

ZIBELINE INTERNATIONAL™  
P U B L I S H I N G

ISSN: XXXX-XXXX (Print)

E-ISSN: 2976-2421 (Online)

CODEN: XXXXXX

# JOURNAL OF ROCK ART (JRA)

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.65098/jra.01.2022.17.23>

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# THE SPECIAL CONNECTION BETWEEN NEW YEAR PAINTINGS AND ROCK PAINTINGS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE CULTURE

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## ARTICLE DETAILS

### Article History:

Received 2 March 2022

Accepted 30 May 2022

Available online 11 June 2022

## ABSTRACT

The key to the study on the origin of the traditional new year paintings and its connection between new year paintings and rock paintings lies in the fact that Chinese festivals are combination of faith and aesthetics. The earliest rock paintings can be dated back to new year paintings, which are carved on the earth. Rock paintings and new year paintings both reflect carnival consciousness. In the transformation and acceptance of cultural narrative, both rock paintings and new year paintings have effectively completed the production of various media, and showcased the expressions of exaggeration and deformation. Rock paintings are not only the carrier of new year paintings. As they are themed with the primitive civilization mainly featured by primitive mythology and primitive art, rock paintings are also important origin of culture.

## KEYWORDS

New Year Paintings, Rock Paintings, Carnival Culture

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the past studies of Chinese culture and art, many scholars emphasize that the new year paintings came into being by chance. To be specific, it reflects the cultural demands of the people for the nature world. Now, with the expansion of world civilization, more information can prove that seemingly, there is no connection between new year paintings and rock paintings on the surface, but in fact there is a very close relationship in terms of cultural inheritance. The problem lies in the core of Chinese festivals and the combination of faith and aesthetics in Chinese culture, that is, the origin of new year paintings cannot be only traced back to the era when there was literature record about new year paintings. As a festival, spring festival originates from the belief in heaven, earth and deities, and every link of it driven by faith. As the most important belief of the Chinese people, new year integrates many beliefs and worship originated from the primitive civilization. The new year is closely related to the season, and the paintings are relevant with the images. New year paintings first reflect faith, then pleasure and aesthetics. From stone carvings to paper, to today's multimedia, new year paintings have become the media of festivals and decoration of the environment, forming a rich and colorful cultural ecology. Rather than mere paintings made from paper materials, new year paintings also have many forms. In the historical evolution of civilization, there is close relationship between new year paintings and rock paintings. In other words, the earliest rock paintings were actually primitive new year paintings, which were consciously carved on the earth by the primitive people. It

can be inferred that from the perspective of modern anthropology, the commonality of new year paintings and rock paintings lies in the fact that both transcend the natural world and social reality- both have a typical Carnival consciousness, especially the expression of people's belief in the soul. New year paintings belong to history, reality, life, culture and faith. Moreover, the combination of new year paintings and multimedia has formed a richer art form, and the diversity of civilization has aroused people to think more and more deeply. To this end, this thesis is written for the consulting the ideas from more scholars.

## 2. NEW YEAR PAINTINGS AS FESTIVAL SYMBOLS

Traditional festivals are the organic combination of folk beliefs and aesthetic activities, including specific symbols and ceremonies. Because of the convergence of various traditions and the formation of cultural changes, it came into being. When it comes to the origin of new year festivals and new year paintings, people mostly follow the literature description, and simply think that the time recorded in the literature is an important symbol of the origin of new year paintings. The problem is that a cultural life with traditional significance is always formed in the long process of practice, and the cultural life is represented by multiple events rather than just one event. The traditional new year paintings are colorful, with deities, flowers, birds and animals, and figures, showing various items that are transformed into auspicious totems.

New year paintings are part of the new year festival culture. New year

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<https://volksonpress.com/journal/jra/>

#### DOI:

10.65098/jra.01.2022.17.23

festival is the most important festival in China. Originated from the celebration of the harvest, it has been endowed with the significance of dispelling evil, eliminating disasters and bringing joy and blessing; In Xu Shen's "Shuowenjiezi" (Analytical Dictionary of Characters), new year means "ripening of grains". According to Notes to Analytical Dictionary of Characters by Duan Yucai, "Year was called Sui in the Xia Dynasty, Si in the Shang Dynasty, Nian in the Zhou Dynasty, and Zai in the Tang and Yu dynasties". It can be seen that year is the most important time measuring unit in China. It takes the new year's festival as the time to arrange production and life year by year; No matter when, all the people attach great importance to new year's festival. The year means beginning. It is placed with people's hopes, expectations, and good wishes.

