

Study on the Significance of Flower Window Decoration in the Traditional Hakka House Decoration in Gannan

Lin Guo

Academy of Fine Arts, Gannan Normal University, Gan Zhou, China.

^a 536590228@qq.com

Abstract: As a carrier of material and spiritual culture, flower window decoration had various shapes and categories, and carried rich and profound historical information. It was an extremely valuable culture for Hakka and reflected the typical “collective memory” of Hakka. According to the two classification principles of the flat decoration and the noumenal structural decoration, this article analyzed the historical evolution of the Hakka flower window decoration art from the perspectives of architectural decoration, art history and decorative art theory; and its decorative language, performance techniques, composition methods, and cultural connotations were analyzed in detail in order to reveal the traditional cultural concepts, folk psychology and deep structure of the Gannan Hakka hidden behind the Hakka flower windows, and the influence of the Hakka residential architecture on the decorative arts. Studies shows that the traditional flower window of Gannan Hakka is shining with the light of scientific and technological rationality and humanistic spirit of folk art creation.

Keywords: flower window, Hakka culture, folk psychology, collective memory.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gannan Hakka traditional flower window is an important decoration component of Gannan Hakka folk architecture, and it is one of the characterizations of Gannan Hakka culture. The rich and profound historical information it carries is an extremely valuable vehicle for the Hakka culture. It infuses the Hakka people with the ambiguous and pioneering spirit and emotions.

Gannan Hakka traditional flower windows have typical regional characteristics. This article not only enriches and supplements the content of traditional Chinese architectural component research, but also excavates the “local knowledge” of traditional Chinese decorative art. Therefore, both the study of the history of architecture and the study of the history of folk art of decorating are all of great significance. The traditional flower windows of Gannan Hakka reflect the Hakka people’s “collective consciousness”. Hakka craftsmen creatively applied various decorative arts to the architecture. Revealing the history, culture and decorative

language behind Hakka's traditional flower windows helps to understand the humanistic qualities of the Hakkas and the difficult course of Hakkas in their history.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Regardless of the traditional architecture of China or the West, decorative art is an important part of it. The flower window is an important part of the architectural decoration art. Therefore, it can be seen that the art of flower window decoration is part of the study of architectural decoration art.

2.1 Domestic research status

At present, there are two main types of research on flower windows in China: First, it is a type of research on architectural decorative arts. Such research results are commonly found in the works of Chinese traditional architectural history. Among them, the main focus is on the decoration of flower windows of various ethnic groups. Their perspectives are mostly based on architectural functions to analyze the composition of flower windows, carving techniques, spatial organization, etc., for example, in the Creation of the French, Yuan Ye, Qing Dynasty Engineering practice rules are all involved; there are also studies on the composition of the flower window and the production of specifications, such as the famous Japanese historian Ito Chuta's book Chinese ancient architectural decoration (three-volume version) basically follows the concept of Creating a French Style and discusses the flower window slightly. Professor Hou Youbin's Aesthetics of Chinese Classical Architecture discusses the function and aesthetic significance of the flower window in architecture; the famous architecture Liang Sicheng, Liu Dunzhen, Luo Zhewen, and Lou Qingxi are more important in the practice of recording and field protection which have typical philological significance (Lee et al., 2016). Another type of research is to study it as a traditional decorative pattern. At this time, the "decoration" is close to the "pattern", and the decoration of the flower window (including the window grille art) is mainly discussed from the two-dimensional flat. Research in this area can be found in various types of traditional decorative arts, patterns, and other works. For example, Ni Jianlin's Chinese Flower and Bird Decoration and other series of books, although there is no separate flower window decoration listed, but you can still find this discussion. From the perspective of the above research, one is to discuss decorative arts from the architectural structure type, and the other is to discuss decorative arts from the planar pattern style. Most of the research works in China or from the regional, such as Sichuan, Shaanxi, Huizhou and other types of flower window classification, or from ethnic, such as Tibetan, Yao, Uygur, etc. to read the flower window decoration. Although research on Hakka history and Hakka architecture has drawn more and more attention from scholars, it still rarely sees the results of Hakka's research on this aspect (Lin et al., 2017).

2.2 Research status in foreign countries

Studies of traditional flower windows in foreign countries mainly focus on the architectural decoration of Romanesque and Gothic churches. In 1890-1891, the young Rigel obtained the opportunity to teach at a university and began to teach courses in the history of decorative arts.

