

# A Detailed Explanation on the Hierarchical Aesthetic Teaching of “Peach Blossom Spring”

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## ABSTRACT

"Peach Blossom Spring" is Tao Yuanming's most famous and widely circulated representative work. Therefore, students and readers can easily associate it with Tao Yuanming's ideas of advocating nature and seclusion. In addition, Chinese language textbooks clearly state that "Peach Blossom Spring" is an ancient prose genre used for narrative, scenery, and expressing emotions and aspirations. Therefore, the focus of Chinese language teachers in teaching is on Tao Yuanming's portrayal of the Peach Blossom Spring scenery and his thoughts of coming out of the world. The author's description of an ideal society, longing for a better society, and pursuit of a better society are the aesthetic goals that students should ultimately implement.[1] However, looking at the academic situation, the war-torn society of the late Eastern Jin Dynasty was very far away from students, and the perfectionism of the ideal society of "looking back" lacked experience. Students find it difficult to empathize, and even if they resonate, they cannot receive behavioral guidance through their external values. The reason for this problem is that the main content of the author's emotions lacks pre-perception and post practical significance, and the teaching of aesthetics lacks hierarchy. The following will analyze the emotional, attitudinal, and value goals of "Peach Blossom Spring" from the perspectives of stylistic features and academic sentiment.

**Keywords:** “Peach Blossom Spring”, Chinese language teaching, Aesthetics.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, the symbolic significance of Peach Blossom Spring, which internalizes the pursuit of ideals into students' yearning for a better life, is definitely the central aspect of teaching. But what people need to consider is the purpose of students learning and experiencing the beautiful scenery of Peach Blossom Spring and Tao Yuanming's thoughts of coming out of the world. So the authors of this paper adopt the mode of reasoning, completing the logic and deducing forward. Only by resonating with and expecting the beauty of the Peach Blossom Spring can people develop a longing for it. Looking back, the negative thinking of "avoiding the world" cannot be the ultimate goal of teaching for second year students whose values have not yet been formed. Therefore, when students study "Peach Blossom Spring" and

understand the author's pursuit of a better society and the purpose of their thoughts and emotions in the world, it is actually necessary to form guiding significance in their behavior. That is to say, to make students become passionate, positive, generous, and friendly people like the people of Peach Blossom Spring, and to make the morally noble world in Peach Blossom Spring a reality, it is necessary to let students see that the beautiful qualities of Peach Blossom Spring people are the core of the ideal society of Peach Blossom Spring, not the scenery. In this way, the clues and levels of the four aesthetic teaching in this text have surfaced.

The stylistic features of "Peach Blossom Spring" are quite unique. As an ancient prose genre, "Ji" combines the true emotions and feelings of narrative writing with the narrative style of other textbooks, such as "The Little Stone Pond" and "Notes of the Yueyang Tower". [2] Because it is not a true story, but a fictional spiritual world

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created by the author, "Peach Blossom Spring" is treated as both a prose and a supernatural novel in "The History of Chinese Literature". Therefore, when teaching, teachers should not only grasp the beauty of rhyme and language in the characteristics of prose works, but also use the elements of novels, namely environmental elements, plot elements, and image elements, to interpret the text and leave a deep impression on students.

## **2. THE BEAUTY OF ENVIRONMENT - EXPECTATIONS FOR PEACH BLOSSOM SPRING**

As a narrative prose known for the beauty of rhyme, appreciating the artistic conception outlined by the author through words is a prerequisite for students to develop empathy. Therefore, the first step is to give students a visual sense of the environment in Peach Blossom Spring.

