

The Influence of Zen Thought Culture on the Development of Contemporary Literati Painting at the End of Ming Dynasty

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to discuss the influence of Zen thought in the late Ming Dynasty on the development of contemporaneous literati painting. Firstly, the development history of Zen thought culture is sorted out, including the birth of Zen thought, its continuous dissemination and the distribution of the northern and southern sects. Secondly, the development of China's painting and calligraphy works under Zen thought is elaborated, emphasizing the important position of Zen thought culture in the field of painting and calligraphy. Then, it focuses on the influence of Zen thought on the contemporaneous literati paintings in the late Ming Dynasty, including the influence on the concepts and aesthetic interests of literati paintings, as well as the influence on the techniques and expressive methods. Through the analysis of typical literati painters and their works, the representative figures of Zen thought in the late Ming Dynasty and their works are specifically introduced, and their artistic characteristics and Zen embodiment are interpreted and analyzed. Further, the revelation of Zen thought in the late Ming Dynasty to contemporary literati painting is discussed, emphasizing the significance of Zen thought to the inheritance and development of contemporary literati painting, and suggesting specific methods to integrate Zen thought into the creation of contemporary literati painting. Finally, the influence of Zen thought in late Ming Dynasty on the development of contemporaneous literati painting is summarized through conclusions and outlooks, and outlooks and suggestions are made for future research.

Keywords: Zen Thought Culture; Ming Dynasty; Literati painting

1. INTRODUCTION

China at the end of the Ming Dynasty was an era of intellectual and cultural convergence, and the convergence and interaction between Zen thought and literati painting became a major highlight of Chinese culture at that time (Cheung, 2018). The influence of Zen thought has been throughout all periods of Chinese history, but in the late Ming period, the relationship between it and literati painting became closer and closer, producing a profound influence and exchange between each other. This paper will explore the influence of Zen thought on the development of contemporaneous literati painting during the late Ming period, aiming to reveal the role and significance of Zen thought in the creation of literati

paintings, as well as the importance of this influence in the history of Chinese culture (Field, 2024). The late Ming period was an important cultural turning point in Chinese history, as well as a period of the rise and prosperity of literati painting (Ni, 1999). During this period, the exchange between Zen thought and literati painting reached an unprecedented level. The ideas of Zen thought, such as "enlightenment" and "enlightenment to Buddha", and the expressions of literati painting, such as "transcendence of meaning" and "interest in ink and brushwork", complemented each other, drew on each other, penetrated into each other, and jointly promoted the prosperity and development of Chinese culture (Faure, 2005). The influence of Zen thought on literati painting is not only reflected in the connotation and expression of artistic creation, but also affects the spirit and aesthetic taste of literati painters at a deeper level. By studying the influence of Zen thought on literati painting at the end of the Ming Dynasty, we can not only deeply explore the inner connection and inheritance development of Chinese culture, but also reveal the cultural phenomena and characteristics of an important period in the history of Chinese art (Yang, 2007).

2. DEVELOPMENT OF ZEN THOUGHT

Zen thought, as one of the important branches of Buddhism, carries the wisdom and essence of Chinese culture for thousands of years. Its development is both the historical evolution of Buddhism after its introduction to China and the spiritual condensation of ancient Chinese philosophy and culture. In this chapter, we will explore the development of Zen thought in terms of its birth, its continued spread, and the assignment of the northern and southern sects (ARAL, 2018; Ho, 1997).

2.1 The Birth of Zen Thought

The birth of Zen thought can be traced back to the introduction of Buddhism into China. Buddhism was introduced into China from the Western regions, and after thousands of years of spreading and integration, it formed the unique style of Chinese Buddhism. The birth of Zen thought is the new birth of Buddhism on Chinese soil and the product of the intermingling of Buddhist thought and Chinese culture (Wang, 2022). Zen thought originated from the Dhyana Sect in India, which is rooted in the meditative practices of the Buddha. It focuses on the practice of meditation, emphasizing meditation to break the bonds of the cycle of birth

