

Exploring the Symbolism and Cultural Importance of Dunhuang Lotus Motifs

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Abstract: As one of the important symbols in Chinese traditional culture, the Dunhuang lotus pattern has profound symbolic meaning and cultural importance. This paper reveals its unique position in Chinese culture through an in-depth study of the origin, evolution and application of the Dunhuang lotus pattern. Firstly, the lotus flower, as a holy symbol in oriental culture, represents the beauty of purity, nobility and untaintedness. Secondly, the extensive use of lotus motifs in Chinese painting and craftsmanship reflects not only the Chinese people's reverence for the lotus flower, but also their awe of nature and the universe. Finally, as an important element in Chinese traditional culture, Dunhuang lotus pattern not only enriches the connotation of Chinese art, but also carries the good wishes and spiritual hopes of the Chinese people.

Keywords: Dunhuang, Lotus flower, Pattern, Symbolism.

1. Introduction

Dunhuang Grottoes is one of the important heritage of ancient Chinese culture and art, and its murals, Buddha statues and other artworks are the treasures of the world's cultural treasury. In the Dunhuang caves, the lotus pattern is a very common pattern, and its symbolism is rich and profound. The study of the symbolism of the lotus pattern in the Dunhuang caves helps to gain a deeper understanding of ancient Chinese culture and art, and at the same time helps to deepen the understanding and knowledge of Buddhist culture. The purpose of this paper is to explore the symbolism, expression and characteristics of the lotus pattern in the Dunhuang caves, as well as the important role it plays in cultural heritage and development through the study of this pattern. At the same time, this paper will also explore the value of the Dunhuang Cave Lotus Motif in cultural heritage protection, its role in Chinese cultural exchange, and its value and significance in artistic research. China is a country with a long history and a rich and colourful cultural and artistic heritage. Dunhuang Grottoes, as a representative of ancient Chinese cave art, has a cultural and artistic status that cannot be ignored. And the lotus flower, as one of the traditional Chinese cultural symbols, has always played an important symbolic significance. The study of the symbolism of the lotus pattern in the Dunhuang caves not only helps to understand ancient Chinese culture and art, but also helps to deepen the understanding and cognition of Buddhist culture. At the same time, the study of the cultural heritage and development of the lotus pattern in the Dunhuang caves also helps to promote the development of Chinese culture and art, and to promote its dissemination and exchange in the international arena.

2. Introduction to Dunhuang Caves and Lotus Patterns

Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes is the general name for the Mogao Caves and the Western Thousand Buddha Caves in Dunhuang City, Gansu Province, which is one of the four famous grottoes in China, and the world's most magnificent and well-preserved treasure trove of Buddhist art in existence.

Mogao Caves is located 25 kilometres southeast of Dunhuang City, cut in the eastern foot of the Mingsha Mountain cliffs. Former Qin Fu Jian Jian Yuan two years of salmon music venerable travelled here, see the Mingsha Mountain on the golden light, the shape of a thousand Buddhas, and then developed the heart of the excavation, and after the successive construction constantly, and then became a holy place of Buddhism, the number of Dunhuang Mogao Caves, commonly known as the Thousand Buddha Caves. It is the largest and most famous Buddhist art grotto in China.

The lotus flower is one of the traditional Chinese cultural symbols and has a high cultural status. In Chinese culture, the lotus flower symbolises purity, elegance, innocence, wisdom and untaintedness, and is a symbol of the "gentleman's style". Lotus is also one of the important symbols in Buddhist culture, representing the truth and wisdom of Buddhism, and is one of the very important symbols in Buddhist culture. Symbol is a kind of cultural behaviour that carries meaning, and the study of the symbolic meaning behind culture is the focus of many modern schools of thought.

