

Analysis of the Artistic and Cultural Characteristics of White Tibetan House in Xiangcheng County from the Perspective of Symbolism

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Abstract

As a cultural carrier, residential buildings can not only meet people's material needs, but also convey the spirit. Symbolism is the soul of architecture. It conveys the good wishes and spiritual pursuit of human beings through architectural ontology, and has rich artistic and cultural characteristics. As a unique Tibetan architecture, the White Tibetan House, together with temples and crazy costumes, is known as the "three absolutes of the countryside and the city" and is a symbolic symbol of the regional culture of the countryside and the city. Through the study of the white Tibetan houses in Xiangcheng County, this paper analyzes the symbolism contained in the three levels of 'shape symbol', 'object symbol' and 'color symbol' from the aspects of its overall structure, decorative details and color application, and further shows the rich plastic arts and profound national culture of the white Tibetan houses in Xiangcheng County.

Keywords

Symbolism; Residential Buildings; Xiangcheng County; White Tibetan House.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Symbolism

As a unique thinking method of Chinese traditional aesthetic cognition, symbolism is an important part of Chinese traditional culture. In the long history, it can reflect people's attitude towards life and knowledge. Traditional architecture is a reflection of the concept of survival and development of Chinese people in the past dynasties. In the imperial palaces, temples, zen gardens and even residential buildings, from the overall structure, internal structure to decorative details, it contains symbolic beauty. Good buildings can not only meet people's living and using functions, but also improve their living environment, thus enriching people's spiritual world. In traditional residential buildings, people usually give special meaning to natural things, so as to create a living space consistent with aesthetic needs and psychological demands.

1.2. Architectural Symbolism

The symbol of architecture usually refers to the basic characteristics of the structure and form composed of various architectural images of a specific period or individual. Buildings of the same period usually have some similar features due to the same social network. These characteristics are inherited from generation to generation and have become the symbol of contemporary architecture. The core idea of architectural symbol is to use architecture as a cultural carrier, which can not only meet the needs of material functions, but also play a role in transmitting spirit, showing the infinite possibility of transcending space, and then expressing people's good wishes and spiritual demands through architecture. The expression of the symbol requires a medium. In the external form, spatial form, sculpture decoration, plane material and color expression of the building, the emotions beyond the building ontology are

created by human psychological activities to form an open and infinite space. In the process of creating architecture, culture is the medium of symbol. The symbol of architecture often takes historical culture, humanistic tradition and regional characteristics as its inspiration source. Therefore, on the basis of local culture, exploring the cultural roots of architectural symbols is the essential requirement of architectural creation.

1.3. White Tibetan House in Xiangcheng County

'Xiangcheng' in Tibetan refers to the meaning of " Buddha beads in hand. " The Shuoqu River runs through the whole territory from north to south. It is like a silk line along the river, connecting villages scattered on both sides of the river into one, like a string of Buddha beads. Xiangcheng County is also named for its special terrain. Xiangcheng County is located in the southwest of Ganzi Prefecture, Sichuan Province. It is located in the north-central part of the Hengduan Mountains and the southern part of the Shaluli Mountains. Its east is connected with Daocheng Aden, and the south is connected with Shangri-La, Diqing Prefecture, Yunnan Province. It is the center of the Shangri-La Ecotourism Zone. The average altitude of Xiangcheng County is about 3200 meters, and the overall terrain gradually increases from southeast to northwest. Xiangcheng County is a typical continental monsoon climate, with scarce rainfall, clear dry and wet seasons, abundant sunshine, and great regional differences in temperature. In the time dimension, the annual difference is very small, but the daily temperature difference is very large. In November 2020, Xiangcheng County was officially named ' the hometown of Chinese white Tibetan house culture ' after an inspection by a relevant expert group organized by the Chinese Folk Literature and Artists Association.

