

Research on Taiwan Painting Schools in the Qing Dynasty

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Abstract: Jiang Tingxi is the founder of court flower-and-bird painting of “Jiang School” in the period of Kang-Qian Flourishing Age. The court flower-and-bird painters of “Jiang School” include Jiang Tingxi, Jiang Pu, Li Shan, Zou Yuandou, Ma Yi, Yu Sheng, Shang Zuxiang, and so on. The thriving time of “Jiang School” experienced three reigns of Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong. Among them, Jiang Tingxi was a pioneering figure of the “Jiang School”.

1. Introduction

According to “National Court Painting Collection” (Volume 2) by Zhang Geng in the Qing dynasty, “Jiang Tingxi, also called Yangshun, Xigu, and Nansha, was from Changshu, and Jinshi in the Quiwei during the reign of Emperor Kangxi; he was enrolled into the academicians with free sketchbook, which has special features with different techniques and expresses natural harmony, vividness and artistic conception. His works can compete with those in Yuan, and other schoolers took his works as model”. This can be used as the basis of argument, and the conclusion can be drawn that the painting styles of Jiang Tingxi’s paintings are changeable, and the forms of brush and ink painting techniques and color application are diversified. In terms of the painting style, it can be said that Jiang Tingxi collected the advantages of many generations of flower-and-bird painters. Due to the description of Jiang Tingxi’s painting in “Mo Lin Jin Hua” by Jiang Baoling, many web encyclopedia and art scholars make Jiang Tingxi linked to Yun Shouping at present, and incorporate Jiang Tingxi into Yun Shouping genealogy of painting style, thinking Jiang Tingxi is the bridge to make “Yun School” become the “real” court flower-and-bird paintings, but in fact, there is no mentoring relationship between Jiang Tingxi and Yun Shouping. Therefore, the author will sort out the network between Jiang Tingxi and Yun Shouping through the historical data collection and analysis in this chapter, so as to understand the formation process of Jiang Tingxi’s flower-and-bird painting.

2. Formation of painting concepts and characteristics of “Jiang School”

(1) Literary and artistic accomplishment of Jiang Tingxi

As is known to all, during the period with the reign of Kangxi and Yongzheng, Jiang Tingxi integrated many identities including official, scholar, poet, painter and so on. Jiang Tingxi was often called “Shifu painter”, so he should be regarded as a literati painter among court painters. His collection of poems retained in the world includes “collections of autumn wind of Qing Tong Xuan” and “collections of Pian Yun”. He was not only good at poetry, but also was the general editor of important bibliography in literary circles such as “Pei Wen Yun Fu”, “Kangxi Dictionary” and “integration of ancient and modern books”, and so on. He also wrote a geographical research work “interpretation of Shngshu geography”. It is natural that Jiang Tingxi was deeply loved by emperor Kangxi and emperor Yongzheng for his high cultural deposits and the diversity of his painting styles of flowers and birds. Since this paper is aimed at the formation and inheritance of Jiang Tingxi’s court painting style, Jiang Tingxi’s remarkable achievements in other aspects are not discussed here. Jiang Tingxi supported the compilation of a large number of bibliographies, and his theoretical books in the painting were not recorded in the history of painting, but in the inscriptions and postscript of his paintings and poetry, Jiang Tingxi’s views on painting were recorded. This chapter will organize Jiang Tingxi’s postscripts and poems, analyze his accumulation of his literary and

artistic accomplishment, his views on artistic creation, his appreciation of painting and imitation of previous works, and summarize his painting thoughts and views, so as to further understand the flowers and birds of “Jiang School”.

1) Findings on flowers and birds in “collections of ancient and modern books”

In October in the second year of Yongzheng (1724), in “All flowers strive for elegance” painted by Jiang Tingxi, there are fruits and vegetables, insects, showing a harvest and prosperous scene. In the picture, there are abundant fruits, blossoming flowers, flying butterflies and busy bees, with the open scroll. It has high level of fun. Through the inscription and seal, we can see the important status of it in the Qing court. There is the identification seal of emperor Qianlong: Sanxitang fine identification seal, Yizisun, Treasure identified by Qianlong, Shi Qu Bao Ji, Treasure identified by Qianlong, identification by Qianlong, seal for Qianlong’s works: treasure of Qianlong, and inscription by Qianlong: all flowers strive for elegance. And Liang Guozhi, Dong Gao, He Shen, Guan Huai, Wang Jie, Yong Rong, Ji Huang, Chen Zhaolun made the inscription. In addition, Minister Peng Yuanrui made the inscription: for “all flowers strive for elegance” by Jiang Tingxi, it is the most wonderful. The eleventh son of emperor Qianlong, prince Chenqin made the inscription: the painting of “all flowers strive for elegance” is a fine work. This is enough to witness the importance of Jiang Tingxi’s painting in the Qing court. It can be inferred that the painting of fruits, vegetables and insects in this painting volume with 47.5cm x 633cm was inspired by the knowledge structure of plants, trees and birds in the recompilation of “collections of ancient and modern books” in terms of the painting time and the description of the species of fruits, vegetables and insects.

