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TOBITA, Yuki. The Imitation Consciousness and the Southern and Northern Schools Theory in Dong Qichang's "Eight Views of Autumn Moods"

This paper focuses on the album "Eight Views of Autumn Moods" painted by Dong Qichang (1555–1636) in 1620, examining how he imitated and commented on the paintings by old masters, and then expressed them in his own way. This album emphasizes dynamic compositions, powerful brush strokes and the contrast of color applying. Though it has been deemed as one of Dong's representative paintings, its imitation of ancient painting has not been analyzed deeply so far.

In his self-statement of the first work in the style of Zhao Mengfu, Dong lists Zhao's painting he has once collected, and mentions his large hanging scroll "The Pine Wind of the Summer Imitating Juran," which is the only work Dong owned at that time. There is a copy of Zhao holding the similar composition with this work in the album "Reduced Versions of Song and Yuan Paintings," which can be considered that it has the same source as Dong's painting. The fourth one imitates Zhao Lingrang's "Whiling Away the Summer by a Lakeside Retreat," but also adding the distant mountains in Ni Zan's style. The sixth quotes the form of pines from Zhao Bosu and its boat from Zhao Boju. The eighth copies the foreground landscape in the beginning part of Li Tang's "Intimate Scenery of River and Mountains". These four paintings can be said as rare sources for Dong's works. The rest four works are based on the tradition style of Southern school that is asserted as orthodox literati painting by Dong.

However, this album does not paint in the same way as these ancient colored works, but in the style of Ming dynasty Wu school. The direct prototype of this album is the light-colored style of Shen Zhou and Wen Zhengming, whose consciousness for imitation of old masters are also shared here. However, Dong enlarges lines and dots, and lays more stress on strokes and the contrast of colors. This tendency can be seen as well in his ink paintings, which are characterized by the various lines and ink-color contrast of the neighboring dark and light ink. In other words, Dong introduces brush-and-ink theory to color paintings in "Eight Views of Autumn Moods".

In Dong's theory, he shows a mixture of both positive and negative evaluations towards three old painters called "Three Zhao"; Zhao Lingrang, Zhao Boju and Zhao Mengfu, who are also quoted in this album. Among them, Zhao Mengfu is one of the most important focal points when Dong tries to re-construct the Chinese art history, as the representative literati painter who innovates the blue-green style categorized into Northern school. For instance, regarding the evaluations on Zhao Mengfu's "Autumn Colors on the Que and Hua Mountains," Dong regards this work as one example from "Three Zhao" system at first when he acquired it, but later he changes his comment as one of Southern school system when he wrote the second colophon on it. On the other hand, Dong shows his surprise when viewing Zhao Bosu's "Golden Halls in Pine Forest," even though he already knows well since his early days about the different versions of Suzhou fakes copied from the system of Zhao Boju and Zhao Bosu. This appreciation experience happens in the same period as the second colophon of "Autumn Colors on the Que and Hua Mountains" and related texts, when Dong finds out the balance between blue-green style and southern school, and finally accomplishes his own ideal image of color painting. Therefore, the pictorial expression in "Eight Views of Autumn Moods" can be said as the reflection of Dong's formation of color theories.

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