the content and subject matter of Chinese painting creation to the "soil" of the five elements.

5. Wood of the five elements – the style of the Chinese painting

The "wood" is said the "bend and straighten". The "bend and straighten" means the growth state of the trunks of trees. It is the performance of the growth, germination, tenderness, freshness, and traits of the "wood". It is intended to be the meaning of germination and stretching. In ancient China, everything that has the functions or properties of growth, germination, relaxation, etc. in nature belongs to the "wood" of the five elements.

Chinese painting is very particular about "style, appearance", painting works of the "style, appearance" in the paintings are very interesting. These two words have a "wood" border. It can be understood that the "style, appearance" and "wood" of a Chinese painting cannot be separated from each other. Or, the "style, appearance" of Chinese paintings is attributed to "wood" of the five elements.

The "style, appearance" of Chinese painting creation mainly depend on the expression techniques of the works. Chinese painting's expression techniques are rich and colorful, and its various forms of creation can be either realistic or freehand or Abstract and exaggerated. It can be a combination of realism and romanticism, and it can also be a common and coexistence... The

predecessors are very rich in the diversity of expression techniques that embody drawing creation. The Tang dynasty painter Zhang Yan proposed that "foreign teachers can make things happen in the heart," which means that Chinese painting's creative technique is to seek artistic truth by comprehending the experience from nature. Gu Kaizhi, a famous painter in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, put forward "to write God in form" to warn Chinese painters that the creative technique of painting is to express the inner essence and spirit of things by depicting the external image of objects. Also, shi tao, a famous painter in the Qing dynasty, proposed that "I am what I am and I am what I am", etc., which are all manifestations of the expressive techniques of Chinese painting creation. The expression techniques of painting creation can best reflect the artist's quality and personality.



Figure3:Ink bamboo Qing dynasty Banqiao

The characteristics of the expression techniques of Chinese painting express the nature of the "wood" in the five elements. It can be curved or straight and stretch. There are rich and varied aesthetic ways of embodying the artist's self-mind in Chinese painting creation. Either is the implication humble modelling color, or is the majestic form constitution; It is either the subtle realistic expression of love, or the image expression containing the Taoist mirror. It is either a romantic and exaggerated expression of passion, or a metaphorical expression of obscure symbols... These rich and colorful expression techniques and styles embody the characteristics of "wood" in the five elements -- germination, striation, germination and stretching. Therefore, we attribute the style of the Chinese painting creation to the "wood" in the five elements.

6. Metal of the five elements –the composition of the Chinese painting

The "metal" is said the "reform and change", it means clear, settling, convergent, restrained and so on. It means to achieve the goal of convergence, stability, and stability through the methods of reform and reform. In ancient China, everything that has the functions or properties of clear, settling, astringency, stability, and stability, etc. in nature belongs to the "metal" of the five elements.

In Chinese painting creation, the painters' pursuit of the artistic conception of the works, the selection of subject matter content, and the determination of the form and style of the sculpture must be fixed on the drawing paper through the process of composition. Therefore, it can be said that it is the process of composition in painting creation that stabilizes all elements of the picture, such as originality and conception, technique of expression, content and other elements in the painting. Therefore, the "composition" in Chinese painting has the characteristics of "collection, surrender, convergence and stability", which shows the characteristics of "metal" in the five elements.

For a long time, Chinese painters have always been very particular about and pay attention to the composition of the picture, and long ago formed a complete system of composition of Chinese painting. In ancient painting records of the southern and northern dynasties, the painter sheikh put forward the "management position" of "six methods", which was the earliest study on the principles

and standards of composition in Chinese painting. In the concept of composition of traditional Chinese painting, Chinese painters pursue the spatial layout of the picture. Lao zi's theory of "knowing the white color, keeping the black color, and being the style of the world" has exerted a significant and far-reaching influence on the composition method of traditional Chinese painting.



Figure 4: Xiaoxiang wonders map Song dynasty Mi Youren

Through the composition of the painting, Chinese painters select and conceive each material of the painting creation, and then organize and arrange the various materials of the painting creation to make their relations harmonious and unified. The "clean, solemn and convergent" nature of "metal" in the five elements reflects the function and characteristics of the process of "composition" in Chinese painting creation. Therefore, we attribute the "composition" in Chinese painting creation to "metal" in the five elements.

7. Water of the five elements –the technique of the Chinese painting

The "water" is said the "moisten and dawn". The "moisten and dawn" means moisturize, flow down, run and so on. It is extended to soft, moist, downward, and flowing meaning. In ancient China, everything that has the functions or properties of moisturize, flow down, run, etc. in nature belongs to the "water" of the five elements.

The use of "water" in Chinese painting is mainly manifested in the change of moist ink. Chinese painting emphasizes that "writing should be smart, ink method should be inundated, and coloring should be natural, which means rejuvenation." The "writing", "ink method" and "coloring" mentioned here all belong to the skills and techniques of Chinese painting creation. These techniques and skills are reflected the characteristics of "water" in the five elements-moisture, fluidity, gentleness, and exercise.

The "writing", "ink method" and "coloring" mentioned in Chinese painting are the technical aspects of the art of painting. Technology is the basis of art. As we all know, exquisite technique is an important means of artistic perfection. Art can only rely on technology to become superb.

8. Conclusion

After thousands of years, the five elements theory of Chinese traditional philosophy has been endowed with too much ideological meaning and symbolic significance by various cultural deposits. Between the Chinese painting creation and the five elements theory, there has always been an inseparable source and connection. Chinese painters need to make comprehensive use of the theory of the five elements in all aspects of Chinese painting, including the creation and conception, content and subject matter, expression techniques, picture composition, brush and ink color, etc., and make comprehensive use of the theory. In particular, Chinese painters need to make comprehensive fusion in many aspects such as feelings, subjective will, psychological quality and knowledge accomplishment. Only in this way can Chinese painters use the philosophy of the five elements to show their characteristics and depth in the creation of Chinese paintings.

Acknowledgement

In this paper, the research was sponsored by the 2017 project of hubei provincial education science planning, a research on the theory and practice of Chinese philosophy and contemporary painting art (2017GB101).

References

- [1] The rate of my true. "The writing method" Five-generation Liang Jing Hao [DB/OL]. <https://zhidao.baidu.com/question/752529981524260844.html>, 2014-07-16/2018-01-30.
- [2] Tian Mu. Ming Feng Fang "The book" [DB/OL]. http://www.360doc.com/content/16/0518/21/1597421_560258805.shtml, 2016-07-09/2018-01-30.
- [3] Su Shi (Author) Tu Youxiang (Annotation commentary). Annotation of Dongpo Tizi[M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Far East Press, 2011.
- [4] Changle Wuji. Huang Binhong's "drawing principle" [DB/OL]. http://www.360doc.com/content/16/1103/23/973733_603760621.shtml, 2016-11-03/2018-01-30.
- [5] [Song]Guo XiWith Zhang HongweiCompile Liang YanTranslation. Lin Quan Gao Zhi [M]. Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Ancient Books Publishing House, 2013.
- [6] The rate of my true. "The writing method" Five-generation Liang Jing Hao [DB/OL].<https://zhidao.baidu.com/question/752529981524260844.html>,2014-07-16/2018-01-30.