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# The Situation and Protection of Contemporary Wood Engraving Chinese New Year Pictures

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**Abstract:** Wood engraving Chinese New Year pictures have the characteristics of bright colors and exaggerated modeling, and the use of color also has its own uniqueness. They have a history of nearly thousands of years in China and started from the people, and are closely related to people's life. wood engraving Chinese New Year pictures show people's life scenes, and people's yearning for a better life can also be seen through them. Based on this, this article carries on the profound analysis to wood engraving Chinese New Year pictures, they are the treasure of our traditional culture, which can aim to arouse people's attention to the traditional craft culture.

**Keywords:** Wood Engraving Chinese New Year Pictures; Traditional Craft; Traditional Culture; Folk Art; Art Conservation

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## Introduction

In the development of a country, culture is filled with every bit of experience. Every nation has its own culture engraved on its path, which is a unique landscape that can never be duplicated. It is everyone's cultural instinct to protect their national individuality. Feng Jicai said, "wood engraving Chinese New Year pictures are in danger of becoming extinct and will eventually disappear if they are not protected". And he also said that: "No matter what the outside world thinks, we should try to protect Chinese New Year pictures." Every Chinese should have a sense of responsibility to protect traditional culture, which needs to be inherited and carried forward by a new generation of young people. Therefore, we should call on everyone to pay attention to some traditional culture and art, and take actions to protect the endangered wood engraving Chinese New Year pictures, so that this art form can be handed down forever.

## 1. About wood engraving Chinese New Year pictures

In the Chinese art dictionary, New Year pictures are defined in this way: New Year pictures are a kind of Chinese paintings. They are generally used during the Spring Festival and posted on the doors and Windows of every family. They not only play the role of dressing up the environment but also have a festive feeling. New Year pictures are pictures posted during the Spring Festival. Every Spring Festival, you can take down the old New Year pictures and paste them on the new one, and then enjoy them for another year. According to research findings, although New Year paintings and Spring couplets are different in form, they both originate from door gods. About the Spring and Autumn period, it was divided into the Western Han Dynasty and the Eastern Han Dynasty. At that time, Shenta and Yulei will have a powerful image in people's hearts. Therefore, during the Spring Festival, people will carve the portrait of two gods on the mahogany, and then hang the portrait at their door to protect the house, or put it at the door of the bedroom. It is believed to have the function of exorcism and blessing. Later in the Tang Dynasty, because Zhong Kui is good at eliminating ghost, therefore, people often use the portraits of Zhong Kui and Yu Chikong on doors as New Year's pictures, and they are used as door gods.<sup>[1]</sup> After the Song Dynasty, The rise of engraving technology has created favorable technical conditions for the production of wood engraving New Year

pictures. This way of making New Year pictures replaces the original way of drawing New Year pictures, so that the New Year pictures of door gods, which are only hung in large families, are also displayed in ordinary people's families. In the Qing Dynasty, New Year paintings were more developed. Every household, whether rich or not, would paste door gods and hang New Year pictures during the Spring Festival. This custom prevails all over China, and many places have production bases of New Year pictures, which makes the art of New Year pictures develop vigorously. However, as the customs of different places are not the same, so there are great differences in the production methods and styles of New Year pictures. For example, the New Year wood engraving picture of Zhuxian Town in Kaifeng, it is not only representative but also the birthplace of Chinese New Year wood-plank paintings. Taohuawu in Suzhou, it is an excellent representative of Jiangnan New Year paintings in China. As well as the Southern wood engraving New Year paintings. These representative New Year paintings are the treasures of our country's traditional culture and with the gradual development, they have become a school of their own in the folk art.

## **2. Exquisite carving and color gorgeous beauty - Tianjin Yangliuqing wood engraving painting**

Located 15 kilometers west of Tianjin, Yangliuqing is a famous thousand-year-old town, adjacent to the famous Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, so the trade here is very prosperous.<sup>[2]</sup> It can be called an economic center, where most of the trade between people takes place. Besides merchants, lot of literati often gather here. Yangliuqing New Year pictures are not only popular locally, but also have a great influence on Wuqiang New Year pictures in Hebei province and Weifang New Year pictures in Shandong province. Different from other methods of making New Year pictures, Yangliuqing New Year pictures are mostly made in the way of "half printing and half painting". This method is mainly used to carve lines on wood and then color them with a pen, so they are rich in Chinese style. In addition, different artists adopt different techniques of expression and styles in the drawing of New Year wood engraving paintings, but they all have their own characteristics and have very high artistic value. Yangliuqing New Year paintings can show the image of the characters lifelike, with very delicate brushwork. The characters and the environment echo each other, the atmosphere is harmonious, especially in the display of historical themes, the thickness of the line changes, and we can see its concise characteristics. They are also very bold in the use of color, bright and colorful. There are even some New Year paintings, which not only retain the strong interest of the wood engraving paintings, but also highlight the bright and colorful hand-painted paintings, so that the arts complement each other. Yangliuqing New Year paintings also have a wide range of themes, such as historical plots, folk customs, and even common flowers and landscapes. The most common New Year pictures are those that reflect People's Daily life. These New Year pictures not only have appreciation value, but also have high research value. They are precious treasures left by predecessors to future generations. The production of Yangliuqing New Year wood engraving pictures involves many fields, so the styles displayed are not the same, and different styles have different characteristics. The dolls are common in New Year paintings. The dolls are plump and cute. There are commonly dolls holding carp, which make people feel happy and symbolize good meaning.

