

Searching for the Aesthetic Traces of Asagye Guanyin

-- The Song Silver and Gold Backlit Guanyin Statue in Yunnan Provincial Museum as an Example

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Abstract. The Nanzhao Tuzhuan gives the name "Asagye," which is also referred to as "Guanyin." Asaye Guanyin is the most representative and revered Buddhist deity of the Nanzhao Dali Kingdom. The Yunnan Provincial Museum's Song Dynasty Nanzhao Dali silver and gold Asaye Guanyin statue is examined from an aesthetics standpoint in the article, which also notes that the statue is known as "the true body of Guanyin" from a Buddhist point of view and contains "emptiness and tranquillity," "prajna," and "Zen respect" as well as aesthetic appreciation.

Keywords: Aesthetic Perspectives; Asagaya Kannon; Jingruo Zen Zun.

1. Introduction

This gold Guanyin statue from the Dali Kingdom of Nanzhao in the Song Dynasty, which was unearthed in 1978, is said to be the oldest statue of Guanyin to be transported to Yunnan. It is a product of the secularization of Buddhism following its introduction to the Dali Kingdom. It has a period-appropriate appearance and modeling traits that were influenced by the common practices of the Dali Kingdom of Nanzhao at the time. Mr. Li Kunsheng pointed out that: "The face shape of Asaye Guanyin is very similar to that of the modern Bai people, reflecting the local ethnic characteristics, and it is possible that this kind of statue came from the hand of the ancient Bai craftsmen." [1] It is therefore referred to as "the hybrid art of the southwest frontier" and "the lucky star of Yunnan," with a strong sense of the historical context and regional peculiarities, and is still revered by the residents of the Dali region.

The American researcher Helen Chapin (Helen.B.Chapin) has an excellent description of the Asaye Guanyin statue style, and Li Yumin of the National Palace Museum in Taipei, China, also spoke about it. From the surviving objects and the atlas comprehensive study, the face and attire of the Asaye Guanyin statue are characterized by: a forehead square broad, central white hair, two eyebrows are connected to the frontal bone is very high, the nose quasi low hanging, a mouth wide lips thick, cheeks thin, hair bun high, bun in the Amitabha Buddha (Buddha's top); ear dangles heavy, with a neck necklace, the arms wear triangular carving of the Kuanzhi; broad shoulders and waist, the body flattened, the upper body full of favoritism, the waist wear decorated with flowers buckle belt, the lower body is narrow and thin, both legs narrow and thin, and the waist wear decorated with flower buckle belt, the lower body narrow and thin. The lower body is narrow and thin, with two legs standing upright and feet falling; the lower body is covered with a skirt that is tightly attached to the body, with the skirt folds arranged in a regular arc; the hand style is often used for comforting marks. [2] And one of the Song Dynasty Dali bronze Asaye Guanyin statues as the domestic Asaye Guanyin boutique, as Figure 1.

There are now a few scholarly studies on Asagaya Guanyin, but very few of them are done from the standpoint of Zen aesthetics. The standing statue of Asaye Guanyin in the Yunnan Provincial Museum, which is a silver and gold backlit figure of Asaye Guanyin from the Nanzhao Dynasty of the Song Dynasty, will therefore be examined from an aesthetic point of view in this article.



Fig 1. Sung Silver and Gold Back-lit Asagaya Guanyin Statue (Sung Silver and Gold)