Firstly, it is the natural environment, that is, the beauty of the scenery, which tests the teacher's ability to combine translation and guidance in teaching classical Chinese. They cannot simply copy the annotations in the textbook, but should create a teaching atmosphere as much as possible, pay attention to skills, especially "down-to-earth", and carry out secondary processing and polishing. It can be seen that all the beautiful things are concentrated in the Peach Blossom Spring, where flowers bloom in full bloom, green grasslands are tender and juicy, and a gentle breeze blows, causing flowers to flutter and scatter in the air; The houses are neat, the land is open, and there is a peach forest blooming for hundreds of meters. There are mountains and water, tender grass and fresh flowers, convenient transportation, fertile land, beautiful ponds and marshes, and a wide variety of mulberry and bamboo forests. Chickens and dogs chirp, the water source is abundant, and people are self-sufficient. The ten-mile peach forest is like a fairyland on earth.

Secondly, it is the cultural environment, where people come and go, with the old and the young and enjoying themselves. Seeing a stranger (fisherman) who is lost or in difficulty, everyone is warm and hospitable, willing to lend a helping hand. Isn't it better for oneself to treat a stranger like this?

Here, everyone lives and works in peace and contentment, with ample food and clothing, harmonious neighbors, warm hospitality, noble morals, and long lives for the elderly with yellow hair. The population of young children is

prosperous. This is the great harmony society described in the "Book of Rites", where the elderly have a place to live, the young have education, the poor have a place to rely on, the difficult have help, and the widowed, lonely, disabled, and sick all have a place to live. Everyone would aspire to such a society.

## **3. PERFECTIONISM - RESONATING WITH STUDENTS**

In order to understand the author's emotions, it is necessary to guide students to see that this beauty is contradictory and conflicting. The ideal society with such beautiful natural and cultural environments is too unrealistic and difficult to achieve. Not to mention the decline of feudal society at that time, it is also difficult to achieve today. Where is the contradiction?

- Contradiction in scenery: Suddenly, the fisherman saw a peach blossom forest several hundred meters long. Along both sides of the stream, at a glance, everything was peach trees, and there were no other trees besides peach trees. Middle school students have long known that there are only three natural ways for plants to spread, either through flowing water, animals, or wind. Wind, water, bees, and butterflies cannot be discussed, and only peach trees can be planted in this area. Therefore, it is impossible to achieve a peach forest with hundreds of steps between banks without mixed trees. In addition, the mulberry and bamboo that fisherman can see at a glance must be very lush, but the growth period of mulberry and bamboo is in June and July, while peach blossoms bloom in March and April, which also has obvious conflicts; The houses are neatly arranged, the transportation is staggered, and the land is flat and open. With the social productivity of more than two thousand years ago, coupled with the fact that the people of Peach Blossom Spring came to avoid war and did not bring large supplies when fleeing, the houses are neat and the land is also difficult to achieve. Even if the terrain is flat and open, a new contradiction arises: may such an open plain not be discovered for five hundred years?
- Contradiction in humanities: The article states: "Since the beginning, we have been avoiding the chaos of the Qin Dynasty and have not returned, but we did not know that there was a Han Dynasty, regardless of the Wei and Jin Dynasties." From the Qin

Dynasty to the end of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, there was a history of five to six hundred years, spanning dozens of generations. Even men and women could still dress like strangers. This is also impossible to achieve.

The purpose of seeking the meaning of environmental contradictions is to enable students to see the inner contradictions of Tao Yuanming. He wanted all the beautiful things in different time and space to exist in the Peach Blossom Spring. He wanted to live in seclusion, avoid war, and keep up with the pace of the times; Tao Yuanming wanted to isolate himself from the world and let the years pass by without being eliminated by society. This was precisely the inner emotion of Tao Yuanming, who wanted to enter the world and become an official, but also did not want to blend in with the secular world. The beauty of this perfectionism can only be placed in the illusion, in the inner spiritual world. Has every one ever fantasized about the pursuit of perfectionism, where people can have both fish and bear's paw?

#### **4. IMAGE COMPARISON - UNDERSTANDING THE WRITER'S EMOTIONS**

The main characters in "Peach Blossom Spring" are the people of Peach Blossom Spring and the fisherman, while the secondary characters are the governor and Liu Ziji. In the third step of teaching, a comparison should be made between the fisherman's handling of affairs and the attitude of the people of Peach Blossom Spring. If the people of Peach Blossom Spring symbolize morally upright individuals in an ideal society, then the fisherman, as the only person outside of Peach Blossom Spring in this article, symbolizes the majority of people in secular society.

