



# AESTHETIC CONSCIOUSNESS OF LITERATI PAINTING AND ITS APPLICATION IN URBAN PLANNING.

Hua Wei

## Abstract

*In order to find a way to combine traditional culture with modern living needs, taking "Chinese painting" as the breakthrough point, through the study of the development process and artistic characteristics of Chinese painting, four aspects of classical philosophy, natural landscape image, brush and ink composition artistic conception, and abstract aesthetic conception contained in Chinese painting are summed up. The results of the study provide enlightenment for contemporary residential landscape design, and summarize the methods of creating Chinese paintings in residential landscape design. Thus, a residential landscape model with the characteristics of "Chinese painting" is found out.*

**Keywords:** literati painting, aesthetic concept, urban planning, Chinese painting.

## 1. Introduction

The splendid civilization of the Chinese nation for 5000 years has bred splendid traditional culture and absorbed various foreign civilizations on the basis of the inherent traditional culture of the nation. After digestion and integration, it contains many factors such as philosophy, religion, art, literature, music, customs, etiquette and so on, forming our extensive and profound traditional culture (Jie and Xin 2017) and creating our unique national aesthetic concept. As the mainstream of Chinese painting, literati painting also reflects the traditional aesthetic concept of Chinese art to a large extent. Literati painting began in Tang Dynasty, flourished in Ming and Qing Dynasties after Song and Yuan Dynasty, and occupied the main position in Chinese painting circle after thousands of years of development. Scholar paintings adhere to Confucianism, Taoism and Zen in philosophy and personality to express Confucianism's self-cultivation and gentleman's character (Chiem 2017); they pursue Taoism's chic and free appearance; they also pursue Zen's spiritual comfort, the attitude of "seeing nature from the heart", "agreeable intention", "natural" life, and Zen's love for natural mountains and waters, which have great influence on literati paintings (Weili 2017). Literati painting pursues free and easy mood and expresses one's mind directly in artistic style, which is a kind of art with emphasis on expression. In terms of aesthetic character, it is shown that "light, clear" is the beauty, and "nature" is the ultimate beauty (Lee 2017).

Based on the study of the development process and artistic characteristics of Chinese painting, the classical philosophical ideas, natural landscape imagery, brush and ink composition artistic conception, and abstract aesthetic conception contained in Chinese painting are summarized.

From the core point of view of "Chinese painting meaning", new requirements for residential landscape design are put forward, and new ideas and

new methods of modern residential landscape design are summarized. It is emphasized that residential landscape design must make people feel "unrepeatable" painting beauty and "harmony between man and nature" artistic beauty, so as to obtain great artistic enjoyment. At the same time, the combination of subjective thoughts, feelings and objective scenery produces a new "painting idea".

## 2. State of the art

The earliest proposal of "painting idea" was that "painting idea does not draw shape" advocated by Ouyang Xiu in Song Dynasty. His idea was supported by many literati painters, and they began to regard "painting idea" as an important criterion for judging painting, which had a great impact on later painting and gardening. Chinese traditional gardening and Chinese painting share the same artistic characteristics. In the book *Yuanye*, *Jicheng* of Ming Dynasty emphasized that gardening should be "like painting". He believed that gardening should "imitate the environment, natural painting", "deep drawing, remaining feeling hilly". It can be seen that the idea of "painting" had been deeply rooted in people's hearts at that time, and was fully embodied in the gardening activities in the late Ming Dynasty. Emperor Qianlong once described the Lion Forest with such poems as "a tree with a peak in the picture, a few curves in the heart of the distant world", expressing his appreciation for the picturesque beauty of the Lion Forest.

In the new century, people have higher requirements for the quality of residential environment, but compared with the rapid development of urban residential environment practice in China, the corresponding theoretical level is still lagging behind (Pamučar et al. 2016). At the same time, the residential landscape has also attracted increasing attention. It is considered that the residential landscape is a very important part of the overall living environment, which affects people's living feelings at anytime and anywhere (Yishao and Yongjian 2016). At present, it is

urgent to study the residential landscape pattern with Chinese national characteristics and create a living environment that not only satisfies the coexistence of man and nature, but also has Chinese cultural and artistic characteristics (Chao et al. 2017). Based on the current residential landscape practice, a systematic and comprehensive theory is summarized to guide the healthy and correct development of urban residential landscape design.

