

Étude sur la cosmologie du peuple Han du point de vue de l'image céleste dans la dynastie Han

Wang Yi

Résumé Depuis la dynastie Han, la pensée des hommes sur l'univers, le temps et l'espace s'est progressivement déplacé vers le monde séculier, l'expérience et la rationalité. Ainsi, les concepts philosophiques de la dynastie Han étaient caractérisés par la sensibilité et la visualisation, ce qui nous fournit un moyen important de comprendre l'image céleste dans les tombes de la dynastie Han. Tout d'abord, la carte astronomique est une vue schématisée de l'univers. À partir de ce schéma, elle forme un univers interne, intégral et miniature avec les peintures murales tombales et les objets funéraires. Deuxièmement, sur le plan de la forme, les objets présentés par la carte astronomique ont des connotations symboliques. Parmi eux, le corbeau doré, le crapaud, le nuage, les étoiles et les personnages ont des caractéristiques artistiques. Cela signifie que les Han ont voulu utiliser ces objets pour abstraire un espace cosmique, et lui donner en même temps une riche imagination et créativité. Troisièmement, la carte astronomique reflète un univers plein de vitalité, d'harmonie et de rythme, dans lequel les nuages de bon augure, l'alternance du soleil et de la lune, les étoiles faiblement visibles et les saisons changeantes construisent ensemble un univers esthétique et éternel. Telle est la quête idéale et la croyance spirituelle du peuple Han. De ce point de vue, la carte astronomique de la dynastie Han est un univers visualisé et esthétisé qui sert de preuve claire, par le biais de l'art de l'image, de l'esthétique cosmologique de la dynastie Han.

Mots-clés: Dynasties Han, la perspective de l'image céleste, la vue de l'univers.

On Han People's Cosmology from the Perspective of Celestial Picture in Han Dynasty

Wang Yi

(Research Center for Value and Culture, School of Philosophy, Beijing Normal University,
Beijing 100875, China)

Abstract: Since Han Dynasty, people's thinking about the universe, time and space gradually moved to the secular world, experience and rationality. Thus, the philosophical concepts in Han Dynasty was characterized as sensibility and visualization, which provides us an important way to understand the celestial picture in the tombs of the Han Dynasty. First of all, the astronomical map is a schematic view of the universe. Starting from this scheme, it forms an internal, integral, and miniature universe with the tomb murals and funerary objects. Secondly, in terms of the form, the objects demonstrated by the astronomical map have symbolic connotations. Among them, the golden crow, toad, cloud, stars, and characters have artistic characteristics. It means that the Han people wanted to use these objects to abstract a cosmic space, and give it rich imagination and creativity at the same time. Thirdly, what the astronomical map reflects is a universe full of vitality, harmony and rhythm, in which the auspicious clouds, the alternation of the sun and the moon, the faintly visible stars, and the changing seasons together construct an aesthetic and eternal universe. This is the ideal pursuit and spiritual belief of the Han people. From this perspective, the astronomical map of the Han Dynasty is a visualized and aestheticized universe, which serves as a clear image art proof for the cosmological aesthetics in the Han Dynasty.

Keywords: Han Dynasties, the Perspective of Celestial Picture, Universe View

The Han Dynasty was a unified dynasty, and its concept of the times also showed the characteristics of grand unification. The philosophical change brought about by this situation is that people often observe and dominate the world and even the universe in a subjective way. This way of reflection on the world is not a pure ontology, but a cosmology interwoven with rationality and sensibility. In other words, it has both rational characteristics and perceptual forms. Under this philosophical background, it can be seen that the aesthetics of Han Dynasty is full of a broad and full sense of vigor, and also contains a sense of transcendence of space and time in the universe. This made the aesthetics and art at that time full of cosmological color. On this point, we can see it clearly from art forms such as Han painted bricks, Han portraits and tomb murals. Of course, among many art forms, the celestial picture in the tomb murals is particularly prominent and intuitive in the expression of the Han people's view of time and space and the universe. It is their existence that provides us with the most authentic and original information to understand the concept of the universe at that time. Based on this, we need to study the celestial picture of the

Han Dynasty, so as to reveal how the Han people used perceptual art forms to present a unified and systematic concept of the universe, and further point out the life ideal and spiritual belief behind it.

