

Study on the Realities of the Life of Boudoir Painters in the Background of Late Ming Feudalism

-- Taking Wen Bun as an Example

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Abstract: The Late Ming Dynasty was a period of unprecedented development for women's painting in ancient times, which surpassed all previous generations of women painters in terms of the number of painters and the number of paintings, especially in terms of the language and form of paintings. women painters. As a representative of the late Ming boudoir painters, Wen Chuan's paintings superficially depict a picture of the "small world" of daily life, but hidden behind her "small world" is her conscious creative attitude and keen gender awareness in the context of the feudal society of the late Ming. However, behind her "small world" is her more conscious creative attitude and keen gender awareness in the context of the late Ming feudal society. In this paper, we focus on aesthetics, sociology, and art history from an interdisciplinary perspective to explore the real life and social status of Wen Hsiun in the context of the late Ming feudal society.

Keywords: Late Ming Feudal Background; Boudoir Painters; Literati; Life Reality.

1. Introduction

In the late Ming period, with the emergence of the bud of capitalism, the development of factory handicrafts and industry and commerce contributed to the unprecedented prosperity of the city's economy and culture, and the cultural families in the Wumen area gathered during the Ming period, and various art schools were created, with a strong cultural atmosphere. The works of these painters reveal a harmonious and intimate painting style with a high sense of fun. Based on their different life situations and ideological sentiments, their works are very different and interesting. By studying the Ming painter Wen Hsiung and his works, we hope to learn more about the living conditions and artistic characteristics of painters of the same period.

2. The Sources of the Boudoir Painter's Skills from the Path of Learning to Paint

2.1. The Influence of Family Studies on the Bibliography of Boudoir Painters

Prior to the Ming and Qing dynasties, women rarely had the opportunity to gain an education due to the strong constraints of traditional feudal thinking, but it was only with the continued sprouting of capitalism in the Ming dynasty that the number of female painters in the Ming and Qing dynasties began to increase, and among the large group of boudoir painters in the Ming and Qing dynasties, Wen Bian and her father Wen Congjian are a good example. "In general, there must be a teacher for learning, and the influence of family learning is especially easy to achieve." Among the Ming boudoir painters, Wen had a very favourable family background and a good living environment, and had plenty of time to organise her life. She was influenced by her father's brush and ink painting style, and often discussed painting with her brother, Wenshao, who specialised in landscape painting. Wenshang specialised in landscapes and was known as "a

master of landscape painting". Looking at the family from the upper generation downwards, the Wen family has been good at painting for many generations, and their fame relied on their literary attainments. Wen Zhengming, Zhengming's son, Wen Peng, Wen Jia, and nephew, Wen Bo Ren; Wen Jia's son, Wen Yuanshan, grandson Wen Congjian, and grandson, Wen Congchang, Congchang's brother Wen Congzhong, and Wen Conglong, and Congchang's son, Wen Chengguang, and Congjian's son, Wen Tsui, and his wife, Wen, were all good at poetry, literature, and painting. Compared to ordinary families, Wen was uniquely equipped artistically, and it is not surprising that he became the highest achiever of boudoir flower and bird painting at that time.

Wen Chuan's husband, Zhao Lingyun, also wrote in the JINSHI INSECTS AND TREASURES COPY: "Yu's son, Wen Chuan, was passed down from his family to his father, who was a judge of ink and writing, and studied light colours and light pigments, and was a member of the family school." Zhang Fengyi, a minister of the Ministry of War, said in his inscriptions to the book Jinshi Insects and Trees: "Mrs Zhao, the daughter of Yanke, was married to Lingjun, and passed on her family's teachings at an early age, keeping her heart set on the art of writing." It can be seen from since the renowned women painter wen zhengming, the family's pen and ink painting and calligraphy has been passed down from generation to generation for nearly a hundred years.

2.2. The Influence of Husbandry on Boudoir Painters

At the age of 19, Wen Bian married her husband, Zhao Jun, whose character Lingjun, grew up with his father, Zhao Hanguang, who had a deep family pedigree. He also learnt Sanskrit under the famous Garland monks, studied poems and canons, and authored the Jingshi lin zhi ji qiao (A Study of the Times and Places of the Jinshilin Forests). He studied under Wen Congjian, the father of Wen Bian, and lived with his father and mother for a long time in the cold mountains outside the city of Suzhou, where he led a reclusive life. After his seclusion, he read for pleasure, excelled in seal script,

