

# The Isomorphism Between the Features of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty and Li Bai's Landscape Poems<sup>\*</sup>

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This paper focuses on the connection between the Flourishing Tang Features and Li Bai's landscape poems, exploring their interactive relationship from three main dimensions. Firstly, the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, characterized by political stability, economic prosperity, and cultural openness, nourished Li Bai's landscape poems. Geographically, the expanded territory and smooth transportation broadened his creative vision, enabling his works to break away from the narrow local landscape and present a cosmic perspective covering landscapes like the Yellow River, Yangtze River, and Tianshan Mountains; spiritually, the era's emphasis on active engagement in society shaped the core of his poems, transforming landscape writing from a tool for seclusion to a medium for expressing lofty aspirations. Secondly, Li Bai's landscape poems projected the Flourishing Tang Features: Grand landscape images echoed the dynasty's vast territory and national confidence; free artistic conceptions reflected the dynasty's cultural inclusiveness and ideological emancipation; the integration of landscapes with ideals manifested the scholars' commitment to serving the country. Finally, the two achieved spiritual interaction: In spatial terms, the dynasty's vast territory aligned with Li Bai's broad spatial vision; in values, the era's balance between engagement and freedom matched his combination of wandering and ambition; in spirit, the dynasty's confidence resonated with his heroic and free emotions. In summary, the Flourishing Tang Features provided a creative foundation for Li Bai, while his landscape poems materialized and spread the Tang spirit, jointly forming a unique cultural legacy of the Tang Dynasty.

**Keywords:** Li Bai, landscape poems, Flourishing Tang Features, spiritual interaction, cultural projection

## Introduction

The Flourishing Tang Dynasty (8th century) stands as a golden age in Chinese history, celebrated for its unprecedented prosperity, open culture, and vigorous national spirit. This era not only fostered a flourishing

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literary but also gave birth to Li Bai—one of China’s greatest poets, known as the Poetic Immortal. Li Bai’s landscape poems, with their bold imagery, unrestrained emotions, and grand vision, have long been regarded as quintessential expressions of the Tang Features. Yet, the relationship between the Flourishing Tang Features and Li Bai’s landscape poems is far from a one-way influence. It is a dynamic interaction where the era shaped the poet, and the poet’s works, in turn, defined the era.

For centuries, scholars have praised Li Bai’s landscape poems for their artistic brilliance, but the deep connection between their style, themes, and the broader social context of the Flourishing Tang has yet to be fully unpacked. How did the Tang Dynasty’s territorial expansion and cultural inclusiveness expand Li Bai’s perspective on landscapes? How did his poems transform abstract concepts like Tang confidence and scholarly ambition into tangible images of rivers, mountains, and stars? And in what ways did Li Bai’s works not only reflect but also reinforce the cultural legacy of the Flourishing Tang?

This paper aims to address these questions by examining the mutual nourishment and spiritual resonance between the Flourishing Tang Features and Li Bai’s landscape poems. By doing so, this study seeks to reveal the profound symbiosis between a great era and a great poet, and shed light on why Li Bai’s landscape poems remain an enduring symbol of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty.

### **The Nourishment of Li Bai’s Landscape Poetry by the Flourishing Tang Dynasty Features**

The core of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty was political stability, economic prosperity, and cultural openness, which created an era that was both broad and high. This characteristic of the times is not only an abstract background, but also deeply integrated into Li Bai’s creation of landscape poems. It broadens Li Bai’s perspective on writing landscapes from the following two ways and shapes the core of his poetry. It makes Li Bai’s writing of landscapes different from his predecessors who only depicted the surface of landscapes, but has become a literary work that can reflect the spirit of the times.

Firstly, the Flourishing Tang Dynasty expanded the poet’s creative vision. During the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, the land area expanded and transportation became smoother, providing material conditions and the possibility for literati to travel to various places. Moreover, at that time, the society advocated the literary spirit of helping the people of the world and carrying a sword to distant places, which further propelled Li Bai out of his hometown, as he wrote “leaving his hometown with a sword and bidding farewell to his loved ones to travel far away” (《上安州裴长史书》: “仗剑去国, 辞亲远游”), and he traveled all over China. This kind of travel is not just about changing places, but also a reflection of Li Bai’s panoramic view of the world brought by the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. It allows his landscape poetry to break free from the limitations of only writing about small scenery in the courtyard and local landscapes since the Six Dynasties, and forms a spatial description style that can encompass the universe.

