



An Analysis of the Use of Brown Horse Chicken Subjects in Traditional Chinese Painting

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Abstract

In ancient times, people's lives were influenced by tools and sorcery, and they believed in totem worship. For Chinese people, "chicken" is part of poultry property. As early as the Stone Age, the shape of a chicken was found in the pottery sculptures excavated as funerary objects, and the subject matter of chickens has been highly valued by painters throughout the ages. In primitive rock painting, the Warring States painting on silk, Han portrait bricks, portrait stones, etc. "Chicken" has a wide variety of biological varieties, and its themes are also included in the painting. All appear the image of a "chicken". This variety appears more frequently in ancient Chinese palace paintings, most of the techniques is the traditional Chinese realistic painting, and its representative significance is also very interesting. Among them, the brown pheasant has a unique aesthetic significance in traditional Chinese painting, and this article will discuss the use of the subject of the brown pheasant in traditional Chinese painting.

Keywords

Chicken, Brown horse chicken, Traditional Chinese painting

1. Background

In ancient times, people's lives were influenced by tools and sorcery, and they believed in totem worship, so abstract symbols in the form of pheasants appeared in Yunnan as early as the Zhou Dynasty, but the idea of chickens in paintings began to appear in the Zhou Dynasty, it can be seen that very early "chicken" symbol was used in the life of people, the purpose is "to drive away evil spirits". In the Tang Dynasty, the real meaning of brocade chicken painting began to take shape slowly. During the Han Dynasty, the "five virtues" of the chicken appeared: "You do not see the chicken alone? The one who wears a crown on his head is also a man; the one who has a distance between his feet is also a man; the one who dares to fight when the enemy is in front is also a brave man; the one who sees the food phase is also a benevolent man; the one who keeps watch at night and does not lose time is also a believer." (Han Ying, 1123-1202). Therefore, the "five virtues" of the chicken are summarized in the article written by Yang Danxia, a researcher of the National Palace Museum: "The door god painting of the Han Dynasty is the earliest recorded work of painting chickens today." The mature period of "chicken painting" was in Song and Yuan dynasties.

Chinese painting with "chicken" as its subject matter has gone through four stages, from the Song Dynasty's brushwork to the Yuan Dynasty's both working and writing, and the Ming and Qing Dynasties' both-working and painting, to the modern development of the mature chicken. There are many varieties of "chicken" creatures in China and many kinds of their subjects have been painted, among which the brown chicken has a unique aesthetic significance in traditional Chinese painting (Wang Shuang, 2022).

The "brown martin" is a Chinese specialty bird, which was found in the Cenozoic strata of the Peking Man site in Zhoukoudian, Beijing, 60 million years ago. The scientific name is said to be "mantchuricum" for the first time after the Englishman Winshaw bought a specimen of Brown Moorhen in Tianjin market in 1862, a rare bird of Chinese specialty, a national-level protected animal, and a vulnerable species of IUCN. In 1984, the People's Government of Shanxi Province designated the Brown Moorhen as the "Provincial Bird" of Shanxi Province. In 1984, the People's Government of Shanxi Province designated the Brown Moorhen as the "Provincial Bird" of Shanxi Province.

The brown pheasant belongs to the large pheasant group, and there are several species of pheasants, including the brown pheasant, blue pheasant, white pheasant, and Tibetan pheasant. Among them, the "crossbill" of the brown pheasant is called "crossbill" in ancient times, also known as "turkey" alias "crossbill" "Jui Chicken", "Ear Chicken", "QingFeng", "Black Chicken", "Ear Chicken" and so on (Zhao Yifan, 2018).

The appearance of the male and female is isomorphic, body height of about 60 cm, a body length of about 1.2 meters, and weighing about 5 kg, the whole body appears rich brown, the head and neck gray-black, the top of the head has crown-like short black velvet feathers, face, cheeks naked without feathers, is bright red, the ears have a cluster of particularly well-developed feathers like a pair of white horns, often protruding from the neck, tail slightly laterally flat or flat, the central tail feathers then the outermost tail feathers are about twice as long, due to the central Tail feathers the feathers are mostly draped down, as if the horse's tail, commonly known as the "horse chicken line".

