

Study on the relationship between the contents of Wuguantun Grottoes and Yungang Grottoes

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Abstract: This article takes the contents of the carvings in the Wuguantun grottoes as the research object, analyzes the patterns, Buddha clothes and Buddhist niches carved in the Wuguantun grottoes. And discusses the Wuguantun Grottoes period, Buddhist belief, cultural influence and other aspects of the study. In addition, by comparing the relevant cultural factors of Yungang Grottoes, the relationship between Wuguantun grottoes and Yungang Grottoes is sought, so the value of Wuguantun grottoes is further explored.

Keywords: Wuguantun Grottoes; Yungang Grottoes; Carving Content; Relationship

Wuguantun Grottoes is located on a cliff about four kilometers northwest of Yungang Grottoes in Datong City, stretching for more than 200 meters from east to west. It is the fifth batch of cultural relics protection units in Shanxi Province. Luyeyuan Grottoes, Wuguantun Grottoes, Jiaoshan Temple Grottoes and other grottoes were completed successively after the excavation of Yungang Grottoes. During the period, private funds were widely absorbed, and princes and ministers, local officials all participated in the construction of the grottoes in the form of individuals and families.^[1] There are 32 caves here, but the scale of the grottoes is small. Compared with the Yungang Grottoes, the overall sculpture of the Buddha is thinner, delicate and delicate.

1. Analysis according to the content and layout of the cave carving

The 32 existing caves in Wuguantun Grottoes are all small in shape, and most of them have a width and depth of only about 1 meter. Because the grottoes are close to the 109 National Road, which carries coal all the year round, they have not been properly protected, resulting in serious differentiation of Buddha statues in Wuguantun Grottoes, but we can still see the various forms of Buddhist shrine. Most of the caves are three walls and three niches, including statues of intersecting feet Bodhisattva and two Buddhas sitting together, etc. There are also donors in the cave, and the Buddha is mainly composed of the robe, with overlapping clothing and decoration. The niche is mainly of round arch, shape and curtain. The lintel is usually carved to support the sky and seven Buddhas. Some of the grottoes are carved with lotus flowers, and the flying sky image revolves around the lotus flower. In addition, there are a large number of small grottoes in the Wuguantun Grottoes that only accommodate one person, which also reflects the prevalence of Zen law at that time.

From the perspective of the carving content, the carving content of Wuguantun Grottoes is basically similar and the layout is simple. We can judge the connection with the appearance of Yungang Grottoes from the carved lotus pattern, Buddhist clothes and the shape of the Buddhist niche.

1.1 Lotus pattern

Lotus pattern is a common pattern in Yungang Grottoes, usually appearing on the top of the cave, the ground, the lintel, the window, the platform, the light on the back of the Buddha. And Wuguantun Grottoes in the lotus pattern in 22 grottoes have obvious traces, the center for the round, superposition of double lotus petals. Although the lines inside the lotus petals have been weathered, but according to the lotus of the Yungang Grottoes, it is likely to belong to the straight lotus pattern of the Yungang Grottoes. Most of these lotus patterns are the representatives of the late Yungang Grottoes, which were carved by the people after the Northern Wei Dynasty moved the capital to Luoyang, and have similarities with many lotus patterns in Longmen Grottoes.^[2]

1.2 Buddha's clothes

The main Buddha on the right side of Cave 3 of Wuguantun Grottoes is similar to the main Buddha on the west wall of Cave 38 of Yungang Grottoes, with a Buddha sitting in a chair and a clothes. In the sitting statue of the two Buddhas in Cave 5, the lower coat lines is

obvious, This is consistent with the clothing pattern of the main Buddha in the north niche of the west wall of Cave 26 of Yungang Grottoes (Figure 1). These examples also illustrate the weathered grottoes in the Wuguantun Grottoes. Most of them are similar to the Buddha clothing statues in the late western area of Yungang Grottoes. It belongs to the style of Buddhist clothes. Its wearing style is relatively close to the traditional Chinese Confucian costume.

In addition, most of the grottoes in Wuguantun are dominated by statues of intersecting feet Bodhisattva and two Buddhas sitting together, with flanks carved on both sides. They are also popular into the main Buddha statues in the second phase of Yungang Grottoes, and more in the third phase of the grottoes, so the statue theme of Wuguantun Grottoes is produced in line with the trend of the second phase of Yungang Grottoes.



Figure 1 Cave 5 of Wuguantun Grottoes (left) and the lower layer of the west wall of Cave 26 of Yungang Grottoes (right)

1.3 Niche for a statue of the Buddha

The round arch niches and tent-shaped niche with a truncated pyramid top in Wuguantun Grottoes are the most common. But the sharp arch niches, square niches and houses niches are hardly visible, and because of the small niches, there is no carving of the central tower columns in the grottoes. Among them, in the Wuguantun Grottoes 2 to 6, 8 to 17, 19 to 21 grottoes such as round arch niche, lintel is pointed and decorate all kinds of small Buddha. The top of the lintel also surrounded by the Buddha, such as caves 2, 3 and cave 26 of Yungang Grottoes east wall lower south niche similar (figure 2). In addition to the round arch niche in Wugutun Grottoes, there is also a tent-shaped niche with a truncated pyramid top in the seventh cave. The lintel carved the folding sitting Buddha. And it's neatly carved, the periphery also appeared the carving characteristics of the donor.