and death, and ultimately to achieve enlightenment and Buddhahood (McCausland & Zhao, 2011). Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen in China, brought this practice to China and started the development of Zen in the East. The birth of Zen in China is inextricably linked to the arrival of Bodhidharma. It is said that Dharma arrived in China at the beginning of the 5th century A.D. and preached in the Northern Wei Dynasty and Liang Dynasty, passing down the concepts of Zen. He put forward the idea of "pointing directly to the human heart and seeing the nature of Buddha", which advocates that through direct experience of the nature of the heart, one can transcend words and teachings and reach the state of liberation. This idea established the basic stance of Zen thought and influenced the direction of its development in later generations (Kleutghen, 2010). Zen thought emphasizes the concepts of "enlightenment of the mind" and "attaining Buddhahood in a single moment," opening up a direct path to the realization of Buddhahood, which has become a major feature of Chinese Buddhism. Zen thought emphasizes introspection and reflection, seeing through the world, paying particular attention to "meditation" and "enlightenment", and advocating enlightenment in silence to achieve liberation of the mind. Its unique cultivation methods and profound ideological connotations have had a profound impact on Chinese culture and provided important intellectual resources for the development of Chinese philosophy and literature.

2.2 The Continuous Spread of Zen Thought

The spread of Zen thought was a long and complex process, which crossed the limits of time and space and profoundly influenced all aspects of Chinese society and culture (Levine, 2005). The Tang Dynasty was the heyday of Zen development. The promotion and support of Zen thought by the Tang imperial family and literati led to the elevation of Zen thought's status in Chinese society. Branches such as the Linji and Cao Dong sects of the Southern Sect and the Fa Yuan and Yunmen sects of the Northern Sect sprang up in the Tang Dynasty, establishing many temples and dojos and laying a solid foundation for the spread of Zen. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, the spread of Zen thought entered a new stage. During the Southern Song Dynasty, Zen emphasized more on inner meditation and Zen experience, focusing on the enlightenment of the mind and the experience of life, and formed the Zen culture represented by the Linji Sect; during the Yuan Dynasty, Zen emphasized more on the practice of Zen and living, focusing on the "breaking of Zen" to make Zen thought and practice closer to the masses, and produced the Yuan Dynasty Zen culture

represented by the Cloud Gate Sect. Zen thought in the Yuan Dynasty, represented by the Yunmen Sect. The spread of Zen was not only limited to the Buddhist circle, but its thought and practice also had a profound impact on various fields of Chinese society, such as culture, art, philosophy and literature. Zen practices such as "sitting meditation" and "seeing the mind" have not only changed the way of life and values of the Chinese people, but also had a great impact on the aesthetics and outlook on life of Chinese culture (Gao, 2011; Liu et al., 2020).

2.3 The North-South Sect Distribution of Zen Thought

Zen thought has been divided into the Southern and Northern Sects throughout Chinese history, and the formation and development of these two schools of thought have played an important role in the spread and evolution of Zen thought. The differences between the Southern and Northern Sects stem from the understanding and emphasis on the teachings of Zen and reflect the diversity of Chinese society and culture. The Southern Sect is an important sub-school of Zen thought whose origins can be traced to the rise of Zen in the Tang Dynasty. The Southern Sect emphasizes "right mindfulness" and "the path to enlightenment," focusing on inner awakening and enlightenment, and emphasizing teachings that go straight to the heart. Representatives of the Southern Sect include Sixth Patriarch Huineng, Nanyue Huisi, and Cao Dong Zen Master Daoyuan. Southern Zen emphasizes the realization and awakening of the individual's heart, and the experience of meditation and enlightenment. Through meditation and enlightenment, people can directly realize the true meaning of self-nature and the Great Way, and realize the liberation and awakening of the heart. The Southern Zen Sect emphasizes the practice and cultivation of meditation and advocates "teaching without words", stressing that the true meaning of Zen can be understood through experience and realization, rather than relying on words and teachings. The Southern Zen Sect emphasizes Zen teachings that are directed to the heart, believing that only through direct realization and awakening can one truly understand the true meaning of the Self and the Great Way, rather than relying on external doctrines and rules and regulations. By emphasizing inner awakening and enlightenment, Southern Zen promoted the development and spread of Zen thought and laid an important foundation for the development of Zen thought in later generations. The rise and development of Southern Zen promoted the prosperity and exchange of Chinese culture and thought, and made important contributions to the development of traditional Chinese culture (Hearn & Smith, 2001). The