2) Painting thought of “Cang Chu Lu” in the poem

“Lotus and Crane” is the work created by Jiang Tingxi in the 43rd year of emperor Kangxi (1704). It is a representative according to Shen Zhou’s flower-bird painting style. From the work, it seems the painting technique is the combination of outline and boneless method. For lotus leaves, the front and back side of the leave are distinguished with thick ink and light ink, and then the outline of the veins is drawn. In addition to boneless method, for crane, it is outlined in white, and the rest are mainly from sketchbook. The whole picture of the painting in neatness reveals a half freehand brushwork.

(2) Characteristics of many schools embodied in Jiang Tingxi’s works

In addition to his own respected painters, Jiang Tingxi imitated and learned from others. In different periods of time, he also involved in imitating the brushwork of many schools to learn the essence of each school, so as to achieve the effect of “unique attainment” of his own painting style.

1) Works gathering the essence of painters in previous dynasties

After searching network chart of various museum and the records of “Shi Qu Bao Ji” and integrating some works of Jiang Tingxi, it can be seen from the records of painting and poetry that Jiang Tingxi often involved in imitating others’ works in painting creation, with the essence of the painters in previous dynasties. Jiang Tingxi’s style is diverse. He constantly absorbed the techniques of each generation of painters in each period. Till his old age, Jiang Tingxi was not only constrained by his own style, but also followed the technique of predecessors, blending with his painting characteristics, and then forming his own style. The following are some of the works created by Jiang Tingxi in combination of the predecessors’ painting styles with the characteristics of his own painting style. For “Peony” by Jiang Tingxi collected in Anhui cultural relics shop, this work is the color silk, with the words, “this flower should be colorful in appearance, method of Baiyangshan people. Jiang Tingxi”. For “Peony”, in the early 1980s, the national ancient painting and calligraphy identification team thought this painting was a fine work by Jiang Tingxi integrating the characteristics of “Xu and Huang” in the Song, collected in “Chinese ancient calligraphy and painting”. For the flowers in “Peony”, Jiang Tingxi used the dark colors to make the overall image thick, with rich texture and gorgeous color. Jiang Tingxi also indicated in the inscription “appropriate to use dark colors in appearance”, and boneless method of Xu Chongsi was used for branches, leaves and stones, making the colors blended. The integral style of the painting is the elegant style of the painter Chen Chun in the Ming dynasty. Therefore, in the inscription, Jiang

Tingxi showed that it was “imitating the method of Baiyangshan people”. The overall painting clearly shows the characteristics of Jiang Tingxi learning from many schools and integrating the use of their styles.

2) Friends and colleagues in the painting circle at the same period

With the integration Jiang Tingxi's style of painting and the formation of ideas, in the meantime of drawing lessons from ancient calligraphic style of flower-and-bird painters, his painting friends and colleagues at the same time also had certain effects on his painting. When the churchmen came into China in the Ming and Qing dynasties, western painting was introduced into China, into the Qing court, and the introduction of western painting was also reflected in Jiang Tingxi's elaborate-style painting. Among Gu Xuepo's works, the most famous one is “Zhu He Liu Quan”, which is a long silk scroll. In addition to Gu Wenyuan's own title, the painting also includes the inscriptions of Qing poets Wang Yi and Zhang Yuan, and the inscription of Jiang Tingxi and Qian Lucan at the end. At the back of the volume, Jiang Tingxi titled, “clear and fine, deeply showing the technique of Yuan people, the preferable work of Xuepo”. From the time on it, the 43rd year of Kangxi (1704), it can be seen that Jiang Tingxi just won success in the examination of Jinshi, when he thought this work was the preferable work of Xuepo and showed the technique of Yuan people. We can see Jiang Tingxi highly appreciated in this picture, and at the same time, Jiang Tingxi love the Yuan painting style.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, Jiang Tingxi integrated many identities including official, scholar, poet, and painter. His own cultivation knowledge made him full of literati character, made his painting composition, level, color, appear natural and harmonious with artistic conception, and also full of literary flavor. His court flower-and-bird paintings, based on fine, gorgeous picture, show too much artistic conception and elegance of literati paintings. Through the above analysis and the integration of paintings, it can be concluded that the court flower-and-bird paintings in the early Qing dynasty that Jiang Tingxi was good at is in the orthodox position, and the most characteristic was the creation of ochre ink free-style flower-and-bird painting, advocating seeking the principles and methods of song people and inheriting the ink connotation charm of the Yuan people. In the end, as Zhang Geng said, “directly take the seat of the Yuan people”. The creation and inheritance of ochre ink painting made it possible for free-style brushwork flower-and-bird painting to have another characteristic style, which has been carried forward till today through the inheritance of Jiang Pu, Jiang Shu, Yu Sheng and so on.

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