

Research on Aesthetic Psychology of Huayan Temple in Datong, Shanxi Province, China

Tingting Hu^{1,2}, Jie Sun¹, Jihu Lu²

¹*Shanxi Datong University, Datong, 037009, Shanxi, China*

²*Philippine Christian University, Manila, 1004, Philippines*

Keywords: Aesthetic psychology, Datong Huayan Temple, Aesthetic activities

Abstract: The exquisite statues in Huayan Temple in Datong, Shanxi Province, China represent the highest achievement of sculpture art in Liao Dynasty, China. The realization of its historical and artistic value needs to be active and developed in the aesthetic public activities. This study uses the aesthetic activities of the aesthetic psychology theory, using the literature method, the field observation method and the questionnaire survey method, investigates the aesthetic activities of the public in the Liao Dynasty statues at Huayan Temple.

1. Introduction

Datong Huayan Temple is a national key cultural relic protection unit in China. The Statue, murals and buildings in the temple are of high artistic value, especially the 29 statues, which represent the highest achievement of sculpture art in China, and attract the attention of tourists from all over the world. Some scholars have carried out the historical investigation, the identification of the statue, the costume and the artistic style of the Liao Dynasty statues of Huayan Temple, and affirmed their precious historical and artistic value. The realization of value needs to be active and developed in the aesthetic activities of the public. The study of the aesthetic activities of the Liao Dynasty statues in Huayan Temple is helpful to improve the effectiveness of the public aesthetic activities, and it is also the inevitable requirement of carrying forward the excellent history and culture.

2. Study content and methods

In the past, the study of Liao Dynasty statues in Huayan Temple focuses on history and art, and this study studies the history and artistic value of Liao Dynasty statues in the public aesthetic activities from the perspective of aesthetic psychology. First of all, the research started from consulting and sorting out the relevant research data of the Liao Dynasty statues of Huayan Temple. By drawing on the previous research results, the contents representing the characteristics of the Liao Dynasty statues of Huayan Temple were preliminarily selected, and the questionnaire was compiled by combining through the field research of the public aesthetic activities. A total of 206 people were randomly selected for the questionnaire survey. Through the statistical analysis of the data of the questionnaire survey, the phenomenon of the public in the aesthetic activities of Liao Dynasty statues in Huayan Temple was objectively presented. Based on the theory of aesthetic psychology, the paper further

analyzes on how to optimize the public's aesthetic experience of the statue of Liao Dynasty in Huayan Temple and promote the dissemination of excellent culture and art.

3. Research status

The research on the Datong Huayan Temple began in the early 20th century. In 1902, the Japanese scholar Ito Chutaro conducted an investigation and wrote an introduction to the Datong Huayan Temple [1]. In 1931, Japanese architectural scholar Sekino Sada examined the architecture of the Huayan Temple and the Liao Dynasty statue. He described the Liao Dynasty Statue and acknowledged their historical and artistic value [2]. Another Japanese scholar, Murata Jiro, believed that the westward orientation of the Huayan Temple was a reflection of the Khitan people's sun-worshipping customs, a view that has since been widely accepted. His written works were destroyed in the 1945 air raid on Osaka, and the surviving photographs were published in a pictorial album, which remains the most comprehensive photographic record of the Huayan Temple from the early 20th century [3]. Swedish scholar Xi Renlong argued that the layout of the Liao Dynasty Statue in the Huayan Temple had unique and complete artistic value, surpassing individual artistic levels [4]. Research on the Huayan Temple in China began in 1933 when Liang Sicheng and other scholars conducted an architectural survey of the Datong Huayan Temple. Notable Chinese works dedicated to the Liao Dynasty Statue of the Huayan Temple include "History of Chinese Sculpture" by Wang Ziyun [5], "History of Chinese Religious Art" by Jin Weinuo and Luo Shiping [6], "History of Chinese Art" by Wang Bomin [7], and "Ancient Temples and Monasteries in Shanxi" by Zhang Mingyuan [8]. Art historians have all highly praised the Liao Dynasty Statue of the Huayan Temple. Scholars such as Wang Yintian, Cao Yanling [9], and Zhang Li [10] have conducted comprehensive studies on the Statue from historical, religious, and artistic perspectives. Yang Junfang's research [11] provides a detailed analysis of the clothing of the Buddha, disciples, bodhisattvas, dharma protectors, and donors, comparing them with Buddhist rituals and the aesthetic characteristics of the era. Li Qian [12] has discussed the backlighting, headgear, and clothing patterns of the Liao Dynasty Statue. Liu Xiangyu's doctoral dissertation [13] offers a detailed study of the overall structure of the Huayan Temple, including the Liao Dynasty Statue, while Liu Bianqin's master's thesis [14] compares the bodhisattva statues from different periods and summarizes the artistic characteristics of the Liao Dynasty bodhisattvas at the Huayan Temple, including their appearance, proportions, attire, and layout. Wang Suyun's master's thesis [15] explores the unique ethnic culture and aesthetic taste embedded in the Liao Dynasty Statue at the Huayan Temple. In terms of conservation, Zhang Haixiao, Ning Bo, and Wu Zhiqun [16] have conducted three-dimensional laser scanning digital research on the "Handfolded Bodhisattva" sculpture at the Huayan Temple. Shen Lu and others [17] have applied chemical methods to explore the conservation of the Liao Dynasty Statue at the Huayan Temple. Research on the Liao Dynasty Statue at the Huayan Temple in China is primarily focused on historical and artistic fields.