As a symbol of local culture in Xiangcheng County, the white Tibetan house only exists in Xiangcheng County and a few surrounding areas. The white tower structure is a unique structural form of the white Tibetan houses in Xiangcheng County. It is known as the " three absolutes of Xiangcheng " together with temples and crazy costumes. The white Tibetan house is a combination of rural and urban folk craft skills, including rammed walls, painted paintings, carvings, Thangkas, kitchen god totems and Buddha statues. Its construction relies on the profound and splendid cultural heritage of the rural valley. The overall layout and structural form of the White Tibetan House are relatively close to those of Tibetan and Qiang buildings. They are all watchtower structures that are gradually shrinking from the bottom to the top. The white Tibetan house is a civil structure with wooden columns inside. The outer wall is built of rammed earth, which is very different from the Tibetan and Qiang houses built with wood and stone in other areas. The outer wall of the white Tibetan room is tilted inward from bottom to top, while the inner wall is straight and the interior is covered with a wooden mesh structure. The size of the white storage room depends on the number of column heads, usually 35 to 118 columns. The flat roof can be used as a sunning field for crops in addition to being used to block the wind and rain. The building is quadrilateral and ' L-shaped ' layout, with a regular appearance and distributed along the river.

2. An Overview of the Symbolic Artistic and Cultural Characteristics of the White Tibetan House in Xiangcheng County

The white Tibetan house in Xiangcheng County is a comprehensive carrier of Tibetan history and Tibetan culture and art. Its symbolic artistic features show the rich plastic arts and profound Tibetan culture of Tibetan residential buildings.

2.1. Symbol of the Shape

The residential buildings pay special attention to the formal beauty, with symbol as the main means to express its formal beauty. Based on its unique cultural background and cultural connotation, it conforms to the external natural environment and weather conditions, and then

transmits the cultural tradition and humanistic spirit of the building, forming a certain cultural aesthetic concept.

Xiangcheng County is located in high latitudes, with strong winds in winter and low temperatures throughout the year. Due to the high requirements for building insulation in alpine areas. Therefore, in the west and north of the Tibetan houses in Baixian County, the windows are not opened. The walls of the buildings are relatively thick, and the thickness of the wall base can reach 100 cm. The outer walls are inclined, the inner walls are straight, and the walls are gradually thinning from bottom to top. In addition to the daughter wall of the roof, the back of the building is white, without any structural decoration, looks simple and powerful. In order to improve the lighting and heating performance of the house, the sun-facing surface of the building is arranged from the second floor, with equal spacing. The structure of the lintel and the beam is generally the same, which are protruding from the wall. The structure is complicated, and the decorative structure is as many as 4-5 floors. Each floor has a door or a window. The first floor has 6-8 raised wall columns, short rafters with a diameter of about 16 centimeters, and the outer flywood ends are white. The second layer is a load-bearing sleeper beam parallel to the wall, protruding about 8-10 cm. The structure of the third floor is basically the same as that of the first floor. The difference is that the protruding flying wood is processed into a downward and inward tilt, while the four to five floors extend from the inside to the edge of the doorframe and window by means of carving and painting.

The simple and thick white Tibetan room is like a white pearl, dotted in the green countryside, adding a fresh charm to the elegant and pure countryside. On the whole, the architecture of the white Tibetan house in the rural city has simple and lively visual characteristics. It shows a thick effect when looking close, and can feel the simple and natural atmosphere when touching. On the outer wall of the white Tibetan house, the complex and rhythmic decoration effect is adopted. The decoration on the back sun side looks relatively simple, while the decorative hierarchy on the sunrise side is relatively rich, which makes the white Tibetan house in the rural city look heavy and vivid from the whole.