Symbol is a cultural behaviour that carries meaning, and the study of the symbolic meaning behind culture is the field of study of many modern schools of thought. For example, in modern semiotics and semantics research; in art history research, since the formal style research method, there has been the Abbey-Warburg school of systematic symbolism analysis of images; in the anthropological branch of research, from the 1960s, the emergence of a special symbolic anthropology research and the study of symbolism in the decorative arts is only one small branch. What does symbolism really mean for decoration? In The Lotus Grammar, we see that Goodyear has boldly embraced solar symbolism as the sole factor driving the development of decoration and constructed a history of decoration spanning thousands of years. Indeed, from Egypt to Greece, from its initial creation to its later dissemination, Goodyear has determined that the lotus flower has been transformed from decoration into a symbol that endures. [1] Lottman, a researcher in cultural semiotics, has pointed out in his discussion of the relationship between "symbol" and "memory" of cultural symbols that meaningful elements (symbols) can act as memories. In his view, symbols such as

graphics and costumes are carriers of memory. In his research, memory also exists on the premise of "stable collectivity", because the memory of wandering individuals cannot be called culture, which itself contains the meanings of groupness, locality, stability, continuity, etc. [2].

In the Dunhuang Grottoes, lotus motifs appear in a variety of artefacts, such as murals, statues, and niches. Lotus motifs have different forms, some are single lotus, some are lotus and other flowers mixed together, and some are lotus-based motifs, such as lotus petals, lotus stems, and so on. In addition, there are many other patterns of lotus motifs, such as double-layered lotus, rotating lotus, double lotus, and so on. These lotus motifs in the Dunhuang caves in the form of expression and characteristics, reflecting the important position of the lotus in the Dunhuang caves.

3. The Symbolism of The Lotus Pattern

In Buddhism, the lotus flower is an important symbol representing a pure, untainted and clean mind. The lotus flower is called the "Dharma Lotus" in Buddhism because it symbolises the essence of Buddhism, i.e. purity from worldly contamination. Zhou Dunyi of the Song Dynasty described it in his "Love of Lotus": "I only love the lotus that comes out of the silt but does not get contaminated, the maundy is not demonic, the middle passes through the outer straightness, does not spread out, the fragrance is far away from the clear, the pavilion net planting can be viewed from afar but not to be desecrated..Lotus, the flower of the gentleman of the people also.. "From this, it is easy to see the first symbolism of the lotus flower - out of the mud and not stained. Because it comes out of the mud without being stained, Zhou Dunyi compares it to a gentleman. In the Dhammapada, it is said, "Free from all defilements. The Bodhisattva, in his practice, is able to view all realms in all dharmas with wisdom, without craving, and although he is in the five turbid streams of birth and death, he is not tainted by the faults of birth and death." Symbolising the lotus flower coming out of water and not being stained by sludge. The five turbidities are the turbidity of kalpa, the turbidity of living beings, the turbidity of worries, the turbidity of seeing, and the turbidity of life. [3] The Buddha sitting on a lotus flower is also a scene often depicted in Buddhism, and this is because the Buddha's heart is also as pure and untainted as a lotus flower. The lotus flower is also a common symbol in Chinese culture. The lotus flower is believed to represent noble qualities and virtues, such as purity, elegance, purity, and freedom from undulation. The lotus flower also symbolises good fortune, happiness and prosperity, making it a favoured artistic motif and decoration in traditional Chinese culture. In the Dunhuang Grottoes, the lotus pattern also embodies a special symbolism. Appearing in Buddhist artworks, the lotus flower motif is a common decorative element that represents the purity, innocence and nobility of Buddhism. The lotus flower also symbolises the virtue and wisdom of all beings, so in the Dunhuang caves the lotus flower pattern often appears together with the image of Buddha.

4. Dunhuang Cave Lotus Pattern of Expression and Characteristics

In the murals of the Dunhuang caves, the lotus pattern often appears in perspective, showing curved green leaves and open lotus petals. The colours of the lotus pattern are mostly dark red, light red, yellow and green. It is attested that these colours

were used to show the bright colours of the lotus flower in sunlight and the soft colours in the shadows. It is a common representation of the Buddha in the Dunhuang caves that a lotus flower is often painted on top of or behind the head. The lotus flower is linked to the image of the Buddha, reflecting the purity and nobility of the Buddha's teachings. Lotus motifs are also widely used in other artefacts in the Dunhuang caves. For example, in Buddhist scripture manuscripts, lotus motifs were often used as chapter signs and decorations. Lotus motifs were also widely used in Tang dynasty murals and fabrics. The analytical process unfolding chronologically in each theme shows step by step the specific morphological features of lotus art, the stylistic characteristics of different periods, the different creative vigour of each dynasty, and a preliminary presentation of the evolutionary trajectory of the lotus form. This does not stop here, the Mogao Grottoes lotus art form has a grasp of the whole, will be compared with the modern product family thought, found that the two have many points of convergence, which provides a new idea for further research. [4]