4. Reference to the theories related to aesthetic psychology

Aesthetic activities are closely related to human psychology, and the related thoughts go back to the ancient Greek Aristotle. He put forward that the aesthetic needs the viewer to have a certain cognitive ability, and the aesthetic activities have a "purifying" effect on the viewer's emotions. Bke, the representative of British empirical aesthetics in the 18th century, pointed out that beautiful things "work mechanically in the human heart through the mediation of the senses." One of his important points is that "aesthetic taste involves three psychological functions, the senses, imagination, and the ability to judge or reason." [18] Hegel believes that "artistic beauty is the beauty produced and regenerated by the mind." [19] He affirmed the value of artistic beauty, and revealed the inevitable

connection between artistic beauty and human psychology from the perspective of philosophy. Aesthetic into the psychological research field of vision, further defined the aesthetic activity is a kind of human psychological activity, is the aesthetic object effect on peoples senses of individual cognitive deployment and emotional participation, whether conscious or unconscious aesthetic activities, contains the human and aesthetic object interaction in peoples psychological process and experience. As the aesthetic subject appreciates the aesthetic object (aesthetic object), the whole process is accompanied by the participation of each part of the psychological structure. Some studies have put forward the substructural view of aesthetic psychology.[20] This view holds that the aesthetic psychological structure is divided into aesthetic cognition substructure, aesthetic emotion substructure and aesthetic tendency substructure. Among them, aesthetic cognitive substructure is the part of cognitive processing of human brain in aesthetic activities, such as aesthetic perception, aesthetic memory, aesthetic thinking, etc. This process involves peoples cognitive skills, cognitive ability and transcendental aesthetic experience in aesthetics. It is based on the physiological organs of people, and is influenced by the nature of aesthetic objects, and has individual differences and universality. The substructure of aesthetic emotion is the emotion related to the satisfaction degree of aesthetic needs caused by the process of aesthetic cognition. Through the stage of aesthetic cognition, aesthetic needs are generated. The more complex the human cognition is, the richer the aesthetic emotion is generated, and different cognitive levels cause different emotional intensity. In the aesthetic process, the more the aesthetic demands are satisfied, the more positive the aesthetic experience; the emotional trigger is also related to the characteristics of aesthetic objects, such as strong colors, dynamic tunes and sad literary works may cause different aesthetic emotions. With the complex operation of cognitive processing, from the initial short intuitive beauty to the image beauty, people may sublimate to the rational beauty through the rational thinking process. The production of aesthetic emotion necessitates the involvement of aesthetic memory, aesthetic imagination, and other cognitive mechanisms; however, aesthetic emotion tends to dominate the fundamental needs of aesthetic psychology, thereby promoting the realization of human aesthetic activities. The substructure of aesthetic psychological tendency is related to aesthetic needs, aesthetic interest and aesthetic values. People hope to be promoted in aesthetic activities and tend to appreciate beautiful things, so as to point out the direction for their aesthetic activities. This tendency is gradually formed in the acquired aesthetic experience and aesthetic practice and tends to be stable. In the interaction between aesthetic subject and aesthetic object, each sub-structure of aesthetic psychology realizes the multi-level and multi-rhythmic interaction of various elements. Huang Xiting believes that once the aesthetic psychological structure is formed, the personality tendency,[22] Connect with the factors in the personality trait theory. Therefore, as a special form connected with self, nature and society, aesthetic activities make the personality more harmonious and perfect, and lead human beings to a more complete realm of life. Through conscious and specific operation, it can promote the full play of the psychological substructure function in aesthetic activities, and then exercise and shape peoples aesthetic ability, improve the effectiveness of aesthetic practice, and also promote the dissemination of the rich cultural connotation contained in the aesthetic objects. According to the above theory, this study explores the aesthetic activities of the Liao Dynasty statue of Huayan Temple with the relevant theory of aesthetic psychology, and prepares the questionnaire, finds out and analyzes the problems according to the theory of the structure of aesthetic psychology.

