# Characteristics and Inheritance Analysis of Architectural Culture in Han Dynasty

Xia Fenghua<sup>1,2,a</sup>, Guan Qijun<sup>1,b</sup>, Zhang Qi<sup>1,c</sup>, Gao Liyan<sup>1,d</sup>, Pan Wei<sup>1,e</sup>, Zhao Xia<sup>1,f</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Civil Engineering, Binzhou Polytechnic, Binzhou, China

Abstract: As the most splendid period of Chinese history and culture, the culture of the Han Dynasty is the mainstream culture in Chinese history and culture. The architectural culture of the Han Dynasty is an indispensable part of the traditional Chinese architectural culture. It not only inherits the architectural culture of the Qin Dynasty, but also creates the unique cultural buildings of the Han Dynasty. In recent years, there has also been a boom in the culture of the Han Dynasty in China, and the country has also begun to strengthen the emphasis on and inheritance of traditional culture, especially the splendid culture of the Han Dynasty. Since the establishment of the Han Dynasty by Liu Bang, the great ancestor of the Han Dynasty, the culture of the Han Dynasty has been popularized and has been passed down to this day. Most of the buildings in the Han Dynasty were architectural styles whose center was symmetrical on both sides of the axis, but in order to meet the needs of artistic beauty, a diversified architectural style was formed. Magnificent and gorgeous buildings are scattered all over the land, especially the majestic momentum of the palace buildings, which is unprecedented in scale. As a cultural landscape, the cultural architecture of the Han Dynasty is the witness of history and culture, the precipitation of Chinese civilization, and has far-reaching humanistic spiritual connotations. The wide range of spiritual and cultural radiation in the Han Dynasty and the deep influence on people's activities and behaviors are the core of the sense of national belonging, and its cultural belonging and identity are manifested in the special material of architecture. With a history of more than five thousand years, China has a long history of architectural culture. Chinese traditional architecture not only reflects its own cultural deposits, but also reflects the historical essence of the Chinese nation in different periods. Through the analysis and research on the architectural characteristics and the continuation of historical context in Han Dynasty, it is not difficult to conclude that the continuation of urban architectural context is an important challenge faced by architectural design.

Keywords: Architecture of the Han Dynasty, culture, context, inheritance

## 1. The origin of culture and architecture in Han Dynasty

# 1.1 The relationship between Han culture and architectural culture

As a dynasty that emerged after the Qin Dynasty in Chinese history, the Han Dynasty is divided into two periods: the Western Han Dynasty (202 BC-9 AD) and the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD), which later historians called the Han Dynasty. The Western Han Dynasty was founded in Chang' an, British Columbia. Wang Mang's short-lived chaos policy in the late Western Han Dynasty broke the continuity of the Han Dynasty. In 25 AD, Emperor Liu Xiu of the Han Dynasty restored the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Han Dynasty, which was later called the Eastern Han Dynasty. In a narrow sense, Han culture refers to the sum of social material wealth and spiritual wealth in the Eastern and Western Han periods. Broadly speaking, it can refer to the Han Dynasty and the cultural summation of the period greatly influenced by the Han Dynasty.

At the suggestion of Dong Zhongshu, Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty was determined to "stop persuading a hundred schools of thought to respect Confucianism". This change made Confucianism an irreplaceable center of traditional Chinese culture in the next 2,000 years of history<sup>[1]</sup>. In addition, Buddhism was rapidly introduced into our country with the economic prosperity of the Eastern Han Dynasty, and its symbol was the construction of the White Horse Temple in Luoyang. Since then,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>New Era University College, Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup>18654356826@126.com, <sup>b</sup>zixiushi@126.com, <sup>c</sup>83632813@126.com, <sup>d</sup>67075241@qq.com,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>e</sup>840578273@qq.com, <sup>f</sup>yxzhaoxia@sian.com

Buddhism has also played an important complementary role to Confucianism. As a local religion, Taoism was also formally established in the Eastern Han Dynasty and became an important supplement to Confucianism. Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are the basic components of Han culture and the mainstream of Chinese culture; in the process of development, Chinese culture has integrated many new forces, which are the first peak of Chinese civilization in the process of increasing assimilation.

