

The Embodiment of the Moralization Function of Buddhist Murals in Guanyin Pavilion, Dule Temple, Ji County, Tianjin Province-- from the Perspective of Artistic Expressions Such as Schema, Dynamic Space, Pattern, Line and Color

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Abstract: Different expressions of space, pattern, and color reflect different artistic connotations and intentions. The special figure composition of Guanyin Pavilion murals, the interaction and spatial relationship between array characters in the painting, and the internal psychological space created by sixteen portraits of Arhat enrich the spatial concept of Guanyin Pavilion murals. Different from the three-dimensional spatial representation of linear perspective under western visual technology, the spatial representation method of special nonlinear perspective in Guanyin Pavilion murals is closely related to the Buddhist theme advocated under the specific social background of Yuan Dynasty. Behind the artistic expression of mural composition, pattern elements and color design are the special social context of this period and the visual reflection under the rule of ideology and culture. To a great extent, it reflects the thought of the rulers. In the artistic creation with certain restrictions, the meaning of the content given by the society or the ruling class was hidden behind the visual expression of the image. Space, patterns, colors, etc. are deeply restrictive and symbolic. Therefore, as carrier with strongly moralised intention, the murals of Guanyin Pavilion in Dule Temple are also of far-reaching significance. The analysis and research of composition, spatial relationship, pattern and color design under the influence of social ideological and cultural system in this period are the core of this thesis.

1. Introduction

As one of the three famous temples in the Liao Dynasty in China, Dule Temple is located in the north of Wuding Street, Jixian County, Tianjin. It was built in Tang Dynasty and rebuilt in AD 984. The Dule Temple combined architecture, clay sculptures, and murals. Among them, the Guanyin Pavilion mural is the main part of the Dule Temple murals. It was the first painting of the Yuan Dynasty and redraw in the Ming Dynasty. In the 18th year of Emperor Qianlong (1753) of Qing Dynasty. Then the murals were covered with white ash of one centimeter thick. Until the renovation of the building in 1972, its internal murals were found. The artistic expressions of composition methods and the concept of spatial structure in Guanyin Pavilion's murals further enrich the ancient Chinese temple murals.

2. The Serial Composition Space with Independent Form and Unified Theme

In the murals of the north, west and east walls of Guanyin Pavilion, the sixteen Arhats are placed in the sixteen *internal frames* (Fig. 1), which are divided into wooden fences of about 1.5 meters in the temple. Each content of frame is composed of custom stories and Buddhist legends. On both sides of the Arhat, there are philanthropists, believers, evil spirits, beasts, and secular figures. The division design of the overall mural pattern makes the interior of the sixteen independent story paintings, scattered and orderly, and magnificent. Compared with the gods of the Sanqing Hall of the Yongle

Palace (built in the 13th century in the Yuan Dynasty in Yuncheng, Shanxi Province), the composition of the gods is more closely spaced. There is a strong visual logic in the paintings of the Dule Temple. The essence is that it has a standard spatial structure based on sixteen painting elements. Arhat is at the center of each internal schema, and his position also establishes the central axis of the picture. The two sides of the Arhat correspond to secular characters or fairy evil spirits. When the spatial structure is established, the painters are under the theme of ruling class control. Next, screen and convert images into folk tales, Buddhist legends, etc., and add these images to the composition to enhance the theme. In addition, the sixteen schemas are all fragmented closed structure, although they are under the theme of unifying Buddhism-related myths or secular stories, there is no continuous spatial narrative sequence or prospective relationship between them. This spatial construction based on non-coherent internal images is fundamentally different from the western painting patterns of linear perspective that emphasize spatial coherence.