## **3. Rough and interesting Weifang Yangjiabu New Year paintings**

Among the traditional handicrafts of Shandong Province, Weifang Yangjiabu New Year paintings are one of the representative works with a long history. Yangjiabu New Year paintings were first built in the Ming Dynasty and began to rise in the Qing Dynasty. They usually focus on showing People's Daily life. In composition, it is not only complete but also well-proportioned, with smooth and concise lines. Their main creative inspiration is from the life of farmers, local flavor is very strong, atmosphere is very strong in the festival. Yangjiabu New Year pictures have a wide range of materials, but mainly to show good luck as the theme. Their advantage in addition to rich subject matter, but also to show people's folk customs and beliefs. The image of shandong people's hospitality has left a deep impression on people, so New Year paintings often show the happy and harmonious scene of greeting and blessing between friends and relatives.<sup>[3]</sup> Although Yangjiabu

New Year paintings have a strong local flavor, their unique artistic presentation techniques make them walk into the palace of art. People began to realize their value and dig deeply and reorganize research. The production method of Yangjiabu's wood engraving New Year pictures is relatively simple and basically handmade. Their production method is also different from that of other New Year pictures. Artists usually paint with ash or sticks of willow, and then trace lines to facilitate the carving. After that, color and simple description make the New Year pictures more vivid. In the composition, people will first consider the public's psychology and vision, the design of the picture should be able to meet the vision of farmers. When carving, the material needs to be carefully chosen, we should choose the right wood for carving, generally the use of pear wood is the most, mahogany second.

#### **4. Full structure and decorative Taohuawu New Year paintings in Suzhou**

Taohuawu Is located in Suzhou. Taohuawu New Year painting is an important folk New Year painting in Jiangnan area. Suzhou is rich in products, just because of the rich material conditions, the pursuit of the people here is elegant culture. Especially in the Spring Festival, etiquette and customs are rich and colorful. These material and spiritual pursuits have created favorable conditions for the development of New Year paintings. In Hongzhi Period of Ming Dynasty, Tang Bohu was built a peach Blossom Temple here, and its reputation has spread far and wide since then. Taohuawu New Year pictures originated in the Ming Dynasty, during the Yongzheng and Qianlong of Qing Dynasty, all parts of Jiangnan are affected by the Taohualu New Year pictures and continuous development, wood engraving New Year pictures also appeared in the Hanjiang in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties.. With the development of social culture and economy, the figures in Taohuawu New Year paintings in the Qing Dynasty are well arranged and lifelike. In particular, New Year paintings depicting Suzhou's prosperous scene and urban customs break through the traditional pattern, most of which are three feet, four feet and six feet, and are the center of traditional landscape.<sup>[4]</sup> The expression of Taohuawu has also absorbed the perspective of the west, with a sense of space, but also presents the copperplate lines and the three-dimensional effect of Yin and Yang. After Xianfeng, Taohuawu New Year paintings had a great change in form, replacing simple lines. The colors tended to be primary colors, with strong folk decoration and quarto size. In the late Qing Dynasty, the development of lithography had a great impact on the wood-block New Year paintings. Taohuawu New Year paintings returned to the countryside from the city and became a vivid portrayal of rural culture together with blueprint cloth.

#### **5. Conclusion**

With the trend of global economic and cultural integration, people should reverse the marginalized and weak cultural status of Chinese New Year pictures, realize their equal rights and interests, and save them from extinction. It is one of the protection projects of Chinese New Year paintings to provide a living space that can be seen from the perspective of human life and aesthetics and leave a clear life path for future generations. With the passage of time, historical culture and folk art should also be given their rightful place in history. Through this article, I want to remind you that the more national something is, the more cosmopolitan it is. This view has been widely accepted in the development of human civilization.

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