

# Reread Wu Hufan's *Red Dress and Cui Pei*

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**Abstract:** In the Chinese painting circle of the 20th century, Wu Hufan's painting style is very distinctive. On the one hand, he carefully studies the tradition of literati painting, and pays attention to comprehend the expressive spirit of traditional painting. On the other hand, he diligently goes to nature and tempers his own color language in a large number of sketches, so as to make the flower and bird style in his paintings elegant and artistic. It is far-reaching, especially the lotus flowers painted by him are gorgeous but not vulgar, graceful and graceful.

**Keywords:** *Cui Pei in red dress, lotus, no-bone method*

## 1. Introduction

Wu Hufan (1894-1968), whose initial name was Yiyan, whose word was Zhenjun, was later renamed Wan, whose word was Dongzhuang, also known as Qian, and whose name was Qian'an, and whose calligraphy and painting was signed by Hufan, is famous for Wu Hufan world. The name of the study is "Meijing Academy". He was born in a scholarly family with a family background, and he has been engaged in antique painting since childhood. When he was a child, he learned landscape, flowers and birds from his mentor Lu Lianfu, and finally formed his flower and bird painting style with ease and profound artistic conception. In his life's painting creation, the flower and bird paintings with lotus as the theme undoubtedly have an important position. *Cui Pei in Red Dress* (Fig. 1) is the most famous one, a typical painting method of Lotus in Wu costume.

*Red Dress and Cui Pei* is a freehand painting on a vertical scroll created by Wu Hufan in 1949, and it is also one of his representative works of many lotus works. This painting is 77.5 cm long and 16 cm wide. It is included in the Shanghai Painting and Calligraphy Publishing House's Collection of Works of the Centennial Representative of the Shanghai School. Wu Hufan. *Red Dress and Cui Pei* depicts the beautiful scenery of pink lotus blooming among the green lotus leaves in the pond swaying in the wind. In the painting, a blooming lotus flower leaps between two jasper lotus leaves, a budding pink lotus pavilion stands on the lotus leaf, and in the distance there are lotus with sharp horns. The lotus powder is carved into jade, clear and plump, like a beautiful woman standing in front of the water. At the bottom of the picture are orchid-leaf-shaped aquatic plants that grow at will, swaying in the wind inscribed on the painting: *Cui Pei in red dress*. Ji Chou summer is an elegant lesson for Mr. Jin Huai, Wu Hufan. And printed with seals: Qianxu painting record, Naohongyige.

## 2. Subject matter

In terms of painting themes, Wu Hufan chose the famous flower in my country, the lotus. Lotus is born in China and is famous all over the world. The lotus is a traditional famous flower in my country. It has high historical, cultural and economic value and is deeply loved by people. Cao Zhi of the Wei and Jin Dynasties wrote "Furong Fu": "Looking at the splendid beauty of hundreds of flowers, there is no single spirit of the flowers." Bai Juyi's "Lotus Picking Song" in the Tang Dynasty: "The ling leaves lingering in the waves and the wind, and the boats pass through the depths of the lotus." Yang Wanli of the Song Dynasty "Dawn out of Jingci Temple to send Lin Zifang": "The lotus leaves are infinitely green, and the lotus flowers are different in the sun." Wu Minhong wrote "Hibiscus Fu and Preface": "There is a hibiscus spirit grass, which is cultivated in Zhongchuan." He the lotus is called the spirit grass. Zhou Dunyi of the Northern Song Dynasty said in "Love the Lotus": "I only love the lotus that comes out of the mud without being stained, and the lotus is clean and not demonic... The lotus is also the gentleman of flowers." In it, the lotus is called the gentleman in the flower. Yuan Dynasty Bai Pu's "Double-tone> Victory in the Summer": "In the hot summer, the sunflower pomegranate is full of fragrance, and the lotus is fragrant."



*Figure 1: Red Dress and Cui Pei, Wu Hufan, 1949, Vertical Scroll, Ink and Color on Paper*

Throughout the history of Chinese painting, there are many painters who painted lotus flowers. During the Five Dynasties, both Huang Quan and Xu Xi painted lotus flowers, and their representative works include Huang Quan's "Lotus with Mandarin Ducks" and Xu Xi's "Ruilian Tu". During the Song and Song Dynasties, there were more painters who painted lotus flowers, such as Cui Bai's "Autumn Lotus and Double Ersons" and Wu Bing's "Water Hibiscus", etc., mainly taking the meaning of lotus's cleanliness and elegance. Literati painting developed very well in the Yuan Dynasty. Painters such as Wang Mian, Zhang Zhong, Qian Xuan and others who painted lotus used ink to express the lotus and pursued the quiet realm of the lotus. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there were more famous painters, such as Shen Zhou, Lu Ji, Zhou Zhimian, Bada Shanren, Yun Nantian, Zheng Banqiao, Jin Nong, etc. Their works were not only highly personalized, but also focused on freehand brushwork. At the same time, different expression techniques such as no bone, double hook and heavy color are also displayed. In pursuit of the meaning outside the painting, the lotus flower has become the sustenance of the painter's soul. In the paintings of the past dynasties, there are many designs that will coexist the lotus and the mandarin ducks on the screen, such as Huang Quan's "Lotus and Mandarin Ducks" in the Five Dynasties, Zhang Zhong's "Withered Lotus and Mandarin Ducks" in the Yuan Dynasty, and Chen Hongshou's "Lotus and Mandarin Ducks" in the Ming Dynasty. In the Qing Dynasty, Ren Bonian's "Lotus and Mandarin Ducks" [2], etc., used lotus and mandarin ducks to symbolize feelings, sustenance between men and women, and the meaning of love between husband and wife.