2. Ancient Records and Representative Works

There are also many records about the brown horse chicken in ancient Chinese texts, for example, the Book of Birds state, "Crossbill is also a bird of perseverance, and perseverance does not know death." Shan Hai Jing - Zhongshan Jing: "The mountain of Hui Zhu has many mulberries on it, and its birds have many crossbills" Cao Zhi of the Three Kingdoms wrote the preface of "Crossbill Fugue": "Crossbill is a fierce bird, and its fight has no victory or defeat in the end and is expected to die." Li Shizhen, "Compendium of Materia Medica", Avian Section, Volume 18: "crossbill is like a child and large, yellow and black, the head has hair and horns like a crown. Sex love to be among the peer party, there are invaded, straight to the fight, although death is not set." "Shuowen Jiezi," said: "crossbill, a courageous boy also, its fight, a death is stopped." Etc (Li Chengjie, Liu Huanjin, & FengJingyi, 1894), which are listed in detail on the official website of Hebei Xiaotai Mountain National Nature Reserve and in the article "Historical Records on the Brown Horse Chicken and its Name Interpretation".

The above records all reflect that the brown pheasant is a brave and warlike bird that fights to the death, and because its distinctive nature symbolizes the spirit of national struggle, its tail feathers have been used as a reward for victory since the Warring States period, thereby enhancing the fighting mood and sense of honor of the soldiers. The article "The origin of the crossbill and the feathered plume from the brown pheasant - the brown pheasant is a bird of national struggle" tells in detail the feathers of the brown pheasant until the Qing Dynasty, the use, and ranking of the feathered plume system as the official top at different times.

There are few Chinese paintings on the subject of brown horse chickens that have come down through the ages, and the following are currently worth a brief analysis.

There are two works from the Ming Dynasty, Yin Hong's "Early Spring Flowers and Fowl" and Lv Ji's "The Picture of the Brocade Rooster", and in the Qing Dynasty, during the Qianlong period, Yu Sheng and Zhang Weibang's "The Page of Turkey in Imitation of Jiang Tingxi's Bird Album", Lang Shining and Jin Tingbiao's "The Picture of Turkey", and Ma Jinlin's "The Picture of Turkey".

"Early Spring Flowers and Fowl" by Ming Dynasty court painter Yin Hong is a painting of silk with color, 168.7 cm in length and 102.7 cm in width, first collected at the Kemble Art Museum in the United States. The main subject of the painting is two brown pheasants crouching on a rock, one pecking its feathers and the other taking a nap, their eyes half-opened and half-closed, their plumes intact, with distinctive characteristics of their species and vivid, natural posture. The picture as whole records the harmonious scene in early spring, when the snow has not completely melted, a small amount of spring water flows from the crevices of the cliff, the white plum and elegant camellia are in full bloom, and various mountain birds are perched in the warm sunlight at noon, pecking, grooming and chirping.

Palace painter of the same period Lv Ji "brocade chicken" silk color, 166 cm long, 91.5 cm across, early included in the Qing dynasty Zhang Dayong recorded in the "Ziyuezhai book of calligraphy and painting", later for the Chi-

nese collector Wang Jiqian private collection, the painting in November 2009 in the Capital Museum held "treasure five hall—overseas Chinese important painting and calligraphy collection -Important overseas Chinese painting and calligraphy collection" exhibition, the same year in Beijing Yanjing Publishing House published "Bao Wu Tang - important overseas Chinese painting and calligraphy collection" book, in June 2010 Beijing Hanhai Auction Co. It was auctioned in June 2010 by Beijing Hanhai Auction Co. In the environment of "royal wealth, Xu Xi's wildness", Lv Ji's early works were heavy brushwork, but after he entered the palace and became a royal painter, he painted mostly in ink and light colors, and also produced many excellent works, such as "Peony and Brocade Rooster" and "Guihua Mountain Bird", etc. The change in painting style was mostly based on the change in the royal aesthetic preferences at that time. This painting is more like a mature work of painting style, in which two brown horses and chickens with dark color are painted with neat and delicate brushwork, and the backgrounds of mountains and trees are depicted, and the technique is borrowed from the Southern Song Dynasty "a corner of horse and half of summer".

"Bird Spectrum", also known as "Imitation of Jiang Tingxi Bird Spectrum", in which more than 360 rare birds are introduced to the brown pheasant: "turkey, red and yellow eyes, teeth red beak, Yin Dan cheeks, two cheeks under each white hair horns grow out of the back of the head. The Head, back, belly, and wings are green-brown with fine white hair, and a long tail, the upper half is white Cui tip and the end the dark blue. Crimson feet, rice red claws." The turkey page was painted by Yu Province and Zhang Weibang, and is in the collection of the National Palace Museum. In the picture, a single full-side brown pheasant is in the center, shallow mountain waterfall flows in the distance as the background, this work is heavy in the knowledge of rare bird animal characteristics of science, according to the current searchable literature, the 13 years of Guangxu "Chengde Prefecture" 29 volumes of "animal products and birds" also have today's "brown pheasant" called "Turkey", the reason for such a name is that the bird's eyes around a short circle of hair like burning embers. This "turkey" is not the turkey used as the main Thanksgiving meal in the United States.