Sixteen independent and subject-related spatial composition not only emphasize the unity of the overall spatial form of the picture but also make each image itself the carrier of its own information to the greatest extent. The viewer must move to see the corresponding theme story in each of the Arhat pictures. This kind of comic-style viewing composition can be traced from the structural style of Chinese traditional painting. The same as the scroll painting, *The Night Revel of Han Xizai* is its typical representative. In the Guanyin Pavilion murals, when viewers move to admire the murals, the scenes are continuous. The viewers clearly feel the clear image boundary with the moving viewpoint and enter the next story, which are not disturbed by group images consisting of sixteen Arhats and many secular images. However, each different story content is strengthening the same Buddhist theme of powerful solemnity, universal relief, and closeness to the person. This kind of appreciation experience under the separate form and unified subject makes the transfer of the moralization in the art psychology be deepened.



Fig. 1 Sixteen Arhats Plane Extension Pattern

It is worth noting that Sakyamuni is located between the first and second Arhat, above the top(Fig. 2), using Gerard Genette's *focusing* theory to explain this composition. The relationship between *focus* Sakyamuni and the *focalizer* sentient beings actually represents the juxtaposition of the space between the Buddha and the sentient beings. Sixteen Arhats and the beings at the bottom of the image, the secular land, were watched, and the gaze was Sakyamuni, and the overall space was unobstructed. Sakyamuni is located in a special position between the first and second Arhats, not before the first. It expresses the Buddha's idea of entering the world. This compositional perspective makes the Buddha's universal feelings and the theme of the sentient beings reflected. It is closely related to the social atmosphere of the Buddha in the Yuan Dynasty and the Buddha's thought of entering the world.



Fig. 2 Focusing Pattern



Fig. 3 Multi-Layer Visualization Pattern under Segmentation

3. Multi-Layer Visual Space under the Division of Arhat

For the analysis of single picture composition, the bottom position in the corresponding picture of each of the pictures is generally a straight line, and the point intersecting the vertical line of the picture is the composition base point of the image. In the entire mural with a height of about 3.5 meters, it consists of three spaces separated by a 2.5 meters Arhat image(Fig. 3). From bottom to top, it is the earth or the world, the void between heaven and person formed by the nature (such as sky, mountains, and rivers), and the heaven or world of bliss in the Buddha. Each vertical arrangement of the three realms divided by Arhat, naturally connects the bottom boundary, the middle boundary, and the heavenly boundary. Metaphorically Buddhist gods enter the world for the scholars to seek for the blessing. The semi-closed composition surrounded by auspicious clouds is metaphorical to the gods. The different spatial boundaries or thresholds of the multi-layer visual space model created by the regional division and the transition between them have further deepened the theme of the Buddha's accession to the world and the love of the people.

4. The Virtual Illusion Space under the Arhat Dynamic

The image of an Arhat is as high as 2.5 meters, and the other characters are less than 1 meter. They are diverse, such as squat, kneel or stand. The highest level of secular people does not exceed one-half of the height of Arhat. The proportional relationship is in sharp contrast. It has weakened individual figures and strengthened the main image of Arhat's image. The direction of the Arhat is roughly from the front or at a 45-degree angle. It is depicted by the *idol composition* and gazing at the sentient beings in the painting or the viewer outside the painting. The universal rhythm of the sin is not limited to the interaction in the picture. Or the peace of mind, serious and focused face and momentum, more closely related to the people who came to visit the temple. However, most of the secular characters are the less frontal image, and the dynamic design of secular characters is more involved in themselves. For example, the devout man and woman in the eighth Arhat image, the characters who drink the holy water in the ninth Arhat image, believers who accept groping, etc. Some of the Arhat images, even if they are front, participate in the plots corresponding to other images, which also highlights the image of Arhat from the side and closely connects with the theme.