The question of style—the foundation of the history of decorative arts was the first book of his new work. It showed that Rigel’s most formalist point of view analyzed the mystical line adopted by the Mycenaean culture that has been rubbed into the traditions of Egypt and the ancient Near East, thus confirming the pursuit of art, the freedom of art, and the indestructible independence of art. In this book, Rigel’s concept of “art will” was formally formed. In 1911, the work of the famous German modern historian William Wallinger’s *The Gothic Formalism* provided theoretical guidance for the study of western Gothic window decoration art. Wallinger interpreted medieval Gothic art with artistic style psychology, trying to find a way to confirm the development of a northern Germanic national art that was different from Southern classicism and was not influenced by Paris and the Mediterranean tradition. After the mid-nineteenth century, the European industrial revolutions were completed one after another. The appearance of new-style architecture challenged the traditional decorative arts, and the genres of decorative arts flourished. Europe thus entered a period of “decoration”. In addition, Gombrich’s wise, energetic and inspiring book, *The Sense of Order—Psychology Foundation of Decorative Arts* did not specifically list the decorative chapters of flower windows, but his decorative psychology studies opened up deep psychological problems for us to glimpse the decorative arts. With the rise of “international style” architecture in Europe and the United States, modern architecture has entered the era of rationality. Window design and decorative arts have even reached a minimal level. Window decoration seems to be no longer a research topic. Due to historical reasons, although foreign countries have made important achievements in decorative research, the study of the Chinese Hakka flower windows has not entered the field of vision of Western scholars. This is probably related to the “Western Centralism” of culture (Zhang, 2018).

In short, a large number of domestic research works on Hakka are mainly concentrated in the fields of sociology, history, and anthropology. In recent years, with the continuous deepening of Hakka research, more and more domestic and foreign scholars have begun to use different theories or interdisciplinary perspectives to provide more possibilities for Hakka folk art research. Studying the Hakka traditional decorative art from the perspective of art history and folklore is a trend worthy of attention.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Analysis of the traditional flower window decoration types of Hakka




Chinese decorative art has a long tradition. Flower window decoration is different from the paper flat decoration, and it has a certain degree of functionality. In the interpretation of Ci Hai, the art of decoration does not exist as an independent style. It is a decorative treatment of architecture, interiors, costumes, or certain real objects. The window is used as a kind of artistic treatment on the building when it is used as an architectural ornament. It is attached to the building entity. If it comes to the additional decoration of the flower window, it shows more plane decorative meaning, more independent aesthetic value, and contains pure appreciation

features. Gannan Hakka traditional decorative flower window is divided into the following decoration types according to the decorative theme, theme, and performance techniques.

Decoration subject:

Mr. Lu Pintian pointed out that the subject of Chinese folk art is very rich, but it is important to discover unity from its richness, and thus it is possible to pursue the roots of more intrinsic unity. He further pointed out that these rich Chinese folk arts can basically be attributed to the three “constant themes”: the theme of praying for life extensions, the theme of wealth for Fortune and the theme of exorcism, which correspond to the following three utilitarian tendencies (Qiu, 2015). The utilitarian implications of these three themes have specific stipulations and stability, covering almost all the psychological intentions of the people’s production and life, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The decorative theme of the Hakka flower window of Gannan






Pray for hope	Longevity and health	Riches and honor	Peace
Decorative subject	Hope the family is strong and the family is healthy and long	Hope life can be rich, social status is eminent	Hope the society is safe, the family is safe
Window legend			
The utilitarian meaning	Focusing on the public's attention to their own health and longevity and reproduction	It shows the people's demand for the prosperity and prosperity of the family	It shows people's pursuit of ideal and stable living environment

Decorative theme:

The decorative themes of Gannan Hakka flower windows are complex and frugal. Not only does it originate from extensive Chinese traditional culture, but it is also a unique living culture, customary beliefs and religious fossils of Qiannan Hakkas. It is a living fossil of the evolution of religious history (Zhang, 2016). In order to more comprehensively display the decorative contents and forms of the Gannan Hakka flower window, a large number of collected flower window decoration patterns can be classified on the subject matter content, and it is mainly

divided into five categories: birds and animals (animals), flowers and trees (plants), character gods (characters) and historical allusions, characters (symbols) and geometric shapes. These five categories basically cover the entire content of Hakka flower window decoration (Table 2).





Table 2. Gannan Hakka flower window decoration theme

Subject category	Subject	The picture
Animal	Dragon, phoenix, lion, unicorn, fish, rabbit, etc.	
Plants	Peony, lotus, plum, orchid, ivy, etc.	
The character and historical allusion	Fairy, fairy child, eight fairies, cowherd and so on.	
Text symbols	Longevity, gossip, lucky words, square win, return lines and so on.	
Geometric	All kinds of geometric patterns.	

