

Analysis on the Style and Evolution of the Sculpture Art in Shanxi Merchants Courtyard

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Abstract: Shanxi merchants' foreign exchanges and family culture have made the sculpture features in Jinzhong area brilliant, and local craftsmen have also continuously absorbed local culture and customs from it, making the aesthetic taste of sculpture diversified and gradually showing differences. Therefore, this article focuses on understanding the relationship between the evolution of Shanxi merchants' ideological, cultural, and economic strength and the aesthetic characteristics of sculptures, so as to analyze the sculpture art culture of Shanxi merchants' courtyards in Jinzhong area more vividly and comprehensively.

Keywords: Shanxi Merchants; Shanxi Merchants Compound; Sculpture; Influencing Factors.

1. Introduction

Shanxi merchants have always been looked up to by the residents of Jinzhong, making their cultural value recognized by the local people, especially the aesthetic value of sculpture. In recent years, the upsurge of local culture has been set off, and the sculptures produced by Jinzhong merchants Courtyard have gradually entered the public's field of vision. Many scholars have made fruitful research results on the sculptures of Jinzhong merchants Courtyard. For example, Rong Xiping's "Analysis of the Motives of the "Three Sculptures" Art Decoration in Shanxi Merchants Courtyard" [1], "A Brief Discussion on the Sculpture and Decorative Art of Ancient Buildings in Jinzhong Area" [2] by Wang Fang, "Research on the Application of Brick Carving Art in Traditional Houses in Guanzhong" [3] by Yan Na and Li Yanjun. "Analysis and Refinement of the Architectural Decoration and Sculpture Patterns of Qiao's Courtyard" [4] by Zheng Wei, "Exploring the Cultural Characteristics of Chang's Manor Zhaobi and Yingbi" [5] by Zhao Wenjing, Rong Jian, Wang Han, Wang Xinyue, Yang Linmei, Sun Wenya, "Study on the architectural decoration art of ancient residential buildings in Shanxi Wang Family Courtyard" [6] by Wei Yanping, Xu Yongyi. However, the above research lacks a comparative study of the differences in the sculptures of the courtyards in various regions of Jinzhong, let alone a comparative study of the differences in the sculptures of the courtyards in various regions of Jinzhong. The characteristics and causes of the differences.

2. The Distinguishing Features of the Sculptures in the Courtyards of Shanxi Merchants in Various Parts of Jinzhong

2.1. Sculptures in the Chang Family Courtyard in Dongyang District, Yuci

Chang family Manor is located in Chewang Village, Yuci. It is the "North Chang" mansion among the "North Chang" and "Nan Chang" brother families in the Qing Dynasty, covering an area of more than 120,000 square meters. Yuci "North Chang" created the "Tea Road" which is also known as the "Silk Road" in Chinese history, and its footprints spread

across most of China. The tea trade with Russia has lasted for nearly two hundred years, and it has become the largest and longest-running business in foreign trade in Chinese history.

The manor integrates Confucian etiquette and Taoist romance, and combines the thickness of northern folk houses with the beauty of southern gardens. The ideal mansion and spiritual manor of "eight can" that expresses love and can be sung. [7] There are 'Shi yun pavilion' Academy, 'Gui he hall' House, Chang's Ancestral Hall, Jing Garden, plaque couplets, screen walls, screen walls, door styles, window decorations and other fine buildings in the compound.

Therefore, the architectural sculpture decoration of the Chang Family Courtyard has the distinctive characteristics of eclecticism and learning from each other. Observing the sculpture relics and pictures of the Shanxi Merchants Courtyard of the Chang Family found that the sculptures of the Chang Family Courtyard are mainly calligraphy characters, animals and plants. In general, there are traditional Chinese elements and patterns surrounded by decorations, which are rich in content, and the inner information of the connotation is beautiful. It expresses the ardent hope of the owner of the Chang family for future generations. To act, to warn future generations of the principles of building morality, establishing character, being a human being, and being involved in the world. The decorative pattern around the center of the wall is a major feature of the screen wall decoration of the Chang family manor, which is in line with the literati temperament of the Chang family and represents the image of a gentleman with a pure heart and a clean heart.

2.2. Sculptures in Qiao Family Courtyard in Qixian County

Qiao Family Courtyard (Qixian Folk Custom Museum) is located in Qiaojiabao Village, Qi County. It is the residence of Qiao Zhiyong, the third generation of the Qiao family, a well-known commercial capitalist at home and abroad in the Qing Dynasty. The hall name is "Zai zhong hall". The compound was built in the reign of Qianlong, covering an area of 8724.8 square meters and a building area of 3874 square meters. The starting point of the Qiao family's foundation is Baotou, Inner Mongolia. It has a huge and self-contained business network, with shops scattered all over the country. Its business includes grain, goods, tea, ticket numbers, and pawn industries.

The compound has been listed as a national key cultural relic's protection unit, and is praised by experts and scholars as "a bright pearl of northern residential buildings in the Qing Dynasty". The courtyard includes the 'Minglou' Courtyard, the brick-carved screen wall of a picture composed of one hundred longevity characters, the brick carvings of "Distinguish between Province Proverbs", and the brick-carved boutique buildings of the Land Shrine. Through the observation of documents, pictures and materials of the museum, and the real scene of the compound, it can be intuitively found that the brick carving art of the Qiao Family Courtyard is widely used in the screen walls, roof ridges, thin retaining wall on the outer edge of the top of the city wall, chimneys, etc. of the building, with high relief and shallow relief, round carving, open carving and other techniques. The themes mainly include traditional auspicious patterns such as auspicious birds, auspicious animals, flowers and fairy fruits, piano, chess, calligraphy and painting, blessings, prosperity and longevity, and "Dark Eight Immortals", which have rich cultural connotations. The brick carvings in the courtyard are rich in layers and imply auspiciousness. It is a typical fine brick carving art integrating calligraphy, sculpture and folk customs.