2. Empty and Quiet - empty Spirit and Stillness

This Song Dynasty Nanzhao Dali silver backlit gold Asaye Guanyin standing statue was long round face type, face clean, eyebrows like a curved moon, eyes half-open, looking straight ahead, half-high nose, thick lips, and a smile. Its statue's face like quiet, eyes half-open and slightly closed to accentuate the statue of the temperament of peace, an "empty" atmosphere was created. The Sanskrit words for "emptiness" are Śūnya (adjective) and Śūnyatā (noun), which are translated as Shunyata or Shunyodo, and mean nothing, emptiness, silence, purity, and non-existence. The idea that in everything that exists, there is no self, no entity, no self, etc., is called emptiness. This idea is called emptiness. It also refers to the illusory unreality of things or the emptiness and purity of the physical body. This idea has existed since the time of the Buddha, especially in Mahayana Buddhism, and the idea of emptiness is the fundamental idea of the Prajna Sutra system. In Buddhism, "emptiness" means "emptiness of spirit", and the Indian Buddhist idea of emptiness and the practice of emptiness are important elements of Buddhism. The idea of emptiness emphasizes the originality of things, which means that there is no self-nature and that the absence of self-nature leads to emptiness; the emptiness concept is a method of practice for observing the reality of things based on the knowledge of emptiness. [3] However, "emptiness" is not "emptiness", although the Buddha's nature is not empty, it is not the existence of solidity, formlessness, and formlessness. The Mahaparinirvana Sutra says, "The Buddha nature has no self, and the Buddha says that it is self because it is constant." [4]

In such a statue there is not only the beauty of the ethereal, but also the beauty of Jing You. Jing also refers to the quiet truth, that is, the "truth" and "reality" of Buddhism. In the Qing Dynasty, Zhao Yi wrote a poem entitled "Summer in the Garden of Clarity", which says, "I read Shurang Yen leisurely, and the cock crows in the evening after the night of the quiet truth." You refer to the second-person pronoun of God. The fusion of the two under the "empty spirit Jing You" is for the Buddha's karma and all things born of karma, karma born of the law, in the end, but no entity is said to be empty. It is also called the emptiness of the body of reason. The Himalaya Sutra - disciples of the "said:" The dharma in the end without all, is the meaning of emptiness." The same note "Zhao said: the Hinayana view of the origin of the law, no real Lord for the empty meaning. Although the view of the empty, in the empty can not be obliterated, so not exactly. In Mahayana, there is no existence, there is no emptiness, and there is nothing that is not extreme, so there is exactly the meaning of emptiness." The second chapter of the Mahayana doctrine says: "The empty one manifests its name concerning the reason, and the reason is silent in the name of emptiness."



Fig 2. Detail of the front view of the Sung silver and gold backlit Guanyin statue of Asagaya, taken by the author

3. Prajna - Silent Illumination

Under the long skirt is decorated with wet clothes out of the water (like the Indian Shudo Mathura style of thin clothes close to the body of the "wet Buddha"), whether the upper body is bare, the chest wearing a necklace (ancient Indian Buddha neck is a kind of decoration), the arm and wrist are decorated with beads, or the waist is decorated with flower knots. Similar to the Indian Shiva statue is the Guanyin statue. From the perspective of Indian Shiva statues, perhaps we can study this Song Dynasty Nanzhao Dali silver illuminated gold Asanya Guanyin.⁴ Test outcomes.