With its majestic temperament, the architecture of the Han Dynasty formed a special architecture in the early feudal China. From the modern materials left over from the Han Dynasty, the Hanque, the Watchtower, etc. clearly reflect this style, giving people a prominent impression and bringing great inspiration to the design concept. Design can extract its representative features from these numerous images as the subject of architectural creation, and then create. The Qin Dynasty established China's first centralized state, summarized the experience of various architectural forms and techniques, and laid the foundation for the architecture of the Han Dynasty. Han society became more prosperous, and buildings and cities began to take on all the characteristics of a mature architectural system. At the same time, the architecture of the Han Dynasty created a great moment, and the pursuit of the architect's vigorous and heroic character is also a way to reflect the thinking of the Han Dynasty. (Figure 1)



Figure 1: Restoration model of Weiyang Palace.

## 1.2 Architectural culture and present situation of Han Dynasty

Each city has its own history and culture, so it also has its own cultural characteristics and personality, which highlights the image of the entire city and interprets the space and architectural features of the city in the form of modern architecture. The historical buildings of the Han Dynasty formed the characteristics of the feudal era of early Chinese architecture with their magnificent, simple and heavy temperament. It clearly reflects the stylistic features of the Hanque, the Watchtower and the main hall, gives a distinct impression, greatly stimulates the design concept, and can reproduce new elements from the design theme.

The development of architectural culture has both spirit and essence. The essence is real and clear at the same time. With the development of architectural culture, it is the real architecture. The development of the vitality of architectural culture is interdependent and the result of historical changes. Everything disappears, and only the connection of spirit and soul can transcend life and death, time and space, and be permanently preserved in architecture. The blood of civilization and the blood of human beings can last forever.

In the long historical process, the development of time is the basis for research, understanding and creation of architecture, and is the witness of historical traces and social development. The Han Dynasty was the first peak of architectural development in China's feudal society, and its architectural art had unique characteristics. The architectural characteristics of the Han Dynasty have not yet been determined, but the architectural art of the Han Dynasty has the characteristics of "magnificence without power over the world", that is, majestic, magnificent, heroic and ancient charm. In addition, the art of the Han Dynasty more expressed the tone of Chinese tradition, the naive and bold romanticism of Chu culture, the Confucianism unique to the culture of Qi and Lu, the profound importance of Central Plains culture, and the beauty of people who conquered the world with blind behavior.

In short, the development of architectural culture in the Han Dynasty can be understood as the organic

living environment of contemporary architecture in time and space. It is the internal relationship between the part and the whole presented to the reality and history of the Han Dynasty in the architectural environment. At the same time, it includes two aspects: first, the expression of matter is often more direct and realistic, and second, the expression of thought, that is, the spiritual form is usually not easy to grasp. It still requires a specific physical form to transmit information. The development of architectural culture plays a very realistic and important role in urban architectural construction. Respect for architectural culture means that new buildings will not occupy urban in isolation and arrogantly, but properly handle and intervene in the existing urban built environment, emphasizing that individual buildings are part of a group, paying attention to group buildings from visual, psychological, environmental, etc. overall continuity. This culturally attractive architectural type not only promotes the preservation of architectural features, the continuation of historical culture and the formation of the overall order of the environment, but also promotes better acceptance and recognition of modern architecture by the public.

## 2. The spiritual and cultural characteristics of the culture in the Han Dynasty

As a long-standing culture, the architecture of the Han Dynasty is the witness of Chinese history, culture and civilization. It has a long-term humanistic spiritual connotation. Even if culture is intangible, it can have a profound effect on people's values. The extensive spiritual and cultural radiation and influence in the activities and behaviors of the people of the Han Dynasty is the core of the sense of national belonging, and their culture and identity are described in the special material of a specific building, which provides a perceptual premise and evidence that matches its development.