### 3. Methodology

"Literati painting" has occupied an important and special position in the Chinese painting circle for thousands of years, which has exerted a tremendous influence on ancient Chinese painting. As a representative kind of Chinese painting, literati painting reflects the mainstream aesthetic preferences of Chinese painting to a large extent. For the concept of "literati painting", the entries in the Dictionary of Literary Aesthetics are interpreted as "referring generally to the paintings of ancient literati doctors, indicating morale". Different from the traditional methods of classifying flowers, birds, figures and landscapes by describing objects, the concept of "literati painting" is different from "courtyard painting" and "craftsman painting". It is classified by the subject of painting and the difference of the status of the painter. Zhang Yanyuan in the Tang Dynasty once said in *The Records of Famous Paintings of All Dynasties*: "From ancient times, good painters are all of noble birth or the skilled", and this statement has a great influence. During the Northern Song Dynasty, Su Shi clearly put forward the concept of "scholar painting": "to observe scholar painting just like reading the horse in the world". Dong Qichang of Ming Dynasty began to use the term literati painting formally. He mentioned in his *Purpose of Painting* that "literati painting began with Wang Youhang, then Dong Yuan, Juran, Li Cheng and Fan Kuan". Dong Qichang here proposed Wang Wei as the founder of literati painting and the ancestor of Nanzong. Therefore, "literati painting" has a special guide to painting in the inheritance of painting style. Mr. Yu Jianhua gave two conditions to literati painters in *Talking about Literati Painting Again*: "Rich Literary accomplishment" and "Skillful professional training". From this, it is seen that "literati painting" can refer to: literati, scholar-bureaucrat painting; literati origin, paintings of artists with comprehensive artistic accomplishment with skilled professional skills and dedicated to the cause of painting; Nanzong paintings. Mr. Chen Heng said: "the so-called literati painting, that is, painting with literati nature, containing the interest of literati, not on the basis of art in painting, but to see the feelings of many literati outside the painting".

### 4. Result analysis and discussion

#### 4.1. Enlightenment of Chinese painting on contemporary residential landscape design

The idea of Chinese painting is the embodiment of the painter's philosophy and social outlook on painting concept and idea, which runs through the whole process of painting. Ancient painters, deeply influenced by Confucianism, Taoism and Zen, showed different personality traits and spiritual will. For the design of residential landscape, the designer's personality traits and spiritual will directly affect the concept, intention and style of the scheme. Different designers have different ideas and opinions about the design.

Residential landscape is different from complex system planning such as factories, streets and squares. There are many factors besides aesthetics and life that need to be considered. The biggest characteristic of residential landscape is to pursue high-quality life, and create ecological, healthy and open space effect is the most important content. Chinese society is in the transitional period of development of various undertakings. The style of residential areas is influenced by ideas and opinions from all over the world. Especially in today's material prosperity, people's spirit is in an unprecedented state of contradiction. Tradition and modernity are constantly struggling and contrasting, gradually losing the strong idea of the designer's main body, without the "self-entertainment" of ancient painters, and without the bold and unconstrained general subjective feelings, and even losing the belief and integrity of the national culture.

In fact, the image of Chinese painting observes the natural scenery or artificial things around with aesthetic eyes, and presents in the picture with the help of the painter's hand. It has the label of graphical, expressive, abstract and emotional. The image of Chinese painting is divided into two parts: natural image and painting image. The natural image is the objective object that the painter wants to express, such as flowers, forests, rivers, etc. While the objective image is the emotional image of the painter, and the two have great differences in form, which is also the essential difference between painting and other arts. In the design of residential landscape, designers often need to use natural elements such as plants, stone, water to create an environment to show a more natural scene. The organization of these natural elements is the product of the subjective consciousness of landscape architects, with a strong form of refinement, fully reflecting the theme of the design and the ability to adapt to the site. Therefore, the image of residential landscape is that designers need to use the means of form refinement to shape a certain scene, and the material is the most basic elements of terrain, plants, water, stone and so on.

The artistic conception of Chinese painting refers to the way of expression and layout of the picture presentation, and it is the technical embodiment of the artist's realization of the image of the picture. After surveying and analyzing the base of residential landscape design, it is necessary to make a preliminary conception of the overall project. From this point on, the design techniques and conceptual layout begin to be integrated into the scheme, which runs through the whole process from the conception to the realization of the landscape intention. Painting artists use water, ink and mineral pigments as basic materials to express rich content and changing levels by means of pen, ink and color rendering, while residential landscape design uses landscape elements such as garden roads, small squares, water bodies, green spaces, stones, buildings and sketches to express landscape images. These landscape elements are abstracted into point, line, surface, body, color, texture and other pure form elements, as a plane form and vertical form of composition elements, conforming to the basic principles of beauty, comfort, etc. under the premise of meeting the function of residential areas.

