

# The Enlightenment of the Family Values in the Genealogy Images as the Central Scroll Painting

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## ABSTRACT

This article takes the genealogy diagrams of ordinary families in Longkou, Shandong Province as the research object, and comprehensively analyzes the images obtained on the spot through field inspections, and takes the most representative image as a typical case, analyzes from the visual image, text and layout. The research finds that there are rich connotations and meanings hidden behind the genealogy patterns. The family ethical conception of each family unit converges into the family values of the entire region or the entire nation. The genealogical map is a symbol of the ancestral hall, which also embodies the values of the modern family. This research has an important reference value for investigating the local humanities.

**Keywords:** central scroll painting, ancestral halls, Zudou (sacrifice), Confucianism

## I. INTRODUCTION

As early as the late Qing Dynasty, a special catalog of genealogical books has appeared.[1] Genealogy is generally in 16 formats. For example, the sizes of "(Chongming) Shen Family Genealogy" and "(Chongming Xinkaihe) Guo Family Genealogy" are 255mm\*162mm, and 248mm\*145mm respectively, and the chases are 224mm\*140mm, and 205mm\*145mm respectively. It is about the same size as the printed copy of a normal thread-bound book[2]. The genealogy records the complete genealogy of the branches of the same ancestor, and it is the secondary part of the genealogy of the same surname. When compiling the genealogy, each family will go back to the Yellow Emperor from the first immigratory ancestor. Compiling a genealogy is a very important event in the family. For example, the Kong family put forward the purpose of compiling a genealogy, that is to "detail the lineage, connect and distancing relatives, enhance relationship, check out the fake relatives, rank the agnation, and record in case of forgetting"[3]. Some genealogies with more detailed records also record important events in the family's past dynasties. Genealogy revision is mainly a moral function, to condense the family, maintain the clan rights, and serve the clan and harmony[4].

## II. CONFORMATION OF GENEALOGY AND CENTRAL SCROLL PAINTING

In the Jiaodong Peninsula of China, there is a special form of genealogy. This type of genealogy does not exist in the form of books or scrolls, but in the form

of the central scroll painting and is displayed within a certain period of time. The central scroll painting is a painting that hangs in the middle of the hall (the main place for receiving guests in traditional Chinese dwellings) and is opposite to the main entrance. It is mounted on a vertical axis and is divided into large central scroll paintings and small central scroll paintings. Large central scroll painting heart is generally not less than four feet, and the most common one is 137cm\*68cm[5]. These genealogical paintings are hung in the middle of the hall around the Lunar New Year, which is the place where the central scroll paintings were hung in the past.

As the screen painting of "Rites of Zhou" "The Emperor Standing by the Screen", it gradually fell silent after the Song Dynasty. As a public display screen painting, it transformed into a hanging scroll painting in the hall. After the Qing Dynasty, the hanging scroll painting was fixed as the unified format of the central scroll painting. Among them are paintings that are approximately 2:1. The contents include landscapes, figures, plants, etc. These images have different symbolic meanings. There will be couplets on both sides of the paintings, called "堂联 (táng lián, couplets in the hall)". The content of the couplets echoes the content of the paintings, expressing the master's attitude towards doing things and being a person. In the Dianshizhai Pictorial of the Qing Dynasty, people can see a lot of "central scroll paintings". ("Fig. 1") Different types of central scroll paintings convey the core values recognized by different families.



Fig. 1. The central scroll paintings in *Dianshizhai Pictorial*, (encircled content).

With the development of modern society and the transformation of home interior space, central scroll paintings have disappeared in most families. The main social place of the family, the main location of the living room is more placed with new media such as television. The gathering place for each family unit represented by the Jiaodong Peninsula area is occupied by public media. Different from other areas, Longkou area retains the custom of hanging genealogy in the position of the central scroll painting every New Year. The form of the genealogy is consistent with that of the central scroll painting, and the content is different, but the meaning is similar. They all convey the family history and core value concerns through the figures and content. The ethical conception of the Chinese family is formed by the convergence of every small family unit. Studying this type of painting is a way to understand the traditional Chinese family conception.

The conformation of the genealogy and the central scroll painting shows several changes. First, the genealogy was enshrined in the ancestral hall of the family in the past, or kept by the prestigious elders of the family, and was not displayed to the outside. Second, the genealogy was rich in content. In addition to recording the list of the family, it also records the core values of the family and the people who have made outstanding contributions in the family. However, it is different from the genealogy displayed in the central scroll paintings. The location of the display is a relatively public space in the family, which is the content for public display. At the same time, the content displayed is mainly text and images, not only the main content of genealogy, but also the appearance of the central scroll painting. ("Fig. 2") The private and open information of a family is unified and displayed.