New year paintings, as a festival symbol, appeared widely in the Ming Dynasty. Take the painting "Yubixiesanyangkaitai" (Emperor Drawing the Painting of Three Goats Ringing in Spring) the Emperor Xuanzong in the Ming Dynasty, Zhu Zhanji as an example. New year paintings were popular in the society. In fact, New year paintings came into being in quite a long time before. According to "Sanhaijing" (Classic of Mountains and Seas), there were high peach trees in Dushuo Mountain in the East China Sea, stretching for three thousand miles. Later, Yin Shao illustrated that, Shencha and Yulei found the ghosts under the peach tree and caught the evil spirits to feed the tigers in his "Literature and Customs- Sacrificial Ceremony". "On the New Year's Eve of the twelfth lunar month, county officials decorate peach people together with reeds and bamboo shoots, and paint tigers on the door. They all put them on the main door for the purpose of guarding against evil". According to these lines of words, there were already the customs of painting tiger town to eliminate evil and celebrate the new year. Previously, there was a saying in "Rites of Zhou - Spring Official" that "the teacher lived on the left of the tiger gate" and it just described the custom of painting tigers. In the "Master Zou's Spring and Autumn Annals - 29th year of Duke Xiang of Lu", it is recorded that "The people of the state of Chu asked Duke Xiang of Lu to personally present a shroud to King Kang of Chu. Duke Xiang was worried about this. Uncle Mu said, 'First remove the evil spirits of the coffin, and then give clothes to the dead. This is equivalent to displaying leather coins in the court.' The wizard was asked to use a peach stick and a broom to sweep away the bad omen on the coffin first." According to the "Book of Rites- Tan Gong (II)", "When the king comes to the funeral of his ministers, he wishes the Taomao to hold the sword with a witch, which is also evil." This shows that peach worship is quite popular. According to the new year recorded in "Jingchusuishiji" (Record of Jinchu District), every family has a peach wood, which is called fairy wood." It shows that peach wood was used in the Six Dynasties as the belief mode of new year paintings. In his poem, Wang Anshi of the Song Dynasty said "One year has passed in the sounds of delight firecracker. Spring wind is sending the warm to the Tusu drink. Thousands and thousands of families are bathed in the bright sunlight. They are always changing the old peach wood charms, to be new ones by their doors..." This shows that the peach wood was widely used as a new year painting in the Song Dynasty. According to "Reminiscences of the Eastern Capital-December" by Meng Yuanlao, people already sold new year paintings at that time, including "the door god, Zhong Kui's peach wood, peach wood, donkey bringing in wealth, deer and horse looking back, and horizontal scroll with the words of "following the natural law" (Meng, 1832). Also, "the expert tell the story of the 'Three Kingdoms'. Street vendors sell the books of the Five Dynasties. Bakers sell snacks... Regardless of the tough weathers, ordinary citizens often visit pleasure quarters to enjoy various performances every day.", which were also important parts of new year paintings. It is also verified that the legend of Li Shimin, Yuchi Jingde and other heroes' stories are shown in new year paintings. The archaeological excavation of the tomb of Marquis Yi of the Zeng State is as an example to prove that the door god in the new year paintings has appeared very early.

The concept of new year paintings appeared in the book "Xingyanjieiyi" (Record of Folk Customs) by Li, in the 30th year of Daoguang Emperor in the Qing Dynasty, (1850). Among them, the chapter of "Spring Festival Couplets" describe the "ten things of the new year", saying: "the peach woods are painted, and the Spring Festival couplets are written. Spring Festivals couplets are more convenient than paintings, because they have various sizes and forms. Villagers cannot read, so they place "peace and safety" in pigsty and "fat pigs" in the bedroom. The chapter of "Harvest Year" records that "after the house is cleaned, new year

paintings are placed, which is the joy of little kids. However, adults ask children to watch and interpret the paintings of filial piety and busy harvest, which help to develop the knowledge of the kids. Kids are asked to imitate the new year paintings and enjoy the spring scenes from the new year paintings. Adults can make children happy and add happiness to the family. Farming picture is the best and can bring harvest" (Li, 1850). After that, people pasted new year paintings on the door after cleaning their houses, which was the first time that the name of new year paintings appeared in history. Not only that, in the "Dijingsuishijilu" (Record of Prosperous Capital City), there were activities in December, such as "selling Tianjin Yangliuqing paintings, door gods and paper-cut outside the front gate." According to "Record of Prosperous Capital City- December- Street Vendor": "On the first day of the twelfth lunar month, there were numerous vendors selling porridge and fruit on the street. With baskets on their shoulders, they sell walnuts, persimmons, jujubes, chestnuts, dried water chestnut and rice. There are also fat chicken, Guandong fish, wild cats, wild ducks, cured meat, fried snacks, fruit shelves, etc. On the tenth day of the ninth lunar month, there are activities such as "selling Tianjin Yangliuqing paintings, door gods and paper-cut hanging money outside the front gate, gold and silver foil, yellow money, gold and silver coins, horse paper, paper money for the dead, glass mirrors, and window eyes." This proves the hot sales of Tianjin new year paintings (or Tianjin Yangliuqing paintings) in Beijing and shows the popularity and prosperity of new year paintings in Qing Dynasty. In fact, in a broad sense, new year paintings include not only door gods, Spring Festival couplets and "children's play", that is, children's favorite paintings, but also peach woods. Obviously, the new year paintings appear because of the New Year Festival. The core content of the new year is to celebrate the harvest. The new year paintings naturally express people's understanding of the harvest. Harvest is closely related to agricultural civilization. However, its significance lies not only in agricultural production, but also in all aspects of labor and harvest, which shows the abundant material wealth and spiritual pleasure of people at that time.