1. Schematized cosmic space

As far as the extant tombs of the Han Dynasty are concerned, the Western Han Tombs in Xi'an Jiaotong University¹ and Qushuhao Tombs of Jingbian County, Shaanxi² are particularly well preserved, and the murals are also very beautiful. The murals of the Western Han Tomb in Xi'an Jiaotong University are mainly painted on the four walls and the inner roof of the main room. The murals are mainly about the celestial picture of the sun and moon, auspicious clouds, 28 constellations and four images. These stars are very specific, and there are also vivid stars and star officers. Obviously, this mural is of great significance to the astronomical research in ancient China. The coupons of Qushuhao Tomb in Jingbian County, Shaanxi Province, are full of the pictures of celestial phenomena and fairyland people. The picture is mainly composed of the sun, the moon, Nuwa, Fuxi, white long line, four images, twenty eight constellations and stars and star officers. It is vivid and colorful. The center of the whole mural is the Big Dipper, and the four directions are the 28 constellations, that is, the four houses of stars. It has many similarities with the real stars. Although there is no scientific cognition of the mural in the modern sense, the fusion of astronomy, art and aesthetics is demonstrated under the background of knowledge at that time.

On the whole, the celestial pictures of the two tombs basically revolve around a center and then spread out in all directions. It is easy to think of a kind of cosmic schema summarized by the Han people when they grasped the law of the operation of heaven and earth. According to this idea, if we understand the celestial picture of tomb murals conversely, we may have a new understanding. In fact, the celestial picture in the mural can be regarded as a cosmic pattern, which is a visual cosmic space. It is painted on the inner roof of the whole tomb, most of which are round, symbolizing the celestial universe. This comes down in one continuous line with the traditional concept of a round sky and a place. In the celestial picture of the Han Dynasty, there are many images of the sun and the moon, clouds, stars, Fuxi Nuwa, etc. This is to use a very visual image to express the concept of space. For example, Yin, Yang and Five Elements were highly respected and popular ideas in the Han Dynasty. Then, how to express it in celestial pictures? The answer is to use the sun and the moon, Fuxi and Nuwa to symbolize Yin and Yang. Of course, in some murals, it is represented by the Queen Mother of the West and the Duke of the East. The combination of Yin and Yang can make the whole universe in a harmonious condition. This means that the universe understood by Han people not only implies the concept of Yin and Yang and the

¹ Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an Jiaotong University. 《Briefing on the Excavation of Western Han Dynasty Mural Tombs in Xi'an Jiaotong University》. *Archaeology and Cultural Relics*, no. 4. 1990 .

² Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Jingbian County Cultural Relics Management Office. 《Briefing on the Excavation of the Eastern Han Dynasty Mural Tomb in the Canal Tree Trench at Yangqiaoban, Jingbian County, Shaanxi》. *Archaeology and Cultural Relics*, no. 1. 2017.

five elements, but also shows a schema in space circulation.