The "Turkey" painted by the Italian missionary Lang Shining and Jin Tingbiao in the Qing Dynasty was exhibited at the "'The World of Qing' - Kang Yong Qian Palace Art Exhibition" organized by the Long Museum in Shanghai in August 2015. The work was exhibited at the "The World of the Qing Dynasty" - The Great Exhibition of Kang, Yong, Qian Court Art at the Long Museum in Shanghai in August 2015, and fetched 71.3 million coins in the "Hundred Generations of Biao Cheng" evening sale of ancient paintings and calligraphy at Poly's autumn auction in Beijing in 2017. The information in the "General Collection of the Archives of the Office of the Interior Affairs of the Qing Palace" records the birth of these two works in detail. The "Green Sheep" is now in the National Palace in Taipei and the whereabouts of the "Turkey" are unknown. The "turkey" mentioned in this article is recorded in the "Qing Palace Office of the archives", in the Qianlong 26th year, on the North Sea East coast of the painting of the boat Zhai do "paste drop" with, until the Eight-Power Allied Forces invaded Beijing in 1900 and began to be scattered among the people, the Republic of China was the collection of Guo Baochang the work has been published in various publications.

Turkey on Silk, color on silk, 212 cm in length and 188.5 cm in width. The whole work combines Western techniques with traditional Chinese painting techniques, not only with ink and wash brushwork, but also using elements such as perspective, light and dark, and layers. In the center of the painting is a brown chicken standing on a rock with its head turned to the right, its eyes shining, its claws clasped to the rock, and its sharp beak bent, making it very graceful. In the lower right corner, a brown pheasant with its head twisted and pecking at its feathers appears to be looking at the turbulent stream in the rocks. The picture is also painted with a bent and coiled pine, the bark is mottled and pale, the pine branches are gnarled on it, the needles and leaves are all in good shape, together with purple lingzhi, white peony, small flowers around the scene, etc., creating a kind of ancient and elegant scenery with the right combination of East and West, the upper right corner of the picture is Yu Minzhong (1714-1780), the university scholar of Wenhua Hall inscribed Emperor Qianlong's imperial poem "Turkey", the late Republican painter Ma Jin also copied the "Turkey" and "Green Sheep" (Yang Danxia, 2005).

The style of the brown pheasant in the works listed above is accurate, realistic, and realistic, so it can be seen that the creation period was not less ornamental. The background of the above painters' paintings is all the palace, which also indicates a certain extent that the brown pheasant was more often kept in the palace or private garden as an ornamental bird at that time (Xue Dezheng, 1957).

3. Modern masterpieces

In December 2010, Shanghai Oriental International Commodities Auction Co., Ltd. auctioned a painting entitled "The Golden Rooster Exorcising Evil" for RMB 1,232,000, which is a work of the famous modern painter Jiang Hanting. In the painting, the brown horse-rooster is located on the left side of the picture, clutching the trunk of a tree and standing almost vertically upside down, gazing intently at the small snake he has just caught on his left foot. Another work by Jiang Hanting, "Green Pine, Horse, Rooster", appeared in the spring auction of Shanghai Gongmei in July 2017, with an estimate of RMB 400,000, standing scroll, color on paper, 128 cm in length and 54 cm in width inscribed: "Painted by Jiang Hanting in Difang, Yushan", a seal of inscription: "Haunting, Jiang Yu". In this painting, the brown pheasant spreads its tail feathers under the green pine, seemingly strolling toward the left side of the picture.

The Chinese paintings of the brown pheasant, "Mountain Fowl" edited by Zhang Wen of Hubei Fine Arts Publishing House in 2014, include an introduction on how to use the white drawing technique to paint the brown pheasant, while those using the realistic technique are relatively more common in modern times, such as the painter Zhu To, who used simple and condensed realistic brush and ink to shape the artistic image of the bird in the Shanxi province. To be able to create this subject matter many times in the Pangquangu Nature Reserve sketching, in 2002 the Tianjin Yangliuqing Painting Society published Zhu To's painting "painting method of the brown horse chicken", Mr. Zhu To's image of the brown horse chicken in the appropriately exaggerated deformation in the brush, rather square than round, with the obvious sharp, right angle, obtuse angle, other symbolic elements, crisp and sharp to show the brown horse chicken raptor comes with aggression, majestic, domineering Mr. Zhu To's representative works of brown pheasants include "Qiong Shu Xuan Cang" and "Rare Bird Welcoming Snow" among which "San Jin Rare Bird" was included in the long scroll of Shenzhou Ode Painting in 2005, which successfully flew to the sky on Shenzhou 6, with two brown pheasants looking far away with their necks in the green bamboo and snowy fields. In addition, many contemporary painters who create paintings on the theme of brown pheasants, such as Sun Qibin, Guo Jianyang, Chen Dongshan, Shan Jianyue, Zhang Junbo, etc. There are also many exhibitions and thematic painting exchanges on the theme of brown pheasant.