China has a long history of agricultural civilization, and people have formed very profound memories of new year paintings during the celebration New Year Festival. New year paintings express people's hopes and expectations, educate future generations, and become an important cultural activity in people's lives. From the "Research Conference on Popular Education of the Ministry of Education in the Early Years of the Republic of China" to the "Instructions on Developing New Year Paintings" issued by the government after the founding of the People's Republic of China, we can see that new year paintings have always been loved and valued by all walks of life in the whole society.

In a word, new year pictures are originated from the New Year Festival and are a kind of pictures displaying rich emotions, such as carnival and solemnity. This is a typical embodiment of the tradition of "showing images for expounding meanings" in Chinese culture.

### 3. THE INFLUENCES OF ROCK PAINTINGS ON ROCK PAINTINGS

New year paintings have a very close relationship with rock paintings. In other words, the earliest rock paintings were actually new year pictures and were carved on the earth. What new year paintings and rock paintings have in common is that they both embody the transcendence of the natural world and social reality and a typical carnival consciousness, and express people's belief in the soul.

Rock painting is a kind of stone carving. The ancients used stone tools to depict various patterns, and record their feelings and lives, especially the live of production and labor. On the one hand, material acquisition is a necessary condition for people to survive, so hunting, planting, domestication and others occupy an important position in rock paintings; On the other hand, people's spiritual world can be reflected, so contents, such as the sun god and population reproduction, play prominent roles in rock paintings. The historical and cultural backgrounds and natural living environments of all nations in the world are different, but the pursuit and understanding of the material world and the spiritual world have many similarities, reflecting the carnival scene and the expression of faith. In this sense, the rock paintings of various nationalities in the world are the earliest new year paintings (Chen, 2007).

Rock paintings are distributed in many parts of China to represent primitive civilization. However, historical documents mention that the era of rock paintings came relatively late. The earlier one should be Han Feizi. In "Han Feizi-Persuasion I", it is said that "Wuling Duke of State of Zhao asked someone to set up a shelf and engrave huge footprints on the stone, and then annotated it on the side: Zhao Yong came here for a visit. Later generations may be deceived- Wuling Duke of State of Zhao is a giant!" It can be regarded as the earliest record of rock paintings in China. In the Volume 34 "River" of "Commentary on the Waterways Classic" by Li Daoyuan, "The Yangtze River continues to flow eastward through the Wuxia Gorge. The Wuxia Gorge was dug by the workers dispatched by King Du Yu. Guo Zhongchan said: 'According to the Geography Section of History in Han Dynasty, Wushan was originally located in the southwest of Wushan County, but now Wushan is located in the east of Wushan County. This is probably because the location of the county government is not fixed.' The Yangtze River flows eastward through Wuxia Gorge and passes Xinbengtang Hirst. Now, there are many stones on the bank, some round like bamboo utensil, some square like bamboo baskets, and so on. They all fall from the collapsed cliff, making the turbulent river more turbid, so they are called Xinbengtang Hirst. Compared with other mountains, the rest of the collapsed cliff is still towering. More than ten miles down the Xinbengtang Hirst, there is Dawu Mountain. It is the highest in the Three Gorges, and can compare with Minshan Mountain and Emei Mountain, or even Hengshan Mountain and Jiuyi mountain; High as the sky, it towers the surrounding mountains. God Meng Tu just live on the Dawu Mountain. The 'Book of Mountains and Seas' records that "Meng Tu, the Minister of Emperor Qi of the Xia Dynasty, was in charge of the gods in Sichuan. People from Sichuan went to Meng Tu to sue. Meng Tu arrested the man with blood on his clothes. The captured man asked for mercy. Meng Tu pardoned him and let him live in the west of Danshan. In the note to the 'Book of Mountains and Seas', Guo Jingchun said that "Danshan is in Danyang and belongs to Badi. "Danshan Mountain refers to Wushan Mountain. Tiandi's daughter also lives there. Song Yu said: "The youngest daughter of the emperor of heaven, named Yaoji, died before she was married and was buried in the south of Wushan Mountain. Her soul became grass. This is *ganoderma lucidum*." It is recorded that "when the goddess left King Huai of Chu State, she said to herself: 'the goddess of Wushan lives in a dangerous place in Wushan. She turns into morning clouds, night mists, and morning and evening under Yangtai Mountain.' when I went to see it the next morning, it was exactly like what the goddess said. Therefore, King Huai of Chu built a temple for the goddess, which is called Chaoyun." This section is 160 li long from beginning to end. It is called Wuxia Gorges, which is named after Wushan" (Li, 1877).

The research on rock paintings in China was generally marked by Huang Zhongqin's "Investigation of Xianzitan Rock Carvings" in Taixi, Hua'an County, Fujian Province in 1915. According to the "Ancient Book of Taixi" by Huang Zhongqin (Huang, 1935), "it is assumed that it was used by the ancient Lanlei people and is a kind of Cuan character or Miao language". This idea attracted people's attention. Until the 1970s, rock paintings were constantly discovered in Heilongjiang and Inner Mongolia in the north, Xinjiang and Gansu in the northwest, Yunnan and Guangxi in the southwest of China. By the 1980s, with the general survey on cultural relics, large-scale rock paintings were discovered in Guizhou, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Gansu, Qinghai, Tibet and other western regions. Also, large-scale rock paintings were found in Guangdong, Fujian, Taiwan, Jiangsu, including Henan. The research on the rock painting reached peak. Many scholars have noticed the close relationship between rock paintings and primitive civilization, and gratifying achievements have been made in the study of rock paintings in anthropology, mythology, folklore, religion and archaeology.