It should be noted that some tomb murals depict astrological images. It should be said that the star map can better reflect the schematized space understood by Han people. This is related to the ancients' understanding of stars. Professor Feng Shi categorizes ancient star map into three types. Circular star map is the first type. This schema has the most profound ideological background, that is, the "theory of covering the sky". It reflects the ancients' understanding of heaven and earth, that is, "the sky is round and the place is round". This style is basically in the mainstream, and has been constantly improved with the development of the times, which is more and more consistent with the real stars. Horizontal star map is the second type. This pattern also has a long historical tradition. But in the tombs of the Han Dynasty, "it seems that the location of the star map is also limited". The third type is a complex of Chinese and Western star map. Due to the late time period, it mainly reflects the integration and infiltration between Chinese and Western literature.³ On the whole, the first two represent the universe schema understood by the ancients. The unearthed astrological map of the Han Dynasty shows that the Han people's understanding of space is indeed schematic. They show the real celestial phenomena on the tomb murals in a schematic way. For example, the murals in the Han Tomb in Xi'an Jiaotong University are round, with auspicious clouds, birds, the sun and the moon in the middle, and 28 constellations around. The four images are also very clear. Although it is not as real as the starry sky in reality, it has shown the universe well in terms of schema. In contrast, Qushuhao Han Tomb is more standard. It is centered on the Big Dipper, with the 28 constellations, star officers and four images standing out around it. Although the whole image is in the shape of "T", from the perspective of the layout of the whole star, it has exactly shown the schematic universe.

Of course, the Han people schematized the universe, not only in the form of astronomical maps, but also in many other forms. For example, the lacquered wood plates of the Han Dynasty unearthed from the Mozuzi Han Tomb in Wuwei, Gansu Province in 1972, and the two lacquered wood plates unearthed from the Ruyin Marquis Tomb of the Western Han Dynasty in Shuanggudui, Fuyang, Anhui Province in 1977 are important forms of representing the space of the universe. As Li Ling said: "Take the Six Union Style as an example, its form is to imitate the cosmological structure of the theory of covering the sky. The disk on the top is like the sky, the center is the Big Dipper, and around it are the twenty eight constellations and the God of the December moon represented by the stars. The square under it is like the earth, as well as the star field corresponding to the twenty eight constellations and the heavenly stems and earth branches representing the degree of the sun and the moon."⁴ Although the use of the disc is more for divination, its structure, like the astrological chart, contains an implicit connection between heaven and earth and the universe. Its symbolic and formatted mode of thinking covers the entire structure of the universe, including the mysterious relationship between heaven and man. People then observe everything in the world from the cosmic structure, which is conducive to the prediction of personnel. Therefore, the Han people's understanding of space has shown its own

³ Shi Feng. *Chinese Astronomical Archaeology*. Social Science Literature Press, 2001. pp330.

⁴ Ling Li. *Chinese Prescription Examination* Zhonghua Book Company, 2006. pp30.

characteristics. Although their functions are different, the internal logic of the astronomical chart and the tray is supposed to be the same.

Of course, as we explore further, it can be seen that the Han people's schematic concept of the universe still has a deep philosophical foundation. Since ancient times, people have given an intuitive perception of space and all things in the world by looking up and down. They believed that the sky is round and the earth is square. Thus, they began to understand the universe. In the Pre-Qin period, people seemed to be no longer satisfied with this perceptual knowledge, but wanted to explore the ontology behind the universe. For example, Taoism stresses "Tao", Confucianism stresses "benevolence", and Yinyang School stresses "Yin-Yang and five elements", which are the results of rational reflection and ontology inquiry. It should also be noted that this highly speculative way of thinking is not easy to grasp. Therefore, on the one hand, the philosophers in Han Dynasty inherited the speculative thinking since the pre Qin period. On the other hand, they embodied it in a more accessible way. In contrast, Huainanzi's interpretation of Tao is obviously more visual than that of Taoism. It is not the way of abstraction and conceptualization, but the way of interpretation from the perspective of empiricism. As a result, the Han people's view of the universe is more vibrant and alive. This shows that the ideas of the Han Dynasty can better reflect the interweaving of rationality and sensibility.