From a geographical perspective, the mountains and waters depicted in Li Bai’s poetry cover the main landscapes of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. “Look there! The waters of the Yellow River, coming down from the sky, rush in their flow to the sea and never turn back again” (《将进酒》: “君不见黄河之水天上来, 奔流到海不复回”), which reflects the grandeur of the mother river in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. There is also the fast-paced Yangtze River “starting from the White Emperor City surrounded by colorful clouds in the morning, one can reach Jiangling thousands of miles away in a day” (《早发白帝城》: “朝辞白帝彩云间, 千里江陵一日还”), implying the convenient transportation and free movement of literati in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. Plus, there is also the famous mountain scenery depicted as following: “the Heavenly Mother Mountain rises

high into the clouds, stretches horizontally, and surpasses the Five Sacred Mountains, surpassing even the Chicheng Mountain” (《梦游天姥吟留别》: “天姥连天向天横, 势拔五岳掩赤城”), integrating the desire of Tang literati to explore the beauty of the world into their imagination of mountains and waters. This cross regional way of writing about mountains and waters is essentially a reflection of the national unity pattern of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty in literature. It is precisely because the Flourishing Tang Dynasty broke down the barriers between regions and achieved the integration of culture and geography that Li Bai was able to use the perspective of treating heaven and earth as houses to view mountains and waters, and elevate local landscapes into landscape images with national symbolic significance.

From an aesthetic perspective, the openness and inclusiveness of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty allowed Li Bai to break through the traditional aesthetic mode of using quietness to complement elegance in landscape poetry, forming an aesthetic style of combining movement and stillness, combining hardness and softness. During the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, the culture of the Western Regions was introduced to the Central Plains, and Chinese and foreign cultures merged with each other. The vigorous and unrestrained characteristics of cavalry culture collided with the elegant and subtle characteristics of traditional landscape aesthetics (Wang, 2000, p. 41). This cultural fusion is clearly reflected in Li Bai's landscape poetry. He not only wrote about quiet scenery like Wang Wei's “The bright moon shines in the pine forest, and clear springs flow on the stones” (《山居秋暝》: “明月松间照, 清泉石上流”), but also wrote about the magnificent and peculiar Mountain Lu where “the waterfall falls straight down from a height of three thousand feet, making people suspect that the Milky Way falls from the sky” (《望庐山瀑布》: “飞流直下三千尺, 疑是银河落九天”). It not only depicts the natural beauty of “lotus flowers that have just emerged from clear water, without any artificial decoration” (《经乱离后天恩流夜郎忆旧游书怀赠江夏韦太守良宰》: “清水出芙蓉, 天然去雕饰”), but also portrays the heroic realm of “One day, I can ride the long wind to break through thousands of miles of waves, hang high sails and cross the vast sea” (《行路难·其一》: “长风破浪会有时, 直挂云帆济沧海”). The expansion of this aesthetic perspective is essentially the shaping of Li Bai's aesthetic taste in mountains and waters by the atmosphere of multiple cultures coexisting in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. It is precisely because the Flourishing Tang Dynasty did not reject the vigorous cultural characteristics that Li Bai was able to add a sense of power when writing about mountains and waters, making the landscape image a symbol of vitality of the times.

Secondly, the Flourishing Tang Dynasty inspired people's ambition to enter the world. The core spirit of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty was the ideal of literati to actively participate in society and work for the country, that is, the sense of responsibility of literati to regard the affairs of the world as their own, and the confident attitude of the belief that natural talent must be useful. This spirit is not transmitted through reasoning, but gradually permeated into Li Bai's values through the atmosphere of the times, thus shaping the spiritual core of his landscape poetry of using mountains and waters to metaphorically represent ideals and expressing heroic emotions through heaven and earth, freeing landscape poetry from the negative tone of using mountains and waters to escape reality in the past, and becoming a declaration reflecting the spirit of literati in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty.

