Journal of Innovation and Development
ISSN: 2958-4752 | Vol. 3, No. 3, 2023

The Artistic Characteristics of the Sculptures in Shanxi Merchants Courtyard and the Evolution of Cultural Connotation

Xiaoju Guo

School of Language and Culture, Graduate University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, 11000, Mongolia

Abstract: By comparing and analyzing the sculptures of Jinzhong courtyards, we can distinguish the sculptures of Shanxi Merchants courtyards formed under the backgrounds of patterns, shapes, environments, and cultures in different regions, and understand the relationship between the evolution of Shanxi transplanted texts and the aesthetic decoration of carvings, which can help us understand more In-depth and comprehensive understanding of Jinzhong Shanxi merchant culture. Therefore, focus on the sculptural features of the Jinzhong merchant courtyard, compare the patterns, shapes, environment, culture and other elements, and the background of the Shanxi merchants, and summarize their respective sculpture characteristics, so as to gain insight into the humanistic charm of the Jinzhong merchants.

Keywords: Shanxi Merchants; Shanxi Merchants Courtyard; Sculpture; Features.

1. Introduction

Regarding the origin of Shanxi merchants, Shanxi merchants rose in the Ming Dynasty and flourished in the Qing Dynasty. Especially after the middle of the Ming Dynasty, the emergence of new social thoughts marked the loosening of the traditional culture of suppressing merchants. Merchants had a certain social status and formed their own Confucian merchant culture, which in turn promoted the further development of Shanxi merchants. In the late Qing Dynasty, Shanxi merchants, who had already accumulated abundant funds through foreign trade, created the bank account business, and formed a mutual utilization relationship with the financial system of the Qing Dynasty. Expansion of existing capital. At the same time, Shanxi merchants in the Qing Dynasty still maintained close contacts with the royal family and the government, and intervened in politics through various methods such as donating officials, imperial examinations, and rent-seeking to seek additional support and protection from political power for their business activities. [1].

Shanxi merchants accumulated a large amount of property through business, and later because they became officials and gained a certain social status, they built and repaired the house. Later, as the family grew, they expanded and repaired the house. Finally, in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the basic size of the Shanxi Merchants compound It was formed under such a background, and its sculpture art is also fully displayed under the traditional Chinese culture and unique human geographical environment.

2. The Artistic Characteristics of the Sculptures in Shanxi Merchants Courtyard and the Evolution of Cultural Connotation

Shanxi merchants are widely distributed in the south, middle, and north slant lines of central Shanxi, and they are constantly expanding in the process of development. When doing business and exploring one after another, they need to involve politics, economy, culture, etc. In the communication with related ethnic groups, the thoughts and habits of business and life are also inadvertently compatible with different ethnic groups, so that Shanxi merchants from all over Shanxi have different styles and customs. The traditional sculptures of Shanxi Merchants are mainly composed of stone carvings, brick carvings, and wood carvings. Influenced by the times, the patterns and materials of the traditional sculptures of Shanxi Merchants in various regions of Jinzhong are similar.

Compared with traditional sculptures, the courtyard sculptures of Shanxi Merchants in Jinzhong are richer, with more ingenuity in details such as styles, themes, and shapes. Under the influence of Shanxi merchant culture, skilled craftsmen at that time chose the extremely rich objects in nature as the creative materials for the "three sculptures" pattern. The courtyard sculptures of Shanxi Merchants in Jinzhong retain the common flower patterns, animal patterns, character patterns, calligraphy characters, utensil shapes, comprehensive patterns, geometric patterns, homophonic patterns and other themes in the courtyard, making all parts of Jinzhong The design of the sculptures in the courtyard is based on the businessman's point of view to promote the Confucian culture of ethics and ethics, the folk auspicious culture that embodies beautiful ideals, and the Fengshui culture of avoiding evil and eliminating disasters. They are all dominated by education, appreciation and beautification. Sometimes there are some Taoists and even Buddhists. Thought charm, but it belongs to occasional revelation, occupying a supplementary position. Various patterns are displayed in artistic techniques such as embossing and hollowing out. These ingenious folk artists have created works of art that are completely different from other art expressions. [2] It is different from folk sculptures in other provinces and cities. At the same time, affected by multiple factors in various regions of Jinzhong culture, there are differences in the courtyard sculptures in various places in Jinzhong. Therefore, the courtyard sculptures in various places not only have the elements of Jinzhong sculpture, but also have their own unique regional characteristics.