Arhat's eye gestures are in a certain regularity in the scattered. The first to fifth Arhat on the East Wall are generally southward, and the ninth to the fourteenth Arhat on the west wall are generally northward, and the fifteenth Arhat on the west side of the north wall and the 7th Arhat on the east side are frontal images. The Arhats on both sides echo each other. These Arhat's dynamic and eye-viewing designs are consistent with the viewing angles of the worshippers, and psychologically close the distance between the Buddha and the believers. This visual expression technique successfully produces pictorial *illusion* and triggers the imaginative process of *magic transformation* in the painting. Imagine immersing themselves in the Buddhist world of Buddhism(Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 Sixteen Arhats Dynamic Trend Pattern

5. The Space of the Front-and-Back Composition Method and the Three-Dimensional Stereoscopic Composition Method in the Secular Character's Dynamic Trend

Among the sixteen patterns, there is no unified framework and vanishing point of linear perspective. Most of them are juxtaposed by several front and back characters' dynamic trend thereby producing the longitudinal depth of space. There are many juxtaposed characters in the murals. This combination no longer has a certain ceremonial or philosophical meaning in the social background of the Yuan Dynasty but provides a way to increase the complexity of painting performance. The visual extension is richer and helps to build the story content of the picture. For example, the ninth Arhat of *the twenty-four filial piety, drinking sacred waters*, and other secular stories (Fig. 5) are strongly different from the linear perspectives in Western paintings. There is no fixed focus different from the basic principle of linear perspective. The painter consciously constructs this perspective system by means of overlapping forms and shortening the depth of the field. Several groups of secular characters are almost the same size in different spaces before and after. Space relies on the eye movement of the characters in the painting to guide the viewer's line of sight to the front or Move in the depth direction and pull away, rather than approaching a real or fictional vanishing point. For example, the upper right stalker interacts with the slanting head and the shoulder squatter to make the viewer feel the spatial level. The same is true of the front-and-back dynamic trend in the lower-left corner.

As early as the 9th century, the khitan people had material and cultural exchanges with the central plains. The use of iron tools and weapons had become popular. People can smelt iron and make iron implement, opened up broad foreground for the further development of productivity. A Baoji's uncle, Shi Lu, advocated the establishment of the house, set the city and taught the people to plant mulberry so that the nomadic Khitan (an ancient nationality in China) people gradually settled in the handicraft industry and agricultural center. In the upper right of figure 5, the return of riverside people with hoes on their shoulders is also an embodiment of their lifestyle under the development of social productivity. During the 10th century A.D., Emperor empress Xiao Chuo, the mother of the Emperor of Liao Shengzong in Liao Dynasty consolidated the Emperor's sovereignty. In culture, Confucianism is constantly advocated, and it is tried to use it as the ruling thought. Advocating and establishing feudal ideology and behavioral norms such as loyalty, filial piety, rites, and righteousness weaken the old system of Qidan. At the same time, feudal esteem and hierarchy are gradually formed. During the Shengzong period, the rule of Liao reached its peak, and the Liao regime completed the feudalization process. In the Yuan Dynasty, the feudalization process intensified, and the rulers vigorously proclaimed the Confucian ethical thoughts and hierarchy. Guo Jujing's *Twenty-four Filial Piety* recorded the story of Guo Ju's family's fall by burying son to raise his mother in the ninth Arhat image. The reflection of feudal ethics on murals is also the means of the ruling class.



Fig. 5 Front-and-Back Composition and Stereoscopic Three-Dimensional Composition Pattern in the Ninth Arhat Image



Fig. 6 Wave Pattern

6. The Arrangement of Decorative Patterns

The repeated arrangement of decorative wave patterns behind the image of Arhat is a distortion, exaggeration, and generalization of the real world(Fig. 6). Different from the literati paintings of the Yuan Dynasty at that time, the Taoist temple murals more embody the intention of moralization and are mostly drawn by folk artisans, which is a propositional creation design under certain restrictions by rulers. This repetitive arrangement is similar to the wave pattern in *the Eight Immortals Crossing on the Sea* of the North Wall of the Chun Yang Temple in Yongle Palace, Shanxi province. On the one hand, for the needs of the moralized theme, the background composition needs to be rigorously regulated, so the continuous repetitive decorative wave pattern is used; on the other hand, because the folk art of the Yuan Dynasty Temple is inferior to the literati, the simple arrangement design can be more intuitive. Pulling the complicated Arhat and secular figures to the level, reducing the difficulty of drawing.

