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Research on the Decorative Art of Woodcarving Hump Patterns in Longshui Confucian Temple, Lichuan City, Enshi

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ABSTRACT
How traditional architecture can become an important cornerstone of China's cultural heritage is not only reflected in the richness of its types, but also in the traditional cultural framework formed by the combination of multiple elements such as craftsmanship, art, and culture. The elements that make up the framework are also a collection rich in their own functionality, decorativeness and symbolism. The woodcarving construction is an important part of it. The form, material, craftsmanship and decorative patterns of the construction are all elements of the combination of traditional culture, and the woodcarving hump is the artistic wonder of traditional woodcarving craftsmanship. Whether it is the variation of its form and outline or the refinement of its decorative techniques, it can serve as a reflection of the development of traditional Chinese architecture. By studying the construction of woodcarving humps that have evolved under the influence of regional culture, not only can knowledge of the local traditional architectural culture be enriched, but also new ideas for understanding regional culture can be provided.

KEYWORDS
Wood-carved camel-back beams; Decorative arts; Traditional ornamental motifs; Longshui Confucian Temple

1 An Overview of Woodcarving Hump Decorative Art in Traditional Construction

Woodcarving decoration is an artistic creation based on traditional artisans' own skills on wood materials. Through the painstaking carving of artisans and the grinding of time and history, the construction of woodcarving decorations in traditional architecture is no longer limited to a single functional role, but has become part of traditional Chinese craft art. The earliest woodcarving techniques can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn period of China. Through the iteration and renewal of techniques, Chinese woodcarving has long been professionalized and scaled up. Traditional Chinese architecture was mostly made of wood, and the extensive use of wood materials also provided a breeding ground for the art of woodcarving decoration. Traditional architecture, in order to demonstrate the knowledge and status of the family, made artistic works on the beams, columns, doors and Windows of the buildings, using different decorative patterns and materials combined with woodcarving techniques to highlight the decorative construction of the buildings, enhance the status of the buildings and give them more ornamental value. This can reflect the aesthetic level and orientation of the owner of the residence by highlighting the superiority or inferiority of the decorative culture.

As an important part of traditional architectural art, wood carvings from different regions bring together the local cultural characteristics. These diverse decorative cultures are mainly concentrated in architectural construction and interior furniture, integrating traditional craftsmanship techniques such as woodworking, painting, lacquer art, and carving. Woodcarving humps are a representative type of traditional architectural construction. The hump, also known as the beam mound or the lotus leaf mound, is an important building component in the framework of traditional architecture, mostly used between the upper and lower beams, similar to the supporting component of a camel's back. Under the long inheritance of Chinese arts and crafts, a very mature work of craftsmanship and technology has been formed. The form and status of the woodcarving hump have become increasingly prominent with the changes in craftsmanship and cultural consciousness in different periods. From the Tang Dynasty, the craft form of the hump laid the foundation. Take the one in the east hall of Foguang Temple as an example. The style is simple and elegant, and its function is very clear. By the Song, Liao, Jin and Yuan Dynasties, it reached its peak and was institutionalized. The Song Dynasty's "Yingzao Fada" classified it as "great woodwork" and systematically recorded styles such as "eagle beak", "pinched petal", "felt hat", "trapezoid", which precisely served the structure and were restrained yet powerful in decoration, embodying the rational spirit of the Song and Yuan Dynasties. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the mechanical functions of official buildings were mostly replaced by simplified beams and columns, and they themselves tended to be decorative, evolving into highly carved styles such as "lotus leaf piers" and "ruyi camel humps", but in a large number of regional buildings, traditional forms and craftsmanship were preserved and developed. In the Qing Dynasty, due to the transformation of traditional aesthetic styles, decorative techniques replaced the simple and elegant style of the Ming Dynasty and moved towards a rich and elaborate style. It was this change in style that gradually led the hump craft towards the direction of decorative art. Humps are an important carrier of regional architectural style. In the Shanxi-Shaanxi region, the hump is thick in shape and rough in carving, often combined with local opera themes; In the dwellings of Huizhou, the camel humps are exquisitely carved, and the subjects are often the literati's favorite, the Eight

Immortals, reflecting the taste of Confucian merchants; In Sichuan-Chongqing, Hubei-Hunan and other places, the camel humps are lively and elaborate, with a preference for multi-layered pierced carvings, and are highly decorative. The subjects of the carvings include auspicious beasts, flowers and plants, figures, objects and even dramatic scenes, which are a concentrated reflection of folk beliefs, ethical teachings and aesthetic tastes, and have profound social and cultural connotations.