Northern Sect is another important branch of Zen, the rise of which can be traced back to the Tang and Song dynasties. The Northern Sect emphasizes "learning" and "following the classics", focusing on the interpretation of the classics and religious norms. Representatives of the Northern Sect include Huiyuan, a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng, Monk Shi, and Dongshan Liangjia, the ancestor of the Cao Dong Sect. The Northern Zen Sect focuses on the interpretation and religious norms of the classics and advocates understanding and practicing the teachings and norms of Zen based on the classics. They emphasized that the true meaning and essence of the classics could be realized through study and meditation. The Northern Zen Sect advocates the Zen method of "learning by study", believing that by studying the classics and attending zazen, one can realize the Buddhist principles and the true meaning of Zen in the classics. They emphasized the traditions and norms of Zen and advocated following traditional Zen practices and teachings. Promoted the classical interpretations and religious norms of Zen: By promoting the classical interpretations and religious norms and emphasizing the importance of studying and attending Zen, the Northern Zen Sect promoted the transmission and development of Zen thought. The rise and development of Northern Zen promoted the standardization and institutionalization of Zen and provided an important foundation for the organization and education of Zen (CHEN & ZHANG). The Southern and Northern Sects, as two important sub-sects of Zen, played an important role in the development and spread of Zen thought. The Southern Sect emphasized inner awakening and enlightenment, and advocated Zen teachings that pointed directly to the heart, which promoted the internalization and enlightenment of Zen thought; the Northern Sect focused on the interpretation of the classics and religious norms, and promoted Zen teachings that involved learning, which promoted the classicization and institutionalization of Zen thought. The differences between the Southern and Northern Sects reflect the diversity and richness of Zen thought, and provide multiple perspectives and ways for the development and spread of Zen thought.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE PAINTING AND CALLIGRAPHY UNDER ZEN THOUGHT

In the development of Chinese painting and calligraphy, Zen thought has played an important role, and its profound philosophical connotation

and aesthetic concepts have had a far-reaching influence on the creation of painting and calligraphy. Firstly, Zen thought focuses on the expression of inner experience and spiritual realm, emphasizing the concepts of "mind is reason" and "mind is realm", which is similar to the pursuit of "ink realm" in Chinese painting and calligraphy art. This is in line with the concept of "realm of ink" and "realm of meaning" pursued by Chinese painting and calligraphy art, and injects deeper connotation and emotional expression into the works of painting and calligraphy. Secondly, Zen thought emphasizes the intuitive experience of transcending objects, and advocates the purification and sublimation of the mind through quiet meditation, and this inner state of mind and the pursuit of the realm are fully embodied in Chinese painting and calligraphy, which makes the works more transcendent and profound. Finally, Zen thought has been deepened and developed in the practice of great painters and calligraphers of all generations, from Wang Xizhi and Mi Fu to Wen Zhengming and Zhang Daqian, all of them were inspired and guided by Zen thought, and they pursued the realm of the mind and the expression of the mood in their painting and calligraphy creations, which resulted in the formation of their own distinctive artistic styles, and made an important contribution to the prosperity of the Chinese painting and calligraphy art. In the process of the development of Chinese painting and calligraphy, the influence of Zen thought is not only reflected in the aesthetic concepts and creative methods of the works, but also in the inner cultivation and spiritual pursuit of the painters and calligraphers. Zen thought emphasizes that "the heart is the reason", and advocates the purification and sublimation of the mind through meditation and transcendence of objects, and the pursuit of this inner state of mind and realm has become the goal that Chinese painting and calligraphy artists have relentlessly pursued. In the creation of calligraphy and painting, artists not only focus on the realistic skills of expressing the external image, but also pay more attention to expressing the realm and mood of the inner mind. They express the mood and emotional experience of the mind through the spontaneity of the brush and ink, and the bones of the ink rhyme, and strive to show the unity of the mind and the realm in their works. Therefore, Zen thought plays a leading and inspiring role in the development of Chinese painting and calligraphy, giving profound connotation and emotional resonance to the works of Chinese painting and calligraphy, and making them more valuable for viewing and artistic charm. The combination of Zen thought and Chinese painting and calligraphy art is not only reflected in the aesthetic concepts and creative methods of the works, but also in the attitude of the

painters and calligraphers and their pursuit of art. Zen thought advocates "meditation", "enlightenment" and other ways of cultivation, which have deeply influenced the inner cultivation and spiritual pursuit of Chinese painting and calligraphy artists. Through the concepts of Zen thought, painters and calligraphers discipline their own state of mind and creative attitude, pursue spiritual purification and sublimation, and strive to express in their works their profound experience and understanding of life, nature, and life. Therefore, the combination of Zen thought and Chinese painting and calligraphy not only enriched the connotation and emotional expression of the works, but also shaped the extraordinary artistic sentiment and life attitude of the painters and calligraphers, injecting a constant stream of vitality and wisdom into the prosperity and inheritance of Chinese painting and calligraphy.

