



A Study on the Architectural Decoration System of Qiang Nationality Based on Symbolism Theory

—A Case Study of Muka Qiang Village in Li County

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Abstract

As a nationality without written language, the Qiang nationality had developed up to now with its own architectural characteristics, national culture and religious belief, which is of great research value [1]. Because the Qiang people are located in a relatively closed area, so far they had been able to retain the original architectural features and show their unique architectural features, especially the symbolic symbols with national characteristics in architectural decoration, which express some specific meanings in the Qiang people's architecture. The current research on the architecture of Muka Qiang is lack of the symbolism analysis of its architecture. The architectural decoration system of the Muka Qiang village was analyzed based on the theory of symbolism. This paper mainly takes the Muka Qiang village in Li County as an example, analyzes the architectural decoration system of the Muka Qiang village based on the theory of symbolism, include belief and symbolism meanings, and explores its value, including the inheritance of architectural skills and culture, in for the diversified development of China's architectural culture.

Subject Areas

Architecture, Culture

Keywords

Symbolism, Muka Qiang, Qiang Nationality Architecture, Decoration System

1. Introduction

The Qiang nationality has been in the “marginal zone” of the Chinese nation

since ancient times, with the characteristics of diversification. The architectural decoration of Qiang nationality reflects the belief system, economic production mode and social organization structure of Qiang nationality, which not only reflects the general characteristics of Chinese traditional architecture, but also has its own strong characteristics. The architectural decoration patterns of Qiang nationality are localized and processed on the basis of integrating the architectural decoration of Han, Tibetan and other nationalities, and finally form the architectural decoration system with national characteristics [2]. From the aspects of white stone decoration, color, “shikandang in taishan” and the construction of doors and Windows [3], we can interpret the ability of the Qiang people to absorb and integrate other cultures, the embodiment of diversified cultures in the Qiang people’s architectural decoration, and the symbolic expression in the Qiang people’s architectural decoration system.

The closer to the north and west valleys in Li county, the more deeply the culture of the stockade is influenced by the Tibetan and Han cultures, so is the form of architectural decoration. The Qiang people, who live in the Muka Qiang Village in Li County, have been living and reproducing in this mountain valley for more than 2000 years [4]. Although they did not have their own writing for various reasons, the magnificent and complex natural environment created their strong and tenacious courage and boldness, deriving their unique religious beliefs and folk culture.

2. Symbolic Analysis of Architectural Decoration System in Muka Qiang Village

The architectural decoration system of the Muka Qiang village in Lixian County is mainly influenced by the belief mode and living and production mode of the Qiang people, showing very restraint, frugality and practical principles [5]. The cultural features of Muka Qiang, such as cremation, white stone worship, Qiong cage and religious belief related to sheep, etc. Have been continuously extended on the time axis and spatial axis, symbolizing the continuation and development of the national culture of Qiang.

2.1. Symbolic Expression of Qiang Belief in Architectural Decoration of Muka Qiang Village

By studies examples of worship, such as white stone worship, totem work ship and scared forest worship, we can analysis the Qiang belief in architectural decoration of Muka Qiang village.

2.1.1. White Stone Worship

The evolution of the custom of Shang Bai into Bai Shi worship began in the famous “Qiang Ge War” [6]. After the war, the Qiang people expected the gods to bless the Qiang people forever, and the white stone became a symbol of nobility and holiness in the minds of the Qiang people. Thus, the worship of god and white stone appeared, and became the traditional customs of the Qiang people.

Qiang people are still white, “its common white for good”. The white stone is taken from the top of the snow-capped mountain and offered on the roof of the “Lesse”, which shows the status of the white stone god in the Qiang gods. The belief of the Qiang people has gradually become an indispensable part of the architectural decoration system of the Qiang people. White stone on the roof has become a typical symbol of the Qiang people’s architecture. The white stone decoration shows the architectural aesthetic taste and architectural decoration techniques of the Qiang people. The white stone on the roof of the house has become the symbol and symbol of the Qiang people’s architecture.

2.1.2. Totem Worship

Qiang people worship sheep, so Qiang and sheep are closely dependent and inseparable. The Qiang people believe that the sheep have a soul, which can protect and protect the safety of their members. In daily life, the patterns on the clothes of the Qiang people cannot be separated from the patterns of sheep. Among them, the most representative patterns are “four-horn flower protection” and “ram horn flower” (both are the patterns generated by the deformation of sheep). These symbolic patterns are widely used in the architectural decoration of the Muka Qiang village.

2.1.3. Sacred Forest Worship

Each village of the Qiang people has its own “sacred forest”, which symbolizes the place where the spirits of the Qiang people live and where they worship them. The existence of the sacred forest signifies the inheritance and protection of the Qiang people’s religious symbols.