Many ethnic groups in the world used rock paintings for recording the festival carnivals of different ethnic groups. In recent years, there are more and more literature on studying and recording rock paintings. People understand rock paintings from different aspects. Some people grasp the faith and significance of rock paintings in primitive civilization, and some even see the earliest human migration footprints. Without exception, people agree that rock paintings, as the carnivals of primitive people, are the product of praying for blessing, communicating the feelings between human and deities, recording hunting and war and other major events. In this sense, it is consistent with the carnival and faith of the New Year Festival (Emmanuel, 2017).

In the previous researches on new year paintings, more attention was drawn to the description of new year paintings in historical literature and the physical preservation of new year paintings. The limitations of historical documents are very obvious. People pay more attention to major events affecting the destiny of the country, society and nation, and ignore or disdain to showcase the cultural life of the bottom society. Researchers also mostly focus on the accounts of traditional literati, ignoring the international perspective of cultural relics discovery. The communication between Chinese society and human civilization started from the scramble for and bullying of modern China by the great powers, despite the events in Chinese history, such as Zhang Qian's envoys to the western regions, Xuanzang's westward journey and Zheng He's journey to the west. It can be said that with the rise of Sinology, especially after the missionaries, explorers and businessmen from western society flocked to China, the Chinese government started to send envoys and overseas students to Europe, the United States and other foreign countries. Only then did Chinese truly develop an international perspective. Among them, the knowledge absorption and development of anthropology has built a broad bridge for the cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries.

Rock painting has attracted the attention from the circle of humanities, which is inseparable from the rise of anthropology. Britain is the hometown of anthropology. Originated from the industrial revolution and colonial political culture, anthropology aims to forage for the differences between the original civilization behind the backward nations and the modern civilization behind the developed nations. Dedicated to the evolution of human civilization, anthropology takes the theory of evolution as its own method of thinking, regards primitive civilization as the mother of modern civilization, and regards rock painting as an important model of primitive civilization and primitive art. Furthermore, anthropology regards rock painting as the precedent of human civilization, and inherits and disseminates it as an art form and concept. Since the reform and opening-up, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, Chinese academic circles have increasingly have more communications with the world. The Chinese anthropology, mythology, totem art and other fields have actively absorbed the achievements of rock art research from the international community. With the rapid development of the museum industry, people's research on rock art has become more and more intense, embracing the world. Many places in China attach importance to the display function of rock paintings. The largest rock painting museum in the world is Yinchuan World Rock Painting Museum, which is established in the rock painting scenic area of Helan Mountain in Ningxia. In Yinchuan, there are "preface hall", "middle hall", "world rock painting exhibition hall", "Chinese rock painting exhibition hall", "Helan Mountain rock painting exhibition hall", "original art exhibition hall" and other exhibition halls, which display rock painting patterns and include the main types of rock paintings at home and abroad. It can be seen that rock paintings in this museum are dominated by figures and animals, mainly human face images, human body images, animal images, life images of figures and animals, as well as various abstract symbols and patterns.

For various reasons, people study new year paintings and rock paintings, but fail to attention to their common point, that is, carnival. There are various forms of carnival. New year paintings and rock paintings are the results of carnival. Carnival is an important symbol and function of traditional festivals. Through carnival, people make all kinds of intoxicated performances to achieve spiritual and emotional pleasure. In the process of carnival, the two worlds of man and deities communicate with each other and reach the free and unrestrained state of mind. All kinds of abstract symbols and concrete life pictures expressed by rock paintings, as well as warm emotions and wishes expressed by new year paintings run through carnival and madness. Carnival and madness, as a kind of spiritual form, have become important means of expression through various deformations, and imagination and exaggeration have been extremely expressed. Of course, it is inevitable that there are purposes behind any imagination and exaggeration. Purposes can be found everywhere in production and life. For example, people depict all kinds of animals in order to obtain more prey or to avoid the harm from beasts; People depict all kinds of plants and objects in life for the sake of abundant life, including the conjoined human beings and animals, exaggerated human organs, and obtained power, fertility and fecundity; The meaning of people's portrayal of various symbols, especially the

deformed sun, animal and plant-shaped faces, is more complex, and is deemed to include the worship of various gods and other belief functions.

#### 4. THE INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ROCK PAINTINGS

Exaggeration and deformation are common expressions in both Chinese and foreign rock paintings. The meaning of deformation is related to witchcraft worship and is universal in religious and cultural life. This is true of rock paintings and new year paintings. The content of rock paintings is related to the local natural environment, to the historical and cultural origin of a certain region. More importantly, it is relevant to the civilization characteristics formed by the natural environment and has become a symbol of a certain region. Later, it becomes either new year paintings or murals.