Against such background, the philosophy of the Han Dynasty was relatively comprehensive. It integrated many ideas such as Confucianism, Taoism, Yin and Yang School, and endowed the cosmology at that time with more abundant connotation. In the view of Han people, "the original evolvement of the universe runs like that Tai Yi creates two things, which creates four images, and four images creates eight trigrams. The structure of the universe is combined by the rules of five directions, eight trigrams, nine fields, and twenty eight constellations. Everything circulates orderly in this orderly pattern"⁵. In short, the Han Dynasty's cosmology is a kind of schematic cosmology. On the one hand, it has the characteristics of rationality, and on the other hand, it shows this rationality with a perceptual schema. First of all, it has a starting point. On this basis, it spreads out in a certain sequence, so that everything in the universe is formulaed. Therefore, the Han people "tried to integrate all things, such as astronomy, geography, meteorology, seasons, vegetation, birds and animals, personnel system, law and politics, and body spirit into a categorized universe schema, which is unified, interrelated and interacted. Everything follows the universal law, so as to understand and grasp from the overall perspective. This conception can be considered as a progress in theoretical thinking"⁶. For them, the universe includes not only heaven and earth, qi, space-time, yin and yang, five elements, but also five directions, five tastes, five smells, five colors, five tones, etc. This makes the abstract concept visual and full of experience and human color. In this sense, the cosmology of Han Dynasty has both rational schema thinking and perceptual enrichment of everything. This shows that as long as we grasp this cosmic schema, many emotional, artistic and cultural issues of the Han Dynasty will be further understood.

⁵ Zhaoguang Ge. *History of Chinese Thought (Middle)*. Fudan University Press, 2009. pp212.

⁶ Zehou Li. *The New Edition of the History of Ancient Chinese Thought*. Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2008. pp116.

To sum up, we can also understand the celestial picture in the Western Han Tomb of Xi'an Jiaotong University and Qushuhao Tomb in Jingbian County, Shaanxi Province. It can be said that they are artistic expressions of the schematized space understood by Han people. They are a miniature model of the universe as well as a visual expression of the philosophy of the Han Dynasty. They represent an underground space in order to find a home for the souls after death.

2. Symbolized space

Since ancient times, due to the needs of agricultural production, people must farm at a specific time, or they will miss the farming season, which will bring about a year's harvest without hope. The wise men at that time determined the best farming time according to the moving position of the stars according to practical experience. This is called "time observation". Of course, this knowledge of visual timing is so important that it is often controlled by rulers. It is also true that archaeologists have found a large number of objects or relics related to stars since the Neolithic Age, which are often related to the nobles at that time. Among them, the relatively famous ones are the remains of Xishuipo Tomb in Puyang, the lacquered box of Marquis Yi in Suixian County, Hubei Province, and the murals of Western Han Tomb in Xi'an Jiaotong University. In addition, we can also see from the Records of the Historian • Tianguan Shu, Han Shu • Astronomical Annals, and Later Han Shu • Astronomy that the ancients had a complete set of knowledge systems about stars, which are both meticulous and imaginative. All this is enough to show that traditional astronomy has a long history and is very developed. Thus, why didn't they draw celestial pictures on the tombs of the Han Dynasty in a more detailed way? Although it is related to the painters' artistic capacity, it is more likely that the Han people did not want to pursue refinement, but wanted to use a symbolic artistic technique to present the universe.

In the celestial picture of Han Dynasty, the most symbolic art is the auspicious sign. In the Han people's ideology, there is a close relationship between heaven and man. This relationship formed the unique thought of the unity of heaven and man in the Han Dynasty, which was mainly manifested in auspicious omens and prophecies. It is in this way that the rulers always pay attention to the revelation brought by heaven. If there is a good thing happening, the sky shows in auspicious omens. If something bad happening, it shows in disasters. Under this ideological background, the Han people's spiritual belief in auspicious omen is increasing. When they build tombs and related buildings, they must draw a mascot map in order to bring mascot to this miniature space. This can be seen clearly from the murals of the Wuling Temple. The auspicious map in Wuling Temple shows strange birds, strange animals, fish, trees, utensils, etc. It seems that they have little relevance. But are painted on the interior roof as a style of atlas. As Wu Hong said, "As the portraits on the roof of the Wuling Temple show, none of the auspicious images carved there are specific things that are expressed in specific situations. They are all abstract images."⁷ Obviously, they hope to get the auspicious omen and protection from heaven in a symbolic way.