## 2.1 Confucian rational thought

In the early years of the Western Han Dynasty, in order to recuperate with the people, the rulers implemented the ideological rule of "rule by inaction" of Huang Lao, so as to make the country stable, economic development and social prosperity. However, Huang Lao's thought of "rule by inaction" has also brought some negative effects. Confucianism is one of the earliest and most influential schools of pre-Qin scholars. After Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty came to the throne, he began to change the past policy and implemented the Confucian ideological rule of "removing all other schools of thought and respecting only Confucianism". Therefore, during the Han Dynasty, Confucianism became the dominant ideology for the ruling class to rule, and Confucianism was carried forward. At the same time, it also suppressed the free air of the ideological and academic circles, and suppressed all kinds of ideological theories that did not meet the needs of the ruling group. Since then, cultural education as an ideology has been firmly attached to feudal politics and has become an ideological tool for ruling the people<sup>[2]</sup>. "The basic orientation of Confucianism and academics is to discuss social politics, ethics, and morality. Confucianism often does not consider material interests, but firstly focuses on social stability and human ideological awareness, and standardizes and penetrates the form and content of the creation." It can be said that although Confucianism has not made more direct contributions to aesthetics and design art, it emphasizes the ideas of "benevolence and justice", "rites and music", "ethics and morality", and advocating the value of righteousness for profit provides a completely rational theoretical basis for architectural design. The only Confucian thought in the period of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty was a Confucian thought that had integrated various thoughts and contained the thought of divinity. The Confucian thought of the Han Dynasty was extremely inclusive, which laid the ideological foundation for the formation of the magnificent artistic style of the Han Dynasty [3].

# 2.2 The Philosophy of "induction between heaven and man"

The underdevelopment of science and technology in ancient times became the basis for the development of geomantic omen. Geomantic omen is a crucial factor in determining the site selection, planning, design and even construction in the early period of the Han Dynasty. Heaven is the master of all things, and is connected with human beings. Heaven can intervene in human affairs, and people can sense the thoughts of God rooted in people's brains. As a member of all living beings, human beings are born in nature, and their yearning and pursuit for nature is eternal. Therefore, most human buildings are integrated with nature. This thought is in line with the ancient belief of "induction between heaven and man" thought. Therefore, the idea of harmonious unity of heaven, earth and man runs through the whole building in the architecture of the Han Dynasty. As a residence, the builder is concerned about the safety of the family and the family. For emperors, it is more about the rise and fall of dynasties. For example, the design of the steps in Han Dynasty architecture is both wide and majestic, reflecting the concept of

hierarchy and also symbolizing that only the emperor himself can sense the heaven, just like the stairs connecting the heaven and the earth. In the cultural of the Han Dynasty, the behavior of the emperor affected the society. If the emperor accepted the will of Heaven, the weather would be favorable; otherwise, there would be no harvest or even epidemic disease, which would lead to the destitution of people. It can be seen that people's thoughts and lifestyles are reflected everywhere in the building. The patios of buildings in the Han Dynasty can collect rainwater, solve the problem of water use, and imply that patios gather water and wealth. It can be seen that patios are closely related to "wealth". The architecture of the Han Dynasty was integrated with nature as a whole, which fully expressed the philosophical concept of "induction between man and nature" in traditional Chinese philosophy.

Generally speaking, the culture of the Han Dynasty is characterized by its pluralism and unity, as well as its integrity and integration with other cultures, but its creativity and uniqueness are no less than other cultures. Therefore, the characteristics of Han culture are unique, spreading a positive spirit. Since it is based on much of the fusion and conflict between God and man, nothingness and reality, it lays the ideological and theoretical foundations important to civilization and makes its culture more representative.

