

Around Chifeng, the Birth of New Traditions and the Splendor of Funerary Art

Mgr Qilimuge¹, Dr.Hasilu¹, Dr. Erdenetulga Ganchuluun², Dr.Odpurev Gankhuyag²

¹ Mongolian National University of Education, 976, Mongolia

² Wenzhou University of Technology, China

Abstract: The subject of the article concerns the state of Liao (916-1125), existed in Central Asia, occupying the territory of present-day Mongolia, northern China, part of Kazakhstan. They had half nomadic and half agricultural culture. The main idea of the work is to show their rich funerary traditions and its art. Liao dynasty had a very complicated system of burial of the dead and funerary rites. Sometimes not some things remind ancient Egyptian. Under the ground burial chambers found decoration, painting and sculpture, ceramics made by the artist there that period are beautiful and impressive. Clothing of the dead and masks on their faces we can only observe their graves. In Central Asia, the culture and art of Liao differ in many respects, including funerary rites.

Keywords: Liao Dynasty, Nomads, Wall Frescoes, Tombs.

1. Introduction

Nomads in Central Asia, in different historical periods took active cultural relations with their neighbors, this contact had quite a large significance on the societies of the middle Ages. In these contacts, Chinese cultures had their unique characteristics. Chinese culture not only on the nomadic lifestyle, influence reaches various countries of East Asia. Nomads in Central Asia with China maintained cultural contacts at certain distances, in the end they always derived from their family atmosphere. This even today clearly issue every moment. The relationship between the population politics determined culture and art and religion. This idea in each newly emerging Mongolian state looked similar. Of these Liao dynasty (906-1125) emerging in the second stage of the Middle Ages played a unique character on the art of this period (Miao Chun Gang 2015, p-323-324).

In ancient Chinese books it was first recorded in the 4th century AD. First they joined the states of the Turkic Khanate and the Uyghur Khanate. The Liao dynasty had its origins in the land of eastern Siberia. In the books of the Liao dynasty legends recorded: On the banks of the Xar River, a princess flew from heaven, she rode on a small cart pulled by blue oxen, on the road she met a noble boy who had a white horse and white clothes. In their union they were born. These eight children started mainly the lines of the Liao dynasty (Ga Ju Cha 2005, p.33-43).

In Mongolian history, the Liao dynasty is considered to have originated from the Xianbei. They grew in military power from the 9th century, every three years changing the ruler, after the order of the main tribes. In 906, the new khan Taizu Abaoji changed the rules, only his descendants could sit on the throne of the new empire. This state 906, formed over 200 years in Central Asia, played a major role. The population structure and the relationship with the Song dynasty caused the change of the state's name in Chinese Daliao dynasty. After the old name in the Mongolian language is Khitan (Perlee Borjigon, 2008, x.40).

The decision to change the name of the state had several reasons, open policy on different religions, developing different trends of art, equivalent contacts with the Song

dynasty in China. The Liao dynasty khans gave birth to all religions even in governments used the Confucian idea of his teachings. Liao dynasty their core cult of religion was shamanism, through open policy at one time Confucianism, Buddhism, shamanism after mixing peaceful mood spread. Of these Buddhism had a greater role among the aristocrat (Yuan Kang Wang 2013, p.207-232). These new ideas of religion on the Liao dynasty societies and their traditions had a lot of significance, from those on rites, funeral rituals. This can be observed today on their graves, In China, the autonomous region of Inner Mongolia archaeologists found more than 100 graves. These monuments today provide us with many secrets from that period (Wu Hung 2000, p.100-102).

2. Description of The Graves

The graves of the Liao period can be divided into three parts, the early period, the middle period, the late period.

Before the advent of Buddhism and other religions, the Liao dynasty had different funeral rules. In the Chinese records of the Song dynasty, they noted:

In the traditions of the Khitans, the body of the dead was left in the forest, the details on the branches of trees. After three years, they will come to this place, collect the bones of the dead, then burn them, in the winter in the sun, in the summer in the shade, travel, when we will do the hunting, give us large profits. He gives spirits vodka, pouring it on the ground. This ritual has four parts, the first body is left in the forest, the durgi burns the remains, the third ashes of the dead are buried underground, the fourth draws portraits, gives on the altars of the house. Then when the father or mother died in the spring, he gives immediately to the ground, they build a shelter on the grave because of the humidity. And when it will happen in the fall it will be done above written this rule is made. In the Khitans their core culture the body of the dead had no clothes nor did they offer anything as a sacrifice (Perlee Borjigon 2008, p.28-34).

When the Liao dynasty adopted foreign religion changed, they built large funeral facilities, a lot of valuable items were put, including similar as other nomads buried together horses and bows, saddle. When the Liao dynasty 916 official began to call the Daliao dynasty, the tomb of Princess Chenguo with

her husband, refers to the initial period of this state. This tomb of Princess Chenguo is the most interesting and rich monuments provide for us. The Khitans began to build large funeral facilities, on the walls painted beautiful frescoes, funeral clothes, and golden masks on the faces and so on new elements used in the ceremonies of the dead. Their traditional views on the dead began to be richer and more important than before.