Fig. 2. Main genealogical images: the whole picture and part of the genealogical images as the central scroll painting (location: Longkou, Shandong).

In China in the information age, the Spring Festival Gala and mobile phone interaction have become the main content. However, in some areas of Shandong, New Year greetings and sacrificial activities are still

representative procedures, and the hanging of the central scroll painting is an indispensable link.

In the approaching New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, the genealogy will be hung in the hall, and along

with the genealogy there are also couplets. The content of the couplets is generally the expectation of the prosperity of the family. In addition, there are incense tables to enshrine food, bamboo leaves, pine branches and other items, as well as paper ritual flowers. The genealogy pattern adopts the scatter perspective method commonly used in Chinese painting, and the buildings adopt one-point perspective. The form of pattern overprint is similar to Chinese New Year pictures, but the paper is thicker than New Year pictures. The pattern form of the genealogy comes from folk paintings, and the painting patterns and styles mostly come from the experience of craftsmen, as well as traditional arts and crafts patterns. The drawing of characters or animals and plants does not pay attention to the depiction of objects, but pays more attention to the convenience of use and the symbolic meaning represented by the images.

The genealogy images are printed on thick rice paper, and the colors are similar to those of Chinese New Year pictures, mainly pink blue green. The image is presented on a scroll or a separate wide-open paper, with a symmetrical layout being dignified and splendid. Sacrifices centered on scrolls have become the most representative content of New Year's etiquette.

Genealogical patterns are generally divided into three parts. From bottom to top, they are divided by buildings. The bottom part is composed of old people, young people and children. Children hold lanterns and other items in their hands. All figures are opposite to a pair of lions. There is a pine and cypress on each side of the lions.

The bottom part and the middle part are separated by a porch. On the porch, there are the words "俎豆千秋 (inheritance of the sacrifice)" and "本枝百世 (hundred generations of the original family)", and the words "祠堂 (ancestral hall)" on the lintel. Above the porch is a screen with water patterns and a red sun painted on the screen.

The second part in the middle is painted with deer and crane patterns. Some genealogies show children playing. The middle part and the top part are separated by a low wall. There are vases and flowers on the low wall. A more complicated genealogy will have chessboards, books, scrolls and other objects.

The uppermost part is mainly composed of rectangular grids, using names with Chinese characters in the genealogy for a long time. At the top of the middle, there are two elderly people, a man and a woman. Above the old people is a cloud and fog pattern, with pillars on the left and right sides, or two symmetrical doors.

The images of animals and plants in the image have obvious symbolism. This symbolism is based on Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. The lion

symbolizes power and status, and the deer and crane symbolize wealth and longevity. They are both unified and contradictory. The pursuit of rights in this world and the desire to rise to bliss after death are abstractly expressed together.

### III. IMPLIED MEANING OF THE IMAGES

The pattern of the genealogy actually shows the reproduction of the ancestral hall. Judging from the overall composition of the genealogical image, it is obvious that the front, middle and back three jins of the courtyard. (Jin is a quantifier. A house in a bungalow is divided into front and back rows. One row is called a jin. [6]) The entities of the ancestral hall are mostly in the form of "three jins", and the Wang's ancestral hall with historical records is the three-jin courtyard. The three-jin courtyard was used by the family female members, but some ancestral temples were built in the backyard[7].

After Zhu Xi created an ancestral hall to worship ancestors, there was a difference between tomb sacrifice and ancestral sacrifice.[8] The family mainly uses ancestral halls, ancestral properties and genealogy to realize the functions of collecting clan. However, not all families have the financial strength to build ancestral halls. The "Book of Rites · The System of Kings" contains "庶人祭于寝 (common people offering sacrifices in their bedrooms)", which means that people do not need to build an ancestral temple, but can worship their ancestors in the halls of their houses. This also explains why this type of genealogy is more common in this area.

According to the logic that the genealogical image is the signifier of the ancestral hall, to re-understand the picture, it can be seen that the picture describes the scene of family members going to the ancestral hall to make sacrifices. The layout of the ancestral hall in the picture mimics the appearance of the real ancestral hall, but this kind of original depiction is rare. Thus, genealogical images are mixed with part of the imagination of folk painting artists. However, this kind of imagination does not come from nothing, mostly based on thinking about reality.

First, among the family members who came to worship in the image, some of them were obviously dressed in official clothes. This can be found through the "patch" on the clothes. The implementation of the "patch" system for official clothing began in the early Ming Dynasty and ended in the late Qing Dynasty. In the feudal society of ancient China, the clothing of officials was basically regulated to express their status and position.[9] Among them, the patch of civil and military officials has obvious animal patterns, but in the genealogy, the patch is simplified, and it is not the true official uniform in history. However, this simplification is sufficient to point to the "officials".