2 Overview of the Current Situation of Longshui Confucian Temple Architecture in Lichuan City, Enshi

Longshui Confucian Temple, located in the southeastern border of Wanzhou District, Hubei and Chongqing, borders Moudao Town, Lichuan City, Hubei Province, 71 kilometers from the main urban area of Wanzhou. Luotian Ancient Town and Moudao Town are located in the secluded mountains, both of which were settlements formed during the Ming and Qing dynasties. In the context of the grand historical event of "Huguang Filling Sichuan", a number of traditional residential buildings along the migration route emerged amid frequent cultural exchanges and regional interactions. These traditional buildings are a reflection of the unique cultural phenomena of the period. Their forms incorporate the cultural connotations of Hubei-Hunan, Jiangsu-Zhejiang and other regions, while also embodying the simple humanistic sentiments.

The Longshui Confucian Temple, located in Longshui Village, Moudao Town, Lichuan City, Enshi, Hubei Province, was built in the early Ming Dynasty and rebuilt after a fire during the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty. It covers an area of about 1,000 square meters. The building is a two-entrance quadrangle layout made of brick and wood, consisting of a front hall, a main hall and side rooms. Above the entrance hall is the stage, and the two sides of the corridor connect to the side rooms on the second floor. The foundation of the building is built with bluestone slabs, and the roof is made of single-eaved hard gable grey tiles. The framework of the building is raised beam type, and the secondary rooms are pierced frame type. Longshui Confucian Temple, located in the Tujia region where Hubei and Chongqing meet, is one of the best-preserved Confucian temples in the area. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Longshui Confucian Temple was transformed into Longshui Village Primary School, which was later protected by national policy and moved to the side of the Confucian temple. Longshui Confucian Temple was designated as a provincial cultural relic protection unit in 2008. Abstract. Longshui Confucian Temple was a renowned local landmark during the early Ming Dynasty and later gained prominence under the patronage of regional authorities, evolving into a symbolic center for cultural advancement and education. As a result, the architectural style is grand, imposing and bright. The building has thick beams and columns, with fine patterns carved on many sides of the column bases, and high beams and lintels above the columns, connected by magnificent and exquisite humps. The exterior walls are adorned with dark ethnic minority totems on a white background, giving the building a strong regional cultural atmosphere. And over time, the decorative patterns in the building's construction have remained relatively intact, providing convenience for further research. Due to its location in an area where ethnic minorities blend, the design concept and construction techniques of the building reflect the results of multicultural exchanges in ethnic minority areas.

3 The decorative Art Features of the Woodcarving Hump Pattern in Longshui Confucian Temple, Lichuan City, Enshi

Longshui Village in Lichuan City, which is close to the settlement of the Tujia ethnic minority and is also part of the route of the ancient post road, has formed a grand scene of cultural integration under the influence of the two types of folk customs. This is reflected in the residential buildings, burial buildings, transportation buildings and cultural buildings in the area. The local traditional architectural decoration, which combines writing, painting, sculpture, etc., provides a great deal of classical material for future research. Upon entering the Longshui Confucian Temple, one is first struck by its beam-lifting halls, the spacious interiors, the thick and heavy columns, and the delicate and beautiful humps. The humps are mainly carved from wood, and the selection of materials is very meticulous, with the middle sections of large tree species such as nanmu, sandalwood and ginkgo as the main materials. Depending on their shapes, they serve different functions. In the Confucian Temple, the triangular humps on the beams, as load-bearing wooden piers that support each other between the beams, mainly serve to support the upper beams. Triangles increase the contact area of the force-bearing surface, which is beneficial for the stability of the beam frame, as shown in Figure 1. The square humps between the lifting poles and the slab humps at the veranda are mainly for decoration and secondally for load-bearing. For the square humps between the brackets, since the brackets mainly transfer the load to the column through mortise and tenon joints at both ends, the humps between the upper and lower brackets do not need to bear much weight. They are generally rectangular or trapezoidal in shape, with rich carvings that reflect the artistic aesthetic of the place. A square hump as shown in Figure 2.