mastered gold and stone, and wrote a great deal. Her mother, Lu Qingzi, was the daughter of Lu Shidao, a literati painter and one of the "two great masters of Wu" at that time, and Lu Shidao once studied calligraphy and painting under Wen Zhengming. The marriage of Wen and Zhao Lingjun naturally brought the three famous families together, and thus led to more frequent exchanges between them. The "Poetry of the Boudoir" recounts that she: "sex by the Xuan light, do not like the complexity of the decorations, and Zhao knot hut in the mountains, embroidery long fasting, chanting and chanting without interruption, transcendence has the will to leave behind the common people." That is to say, Lu Qingzi's temperament was elegant, and she lived with Zhao Hanguang in the cold mountains, and her works had the temperament of transcendence. Wen Huan Guang and her mother-in-law had a very good relationship; they were not only mother-in-laws, but also bosom friends, and in their spare time, they would recite poems and paint with ink. Undoubtedly, the outstanding cultural environment of the Zhao family was also conducive to the further development of Wen's paintings, making her a representative of boudoir flower and bird painters in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties.

Wen Biao is the late Ming dynasty feudal marriage in the lucky child, she and Zhao Lingjun married, then follow the in-laws to return to the Cold Mountain, where they live a free and easy life of seclusion, they are husband and wife love, and passed on as a good story: "Duanrong Ming poetry and study etiquette, both feeds and the public aunts praise and congratulate, said Lingjun said, 'This is my virtuous woman, and your Yatou's wife is also. A piece of stone in the cold mountain can be unharmed.'" It can be seen that Wen Chuan was deeply loved and appreciated by her in-laws. In his later works, Wen Chuan's material was mainly concentrated in the house of "Cold Mountain," and his works show the unique and delicate feelings of women. Wen and his wife shared common interests and spiritual pursuits. As Qian Qianyi's Epitaph on the Tomb of Zhao Lingjun records, Zhao Lingjun loved to watch Wen paint, and most of Wen's paintings were inscribed by Zhao Lingjun with the words, "Lingjun came in to look at his wife, applying dan and toning the powder, sketching in ink, and writing handwritten inscriptions to distinguish between the real and the fake." At that time, Wen Biao's paintings were very popular, and a large number of forgeries appeared during her lifetime. In order to prevent forgeries, Zhao Lingjun often wrote inscriptions on her paintings. Although Zhao Lingjun was not very good at painting, he was good at calligraphy, and there are many of his inscriptions on Wen Huan's paintings. Wen Huan's painting style and Zhao Lingjun's calligraphy complemented each other on the whole, and Zhao Lingjun's profound literary training greatly influenced Wen Huan, so that Wen Huan was also good at poems and writings, which helped Wen Huan's creativity a great deal. It was in this environment that their mutual artistic exchanges and support, and their common interests and hobbies sublimated their relationship, and enabled Wen Chuan's creativity to break through. The couple's long-term seclusion in the cold mountains enabled Wen Huan to find the joy of life in the space of nature, where the sounds of wind, water, flowers, and birdsong provided an all-encompassing aesthetic experience for Wen Huan.

2.3. The Way of the Teacher's Heart

In the Tang Dynasty, Zhang Jade Coronet has long put forward the idea that "to learn from the outside is to learn from

the outside, and to learn from the inside is to learn from the inside", which illustrates the importance of self-study and copying in painting. In addition to the support of external conditions, the real reason for Wen Bian's success was her diligent pursuit of painting. Qian Qianyi said in the Epitaph of Zhao Lingjun: "Duanrong was a bright and generous person, and when she saw strange flowers and flowers, small insects and strange butterflies, she was able to paint them with her own brush, and she was able to describe their nature, and they were all vivid and vivid, and she made a thousand kinds of drawings, which were called "Cold Mountain Grasses, Trees, and Insects". Copying the internal herbage of a thousand species, a thousand days and on. And with its spare time book Xiangjun pounding Su, flower beauty, far and near the buyers to fill. The girls of the noble ladies competed with each other to learn from them and pass on their brushwork to each other." For a long period of time in her painting career, Wen Biao copied the Nei Fu Ben Cao Tu Hui Mysteries, an ancient catalogue of the Nei Fu, and it took her three years to finally complete the atlas Jin Shi Insects, Grasses, and Trees. For Wen Chuan, copying samples was an important part that could not be ignored, and it was precisely because of her hard work and perseverance in copying that she mastered the skills of painting, and thus created paintings that were "purchased from near and far". Wen Hsiung did not just copy, but also took the essence of her paintings on the basis of copying. Her husband described this in the Preface to the Book of Goldsmiths, Insects, Herbs and Trees: "This book of goldsmiths, insects, herbs and trees is the secret book of the Imperial Palace of China, such as Xuehua, Chrysanthemum Water, Wellspring, Waki Clothes, Copper Crossbow, Dongbi Soil, Failure of the Heavenly Duke, the Hemp Shoes, and Pottery and Salt and Iron, which is different from the book, but it is not censored, but it is taken for its essence, and it is used in the case. Coral, Rui grass species, easy to all the family collection. And take its strengths, abandon its short ears, and the world prevalent Tang Shenwei's "evidence of class diagrams Jing" is like the abyss of heaven, such as Jade and stone." On the one hand, this shows that it was not easy to complete the Jinshi Insects, Grasses, and Trees, and on the other hand, it also shows the depth of Wen Bun's painting skills and his "mastery of the mind and creation. At the time of Wen's life, the aesthetic consciousness of lady's chamber painters was awakening due to the prevalence of Wang Yangming's "psychology," and they were no longer confined to copying the classics of their predecessors; instead, they devoted themselves to the creation of their own works, using their own experience, training, and emotions to care for the objects they were depicting, and to create their own subjective ideas through the process of recognising nature and expressing it. The process of creating subjective images is the fusion of the "heart" of all things natural. This process is the integration of the "heart" of all things natural. The "heart" runs through almost the entire process of painting in the late Bunsen period, and one can feel the freshness, quietness, and boundless vitality in the quiet flowers and grasses that he paints.