For example, Asian rock paintings can be divided into rock paintings in West Asia, East Asia, South Asia and Central Asia. Saudi Arabia is a typical example of rock paintings in Western Asia. The main contents are hunting scenes, grazing life, animal images, male groups and some women. The instruments in the rock paintings are mainly bows, arrows, spears, sticks and so on, which are related to the history of this region. The rock paintings in Central Asia are represented by the Baikal Lake rock paintings, as well as the Khoit Tsenkher cave rock paintings in Khovd Province of Mongolia, painted cave in Shiveet Khairkhan, the Chulut rock paintings in Arkhangai Aimag Province, and the High Altai rock paintings in northern Mongolia. Characterized by shamanism, these paintings mainly illustrate grassland and desert geography. Many animal images and symbolic symbols have been displayed, including sheep, horses, horsemen and camels. The typical example of rock paintings in East Asia are the caves in the south of Kyushu Island, Japan. The patterns mainly include women, children, hunters, deer and other animals. India is a typical example in South Asia. The rock paintings in India show the images of hunting, animal husbandry, cultivation, settlement in thatched cottages, worship, honey collection, tree planting and war, singing and dances, entertainment, sacrifice and other contents in places such as Bhimbetka. These paintings showcase diversified primitive beliefs, like spirit worship and reproduction worship. In particular, the scenes from Indian mythology, including "wounded wild boar", "idolized wild hunting", "woman with marigold", "tree of hope", horsemen, elephant riders and armed soldiers on foot reflect the lifestyles and a period of history at that time.

For example, European rock paintings mainly include Spanish rock paintings, covering the area from northern Cantabria area to the southern Strait of Gibraltar. The content of paintings includes the wild animals, women collecting honey, and short men; The cave and rock paintings in France are similar to those in Spain in many aspects. The rock paintings in Lascaux Caves are called "the Louvre in prehistory". The caves were drawn with horses, red deer, bison and other animals. In the cave painting, one of the bison rushes to a birdman. Next to the birdman, there is a bird standing on a tree branch. The bison's belly is pierced by a spear and its intestines are exposed to the air, but it is still struggling to rush forward; In the Addaura cave engravings in Sicily, Italy, some nude people were dancing, enforcing law or making other movements, which are related to the primitive civilization of Italy. Many geometric figures and some mysterious symbols, weapons, figures and animals, as well as various curves, trapezoids and meshes, appear in the rock paintings of the Valcamonica, Italy; The stone paintings in Norway, Finland and other places in northern Europe mainly show the scenes of hunting and fishing, because they are near to mountains, seas and forests. The patterns include the sun, wild animals, fish, birds, canoes, carriages, bows and arrows. European rock paintings are related to prehistoric life and some scenes are about war and hunting. The animals shown include mammoths, rhinoceroses, wild horses, bison and deer. However, there is relatively small content of plucking and farming. Due to the imbalanced development in Europe, there are differences in the color of rock paintings. For example, from northern Spain to southwest France, rock paintings are distributed in the depths of caves without sunlight, so the cultural traces of the ice age have been preserved; From the Ural Mountains to the Arctic Ocean, the sun is abundant, and non-rock paintings showcase people's life of fishing and hunting.

Furthermore, African rock paintings are mainly distributed in the

Tassili-n-Ajjer at the border between Algeria and Libya in the middle of Sahara and in the mountainous areas of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia. The development of African rock paintings can be divided into Bubalus Period, Cattle Period, Horse Period and Camel Period. Different periods have different patterns. Different patterns display various animal activities and scenes, indicating different stages of social development. Africa is rich in elephants. In many places, the image of elephants appears in rock paintings. In some places, cattle, large carriages and camels appear, marking the development of animal husbandry. The vegetation in Africa is related to the planting industry. In the Sahara rock paintings, there is a goddess in charge of grain. The goddess has feathers on her head as decoration, and a mottled curtain around her face. Also, there is a crop field for sowing seeds. Different from the Sahara rock paintings, the rock carvings in southern Africa mainly show animal images such as wild elephants, lions, hippos, rhinoceroses, antelopes, giraffes and zebras, which means that the primitive residents here have contact with these animals. At the same time, there are also patterns of human and animal integration, hunting, war, sacrifice, entertainment, dance, intercourse and other contents, showcasing hunting scenes, dance scenes, and scenes that crowds gather to cheer or rest. It is worth noting that there are some dancers wearing animal skins or masks in some animal shapes. Some of these patterns are mixed with animals, some disguise themselves as wild animals, some hold bows and spears as hunters, some use feathers as ornaments, and some elongate their heads like ostriches stretching their necks. Researchers wonder whether all these can demonstrate totem life, the composition of totem structure, and the connection between totem cultures.