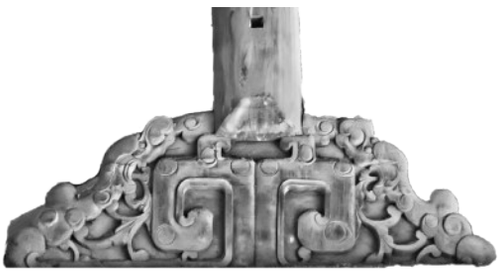


Figure 1 Triangular hump



Figure 2 Square hump

The humps in the Longshui Confucian Temple are mainly concentrated on the beams and columns of the hall, as well as in the corridors and side rooms on the second floor, totaling 14. While maintaining the stability of the building, they also serve a decorative purpose, so they are mostly composed of triangular and square humps. In the process of analyzing decorative patterns, a general classification can be made based on the outline of the hump shape. The "Great Woodwork System Pattern" in Volume 30 of the "Yingzao Fashi" provides the authoritative basis for the classification of humps. The patterns are mainly divided into two systems: "out of the petal" and "in the petal". The "eagle-beak hump" is the representative of the "protruding", with pointed ends and convex sides like an eagle's beak, full of tension; The "Pinched hump" is typical of the "inpetal-shaped", with several arc-shaped notches carved on both sides, resembling a petal, with a graceful and reserved outline. The "felt hat hump" takes the image of a conical hat, while the "trapezoidal hump" retains the ancient style. These styles are not purely formal creations. The number of segments, height-to-width ratio and force distribution are related to standardized structural modules.

3.1 Triangular Hump

There are a total of nine triangular hump forms in Longshui Confucian Temple. Three are distributed on each of the left and right beams in the hall, and the left and right hump styles are the same, so there are only three styles of triangular hump in the hall. There are also three styles in the left wing on the second floor, which are different in style from the hump in the hall. There are a total of six styles of decorative patterns. They are a combination of the following patterns: bat, dragon, lotus, tassel, etc.

3.2 Square Hump

"Square hump" is not the standard classification in official classics such as the Song Dynasty's Yingzao Fashi. It is usually a modern descriptive or local term, referring mainly to components of camel humps whose overall outline is approximately square or rectangular. It is often regarded as the simplest, most primitive form of the hump, a product that prioritizes functionality. Unlike the triangular humps on the beam frame, the square humps between the lifting poles and the slab humps at the verandas serve a decorative purpose, with a secondary load-bearing function. For the square hump between the struts, since the struts mainly transfer the load to the column through mortise and tenon joints at both ends, the hump between the upper and lower struts does not need to bear much weight. It is generally rectangular or trapezoidal in shape, richly carved, reflecting the artistic aesthetic of the place. The square humps in the Longshui Confucian Temple are mainly concentrated between the carrying poles and in the eave corridor on the second floor, serving a decorative purpose with a secondary load-bearing function. There are five of them, which are presented in the following combinations: vase pattern, symmetrical lotus pattern, bat, walking dragon, auspicious cloud pattern, scroll grass pattern, etc.

The hump of Longshui Confucian Temple is an important carrier of the architectural style in this region. The hump of the Longshui Confucian Temple can be summarized into two types: the supporting triangular hump, which can be further divided into the "eagle-beak hump" and the "pinched hump". The core feature of the "eagle-beak hump" is that there are multiple raised rolled flaps on both sides, and the side flaps are like an eagle's beak, full of the tension of life. The core feature of the "pinched hump" is that it has three to five concave arc-shaped carvings on both sides, which are typical of "inpetal-shaped", with several concave arc-shaped notches on both sides, resembling petals, with an elegant and reserved outline. The square hump and the plate hump belong to the outline style of the trapezoidal hump and retain the traditional ancient construction techniques in architectural form. It is mainly for decoration, so it is more elaborate and complex in pattern construction and carving than the triangular hump, and more beautiful in pattern style.

