

Oriental Aesthetic Embodiment of Ikuo Hirayama's Works

Xiaofeng Yang^{1*}

¹ School of Arts and Media, Guangzhou Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Guangzhou, China

Email Address

2362149495@qq.com (Xiaofeng Yang)

*Correspondence: 2362149495@qq.com

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Abstract:

Ikuo Hirayama is one of the most influential Japanese artists in the world in the 20th century. This paper focuses on the Oriental aesthetics presented in his works. The Oriental aesthetic charm presented in Ikuo Hirayama's works is obviously different from the aesthetic taste presented in traditional western realistic paintings. Ikuo Hirayama's paintings do not emphasize the strict perspective, the strict anatomy of the human body, and the objective and accurate description, but more emphasis on emotional appeal, artistic conception, image, such as some features of oriental aesthetics. This is the charm of Ikuo Hirayama's works. When the whole society was changing, Ikuo Hirayama became a solid successor of Japanese painting, and at the same time extended the influence of Japanese painting to the East and even the world. This paper discusses the history and cultural background of Ikuo Hirayama's artistic creation and the oriental aesthetic characteristics of his artistic works. It also tells the three stages of Ikuo Hirayama's artistic transition. This will provide reference for Chinese painting and the author's own painting creation.

Keywords:

Ikuo Hirayama, Ikuo Hirayama's Works, The Oriental Aesthetic

1. Introduction

Ikuo Hirayama is a famous painter in contemporary Japanese painting and an artist with worldwide influence. His works are not only famous in the East, such as Japan, China, Korea and other countries, but also highly recognized in the Middle East like Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Istanbul. Even in Greece, France and The United Kingdom. Through his paintings, Ikuo Hirayama has been promoting exchanges of arts and cultural between different ethnic groups for decades. His paintings have been widely recognized by people around the world and play a pivotal role in the international art circle. His artistic exchanges have greatly promoted the understanding and integration of eastern and western cultures. His works are known and loved by the world for their distinctive Oriental aesthetic features.

Ikuo Hirayama's works are characterized by comprehensive oriental aesthetics, which absorb the essence of traditional oriental arts such as literature and philosophy

in the form of expression and aesthetic taste, and reflect the form and rich aesthetic value of oriental beauty in the topic selection, composition, color, modeling and other aspects. We can feel the visual aesthetic features conveyed in Ikuo Hirayama's works from the following four aspects.

1.1. Brief Introduction of Ikuo Hirayama's life

Ikuo Hirayama was born in 1930 in Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan and died in 2009. In his autobiography, Ikuo Hirayama said he was only a negligible presence in a long history river. Even if it were destined to become dust, he would weigh much more than others. When he was plagued by illness and painting bottlenecks, it was The Buddhist inheritor of China's Tang Dynasty - Xuan Zang that supported him to sustain himself and find a new dawn.

In 1945, the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan, it killed 201 teachers and students at his school. Although the 15-year-old Ikuo Hirayama survived, but also suffered from severe nuclear radiation leukemia. By the age of 29, Ikuo Hirayama's white blood cells had dropped to less than half those of normal people. At this time, Ikuo Hirayama's only wish is to create a satisfactory painting before the arrival of death. Perhaps inspired by heaven, the images of Xuanzang suddenly appears in his mind, a monk, with one hand outstretched in front, riding a horse with a sense of hope and mission in the desert oasis. Thus it came "Buddhism comes".

Since the creation of "Coming of Buddhism" at the age of 29, Ikuo Hirayama has continuously participated in the investigation and sketch activities of Buddhist relics in Central Asia, India and other places, and created a large number of art works that express the theme of Buddhism. In 1962, Ikuo Hirayama again took Buddhism as the theme of the creation of the Dream of the Spirit of the Womb, which won the Grand View Prize at that time. In 1964, Ikuo Hirayama created the Buddha said "Chang A Han Classics" Volume 5, in which year Ikuo Hirayama also became a lecturer at Tokyo University of The Arts. Since the 1970s, Ikuo Hirayama has traveled to Central Asia, South Asia and China along the Silk Road for research and sketches."1970 to Iran, Iraq and Mesopotamia; In 197, he went to Syria, Jordan and Iraq. In 1973, he went to Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan successively. In 1974, he went to Afghanistan and Pakistan again. In 1975, he visited Datong and Xi 'an in China twice. In 1976 he went again to Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt and Iran; In 1977 he went to China again to visit Tibet. He arrived in Xinjiang, China in 1978. In 1979, he went to Beijing, Dunhuang and Guangzhou, and Edessa, Greece; In 1980 he went again to India, Syria, Pakistan, Indonesia, In 1981, he went to India and China again. China and India again in 1982; In 1983, he went to Dunhuang, Xinjiang, China. In 1984, he visited various places in China and the Ruins of Borobudur in Indonesia. In 1985, he visited China again. In 1986, he visited Loulan and Milan in Xinjiang, visited the Yellow River, and went to Ningxia and Inner Mongolia. "The Silk Road became inseparable not only from my art, but also from my life." Hirayama wrote.