## 3. The historical inheritance of the architectural culture of the Han Dynasty

## 3.1 The development of architectural context in the Han Dynasty

Context originated from the category of linguistics. It is a historical category developed in a specific space, and its extension contains extremely rich cultural, economic, political and other content. In a narrow sense, it should be understood as the context of culture and the relationship between culture and origin. The development of urban architecture in history shows that the overall order and harmony of buildings benefit from the principles of visual continuity and mutual coordination between buildings and groups. This is the expression of the predecessor's simple "context" thought, and it is a reappearance of intuition. American anthropologist Clarcohen pointed out: "Culture consists of various explicit or implicit modes of behavior, which are learned or taught through the use of symbols and constitute the outstanding achievements of human groups; the basic core of culture includes the traditional concepts, especially values, derived and selected from history; although cultural systems can be regarded as the product of human activities, they can also be regarded as factors that limit further human activities. Clarcohen defines "context" as "the historically created pattern system of existence."

Architectural context, which has spirit and soul. Spirit is very real and soul is very shrewd, only in this context is the real architecture. And the dependence of the vitality of the context is the vicissitudes of history, and everything will go out. Only the context, which can be called the spirit and soul, can transcend life and death and time and space, and be preserved forever in architecture; the vein of civilization and the vein of human beings can be inexhaustible. The continuation and development of time in the long history is the basis for investigating, understanding, researching and creating architecture, while witnessing historical traces and social development. The Han Dynasty was the first peak of architectural development in China's feudal society, and its architecture and art had distinct characteristics<sup>[4]</sup>. "Han Dynasty architectural context" can be understood as the organic space-time environment in which contemporary buildings can survive, and is an inherent relationship between the reality existing in the architectural environment and the history of the Han Dynasty, as well as the part and the whole. Grasping the "architectural context" plays a very realistic and extremely important role in the creation of urban architecture. Respecting the "context" means that new buildings are not isolated and rudely occupying urban space, but are treated compatibly and appropriately intervene in the existing urban environment, emphasizing that individual buildings are part of the group, and focusing on the visual, psychological, and the inheritance and continuity of the environment as a whole. This kind of architecture with contextual charm is not only conducive to the preservation of architectural features, the continuation of historical culture, and the formation of the overall order of the environment, but also to the better acceptance and recognition of modern architecture by the public<sup>[4]</sup>.

# 3.2 The influence of regional cultural fusion on contemporary architecture

China, which has a history of five thousand years, must have a history of less than a few thousand years of architectural culture. In this long inheritance process, Chinese traditional architecture not only reflects its own cultural heritage, but also reflects the historical essence of the Chinese nation in different periods. In the long history of architectural culture for thousands of years, architecture is always

expressing the wisdom of the people in various periods, so it has also achieved the characteristics of each region.

Regional culture is limited by time, space and region, and follows the trend of historical development in a certain region to accumulate material and spiritual wealth and other cultural heritage, including the cultural environment relationship, geographical characteristics, human behavior characteristics and cultural dissemination forms of the region, etc. And human behavior systems include economic systems, religious beliefs, folk traditions, literature and art, social organizations, and so on<sup>[5]</sup>. Regional culture is formed through its unique regional space, natural elements and humanistic factors. Different regions will form different regional cultures and form unique regional landscapes. Regional culture is the comprehensive cognition of environment, history and material.

## 4. Conclusion

Through the analysis and research of the architectural features of the Han Dynasty and the continuation of the historical context of the Han Dynasty, it is not difficult to draw the conclusion that the continuation of the urban architectural context is the challenge of architectural design. Architects only need to pay attention to the past, reality and future of history and culture, in order to inherit and integrate the precious architectural heritage of civilization and regional progress, inspire creative inspiration, and form a splendid cultural history with spiritual, cultural and living buildings. This work not only means historical research, but also brings new life into the historical environment. The harmony and coordination between buildings and buildings embodies the unity of social development. The architectural form of the Han Dynasty is not only a simple imitation or similarity in form and spirit, but also a coordinated development and social unity, which means respect for the inheritance of architectural culture.

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