INFLUENCE OF ZEN THOUGHT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORANEOUS LITERATI PAINTING IN THE LATE MING DYNASTY

As an important part of Chinese culture, Zen thought had a profound influence on the development of literati painting. During the late Ming Dynasty, Zen thought was widely spread and applied among literati painters, profoundly influencing their aesthetic concepts, creative techniques and artistic expressions. In the following, we will discuss the influence of Zen thought on the concept and aesthetic interest of literati paintings, as well as the influence of Zen thought on the techniques and expressions of literati paintings.

4.1 The Influence of Zen Thought on the Concepts and Aesthetic Interests of Literati Paintings

Zen thought has had a far-reaching influence on the concepts and aesthetic interests of literati painting. Firstly, the concept of "ink state" advocated by Zen thought has profoundly influenced the aesthetic concept of literati painting. Zen thought focuses on the free flow of ink and brush and the expression of the spiritual realm, advocating that the unity of the mind and the realm can be achieved through the drenching of ink colors and the condensed simplicity of lines (Liu, 2023). This pursuit of ink realm makes literati paintings pay more attention to the mood and realm of the works, pursuing the depth and subtlety of the painting realm, and focusing on the expression of inner emotions and spiritual pursuits rather than

pursuing the form of realism and subtlety. Therefore, in the literati paintings, you can often see the expression of the ink color, simple and powerful lines, as well as the poetic and philosophical mood and emotional expression, which are closely related to the pursuit of the Zen ink realm. Secondly, Zen's concepts of "mind is reason" and "mind is situation" have also profoundly influenced the aesthetic taste of literati paintings. Zen thought emphasizes intuitive experience beyond verbal thinking, and advocates the expression of the inner realm and the realm beyond the realm through quiet meditation and transcendence of objects. In literati painting, artists create an artistic realm beyond the image through the refinement of meaning and the transcendence of realm, making the works have a deeper connotation and viewing experience. They often express their inner feelings and emotions, as well as their profound thoughts and understanding of life, nature and life through the depiction of natural scenery and the symbolism of imagery. Therefore, in literati paintings, one can often see the poetic and pictorial expression of the ethereal mood, as well as the inner expression of emotion and spiritual pursuit, which are closely related to the pursuit of Zen state of mind. To summarize, the influence of Zen thought on the concepts and aesthetic interests of literati painting is multifaceted and profound. The Zen concept of ink realm makes literati paintings pay more attention to the expression of mood and realm, and pursue the profound and implicit painting; while the Zen concept of state of mind makes literati paintings pay more attention to the inner experience and the transcendence of the realm, and pursue the artistic realm beyond the image. Therefore, Zen thought has injected deep philosophical connotation and aesthetic interest into literati painting, enriched the expression and artistic connotation of literati painting, and made literati painting become an important part of traditional Chinese culture, and also provided valuable creative wisdom and spiritual wealth for artists of later generations.

4.2 The Influence of Zen Thought on the Techniques and Expressions of Literati Paintings

During the late Ming Dynasty, Zen thought had a far-reaching influence on the techniques and expressions of literati painting. Firstly, the pursuit of Zen ink realm made literati painting pay more attention to the free use of ink and ink and the fullness of ink color. Zen advocated that the depth and intensity of the ink color should be changed according to the mood, not sticking to the portrayal of the image, but pursuing the arbitrary use of brush and ink, and the profound and implicit mood. In the literati paintings

of the late Ming Dynasty, painters can often be seen using concise and powerful ink and brushwork to express the mood and realm of the works, focusing on the creation of ink and the grasp of the realm, and striving to show the unity of the mind and the realm in the works. Secondly, the pursuit of Zen state of mind makes literati painting pay more attention to inner experience and emotional expression. Zen advocates transcending the intuitive experience of image, and expresses the inner realm and the realm beyond the realm through meditation and transcendence of objects. In the literati paintings of the late Ming Dynasty, artists often expressed their inner feelings and emotions, as well as their profound thoughts and comprehension of life, nature, and life through the depiction of natural scenery and the allegory of imagery. They pursued an artistic realm beyond the image, and created a mood and emotional expression that transcended the image and the object, making the works have a deeper connotation and viewing experience. Therefore, the influence of Zen thought on the techniques and expressions of literati painting at the end of the Ming Dynasty is reflected in the creation of ink and the expression of the state of mind, which injected new vitality and connotation into the development of literati painting at the end of the Ming Dynasty. To summarize, Zen thought had a far-reaching influence on the development of literati painting in the late Ming Dynasty, not only affecting the aesthetic concepts and emotional experiences of literati painters, but also influencing their creative techniques and artistic expressions. The penetration and influence of Zen thought made the late Ming literati painting present a unique artistic style and aesthetic interest, which had an important influence on the development of Chinese painting history (Wang, 2022).