2.2. Symbol of the Object

The symbol of the object is especially widely used in residential buildings. Residential buildings focus on reflecting the concept of life, and praying for Naji is the main content of life desire. Therefore, people often use the symbolic meaning of natural things to convey beautiful blessings. These are usually reflected in the details of architectural decoration, such as the exquisite patterns of carving, or large or small decorative ornaments, architectural components. In Xiangcheng County, Tibetans mostly live from generation to generation, and the white Tibetan house is a concrete manifestation of the local Tibetan family relations, after several generations of years of efforts, to be completed. The white Tibetan room looks simple and atmospheric from the outside, while the interior decoration is magnificent. The first floor of the white Tibetan house is used to store livestock, and sometimes used as a storage room. Under the guidance of the government, the production and life style of the Tibetan residents in Xiangcheng County has been changed, and the goal of separating human and livestock has been achieved. The second floor of the White Storehouse is a living area with a living room, a kitchen, a living room, and a Buddhist hall. There is a platform directly above the Buddhist hall. In order to show respect for the Buddha, there is no building here. The third floor is a bedroom, the fourth floor is a family food warehouse, and the roof is usually used to dry food.

2.2.1. The Decoration of the Hall

In the core position of the white Tibetan houses in Xiangcheng County, there are mosques. At the same time, the decoration and arrangement of the mosques are unique and representative in the whole Tibetan area. It can be seen that Tibetan Buddhism has a supreme sacred position in Tibetan areas. The window area of the white storage room is the largest and the decoration

is the most gorgeous. Yellow and orange are often used to decorate the mosques of the white Tibetan houses, and the shrines are decorated with woodcuts, color paintings, and carvings. Under the influence of the Gelug Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, the layout of the mosque is similar to that of the temples in the Tibetan area. It adopts layered carving, clay sculpture, gold, powder drawing and color painting decoration to create a solemn and magnificent atmosphere.

The main surface of the Sutra Hall is a Buddhist niche, in which the statues of Buddhas are worshipped, and on both sides are rows of Buddhas or Buddhist instruments. The decoration of the niche is mainly orange-yellow. On the back of the Buddha statue, there are lions, tigers, peng birds, magic diamonds and eight treasures, etc. On the screen in front of the niche, there are Buddhist auspicious signs such as dragons and lotus flowers, which are connected with complicated scroll grass patterns. The whole looks extremely luxurious. At the front of the table, the living Buddha 's photo frames, incense candles and butter tea are presented. The pillars in the chapel are decorated with woodcarving paintings. There are complex cloud patterns and dragon patterns on the stigma. The four walls are Buddhist-themed murals or stacked Thangkas. The interior decoration of the white Tibetan houses in the township fully reflects the infinite piety of Tibetans to Buddhism, and uses complex decoration techniques to increase the visual effect of the interior, creating a warm and sacred atmosphere, fully demonstrating the strong perception of Tibetan folk culture.

2.2.2. Kitchen and Living Room Decoration

In the white Tibetan house, the kitchen and living room are the most important places after the mosque. The kitchen and living room on the second floor are open. There are storage cabinets on the wall of the living room, which are used to place cooking utensils, kitchen utensils and food. The cabinets are mainly made of pine wood and arranged along the wall. From the top of the cabinet to the ceiling, the clay sculptures, wood carvings and painted works of the Naxi, Han and Mongolian nationalities are placed, mainly dragon and phoenix, peacocks, peony, eight treasures and other patterns, representing auspicious wealth. In front of the cabinet, chairs and coffee tables are placed, which are filled with cushions of various auspicious flowers and auspicious animals.

Tibetans like to be clean, so in the white Tibetan houses in the countryside, every household has a water tank cabinet. Tibetans have unique characteristics in the location and decoration details of the water tank cabinet. The water tank cabinet is near the stove in the kitchen. There are three to five large copper tanks on top, which are filled with spring water taken by Tibetans from the mountain stream. The Tibetan residents in the town have a tradition of offering sacrifices to the stove, that is, placing the god of the stove near the stove. The Tibetan people use the flame retardancy and plasticity of the soil to create a variety of different forms of the stove god totem. In order to prevent it from being polluted by oil fumes, the surface of the clay sculpture is black. According to everyone 's preferences, the image of the stove god will also be different. The main statues are the eight treasures, the god of wealth and the Buddha of longevity.