In the "Analects of Confucius" which collected all the Confucian core ideas, there is a text: "子夏曰：‘仕而优则学，学而优则仕。(Zixia said: "Those who have spare capacity after work should study and advance to continuously improve themselves; after studying and research, they should participate in specific work and practice.')" Among the adults who worship their ancestors, most of them wear official uniforms, demonstrating the ordinary people's pursuit of official duties. Among the ideal family members, it is an ideal state that someone can hold an official position. In the commercial society of China, reading and holding a position for the benefit of each region is always the highest pursuit of every student. This concept can be traced back to the enlightenment significance of the patterns in the genealogy.

Secondly, there are lions and pines and cypresses on both sides of the image gate. Putting a lion at the door as a guardian, this custom of using lion to "suppress house" has a long history. There were lions in front of the old government offices, temples, tombs and homes of large families.[10] The lion is also a sacred object of Buddhism. Pines and cypresses are evergreen throughout the seasons, symbolizing the tenacity of life. As stated in "The Analects of Confucius · Zihan": "岁寒，然后知松柏之后凋也。(It was only in the cold season that the pines and cypresses were finally withered.)" The pines and cypresses also represent longevity. "Shen Nong's Herbal Classic" Volume 1: "松脂，味苦温……安五藏，除热。久服，轻身不老延年，一名松膏，一名松肪。Pine resin, bitter in taste and warm in attribute...It can calm the five internal organs and eliminate the fever. When eat it for a long time, it can light body and prolong life. It has another name called pine cream or pine fat.)" The meaning represented by pines and cypresses points to the praise of the moral character of the ancestors.

The water ripples and the sun on the screen on the inner side of the gate are a clear picture of "sunrise on the sea". "Huainanzi · Astronomy Instruction": "日出于畅谷，浴于咸池，拂于扶桑，是谓晨明。(The sun bears in valley, baths in the ocean and rises by a large mulberry, and it is called morning.)" The symbolism of the "sunrise on the sea" picture is obvious. It shows the solemnity of the ancestral hall.

Behind the gate, in the middle part of the courtyard, there are cranes and deer. Cranes have always been a symbol of auspiciousness in the Chinese folks. The first volume of "Afterwords of Searching for Gods": "丁令威，本辽东人，学道于灵虚山。后化鹤归辽，集城门华表柱。Ding Lingwei, a native of Liaodong person, learned from Lingxu Mountain. Later he became a crane and returned to the Liao, and stood on the Huabiao pillar of the city gate." The crane is also called the guide to becoming a fairy, and the cranes and the pines are collectively called "松鹤延年 (longevity as the pine and crane)", which symbolizes longevity. Deer has two

meanings. One is about becoming immortals. Deer is also common forms of immortals. "The Legend of the Immortals" records: "葛仙翁于女儿山学道数十年，登仙，化为白鹿，二足时出山上。(Ge Xianweng studied Taoism in Nvji Mountain for decades, became the immortal, turned into a white muntjac, and he often appeared on the mountain.)" At the same time, deer is also a homonym of "禄 (fortune)" and is regarded as one of the symbols of "福 (fú means happiness)", "禄 (lù means fortune)" and "寿 (shòu, means longevity)". 福, 禄 and 寿 are the three gods of good fortune in Taoism, meaning happiness, fortune and longevity. Folks like to express their wishes with the phrase "福如东海、寿比南山 (wish your fortune as the East Sea and longevity as the South Mountain)".

Finally, the main characters of the sacrifice are at the top center of the screen, a man and a woman, symbolizing the ancestors of the people. On the altar are common sacrifices such as livestock and steamed bread in real life. The cloud and fog at the top serves as a barrier, representing the world in which the ancestors lived, which has also shown the unattainable superiority.

The grid becomes the representative of the memorial tablet. Chinese folk, after the death of ordinary people, there will be tablets in the ancestral halls and homes, and tombstones on the tombs. The rectangular grid simplifies the form of the tablet, and the grids are arranged from top to bottom, indicating the inheritance of the family. The names are arranged according to the location of the ancestor and the direction of the characters in the genealogy. One side is male and the other is female, showing the direction of male left and female right.

#### IV. TEXT ANALYSIS

On the porch, there are "俎豆" of "俎豆千秋 (inheritance of the sacrifice)" and "本枝百世 (hundred generations of the family)", from: "The Analects of Confucius · Weilinggong" and "Historical Records" Volume 47 "The Family of Confucius". 俎豆 Zudou: A ritual vessel used to serve food during rituals and banquets in ancient times. It also refers to various ritual vessels. Later it was extended to mean sacrifice and worship. It shows the meaning of the "祠堂 (ancestral hall)" on the lintel. And 本支(běn zhī) is the name in the grid according to the generation.