The Yoga Sutra/Unity Sutra of India contains a detailed explanation of the word Prajna, which is taken from the Indian yoga and means discernment wisdom. The transcription of the Sanskrit word Prajna is Prajna (br). It can also be interpreted as "ultimate wisdom," "discerning wisdom," "ban r," "cymbal r," "ban r," and "Prajna," etc., and especially refers to the genuine understanding of everything and the source of everything. It alludes to the knowledge of everything's genesis and wisdom in perceiving everything for what it is. The Asagaya Guanyin statue, with its device resembling a Southeast Asian statue of Buddha, draws us back to the so-called realm prajna of the six prajnas, which is the way of authenticating the real prajna: "One thought does not arise, the front and back are cut off, and the illumination of the body is clear, that is to say as if one were Buddha." This means that the present mind, which is free of delusion, possesses both silence and illumination, which is the same state of mind as that of Buddha, and this is realm prajna. In his book, *The Tao of Physics: Modern Physics and Oriental Mysticism*, Fritof Capra, a famous contemporary American theoretical physicist, points out, "The most important feature of the Oriental cosmogony, which can also be said to be its essence, is the realization of the unity and interconnectedness of everything. interconnectedness, as well as the appreciation that all phenomena in the world are manifestations of a fundamental unity Eastern traditions have always spoken of this indivisible ultimate reality, which manifests itself in all things and of which all things are parts. It is called 'Brahman' in Hinduism, 'Dharma Body' in Buddhism, and 'Tao' in Taoism; and since it transcends all concepts and categories, all Buddhists also call it 'True Ru'." [5]. The opening words of the Heart Sutra, "Guan Zi Zui Zai Bodhisattva", is a kind of observation of prajna, which is neither the biological observation of the naked eye nor the observation of neural functions, but is similar to "formlessness and formlessness", which is a kind of "formlessness and formlessness". This "view" is neither the biological view of the naked eye nor the view of neural function, but is similar to the "formless and formless" function, which is the "unconscious" view of the present. [6] It can be called the true Buddha's view of the "Way".

In Buddhism, the word "silence" means extinction, which refers to the transcendence of life and death, and the attainment of the state of silence and inaction. Because "Silence" is a shortened version of the term "Silence," it refers to both "complete silence" and "return to silence" after monks and nuns pass away. It denotes absolute silence. All music is silent, but the sound of bells is worn out, according to Changjian's "Inscription on the Zen Garden Behind the Broken Mountain Temple." The goal of illumination is to realize that all dharmas are empty, and that "the one who sees confirms the existence of appearances." Its beauty lies in the simultaneous possession of silence and illumination, shaping the statue of Guanyin with the realm of prajna to complete the meeting with illumination.



Fig 3. The author's own photographs of the details of the clothing of the Sung silver and backlit gold Asaghai statue of Goddess of Mercy.

4. Zen Dignity - Zen Silence Flow

The statue's front is perfectly symmetrical, with a slim body, two shoulders, and a narrow but wide waist. Bare feet are displayed beneath square cylindrical tenons, and the back is embellished with a silver long gourd-shaped openwork carving. A sense of flow between the rigid and the soft is created by the upright posture in contrast to the soft appearance. The crown is adorned with a seated figure of Amitabha, and the high bun is double-braided with the seal of the Myriad Sounds of the Heavens hand-knotted into it. The Buddha in the bun refers to the Buddha who was not there but has suddenly appeared, and its symbolism is that "the heavenly crown of the Buddha is a thousand miles high, and I always wear it in remembrance of kindness." According to the Sutra of the Buddha of Infinite Life, "In the light of the circle, there are millions of billions of Nayuta Ganges River Sand Transformation Buddhas, and each Transformation Buddha has many Transformation Bodhisattvas as his attendants." The Buddha of Transformation is held in one of the forty left hands of the Thousand-Handed Guanyin, hence the name "Hand of the Buddha of Transformation." A Pure Land practitioner who is on his way to the Pure Land will be guided to the Pure Land by a transforming Buddha before he dies, which is also known as a transforming Buddha.