On the one hand, the atmosphere of political clarity and talented people everywhere in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty made Li Bai regard mountains and waters as a stage to achieve his ideals rather than a place to escape reality (Zhang, 1992, p. 129). In the early Tang Dynasty, the imperial examination system gradually improved, and rulers recruited talented people widely. The inclusive politics atmosphere made literati believe that the path of becoming an official with good education was feasible. Although Li Bai did not pass the imperial examination

to become an official, his ideal of carrying a sword to pay respects to a wise monarch had never changed. This ideal is reflected in landscape poetry, making landscape a medium leading to ideals. For example, “the mountain gradually disappears with the flat and vast wilderness, and the river rushes into the boundless wilderness” (《渡荆门送别》: “山随平野尽, 江入大荒流”). The openness of mountains and waters is used to metaphorically describe one’s grand ambition to leave Shu and pursue ideals in Chang’an. In the poem “the mountain seems to emerge from the side of a person’s face, and the clouds float tightly against the horse’s head” (《送友人入蜀》: “山从人面起, 云傍马头生”), although it describes the hardships of the Shu Road, it implies the determination to not be afraid of difficulties and bravely pursue official careers. This way of writing about mountains and waters is writing about ideals which is essentially an inspiration for Li Bai’s spirit from the political opportunities of the Tang Dynasty. It is precisely because the Tang Dynasty provided the possibility of realizing ideals that Li Bai linked mountains and waters with participating in society and serving the country, making mountain and water poetry a declaration of ideals.

On the other hand, the atmosphere of strong national strength and cultural confidence in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty allowed Li Bai to integrate the heroic spirit of resonance between individual and era into his landscape poetry. During the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, China became the cultural center of East Asia, and the grand occasion of all countries coming to worship stimulated the national pride and personal confidence of literati. This confidence is manifested in Li Bai’s wild and unrestrained attitude of the belief that natural talent must be useful, as well as his arrogant spirit of “how can one bow down and bend down to please the powerful” (《梦游天姥吟留别》: “安能摧眉折腰事权贵”). The integration of this spirit into landscape poetry makes the landscape a mirror of personal spirit. In “green mountains on both sides appear opposite each other, and a small boat sails from where the sun rises” (《望天门山》: “两岸青山相对出, 孤帆一片日边来”), Li Bai uses the metaphor of small boat to highlight his confidence in moving forward together with the times in the magnificent landscape. In another poem, “the tall building is a hundred feet high, and standing on it seems like you can reach for the stars in the sky with just one hand” (《夜宿山寺》: “危楼高百尺, 手可摘星辰”), with exaggerated landscape images, it showcases the confidence of the Tang Dynasty that people could converse with heaven and earth. This way of writing about mountains and waters is writing about the spirit which is essentially the shaping of Li Bai’s personality by the cultural confidence of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. It is precisely because the Flourishing Tang Dynasty gave literati the confidence to walk together with the times that Li Bai was able to achieve synchronization of personal spirit and the spirit of the times’ in his landscape poetry, making landscape poetry a monument to the spirit of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty.

### **The Projection of Li Bai’s Landscape Poetry on the Atmosphere of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty**

If the Flourishing Tang Dynasty provided Li Bai with the soil for creation, then Li Bai’s landscape poetry was the fruit of the times that grew on this soil. It not only responds to the magnificent atmosphere of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, but also projects the open spirit of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, and highlights the worldly feelings of the Flourishing Tang people, allowing future generations to intuitively touch the pulse and temperature of that era through the Yellow River, Tianshan Mountains, solitary sails, and green mountains in the poem.

Firstly, Li Bai echoes the grandeur of the Tang Dynasty with his majestic landscape imagery. The majestic landscape images in Li Bai’s works not only depict natural landscapes, but also integrate the confidence and

aesthetic pursuit brought by the territorial pattern and national strength of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty into tangible and perceptible literary symbols, forming a metaphorical system of landscape which is the era.