This tomb will allow us to learn more about the art and culture of the Liao dynasty. The tomb of Chenguo and her husband was discovered in 1985, when they began to build a new dam on the river. Chinese archaeologists arrived at the site two years later. In Inner Mongolia, Tongliao Province,

Naiman County, this site is located. The length of the tomb is 16.4 m, the construction is continuous, on the walls there are frescoes painted with natural paints. Five tomb halls are connected by five streets with each other. All rooms are dome roofs. The main street is 6.5 m long. Both sides of the walls are colorful frescoes, the floors are made of bricks. The eastern and western rooms are 1.93 m high and round. The southern and northern rooms have wooden doors. The southern room on both walls are frescoes that show how her life was, the central rooms are the tomb of Chenguo and her husband. In front of the bodies there are ritual parts (Sun Je Hua 2008, p.43), (Figure 1).

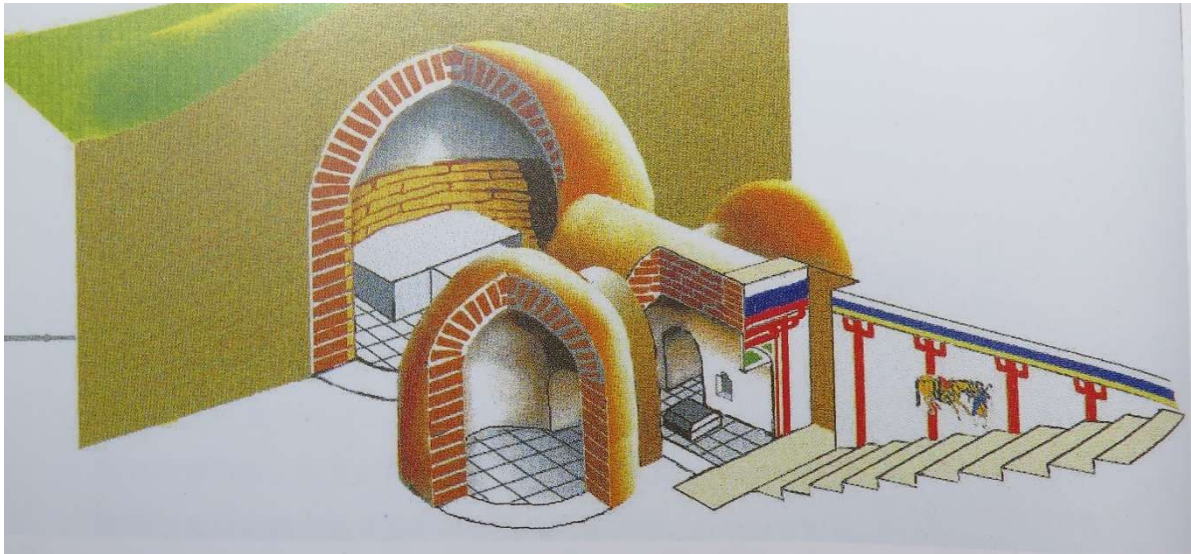


Figure 1. Main appearance of the tomb, (The princess of Liao dynasty 2008, p.44)

The murals of the tomb of Princess Qinghua of China and her husband are the main representative of the early and middle periods of the Qing Dynasty. The tombs of the nobles of the early period of China do not have rich wall decorations. Only the doors and the tops of the columns are decorated with paintings. According to research, the form of decorating the tombs with paintings has been widespread among the nobles since the middle of the Qing Dynasty. They decorated the entire walls, ceilings, auxiliary rooms, and even the streets of the tomb with paintings. The main content of the paintings is the portraits of the buried person, the women and men who surrounded him, the nature, the depictions of various animals

and birds, and the scenes showing the life of the nomads, and the depictions of servants riding horses. There are many depictions of the various forms of nomadic life, including the depictions of horses and camels, as well as hunting scenes. The most important picture in the tomb of Princess Qinghua is the picture of two officials leading horses on the left and right sides of the central door. It is worth noting that the two pictures are slightly different. The ages of the two men depicted in the picture and the horses they ride, their saddles and bridle, are different. Men and women are depicted on the right and the women on the left, in accordance with nomadic customs (Sun Je Hua., 2008, p. 63-64), (Figure 2, 3).