The two hump styles are often decorated with a combination of traditional auspicious patterns, including plant patterns such as scroll grass, lotus, lotus leaf, and tassel patterns, and animal patterns such as bat and dragon. Among the geometric patterns, there are vases, cloud patterns, etc. In terms of pattern composition, geometric patterns are used as an auxiliary to form rhythmic artistic designs around the main patterns. Unlike other woodcarving constructions, the

decorative nature of woodcarving humps is not limited to the patterns themselves. Although the variations in their shapes are more to meet the needs of spatial changes in different architectural types, the different outline shapes themselves are also one of the important means to enrich the decorative nature.

4 Analysis of the Decorative Art of Woodcarving Camel Hump Patterns in Longshui Confucian Temple, Lichuan City, Enshi

Based on the above camel hump patterns for decorative art analysis, the implications of the patterns can be analyzed in terms of homophonic connotations, combined implications, symbolic meanings, etc. Because of the homophonic meaning of "bat" and "blessing", it was regarded as a mascot by the ancients and often combined with other patterns, such as five bats surrounding the character "longevity" as "Five Blessings Holding Longevity", combined with the qilin as "Qilin sending blessings", combined with the auspicious cloud as "Blessings Descending from Heaven", and the most typical and exquisite combination of the flower vase pattern and the bat pattern in the Longshui Confucian Temple is the most typical and exquisite. The vase, which sounds like "flat", symbolizes peace and tranquility, while the bat foretells good fortune. Therefore, when the bat pattern is combined with the vase, the most basic meaning is "peace is good fortune" or "peace and good fortune". It expresses a profound philosophy of life of the ancients: peace itself is the greatest blessing, and only on the basis of peace does all other blessings make sense. In addition, the hump, formed by the combination of circles and squares, reflects the ancient philosophical principles of the early cosmic order and the way of being a person and doing things. From the formal beauty of concrete objects to the beautiful vision of praying for good fortune, it forms a complete cultural system from the macro to the micro, from thought to life.



Figure 3 "Vase Pattern" square hump

Next is the lotus-themed composition, with the main body of the pattern consisting of scroll patterns surrounding the blooming lotus, defined by the wraparound dragon, and combined with the flourishing stamens of the lotus and upturned auspicious cloud patterns. The lotus, as a gentleman among flowers, symbolizes noble character and upright conduct. The combination of the dragon and the scroll pattern forms a wish for the prosperity of the family. The auspicious cloud pattern elevates the artistic conception of the entire picture, bringing blessings bestowed by heaven. So the entire pattern builds a perfect system of blessings that progresses from personal moral cultivation to family prosperity and prosperity, and then to smooth sailing in life.



Figure 4 "Lotus Pattern" square hump

Finally, the triangular hump in the Longshui Confucian Temple has a similar basic shape outline and is mainly used for architectural functional construction, so it is less decorative than the square hump. But the contours are rich and varied. The most typical of them is the "Ruyi" made from the symmetrical huizi dragon. The head or the turning point of the wraparound dragon is incorporated into the shape of the wraparound head, combining the wraparound, tough lines of the wraparound dragon with the rounded, graceful form of the wraparound pattern. It embodies both the meaning of "prosperity and longevity" of the dragon and the blessing of "all things go well" expressed by the ruyi, and is a lucky pattern that combines multiple beautiful visions.



Figure 5 "Guaizi Ruyi" eagle-beak and hump

5 Conclusion

In summary, the Longshui Confucian Temple has a rich variety of architectural styles, distinct regional architectural styles, and has left behind research objects for study in the long course of history, preserving the complete traditional architectural form and the exquisite and delicate hump architectural structure. Both the functional expression of the form outline and the implications of the decorative patterns are important ways to study traditional architecture and folk culture, hoping to enrich the research content of local cultural traditions and residential architecture by analyzing the decorative patterns of the hump in Longshui Confucian Temple, thereby providing different observation directions for such research.

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