5. ANALYSIS OF TYPICAL LITERATI PAINTERS AND THEIR WORKS

5.1 Representatives of Late Ming Zen Thought and Their Works

During the late Ming Dynasty, Zen ideology was widely spread and applied in the literati painting world, influencing the artistic creation of many literati painters. Representative figures include Dong Qichang, Mi Fu, Wen Zhengming, and Tang Yin. Most of these painters were scholars and masters of literature, calligraphy, and painting. They pursued the Zen concept of "mind is Buddha" and advocated natural brushwork and transcendent mood, forming a unique artistic style. Next, we will mainly introduce these representative figures. Wen Zhengming, courtesy name

Dainian, and number Mu Xin, was born in the middle of the Ming Dynasty, and was one of the most famous literati painters of the Ming Dynasty. His works are full of Zen, deeply influenced by Zen thought. Wen Zhengming was good at landscape painting, especially at expressing the composition and ink rhythms of mountains and rocks. His works are full of rich Zen flavor, expressing the depth and connotation of landscapes through simple ink and brushwork, and showing the realm of "doing nothing and ruling by doing nothing" in Zen thought. His representative works include *Fresh Snow on Faraway Mountain*, *Ink and Landscape*, etc. With their unique styles and profound meanings, these works became the classics of literati paintings in the Ming Dynasty, and had far-reaching influences on the development of literati paintings in the later generations. Tang Yin, courtesy name Bo Hu, courtesy name Run Fu, born in the middle of the Ming Dynasty, was a famous literati, calligrapher and painter in Chinese history. His paintings were inspired by the ideas of Zen thought, and were full of joie de vivre and Zen. Tang Yin specialized in painting flowers, birds and figures, and his works were known for their drenching ink colors and dashing brushwork. He focused on capturing life's moments, advocated "painting the country in the vernacular", and emphasized the expression of writing and spontaneous brushstrokes. His representative works include *Grapes* and *Fishing Alone on the Autumn River*, etc. These works, with their simple but powerful ink and brushwork and deep and spiritual mood, were highly esteemed and borrowed by later generations of literati painters. Born at the end of the Ming Dynasty, Dong Qichang, courtesy name Shiqi, and nickname Meng Ruan, was an important figure in Chinese cultural history, as well as an outstanding literati painter and calligrapher. His paintings are characterized by both Southern and Northern schools, focusing on the expression of Zen and pursuing both form and spirit. His representative works include *The Lanting Collection* and *Running Cursive Calligraphy*, which, with their unique brushwork and profound mood, have had a profound influence on later generations of literati painting and calligraphy. Mi Fu's calligraphic works are full of Zen, his ink is vivid and strong, and he pursues the perfect unity of ink and brushwork and mood without being formal. Representative works include *Fishing Alone on a Cold River* and *Broken Sentences*, which, with their unique styles and profound Zen meaning, were greatly admired and utilized by later generations of literati calligraphers and painters. Mi Fu was also an influential literati painter. His paintings, mainly landscapes, express the magnificent beauty and grandeur of nature with his strange and tense brushwork. Mi Fu's paintings are unconventional, incorporating the connotations of Zen thought and pursuing the perfect

unity of brushwork and mood. Representative works include *Inscription on Lin'an Residence* and *Twelve Panels of Landscape*, which, with their unique artistic expression and profound Zen meaning, had a profound influence on the development of literati painting in later generations.