After years of field investigation and facsimile, the Silk Road has gradually become the soul of Ikuo Hirayama's painting art and life pursuit. Ikuo Hirayama spent 20 years painting the Silk Road into 13 mural works -- The Western Region mural of the Tang Dynasty. During this period, he also created works of art such as "Afghanistan Teahouse", "Buddha's Head of Hada", "King City of Babylon", "Bronze Statue of Hittite" and "Bamiyan Buddha". Ikuo Hirayama found his way to painting along the

Silk Road, and his paintings were exhibited in various countries along the Silk Road, which also promoted cultural exchanges among the countries along the Silk Road. During this period, Hirayama made great contributions to the preservation of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the preservation of bamiyan Grottoes in Afghanistan, and the restoration of Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes in China. During this period, Ikuo Hirayama wear different hats, including the president of The Tokyo University of The Arts and the president of the Japan-China Friendship Association. Though in those days he was destined to be constantly running every day is busy, but he never forget he is a painter, so he never put down his brush, no matter where he is, he has picked up a paint brush, or some even can only draw the outline of some line sketch, he will be in the hands of the brush to record their feelings and experience, if you have more time, then according to their own sketches and line draft to create.

Ikuo Hirayama's art works are world-renowned and have an important influence in the world. In 1988, Ikuo Hirayama became a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, where his responsibilities focused on the preservation and protection of world cultural heritage sites. Ikuo Hirayama has lived up to his role as UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. Through his major - painting, he has been promoting exchanges between countries through fine arts and cultural activities over the years. He has played an important role in the exchange and integration of Eastern and Western cultures, and has been highly praised internationally. Ikuo Hirayama stressed that we should "face history squarely and create the future". Ikuo Hirayama has always maintained the peace between China and Japan as well as the world through the exchange of culture and art painting, and has done a lot of useful and positive work. As a result, Ikuo Hirayama earned the title of "Xuanzang of the Contemporary Tang Dynasty". Ikuo Hirayama, who suffered from the radiation of the atomic bomb, even valued peace. Therefore, he took the lead in promoting friendly activities between China and Japan for a long time, and made great efforts to promote the development of friendly cause between the Chinese and Japanese people. In particular, since he became the president of the China-Japan Friendship Association in 1992, he has spared no pains and hardships and devoted great energy to the development of china-japan people-to-people friendship activities, in which he played a very important role and was highly praised by the people of the Chinese and Japanese governments. Ikuo Hirayama greatly admired and liked the excellent traditional Culture of the Chinese nation, and also attached great importance to the influence of Chinese culture on Japanese culture. Ikuo Hirayama regarded Chinese traditional culture and Buddhist culture as the source and foundation of Japanese culture. He encouraged the Japanese government and people to return the "favours" of Chinese culture, strengthen the fine tradition of china-japan cultural friendship and further expand cultural and artistic exchanges between China and Japan. In 2002, the Chinese government awarded Ikuo Hirayama the "Contribution to Cultural Exchange Award" in recognition of his outstanding contributions to promoting cultural exchanges between China and Japan. In July 2008, Ikuo Hirayama, as the honorary president of China-Japan Friendship Association, continued to engage in china-japan people-to-people friendship activities. On December 2, 2009, Ikuo Hirayama died of illness in Tokyo, Japan, at the age of 79.

1.2. The Historical and Cultural Background and Artistic Background of Ikuo Hirayama's Creation

Ikuo Hirayama's works mainly focus on the latter half of the 20th century; In the second half of the 20th century, "postmodernism" rose in the West, and its influence

spread rapidly all over the world. Postmodern art is a criticism and transcendence of modern art, and is the cultural representation of post-industrial society. Postmodern culture is the product of highly commoditized and highly medialized contemporary society. Postmodern culture moves towards mass culture and popular culture. Postmodern culture has the tendency of flatness, popularization, entertainment and game. Postmodernism is all-inclusive. It integrates intellectual culture with mass culture, and uses absurdity, ridicule and other means to break the traditional aesthetic concepts of culture and art.

