



Kung Fu Mural Painting at Shaolin Temple, Henan : Chinese Traditional Fighting Culture in the Context of Pre-modern Nation State

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Abstract:

The results showed that Shaolin Kungfu refers to the long-standing traditional cultural system that formed in the specific Buddhist cultural environment of the Shaolin Temple in Songshan Mountain. It is based on belief in the divine power of Buddhism. Fully embodying the wisdom of Zen Buddhism and takes the martial arts practiced by the monks of the Shaolin Temple as the main form of expression. Later, the traditional Chinese martial culture at Shaolin Temple was associated with a state of war between China and foreign invaders. The Chinese at that stage resurrected their martial arts to defend themselves and fight against invaders. Therefore, a group was formed to practice fighting in the temple. especially the Shaolin Temple. In addition, to promote correct training Therefore, the murals documented the various poses and methods of fighting. Thus, the Kung Fu murals at Shaolin Temple were like a martial textbook that kung fu fighters practiced. and became an important role in this period of martial culture.

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Research purposes

Kung Fu Mural Painting at Shaolin Temple, Henan : Chinese Traditional Fighting Culture in the Context of Pre-modern Nation State is a qualitative research Its main objectives are 1) to study the historical context of China, Henan, and the Shaolin Temple in the pre-modern era; 2) to study and study the murals of the pre-modern Shaolin Temple; 3) to study the history of the formation of traditional martial arts and pre-modern kung fu in pre-modern Shaolin Temple; and 4) to study the relationship between Shaolin Kung Fu frescoes and traditional pre-modern martial arts in the pre-modern Nation-State era.

Research Methodology

The research method is qualitative and the writing method is descriptive analysis. During



this research process, the researchers collected information through field visits, literature reviews, and expert interview method.

Conclusions / Discussion

Through research, it is found that the formation of Shaolin traditional fighting skills is influenced by many factors such as historical environment, social environment, Confucian culture, Buddhism, Taoism and so on. The pre-modern period has experienced historical changes. Henan is located in the Central Plains, with rich products, rich historical culture and natural landscapes. The development and formation of Shaolin Temple, as well as the evolution of Shaolin Kungfu and Shaolin Temple Kungfu murals are all located in the larger environment, and the Historical developments and changes are closely linked.

Keywords : Kung Fu Mural Painting; Traditional Fighting Culture; Cultural Identity

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1. Introduction

This paper studies, summarizes and sorts out the fighting culture in the Kung Fu murals of Shaolin Temple in Henan, and explores its application in pre-modern society. The Shaolin Kungfu culture in the Songshan area of Dengfeng, Henan Province has a rich development background. Influenced by the geographical location and environment of the ancient Shaolin Temple, the living environment of the pre-modern society was harsh, and it was harassed by fierce tigers and beasts, bandits were rampant, and wars continued. Far-reaching influence, and Shaolin fighting culture is closely related to the story. By further excavating Chinese pre-modern history, the relationship between the formation of Shaolin Kung Fu murals and Shaolin Temple, and the social process of Shaolin Temple Kung Fu Murals, this paper understands the interaction between Shaolin murals and Chinese traditional fighting culture in the context of pre-modern ethnic contexts.

In the current tide of socialist economic development, Shaolin Temple Kung Fu murals have transformed and improved the traditional Shaolin martial

arts fighting culture to a certain extent. From this perspective, the cultural connotation of Shaolin Temple Kung Fu Murals is a new communication and development system in pre-modern times. , and implemented the dissemination of traditional culture, breaking the conservative and closed form of traditional culture, raising the awareness of the ethnic masses to develop Shaolin Kungfu, promoting the better and faster development of the traditional fighting culture of Shaolin Temple, and making the traditional fighting culture of Shaolin Temple in a wider space. Modernize and spread.

2. The historical context of research background

China is an ancient civilization in the world. With a history of 5,000 years, the evolution of anything is inseparable from the influence of the environment. The historical evolution of Chinese traditional fighting culture is also affected by the historical environment at that time. China has a splendid Chinese civilization, which has experienced historical changes in the



pre-modern period, and Henan is located in the Central Plains, rich in products, rich in historical culture and natural landscapes, the development and formation of Shaolin Temple, and the evolution of Shaolin Kungfu and Shaolin Temple Kungfu murals are all located in a large environment, it is closely connected with the development and changes of history. The study of the historical background can better understand the development of the society at that time and understand the historical evolution of fighting culture.