5.2 Interpretation of Zen Meaning and Evaluation of Artistic Value of Literati Paintings

The above representative works all contain profound Zen connotations, reflecting the literati painters' understanding and comprehension of Zen thought. Through the depiction of natural scenery and the pursuit of artistic forms, these works express an aesthetic emotion of transcending the world and pursuing freedom. When appreciating these works, the viewer can often feel a kind of transcendent elegance and ethereal artistic realm, and thus be soothed and sublimated. These literati paintings have important artistic value and historical influence in the late Ming period. They not only have unique artistic charm in form and technique, but also have far-reaching influence on spiritual connotation and aesthetic emotion. Through the depiction of natural scenery and the pursuit of artistic form, these works show an aesthetic emotion of transcending the world and pursuing freedom, which has positively promoted the development of Chinese literati painting (Jung, 2023). To sum up, the representative figures of Zen thought at the end of the Ming Dynasty and their works have an important position in the history of Chinese literati painting, and their artistic exploration and spiritual pursuit have had a far-reaching influence on the later generations, opening up a new path for the development of Chinese literati painting and showing the unique charm of Chinese painting art.

6. THE IMPLICATIONS OF ZEN THOUGHT FOR CONTEMPORARY LITERATI PAINTING IN THE LATE MING DYNASTY

6.1 The Inspiration and Influence of Zen Thought on Contemporary Literati Painting

Zen thought emphasizes inner peace and awareness, and advocates purifying the mind through meditation and practice. This is an important revelation to contemporary literati painters. In contemporary society, people are faced with various pressures and challenges, and peace of mind and inner tranquility are particularly precious. Literati painting, as a form

of art that emphasizes emotions and moods, requires painters to express their knowledge and feelings about the world through in-depth inner experience. The inner awareness and calmness emphasized by Zen thought helps painters to find the source of inspiration in the process of creation, which makes their works richer in depth and content. Zen thought advocates observing nature and perceiving the beauty of nature, and advocates "seeing mountains is mountains, seeing water is water". This is in line with literati painting, which emphasizes on writing and mood. Contemporary literati painters can learn from Zen thought and incorporate the changes and interest in nature into their works, making the picture more vivid, natural and spiritual. The concept of nature emphasized by Zen thought echoes the spirit of freehand painting, which helps painters express more sincere and natural artistic emotions. Zen thought advocates an attitude of transcendence, emphasizing that "the world is a flower, a leaf, and a bodhi". This is an important revelation for contemporary literati painters to seek their personal artistic realm in their art practice. As a free and transcendent form of art, literati painting requires painters to pursue the unity of art and life in their creations, and to integrate their artistic pursuits with their personal attitudes towards life, so as to make their works more personalized and in-depth.

6.2 How to Integrate the Zen Thought of the Late Ming Dynasty into the Creation of Contemporary Literati Paintings

Zen thought at the end of Ming Dynasty emphasizes inner purification and awareness, believing that only through inner peace and purity can one truly experience the beauty and truth of the world. In the creation of contemporary literati paintings, painters can incorporate this idea into their works in the following ways. First, meditation and contemplation. Zen thought advocates sitting still and meditating, purifying the heart by focusing on the breath or a specific object. Contemporary painters can learn from this approach and utilize meditation techniques to enhance their aesthetic taste and expressive ability. Through meditation, painters are able to feel their inner emotions and experience of beauty more deeply, thus showing a more sincere and profound artistic expression in their works. Second, awareness and perception. Zen emphasizes the importance of being aware of one's surroundings and inner emotions. Contemporary literati painters can enrich their creative materials and expressive techniques by perceiving the natural scenery, people and things around them, as well as their own inner emotions and feelings. Through in-depth awareness and perception, painters can more accurately grasp their own