5. Public appreciation of Huayan temple Liao Dynasty statue investigation

Study first field investigation, oral interviews to visitors, found that affected by many factors, the public in Huayan temple Liao Dynasty statue aesthetic activities have different aesthetic experience,

through the questionnaire survey, effectively understand the objective status of public aesthetic activities, the factors affecting the aesthetic experience, the public aesthetic tendency, etc.

The field survey adopted the method of combining observation and oral interview to investigate the length of time the public stayed in front of the Liao Dynasty statue in Huayan Temple, the selection of aesthetic objects, and the perception of observation. Later, the questionnaire was designed according to the results of the interview content. Questionnaire questions set mainly from the public aesthetic psychological elements of cognitive, emotion, tendency dimension, 4,5,6 involves aesthetic cognition, 8 involves aesthetic emotion, 3,7,9 involves aesthetic tendency, the objective factors (place service, Liao Dynasty statue trait) and subjective factors (aesthetic subject of psychological feelings and psychological demand, etc.), examines the public in the aesthetic activities of aesthetic subject of aesthetic psychology, namely: aesthetic activities after aesthetic experience, personal aesthetic activity factors of cognition, to China Huayan temple Liao Dynasty statue of aesthetic activity content and way. A total of 206 questionnaires were distributed, and 200 valid questionnaires were collected.

5.1 Statistical results of the questionnaire data

According to the questionnaire data statistics: in the total sample number of this survey, 130 were women, accounting for 65% of the total number, and 70 were men, accounting for 35% of the total number. The age structure of the group aged 36-50 years old was the largest, and the proportion of women under 18 years old and over 50 years old was limited in the survey due to age reasons (Table 1).

Table 1 Age distribution table of the survey questionnaire sample

age group	Sample number (person)	Constituent ratio (%)
Under the age of 18	9	4.5
18-25 Years old	45	22.5
26-35 Years old	33	16.5
36-50 Years old	95	47.5
Over 50 years old	18	9
amount to	200	100

Public willing to stay before HuaYan temple statue of survey data show: respondents 52% willing to spend 15~30 minutes of statue of aesthetic activities, 27% are willing to stay for 30 minutes-1 hour, 11.5% is willing to stay 1-2 hours, another 9.5% of the respondents choose other, including two people said under 15 minutes, 2 people said as appropriate, 1 person said need 2-3 hours. In contrast to the results of the researchers field observation, visitors usually stay in front of the statue of the Liao Dynasty for less than 15 minutes without an explanation, and when there is an explanation or a blessing ceremony, visitors usually stay for less than 30 minutes.

The questionnaire also investigated the publics self-perception of the understanding of the Liao Dynasty statue in Huayan Temple. Option set on the basis of the selection, finally determine the "historical connotation, artistic style, sculpture art, religious connotation" four dimensions, the results show: according to from high to low in order for historical connotation (55.5%), artistic style (35.5%), sculpture art (30%) and religious connotation (28.5%).

The impression, aesthetic memory and experience left by the public on the aesthetic activities of the statues of the Liao Dynasty in the Huayan Temple are also worthy of attention. The options are more specific than the previous question, including "spatial layout, historical connotation, carving skills, statue decoration, religious principles, individual statues of the Liao Dynasty, and others (filled in by the investigators themselves)". The results show that carving skills (22.5%), statue decoration

(22.5%) and historical connotation (22%) are the top three aesthetic memory elements in the options, and those who choose to pay attention to individual statues all mentioned "Bodhisattva".

The survey of the public aesthetic experience shows that the Liao Dynasty statue of Huayan Temple brings to the respondents the sacred experience accounted for 64.5% of the respondents, the beauty experience accounted for 47%, the pleasant experience accounted for 24%, Escape experience accounts for 16.5%. In the survey of the public aesthetic tendency, 76.5% of the respondents chose the option of historical connotation, including carving skills, religious principles and statue decoration of 48%, 42% and 39% respectively. It is worth noting that the percentage of the options in this question is higher than the self-cognition and aesthetic memory of the public. In a sense, the public's aesthetic tendency and demand for the statue of the Liao Dynasty in Huayan Temple are higher than the existing aesthetic experience.