From a geographical perspective, he no longer focuses solely on the beautiful scenery of Jiangnan or the flat plains of the Central China when writing about mountains and waters, as literati did in the past. Instead, he extends his pen to the most extreme landforms within the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. For example, he writes about the Tianshan Mountains “May’s Tianshan Mountains are still covered in snow” (《塞下曲》: “五月天山雪”). To the south, he writes about the Shu region “Yellow Cranes can’t even fly over” (《蜀道难》: “黄鹤之飞尚不得过”). To the east, he writes about the East China Sea “Fishing by the Bixi River when I’m free, suddenly dreaming of passing by the sun by boat” (《行路难》: “闲来垂钓碧溪上, 忽复乘舟梦日边”). And to the north, he writes about the Yan Zhao region “Snowflakes on the Yanshan Mountains are as big as mats” (《北风行》: “燕山雪花大如席”). This kind of spatial description that encompasses the four directions perfectly corresponds to the territorial map of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty recorded in the *Geographical Records in the Old Book of Tang* (《旧唐书·地理志》) “from the east to the sea, from the west to Yanqi, from the south to the southern border of Linzhou, and from the north to the border with Xue Yantuo”. The landscape image has become a literary mirror of the national unity pattern of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty.

From an artistic perspective, his use of extremely exaggerated brushstrokes to magnify the majestic characteristics of mountains and waters is actually using literary techniques to amplify the spirit of high confidence in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. For example, in “the mountain gradually disappears with the flat and vast wilderness, and the river rushes into the boundless wilderness” (《渡荆门送别》: “山随平野尽, 江入大荒流”), the two words end and enter are used to outline the magnificent scene of the Yangtze River flowing out of the Three Gorges and rushing into the plain which is boundless and vast. This is not only a true description of the natural landscape, but also implies the Tang Dynasty’s broad mindedness like the sea accommodating hundreds of rivers and vigorous national development trend. This image of using small scenes to reflect the big era allows readers to intuitively experience the confidence of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty that everything can be used for me when feeling the shock brought by mountains and rivers.

In addition, the majestic landscape image also implies the aesthetic orientation of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty’s vigorous and promising. In “Looking at Tianmen Mountain”, “Tianmen Mountain is split in the middle by the Chu River, and the green river water flows eastward and then turns back here” (《望天门山》: “天门中断楚江开, 碧水东流至此回”), using dynamic words such as interruption and return to give the landscape the vitality of breaking through obstacles and moving forward. This is highly in line with the enterprising spirit of Tang literati who left their hometowns with swords, bid farewell to their loved ones, and traveled far away, as well as the political atmosphere of Tang Dynasty’s exploration of territories and the worship of various countries, making the abstract spirit of the times tangible and perceptible through the imagery of mountains and rivers.

Secondly, utilize the free landscape imagery to project the open spirit of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. The free artistic conception in Li Bai’s landscape poetry is a literary embodiment of the ideological liberation, cultural inclusiveness, and personal consciousness awakening of the Flourishing Tang society. The core is to break down the boundaries between human and nature, individual and society, and to construct an unrestrained, flexible, and free spiritual space, which echoes the open and inclusive era atmosphere of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty.

From a social perspective, the Flourishing Tang Dynasty lifted the restriction that merchants, craftsmen, and others could not join the literati class, and the imperial examination system broke the monopoly of the aristocracy on the officialdom. Cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries were frequent. For example,

Chang'an became an international metropolis where merchants, monks, and students from the Western Regions gathered. This breaking free social environment gave birth to the artistic conception of unrestrained in Li Bai's landscape poetry. "Early Departure From Baidi City" is a typical example: "Departing from Baidi City shrouded in colorful clouds in the morning, one can reach Jiangling thousands of miles away in a day" (《早发白帝城》: "朝辞白帝彩云间, 千里江陵一日还"), using the time and space compression of departing in the morning and arriving at night to convey the sense of freedom of small boats advancing quickly. "The continuous chirping of monkeys and monkeys on both sides of the strait, and the small boat passing through the mountains, contrasts with the rapid movement of the small boat" (《早发白帝城》: "两岸猿声啼不住, 轻舟已过万重山"). This not only depicts the smoothness of the Yangtze River flowing downstream, but also implies the desire of literati in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty to break through class restrictions and realize their life values. This free artistic conception is not a fantasy detached from reality, but a true reflection of the increased social mobility and more personal choices during the Flourishing Tang Dynasty.