creative inspiration and expression, so as to create works with more connotation and depth. Finally, expression of emotion and mood. Zen thought believes that inner peace and purity can make one more sensitive and understanding of the beauty and truth of the world. Contemporary painters can learn from Zen thinking and integrate their inner emotions and experiences into their works to express a more authentic and profound artistic mood. By expressing emotions and moods, painters are able to make their works more personalized and deeper, touching the viewer's heart and causing resonance and reflection. Zen thought emphasizes the beauty of nature and the operation of natural laws, believing that only by living in harmony with nature can one experience inner peace and the true meaning of life. In the creation of contemporary literati paintings, painters can incorporate this idea into their works in the following ways. Firstly, natural observation and experience. Zen thought encourages people to observe nature and experience its beauty and magic. Contemporary painters can enrich their creative materials and expressive techniques by observing the changes, colors and forms of natural scenery. Through in-depth observation and experience of nature, painters can more accurately grasp the beauty and interest of nature, thus showing more vivid and natural artistic images in their works. Secondly, the choice of natural themes. Zen thought believes that nature is the source of all beauty and inspiration. Contemporary painters can choose natural scenery as the theme of creation, such as landscape, flowers and birds, seasonal changes, etc., to express the beauty and interest of nature. By choosing and expressing natural themes, painters can make their works more interesting and aesthetic, attracting the viewers' eyes and hearts. Finally, the expression of writing and mood. Zen thought emphasizes "Dharma as if" and believes that the beauty of nature lies in its natural state and flowing interest. Contemporary painters can draw on Zen thinking to express the changes and interests of natural scenery in the form of writing, and express the beauty of nature and life through the creation of scenarios and moods. Through the expression of writing and mood, painters can make their works more spiritual and interesting, attracting the eyes and hearts of the viewers. Zen thought emphasizes the unity of artistic practice and philosophy of life, believing that only by unifying artistic creation with the attitude towards life can the true value of art and the meaning of life be manifested. In the creation of contemporary literati paintings, painters can integrate this thought into their works in the following ways. Firstly, the integration of art and life. Zen thought believes that art is a part of life, and art creation should be unified with the attitude of life. Contemporary

painters can integrate the Zen thought of transcendental life attitude into art creation so as to make the works more interesting to life and philosophical connotation. Through the integration of art and life, painters can make their works more personalized and deeper, reflecting their understanding and pursuit of life. Secondly, reflection and cultivation in the process of creation. According to Zen thought, art creation is a process of cultivation, which requires painters to constantly reflect on their attitude towards life and artistic pursuit. Contemporary painters can reflect on their attitude towards life and philosophical concepts through the process of creation, from which they can realize the true meaning and beauty of life. Through reflection and practice, painters can make their works more personalized and in-depth, reflecting their own attitudes and pursuits towards life. Finally, the social significance and value of art works. Zen believes that art is a spiritual pursuit and social responsibility, and that artists should combine their artistic pursuits with social values to make their works more socially meaningful and valuable. Contemporary painters can make their works more socially meaningful and valuable by integrating the understanding and expression of life, nature and beauty in Zen thought into their art works, bringing spiritual and aesthetic enlightenment to contemporary society. Incorporating the Zen thought of the late Ming Dynasty into the creation of contemporary literati paintings requires painters to have a profound cultural background and artistic cultivation, and also requires painters to keenly perceive the changes and needs of the contemporary society, to combine the Zen thought with the practice of contemporary art, and to create works of greater connotation and depth, so as to infuse new vitality and significance into the contemporary literati paintings. Inner purification and aesthetic expression, the expression of natural interest, and the unity of artistic practice and philosophy of life are the key elements of integrating Zen thought into the creation of contemporary literati paintings, and only by organically combining these elements will painters be able to create works that are truly rich in spirituality and connotation, and bring the enjoyment of beauty and spiritual enlightenment to the contemporary society.

7. CONCLUSION

Through the study of this paper, we can draw several important influences of late Ming Zen thought on the development of contemporaneous literati painting. Firstly, Zen thought provided literati

painters with an aesthetic concept and spiritual pursuit, emphasizing inner tranquility and transcendence, which made literati painting have a unique aesthetic interest and artistic style. Secondly, Zen thought had a profound influence on the creative techniques and expressive methods of literati paintings, promoting the development and change of literati paintings and making them closer to human nature and the inner world. In addition, Zen thought also promoted the combination of theory and practice of literati painting, which made literati painting pay more attention to personalized and connotative expressions, and presented a more colorful art form. Although this paper provides an in-depth discussion on the influence of late Ming Zen thought on contemporaneous literati painting, there are still many aspects to be further studied and explored. Firstly, the intrinsic connection between Zen thought and literati painting at the end of the Ming Dynasty can be deeply excavated to explore the extent of its performance and influence in different literati painters, different schools and different regions. Secondly, we can further study the specific ways of expression and artistic techniques of Zen thought in specific literati paintings, as well as its influence on the painters' creative careers and personal styles. In addition, the inheritance and development of Zen thought on contemporary literati painting can also be explored from a contemporary perspective, providing new ideas and insights for the innovation and revival of literati painting. To summarize, future research can explore the relationship between Zen thought and literati painting at the end of the Ming Dynasty in a wider scope and at a deeper level, providing a richer and more profound theoretical basis for understanding the development of Chinese painting history and cultural history.

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