For example, Le Se, decorated at the top of the Qiang architecture, symbolizes the religious belief and folk customs of the Qiang people. From the perspective of architectural anthropology, this architectural component of Leser represents the greatest folk custom of Qiang, that is, the Qiang calendar year. On the first day of October each year, the Qiang people will carry out a grand ceremony to scrape the bar, which is the Qiang calendar year. At that time, each stockade will go to the front of the stockade, to the front of the roof of its own house, where it will sacrifice its animals to the heaven to thank God for giving it a better life. The Qiang people continue this grand event to this day, through the ancient architectural decoration symbol Ler to convey the Qiang people’s cherish and yearning for a better life.

2.1.4. Lingstone Worship

The implied meaning and religious color of “Taishan Shikandang” in Muka Qiang village is very consistent with the aesthetic taste and psychological demands of Qiang people, and resonates with the spiritual needs of Qiang society. Therefore, it has been gradually retained and become a fixed architectural decoration element. From the Angle of architectural decoration, “taishan shigandang” belongs to the typical building additions, reflects the Qiang people in construction and its spiritual feeling brought by the construction of a wood card

QiangZhai people's objective understanding and customs and its cultural symbol, this kind of cultural symbol reveals the psychological demands of common human—pray for peace, peace and good life.

2.2. The Symbolic Expression of Decoration Pattern in the Architectural Decoration of Muka Qiang Village

Wooden card QiangZhai traditional architectural decoration theme can be roughly classified into four categories: plants, animals, lines, words, geometric lines [7], have a plenty of directly to the embodiment of the patterns in these subjects, but whatever the form is symbolic and of high aesthetic value and cultural connotation.

2.2.1. The Plant Lines

Plant pattern decoration theme mainly includes azalea, peach, chrysanthemum, peony, lotus, pomegranate, vine and so on. Among them, azalea is the most important architectural decoration theme. The Qiang people also call the azalea as the sheep's horn flower, and use it as a template to create many different combinations and deformation forms, reflecting the nomadic culture psychology of the Qiang people in the early stage. The plant pattern is mainly reflected on the wall or lintel of the building, and is mainly reflected in the decoration of the hairpin.

2.2.2. The Animals

Animal patterns are all symbolic expressions of specific animals in the living environment of Muka Qiang. Of sheep in the Qiang people's life plays an important role in the Qiang people advocate the sheep, the sheep as auspicious animals, used for sacrifice and exorcism, main decorative in building outside wall or directly to the sheep's head on the door eaves of building decoration, there are a lot of sheep head as the image formed by the modification of abstract patterns, such as Windows, door head MeiShang decoration, etc.

2.2.3. The Geometry Lines

Geometrical pattern decoration is also an important type in the architectural decoration of Muka Qiang village. Among them, the fire pattern and stone pattern are formed by abstract deformation and simplification in the concrete form. The architectural decoration of Muka Qiang Village is mainly shown on the panes and guardrails, with simple back lines and repeated vertical lines. Although these geometric lines are designed according to the overall shape of the building, they also have beautiful symbolic significance.

2.3. Symbolic Expression in the Decoration of Doors and Windows in Muka Qiang Village Buildings

2.3.1. The "Door"

Door and "Taishan Shikandang" different, it has a certain architectural function in the architectural design, for the limitation and division of architectural space plays a certain role in the building components. The flower doors of Muka

Qiang village show a strong trace of Chinese culture. In some places, the shape, components, decorations and patterns of the flower doors are completely built according to the Han style.

2.3.2. The “Window”

The pattern, size and decoration of Windows in traditional Han folk dwellings often symbolize the social status of the family, the identity of the host and the hierarchy of the family members and so on, which are very complex and deep social significance [8]. It can be said that the window symbolizes the rich inner world of human beings when carrying out architectural behavior and represents the spiritual and cultural level of human beings. The Windows of the Muka Qiang village have absorbed many elements of the Han culture and formed their own window forms and decorative patterns through their own processing and refining. For example, the flowered window of Muka Qiang village architecture is a kind of evolution and development mode after the introduction of Han culture into Qiang region, which is very characteristic of Qiang people. In addition, there are Muka Qiang ethnic characteristics of the ram window, cross window and so on, with certain characteristics and Qiang flavor, greatly enriched the architectural space decoration of the Muka Qiang.

3. Conclusion

There are many decorative products under the influence of religious culture in the architectural decoration of Muka Qiang village. Religious patterns appear in the architecture of the Qiang ethnic group [9], taking their symbolic meaning to express people’s yearning for a better life. In religion, the functions of exorcising evil spirits and protecting gods and Buddhas coincide with people’s wishes of exorcising Najib and praying for peace and happiness. The most fundamental meaning of interpreting religious patterns into architecture is praying for blessings. Wooden card QiangZhai traditional pattern in modern building decoration use, learn traditional pattern decoration “shape” of the “god”, contains more ethnic characteristics of symbols, can correctly reflect the profound and Qiang ethnic culture and ethnic style, thus to create a new unique style and elegant Qiang building decoration system, provide reference value for the research on Qiang architectural history.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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