5. The Cultural Heritage and Development of Lotus Patterns in Dunhuang Grottoes

The Buddhist art of Dunhuang Caves underwent a six-century-long historical evolution starting from the Western Jin Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty. During this period, lotus motifs have always appeared as a common decorative pattern in the artworks of Dunhuang Caves. The form and colour of the lotus pattern also changed with the times, demonstrating the diversity and change of Buddhist art in the Dunhuang caves. Lotus pattern is one of the important elements of traditional Chinese art, in the Tang Dynasty Dunhuang Caves in the lotus pattern is in the history of Chinese art has left an important stroke. The Buddhist art of the Dunhuang Caves had a profound influence and inspiration on later Buddhist art and painting, and also provided inspiration for other art genres in Chinese art history, such as Chinese landscape painting and bird and flower painting. The Buddhist art of the Dunhuang Grottoes has had an important place and influence not only in China, but also in the world. The rich and varied expressions and profound symbolism of the lotus motif in the Dunhuang caves have also been used in Buddhist art and painting in other parts of the world. At the same time, the international dissemination of Buddhist art in the Dunhuang caves has also promoted cultural and artistic exchanges and intercommunication between China and the rest of the world.

6. The Value of The Dunhuang Grottoes' Lotus Motifs

Dunhuang Grottoes are world-famous for their artworks, of which the lotus pattern is one of the representatives. As an important part of ancient Chinese culture, the protection, inheritance and development of the Dunhuang Grottoes Lotus Pattern is of great value and significance. It represents the high level of ancient Chinese art and the unique charm of culture, and plays an inestimable role in passing on Chinese culture, enhancing national self-confidence and conveying the values of human civilisation. Therefore, in the protection of cultural heritage, strengthening the protection and inheritance of the lotus pattern in Dunhuang caves is of self-evident importance to the maintenance and transmission of

Chinese culture. The Dunhuang Grottoes are known as the "treasure house of oriental art", and the lotus pattern has attracted worldwide attention for its exquisite technique and profound significance. In the process of Chinese culture going global, the lotus pattern of Dunhuang Grottoes plays an important role. It has made an important contribution to the spread of Chinese culture and provided a unique perspective on the spread of foreign cultures. Therefore, the Dunhuang Cave Lotus Motif has the role of promoting cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world. The artworks of Dunhuang Grottoes occupy an important position in the history of Chinese art and have become important materials for the study of ancient Chinese art and culture. When analysing the lotus flower in Han pictorial stones, it is found that the lotus pattern appears again in a certain form, and there are some decorative patterns beside the lotus flower. Analysing the symbolism of the lotus flower and the ornaments around the lotus flower, we can see that the Han people's cosmic view of the heavenly circle and the earthly sphere. [5] Dunhuang caves lotus pattern as one of the representatives, showing the ancient Chinese art of high technology and unique aesthetic. In the study of art history, the Dunhuang Cave Lotus Pattern also has important value and significance, providing an important reference for the study of ancient Chinese art history, art style and art techniques.

7. Conclusion

Through the study of the symbolism and value of the lotus pattern in Dunhuang Caves, the profound connotation and cultural background of Dunhuang Cave art can be understood.

At the same time, a deeper understanding of ancient Chinese art and culture can be gained. In addition, this study also provides a theoretical basis for the protection and inheritance of the lotus pattern in Dunhuang caves and contributes to the inheritance and innovation of Chinese culture. Although this study provides a preliminary analysis of the symbolism and value of the lotus motif in the Dunhuang caves, there are still some limitations. For example, it focuses on the symbolic meaning of the lotus pattern, but the analysis of its modelling and techniques is relatively simple. Therefore, the researcher can explore these aspects more deeply in future studies. In addition, more specific and effective actions need to be made in the protection and inheritance of the lotus pattern in Dunhuang caves, in order to better disseminate Chinese culture and enhance national self-confidence.

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