China's pre-modern history, this article refers to China since 1828, from feudal society to semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, from the Qing Dynasty to the Opium War, and then to the eve of 1894, generations of predecessors fought heroically to save the nation and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. A history of struggle and hard work.

In the pre-modern period, China experienced a history of prosperity and decline, with splendid ancient civilization and rich painting arts. Shaolin Temple and Shaolin Kungfu also grew out of nothing, from prosperous to decline, its development context and Chinese history and The history of Henan is closely related. It develops with the development of the general environment and changes with the changes of history. It is closely related to the local environment, era environment, cultural environment and social factors such as politics and economy in a specific period.

Songshan's unique geographical location and unique cultural factors have become important factors for Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei Dynasty to choose to build the Shaolin Temple here.

The subsequent achievements of the Shaolin Temple have proved the correctness of the site selection. Shaolin Temple is known as the "No. 1 Temple in the World". It is the ancestral home of Zen Buddhism in the Han Dynasty. It occupies an important position in the history of Chinese Buddhism and is a world-famous Buddhist temple. It is famous all over the world because of the Shaolin Kungfu that the Shaolin monks of all dynasties devotedly researched, created and developed continuously.

By understanding the history of the pre-modern period, the study found that the Shaolin Temple was built here, influenced by many factors such as the historical environment, social environment, Confucian culture, Buddhism, Taoism and so on. The pre-modern period has experienced historical changes. Henan is located in the Central Plains, with rich products, rich historical culture and natural landscapes. The development and formation of Shaolin Temple, as well as the evolution of Shaolin Kungfu and Shaolin Temple Kungfu murals are all located in the larger environment, and the Historical developments and changes are closely linked.

3. Pre-modern Shaolin Temple Kung Fu Murals

The murals of Shaolin Temple in the late Qing Dynasty are the only remaining mural cultural relics about Shaolin Kungfu in China. They are divided into Buddhist fighting, story fighting, and kung fu fighting. This paper selects the murals in the rooms of Guanyin Temple to interpret, mainly for the fighting on the south wall and the north wall. Research on the murals, these two murals best show the process of Shaolin



Kungfu from underground practice to public martial arts. It is used when Linqing officials of the Qing Dynasty visited Shaolin to watch the martial arts deeds, and the use of

colored murals can convey Shaolin Kungfu more vividly and directly. The characteristics of boxing fighting style and the variety of equipment fighting.