In the white Tibetan house in Xiangcheng County, the special feature of the worship of the Kitchen God lies in the custom of worshiping cats in Xiangcheng. There will be a cat image in the worship of the Kitchen God in every household. It is said that this village was once invaded by plague, rats were rampant, stealing food, and the people were tired of living. Because of the belief in Buddhism, the Tibetans in the village were not willing to kill, so a cat god was invited from India specifically to destroy them. Therefore, cats are regarded as the reincarnation of eminent monks and are admired and worshiped by thousands of households. The yak decoration on the outer wall of the white Tibetan house and the worship of the cat god in the kitchen are essentially primitive totem worship. In the countryside, people combine the

primitive totem worship with Tibetan Buddhism, which is not only the tolerance of Tibetan culture, but also a supplement to the connotation of local folk culture.

2.3. Symbol of the Color

Color is a kind of space element with strong symbolic and psychological effect. Its symbolic meaning is often related to the natural environment and historical conditions. White is used in all buildings in Tibetan areas, but the white Tibetan houses in rural cities have applied white to the extreme. Before the Tibetan summoning festival, the Tibetan residents of the rural city would go to the mountain to dig a special kind of 'ga soil', mix it with water, and it would become a milky white paste, which was injected into the teapot, and then poured down the wall, allowing it to flow on the wall until the wall was completely covered. 'Gatu' is a white weathered soil that will not fade after long-term sun exposure. The four walls of the white Tibetan house are decorated with white 'gar soil', which is not easy to be washed away by rainwater directly, and will form a solid and effective protective layer on the wall of rammed earth material. The Tibetans in the countryside will also maintain it every other time to ensure that the wall will always remain white.

The Tibetan people apply white to various objects in their daily life. They believe that white is a symbol of peace and goodwill, and is the most auspicious and pure color. The white color is mainly applied to the whole wall of the white Tibetan house, which constitutes the basic tone of the building. The white houses are located in the sunny area of the valley. They are set against the bright sunshine and clear blue sky. They are like white pearls dotted in the mountains, giving a very shocking feeling. The common color of the white Tibetan house is red, which is used in the eaves, parapet and other parts.

The doors and windows of the white Tibetan houses are mostly distributed in the south and east, with bright colors and intricate wood carving techniques, in sharp contrast to the simple white walls. Usually, the windows are decorated with black, green and yellow lights, which make the building facade show a strong contrast and a strong sense of hierarchy. The frame of the window is the decorative focus of the appearance of the rural residential buildings. Most of them are decorated with red or yellow lines and the shape of the horns, which is the concrete manifestation of the Tibetan residents' worship of yaks. The four sides of the window are stepped, and the inner two layers of decoration are extremely complicated. On the basis of painting the surface of the wood carving with red, some blue and green flowers, geometric patterns and Buddhist auspicious patterns are added. The middle two layers are decorated with yellow plant carvings, and the outermost layer is decorated with green and blue cold colors.

In general, the main part of the doors and windows are red, yellow, blue, green, pink and other colors, auspicious clouds, flowers and other geometric patterns and carving techniques to achieve a complex and gorgeous decorative effect. Therefore, the facade color of the white Tibetan house in Xiangcheng County is relatively single, the local color is bright, and the whole presents a unified and distinct contrast, simple and varied architectural external color decoration characteristics.

3. Analysis of the Symbolic Artistic and Cultural Characteristics of the White Tibetan House in Xiangcheng County

The white Tibetan houses in rural areas fully show the rational use of the Tibetans in rural areas in the layout of the appearance of the building, the layout of the interior of the house, the decoration of the building and the setting of the decorative color, forming an architectural style with local characteristics, carrying forward the local ethnic and religious culture and customs, drawing on the absorption of other ethnic art expression techniques, forming an inclusive

architectural decoration method and technique, highlighting the unique regional cultural temperament of the white Tibetan houses.

