

PROCEEDINGS ARTICLE

Research on the Statue of Ceramic Wind Lion God

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ABSTRACT

The main materials of the Wind Lion God (风狮爷) consist of copper, stone, ceramic, azure stone and so on. This paper takes the ceramic Wind Lion God as the main research object, starts with its materials technology, analyzes its functionality and modeling language, then compares the Roof Wind Lion God statues in southern Fujian, Kinmen, and Okinawa, and summarizes the relevance of cultural heritage of the three places. From the perspective of regional humanism, this paper also analyzes the reasons for the formation of similarities and differences, understands the similarities and differences of folk statue factors and modeling aesthetics in different regions, and conducts specific research on the cultural functions brought about by the use of ceramic materials that add to the art form of the Wind Lion God.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The similarity in the sculpts of the ceramic Wind Lion God in southern Fujian, Kinmen and Okinawa is inseparable from the cultural relevance behind it. Southern Fujian and Kinmen belong to southeast China and have been in close contact with each other since ancient times. After the lion was introduced into inland China, the lion culture was formed and gradually developed and evolved, and it was then transformed into the image of the Wind Lion God in southern Fujian. The Kinmen area was influenced by the Wind Lion God in southern Fujian, and combined with the regional characteristics of Kinmen, the Wind Lion God was given more varied shapes and richer cultural connotations. The Okinawa area was influenced by the migration of Fujian people, Chinese culture was also introduced, and the lion culture gradually developed. The relevance of cultural heritage in the three places is directly related to geographical location and population migration. The areas affected by the Chinese lion culture also included Southeast Asian countries. The lion image was introduced from China, the image features were also influenced by Chinese culture, and the shape was similar. From the traditional cultural branch of lion

culture, it can be observed that the inheritance and development of Chinese culture radiates to surrounding countries and regions in a divergent mode, reflecting China's cultural influence and cultural export to a certain extent.

2. REASON AND FUNCTION
OF WIND LION GOD
CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Wind Lion God culture in southern Fujian is an extension of the lion culture. The lion (狻猊, suān ní) is not a native animal in China, and it was recorded as early as the Warring States Period in *Biography of the King Mu of Zhou* (穆天子传), in which it was recorded: "A 狻猊, like a wild horse, can walk five hundred miles" [1]. Although some scholars still dispute whether a 狻猊 is a lion or not, most of the morphological features can prove that a 狻猊 is a lion. The earliest record of the introduction of the lion into China is the *History of the Han Dynasty · Biography of the Western Regions* (汉书·西域传) compiled by Ban Gu of the Western Han Dynasty. The article said: "The world is rich, the wealth is abundant, the troops and horses are strong, and the flocks of giant elephants, lions, fierce dogs,

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and big sparrows are feeding on the field outside" [2]. It can be confirmed that lions were introduced into China at that time. There are more records about the introduction of lions in the Eastern Han Dynasty. For example, in the *Book of the Later Han Dynasty* (后汉书), in the Chronicle of Emperor Zhang, it recorded that in the first year of Emperor Zhang of the Han Dynasty, the lion was offered by the Yuezhi Kingdom and in the second year, the lion was offered by the Parthian Empire. After the tributes of the Han Dynasty, the Southern and Northern Dynasties, the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the Song and Yuan Dynasties, and the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the number of tributes in the Ming Dynasty reached a peak. Until the Portuguese envoy Bento Pereira offered the African lion in the 17th year of Kangxi in the Qing Dynasty [3], the lion gradually replaced the tiger as the king of beasts, and frequently appeared in paintings and sculptures, being classified as auspicious animals and endowed with certain symbolic meanings.

Wind Lion God, also known as Wind Lion Lord (风狮公), is the protector of people's worship and belief, with its appearance being integrated into the image of a lion, and containing human spirit and divinity. The general establishment of Wind Lion God was about the 22nd year of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty (1683 BC) after the Qing Government abolished the Great Clearance and Taiwan was recaptured. As a result of the calamities, the mountain forests were cut down in large quantities, the environment was gradually destroyed, and there were no high mountains as barriers. The influence of the northeast monsoon on southern Fujian could last up to 9 months, resulting in severe desertification. Therefore, the folk hoped to use the power of gods to resist the damage to the living environment caused by natural disasters. The lion had always been called the title of auspicious beast, as a result, according to the customs of southern Fujian, the lion was crowned the title of "爷", thus forming a culture with local characteristics. In southern Fujian, the combination of Buddhism, Taoism and other religious cultures and lion culture endowed Wind Lion God with a noble and majestic temperament. The Wind Lion God gradually developed in southern Fujian.

