



Coexistence of Divinity and Custom: The Song Dynasty Shanxi Gaoping Kaihua Temple Murals Secularization Reason Analysis

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Abstract. Mural is the early form of Chinese painting, and its rich image information has important historical value for the study of connotation. During the Song Dynasty, the production of Shanxi murals reached its peak, especially with a large number of Buddhist themes in temple murals. These mural images have typical functional and narrative characteristics. This paper deeply analyzes the composition and content of the temple mural image of Gaoping Kaihua Temple, and uses the narrative law to analyze the secularization tendency retained on the image style, trying to restore its influence in local life. Exploring the Causes of the Necessity of Mural Secularization from the Buddhist cultural heritage, the spiritual needs of the people, the political needs of the Imperial Court and demand for painters and monks.

Keywords: Song Dynasty, Gaoping Kaihua Temple, temple murals, secularization;

1 Introduction

As the earliest narrative application form and the art form of expressing emotions in human history, murals have experienced ups and downs in the long course, but they have never disappeared. Under the social situation of the gradual secularization and popularization of religious culture in the Song Dynasty, mural craftsmen interpreted Buddhist legends from the perspective of local people based on the realistic social background of the Song Dynasty, which can increase the authenticity and credibility of religious stories and make highly localized mural stories more acceptable to people. The temple murals embody the sacred ethereal beauty and the realistic secular beauty on one wall, that is, the binary opposition of 'secular' and 'divinity' coexists on the same plane.

2 Gaoping Kaihua Temple Song Dynasty mural content and distribution overview

As an excellent cultural heritage of China, temple murals are of great research value for modern scholars to understand the life scenes and religious aesthetics of the Song Dynasty.

The murals in the DaXiong Hall of Gaoping Kaihua Temple contains murals painted during the third year of Shaosheng (1096) of the Northern Song Dynasty^[1]. The west wall and the north wall are mainly painted by the mural artisan Guo Fa. The mural is painted with four narrative drawings and nine stories. It is read in the order of the Buddhist kneeling habit from the south end of the west wall to the west of the north wall. The murals in the hall are based on the classic narrative structure model and visual language, showing the story of Buddhist concepts and connotations in the 'DaFangBianFoBao'en Jing'. A scene that presents a more understandable Popularization tendency and conforms the narrative strategy. The figures in the murals, buildings, artifacts, landscapes and other parts are meticulously depicted by the mural artisans, with clear priorities and orderly arrangement.

3 Localization of Gaoping Kaihua Temple Murals in Song Dynasty from Narrative Perspective

3.1 The Secularization Expression of the Murals of Kaihua Temple in Gaoping

Mural artisans need to consider before drawing a mural, how to combine the content of the theme and the rules of formal beauty to organize the composition and layout of the whole picture. The composition and layout of murals should not only effectively express the connotation of each mural, but also make them interrelated, so as to express the deep ideological connotation, which contains the understanding and re-creation of the theme of Buddhist stories by mural craftsmen, which tests the aesthetic concept and aesthetic cultivation of craftsmen. The "symmetrical composition", "metachronous isomorphism" and "primary and secondary composition" are the other one core spatial concepts that co-exist with the "sacred-secular" in the Gaoping Kaihua Temple murals.

(1).Layout of symmetrical composition

The murals of Kaihua Temple in Gaoping adopt the traditional symmetrical composition layout. The murals in the DaXiong Palace, whether it is a single picture or the Panoramic murals composition. The buildings in these pictures, even the rocks, are centrosymmetric and present a stable triangular pyramid-like layout. Murals can be basically divided into upper, middle and lower three parts, the middle part of the figure is the main Buddha, which is the core content of Buddhist murals. The upper part of the fresco is the heaven, and the left and right sides draw Bodhisattvas, Buddhist disciples, etc., and the lower part of the fresco is painted with mortal beings who listen to Buddhism and people who feed the temple^[2].

(2).metachronous isomorphism space

The murals at Kaihua Temple in Gaoping are not only single-line narratives, but also employ metachronous isomorphism and the juxtaposed maneuver approach to complete, in which five different narrative lines are juxtaposed by the same narrative theme within the same time and space, showing a tendency toward spatialization. For example, in the story of Huasai Bhikkhuni's karma, the three episodes of "The Picture of Preempting see the Buddha", "The Picture of the Villainous Thief" and "The Picture of the Execution Ground" are represented in the same scene picture. The common narrative theme is highlighted through symbolic and metaphorical expressions^[3].