Firstly, the first encounter between the fisherman and the people of Peach Blossom Spring is accompanied by some fear and worry: the fisherman is "very strange", while the people of Peach Blossom Spring are "greatly shocked". So why are Peach Blossom Spring people afraid? In ancient society, it was not allowed to establish private villages and counties. Due to a shortage of labor force, corvée and military service were mandatory for everyone. Once the ruling class discovered someone who did not pay taxes, there was a risk of killing them. How did people in Peach Blossom Spring treat fisherman? "They invited him to home, and offer wine and killing chicken for

food. They all invited him to their homes respectively, drinking and eating, and stayed for a few days." A few days refers to a period of more than three days, during which a dangerous and threatening foreign stranger is invited to have dinner at home, with good wine and food, and a three-day banquet is held as a guest of honor. Such generosity, enthusiasm, and empathy towards the outside world all reflect the nobility of Peach Blossom Spring people.

And how did the fishermen do it? After the whole village went out to drink and eat, taking turns to invite fishermen to eat, killing chickens and sheep, and enjoying the warm hospitality of fine wine and delicious food, the fisherman immediately walked towards the road and was eager to follow the signs when he arrived. What did he want to do? Either he wanted to come back for another drink next time, or he wanted to take credit from the prefect. As soon as he finished eating and drinking, he planned how to use the people of Peach Blossom Spring to make a fortune and gain more credit. This is a typical example of selfishness and insatiable greed; When leaving, this person said, "Not worthy of telling to the outsiders." The villagers reminded him not to tell anyone. But when the fisherman and the county magistrate, and he came at prefecture chief, and reported his experience in Peach Blossom Spring, it was called breaking promises. Don't fishermen know the consequences of betraying them? According to common sense, after a person's physiological desires are satisfied, it is easy for them to develop morality and keep their promises. However, the fisherman who enjoyed the fine wine and delicious food of Peach Blossom Spring and the simple and friendly local feelings should be grateful, but he has done the act of repaying kindness with ingratitude. Fisherman is the representative of the secular world, the representative of the officialdom, and the symbol of most people outside of Peach Blossom Spring. His words are untrustworthy, he repays kindness with ingratitude, and he is insatiable in greed, forming a sharp contrast with the hospitable, generous, and kind-hearted Peach Blossom Spring people. The purpose of the contrast is to make students have a correct aesthetic and appreciation for ugliness, admire the behavior of Peach Blossom Spring people, and dislike the behavior of fishermen.

In this way, students can easily understand the last part of the text: Liu Ziji symbolizes a "noble scholar" like Tao Yuanming. They have ideals, a broad mind, knowledge of honor and disgrace, and a clear understanding of good and evil. They also

want to find a world like Peach Blossom Spring to give them a platform to showcase their talents, so they gladly follow, but to no avail, they end up illness to death. Because the Peach Blossom Spring only existed in the psychology of Tao Yuanming, it could never exist in the world of constant warfare, rampant corrupt officials, declining social morality, outdated human hearts, and moral decay in the late Eastern Jin Dynasty. All the beauty and longing for a better world, that fragrant grass, blooming peach blossoms, lost paths, everyone for me, I for everyone, the yang and the old, a peaceful and happy Peach Blossom Spring. The gentle, leisurely, full of vitality, and extraordinary Peach Blossom Spring can only be built in the author's heart, which is an ideal that the author can never achieve. This helpless emotion truly shows us the reason why Tao Yuanming wanted to be born, rather than simply "not bowing down for five bushels of rice".