Figure 2. Chenguo Tomb with Horses, (The princess of Liao dynasty 2008, p.64)



Figure 3. Chengguo Tomb of Notables with Horses, (The princess of Daliao dynasty 2008, p-65)

These frescoes painted on the walls show us what was their symbol and important totems. So today in various monuments you can see the symbol of the queen and princesses were phoenixes. This can be seen on their crowns and utility items. Chengguo's grave with her husband has all silver clothes, each has a crown. In this grave they found exactly 3225 pieces of items (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Crown of Princess Chengguo, decorating with phoenixes, on top is a Buddhist monk

On these frescoes you can see men have characteristic hair shape. From their traditional religions noted so that they believed the sun as the main totem. Also that they cut their hair because of the rays of the sun first got the Khitan. Every morning they made prayers for the sun. Most of the paintings of men do not have hats. They are distinguished from each other by their clothes. Their hair shape can be divided into four (Figure 5). Observing the frescoes you can see quickly painted (Figure 6). On the funeral rituals the longest lasted building the mausoleum. For this reason the body of the dead to make mummification. On the upper parts they made a hole, took the music, in the same way all the organs will be pulled out. Then through smoke and using salt they dried the body of the dead.

From these frescoes you can learn that the painters of this period knew the proportion of the human well, in one movement they made a nice line. They knew well mainly the character of the mimic people of the Liao dynasty. Attributes on colors just as they came like all nomads of the middle Ages. They respected the white color, for this reason the dignitaries rode a white horse, dressed in white. In rituals they give the gods white animals.

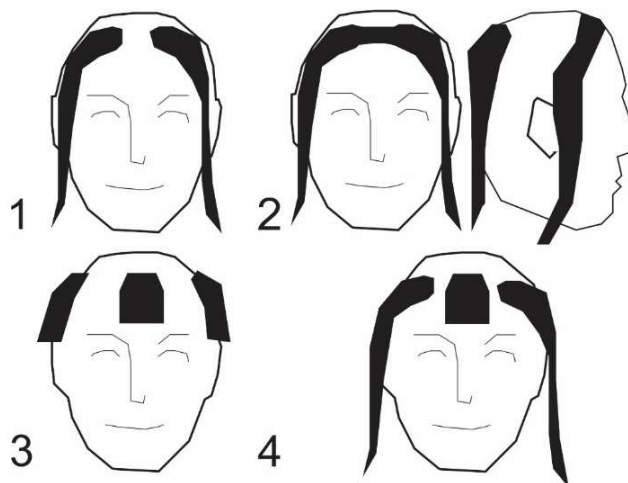


Figure 5. The shape of the Khitan hair, (Fig. Odpurev Gankhuyag)



Figure 6. Frescoes on the walls of the tomb, (photo Odpurev Gankhuyag)

On the frescoes you can see what kind of saddle they had. You can see these saddles are very similar to the XIII century Mongolian saddle. They have a much wider seat, in the saddle decorations you can see dragons, lions or snow leopards, plant decoration, the most popular motif is the phoenix (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Ladies' saddle, phoenix decoration, (Asian art gallery, China)

3. Conclusion

Late Liao dynasty strongly adopted the religion of Buddhism, because of this changed the rules of the funeral again. It began to burn the body of the dead. Rites of burning first made a wooden sculpture of this man. The face must be more similar, all parts of this sculpture must be movable (legs, hands). Later on the chest sculptures made zurki on this gave the ashes of the body of the dead (Fig. 9). These rituals were used in Asia by the Chinese Tang dynasty. This ritual first only aristocrats used, but later who could stand it performed the rites. Such funeral rituals among the nomads belong only to the Liao dynasty. No nomadic grave was so mummified and preparation for the second life. The Liao period tombs are important for studying the art of medieval nomads (Perlee Borjigon 2008, p.30).

The Liao dynasty over 200 years of development through the invasions of the Jin dynasty fell in 1125. The prince of the Liao dynasty with the remaining people, invading the present territory of Kazakhstan, founded a new dynasty, the Western Liao.



Figure 8. Three-wheeled porcelain Liao dynasty, (photo: Odpurev Gankhuyag)



Figure 9. Wooden funerary sculptures of Liao dynasty, (photo Odpurev Gankhuyag)

References

- [1] Perlee Borjigon, Пэрлээ Боржгон, 2008, (монгол бичгээр) Хятанчуудын оюуны соёл, Хятанчуудын эдийн соёл, Өвөр Монголын ардын хэвлэлийн хороо, Хөх хот
- [2] Miao Chungang, 2015, The Evolution of Filial Piety in Ancient China and Its Influence on Neighboring Countries: Taking the Classic of Filial Piety as the Chief Source, Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education
- [3] Naomi Standen, 2011, Integration and Separation: The Framing of the Liao Dynasty (907–1125) in Chinese Sources.
- [4] Ga Ju Cha., 2005, The Lives of the Liao (907-1125) Aristocratic Women, Arizona university, USA
- [5] Sun Je Hua., 2008, The princess of Daliao dynasty, The Excavation of the Chenguo princess tomb, Inner Mongolian University press.
- [6] Hugh Honour., 2006., Historia sztuki swiata, polish edition, 'Arkady', Warszawa.
- [7] Yuan Kang Wang., 2013, Explaining the Tribute System: Power, Confucianism, and War in Medieval East Asia, Journal of East Asian Studies, USA
- [8] Wu Hung., Two Royal Tombs from the Early Liao: Architecture, Pictorial Program, Authorship, Subjectivity, China