(3).The order of primary and secondary composition

If "sacred-secular" realizes the division between ideal and reality, then "primary and secondary composition" constructs the internal order of ideal and reality respectively. On the basis of symmetry, the frescoes of the DaXiong Hall in Gaoping Kaihua Temple also arrange the picture with reasonable perspective and composition layout according to the plot development and the main and secondary relationship of the characters in the story. The main plot is depicted in a large proportion in the visual center, while the secondary plot is depicted briefly on the side, surrounded by a comic strip of scenes from the Buddhist legend. This arrangement of detailed slightly proper makes the picture have a relationship between near and large, far and small, and real and imaginary. Wood and stone, cloud patterns and buildings will separate the different scenes in the screen to coordinate with each other. Of the nine Buddhist stories depicted on the west wall mural, the central space between the second and third panels serves as the centerpiece of the entire mural. and the muralist depicts the first scene of the story of Prince Sanyou's life, which is the richest in plot and uses the most space. It is used to emphasize its importance. The main character of the story usually appears in the first screen, and the other episodes are in its vicinity. The audience can also find out where the main picture of each group of stories is and understand its connotation by means of characters, costumes, scenes and other elements^[4]. It gives a sense of beauty that is both balanced and stable, and harmonious and unified, in accordance with the rituals and rules of Buddhist statuary.

3.2 The Forms Secularization Expression of Murals in Gaoping Kaihua Temple

Although the murals of the monastery are mainly based on Buddhist stories, the former handed down materials reference limitations, can not meet the needs of the current painting, muralists need to rely on their own imagination to portray the Buddhist story, for the Buddhist story needed to accompany the background and character image, can only draw on the real scenes in the world at the time as the narrative background of the religious story, so in the mural, there are many vivid images and architectural scenes reflecting the social life of the time, the theme of the mural and the image of Buddhist characters are obvious localization^[5].

(1). The appearance and expression of the characters

There are many figures in the ' ShuoFaTu ' murals of the Kaihua Temple in Gaoping. The muralists meticulously sketched out more than 900 figures of different identities and sizes in the BaoEnJinBian murals according to the content of Buddhist stories. You

can clearly see the emotional colors of the characters' expressions, either kind, or treacherous, or fierce, or terrified, or joyful, or sad. Each character has its own unique demeanor and appearance. As in the picture of the ShanYouTaiZiBenShenTu, The weaver-girl look shy and curious as she peeked from the wall at the prince on the parade, The officials of the imperial court sat with an arrogant face on the roof of the ship supervising the boatmen and sailors.

In addition to this, Song Dynasty Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have their heads bowed, their faces so quiet and peaceful, their downward-looking slender eyes slightly open, as if they are in a state of introverted and deep thought after hearing the Buddha's teachings, It is as if the Bodhisattva is also worried because of the suffering and troubles of sentient beings. Thus, it is easy to make people feel kindless and increase the effect of meditation.

(2).Costume modeling of the character

In the murals of Kaihua Temple in Gaoping, the devotees who are listening to the Buddhist scriptures, whether they are kings, officials or commoners, their clothes and hats and their manners in accordance with the costume style of the Song Dynasty. According to the identity of each role, their hairstyles, corona and robe are different. But the general trend is nationalization and secularization. The image of Sakyamuni, head and facial features in the frescoes are still the traditional style of Buddhist art, and still retains the classic eight-character beard in the image of Buddhist characters^[6]. It can be seen that it is still constrained by the rules of statues in Indian Buddhist art. However, Sakyamuni's topless shape, a distinctive clothing feature in the Indian Buddhist image, was artistically processed by the muralist in the mural of Kaihua Temple in Gaoping. In addition, other monks in the murals also wear wrapped and strict clothing styles. It can be seen that the social aesthetics of the Song Dynasty under the guidance of Confucianism is more conservative and implicit. The public may not yet be able to accept dresses with open breasts.

(3).Scenes from the story

The frescoes of Gaoping Kaihua Temple also depict many scenes in the real social life of the Song Dynasty, such as the ShanYouTaiZiBenShengJinBian story, depicting the prince watching the farming, weaving, fishing and animal husbandry on the way. Among them, even the fish net, weaving machine, sail, drum instrument, are depicted in detail, which provides a valuable basis for studying the means of production and means of living in the Song Dynasty^[7]. On the screen of the palace pavilions, is a reference to the Northern Song Dynasty palace courtyard and temple building wooden frame style. On the west wall of the mural there is a street scene, the guests in the restaurant raise a glass to each other, on both sides of the street there are all kinds of trade, such as meat stalls, cloth stores, carts, stalls, fortune-telling, the picture overflowing with the vitality of the marketplace, which highly restores the picture of the secular life of the Central Plains in the Song Dynasty. It is not common to depict life scenes in previous murals.

4 the Song Dynasty Gaoping Kaihua Temple mural content secularization cause

During the Song Dynasty in Shanxi, the Buddhist story subjects in the frescoes of Gaoping Kaihua Temple have a large number of images reflecting the rituals and narrative scenes, Just as "function determines the form and content of the work" ,In the frescoes make the form break through some constraints, but in the connotation and extension of changes, attached to the walls and space of the monastery and exist.In order that these painted images, constructed for the functional meaning of edification and the Buddhist idea of design, could fully express the intentions of the Muralist as well as the political intentions of authorities. The reasons for the gradual secularization of temple murals are also obvious.