These brick carvings are exquisite in technique, delicate in technique and vivid in image, showing the profound traditional cultural heritage and splendid folk art in this area of Jinzhong. There are more than a dozen large and small screen walls in the Qiao family courtyard, which decorate the courtyard beautifully and richly. These screen walls fully express Qiao's traditional concept of advocating moral cultivation and pursuing an auspicious and happy life, and show the owner's beautiful yearning and sustenance for life.

2.3. Sculptures in the Wang Family Courtyard in Lingshi County

The Wang Family Courtyard (Museum of Chinese Folk House Art) is located in Jingsheng Town, Lingshi County. It was first built in the Kangxi period of the Qing Dynasty, and then gradually built up. It was completed in the early years of Jiaqing, with a total area of 150,000 square meters. The compound is a typical representative of ancient Chinese residential buildings and enjoys the reputation of "the first Chinese residential house" and "folk palace". The Wang family started from farming and selling tofu, from farmers to merchants, and from merchants to officials. They were both merchants and eunuchs. In the middle of the Qing Dynasty, they became a wealthy family with both wealthy businessmen and eunuchs. The main buildings of the compound include the East Fort Courtyard (commonly known as Gao jia ya), the West Fort Courtyard (commonly known as the Red Gate Fort), the ancestral hall, the Xiaoyi Temple, the pawnshop courtyard, and the stage. Therefore, in terms of sculpture, there is an inseparable relationship between the sculptures of the Wang Family Courtyard and the business and eunuch cultures that advance in politics and economy.

There are many courtyards and screen walls in the Wang Family Courtyard. The screen wall here echoes the gate and is the auxiliary building part of the middle gate of the courtyard building. In terms of content, animals, plants, real objects, utensils, landscapes, flowers and birds, plots and stories are mainly used to express the whole family's life attitude of yearning for a better life, seeking good luck and avoiding evil. Such as the combination of auspicious clouds, auspicious sun and unicorn, the combination of cranes

and deer in spring, the sunrise by the sea, the combination of five "Fu" characters surrounding the word "Shou", the picture of carp leaping over the sacred dragon's gate, and the landscape wall Figure, Lion Rolling Hydrangea Figure, etc. implicitly embody the owner's good wishes to hope for good luck, pursue fame and wealth, and hope to live and work in peace and contentment.

3. The Style and Evolution of the Sculpture Art in Shanxi Merchants Courtyard

Shanxi merchants in central Shanxi mainly engaged in business for generations, and the special business and living environment prompted Shanxi merchants to form a character of advocating nature and open-mindedness, thus guiding Shanxi merchants to form an aesthetic concept of sculpture that regards nature and simplicity as the beauty. Under the influence of various regional cultures and environments in central Shanxi, craftsmen of Shanxi merchants developed sculptures with regional characteristics in their respective regions, which not only retained the aesthetic characteristics of simplicity, simplicity, and grandeur of Shanxi merchant sculptures, but also reflected the aesthetic characteristics of Shanxi merchants. The identity of their own culture and the belonging of the ethnic group show the spirit of Shanxi businessmen who are aggressive and love life. Although there are many similarities in the sculptures of Shanxi merchants' courtyards in various parts of Jinzhong, there are certain differences in details such as style, content, and shape. This regional difference has formed a unique culture among Shanxi merchants.

Through the empirical investigation of the courtyard sculptures in various places in Jinzhong, it is found that from the Chang family Manor to the Wang Family Courtyard, according to the geographical direction from north to south: First of all, in terms of variables in sculpture, the overall performance gradually changes from more to less, from fine to rough; secondly, in terms of subject matter, it shows a mentality from traditional conservative to diverse and open, and in terms of color preference, Shanxi merchants choice shows a trend from deep and simple to smart and gorgeous. This reflects that under the influence of special factors such as history, geography, and cultural environment, Shanxi merchants with strong survivability constantly change the content, style, shape and other details of sculptures to meet the needs of life.

In addition, the manufacture of courtyard sculptures is also limited by socioeconomic and labor levels. Shanxi merchants are active in foreign trade, and make a living by exporting, selling and transporting commodities. The prosperity of the economy and the frequent trade make the sculptures in Shanxi merchants' courtyards more generous and decent.

Finally, the insights gained from Shanxi merchants' outbound trade exchanges made their family customs, culture and aesthetic tastes affect the interpretation of sculptures by Shanxi merchant craftsmen.

4. Conclusion

In the process of development and evolution, Shanxi merchants migrated to various areas in Jinzhong, and the aesthetics, functions, and needs of sculptures have undergone different changes. Through different sculpture details, we can distinguish the sculptures of Shanxi merchants' courtyards in

different regions. This also shows that the sculptures in Shanxi merchant courtyards in various parts of Jinzhong not only meet the physiological needs of the human body, but also show the individuality of the local ethnic groups on the basis of aesthetics, ideology, and culture, and have a certain local folk interest. Studying the sculptures of Shanxi merchants' courtyards in various places in Jinzhong can re-examine the wisdom of Shanxi craftsmen in the application of sculptures and the vision of the family protagonists, and can also understand the aesthetic characteristics conveyed by Shanxi merchants' sculptures, so as to have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of Jinzhong sculptures culture.

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