Performance method:

Auspicious decoration is actually the abstraction of abstract ideas and abstraction of figurative things. Many expressions of Hakka flower window decoration reflect the results of the two processes of the materialization. For example, to express the abstract idea of “succession after birth”, flower windows are often replaced with things with similar morphological characteristics in life such as fish and lotus. In turn, in the course of long-term schema evolution, some things are conventionally abstracted into auspicious symbols, such as the dark Eight Immortals. Whether it is ancient Chinese architecture or decorative art, whether it is official or folk architecture, these two expressional orientations are all reflected (XIAO, 2015). Specifically speaking, Hakka’s window decoration techniques mainly include the following: symbolism, meaning, homophony, table number, and text. (See Table 3).

Table 3. Gannan Hakka flower window decoration

The technique of expression	Basic meaning	The picture
Symbol	In the form, color, ecological habit and other attributes and characteristics of some perceptual thing, it is associated with the abstract meaning similar to or similar to this thing, so as to attach some kind of personification intention.	
The moral	In the course of observation, people gradually delve into the essence of things and ponder on the meaning of things. On the one hand, it represents the external characteristics of the image, while on the other hand, it penetrates into the internal affairs such as folk myths, allusions and traditional Chinese legends, and so on.	
Homophonic	It is mainly based on the phonetic sounds of the living prototype things, which are compared to the phonetics of the things being expressed, thus achieving the representation of things from the meaning. The homophonic analogy has the homophone and the near sound.	
Table	It refers to the abstract processing of the image of some inanimate objects to form a concise symbolic form and give auspicious meaning. The table number has stability and some qualitative characteristics.	

3.2 The artistic language of Hakka traditional flower window decoration

Compared with two-dimensional graphic arts such as paper-cutting and patterns, flower window decoration cannot separate from architecture, but it should include the decorative forms of flower windows in both flat and space. The traditional flower window decoration of Gannan Hakka and the traditional residences of Gannan are spatially unified, and at the same time, they are compared with the unique Hakka culture. The style characteristics, subject matter, and expression methods of Gannan Hakka flower windows are influenced by specific functions, materials and crafts, and regional differences, and present rich features. This article pays attention to these unique historical details and tries to analyze Hakka decorative vocabulary and grammatical features.

The first aspect is the features of decorative vocabulary. The outer wall flower window of Hakka embodies the characteristics of Hakka flower window decoration. This kind of flower window has a simple shape, no window sash and scattered points on the outer wall. Among them, the opening of the enclosure flower window is smaller. It is mainly the defense, the lookout and the gas accumulation. It is the product of the security and the money in the enclosure. The basic functions of the lighting and ventilation are degenerated, and the lexical meaning of the flower window is in a relatively ambiguous concept. It is a typical structural decorative pattern of ontology, mainly appearing through the structure itself, and constitutes one of the basic elements and basic elements of Hakka flower windows. Because the exterior wall building material mainly uses the green brick, the green bar stone and some other materials, the plastic shape also is more regular, without other additional decoration, the whole line looks hard, and the whole exterior wall forms the point, the surface strong contrast relationship, thus makes the whole exterior wall appear thicker. On the other hand, the flower window is more lively and lively.

The second aspect is the features of the decorative grammar. There is saying in Yuan Ye: “windshield, outside the fence, it should be sparse or widely reduced, or horizontal or half, or two points to push off, such as railings, reduction can also be used.” The “text” is the decoration. As the enclosed wall “window”, “Shu Guang Jian Wen” not only reduced, vice versa played Hakka flower window “Shu Guang” extreme. The following is explained one by one. The enclosed wall window sash, because there is no reason, it had to do in the window frame. This is a way of assembling ontology and additional decoration. There are usually two kinds of decorative grammar: one is the use of “circle door type”, the other is “modular module”. The “ring gate” of the Hakka flower window is generally selected from the green bar or the red sandstone ring gate for the function of the defensive function. It is quite different from that of the garden. It is usually built with thick stone, and the window is smaller and more solid on the illusion (Lin, 2015).

3.3 Folklore culture structure of Hakka flower window decoration art

In this world, the philosopher Heidegger thinks that “the origin of the works of art, the source of the creator and the preserver, the origin of the historical existence of a nation is art. The reason for this is that art is a source of its nature: a real way to achieve it, that is to say, a special

way of history.” Heidegger’s philosophical view provides a good perspective for us to understand the deep cultural structure of the Hakka decorative art. He points out that human art is “a special way of history”.