Artistic conception first appeared in Buddhist sutras. Buddhists believe that the highest realm of Buddha is realized by self-consciousness, which is subjective and objective feelings. Different from ideas, b

imagery and artistic conception, the artistic conception of Chinese painting actually exists in the imagination space of the viewer's mind. It is the abstract aesthetic essence of the former three formed in the viewer's mind through mutual connection and interaction, that is, the so-called "only understandable, not utterable" wonderful realm. Traditional gardening art and Chinese landscape painting have the same aesthetic essence of artistic conception, but they adopt different ways of expression.

#### 4.2. Method of creating Chinese paintings in landscape design of Chinese residential areas

In residential landscape, the interface includes vertical elements such as landscape walls, doors and windows, as well as plane elements such as paving, planting and matching. The interface is an important surface element of space. The industrialized production of contemporary landscape materials leads to the uniform feeling of rigid landscape interface, losing the decoration and difference of traditional landscape materials and handicraft technology. Painting conveys the image thinking in the brain through the hand. It has a variety of uncertain forms and unique creativity, which is called handicraft. Handicraft is the best way to embody the creator's imagination. The Chinese painting of residential landscape should be good at creating decorative interface by using the differences and expressiveness of materials, so as to make it have the visual impact and artistic charm of painting.

In the construction of landscape vertical elements, walls and steps are the most important performance elements, among which brick and stone masonry technology can best reflect the handmade decorative aesthetic feeling. Masonry blocks need to follow the building rules of masonry structure in construction. They can display a variety of visual images in accordance with the logic of material construction. From the overall effect of the distance to the close-up of details, the traces of their handmade construction can be seen, such as the ink lines in Chinese paintings, which are exquisite and simple. For the decoration of doors, windows and other holes, it is required to be good at using exquisite design patterns and natural materials for construction, such as wood, stone, less and more precise materials, reasonable layout, reflecting the artisan craftsmanship of designers and builders, just as Chinese painting pays attention to the taste of "cherishing ink as gold" pen and ink.

In composition, Chinese painting pays attention to "laying out the potential", that is to say, the images to be displayed are arranged according to the law of beauty, and the primary and secondary structures are arranged through the size, color and component of the objects in order to conform to their own ideas and concepts. Chinese painting is a plastic art, its composition is essentially for the expression of the content of the picture and services. Chinese landscape painting takes natural landscapes, rocks, waterscapes, buildings and other natural objects as the image of painting, which makes the form of points and lines appear larger than that of natural objects themselves. It is also different from western painting in the form of color modeling. The brush and ink of natural objects in paintings are mostly natural lines, such as the rubbing of mountains and rocks, the curvature of plant branches, the curve shape of waves and currents, etc., which form a lively and flexible line painting.

Chinese painting pays attention to "charm" and "momentum" in spatial form, which is dominated by the operation of "heart" to pen. Western painting pays attention to "shape" in the space it paints, which is reflected in the pursuit of "rhythm" in western landscape design. Rhythm is equivalent to charm and momentum, while "rhythm" is the pursuit of quantitative proportion. Therefore, western gardens pursue geometric spatial rhythm, and so-called geometric rhythm is the spatial form, spatial scale, path to be quantified, proportional graphics to reflect. Chinese painting intends to be represented by graphics in residential landscape space, but this kind of graphics should not have quantitative and proportional relationship, so that the rhythm of space can be expressed by uncertain, vague or even more complex relationship.

Chinese traditional courtyard space is composed of buildings, pavilions, silk walls, shadow walls, ancient wood, strange stones, waterscape and so on. The construction of courtyard as a form of architectural art, the ultimate goal is to pursue artistic conception. The landscaping elements of traditional courtyard are not only natural objects, but also painting images presented by ink and wash paintings, which make people in the courtyard as if they were in painting. As the outer space of people's living activities, the courtyard is enclosed, giving people a certain sense of privacy. With the vivid scenery, people can enjoy their personal time quietly and comfortably.

#### 5. Conclusions

Starting from the "Chinese painting" concept, the landscape design of residential areas in China is studied, which is of great significance to the artistic heritage of the Chinese nation. According to the characteristics and development history of Chinese painting, the meaning of Chinese painting is understood as four aspects: idea, image, artistic conception, and abstract aesthetic conception, which is the starting point of the research. The relationship between Chinese painting idea and traditional ideal living environment is expounded from four aspects: classical philosophy idea, natural landscape image, brush and ink composition artistic conception, and abstract aesthetic conception. And the expression of painting idea in Chinese traditional gardening is discussed, which includes the following contents: gardening idea under the influence of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, the appropriate conception, the landscaping elements of humanized nature, the business location and spatial layout, and the creation of an artistic conception.

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## Author(s):

Hua Wei\*

Zhengzhou University of Light Industry, Zhengzhou, Henan, China

\*Corresponding author: Hua Wei, Email: 125145172@qq.com