2.1. Reason for the Belief in Wind Lion God

2.1.1. Humanity History Factors

The origin of the Wind Lion God was closely related to the lion culture, and the lions were first paid tribute from the Western Regions to the Central Plains. In ancient China, the tiger was regarded as the beast of prosperity, and the lion was the nemesis of the tiger. After the lion was introduced into China, it gradually replaced the status of the tiger as the king of beasts. In

the Han Dynasty, there was a popular saying that lions were fiercer than tigers and leopards, and with the introduction of Buddhism, lions became the spiritual beasts of Buddhism, and Buddha was likened to a lion. The gradual introduction of lions into daily life was a manifestation of the worship of lion culture. The widespread spread of Taoist culture, following the tradition of "believing in witches and ghosts and emphasizing excessive religious activities" in the Minyue Kingdom, formed the custom of respecting wind beasts and wind gods, reflecting the reality of Taoism's combination of lion culture and traditional folk customs and practicality. Taoist religious culture promoted the development and dissemination of lion culture in terms of ideology and human behavior and customs. The humanistic thoughts of traditional Buddhist and Taoist religions were prominently displayed in the Wind Lion God in southern Fujian and Taiwan. With the help of the ritual sense of lion culture, people's expectations for a better life and a sense of belief in the realization of good wishes could be achieved. In southern Fujian, there had long been a folk tradition of setting up a talisman to exorcise evil spirits. Later, the Fujian people moved to Kinmen and introduced the Wind Lion God culture there. The Wind Lion God culture was also expected to be protected by seeking out supernatural powers [4].

2.1.2. Natural Ecological Environment Factors

The emergence of the Wind Lion God was inseparable from the natural environment and climate of the three places. On the one hand, in southern Fujian, Kinmen, and Ryukyu, due to the monsoon climate, they were subject to natural disasters such as rain and wind damage, vegetation damage, and soil desertification. Residents there wanted to overcome the fear of natural disasters through psychology, so they created the Wind Lion God to ward off the evil spirits. On the other hand, in addition to the impact of wind and flood disasters, the three places were also affected by ant infestation, and they also used the Wind Lion God to expel the infestation of ant and pray for peace.

2.2. Function of Wind Lion God

In the early days, the Wind Lion God only had the function of a ritual vessel, and in the later period, it gradually had a certain artistic expression with the development. In the initial period, its function was limited to warding off the evil spirits. With the improvement of the natural environment, the scope of function of warding off the evil spirits gradually expanded to have the functions of settling down, sheltering feng shui, blessing with safeness, eliminating disasters, expelling diseases, marriage and funeral, begetting son, arresting thieves, finding lost property, restraining ant infestation, and cracking

village inter-restriction. Its assigned functions were gradually combined with local folk culture and ideological tendencies. In Kinmen, Okinawa and other places, with the development of tourism, the Wind Lion God gradually became a cultural symbol, being transformed into tourist souvenirs and cultural and creative products. Its decorative role gradually exceeded its practical function, and then developed into a local landmark culture [5].

3. ANALYSIS OF THE STATUE OF THE CERAMIC ROOF WIND LION GOD

The materials of the Wind Lion God are divided into two types: stone and ceramic. The stone ones are mostly placed at the entrance of the village and in front of the door and are called "Village Wind Lion God", which have public attributes. The ceramic ones are mostly placed on the ridge of the roof, and are also called "Clay Wind Lion God" by Kinmen people, "Roof Wind Lion God" by southern Fujian, and "Roof Lion" by Okinawa, with private attributes. The shapes of the Wind Lion God in southern Fujian, Kinmen, and Okinawa have both similarities and differences. Due to the differences in the history and culture of the production regions, their symbolic meanings and characteristics are different. However, the overall image of the Wind Lion God is dominated by a lion-headed human body, and its facial expressions are mostly marked by round eyes and huge mouths. The body and other decorative parts have different decorative symbols according to the different regions. The human figure can often be seen in the statue of Wind Lion God. The traditional craftsmen unite man and god, which reflects the cultural thought of the harmony between man and nature in traditional Chinese culture. Through the Wind Lion God, the good wishes of Fujian and Taiwan people to seek harmony between man and nature can be told.