(1).There is a demand for Buddhist cultural heritage

Buddhist foreign ideology and culture in order to get the recognition of the local people to achieve the purpose of cultural communication. The content of the murals of the Kaihua Temple chooses the idea of repaying gratitude as the theme. The stories depicted in the murals, such as the Bodhisattva coming to rescue when the merchant ship is killed, the prince licking his eyes and restoring the light when he meets the god cow, render the greatness and ubiquity of the Buddhist power, and guide and educate people to accumulate virtue and do good, so that they can be sheltered by the power of the world in times of crisis.

This is closely related to the prosperity of Confucianism in the Song Dynasty and the promotion of filial piety. Not only the localization of the narrative background is obvious, but also to a certain extent, it is integrated into the Chinese folk ethical and moral beliefs. This meets the needs of folk beliefs in the Song Dynasty. It highly resolves the contradiction between extraterritorial Buddhist doctrine and local culture.

The Buddhist ideology of the concept of reincarnation and the relationship between cause and effect has been recognized and absorbed in traditional Chinese culture, and has gradually taken root in the hearts of people. From the perspective of narrative, It is the embodiment of the combination of foreign Buddhist thought and local ethics.

(2).The spiritual needs of the people

The selection of the content of the frescoes at Gaoping Kaihua Temple is based on the selected of fresco themes from a localized and national perspective. Related to the Song Dynasty people's faith in the future, the appearance of a Buddhist Pure Land in the narrative background of the murals to promote Buddhism is in line with people's aspiration for a peaceful society, which is not only tempting to the common people but also a fictionalized ideal life destination for the middle and upper classes. The people needed a beautiful utopia to carry a brief spiritual escape from the hardships of real life.All of these reflect the realistic pragmatic attitude of the people when choosing religious ideas. One of the episodes in which Buddha saves people in a distressing penal colony is very much in line with the psychological expectations of the people, who hope that a bodhisattva will come to save them out of their plight when they suffer, The Maitreya Sutra contains realistic problems such as food, clothing, housing, weddings and funerals, reflecting the real-life problems that ordinary people in our country are worried about and the sustenance of Buddhism.

(3).The political needs of the Imperial Court

The political background of the dynasty had an impact on the choice of mural content. In social morality, the rulers of the Northern Song Dynasty advocated loyalty and filial piety. In ideology, they advocated the strategy of Confucianism. Because of this political and cultural environment, Buddhism was protected and utilized, and Buddhist culture was promoted to develop rapidly and show strong momentum of prosperity. Most obviously, the king in the ShanYouTaiZiBenShengTu is at the center of this picture, and his position is directly opposite the Buddha's altar in the middle of the main hall, where the divine power echoes the secular king's power and is the focal point of the entire mural. It reflects the idea of highlighting the solemnity of the bodhisattva and Buddha, and reflects the idea of the muralists to maintain the center of imperial power and advocate Buddhism to protect the country, with clear and orderly hierarchy.

(4).Demand for painters and monks

Because the mural is a basis for the image style as the industry recognized standards and norms [8], not only can lead an era of aesthetic fashion can also spread to future generations. The muralist cannot paint from imagination, but must follow the original Buddhist story content in the scriptures, and may also be based on folk understanding of Buddhist rituals, stories, ideas and other content, and combined with social and cultural customs and legends, fully reflecting the Chinese elements of Buddhism. In the monastery monks to speak to the many followers of the scriptures, because many of the believers are illiterate, so in order to facilitate the understanding of the public, the muralist in the design of the mural layout should take into account whether the audience can understand the content of the mural, and the interpretation of the Buddhist story is vivid and fascinating. If the mural story can be closer to life, It is also more easily accepted by the public, which is conducive to the spread of Buddhism, in order to give full play to the function of the mural.

5 Conclusion

After the introduction of Buddhism into China, the transformation of localized and secularized Buddhist murals had its historical inevitability. The Buddhist murals of the Song Dynasty in ShanXi province, though mainly expressing Buddhist stories in their plots, take the real scenes of the times and the local secular images as the narrative background. From the images, we can see the preserved character forms and spiritual styles, presenting the narrative background of Buddhist murals of the Song Dynasty or the secularized that appears or hides^[9]. The relative economic prosperity of the time, the awakening of the civic consciousness, the popularity of humanistic ideas, and the strength of the people's secular sensibilities increased the credibility of Buddhist stories and the ornamental nature of religious frescoes. The trend of localization and secularization of frescoes makes them easy to read and accept by the general public and enhances the credibility of Buddhist doctrine, thus adapting to the culture and understanding habits of the local people. For Buddhist culture, localization is needed to better achieve the purpose of communication. For the rulers, better unified ideological education consolidates the status of the monarchy. For believers, the Buddhist temple space

is the hub of communication between people and Buddha in the real world, that is, the 'sacre' place. The secular society drawn in the temple murals is an important node closely related to daily life behavior, that is, the place of 'secular'. The two jointly constructed Gaoping Kaihua Temple 's sacred and secular binary opposition space concept.

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