The folk culture structure of Hakka art can roughly correspond to the “constant theme” of traditional Chinese folk art. The three “themes” of folk art and its utilitarian tendency are in keeping with the basic conditions for human survival and development and the natural consciousness of life: “The theme of praying for life shows the ardent pursuit of the biological existence of human beings; The theme of the lucky money shows that the subject of life possesses the desire to maintain the human existence of basic survival data; the theme of exorcism and disaster relief presents the aspiration of the life subject to the peaceful living environment.” If these three pairs of relations are extracted, such a set of structures can be basically established, that is, the triangular structure composed of “human-object-space”. We put the concept of “Hakka” into it, namely “Hakka - Hakka Flower Window - Hakka Folk House Architecture”. In this way, the positional relationship of the Hakka flower windows in the structure can be clearly seen, indicating that it is not an abstract material form, but a bi-directional view of both the Hakka subject and the space environment. In such a small environment, it can be seen how Hakkas “poetically inhabit” in the small world that they have built, and how Hakka blossoms became the origin of art in the historic survival of Hakka. This has led to the concept of flower window decoration art: the concept of creation of one thing, the unity of nature and nature, and the ethical concept of using things (Figure 1).

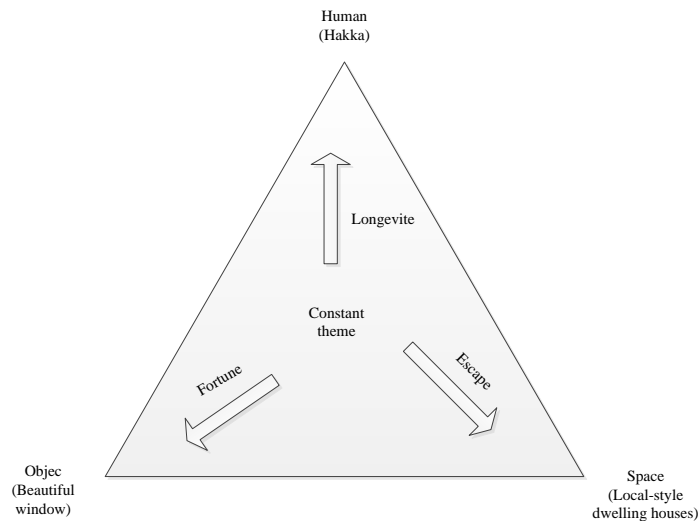


Figure 1. An illustration of the folk cultural structure of hakka decorative arts

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First of all, compared with 2D flat modeling arts such as paper cutting and patterning, flower window decoration cannot exist separately from the building. It should include the decorative form of the flower window in both plane and space. The traditional flower window decoration of Gannan Hakka and the traditional residences of Gannan are spatially unified, and at the same

time, they are compared with the unique Hakka culture of Gannan. The style characteristics, subject matter, and expression methods of Gannan Hakka flower windows are influenced by specific functions, materials and crafts, and regional differences, and present rich features.

Secondly, as Li Yu said, “I who view the world today can change the ancient method into the present system. However, the window bars are two things that change from one to another.” He sees window bars as the most innovative expression of ancient architecture. The Gannan Hakka flower window also evolved from “families”, first relying on a set of stylized decorative grammar, but it also used Hakka’s decorative vocabulary to decorate it. This should be the highest realm of innovation: it originates from the ancient law and is not obliterated by ancient laws. It can be said that it is the source of innovation for the people that gave birth to the rich style and historical connotation of traditional Chinese decoration.

Lastly, Hakka decorative art as a special type of aesthetic value is a concentrated expression of Hakka folk psychology. Flower windows concentrate on various functions such as function, culture, tradition and spiritual practice, and become a deep carrier of “teaching in beauty”. This chapter mainly discusses the psychological foundation of Hakka traditional decorative art from the historical origin of Hakka and the concept of material culture and reveals the corresponding deep cultural structure of the ornamental art of Hakka flower window from the “constant theme” of Chinese traditional folk art, that is, the concept of creation, the natural view of the unity of heaven and man, and the full use of ethics.

5. CONCLUSION

Studying the traditional architecture and decoration art of the Hakka people in Gannan has extremely realistic meaning. This is very important for inheriting Hakka spirit, Hakka culture, and protection of intangible heritage. The decorative art of Hakka flower windows has conjured up the thinking of the Hakka people and the Hakka artisans, reflecting their existing ways of existence. They make full use of their ingenuity and use the decorative grammar and form of traditional Chinese folk art and classical architectural decoration art, and by means of association, allegory and writing, put the simple ideals and wishes of the Hakka people into the form of the flower window. Gannan Hakka traditional flower windows sparkle the artistic and humanistic spirit of folk art and writing techniques to put the Hakka people’s simple ideals and wishes into full play. As for the material form of the window, the traditional flower window of southern Anhui Hakka shines with the light of scientific and technological rationality and humanistic spirit of folk art creation.

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