American rock paintings record a special history and culture. Cueva de las Manos, Río Pinturas of Argentina in South America was the residence of the indigenous Tehuelche people and have rock paintings with different patterns from those in other places. There are many "hand caves", which looks like the hands of various shapes on the wall or trees with many branches and leaves. Also, there are some common local animals, such as the reddish-brown llama, which witness the primitive civilization. Many human face deities in the Americas share many similarities with some rock paintings outside the Americas and have become a mystery and aroused people's various conjectures and associations. For example, in the Coastal Ranges in western North America, human face rock paintings appeared, and there are many radial lines appeared on the human face. Rock paintings of the sun and birds emerged in more places, including various abstract symbols. Some people even cite the appearance of symbols similar to oracle bone inscriptions in the original culture of the Indians as evidence to prove that the Chinese people were firstly discovered and lived in the Americas. Of course, this is a conjecture and requires more evidences. Many rock paintings in the Americas show the changes that took place in Prehistoric America. In North America, there are frog shaped human, female human bodies and reproductive witchcraft, which attract the attention of scholars. Rock paintings vary from place to place. For example, in the rock paintings near Beach, California, there were various patterns, like red handprints, the sun, abstract symbols and various animals; The rock paintings on Pyramid Lake, an Indian reservation in Nevada, are known as the oldest rock paintings in North America. There are various geometric patterns on each side of the stones here, including concentric circles, diamonds and some trees; In addition, in the rock paintings of San Francisco Mountain in Mexico, there are people carrying weapons and various animals. Among the animals in the rock paintings are moose, bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, puma, bobcat, turtle and fish; For example, in the rock paintings of British Columbia, Canada, there is a fish-human face without clear facial outline. The human face is located on the upper part of the fish head. The fish sticks out its long tongue. There is a bird head shaped symbol on the belly of the fish, and a black spot appears near the tail of the fish. All these start from the original belief.

There are many rock paintings distributed from the Kimberleys in the northwest of Australia, through the Arnhem Land in the north, to the Cape York Peninsula, to Kunalda in the south of Australia. The paintings show a variety of heroes and gods, including mythical lizards, giant snakes, kangaroos and other animals, as well as half human and half ape images, and these paintings are depicted in red, yellow, black and blue. Unlike rock paintings in other regions, the rock paintings here are more melodramatic. For example, in the rock paintings of Arnhem Land and Kimberleyss, there are scenes of people and animals echoing each

other. In the center of the painting, there is an emu with a huge body but can't fly. On its side, there are people wearing hats and riding horses. Obviously, this is the image narrative of the story. In the Delamere's rock painting in northern Australia, there are two giant men in the picture. Each of them has genitalia as big as his legs. The relationship between them is a story. Wandjina in northwest Australia is another typical rock painting. The human is lying. Bodies and heads that may show eyes and nose, but typically no mouth. The human, kangaroos, fish, birds and other animals constitute mysterious legends.

## 5. DISTRIBUTION OF ROCK PAINTINGS IN CHINA

Rock painting is a special art. In China, rock paintings can be divided into two parts- the southern and the northern ones. The civilized life of different regions, different times and different nations have been displayed, including rich emotions, wills, beliefs and faiths. Chinese rock paintings tell the stories of the deities and spirits in China with the rocks and pictures, reflecting the style and features of China's early civilization, equivalent to the earliest new year paintings.

The language of rock paintings varies greatly. For example, the rock paintings between the north and the south of China and between the east and the west reflect the differences existed in the primitive civilization. Rock paintings in the south of China can be divided into two systems, the southeast and the southwest. The rock paintings in these two regions have different forms of civilization.

Rock paintings in Southeast China are mainly distributed in Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Anhui, Fujian, Guangdong, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and other places. Different from the coldness and drought in the north and the humidity in the southwest, the climate in Southeast China is featured by abundant sunshine. The major contents include the sun, birds, fish and some other animals. There are also abstract "cup-shaped", "concentric circle" and "squatting" human figures. The meaning expressed by the abstract linear symbols is more special. Famous rock paintings, such as the sun god, stars, birds and animals, in Jiangjun cliff of Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province, the human face and dance in Xianzitan cliff of Hua'an County, Fujian Province, the sea scene in Gaolan Island of Zhuhai City, Guangdong Province, and the "Gubatsaeh" of Wanshan rock carvings in Kaohsiung County, Taiwan. As the Southeast China is close to the sea, its content is more related to marine civilization. It is worth noting that this is a concentrated area of ancient Yue civilization, different from the Central Plains culture.

Rock paintings in Southwest China are mainly distributed in Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Tibet and other places. Most of them are distributed along rivers and appear on cliffs, stone walls and hillsides. The Huashan rock paintings in Guangxi and Cangyuan of Yunnan are typical examples. There are various animals and people. The content is mostly religious activities and agricultural life. The whole rock paintings are mostly red. The figures in the rock paintings have clear lines, but do not have specific facial features. These figures display more body movements. They raise their arms and bend and squat their legs with prominent "squatting" positions like frogs. Instead of any specific shapes of animals, there are only simple lines to express the characteristic parts of animals, such as horns, tails and ears.

Rock paintings in any place do not exist in isolation. There are specific natural factors and special historical and cultural factors behind them. The same is true of rock paintings in Huashan, Guangxi Province. Rock paintings in Guangxi are mainly distributed in Ningming, Longzhou, Chongzuo, Fusui, Daxin, Tiandeng, Pingxiang and other places in the Zuojiang River Basin. Situated on the cliffs along the river, rock paintings of different shapes are important witness of the local primitive civilization. Huashan, where the Huashan rock paintings were found, is located on the bank of the Ming River in the north of Ningming. The pictures are mainly composed of large and small figures, as well as some animals. The largest of these figures is about ten feet, and the smallest is about one foot. When it comes the rock paintings with the front sides of the figures, their arms are mostly extended to both sides, their elbows are bent, their arms are upward, their legs take horse stance or half squatting; Beside them are dogs and other animals, knives and other instruments, or musical instruments such as long drums. The side portrait surrounds one side of the front portrait, which is small in size and numerous in