"Zen" is an abbreviation of the Buddhist word "jhana", which is the phonetic translation of the Sanskrit word. It is also translated as "renunciation of evil" or "jungle of merit". Its meaning is "thought practice" or "meditation". It is a method of Buddhist practice. The term "thinking practice" is based on the cause of the name, meaning that one mind is thinking about the cause of the study so that the mind can be fixed, so it is called "thinking practice". The word "meditation" is based on the body of the name, the body of the meditation, silence, and the use of consideration, so it is called meditation. The body of meditation is still and has the use of consideration, so it is called meditation. Jing means determination, and consideration means wisdom and the wonderful body of determination and wisdom is equal, which is said to be "Zenna". The Sixth Patriarchal Platform Sutra - Sitting Meditation Pin No. 5: "Outside, detachment is Zen, and inside, non-chaos is meditation. Outer Zen and Inner Settlement are Zen." The Asagaya Guanyin statue appears as an image of emptiness and serenity, which is itself "Zen," and in addition to "Zen silence," there is an additional sense of flow, Saṃsāra, which means "flow" in the sense of continuity, and "turn" in the sense of rise, meaning that the cause and effect of the law of existence continue to arise. The meaning of Saṃsāra is that the cause and effect of existing dharmas continue to arise. All mortals do good and bad karma, feel the fruits of bitterness and happiness, and are reincarnated in the six interests. Yoga theory fifty-two said: "The cause and effect of all actions are continuous and uninterrupted, is called flow." Vaisnavism said: "Flow is the meaning of continuity, the turn is the beginning of the meaning." The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment says, "There is delusional karma, therefore there is flow, and those who are averse to flow are delusional in seeing Nirvana." Tang Huayan Sutra III says, "All realms of living beings flow in the sea of birth and death." Vaisravana Sutra III says: "All sentient beings are caused to flow through life and death." The Kusha Sutra III says, "The word 'flow' is used to refer to consciousness as the body, which flows in birth and death." Flow is succession, and turn is birth. All the causative and merging existent dharmas, which flow and change and continue, are flow.



Fig 4. Detail of the foot of the Sung silver and gold backlit Guanyin statue of Asaghaya, taken by the author

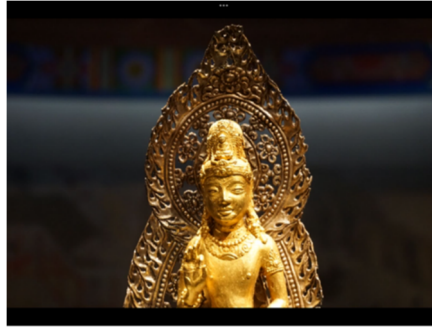


Fig 5. Detail of the bun of the Sung silver and gold backlit Guanyin statue of Asaghaya, taken by the author

5. Conclusion

By searching for aesthetic traces in the Song, silver, backlit, and gold Asaye Guanyin statues in the Yunnan Provincial Museum, the aesthetics of Asaye Guanyin, such as ethereal stillness, silent illumination, and the fluidity of Zen silence, are found to be embedded.

The ultimate realm of silent illumination is the conscious enlightenment of the ultimate existence of the universe, and it is this cosmic philosophy of the ultimate illumination that creates the highest realm of Chinese art - the realm of Zen art that is silent and illuminated with concentration, subtle and profound, and far away and far away. Zong Baihua can be said to have deeply understood Zen philosophy. He understood the ultimate cosmic consciousness of Chinese Zen Buddhism, recognized the ultimate realm of absolute harmony between human existence and the universe, and saw that it was this cosmic-life model that created the highest level of the Chinese art realm. According to Mr. Zong Baihua, the birth of the artistic mind precisely originated from the human being's silent observation of the universe and life: "The birth of the artistic mind is in the moment of forgetfulness of the self in life, which is the so-called 'stillness of illumination' in aesthetics. The birth of the artistic mind occurs in a moment of selflessness in life, which is aesthetically known as 'quiet illumination. The starting point of the stillness of illumination lies in the emptiness of all things, the absence of any attachment of the mind, and the temporary insulation from worldly affairs. At this time, a little awareness of the mind, the quiet observation of all things, as in the mirror, bright and clean, and each in its place, showing their own full, inner, free life, the so-called all things quiet observation are self-completion. This self-acquired, free life of each is shining in silence." Empty Spirit Quiet Thy is a beauty of epiphany in empty Thy. Silence and illumination are the beauty of the meeting of completion and illumination. The flow of Zen Silence lies in the flow, the flow of change, the emptiness of the spirit of serenity, Zen is not fixed in the absolute sense, but the flow is the sense of continuity, and the turn is the sense of rise.

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