⁷ Hong Wu. *Wu Liang Temple: The Ideology of Ancient Chinese Portrait Art*. Translated by Liu Yang et al. Life • Reading • Xinzhì Sanlian Bookstore, 2015. pp102.

Not only in the Wuling Temple, but also in the celestial picture of other tombs, such as the celestial picture of Hanbu Qianqiu Tomb⁸ in the west of Luoyang. There are auspicious things, such as yellow snakes, white tigers, rosinches, two owl sheep, and two dragons. In doing so, the tomb owner still hopes that his soul will soar into the eternal free world under the protection and guidance of the spiritual mascot

It can be seen that the celestial images in the Han tombs of Xi'an Jiaotong University and Qushuhao Han tombs combine important stars with auspicious objects, myths and legends, making the whole universe seemingly perceptual, lively, vivid and interesting, showing rich imagination and high artistry. In comparison, the two tomb murals show Cang Long, Zhi Nu, Niu Lang, Nan Dou, Bai Hu, Bi Su, Zhu Que, Zui Su, Lou Su, Kui Su, Yu Ghost, Sun, Moon, etc., but they are different in some aspects. The murals in the Han Tomb of Xi'an Jiaotong University depict Niusu as a person trying to hold a cow, and the female dormitory as a woman kneeling on the side. The murals in the Han Tomb in Qushuhao painted a morning glory and a man in the performance of Niusushi, and a woman in the process of weaving in the performance of the female dormitory. There is a thick white line between the two, symbolizing the Milky Way, which separates them from each other. It is clearly depicting the myth, the legend of the cowherd and the weaver girl in the form of images. From this point of view, their ideographic functions and symbolic features are very obvious. Through observation, people can recognize these two constellations at a glance. Obviously, the authors of tomb murals have a high artistic accomplishment and knowledge system.

Therefore, the Han people's pursuit of tomb murals is not realistic, because what they want to show is the space world after death. This space world must be distinguished from the reality in order to highlight the particularity of the burial space. It can be seen from the cultural relics unearthed in Han tombs that pottery, jade, bronze and coins are not of practical value. According to Wu Hong, these relics are symbolic materials.⁹ These materials serve in different roles in this micro universe and jointly build a unique scene. In this scene, these materials seem to set off an important position, that is, where the tomb owner's soul lies. This unique position may be among these symbolic materials, or it may be the image of the tomb owner in the mural. In this way, the places constructed by celestial pictures, murals and artifacts together constitute a space of the universe. Although the celestial picture is a symbol of the universe, it is artistically processed and has obvious artistry. For example, although specific and vivid, the tomb murals of Han Dynasty unearthed in Xi'an Jiaotong University are not a scientific cognitive way. As Feng Shi said, "Although the star map only shows the sun, the moon and the 28 constellations, it is beyond doubt that the author tried to symbolize the stars in the whole sky. Therefore, we have every reason to

⁸ Luoyang Museum. 《Briefing on the Excavation of the Tomb of Bu Qianqiu Mural Paintings of the Western Han Dynasty in Luoyang》. *Cultural Relics*, no. 6. 1977. See also Zuoyun Sun. 《Research and Interpretation of the Tomb Mural Paintings of Bu Qianqiu of the Western Han Dynasty in Luoyang》. *Cultural Relics*, no. 6. 1977.

⁹ Hong Wu. *Art in Etiquette: Wu Hong's Compilation of Ancient Aesthetic Histor*. Translated by Zheng Yan et al. Life • Reading • Xinzhi Sanlian Bookstore, 2005.pp602.

regard this map as a schematic round all sky star map."¹⁰ There are differences between this schematic star map and the real star map, but this does not hinder our understanding of the universe.