From a cultural perspective, the freedom in Li Bai's landscape poetry is also reflected in the fusion of multiple cultures. During the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, the cultural characteristics of Taoism's conformity to nature, Confucianism's helping the world when one achieves success, and the Western Regions' boldness and freedom interpenetrated each other, reflected in landscape poetry as equal dialogue between man and nature. In "Sitting Alone at Jingting Mountain", "all the birds fly high and leave, and the lonely clouds leisurely drift away. Jingting Mountain and I look at each other, and no one feels bored, only me and this Jingting Mountain" (《独坐敬亭山》: "众鸟高飞尽, 孤云独去闲。相看两不厌, 只有敬亭山"). Li Bai no longer adopted the attitude of looking at things as the main focus like previous literati, but instead took an equal perspective and interact with the mountains and waters. Birds fly away and clouds drift away are natural freedoms. Sitting alone and looking at each other are personal freedom. The two blend into the artistic conception of no distinction between primary and secondary, no distinction between high and low. This is like the cultural state of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, where the Han and ethnic groups merged and Confucianism and Taoism coexisted, demonstrating the spirit of the times of openness, inclusiveness, and respect for differences.

In addition, this free artistic conception also implies a breakthrough from spiritual constraints. In *Staying at the Mountain Temple at Night*, "the tall building is hundreds of feet high, and standing on it seems like you can reach for the stars in the sky with just one hand. You dare not speak loudly, afraid of startling the immortals in the sky, using exaggerated techniques to construct a fantasy atmosphere of" people and the starry sky bordering" (《夜宿山寺》: "危楼高百尺, 手可摘星辰。不敢高声语, 恐惊天上人"), breaking the traditional perception of heaven and people separated. This echoes the trend of breaking free from the constraints of Confucian ethics and pursuing personal spiritual liberation in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, making landscape poetry a voice for ideological liberation in the era.

Finally, Li Bai embodies the worldly sentiments of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty through the fusion of mountains, waters, and ideals. Li Bai broke the tradition of writing landscape poetry mostly about leisure and seclusion since the Wei and Jin Dynasties, deeply combining writing landscape with family and country ideals and life aspirations, making landscape a carrier of the spirit of literati participating in society and serving the country in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. This not only strengthened the dissemination of contemporary culture, but also gave landscape poetry a new connotation of serving society and playing a practical role, which is highly in line with the prevailing trend of the Tang Dynasty of actively participating in society and making achievements.

From a content perspective, he often uses borderland landscapes as a background to integrate the patriotic ideals into the natural landscape, constructing a vigorous and heroic image of entering the world. In the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, the prefectural military system was implemented, and it became a trend for literati to put down their pens and join the army. Frontier was not only a geographical concept, but also a symbol of realizing the value of life. In "The Song of the Frontier", it says "Snow still floats in the Tianshan Mountains in May, only cold without flowers. I hear the song Folding Willow Trees in the flute, but I can't see the scenery of spring" (《塞下曲》: "五月天山雪, 无花只有寒。笛中闻折柳, 春色未曾看"). First, Li Bai uses the cold mountains and waters of snow in the Tianshan Mountains and cold without flowers to depict the harsh environment of the border. Continuing with the ambitious statement of "willing to use the sword at my waist, only to slay the enemies of Loulan Kingdom" (《塞下曲》: "愿将腰下剑, 直为斩楼兰"), he creates a strong contrast between the desolation of mountains and waters and the fiery ideals. There, mountains and waters are no longer a secluded paradise, but a battlefield for making achievements. This writing style conveys the literati's worldly sentiment of taking the affairs of the world as their own responsibility.