3. Causes of Differences in the Wall Sculptures of Grand Theaters in Jinzhong

3.1. Originated from the Scale Impact of the Development of Shanxi Merchants in Various Places in Central Shanxi.

"Shanxi Merchants, Immigrants and Opera" [3], "Study on the Biographies of Ming Qing Merchants Seen in Inscriptions" [4], "Study on the Spatial Layout Characteristics of Shanxi Merchants Courtyards Under the Influence of Shanxi Merchants Culture" [5], "Study on the Architecture of Shanxi Merchants Courtyards Under the Influence of Shanxi Merchants Culture The study of " [6] Detailed Style Explanation" shows that the Shanxi Merchants and their changes in the Ming and Qing Dynasties not only laid a solid economic and cultural foundation for the external spread and development of Shanxi Shanxi Merchants culture, but also had a profound impact on the sculptures of Shanxi Merchants Courtyards in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Impact. Judging from the research materials, there are differences in the scale and architectural style of Shanxi Merchants courtyards in various parts of Jinzhong. On the whole, it is affected by the employment situation, scope of practice, and family education, which leads to the different themes of sculptures in Shanxi Merchants courtyards. There are different functions in terms of content and modeling performance.

3.2. Influenced by Factors Such as Business-Confucian Relations and Politics

From the constantly changing characteristics of the differences in the political status of the members of the Shanxi merchant family and the main status of the family, the Shanxi merchant craftsmen from all over the world have different choices of content when designing their screen wall sculptures. However, among the many themes, the final core remains unchanged. Its cultural connotation implicitly expresses the cultural connotation of Shanxi Merchants that "the owner either hopes for good luck, or pursues fame and fortune, or wishes to live and work in peace and contentment". Common contents include praying for blessings, wishing birthdays, wishing auspiciousness, promotion, town house to ward off evil spirits, etc. Most of them are about praying for blessings, auspiciousness, and birthday celebrations. There are auspicious clouds and auspicious days, unicorn pictures, cranes and deer in the same spring, sea water facing the sun (The composition shows a round of red sun rising from the sea, colorful clouds floating in the sky, several bats flying around among the colorful clouds, and Shoushan Mountain standing firmly in the sea), The mountain that symbolizes longevity and the sea that symbolizes happiness), five blessings holding longevity, holy dragon holding birthday, birthday stone carvings; with promotion, hope and embodying literati The screen walls of scholar-bureaucrats' taste and demeanor include carp jumping over the dragon's gate, Marquis hanging seals (Its shape is that there are two monkeys, big and small, on the pine tree in the upper left corner. The little monkey holds a wooden stick and hangs the printed ribbon on the branch of the pine tree. In the lower right corner are two deer, male and female, one is holding Ganoderma lucidum, one is looking for food, and there is a plant of evergreen next to it. This composition breaks through the traditional pattern of hanging and printing on maple trees, and replaces maple trees with pine trees, which embodies the character of pine trees that never wither in the frost and are evergreen in winter and summer. What's more interesting is that the homophony of pine and grandson, and son means son and heir, imply that the descendants will be proud of their official career and become prosperous), landscape screen walls, Siyi screen walls, The three friends of winter (refer to the three plants of pine, bamboo and plum. It is named after these three plants can still maintain tenacious vitality in the cold winter, and it is a symbol of noble personality in Chinese traditional culture), etc. the screen walls of town houses and evil spirits include all the content, such as lions rolling hydrangea balls, seven treasures of unicorns, etc.