The Imperial Peiwensai shu shu zhi (Records of Paintings and Calligraphy), Volume 58, describes Wen Chuan's paintings in this way: "Your girls competed with each other to be teachers, and each other passed on their brushwork skills." This shows that Wen Chuan taught his students the art of brushwork at home or in his studio, and that his students came from all over the world to learn from him. For example, the

two sisters, Zhou Shuku and Zhou Shuxi, who were famous painters in the Ming dynasty, often copied Wen Bun's sketches and learnt from his brushwork skills, and were his most favoured disciples. Jiang Shao-shu said in his *Silent Epic*: "The two girls, Gai, studied under Chiu Wen-chuan, whose colourful brushwork was as beautiful as a celestial maiden scattering flowers, and Ruoku and Ruohsi, who did not join in the reputation of the blue". Wenchuan, on the other hand, inherited her skills from her family and had copied a thousand kinds of internal herbs. Her painting skills and aesthetic sensibilities attracted a large number of famous women, and the American sinologist Gao Yanyi argues in his book that Wen Bian, who came from a family of famous painters in Suzhou, became a very good painter herself after a long period of training in painting, and that later on in the Ming and Qing dynasties, other women hoped to find her as a tutor. The transformation of Wen Bian's identity, from learning from her family to her husband's family to becoming a teacher herself, shows that Wen Bian was freed from her male subordination, and that she was not overshadowed by her ancestor, Wen Zhengming, but rather attracted the attention of the literati and connoisseurs of the time, mainly because of her own efforts to find a unique way to paint birds and flowers, with a different flavour.

3. The Life Status of Boudoir Painters from the Uses of Painting

The use of women painters' paintings is an important expression of their social practice. The function of painting has been discussed in painting theories of different generations. Before the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties, painting had always served the function of awareness, and after that, it had always played the role of a preacher who "educated and helped people". However, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, due to the relative political stability and economic prosperity, Suzhou became the centre of economic and cultural development, where the world-famous "Wu Men Four Famous Artists" often traded paintings and calligraphy. In fact, before this, due to the influence of traditional Confucian thinking, the ancient literati were very reluctant to sell paintings, the Tang Dynasty, Zhang Yanyuan in the *Record of Famous Paintings Throughout the Ages*, said: "Since ancient times, good painters: no more than the clothes of the nobility, the high and mighty, Zhenmiao a moment, the fragrance of the thousands of rituals, not the despicable of the village and the lowly can also be." This shows that the literati think that selling paintings is a shameful act. But from the Ming and Qing dynasties, Suzhou region of painting and calligraphy trade to break this situation. However, boudoir painters lived in their own boudoirs for a long time, and most of their paintings were of flowers, plants, fish and insects, and most of their works were for "self-entertainment", and they regarded ink and brushwork as a game. Therefore, most of the subjects of their paintings were free, such as windows, benches and handkerchiefs, all of which could be used as objects of their self-entertainment, and they did not have any utilitarian tendencies. Born in good families, the function of their paintings was twofold: firstly, to amuse themselves; secondly, to be purchased and collected by others.