From an emotional perspective, he also uses daily landscapes as a medium to integrate the desire to participate in society and work for the country into the farewell of relatives and friends and life insights, making the spirit of entering the world more universal. In the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, literati generally regarded participating in society and making achievements as their life goals. Parting was often associated with taking office and joining the army, and mountains and rivers became the link to transmitting ideals. In "Farewell to Friends", "the green mountains stretch across the north of the city, and the white water flows around the east city" (《送友人》: "青山横北郭, 白水绕东城"). With the stability of green mountains and the agility of white water, a beautiful but not sad farewell scene is depicted. In the poem "Floating clouds like the hearts of a traveler, sunset like the friendship of old friends" (《送友人》: "浮云游子意, 落日故人情"), floating clouds symbolize the drifting of friends, sunset implies reluctance, but the core of traveler's hearts is participating in society and making achievements. Friends are not going to hide in the mountains and forests, but to strive on the battlefield of life. The beauty of the mountains and rivers perfectly highlights the ideal brightness, which is in line with the common value pursuit of literati in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty that separation is a new beginning, and separation is for making achievements and careers.

In addition, this fusion of mountains and rivers and ideals is also reflected in persisting in entering the world even when frustrated. In "Difficulties on the Road", the phrase "I want to cross the Yellow River, but it freezes and blocks my way. I want to climb the Taihang Mountains, but they are covered in snow" (《行路难》: "欲渡黄河冰塞川, 将登太行雪满山") is used to metaphorically describe the difficulties of life, using the harsh landscape of the Yellow River freezes and the Taihang Mountains accumulate snow. But later on, the ambitious goal of "one day riding the long wind to break through thousands of miles of waves, hanging high sails to cross the vast sea" (《行路难》: "长风破浪会有时, 直挂云帆济沧海") transforms the obstacles brought by mountains and rivers into the driving force of breaking through difficulties and realizing ideals. Mountains and rivers are no longer a symbol of disappointment, but a test stone for honing ideals. This is highly consistent with the spiritual characteristic of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty that literati, even in the face of setbacks, do not change their original aspiration to enter the world, making landscape poetry a cultural carrier that conveys positive energy of the times.

### **The Interaction Between the Atmosphere of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty and Li Bai's Landscape Poetry**

The relationship between the atmosphere of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty and its creators is not simply a one-way relationship of influence and being influenced, but rather a homogeneous state of mutual resonance and integration at a deep spiritual level. The core characteristic of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty's atmosphere resonates perfectly with the inner spirit of Li Bai's landscape poetry. At the same time, Li Bai's creation of landscape poetry, in turn, confirmed and strengthened the cultural connotation of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty, ultimately jointly shaping the unique spiritual landscape of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. This spiritual isomorphism is not an abstract concept superposition, but is specifically reflected in three key dimensions: spatial perspective, value pursuit, and emotional spirit.

Firstly, the isomorphism of spatial dimensions is mainly reflected in the mutual correspondence between a large territory and a large spatial perspective. The vast territory of the Tang Dynasty was not only a concept of geographical map, but also included the spirit of breaking through limitations and expanding boundaries of the times. Whether it is military exploration of the Western Regions, such as establishing the four towns of Anxi, extensive diplomatic exchanges with neighboring regimes, such as Japan sending Tang envoys and Silla sending students to China, or cultural absorption of local characteristics, such as the integration of music and dance from the Western Regions and literary styles from Jiangnan, all reflect the characteristics of breaking down spatial barriers and embracing the vast world. This spatial consciousness is deeply compatible with the large spatial perspective in Li Bai's landscape poetry, and together they construct the open and inclusive spatial narrative of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty.