## **5. SETTING GOALS - STRIVING TO BE A PEACH BLOSSOM SPRING PERSON**

For students, everyone also has a peach blossom garden in their hearts, which is the pursuit of ideals, in today's words, the longing for a better life. And teachers should guide students on how to achieve the ideal of Peach Blossom Spring, not just building Peach Blossom Spring in their hearts, letting students see that what is truly precious in Peach Blossom Spring is not the beautiful scenery, but the true feelings, the qualities and morals of Peach Blossom Spring people. If people aspire to a Peach Blossom Land, then please first become a Peach Blossom Spring person, not a fisherman. Everyone is willing to be a Peach Blossom Spring person, and Peach Blossom Spring is everywhere in the world.

The teaching of "Peach Blossom Spring" cannot be limited to seclusion and avoidance of the world. Peach Blossom Spring does not refer to "lying flat" in seclusion, but rather to the passionate pursuit of ideals. For Tao Yuanming, he did not choose to escape or lie flat. During his seclusion, he actively pursued his own ideals, which were the pursuit and enthusiasm for natural life. Although "the grass is lush and the bean sprouts are sparse", he still "woke up in the morning to deal with the wilderness, and returned with the moon, lotus, and hoe"; Although "the dew touches my clothes at night", "it doesn't matter that my clothes are wet because of the dew, I just want my wish will not be violated". The pursuit of Peach Blossom Spring does not refer to the pursuit of seclusion, but rather to the pursuit of

ideals, because everyone's goals and pursuits are different. People like Tao Yuanming, who cannot tolerate the secular world, do not conform to it, but some people cannot tolerate it and choose to work hard to change it. Cao Cao, Wang Anshi, Du Fu, Gao Shi, Yue Fei, Wen Tianxiang, these great figures and literati who have appeared in Chinese textbooks also lived in the turbulent period of feudal society or failed in life, but they chose to struggle with it and struggle in hardship, doing their best to change society. They also have a Peach Blossom Spring in their hearts, which is to learn from the sages. Flesh and blood, turn the world into a peach blossom garden. Although the hope is slim, move forward resolutely, as long as you have ideals and are willing to give for them, everyone is a Peach Blossom Spring person, and everyone can have a Peach Blossom Spring. Although this world will never be as perfect and beautiful as Peach Blossom Spring, people can always move towards Peach Blossom Spring and keep moving forward.

Thus, through the gradual aesthetic teaching at the four levels mentioned above, students will not feel a sense of distance between articles and works, but will be able to deeply reflect on life, ideals, and society.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The analysis and interpretation of the multi-level value of classic literary works in aesthetic education can make each teaching level like a ladder to climb a peak, leading students to gradually delve deeper and appreciate the infinite charm of Chinese language learning. The presentation of the beauty of the environment not only outlines peaceful and isolated pastoral paintings for students, but also inspires their infinite expectations and aspirations for the Peach Blossom Spring world. This expectation, like a seed deeply rooted in the heart, lays a solid foundation for cultivating students' aesthetic emotions. The exploration of perfectionism has sparked strong resonance among students. By comparing the gap between reality and ideals, students deeply appreciate the idealistic color contained in Tao Yuanming's Peach Blossom Spring world, which inspires their pursuit and longing for a better life. The teaching process of image comparison allows students to have a deeper understanding of the author's emotional world. By comparing the different living conditions inside and outside the Peach Blossom Spring, students can glimpse the author's inner struggles and pursuits, and further

appreciate the profound philosophy and humanistic feelings contained in "Peach Blossom Spring". Establishing the goal of becoming a Peach Blossom Spring person is not only about improving students' personal moral cultivation, but also about cultivating their sense of social responsibility. This teaching level aims to guide students to transform the ideals of Peach Blossom Spring World into practical actions in real life, encourage them to face challenges and difficulties in life with a positive attitude, and strive to create a more harmonious and beautiful society. The study of "Peach Blossom Spring" is essentially a profound exploration of human nature, ideals, and reality. Through the implementation of the teaching process, it is hoped to cultivate more young people in the new era with aesthetic emotions, ideal pursuits, and a sense of social responsibility, and contribute to building a better society.

Teaching of "Peach Blossom Spring" as an Example [J]. *Language Teaching in Middle School*, 2019/11: 19-22.

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