The United States dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945, and Japan surrendered. Since Japan was defeated, the United States was victorious. As a result of the defeat of the war, the politics, economy, ideology and culture of the United States strongly impacted all aspects of Japanese society. Most of the young generation in Japan had a great sense of self-preparedness. They competed to learn everything from Europe and the United States, and the society was filled with an atmosphere of change. In terms of art, it comprehensively negates traditional Japanese painting, which is regarded as stale and inferior art, and the study of Japanese classical painting will be considered as a violation of the development trend of The Times. Young Ikuo Hirayama did not have a deep ability to identify these trends, his uncle Shimizu Nanshan with a distinct truth to Ikuo Hirayama said: "The quality of culture and art is not directly related to the victory or defeat of the war. Good culture and art are not deteriorated by defeat. Beautiful things are always beautiful. It was Shimizu Nanshan's firm attitude that decided Ikuo Hirayama chose to study Japanese painting, and even became the constant guide of his entire artistic career.

In the process of learning Traditional Japanese painting, the paintings of three teachers had a profound influence on Ikuo Hirayama: the rigour of Kobayashi's Japanese paintings, the elegance of Yasuda Hiko's Japanese paintings and the coolness of Maeda's works influenced Ikuo Hirayama to use modern artistic skills and means to express the elegance of Yamato nation. Okakura Tenshin combined the rationality of the West and the spirit of the East to innovate the Japanese painting art, and also found a way out and confidence for Ikuo Hirayama to learn Japanese painting. As Ikuo Hirayama said in summing up his artistic career: "It is no exaggeration to say that I grew up under the guidance of these masters. Bathing in the new dawn of ancient Japanese painting, I became a neoclassicist by infiltrating teachers' education into the creation of Japanese painting." It is under this background that Ikuo Hirayama carries on the past and opens up the future, blends Chinese and Western, and forms his own artistic style. His artistic style is not only featured by Oriental culture, but also has distinct characteristics of The Times.

2. Ikuo Hirayama's Works and Oriental Aesthetics

2.1. The Implicative Eastern Style of Ikuo Hirayama's Works

Ikuo Hirayama's works are implicit in the Eastern way. Different from the Western nations, the emotional expression of the Eastern nations is relatively implicit, and the emotions in Hirayama Ikuo's art works are implicit and ambiguous. He directly reveals the implication of the East in his works, making the plot of the picture more vivid through the euphemistic form. The image in the picture is also demonstrated in a deeper level through this implicit emotional expression, which enriches the content of the expression. This work chooses Xuanzang's return route to obtain the authentic sutras. In the painting, two monks ride on an oasis of flowers and birds. There are

pigeons around, and the monks walking in front have pigeons above their hands, making the audience feel that the pigeons are carrying the monks to force them; At the bottom of the picture is dense grass, flowers and vegetation, and the trees around the picture are also lush; Through pigeons and lush natural scenery, Ikuo Hirayama expressed that Buddhism brings peace and beauty to society. Also expressed their ideals and the pursuit of great love. It can also be seen that Ikuo Hirayama makes use of Oriental implicativeness to make obscure and subtle changes impossible to appear in real life into his personal imprint. For example, though the eyes, nose, mouth, ears and five fingers of the characters in “Coming of Buddhism” are all hazy, we can feel that the characters are cheerful and full of beautiful yearning for the road ahead through their movements and pictures. Individual objects (horses, human bodies, vegetation) are distinguished by clear colors, and the variations of individual objects are extremely subtle. Ikuo Hirayama uses the Oriental reserve and the ability of “writing god in form” to create a gentle, deep and not depressed ideal world for the audience.

2.2. *The Oriental Freehand Brushwork of Ikuo Hirayama*

Takuo Hirayama’s works are characterized by Oriental freehand brushwork. Hirayama ikuo work outstanding characteristic is to pay attention to the expression of emotion, on composition, he likes a few picture spell together form a sharp piece of work, and some will appear “content” repeatedly, and these “repeated content” is the most painters, the most expressive part of creation, and have change, over and over again to create a special taste, these interests create a quiet atmosphere and cause the audience to meditate. (Figure 1)



Figure 1. *Coming of Buddhism" collection in Modern Art Museum in Sakuma City, 167.7x212cm, 1959.*