The decorative cloud patterns(Fig. 7)behind the image of Arhats are also important parts of the study of decorative patterns in Guanyin Pavilion murals. The painters took patterns such as moiré from the art of decoration and separated the space between the Romans and the living beings by the moiré surrounding the Arhats. It further deified the sacred image of Arhat as a Buddha messenger supported by scholars and provided a perfect visual metaphor for the process of Purdue beings and ethics.The cross-infiltration of the space and space represented by the boundary valve composed of some iconic element patterns injects a strong moral ethic behind the visual form.



Fig. 7 MoirÉ Pattern



Fig. 8 Typical Chinese Elements in the Ripple

Each of the Arhat images contains 14 elements in the ripples of the waves. Including beasts, sacred objects, shells, conch, dragonflies(Fig. 8,8-1), etc. As early as the four years of Tianzan (925 A.D.), A Baoji recruited troops to levy the sea, and the states and counties were divided into different customs and the Han national culture of Jizhou was continued. The connected wave patterns were painted with the unique properties of Jizhou and other localities' pattern. There are more than 70 murals in Guanyin Pavilion. Among them, the image of the three Hu people Hu People in the Western regions or Xiyu(Fig. 9)in the sixth, thirteenth and fifteenth Arhat pictures reflect the frequent exchange of Buddhist culture between the various regions of the Yuan Dynasty. The decorative patterns in the murals, such as the evil spirits and the gods, and the props holding the incense burner, the Arhat fetish and the secular figures all reflect the fusion of the Han and Liao Dynasty elements.



Fig. 8-1 Typical Chinese Elements in the Ripple



Fig. 9 the Pattern of Hu People in the Western Regions or Xiyu

7. The Lines and Colors under the Shape

The line drawing of Arhat is in sharp contrast with the orchid depiction of the character and the slightly curved line drawing of the evil spirit. The lines of Arhat are mainly composed of solemn black ink lines; the lines of the characters are meticulous, mainly black lines; the image of evil spirits is curved red and green lines. At that time, the functional and artistic differences between the folk artisan murals of the Dule Temple and the literati paintings of the scholar-officials in the social background also reflected the intention of moralization. For example, the sidelines of the chain of mountains, auspicious clouds, and Arhat's kasaya are lined with thick iron lines, which are quite different from the thin lines of the mountains of Huang Gongwang's *Nine Peaks and Snow Figures* and Zhao Mengfu's *Red Arhats*. However, compared with the lines of the mural in the same period, there are many similarities. For example, the iron lines of the Seven Buddhas of Xinghua Temple and the moiré of the Daxiong Hall of Xia Temple, Guangsheng Temple, Shanxi Hongdong. It can be seen that in the difference between the fineness of the details of the literati painting represented by the scholar-official class and the use of lines and inks in the paintings of murals with folk painting as the main creative group, the function of the temple murals is further highlighted.

The overall gray-green tone in the murals is actually a world of bliss that is closer to life. As the main body, the sixteen Arhats have almost uniform heights, costumes, and colors. The color of the evil spirits is contrasted with the image of the Arhat, the secular characters, the beasts, the clouds, the waves, and the likes of the Arhat facial smudges closer to the secular characters, further bringing the aesthetic distance of the believers closer. The gilding technique of the two kings, the simplicity of the image of Arhat, and the use of the material of the secular character, the kindness of the Arhat's face are the embodiment of Confucian culture. The color and composition design under certain stylization promotes the communication and dissemination of Buddhist culture and promotes the function of

education(Fig. 10).