number, forming a clear contrast. This position is called "frog squatting", which should be related to witchcraft worship. Cangyuan rock paintings in Yunnan are similar to Huashan rock paintings in Guangxi in that they are mainly composed of large and small figures. The rock paintings mainly cover primitive religions, such as hunting, gathering, grazing, dance, war and witchcraft, as well as buildings and villages. What is striking is that there are monkeys in Cangyuan rock paintings, and there are life scenes of capturing monkeys, which reflected local customs. The theme of monkeys grabbing straw hats appeared in later Yangliu youth paintings in Tianjin. Is it related to this? The roles in Cangyuan rock paintings can be roughly divided into people, animals, utensils, houses, natural objects, symbols and handprints. Different from Huashan rock paintings, the figures in Cangyuan rock paintings are mostly in the shape of "da" and "wen", highlighting the movements of hands, feet and other limbs, and deliberately showing the ornaments worn by the figures, such as the head and body. The most prominent is the protagonist such as wizards. Bodies of wizards are painted in heavy colors to show a special identity and status. The "sun man" and "bird-shaped man" in some myths and legends are half gods and half men. There are also various primitive weapons in the rock paintings, such as bows and crossbows, shields, spears and guns, as well as magic tools, such as ox horns, and daily utensils, such as pestles and mortars, sticks and wooden fences. It is worth noting the reproduction worship. The rock painting at the sixth site of Mengshen shows a woman at the upper right end. Her left and right arms stretched flat, her feet spread apart and her breasts protrude. There is an innegligible round hole protruding between her waist and hip, which should be her genitalia. A round object in her lower right part is lifted by two hands from another two people. They open their five fingers, showing a wild look. There are three people on the left side. Two men are tall while another one is short. For these three men, their chests are also with breasts and there are also round holes between their hips and waists. They hold a shield like object in one hand and a short stick in another. These rock paintings may indicate the unity of reproductive worship and protective gods. The male deity in charge of pregnancy with bows and arrows in later new year paintings ought to share the same meaning.

Rock paintings in northern China are mainly distributed in Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai, Heilongjiang and other places, such as Helan Mountain rock paintings in Ningxia and Yinshan Rock Paintings in Inner Mongolia. Their contents mainly are about animals, hunting, nomadism, war, dance and so on. Also, there are daily items in these rock paintings, like weapons, vaults, yurts, wheels and vehicles. What is more noteworthy is the appearance of gods of heaven, earth, ancestral gods, sun, moon and stars, primitive numbers and other symbols, handprints footprints, and animal hoof prints. Most of the nomads lived in the north, so the hunting and war activities of the nomads also are shown in the rock paintings, of which shooting is the most striking. Taking Yinshan Rock Painting in Inner Mongolia as an example, we can see that there are many animals, such as sheep, goats, argali, antelope and rock sheep, and different deer, including bighorn deer, white lipped deer, red deer, elk and moose. In addition, there are various livestock, such as horses, mules, donkeys, camels, cattle, bison and takins. Other animals include wolves, tigers, leopards, roe deer, dogs, wild boars, rabbits, foxes, turtles, snakes, etc. In contrast, various human activities are displayed in the rock paintings, such as grazing, vehicles, travel, knights, cavalry formation, battle map, vault and yurt, god portraits, dance, sacrifice, which fully reflect the prehistoric civilization in local places. At the same time, there are many symbols with abstract meanings in Yinshan rock paintings, such as human face shape, human hand foot print, animal foot print, original numbers, pictorial characters and star maps. As every animal and every scene appear not accidentally, there should be a very large story group here.

Beautiful Tianshan Mountains are located in Xinjiang, arousing people's imagination on Kunlun Mountains (known as holy mountain) and Xiwangmu, the highest ranked goddess of Taoist lives. Xinjiang rock paintings are mainly distributed in Altai Mountains, Tianshan Mountains, Kunlun Mountains, Junggar Basin and Tarim Basin. In Xinjiang rock paintings, the reproductive worship is very prominent and has its own characteristics. For example, there are four elliptical female genitalia on the front wall of Tangleteri Cave in Fuyun County of Altay Mountain, and a very striking female vulva appears in Altay Aketasi rock paintings. In addition, Du'ate and Songha'ergou rock paintings in the Jiaxihalhai

and Habahe Counties, the Aketasi rock paintings in the Tekesi County of Tianshan Mountains, the Kashgar rock paintings at the eastern foot of the Pamir Plateau of Kunlun Mountains, and the Arixiwengku'er rock paintings in Pishan County all show female genitalia in ochre red, white, black and other colors in the caves. In the rock paintings of Shimenzi, Kangjia, Hutubi County, Central Tianshan Mountains, hundreds of men and women intercourse with each other. Many male reproductive organs are magnified, and there are many small human figures on one side, which might imply the relationship between population production and reproductive worship. Vulva worship and penis worship are sacred in rock paintings and were connected with the belief of respecting life, nature and gods. It was gradually replaced by flowers and birds in later new year paintings and was transformed into a form of elegant art. These rock paintings should be the expression of wild marriage customs in the primitive civilization. Distant from the Central Plains, these places shares something in common with "men and women having appointments with each other" and "private meetings between men and women being not prohibited" recorded in the "Rites of the Zhou", the "Book of Rites" and other classics. This just shows the universality of reproductive worship, which became an important theme of new year paintings, such as the prosperity and pleasure brought by more descendants.