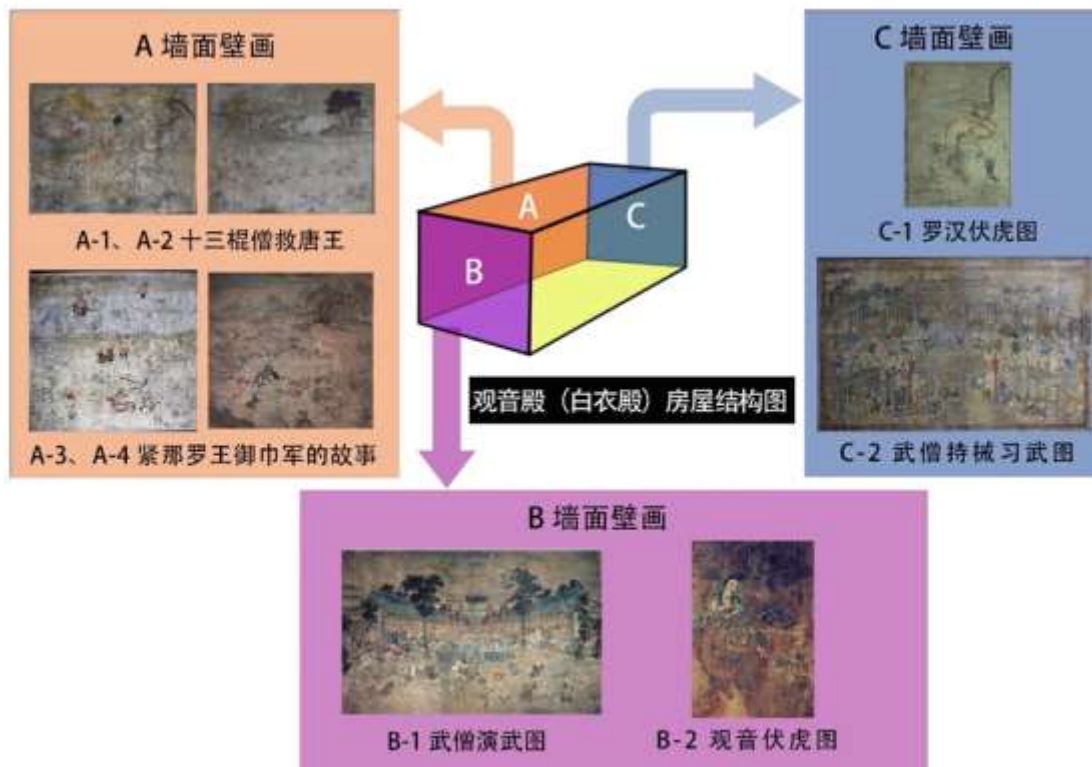


Figure 1: The structure of the room where the Shaolin Temple Kung Fu murals are located
 Source: Produced by Guo Xiaotao, 2022.3d

Shaolin Temple Guanyin Hall (White Clothes Hall) is located on the east side of Qianfo Hall. It was built in the early Qing Dynasty. Sitting east to west, with a row of windows in the west, the murals are surrounded by the north wall, east wall and south wall, which are integrated with the building.

The three walls in the hall are painted with colorful murals, all of which were made in the late Qing Dynasty. The paintings on the north and south are the movements of monks practicing boxing and martial arts with bare hands and weapons,

so the Hall of Thousand Buddhas is also called the Hall of Boxing Spectrum or Hammer Spectrum Hall.

The two rooms at the north end of the back wall are painted with traditional military battle stories of "Thirteen monks rescued the king of Tang" and "captured the Zheng general Wang Renze alive". On both sides of the shroud are drawings of subduing dragons and tigers, and in the northeast and southeast corners are Manjusri riding a blue lion and Puxian riding a white elephant.



Figure 2: South wall monks practicing martial arts with weapons

Source: Guo Xiaotao Photography, 2021.4

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The south wall of Guanyin Hall (White Clothes Hall) depicts the fighting scenes of Shaolin Temple monks holding equipment in front of the Mahavira Hall. It is divided into 15 groups, with a total of 30 monks performing various equipment fighting exercises. The mural is 3.5 meters high, 5.4 meters wide, and covers an area of 18.9 square meters. The composition of the picture is quite different from other murals in the hall. The composition of the mural is divided into three layers and has a very strong sense of perspective. It is centered on the highest layer of the picture and scatters in all directions. It has a great visual depth and a sense of space. It has the style of Western frescoes in the Renaissance period.

In the center of the picture is a two-story, three-sided, Chinese-style double-eaves palace building. Upstairs and downstairs, the statue of Guanyin is

enshrined in the center. Upstairs on the left and in the center, there are officials watching the monks practice various weapon fights. The monks are located on the long corridors on the left, middle and right sides of the upstairs and downstairs respectively. Upstairs, there is a pavilion-style worship of Guanyin, and you can rest and watch the surroundings.

Upstairs, there are 2 eminent monks who accompanied Qing Dynasty officials and waiters to watch martial arts. There are 15 groups of monks fighting with military equipment in front of the hall. The characters on the second floor are basically the same, with certain proportions and perspective effects, but the characters in the upper corridor are the most exciting and in moderate proportions to reflect their screen coordination.

The 15 groups of monks fighting with equipment in the picture have different



images and different weapon holding dynamics, including frontal profile, three-quarter profile, front and back, and the characters' skin color and cassock color are different. The colors are colorful, reflecting a strong sense of movement. The author has also made a detailed description of the surrounding architectural details, and even

the masonry pattern and wooden door structure of the wing rooms on both sides are vividly expressed, making the whole mural impossible to see at a glance, and it is necessary to stop before painting. If you look closely, you can appreciate the subtlety of each and every one of them.



Figure 3: Analysis of Shaolin Kung Fu fighting equipment

Source: Produced by Guo Xiaotao, 2021.12

The mural on the south wall of the Guanyin Hall is "Shaolin Kung Fu Fighting Equipment Picture". The content of the painting is that Shaolin monks practice fighting scenes with weapons such as knives, spears, swords, stems, and cuffs. There are 15 groups and 30 monks in total. This mural reproduces the characteristics of Shaolin weapons in the Qing Dynasty, and is a precious physical material of Shaolin weapons.