As a master painter and connoisseur of calligraphy and painting in China in the 20th century, Wu Hufan also has a special liking for lotus flowers. "Mist Obstruction Qingluo" is a masterpiece of lotus flowers created by Wu Hufan in 1936. It depicts the blooming scene of lotus flowers with freehand brushwork. It is also his sketch of the landscape. "Red Dress and Cui Gai" was made by him in the same year. In 1940, he made "Hanli", in which Zhou Bangyan's "Huanxisha" two works. The poems are the works of chanting the lotus, but the paintings are the works of chanting people. "Hanli" was

painted on the first anniversary of Wu Hufan's wife's death. In the painting, the lotus flower is beautiful and graceful. The pink lotus is either budding or slowly blooming. Wu Hufan used lotus flowers to express his longing for his wife. In 1949, Wu Hufan created the freehand painting "Red Dress and Cui Pei". In addition, he also has a number of "Lotus" (1939), "Lotus Fragrance", "Water Wearing Dress" (1937), "Leng Fragrance" (1948), "Fairy Bun Embracing New" "Makeup" (1953), "Lotus Pond Fei Cui" (1959), "Hibiscus in the First Sun" (1960) and other works, all show Wu Hufan's love for the theme of lotus.

### 3. Tools

In terms of tools, Wu Hufan has unique requirements for drawing lotus flowers. The first is the choice of the pen. Wu Hufan likes to use a hard brush or a double brush to paint. *Red Dress Cui Pei* is not made with sheep's brushes, but with hard and juxtaposed brushes that are not full of moisture, to express the rich changes between brush and ink, moisture and colors, and the brushes are flexible and incisive. The lotus flowers and leaves are plump and graceful, with traces of large expanses of rendering. The second is ink, Wu Hufan painted *Red Clothes Cui Pei* with top oil fume ink. This kind of ink is fine in quality, and when mixed with water, it will be glossy and glossy when painted on paper. The third is the emphasis on pigments. The pigments used by Wu Hufan are very precious, such as azurite, stone green, ochre, cyanine, rouge and other colors are taken from natural ores, clam clam or natural plants, and some of these pigments are even more rare. When Wu Hufan uses these pigments, he will carefully grind them repeatedly, filter them repeatedly, etc., and apply them to painting through complicated processes, so that the pigments on the paper are clear and bright, bright and not floating. Of course, Wu Hufan also attaches great importance to paper products. He often uses cooked paper for his flowers. *Red Dress Cui Pei* is drawn with Japanese custom-made light cooked paper. This kind of paper is delicate, translucent and flexible, which is very conducive to the expression of pen, ink and color, making the lotus paintings by Wu Hufan more moist and beautiful.

### 4. Technique

*Cui Pei in Red Dress* is a boneless lotus painting drawn by Wu Hufan on cooked paper. The boneless coloring method combines the simple and rich freehand interest of the brush, and boldly adopts the method of natural collision of water and ink colors. The petals are formed by mixing white powder with water, eosin, and rouge on the paper and colliding with them. The lotus leaf is dyed with light ink and green juice to dye the area, dynamics, front and back of the lotus leaf. After the water is slightly dried, write, dye, and outline the veins and volume of the lotus leaf, making the lotus leaves moist and elegant. The thickness does not remain dirty, and the leaves are full of layers and three-dimensional sense. Then use strong brushstrokes to draw the loaded rod, which is smooth, graceful and dynamic. Finally, add the orchid-like aquatic plants, which are scattered but not scattered, elegant and yet resilient. The whole painting is both free and easy in freehand brushwork and elegant in Yun Nantian's boneless coloring. The colors are crystal clear and translucent, plump and harmonious, like a beauty in Tang suits, with fat like jade and bright skin like snow. It shows the characteristics of a typical "Wu-suited lotus", which is full of beauty and graceful beauty.