In addition, there is a wood engraving of "Crossbill Fighting" in the Collection of Ancient and Modern Books. In February 1989, China issued "Crossbill" special stamps with a face value of 8 cents and 50 cents; in October 1998, the government issued a commemorative coin with a face value of 5 yuan, which is one of the 10 rare animal coins issued by China. In February 2000, the government issued a special stamp entitled "National Key Protection of Wild Animals (Grade 1)" with a face value of RMB (Li Shigang, Yang Ximing, & ZhouZiyi, 2012). In May 2022, the mascot of the 16th Shanxi Provincial Games - Xiang Xiang. There are also all kinds of cultural and creative peripherals, network expression packs, and other derivative products.

4. Concluding remarks

Rooster has the meaning of "auspiciousness", and also has the meanings of "official on an official", "great luck", "five sons of the family", "wealthy foundation", "chicken eats five poisons", and "good luck". In summary, Chinese painting works with the theme of brown horse and chicken are available from ancient times to the present day in the categories of brushwork. From the technique, there are traditional double-hook coloring, chafing and dabbing, wet and dry, and the combination of Chinese and Western brush techniques; from the layout of the picture, there is the traditional Chinese scattered perspective, as well as the Western focal point perspective (ZhaoYue, 2021). In the heyday of Chinese bird and flower painting when the subjects of brocade chickens and pheasants were highly favored, it was not easy for the subject matter of brown pheasants to still have a place.

On July 1, 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping put forward the "four self-confidence" in his speech at the conference celebrating the 95th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. The Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee also pointed out that "cultural self-confidence is a more basic, broader and deeper self-confidence, and is the most basic, deepest and most enduring force in the development of a country and a nation." However, the author searched about 300 academic journals, dissertations, and other materials related to the brown pheasant, among which a total of more than 200 articles involved biology, wildlife conservation, animal husbandry, and animal medicine. Many scholars' research tends to focus on general biology, conservation biology, macro ecology, microscopic molecular biology, and genetic diversity of brown pheasant species, and it can be seen that China attaches great importance to the protection of endangered species. However, the above research information has little significance in the innovation of the subject matter of Chinese paintings of brown pheasants.

At present, there are two limitations to the creation of the brown horse chicken theme: the study of the cultural heritage of historical development and the lack of integration in the cross-field. The second: is insufficient attention in the group of young cultural and artistic workers, and barriers to inheritance and development innovation. The above two points have led to too few fine works on this subject matter appearing in the field of Chinese painting creation in the new era. General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out that cultural identity is the deepest level of identity. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance the cultural identity of Chinese youth in the new era in practice, and continue the Chinese cultural lineage in inheritance and perseverance. With the change of times and aesthetic changes, whether from the cultural heritage of its historical development or the classical inheritance of traditional folk elements, this subject matter has great room for expansion in the field of Chinese painting in terms of innovation of painting style, creation of spiritual mood, and deep artistic expression. As General Secretary Xi said, "We should strengthen the excavation and elaboration of the excellent Chinese traditional culture, make the most basic cultural genes of the Chinese nation echo the culture of the times and harmonize with modern society, and carry forward the cultural spirit that transcends time and space, transcends national boundaries, has eternal charm and has contemporary value."

"The majority of literary artists should follow the pace of the times, feel the pulse of the art from the pulse of the times, open artistic creation to the great struggle of hundreds of millions of people, open to the rich and colorful social life, from the changes of the times, China's progress, the people's call to refine the theme, extract the subject matter, show the beauty of Chinese history, the beauty of the mountains and rivers, the beauty of culture, the fruits of development, all-round The theme is extracted from the changes of the times, the progress of China and the call of the people. "Ascent makes the heart open, and the stream makes the mind far away." Yes, in the context of the greater of advocating cultural self-confidence, people are eager for a solid, national spirit of the times fine works to take the stage! The author's superficial analysis of the subject matter of brown horse chickens in traditional Chinese painting still leaves much to be desired, and relevant scholars are welcome to give their opinions and suggestions to promote learning and exchange as appropriate.

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