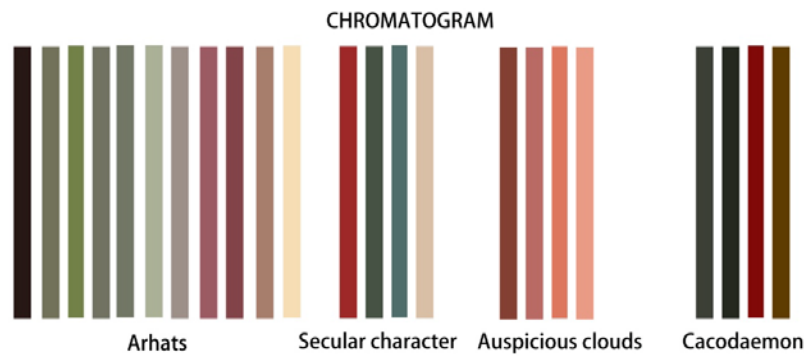


Fig. 10 Chromatogram Analysis of Various Categories of Arhats, Secular Figures, and Beasts in Guanyin Pavilion Murals

8. The Content of the Plot in the Murals

Under the theme of ruling class control, the painters screened and translated from narrative literature such as folk tales and Buddhist legends into images composed of individual characters, events, and plots. By recombining them into the composition, they strengthened the theme. These typical stories effectively give a visual form that can be interpreted.

The fourth Arhat's (Fig. 11) right hand hold bead, the left-hand hold kasaya, and the two women wearing a corolla, the breasts-chested, fleeing and fearing the Buddha. There is a hurry to run off the shoes of women, next to a letter do namaste, create a very dramatic scene. Influenced by the socialized culture of women at that time, and Buddhism opposes lust, all women are the place where all evils live. This image uses the stories of secular people to strengthen the theme. This close-to-life performance strengthens the moralised function of murals. In the fifth Arhat(Fig. 12), the left-handed force opened the shackles on the head of the sinner, and the sinner bowed his hand to Arhat, and the next captor look at Arhat. It was obvious that he abandoned the evil and advised the people to believe in the theme of the Buddha. The seventh Arhat image(Fig. 13)is the story of sowing, surpassing the cycle of life and death; The eighth Arhat (Fig. 14) image is the scene of the devout men and woman sending the scriptures, the loyalty of the virtues, the overlap of the Arhat and the secular figures, the secular nature of the Buddhist gods are strengthened; The thirteen Arhats image (Fig. 15) of the feeding birds vividly expresses the Confucian thought of *Nature and Man in One*; The fourteenth and sixth Arhats images (Fig. 16) inherit the sinology (left) west Cyan Dragon, (right) east White Tiger's Chinese thought, but in order to the intention of educating and cultivating, the original worship of the gods such as the Cyan Dragon White Tiger was changed, and finally, the theme of the Buddha's magical boundless dragon was surrendered.



Fig. 11 the Fourth Arhat Image



Fig. 12 the Fifth Arhat Image



Fig. 13 the Seventh Arhat Image



Fig. 14 the Eighth Arhat Image



Fig. 15 the Thirteenth Arhat Image



Fig. 16 the Figures of Cyan Dragon White Tiger in the Fourteenth and Sixth Arhats Images

9. Conclusion

The believers who came to worship the murals, the essence of which is that the images in the murals assist and guide the viewers with their implicit graphical logic. There are many logics hidden in the paintings of the Dule Temple murals. The logic is a visual, spatial logical relationship, which is reflected in various aspects such as schema, space, lines, and colors. Under the moralization of the ruling class, the painters began to conceive the space as a whole, starting with the methods and concepts of the original composition and arrangement of position, and then filling in the details, constantly revolving around and deepening the theme. The behind of the artistic expression of mural composition, pattern elements, and color design is the visual reflection of social special context and ideological culture in this period. In particular, murals, as important carriers of transmitting tenet, largely reflect the will of the ruler. In the artistic creation with certain limitations, the visual expression of the images is rich in the meaning of the content given by the society or the ruling class. Composition, space, pattern, color, etc. both have profound constraints and symbolism.

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