Li Bai's writing on mountains and waters has always been characterized by crossing geographical barriers. He not only depicts the steepness of "The mud road of Qingniling is winding, and within a hundred steps, one needs to hover around the rocks in the mountains to climb up" in the poem *Difficulties of the Shu Road* (《蜀道难》: "青泥何盘盘, 百步九折萦岩峦"), but also the grandeur of "I climb high and look into the distance, and the great river flows eastward and never returns" in the poem "A Ballad of Lushan Mountain Sent to Censor Lu Xuzhou" (《庐山谣寄卢侍御虚舟》: "登高壮观天地间, 大江茫茫去不还"). It not only depicts the border scenery of the Tianshan Mountains with "May's Tianshan Mountains still drifting with snow" in the "Song of the Frontier" (《塞下曲》: "五月天山雪"), but also portrays the beauty of "Going to Yangzhou in March with fireworks" in the poem "Seeing Meng Haoran off to Guangling at Yellow Crane Tower" (《黄鹤楼送孟浩然之广陵》: "烟花三月下扬州"). This writing style without regional bias breaks the spatial limitations of previous literati who valued the Central Plains over the border, and valued Jiangnan over the northern frontier, just like the Tang Dynasty's concept of no distinction between internal and external territories, no cultural barriers. More importantly, the space in Li Bai's landscape poetry is not a static landscape display, but a dynamic expansion process. In "Farewell at Jingmen", the phrase "the mountains gradually disappear with the flat and vast wilderness, and the river rushes into the boundless wilderness" (《渡荆门送别》: "山随平野尽, 江入大荒流") is used to depict the spatial breakthrough from closed mountains to open plains through the use of the disappearance of mountains and the extension of the river. This is completely consistent with the logic of the Tang Dynasty's territory from inland to the ocean and from the Central Plains to Western Regions, making the era spirit of breaking through limitations and expanding boundaries tangible through the description of landscape space.



Secondly, the isomorphism of the value dimension is mainly reflected in the cultural inclusiveness that balances entry into the world and freedom. One of the core values of the Flourishing Tang culture is to break the opposition between being bound by ritual and education in order to enter the world and avoiding the world in order to be free, and form an inclusive system of both entering the world and being free (Zhang & Fang, 2023, p. 68). On the one hand, the imperial examination system provided a channel for literati to participate in society and make achievements, and helping the people of the world when they achieve success became the mainstream pursuit. On the other hand, the cultural trends of Taoism's conformity to nature and the Western Regions' boldness and freedom provided literati with a space for spiritual freedom, allowing individuals to preserve their private lives of wandering, drinking, and writing poetry beyond achieving success. This kind of value inclusiveness is highly isomorphic to the creative logic of Li Bai's landscape poetry, which combines landscape wandering with ideal pursuit, and together demonstrates the characteristic of diversity and compatibility in the culture of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty.

In Li Bai's landscape poetry, wandering has never been separated from ideals. He lamented in "The Difficulties of the Shu Road" that "The path to Shu is hard, even harder than climbing to the sky" (《蜀道难》: "蜀道难, 难于上青天"), but also implied the concern of his country that "as long as one person holds the pass, ten thousand people cannot attack" (《蜀道难》: "一夫当关, 万夫莫开"). While enjoying the freedom and pleasure of "a small boat sailing through ten thousand mountains" in "Early Departure from the White Emperor City" (《早发白帝城》: "轻舟已过万重山"), he has never forgotten the aspiration to enter the world of "natural talent must be useful" in "Invitation to Wine" (《将进酒》: "天生我材必有用"). Not only did he experience the leisurely feeling of "watching each other without feeling bored" in "Sitting Alone at Jingting Mountain" (《独坐敬亭山》: "相看两不厌"), but he also expressed his ambition of "only to kill the enemies of Loulan" in "The Song of the Frontier" (《塞下曲》: "直为斩楼兰"). This writing style of holding ideals in the roaming center and hiding aspirations in the mountains and waters is precisely the embodiment of the Tang Dynasty's values of both entering the world and freedom in literature. Just as literati in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty could go out to be generals and come back to be prime ministers, such as Gao Shi becoming a military governor from a frontier poet, or retire after making achievements, such as He Zhizhang retiring to Jinghu in his later years, Li Bai's landscape poetry breaks the traditional understanding that writing landscape is writing seclusion and turns free roaming into a process of accumulating ideals and seeking opportunities, which is completely in line with the cultural value of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty's tolerance for multiple life choices.