3.1. Self-indulgence -The Embodiment of the Aesthetics of "Leisurely" Life

Born into a good cultural family, Wen Bian's stable and

favourable living conditions enabled her not to have to work hard for a living, and to have enough time to study painting according to her own interests and tastes. Because of her early life environment, she hid herself in the inner cabinet, and the things she painted came from flowers, plants, insects, and trees outside of her boudoir. She painted for her own amusement, and she pursued a state of life that was more like a state of "leisure and contentment. This state of affairs is well reflected in her paintings, which mostly reflect the sense of leisure and the feelings of the boudoir in the events around her, and the paintings pursue a simple and naïve interest. However, Wen Chuan's "idleness" is completely different from the idleness pursued by men. While the late Ming literati mainly pursued a way of living in seclusion and away from the hustle and bustle of the world, Wen Chuan's paintings reflect more of a leisurely mindset and a mindfulness of ecology, bringing the depiction of small scenes of daily life into her own life. These small scenes became the stage for the literati to seek their own values and to express their own life's trust through "creating a realm with objects", which was in fact an important manifestation of the aesthetics of "idleness" of the life of the lady's chamber painters of the Late Ming Dynasty.

In all of Wenchuan's paintings, the size of the picture is not very large, and she seldom inscribed poems or compositions on her paintings. She usually inscribed the year's title "Painting by Wenchuan of the Zhao family in Tianshui" or "Painting by Wenchuan" in the blank space at the upper part of the picture, and then wrote the vermilion seals around the inscription. Then, in the area around the inscription. Judging from this habit, it can be deduced that painting was more of an "aesthetic game" for Wen Hsuan than a form of entertainment, and the success or otherwise of the paintings can be ignored. It should be said that the mentality of "self-indulgence" was common among painters in the boudoir, and her "self-indulgence" was actually a return to "self-awareness," where the "self-indulgence" of the mind flowed into the "self-indulgence" of the artist. In her "self-indulgence", she was actually returning to her "self-awareness", and in her "self-indulgence", she was able to express her delicate aesthetic feelings and find the value of her own existence in a happy and contented state of mind. In addition, Wen Chuan treasured her paintings very much, because at that time there were many people who copied her works as models and used them as counterfeits, and many fake paintings appeared on the market. In order to prevent forgeries, she would often paint on both sides of the fan at the same time.

3.2. Purchase and Collection - The Rise of "Things"

In the Late Ming period, due to the continuous improvement of living standards, the aesthetics of life emerged in the Late Ming, especially for the scholarly class with a high level of cultural literacy and connoisseurship, the most prevalent is the collection and appreciation of objects, the significance of which lies in the collection of famous paintings of the time to facilitate them to obtain a positive aesthetic experience from daily life, so as to show their talent and aesthetic interest.

As a famous painter of the boudoir at that time, Wen Chuan's works were generally not disseminated to the public, but in the mid- to late Ming Dynasty, some good people would go directly to buy or collect them. At that time, there were so

many people who went to buy and collect Wen Hsiun's works that they were "filled with buyers from near and far". On the one hand, her paintings and calligraphy were extremely popular at that time, but on the other hand, after the death of Zhao Lingjun's father, her family began to decline, and she had to sell her paintings in order to subsidise her family's income. Qian Qianyi's Epitaph on the Cemetery of Zhao Lingjun records that: "When Fanfan died, Lingjun's family fell into decline, and his guests came to him, and he was able to sell his paintings. When he died, Lingjun's family fell further, and his guests came in more and more, and he made himself at home, treating the common people as if they were dung and ulcerating more and more." Zhao Lingjun was able to live such a leisurely life, enjoying the landscape, because she had Wenchuan behind her financially. With the death of her father-in-law, the family fell into decline, and Wenchuan had to rely on his work as a schoolteacher and the sale of his paintings to support their financial needs.

4. Conclusion

The growth and success of a painter is closely related to the environment in which he or she lives. The reason why Wen Huan became a representative of the late Ming boudoir painters is not only because of her intelligence and diligence, but also because of the actual state of her life and her experience in painting. She fully realised Zhang's idea of "learning from the external masters of creation and getting the source of the heart from the centre", as stated on a silk tassel threaded with pearls. In his book *The Boudoir Scholars: The*

Culture of Talented Women in Jiangnan in the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties, Hong Kong-based American scholar Kao Yen-yi has this to say about talented women in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties: "In their daily lives, most of them nominally obeyed these maxims (referring to the Three Obediences and the Four Virtues), and lived a family-centred life, governed by the law and social customs. In their daily lives, most of them nominally adhere to these maxims and lead a family-centred life under the control of laws and social customs. While women cannot rewrite the principles that frame their lives, they have creatively carved out a space within the dominant gender system that gives them meaning, comfort and dignity." It can be seen that for the better-born talented women, they have opened up a new and appropriate space for their existence in their real lives, and they are no longer shadows under the male life, but they reveal their true feelings in their works.

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