An interesting question is that the space in the tomb is actually opposite to the real space. Just like a mirror, the underground universe always serves as a reversal of the real universe. "This change seems to imply that the domain of death uses a cognitive model that is opposite to the real world. Through the inversion of the logic of the living, the tomb maker creates a mirror-like underground world for the dead."¹¹ The reason for this is that the tombs reflect the real world with indoor vision. That is to say, the grave designers build tombs based on the vision of the dead. "Drawing celestial phenomena is just a special way to transform catacombs into symbolic spaces. Another popular way is to transform tombs into fairyland or heaven with different image programs."¹² These two ways are people's pursuit of the after-life world. Perhaps from the perspective of the tomb owner's soul, this celestial picture is the real underground universe. For people in the real world, it is a symbolic art fused with the infinite imagination of people.

On the whole, the burial objects in Han tombs and the space built by them are symbolic. As far as the celestial picture is concerned, it draws a picture of the universe in the form of vision. Here, many stars are full of myths and legends, and each image is imaginative, showing its unique artistic charm. It can be seen that the view of time and space that Han people realized was more perceptual, showing a school of life breath. On the one hand, they use ideas to control the space. On the other hand, they make this space have symbolic meaning. This artistic characteristic was more unique in the Han Dynasty and had an internal influence on Chinese classical art.

3. Rhythmic Space

In *The Space Consciousness in Chinese Poetry and Painting*, Zong Baihua believes that for the ancients, "Space and time together determine his universe and settles his life. His life is calm and rhythmic. For him, space and time can not be separated. Spring, summer, autumn and winter cooperates with the four directions: east, west, north and south. This consciousness was expressed in the philosophy of Qin and Han Dynasties. The rhythm of time (one year old, twelve months, twenty-four solar terms) leads the spatial orientation (east, west, north and south, etc.) to formulate our universe. Therefore, our sense of space has become rhythmic and musical with our sense of time "¹³. Therefore, ancient Chinese artists used their hearts to jump into the rhythm of nature, feel the natural space, and then use art to express this rhythmic and rhythmic nature. Just like this, ancient art always presents a harmonious, rhythmic and rhythmic universe. Of course, this

¹⁰ Shi Feng. *Chinese Astronomical Archaeology*. Social Science Literature Press, 2001. pp322.

¹¹ Hong Wu. *Art in Time and Space: Wu Hong's Second Edition of Chinese Art History*. Translated by Mei Mei et al. Life • Reading • Xinzhì Sanlian Bookstore, 2009. pp169.

¹² Hong Wu. *Art in Time and Space: Wu Hong's Second Edition of Chinese Art History*. Translated by Mei Mei et al. Life • Reading • Xinzhì Sanlian Bookstore, 2009. pp169.

¹³ Baihua Zong *Zong Baihua's Complete Works (Volume II)*. Anhui Education Press, 1994. pp431.

aesthetic consciousness was also fully reflected in the astronomical phenomena art of the Han Dynasty.

In Wu Hong's view, there are at least two visual expression systems for the tomb murals of the Han Dynasty to show the universe. "One system illustrates the universe with abstract symbols and graphics, and the other system depicts the universe with concrete images. The two systems have developed in parallel for hundreds of years without replacing each other, which must imply some profound truth"¹⁴. From the perspective of these two visual ways, the former is a schematic form of the universe, while the latter is a rhythmic form of the universe. In fact, the two are not isolated from each other. They are secretly combined. For example, the celestial pictures in the Han tombs of Xi'an Jiaotong University and Qushuhao Han tombs present a schematic space, but the sun, moon, auspicious clouds, auspicious signs, constellations, and stars have a strong sense of interaction and dynamic. In it, the soul of the tomb owner can feel the alternation of the sun and the moon, the hidden stars and the changing seasons, as well as the gasification universe, the clouds and the infinite space. It can be seen that these celestial pictures try to express the rational philosophy concept with a brilliant sensibility. The mural celestial images, such as the Han Tomb in Zaoyuan Village, Pinglu, Shanxi¹⁵, the M61 Tomb in Shaogou, Luoyang¹⁶, the Han Tomb in Buqianqiu, Luoyang, and the Han Tomb in Yintun, Luoyang¹⁷, are basically descriptive or symbolic. But, in fact, behind these descriptive image arts is the schematic universe concept of the Han people. As a result, on the one hand, the celestial picture of the Han Dynasty showed the schematic universe space. On the other hand, it used descriptive or symbolic perceptual forms to show the pulse, rhythm and musicality of the universe space. The reason why the Han people did so, was in fact inseparable from their understanding of space.