Finally, there is the isomorphism of spiritual dimensions, mainly reflected in the emotional resonance of confidence, enterprising spirit, and heroic freedom. The confidence and progress of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty came from its strong national strength, such as during the Kaiyuan period when rice and millet were abundant, and the granaries of the government and the people were full, cultural prosperity, such as poetry, calligraphy, and painting reaching their peak, and high international status, such as all countries came to China to worship. This kind of confidence in the era has transformed into the spiritual characteristics of literati, who are high spirited and daring. They "leaving his hometown with a sword and bidding farewell to his loved ones to travel far away" (《上安州裴长史书》: "仗剑去国, 辞亲远游"), are eager to "assist the monarch to reach the level of Yao and Shun, and make social customs simple again" (《奉赠韦左丞丈二十二韵》: "致君尧舜上, 再使风俗淳"); even in the face of setbacks, they can maintain the optimism of natural talent which must be useful. This spiritual characteristic resonates strongly with the emotion of heroic freedom in Li Bai's landscape poetry, and together demonstrates the vigorous vitality of the individual.

The emotions in Li Bai's landscape poems have always been based on boldness and freedom. In "To Li Yong" (a renowned Tang Dynasty official and calligrapher), "once the great bird rides the wind, it soars straight up to ninety thousand li" (《上李邕》: "大鹏一日同风起, 抟摇直上九万里"), conveying the passion of unrestricted and moving forward with extreme exaggeration. "Looking at Tianmen Mountain", "Tianmen Mountain is split in the middle by the Chu River, and the green river water flows eastward and then turns back here" (《望天门山》: "天门中断楚江开, 碧水东流至此回"), using the dynamic of interruption and return to show the confidence of breaking through obstacles and controlling destiny. Even when encountering the dilemma of "the Yellow River freezing and the Taihang Mountains accumulating snow" in "Difficulties in Traveling" (《行路难》: "欲渡黄河冰塞川, 将登太行雪满山"), one can still exclaim that "both of us have lofty spirits and soaring thoughts, and we long to climb up to the blue sky to watch the bright moon" (《宣州谢朓楼饯别校书叔云》: "俱怀逸兴壮思飞, 欲上青天揽明月"). This kind of emotion of maintaining high spirits regardless of whether it goes smoothly or not is precisely the embodiment of the confident and enterprising spirit of the Tang Dynasty in individuals, just like when the Tang Dynasty faced border wars, it was able to pacify the wars and consolidate the territory with the strong spirit. Li Bai's landscape poetry has never become depressed due to the steepness of mountains and rivers and difficulties of life, but always breaks through limitations with the heroic and free emotion, synchronized with the Tang Dynasty's vigorous and never give up spirit of the times.

### Conclusion

In summary, there is a bidirectional symbiotic relationship between the atmosphere of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty and Li Bai's landscape poetry, which nurtures the environment and embodies the spirit, jointly forging a classic paradigm in Tang Dynasty literature and even Chinese cultural history.

On the one hand, the atmosphere of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty not only provided a realistic foundation for Li Bai's landscape poetry creation, but also pushed him to achieve a breakthrough beyond previous generations of landscape poetry from the perspective of spiritual core and artistic style. From a realistic perspective, the vast territory and smooth transportation of the Tang Dynasty provided Li Bai with an unprecedented sample of landscape experience. Based on real travel experiences, the landscape materials formed the realistic basis for the majestic and grand style of his poetry. From the perspective of artistic breakthroughs, the cultural atmosphere of openness, inclusiveness, and diverse coexistence in the Flourishing Tang Dynasty completely broke the traditional framework of relying on mystical words and pointing to escapism in landscape poetry since the Wei and Jin Dynasties. It allowed Li Bai to deeply integrate natural landscapes with his national aspirations, transforming landscape poetry from a tool for escapism to a carrier for expressing ambitions and showcasing individuality. This integration ultimately shaped the unique character of Li Bai's landscape poetry.

On the other hand, Li Bai's landscape poetry uses concrete literary expression to transform the abstract atmosphere of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty into perceptible and inheritable cultural symbols, greatly expanding the dissemination dimensions and historical vitality of the spirit of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty. The atmosphere of the Flourishing Tang Dynasty itself is a collection of abstract characteristics such as political stability, cultural confidence, and vast territory, while Li Bai's landscape poetry endows it with a warm and resonant literary form through condensed imagery and emotions. At the same time, the widespread dissemination of Li Bai's landscape poetry further expands the influence boundaries of the Flourishing Tang culture.

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