The most important of the text information in the genealogy is the names of the elders of the past dynasties, which retain the traditional Chinese characteristics. The names of men seen from it have the same middle or end characters in each generation. The generation characters represent the order of the elders and the young, so that everyone respects the seniority and knows how to respect the superiors and be kind to the young.

Women's names are uniformly displayed as her surname in the form of surname + s like Xs, such as "Wangs", "Lis", "Zhaos", etc. "Xs" only left the woman's last name without a name, representing the characteristics of the patriarchal era. Even in modern society, women's names that have recently appeared in genealogy are also in this form, which shows that the Confucian tradition of male superiority is deeply rooted. Although human rights are equal in modern society, the Confucianism that "君为臣纲，父为子纲，夫为妻纲 (The monarch is the rule of the subject, the father is the rule of the son, and the husband is the rule of the wife)" is still enshrined.

The genealogy patterns of the Jiaodong Peninsula have typical ethnic cultural characteristics. The information conveyed by the images can be summarized and summarized as follows. The first is the deep cognition of the concept of "clan" and "family" in the Jiaodong Peninsula. The family theory of Confucian "family culture" is concretely displayed in the genealogy. In modern society, the economy is developing rapidly, and the Jiaodong area is also in the vortex of economic development, but it is only at the special moment of "new year" that the abstract concept of "family" becomes more concrete, and the family members gather for this under one roof, offering sacrifices to ancestors. Genealogy has become an ideal prop for maintaining the clan and the family.

This family philosophy of "from top to bottom" is essentially to cultivate filial piety, which is the core view of Chinese Confucianism. The representative Confucian work "Four Books and Five Classics" in "The Great Learning" contains: "古之欲明明德于天下者；先治其国；欲治其国者，先齐其家；欲齐其家者，先修其身；欲修其身者，先正其心；……心正而后身修，身修而后家齐，家齐而后国治，国治而后天下平。(The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts... Their hearts being rectified, and their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, and their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, and their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, and the whole kingdom will be tranquil and happy.)" The family is the basic unit, and the genealogy carries all the meaning of this basic unit.

In addition to filial piety or good deeds, it is still necessary to be an official [11]. This is the second meaning of the genealogical pattern. For ordinary people, it is difficult for ordinary people to realize the courtyard of three jins, and being an official is the best way. As a symbol of an official, wearing colorful feather or the patch is the best representative. This is

also the dress of the characters seen in this particular type of genealogy. Confucianism pursues official status. Even in modern society, being an official is still considered as the best profession. This also stems from the profound influence of the aforementioned Confucianism.

Finally, a particularly noteworthy phenomenon is that one of the textual information in the genealogy is the typical "generation character." Each generation in the genealogy has a unified generation character. Regardless of the geographical location, the surname and the generation character represent the relationship of marriage. This tradition is almost completely broken in modern society, and the appearance of the generation character is rarely seen again. The generation character can trace each individual and make them return to the group. First, it is the group of each age, then the group of each clan, and finally the whole Chinese nation. In the Jiaodong Peninsula, it is relatively common to retain generational characters, which should also have genealogical effects.

The second is the lack of images of women. Except for the image of women in the image of the ancestor in the highest position of the sacrifice, the rest are typical male images, including children playing. The women shown in the text are also displayed as a certain surname, only staying on the last name and omitting the first name, which seems to be a simplification of symbols, but actually represents the neglect of women. But at the same time, it is found that in the past, the genealogy did not include women in the genealogy because the girl was going to marry, and the people who married in were not from their own genealogy, but "outsiders." And the genealogy now includes women in the genealogy.

## V. CONCLUSION

The genealogy of the Jiaodong Peninsula area intensively reflects the impression that Chinese Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism have left among the people. Nowadays, with the development of economy, only some unurbanized villages in Jiaodong still retain this tradition. As the coastal countryside has gradually turned to urbanization, in the high-rise buildings of the city, only part of the building space has walls that directly face the door, and these walls are not all the places where the central scroll paintings are hung, which are mostly replaced by more contemporary family photos.

Compared with family photos, the central scroll paintings convey more information, while the central scroll paintings that represent the ancestral halls have a clear symbolic meaning spreading and positioning, and the image has obvious enlightenment. With the rapid development of information today, this kind of historical inheritance needs to be studied to emerge a

form that is more suitable for display, to avoid its disappearance, and to avoid the loss of image resources that promote the spread of Chinese family conceptions.

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