Under the management of Ikuo Hirayama, the ordinary scenes make the viewers indulge, as if they should exist in reality. Just as Aristotle said, “Artists’ representation of reality is not to show what exists in real life, but what should exist in reality.” Ikuo Hirayama’s works are just like this. The ideal truth is freehand brushwork, which is created to express the unreal feeling. As the aesthetics of “transcending form, pursuing infinity and thinking based on intention”, oriental aesthetics emphasizes the affinity and symbiosis between human and nature. We can easily find these characteristics when we appreciate the works of Ikuo Hirayama, and find the symbols with the characteristics of Oriental aesthetics. It is because of the presentation of this strong Oriental aesthetic characteristic in Ikuo Hirayama’s works that the charm of his works is deepened. Because art and culture belong to the nation and the world. For example, four paintings are combined into a large group of paintings (Figure 2). Monks in each part are moving forward, but their movements and shapes are different, with beautiful patterns of rhythm. Each part alone is very

ordinary, in the composition of the painting makes the monk east to have a scene. The Moon of Loulan (Figure 3) depicts a scene of business travelers riding camels under the moonlight. From left to right, one person has a camel. It was originally a very ordinary scene, but Ikuo Hirayama covered the whole picture in blue to give people a sense of peace and tranquility. He carefully arranged the size, shape and composition of the camels to make them well arranged. The figures in the moonlight are almost the same, but Ikuo Hirayama has enhanced the processing of the second and third figures on the right (the other figures are brown and gray, while these two figures are white). The virtual reality between the figures and the camels and the background makes the picture interesting. The viewer knows that there is no such scene in reality, but feels that everything in the scene is real.



Figure 2. The East Return of A Monk seeking Dharma (181x366.9cm, 1964).

2.3. Eastern color in Hirayama's works

The color of Ikuo Hirayama's works is Oriental, and color is a very important and attractive artistic language in painting. Through color, we can create amazing and unique picture effects in flat space. The colors in Ikuo Hirayama's works are plain, and the changes of hue and lightness are subtle. It embodies the ideology of "Harmony and Harmony" of eastern nations. For example, Sky on the Silk Road and Moon of Loulan depict large scenes of business trips along the Silk Road, including sky, mountain slopes, business trips, camels, vegetation and desert. The colors of the pictures are summarized into four or five by Ikuo Hirayama, and the color changes of individual images are even more subtle.



Figure 3. The Moon of Loulan (1970) 60.5x127cm Location unknown.

2.4. The Traditional Decorative Features of the Oriental Art of Ikuo Hirayama

Ikuo Hirayama's works have strong Oriental traditional decorative characteristics. His works are flat painted with the same color pair, no matter in the shadow part or the bright part, to shape the change of light and shade of the object in a unified tone. The method used is traditional and planar; At the same time, the colors of western

paintings are absorbed, and the edges of objects or visual center and other prominent parts of the picture are modified with gold powder, so that the picture has a strong visual impact and a prominent sense of form on the basis of the plane. His paintings are innovative and contemporary. His paintings to express the with concise line, and the processing of complanation, the picture is in the form of line management, highly generalization of planar linear image and constitute a harmonious and unified whole, the painting with distinct and exquisite national emotion, the desert, the camel, Buddha and creations of the form of natural, quiet, simple, clear, so that the picture is delicate. Ikuo Hirayama's works pursue changes under the overall tone. When the audience appreciates them initially, they are overall and unified, and when they appreciate them further, they can see subtle changes in the unified tone. Such subtle changes, similar to "ink divided into five colors", make the picture have distinct decorative plane features.

3. Conclusions

Ikuo Hirayama has experienced three stages in his exploration of his painting style, from "the external teacher, the source of the heart" to "the unity of mind and matter" to the creation of painting without borders; continuous pursuit of painting art one after another peak. At the same time, his paintings have distinct oriental characteristics, and he creates his own works of art, actively promoting the development of the "Silk Road" (oriental culture), and actively using art to promote exchanges between eastern countries. Ikuo Hirayama is not only a defender and innovator of Japanese painting, but also a bridge of cultural exchanges between China and the West. Whether hirayama Ikuo shows distinct oriental characteristics in his creation, or his experience in artistic pursuit, it not only strengthens the confidence of the oriental nation, but also has profound guidance and reference significance for the creation of oriental artists. Artists should be modest and studious. Only by learning from excellent artists can they succeed more easily. In the process of creation, artists should not only learn from the experience of art masters, but also absorb their own traditional culture. To constantly improve their artistic accomplishment and exquisite artistic skills; But also innovative consciousness, and constantly work hard on the basis of predecessors, to create works of art in line with The Times and with national characteristics.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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