The questionnaire further makes a survey on the influencing factors of the public in the aesthetic process of the Liao Dynasty statue in Huayan Temple, in order to understand the most real feelings of the public from the aesthetic subject, and to prepare for providing effective strategies. The results showed that the percentage of influencing factors changed from high to low to less access channels of relevant knowledge, less reserves of existing knowledge and experience, the influence of distance from the statue, deep and difficult knowledge, and others (some participants said that there were too few opportunities to visit due to personal reasons). Questionnaire survey the public in HuaYan temple statue aesthetic activities hope to get the way, you can see from the survey results: the interpretation of the rich content, a variety of intuitive form, viewing distance improvement, immersive and interactive experience, for the future HuaYan temple aesthetic activities related services provides improved ideas.

5.2 Aesthetic cognition

The public's self-perception of aesthetics is in line with the focus of scholars' research, especially the historical connotation and artistic style of the statues, which not only reflects the most profound inheritance value of the statues in Huayan Temple, but also reflects that the universal aesthetic ability of the public is the mass basis of excellent history and culture.

In addition to the historical connotation and artistic style, the aesthetic memory elements that leave a deep impression on the public are represented by "palms and teeth Bodhisattva", and the iconic statue deepens the aesthetic memory of the public.

The survey shows that nearly 50% of the public believe that there are few channels to acquire relevant knowledge and few existing knowledge and experience. In addition, four respondents under the age of 18 and 11 aged 26-35 chose "profound knowledge", accounting for 44.4% and 24.4% of the age group, respectively, higher than the proportion of other age groups.

It is believed that the samples affected by the appreciation distance accounted for 26.5% of the total sample. The visible distance, light and shade will affect the stimulation intensity of aesthetic objects, and are required by the protection of cultural relics. How to improve the negative aesthetic impact caused by distance is worth thinking about.

In short, the public's aesthetic perception of the statue focuses on the history, art and religious category of the statue, which is influenced by the difficulty of relevant knowledge, lack of access channels and long distance from the statue, which is the key direction of the historical and cultural dissemination of the statue of Huayan Temple in the future.

5.3. Aesthetic emotion

Art is the creator of emotional expression. The Huayan Temple statue, with its unique religious context, vivid spatial structure, and solemn posture of the statues, offers viewers an extremely

powerful sacred experience. Here, the statue and its surrounding space combine to enhance the sacred aesthetic emotion through aesthetic and intuitive perception of cognitive content, as 64.5% of respondents have indicated.

Forty-seven percent of the respondents chose the beautiful experience, and 24 percent chose the pleasant experience. The reason is that, first of all, Huayan Temple is a royal temple. No matter the size of the statue and the level of the craftsmen, due to the support of the royal family, the artistic level of the statue has reached the top level of its generation. In terms of historical evolution, since the Northern Wei Dynasty, Datong has had a strong imperial capital culture and Buddhist culture. The excavation of Yungang Grottoes makes the carving art continuously inherited in Datong, nourishing the craftsmen of the later dynasties. Under this cultural background, the detached artistic quality and aesthetic taste shown by the statue of Huayan Temple will inevitably meet the viewers aesthetic needs, that is, the enjoyment and pleasure experience of beauty. Of course, the aesthetic experience of Huayan Temple is not limited to this. The more the public can grasp the contents of the statue of Huayan Temple, the more profound the aesthetic emotion they will be. Before the Buddhist of the statue created by the Liao Dynasty in Huayan Temple, the appreciator may subconsciously have observation and free association, which stimulates the aesthetic unutilitarian emotion and beyond the secular emotion. 16.5% of the respondents chose to experience the escape (avoid the secular world).

5.4. Aesthetic tendency

In the comparison of the public's self-cognition and aesthetic memory of the statue of Huayan Temple, the historical connotation option increased from 55.5% to 76.5%, the religious connotation increased from 28.5% to 42%, and the percentage of selected options increased as a whole. 76.5% percent of the respondents chose to know the historical connotation of the Liao Dynasty statue in Huayan Temple. The demand for historical connotation developed in the same direction as the growth of age. Data show that the samples of historical connotation in the four age groups from small to large accounted for 44%, 71%, 72%, 82% and 83% of the age group respectively. This is related to the fact that age growth makes people's cognitive ability and range greatly improve their aesthetic interest and aesthetic values more depth.

The public hopes to help appreciate the statue in richer ways. The data shows that the proportion of explanations with rich content is the highest, which is also the most intuitive and effective form for the public to obtain relevant information during field visits and appreciation and enrich the aesthetic experience. At present, there are two forms in Huayan Temple scenic spot: free manual explanation and free voice tour. Affected by economic conditions, visit time, expectations of the explanation and other factors, the public actively buys the explanation service mainly individual tourists from other places, and the proportion of local tourists is not high. At the same time, the public look forward to a variety of intuitive form of statue display (such as watching films, photos, 3D images, sculpture art display, etc.), immersive experience (technician guide making clay sculpture, painting, etc.), interactive experience (electronic screen interactive answer, etc.), for the future HuaYan temple aesthetic activities related services to expand the train of thought.