Through the research on the pre-modern period Shaolin Kungfu murals, the analysis of the pre-modern period boxing and equipment fighting techniques is the prototype of the early Shaolin Kung Fu

standard, and it is the same as the core content of Shaolin Liuhe Quan and equipment fighting in the Shaolin 72 arts that have been handed down in modern times. However, with the changes in social space, the form of exercise, the scene of exercise, and the purpose of exercise, the external hairstyle, clothing, and scene also show a variety of forms, but the strength, style, move characteristics and the original core standards have not changed. The current research on Shaolin Kungfu provides technical support.



4. The formation history of traditional martial arts and pre-modern Kungfu in Shaolin Temple in the pre-modern period

Shaolin Kungfu is a part of Chinese martial arts. Wushu is continuously developed and formed through long-term practice and evolution for the needs of production struggle and war. As early as the primitive Stone Age 600,000 years ago, our ancestors used stone hammers, stone axes, stone sickles, stone shovels, fishbone forks, stone knives, etc. to hunt, fish, chop wood, etc. People used stone tools to fight with beasts. The concept of slashing, hacking, and smashing was acquired during the fight.

With the development of society and productivity, stone tools evolved into bronze and iron tools. Coupled with the emergence of oppression and oppressed classes, the struggle between princes and princes gradually formed a military war. The ancient struggle for production, military struggle, and fighting against diseases made people realize the close relationship between physical strength and their own development, and forced people to seek ways to strengthen their bodies to meet the needs of production, anti-epidemic and military wars, and to defend themselves. Combining the forms of productive labor (picking, hoeing, moving, pulling, tossing, wiping, grabbing, etc.) and combating assassination actions in war (falling, slashing, killing, hacking, stabbing, etc.), people explored and compiled a comprehensive health system. The practice of physical skills and methods laid the foundation for the emergence of martial arts and the formation of routines.

By studying the history of the pre-modern period, traditional martial arts are

the foundation of Shaolin traditional Kung Fu, because of its (uniqueness, inheritance, diversity, nationality, regionality, rheology, and the times) and other factors, it has formed a distinctive style. Shaolin Kung Fu.

5. The relationship between Shaolin Temple Kung Fu murals and pre-modern traditional martial arts during the pre-modern nation-state period

Kung Fu murals and Shaolin traditional fighting are complementary, mutually based, and interactive. Kung Fu murals are the basis for the study of traditional fighting, and traditional fighting techniques are the basis for the formation of Kung Fu murals. The formation of kung fu murals provides important research materials for the study of the content, historical evolution and development of Shaolin traditional fighting techniques. It is good to find out the historical background of the formation and evolution of kung fu murals and traditional fighting techniques, enrich the existing research content, and provide reference for the dissemination and development of Shaolin traditional fighting techniques and the historical exploration of murals.

5.1 The evolution of traditional Shaolin fighting techniques is the basis for the formation of Kung Fu murals

The formation of murals is closely related to the history and human environment at that time, and the content of the murals is also caused by the historical environment at that time, and is generally a microcosm of the history at that time. Kung Fu murals are also a record of the history of early fighting techniques, which fully reflects the development of martial arts and fighting techniques in that



period. If there is no portrayal of real life, the content of the murals will lack historical proof. For example, the mural "Buddha Biography" in the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang shows many traditional martial arts and traditional sports activities. The picture of practicing swords by the river fully shows the ancient people's belief in nature and belief in worship. The portrayal of ancient thought is also a historical restoration. Among the Shaolin murals, the Kung Fu murals in the Guanyin Hall of Shaolin Temple, its story murals, boxing murals, and equipment murals are all related to the historical development and the evolution of traditional fighting techniques. Therefore, without traditional fighting, the display of kung fu murals would not be possible.

5.2 Kung Fu murals reacted to the development of traditional fighting techniques

The study of history depends on the proof of historical data. As a kind of historical data, murals play an important role in the development of history and the evolution of things. Murals are a reflection of the history and living environment at that time, and a true portrayal of history. Through the murals, people can understand the life forms and development history of the people at that time. The development of traditional fighting is gradually formed by people in the long-term life process and passed down through various forms of survival of the fittest. However, in the process of inheritance, many historical materials are missing due to wars, theft, etc., which has caused the study of history. However, the murals have been preserved compared with the paper-based historical materials and the uniqueness of the

environment in which they are located, which provides a good proof for the historical research and provides a rich, rich and varied history of the development of traditional fighting techniques. Reliable historical material.