In *Red Clothes and Cui Pei*, Wu Hufan showed the charm of lotus flowers with contrast and dot dyeing. The lotus flowers in his works are rich, fat and beautiful, each of which resembles the beauty of the Tang Dynasty; it also resembles the colorful singing of Peking Opera, rich and graceful, coexisting with the refined and the common, showing the tranquility and graceful appearance of the lotus. As depicted in Song Dynasty poet Lu Yan's poem: Cui Gai beauty stands by the water, sandalwood powder is not evenly fragrant and sweaty [3]. What is even more ingenious is the little bit of rouge that Wu Hufan skillfully used when painting lotus flowers. Against the backdrop of white powder, the lotus flower with rouge on its tip lit up instantly. He uses the method of bumping water and bumping colors to blend color and color. The white and red of lotus petals are unified and varied, completely changing the limitations of traditional painting color expression, showing the beauty of lotus, which is both vulgar and elegant. It's not beautiful. Someone once commented that Wu Hufan's lotus "has the wind spirit of the song people [4]."

### 5. Style

In the early days of the Republic of China, traditional ink and wash literati painting was widely

questioned. Based on the active tracers of traditional painting, they took retreat as their advance, and chose the rich and beautiful all the way to make a change, so as to realize the organic combination of traditional and modern themes.

In terms of style origin, *Red Clothes and Cui Pei* resembles Yun Nantian in the Qing Dynasty, but in the hands of Wu Hufan, who has a strong sense of self, Yun Nantian's works are only a reference. Wu Hufan praised "the flowers of Yun Nantian are extremely harmonious, but the feathers of birds are not their lengths." He also wrote "the first Yunnantian painting in the world" in Yun Nantian's "Maolin Stone Wall Scroll" [5]. The total number of Yun Shouping's paintings collected or inscribed by Wu Hufan is about 20, such as "Flower Atlas Six Opens", "Fishing and Hidden Scroll", "Autumn Cat and Butterfly Scroll", and "Pine Wind and Spring Scroll" ", "Imitating Hui Chong Jiang Nanchun Scroll", etc., he said, "The bright and clean colors of Nantian flowers made him heartbroken, and he called it 'even if Xu Huang is born, it may not be able to pass' [6]". It can be seen that Wu Hufan likes to admire Yun Nantian's painting, and imitates and innovates. Wu Hufan took Yun Nantian's deceased appearance and used the boneless painting method to shape the graceful and graceful appearance of the lotus. The "boneless" sketching flower painting method is based on Xu Chongsi of the Northern Song Dynasty, and Yun Nantian became more mature in the early Qing Dynasty. Yun Nantian boldly innovated and creatively restored and carried forward the "boneless" sketching tradition. Yun Shouping's "Treading the Snow with Respect" volume, using the boneless method, can be said to be a masterpiece of Yun Nantian's paintings. As a latecomer, Wu Hufan is a good collector. Not only does he have Yun Nantian's paintings in his own collection, but also some exchange activities in the "Meijing Bookstore" have given him enough time and energy to study Yun Nantian's paintings.

In addition to the evaluation, Wu Hufan also saw and collected a large number of works by Ni Zan and Dong Qichang, such as Ni Zan's painting "Bamboo and Stone Scroll", Dong Qichang's "North Mountain Lotus Hoe", etc. The influence of the two on Wu Hufan cannot be ignored. Wu Hufan once called Ni Zan's paintings that he bought with a lot of money as "extraordinary products", and lamented: "In the past ten years, I have seen no less than 20 real works of Yunlin, but there are many bamboos and rocks and few mountains and rivers, so I want to be unique. It's not easy to get a product [7]." He also called it a "sacred product" on the "North Mountain Lotus Hoe" currently in the collection of Dong Qichang in the Shanghai Museum; he also said in his painting theory: "Dong Wenmin copied The original version of Ascension is all boneless." It can be seen that Wu Hufan affirmed the rhythm and elegance of Ni Zan and Dong Qichang's works, and learned their new ideas in painting creation. Perhaps it was Wu Hufan's pursuit of "Yi Yun" and "Yi Ge", which led him to think that Yun Nantian was one of the scholar painters who had the most similar spirit to Ni Zan after Dong Qichang. Therefore, he constantly learns and explores the elegance and delicacy in Yun Nantian's paintings and applies them to his own paintings.

## 6. Conclusion

Wu Hufan had a very high reputation in the Chinese painting circle during the period of the Republic of my country. Xu Beihong once praised Zhang Daqian, a master of Chinese studies, as "the first person in five hundred years", but Zhang Daqian said in an interview that "Wu is the first of the two and a half painters whom he admired the most in his life." Wu Hufan's boneless technique "Wu Dressed with Lotus Flowers" is graceful and elegant, unparalleled, and can be regarded as the only one in the world of painting. His lotus flower has far-reaching influence on later generations in terms of subject matter, coloring, brushwork and lotus shape, and it is worth learning. Wu Hufan's calligraphy and painting integrate the past and the present. His works reveal his understanding of the techniques of painters of various schools in the past, and transform traditional techniques into his own language to express his personal feelings, interests and spiritual realm. Through his own exploration and practice of art, Wu Hufan has proved that between tradition and innovation, he can forge his own artistic path. Wu Hufan's lotus flower combines tradition and innovation, and still has important practical significance for the development and creation of contemporary Chinese painting.

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