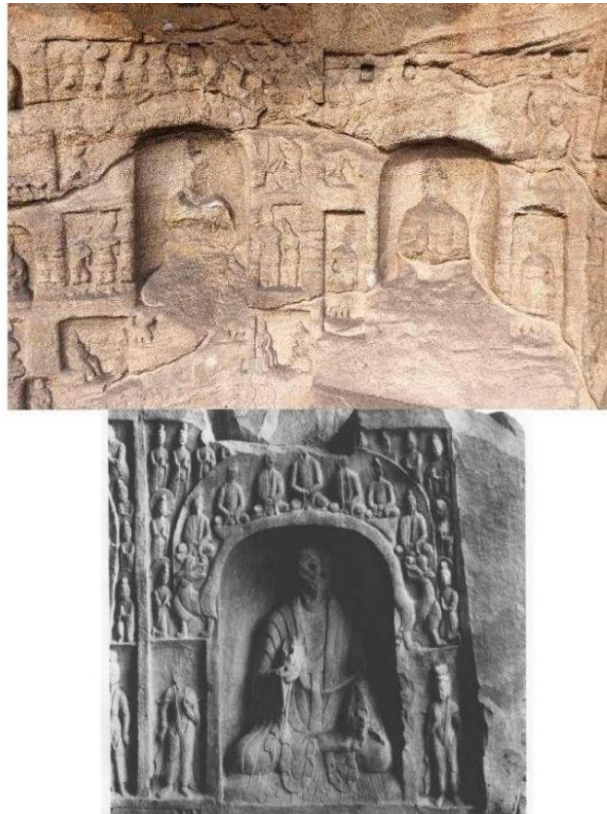


Figure 2 Grottoes 2 and 3 of Wuguantun Grottoes (top) and the lower layer of cave 26 of Yungang Grottoes (bottom)

Wuguantun Grottoes are basically consistent with Yungang Grottoes in terms of niche, grottoes and combination of statues. The layout of the statues is three walls and three niches composed of square plane and flat top, the main wall is the statue of Sakyamuni, and the side wall is the statue of Maitreya, and the main themes of the statues are Sakyamuni, Maitreya and seven Buddhas. This style is very popular in the third phase of Yungang Grottoes, located in the western caves of caves 5-11,21,31,33-4 and 36-3.^[3]In the Northern Wei Dynasty, the grottoes with three walls and three niches first appeared in Pingcheng area of Datong, not only Yungang Grottoes, but also small surrounding Buddhist shrine and Wuguantun Grottoes. Their styles have had a great impact on the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang area.

To sum up, through the comparative analysis of the above factors, the time of the cave and it is known that the Wuguantun Grottoes were excavated by folk believers after Emperor Xiaowen moved the capital to Luoyang.

2.The Buddhist beliefs in the grottoes

Cave carving content is a manifestation of Buddhism beliefs.Caves serve the monks and believers daily religious ceremony.Its function is the main properties of the cave design.So the cave, the carving content and the religious belief should be integrated.And the whole worship and practice process of monks and believers is divided into four parts: worship, long kneeling inquiry, right circle worship and meditation. At the same time, the design of the main Buddha statue in the center of Wuguantun Grottoes and the many Buddhas around it mainly reflects the popular Fahua belief thought in this period,which is also a typical style of grottoes statues in the development of Mahayana Buddhism.

In addition, Fahua belief appeared in the second phase of Yungang Grottoes, and Sakyamuni in the “Lotus Sutra of Magic Fa” was a common theme of sculpture in that period. Until the third phase, the theme of Sakyamuni and in the sitting statue of the two Buddhas was more extensive and affected the Wuguantun Grottoes, which showed the popularity of Fahua thought at this time. On the other hand, it also shows the expectation of the folk believers for a better life in the afterlife.^[4]

3.The relationship between Wuguantun Grottoes and Yungang Grottoes

The excavation of the Wuguantun Grottoes is closely related to the Yungang Grottoes, and its carving features are more consistent with the shapes and themes of the late Yungang Grottoes, which is a continuation from the royal grottoes to the non-royal grottoes.

Yungang Grottoes is generally divided into three periods in archaeology. The first phase is five large grottoes (caves 16 to 20) dug by Tan Yao. The second phase is mainly carved in the eastern and central grottoes (caves 1 to 3, 5 to 13). And the third phase is mainly distributed in the western area of Yungang in the west of Cave 20.^[5] Among them, the first phase of Yungang shows a strong western atmosphere. The second phase belongs to the process of Sinicization and has the new style of the Chinese nationality. In the third phase, the grottoes changed rapidly, most of which were carved separately, not in groups, and the overall elegant and elegant artistic style. The first and second phases were built on the basis of the royal excavation, while the third grottoes were dug by folk believers after Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei Dynasty moved the capital to Luoyang. Therefore, manpower and material resources were limited, and the scale of the grottoes was small. However, at this time, the grottoes changed their previous style. The Buddha statues were showed the bones and clear statues. The Bin-yang Cave of Longmen in Luoyang also imitated the new style and new style of Yungang period. It is because the royal grottoes are generally the main model of the folk grottoes dug. So the excavation of the Wuguantun Grottoes is also a continuation of the Yungang Grottoes. Together with the Yungang Grottoes, the royal grottoes system centered on Yungang Grottoes constitutes a relatively complete Buddhist temples system. Therefore, in Wuguantun Grottoes, the cave layout, carving style and cultural beliefs have continuity. It can be seen that Wuguantun Grottoes not only inherited the carving mode of Yungang Grottoes, but also absorbing the secular nature of folk culture. Wuguantun Grottoes are not only the inheritance and supplement of the third phase of Yungang Grottoes, and it can not be ignored in cultural communication.

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Project:

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