More asking can lead us to the question why the celestial picture of the Han Dynasty expressed this rhythmic and musical space. Actually, it is related to people's outlook on the universe. In the eyes of Han people, man and the world are not separated, but united. As Huainan Zi said, the world is chaotic at the beginning, but then there was heaven and earth. With heaven and earth, there is space. This space includes the space of the sky and the space of the earth. The space of heaven is for gods, and the space of earth is for human beings. Human beings are composed of spirit and body. When a person dies, the spirit will return to heaven and the body will return to earth. As the saying goes, "There is a spirit in the sky, while there is a bone in the earth.

¹⁴ Hong Wu. *Art in Etiquette: Wu Hong's Compilation of Ancient Aesthetic History*. Translated by Zheng Yan et al. Life • Reading • Xinzhi Sanlian Bookstore, 2005.pp645.

¹⁵ Shanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Management Committee. 《Mural Han Tomb in Zaoyuan Village, Pinglu, Shanxi》. *Archaeology*, no. 9.1959.

¹⁶ Cultural Relics Team of Henan Provincial Cultural Bureau. 《Report on the Excavation of Luoyang Western Han Dynasty Mural Tomb》. *Journal of Archaeology*, no.2.1964.

¹⁷ Luoyang Second Cultural Relics Task Force. 《Luoyang Yintun Xinmang Mural Tomb》. *Archaeological Journal*, no. 1.2005. See also Shi Feng. 《Luoyang Yintun Western Han Dynasty Mural Tomb Star Map Research》. *Archaeology*, no.1.2005.

When the spirit enters its door and the bone turns its root, how can I survive?"¹⁸ This means that human spirit and body will eventually be integrated into the world. But the death of human beings does not mean vanishing into thin air, but entering another world. In this case, the Han people paid special attention to the spiritual and physical settlement after death. They should carefully design the space of the tomb, in which the funerary objects, Ming objects and murals are all referred to. The sky map is a unique image art in these designs. Of course, the space they imagined was both an infinite beauty and an eternal home. If they want to express this beauty and eternity in their tombs, they need to use the most exquisite composition, the most typical colors, the most fluent lines, etc., to give full play to their imagination, so that this kind of space can be presented in the image art. In this space, the presence of the sun and the moon means the alternation of time, the presence of clouds means the gasification of space, the presence of stars means the rhythm of the universe, the presence of four signs means the changes of the four seasons, and the presence of immortals means the eternity of time. This is a cosmic space full of harmony, rhythm and rhythm.

To sum up, the tomb murals of the Han Dynasty presented such a space, and their main purposes were shown in two aspects. Firstly, in the rhythmic space of the universe, life and nature were integrated. As for the aesthetics of the Han Dynasty, Professor Zhang Fa said: "From the movement of heaven and earth, from the natural phenomenon to the human society, from the court to the whole country, there is a picture of the interaction between heaven and man. This interaction between heaven and man itself is a musical behavior."¹⁹ Because what people are facing in the world is a rhythmic and living space. As a part of nature, people will also maintain a common rhythm with it, so as to maintain the real interaction between heaven and man and the unity of heaven and man. When Han people face death, they tend to regard the world of the dead as a continuation of their life before death, and will certainly infiltrate the rhythmic concept of space into the design of tombs. The celestial picture in the tomb is displayed by the rhythmic painting language of cloud, air, wind, etc., which makes the entire space full of vitality, liveliness and vigor.