Through the form of painting, the murals not only show the painting skills at that time, but also reflect people's living conditions from the side. For example, Dunhuang frescoes are the earliest preserved images of Shaolin Kungfu in my country, providing valuable historical data for the study of traditional martial arts.

In the pre-modern period, there were two main ways of transmission of Buddhism, one is oral transmission, and the other is collective transmission. However, as a method of meditation, Shaolin Kungfu cannot be taught by word of mouth or collectively taught by everyone, because Shaolin Kungfu was not open to the public and was not the main core at that time. The core of Shaolin Kungfu is that it is inherited by painting on paper, but it is relatively expensive to spread through paper painting, and it cannot be widely spread. As a way of spreading, murals, combined with the historical conditions at that time, It is relatively suitable. Its dissemination method is to display the content of Shaolin Kungfu and Buddhism on the wall in the form of paintings, which can not only have the effect of artistic appreciation, but also combine the inheritance and development of architectural art, painting art and culture. At the same time, it can preserve Shaolin Kungfu for a long time for future generations to carry out teaching, learning and research.

5.3 Kung Fu murals record the development of traditional fighting



techniques

In the pre-modern period, at the beginning of World War II, the Eight-Power Allied Forces invaded China from the outside, the beacon raged everywhere, the internal anti-Qing Dynasty restored the Ming Dynasty, and various forces were about to move. , Shaolin Temple has a tradition of protecting the stability of the surrounding people and temples since ancient times, using Shaolin Kungfu and Shaolin equipment to protect the peaceful life of the temple and surrounding people, and to keep one side safe.

5.4 Kung Fu murals enrich the form of the development of traditional fighting techniques

The formation of traditional fighting techniques is in the process of historical development, people gradually formed a technique based on physical fitness in order to avoid war and beast attacks. At first, it was mainly based on boxing. With the development of the times, weapons continued to appear. , and weapon technology has gradually formed, and in the existing murals, it can be found that traditional fighting techniques are not limited to external harassment, physical fitness and defense of the country, and their content and forms are also constantly enriched. Appeared to combine dance and traditional martial arts to form martial arts as an art form based on viewing.

5.5 The murals embody the idea of "harmony between man and nature" in traditional Kung Fu

Through the traditional Chinese Kung Fu murals, we can see that the pre-modern national culture has distinct spiritual characteristics and rich connotations, which embodies the characteristics of the Chinese

nation and the profound cultural heritage of ancient China. The murals reflect ancient China. People have formed a struggle idea with the core of martial artists' self-improvement and achievements. At the social level, the martial arts style of respecting teachers, respecting teachers and advocating martial arts has been formed. When facing social injustice, warriors can The moral ideology of robbing the rich to help the poor, chivalrous and courageous; at the national level, a patriotic idea with the rise and fall of the world and the responsibility of every man as the core, which the martial artist can stand up to when the family and country is in crisis, and the martial arts concept is reflected everywhere, with heaven and man The philosophical thought of unity and unity of knowledge and action is the core. These are the core connotations of ancient Chinese traditional Kung Fu thought, and also the source of life and inexhaustible driving force for the Chinese nation to inherit thousands of years.

The kung fu movements in the murals are formed after thousands of trials and hardships. In the process of practicing, the will and endurance are honed. In the pre-modern period, there were internal and external troubles, and ancient martial arts had the determination and will to make achievements, highlighting the ancient martial arts thought. Spirit, "Shaolin Ten Commandments" records: "The inheritors of Shaolin martial arts should aim to strengthen the physique, engage in it day and night, and cannot stop arbitrarily." It can be seen from this that it is a corner of the spiritual connotation of ancient Chinese Kung Fu murals.

Shaolin Temple Kung Fu murals and



pre-modern traditional fighting are complementary, mutually based, and interactive. Kung Fu murals are the basis for the study of traditional fighting, and traditional fighting techniques are the basis for the formation of Kung Fu murals. The formation of kung fu murals provides important research materials for the study of the content, historical evolution and development of Shaolin traditional fighting techniques. It is good to find out the historical background of the formation and evolution of kung fu murals and traditional fighting techniques, enrich the existing research content, and provide reference for the dissemination and development of Shaolin traditional fighting techniques and the historical exploration of murals.

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