3.3. Limited by Economic Impact.

This group of merchants in Shanxi gradually ranked first among the "Top Ten Merchants" in Ming and Qing Dynasties. They were rich in business, rich in the world, and famous all over the world. They wrote a brilliant chapter in the business history of China and the world. The foreign trade of Shanxi merchants was active, and they made a living by selling and transporting commodities. The prosperous economy and frequent trade made the sculptures in Shanxi merchants' courtyards more generous and decent. The Shanxi Merchants Courtyard is magnificent and has an exquisite layout. The most outstanding achievement is the sculpture decoration art that is widely used in various parts of the building. The existing Shanxi Merchants Courtyards in Jinzhong each have their own characteristics in terms of architectural carvings and decorations, some are simple and elegant, some are luxurious and complicated, some are poetic and poetic, some are lifelike, but their common artistic style is fine and three-dimensional. From wood carvings to stone carvings, from eaves to walls, there are carvings on almost all components, and the patterns of each carving are also quite complicated and detailed, with a full sense of three-dimensionality and realism. It can be said that it is a master of the "fine and dense" style of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and it also has some unique aesthetics of Western architectural sculpture and decorative art. Due to the disparity in the economic strength of various families in the society at that time, ordinary families could only build houses with simple and plain structures, and their artistic value was mainly "artistic conception" rather than "form". However, due to the strong financial backing and the influence of foreign trade merchants, Shanxi merchants pursued grandeur, fine realism, and spared no expense in their architecture. Some are different from the characteristics of ordinary dwellings.

3.4. The Symbiotic Custom Culture and Aesthetic Taste Affect the Interpretation of the Screen Wall Sculptures by Shanxi Merchant Craftsmen

Shanxi people accumulated a large amount of property through business and then repaired houses in their hometowns. Customs, culture and aesthetic tastes have influenced the interpretation of sculptures by Shanxi merchant craftsmen. The brick carving art of Shanxi Merchants Courtyard was formed in the Ming and Qing Dynasties under the traditional Chinese culture and unique cultural and geographical environment. [7] Therefore, the carving and decoration art of Chang family Manor not only has the style and connotation of traditional Chinese patterns, but also has the delicate feeling of gardens in southern China, and also has some three-dimensional realistic forms of European carving art. The

foreign exchanges in the north and the development of family social status in the south have made the sculptures in the Jinzhong area flourish, and the merchants in the Jinzhong area have also absorbed the local culture and customs from each other, making the aesthetic taste of the screen wall sculptures develop in different directions and gradually show differences. The technique of carving and decoration is also very superb. It combines the strengths of the north and south buildings and combines the local characteristics to create a kind of carving with local characteristics in Shanxi. "Overall style.

4. Conclusion

The sculptures in Shanxi merchants Courtyard are mainly based on the belief aesthetics dominated by Jinzhong culture. Smart and capable Shanxi merchants changed the details of the courtyard, arms and colors to see the living environment. It can be seen that Shanxi merchants are constantly expanding in the process of development, and the political, economic, and cultural aspects involved in successive business explorations. In the communication with related ethnic groups, the ideas and habits of business and life are also inadvertently integrated. These details are projected on the carving art of Shanxi Merchants, and it is precisely because of these nuances that rich and diverse sculptures of Shanxi Merchants Courtyards have been created, adding infinite elegance to the Shanxi Merchants Courtyard.

References

[1] Wang Shuai. Political Analysis of the Rise and Fall of Shanxi Merchants[D]. Shandong University, 2017.

[2] Fan Qianjiang. Investigation on the Artistic Features of the Cao Family Courtyard in Taigu North[J]. Knowledge-Power,2019.

[3] Zhang Chunjuan. Shanxi Merchants, Immigrants and Opera[D]. Shanghai Theater Academy, 2013.

[4] Huang Kaijun. Research on the Biographies of Mingqing Merchants Seen in Inscriptions[D]. Southwest University, 2020.

[5] Song Hao. Research on the Spatial Layout Characteristics of Shanxi Merchants Compound under the Influence of Shanxi Merchants Culture[D]. Nanjing Agricultural University, 2017.

[6] Zhang Liang. Detailed Explanation of the Architectural Style of Shanxi Merchants Courtyard under the Influence of Shanxi Merchants Culture[D]. Shanxi University, 2009.

[7] Guo Ting. Research on the Pattern Art of Brick Carving in Shanxi Jinshang Courtyard[D]. Shanxi Normal University, 2020.