Secondly, the soul soars in rhythmic pace. As mentioned before, in the eyes of Han people, people are composed of soul and body. When a person dies, the soul and body will be separated, the soul will not die, and can fly freely to the world of gods. The body will be rotten and perish into the earth. Clearly, their way of transcending life is to hope to enter the eternal realm. From many celestial pictures, we can see the scene that auspicious animals lead the soul to fly. In the tomb, the human soul flies to the space of the universe. It can "be over the river and sea, and under the Wei Que"²⁰, and finally become an immortal free man. Since then, the soul is emancipated and liberated, because it has got rid of the bondage of the body and transcended the secular society. This is the hope of the future world, and it is also a kind of expectation toward the other world.

¹⁸ Ning He. *Huainanzi Collection*. Zhonghua Book Company, 1998, pp504-505.

¹⁹ Fa Zhang. *History of Chinese Aesthetics*. Sichuan People's Publishing House, 2008, pp69.

²⁰ Ning He. *Huainanzi Collection*. Zhonghua Book Company, 1998, pp112.

4. Conclusion

The above discussion of the astronomical map of the Han Dynasty is carried out in order to form a complete understanding of the Han people's concept of space, and then build the connection between archaeology, art, history, philosophy and aesthetics. The discussion is concluded as follows:

First, starting from the celestial picture of the Han Dynasty, we can obtain a visual interpretation of the Han people's concept of the universe. From the perspective of the history of ideas, the unification of the Han Dynasty laid a realistic foundation for the Han people to formulate a unified concept of the universe. Therefore, people bring the universe into a structured knowledge system, which in turn becomes a schema to explain everything in the world. In a word, the schematization of space is a unique idea of the Han Dynasty. It should be noted that this idea belongs to the ideological level after all. How to express it in the form of images is a problem that Han people want to solve. From the existing images, the celestial picture of the Han Dynasty can be seen as a visual expression of this idea. We can reflect the Han people's simulation, dominance, structure and order of the entire space from the sky picture.

Second, the celestial picture of the Han Dynasty shows that what the Han people built was a brilliant space with infinite vitality. In the Han people's mind, the whole universe is in an orderly structure. On the contrary, if the harmonious relationship between heaven and man is broken, people may be punished by God. Thus, when Han people painted the celestial picture in the tomb, they not only made the auspicious things as the focus of the image, but also made the whole picture full of vitality, harmony, rhythm and brilliance. At the same time, the celestial picture is pregnant with the mythical and legendary elements, making the whole universe more interesting. In this way, the view of the universe that Han people want to express is from experience and finally beyond it. Although the world beyond this experience cannot be reached in reality, they place their hopes on the future, hoping that after death, the soul will enter the divine world or fairyland under the attraction of auspicious things, and then truly realize the eternal realm of the unity of heaven and man.

Third, the space concept reflected in the celestial picture of the Han Dynasty had an important impact on traditional Chinese art. It can be seen from these images that the space understood by Han people is a mixture of sensibility and rationality. On the one hand, they want to create a harmonious, rhythmic and lively space through stars, clouds, characters, auspicious signs, etc... On the other hand, they are pursuing the infinite and eternal through this image. Actually, this idea had a profound impact on ancient Chinese art. In fact, no matter how colorful the world described by ancient literature, art and culture is, it is not what people really want to pursue. What they pursue is the boundless and profound artistic conception behind the art world. In other words, the ancients' pursuit of such concepts as Tao, metaphysics, universe, eternity and history is always embodied in perceptual art. About this, we may get enough inspiration from the cosmology contained in the celestial picture of the Han Dynasty.

A propos de l'auteur:

Wang Yi (1980-), docteur en philosophie, professeur associé et superviseur de la maîtrise du Collège du marxisme, Université de technologie du Henan. Ses recherches portent sur l'histoire de l'esthétique chinoise.

About the author:

Wang Yi (1980-), Ph.D., associate professor and master's supervisor of the College of Marxism, Henan University of Technology. His research direction is the history of Chinese aesthetics.

E-mail: huo4huo4@163.com

Address: Lianhua Street, Zhengzhou High-Tech Development Zone, Henan, P.R.China (450001)