3.1. Adaptation to Natural Environment

In order to solve the problem of harsh natural environment, and the rational use of limited resources to the scientific plateau plateau climate, the construction of the rural city white Tibetan houses on the facade of the targeted changes. Thick rammed earth walls and sunrise windows can effectively block cold air and improve indoor lighting and heating. At the same time, Tibetan residents make full use of the structural characteristics of the external walls of buildings, and integrate local ethnic cultural characteristics into decorative details to form a sharp contrast. Through the study of the construction technology of rammed earth wall in Han nationality area, the shortage of local building materials can be well solved. In order to protect the rammed earth wall and improve the rainproof performance, windproof performance and sun protection performance of the building, the white ' ga soil ' unique to the rural city is smeared on the outer wall of the house, so that the white Tibetan house is shining under the background of blue sky and white cloud, shining under the bright sunshine, like a fairyland on earth.

3.2. Integration of Diverse Cultures

The rural white Tibetan houses reflect the basic characteristics of multicultural integration in architectural structure and decoration form. The white Tibetan house in the countryside is not only influenced by the southern national dry column building in the architectural structure, but also combines the original well dry structure of the Tibetan people, the shape of the blockhouse and the wall building technology of the Han people, forming a kind of civil blockhouse building with local characteristics. The method and form of decorating houses are also based on the integration of clay sculpture, wood carving and color painting art of Naxi, Han and Mongolian, which fully reflects its own characteristics.

3.3. Inheritance of Religious Belief

The layout, decoration and color application of white Tibetan house in Xiangcheng County reflect the extension of religious temple culture to the secular, which is similar to the local temples, forming a set of systematic architectural decoration and color application norms. The decorative elements mostly use the symbols, patterns and lines of Tibetan Buddhism with certain representativeness, forming a decorative cultural tradition that integrates ' home ' and ' temple ' with certain regional characteristics, reflecting the rural Tibetan residents ' religious belief in Buddhism and the pursuit of a better life.

In addition, Tibetan is a nation that especially advocates white and regards white as a symbol of auspiciousness : on the one hand, it is related to the primitive beliefs and primitive worship of the early plateau people ; on the other hand, some people think that the Tibetan worship of white began from Buddhism into Tibet, because Buddhism was introduced into China from white India. The Tibetan people apply white to various objects in their daily life. They always believe that white is the purest color, which symbolizes peace and goodwill. In addition to doors and windows, the exterior walls of the white Tibetan houses are decorated in white, and the whole visual is simple and generous. The white houses are located in the sunny area of the valley. They are set against the bright sunshine and clear blue sky. They are like white pearls dotted in the mountains, giving a very shocking feeling.

4. Conclusion and Outlook

The white Tibetan house in Xiangcheng County is the Tibetan people in the rural area. Under the premise of adapting to the natural environment, integrating multiculturalism and inheriting

religious beliefs, according to their own living needs, with their own wisdom, using 'white Tibetan house' as a carrier, the material life and spiritual life are organically combined. Through architectural decoration, it focuses on its production and life concept, its own aesthetic concept and national religious beliefs. A variety of factors collide with each other, which together constitute the unique residential architectural style of the white Tibetan houses in Xiangcheng County, which is solemn but flexible, sacred and secular, giving the white Tibetan houses in Xiangcheng County unique cultural and artistic charm. It is reported that Xiangcheng County has implemented the protection of traditional culture of 'white Tibetan houses' throughout the region. At present, four administrative villages in Xiangcheng County, including Seer Palace Village in Xiangbala Town, Masai Village in Nice Township, Zhongde Village in Qingde Town and Mucha Village in Qingmai Township, are included in the list of national traditional villages. However, Donger Village in Wuxiang Township and Nalagang Village in Shuiwa Township are also included in the list of provincial traditional villages. It can be seen that the protection and utilization of traditional villages relying on the architectural art and culture of white Tibetan houses in Xiangcheng County are full of vitality. We should explore and analyze the 'shape symbol', 'object symbol' and 'color symbol' more in order to better inherit and carry forward this traditional architectural art and national culture.

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