6. Conclusion

The Liao Dynasty Statue of Huayan Temple are the real carriers of excellent historical and cultural heritage, which cultivate the souls of the viewers. The aesthetic activities of Huayan Temple's Liao Dynasty Statue are always permeated with the participation of aesthetic psychology. This study applies aesthetic psychology theory, by understanding the public's aesthetic cognition, emotions, and expectations, to propose suggestions for enhancing the historical and cultural charm and artistic

appeal of the Liao Dynasty Statue of Huayan Temple. Only by making cultural relics "alive" in the public's aesthetic activities can we better inherit and promote excellent historical culture.

References

- [1] Chung Tai ITO. Dr. Ito, Japan, lectured on the Study of The Architecture, China Construction Society (Vol. 1, No.2) [C]. 1930:7.
- [2] Guan Yezhen. Zhina Architecture Art [M]. Tokyo: Iwabo Bookstore. 1938:293-312.
- [3] Jiro Murada. Datong Dayayan Temple [M]. Osaka: HelelHouse Bookstore. 1943.
- [4] Osvald the Siren. A Chinese temple and its plasctic decoration, Studies of Orientalism published by the Guimet Museum in memory of Raymonde Linossier(II)[C].1932:499-505.
- [5] Wang Ziyun. The History of Chinese Sculpture Art (Part ii) [M]. Beijing: Peoples Fine Arts Press. 2021:754-762.
- [6] Jin Vino, Luo Shiping. History of Chinese religious Art [M]. Nanchang: Jiangxi Fine Arts Publishing House. 1995:176-179.
- [7] Wang Bomin. The General History of Chinese Fine Arts (Vol. 4) [M]. Jinan: Shandong Education Press. 1987:299.
- [8] Zhang Mingyuan. Shanxi: Volume 1 [M]. Taiyuan: Shanxi Peoples Publishing House. 2019:1-167.
- [9] Wang Yintian, Cao Yanling. The Huayan Temple Study in Datong [J]. Heritage Quarterly, 1999 (02): 53-60.
- [10] Zhang Li. Appreciation of colored clay Statue of Liao Dynasty in Huayan Temple, Datong [J]. Heritage World, 2009 (04): 64-69.
- [11] Yang Junfang. Research on Hall, Huayan Temple, Datong [J]. Journal of Aesthetic Education, 2014 (02): 75-84.
- [12] Li Qian. Study on the types and characteristics of Liao Dynasty colored plastic decoration in Huayan Temple, Datong [J]. Identification and Appreciation of Cultural Relics, 2020 (15): 24-25.
- [13] Liu Xiangyu. Research on architecture of Huayan Temple and Hall in Datong [D]. Master Thesis of Tianjin University, 2015.
- [14] Liu Changqin. On the art of Huayan Temple [D]. Master Thesis of Shanxi University, 2007.
- [15] Wang Suyun. Xihuayan Temple Liao Dynasty Buddhism Liao Dynasty plastic art [D]. Master Thesis of Inner Mongolia University, 2016.
- [16] Zhang Tsunami, Ning Bo, Wu Zhiqun. Research on the digital research of Bodhisattva statue in Huayan Temple based on three-dimensional laser scanning technology. Cultural Relics World, 2015 (03): 71-74.
- [17] Shen Lu, Liu Cheng, Zhou Xuesong. Investigation of the gold clay sculpture in Xihuayan Temple, Datong, Shanxi Province [J]. Journal of Shaanxi Normal University (Natural Science Edition), 2008 (S1): 141-143.
- [18] Zhu Guangqian. A History of Western Aesthetics (Volume 1) [M]. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2017:71-101,267,269.
- [19] Zhu Guangqian. The Complete Works of Zhu Guangqian (Vol. 13) [M]. Hefei: Anhui Education Press, 1990:4.
- [20] Li Hong, Gao Xuemei. Aesthetic Psychology and Education of children and adolescents (1st edition) [M]. Chongqing: Southwest Normal University Press, 2004.
- [21] Liu Xiaoying. Aesthetic psychological structure and the emotional construction of aesthetic subjects [J]. Theoretical discussion, 1995 (02): 90-94.
- [22] Huang Xiting, Zhang Jinfu, Li Hong, et al. The Values and Education of Contemporary Chinese Youth (1st edition) [M]. Chengdu: Sichuan Education Press, 1994:275.