It is worth noting that in recent years, a large number of rock paintings have also been found in Jucishan in the Central Plains of China. Greatly different from many animal and plant images in other regions, these rock paintings are mostly concrete symbols, which are another form of primitive civilization.

## 6. SHARED INHERITANCE OF NEW YEAR PAINTINGS AND ROCK PAINTINGS

Of course, rock paintings are not only carriers of new year paintings. The rock paintings undoubtedly showcase the theme of primitive civilizations. As the main content of rock paintings, primitive mythology and primitive art are mythical art. Myth is an important source of culture, so new year paintings have many contents related to myth. Rock paintings do not come into being for no reason. In terms of the significance of sacrifice, belief and carnival, rock paintings are the earliest new year paintings.

From the rock paintings, we can see that there are many common themes and forms of expression, such as human faces and handprints, as well as the content of human-animal mixture, which are popular in many regions. In particular, the popular facial portraits, as the theme of rock paintings, is an important part of primitive civilization. In this regard, some scholars have found that facial images are systematically distributed in East Asia around the North Pacific region and North America. Facial rock paintings have been found in only 11 countries and regions around the Pacific region. In other words, there are extensive links among various ethnic groups, tribes and clans in the world, and people have traveled across the oceans for exchanges. Because of the lack of necessary documents, the later generations are short of due understanding about this. Of course, the literature is not the only evidence, and many of the literature itself may not be completely reliable. The question is, what is the relationship between the human faces in rock paintings and those in the new year paintings? For example, "Kuitou" (guardian of scholars), a woodcut new year painting in Zhuxian Town in Kaifeng, Henan Province, the "Hehe Erxiang" (gods of marriage and harmony) in woodcut new year painting, Taohuawu in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, the "Niannian Youyu" (every year there is fish) woodcut new year painting in Yangliuqing in Tianjin, as well as the God of wealth, Guan Gong statue, Zhong Kui statue and kitchen god statue, and ancestral gods in various places, including murals, carvings, and statues in religious places. Is there any inheritance relationship behind? If so, how is it inherited and transformed? Are the abstract symbols, such as handprints and sun patterns in rock paintings related to the mascots in later woodcut new year paintings? Is there any connection between the image of praying for a son in later woodcut new year paintings and the worship of reproduction in rock paintings? Is there any relationship between the new year paintings and the religious custom of hanging Buddhist statues. Are there any relationship between the images of ladies in woodcut new year pictures of later generations and the female body in rock paintings? Are the war scenes in the rock paintings related to the martial arts patterns in later woodcut new year paintings?

To answer these questions, researchers should make more investigation rather than just check the literature. The forms of cultural inheritance and memory are usually physical, documentary and social customs. Maybe we can get a better answer from life. Behind the rock paintings is faith. This is true of the new year paintings. Faith has become the core of culture, which can be inherited, spread and changed infinitely. It should be said that it took a long period of time for the rock paintings to be transformed in new year paintings. Various connections cannot be grasped easily. The narrative theory by image tells us that there is an undercurrent among all kinds of pictures, patterns and images, forming different ideological and cultural trends and artistic trends. To grasp these trends, we need to have deeper understanding from many disciplines.

Culture has ecological significance. It is able to keep still and stable, but it can also flow and change. Cultural inheritance and dissemination are inseparable from certain media. Media theory tells us that media is information. Generally speaking, media, that is, concrete materials, including beliefs and rituals behind, display concrete images in front of people and form stories. Stories need to be spoken and narrated in order to be recognized. Only then, can them be further narrated and inherited. Telling the stories or narration is not mere in an oral or written form. Then, as the time passes, who will tell or reveal the truth expressed in the stories? It should be said that cultural transformation has become an important mechanism of cultural narration.

In short, the life of culture lies in inheritance and dissemination, and the world is cultivated by culture and life is transformed. In the transformation and undertaking of cultural narrative, the new year paintings have effectively completed the manufacture of various media, from ancient stone carvings to gold and stone carvings and are closely related to primitive civilizations, such as rock paintings. New year paintings have gradually turned to clay sculptures, wood carvings and other cultural forms, and converted to paper printing, forming the wood new year paintings we see today. New year paintings belong to history, reality, life, culture and faith.

## 7. THE SPECIAL CONNECTION BETWEEN NEW YEAR PAINTINGS AND ROCK PAINTINGS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE CULTURE

A forecast of the origin of Traditional Chinese New Year paintings and their relationship with rock paintings focuses on the combination of faith and aesthetics as the core of Chinese festivals. The earliest rock paintings are actually New Year paintings, which are carved on the earth. Both rock paintings and New Year paintings reflect the carnival consciousness, effectively completing the production of various media in the transformation and undertaking of cultural narrative, and presenting exaggerated and deformed forms of expression. Rock painting is not only the carrier of New Year paintings, but also an important source of culture as well as the primitive civilization whose main content is primitive mythology and art.

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