3.1. Southern Fujian Ceramic Wind Lion God

Lian Heng recorded in the twenty-three volumes of *Taiwan General History · Customs* (台湾通史·风俗志): "Sometimes, there are clay images standing on the house, riding horses and bowing their bows, with ferocious postures, which are known as 蚩尤 (chī yóu), and can also be called 厌胜 (yàn shèng)" [6]. This kind of item for suppressing the evil on the roof of southern Fujian is also called "General Tile" and "Roof Wind Lion God". Its shape is mostly dominated by warriors with bows and arrows riding on the body of a lion. This image originated from the people's assumptions about the image of Wind God, 蚩尤 and

General Tile in southern Fujian. 蚩尤 is a miraculous figure who can control the forces of nature in southern Fujian legends, and can prevent wind and rain disasters. In the Hokkien language, "狮" and "师" are homonyms, and "风师" is homophonic with "风狮". As a result, mostly, the folk Wind God in southern Fujian is presented in the image of lions, and the shape of Wind Lion God is born.

It is recorded in *Records of Lu Ban* (鲁班经) circulated among the people that General Tile can restrain the hedge of beast plaques, roof ridges, wall tops and the sharp corners of the memorial archway ridges, and can also play a role in warding off the evil spirits. This book also expounds the placement location and function of the Wind Lion God. The ceramic roof Wind Lion God in southern Fujian is generally placed on the roof main ridge of the gate or in the center of the roof slope facing outwards, and usually appears in single or in pairs. The ceramic Wind Lion God placed on the roof has open mouth and closed mouth. The Wind Lion God with an open mouth is usually hollow inside. Due to the windy weather in southern Fujian, it is necessary to make a windproof warning at any time. The craftsmen in southern Fujian make the Wind Lion God hollow, and once the wind blows in, it will make a sound to remind people, which can be used as a windproof alarm device. The scream sound varies with the wind, being louder when the wind is strong and lower when the wind is weak. Southern Fujian craftsmen skillfully use the sound produced by the friction and vibration of the wind and the ceramic shard. Affected by the airflow, the air pressure in the mouth is slightly higher, the airflow flows out, and the pressure is sucked back into the airflow again, resulting in a difference in air pressure between the inside and the outside, and the inside and outside flow of the airflow repeatedly causes friction, vibration and sound. The southern Fujian people perfectly apply this physical phenomenon to real life, reflecting the wisdom of the working people.

The shape of the Roof Wind Lion God of southern Fujian mostly appears in an upright posture, and a few appear in a squatting posture. It follows the general pattern of the Wind Lion God. The shape of the lion has round eyes and huge mouth, and there are few decorations on the position of the teeth and tail. The shape is relatively concise and general. In contrast, the figures on horses carrying bows and arrows are depicted more precisely, and the accessories on the figures' heads and the armors they wear are all carefully processed, reflecting the meticulous work of the craftsmen in southern Fujian. Its overall shape is both fine and simple, with a strong

sense of rhythm, which reflects the pursuit and advocacy of southern Fujian craftsmen for beauty [7].

3.2. Kinmen Ceramic Wind Lion God

There are many types of Wind Lion God in the Kinmen area, with relatively rich decorative styles and more functions than those in the other two places, such as praying for good weather for the crops, eliminating drought, and blessing a good harvest. There were severe blown sand hazards in Kinmen. The residents believed that these hazards were caused by "wind demon" and wanted to protect the village through the supernatural power. Therefore, they set up the Wind Lion God at the entrance of the village for defense. Over time, it became the protector of the village. Although most of the Wind Lion God in Kinmen is represented by stone village Wind Lion God, there are also a few earthen clay images of the Wind Lion God that adorn the roof [8].

New Kinmen Chronicle (新金門志) mentioned: "On the roofs of people's houses, you can see a ceramic beast in the posture of a lion with its mouth open or in the posture of a general wearing armor, named 蚩尤" [9]. The statues of the Roof Wind Lion God in Kinmen are mostly made of clay and appear individually, and the postures are divided into two types: squatting and standing, with more images in standing postures, and most of them are made with anthropomorphic images, with a volume of about 20 cm. Its shape mostly appears in the image of a warrior riding a lion and there is also the image of a single lion. The craftsmen emphasized the lion's eyes and mouth. The exaggerated mouth is almost the same width as the face, and the head looks up, giving people a visual impression of a god's eyes like electricity, similar in shape to that of the southern Fujian ceramic Wind Lion God [10].

The distinction between males and females is the biggest feature of the Kinmen Wind Lion God. In China, traditional stone lions are covered with manes to make it difficult to distinguish between males and females. Due to the unique upright standing posture of the Wind Lion God, the expression of the lion's gender has become a problem that must be solved. The craftsmen in southern Fujian use an erected gourd to metaphorize a male lion's sexual organ, placed in the middle of the male lion's legs and decorated this part with bright oil paint. For a lioness, the craftsmen add ribbons for decoration, reflecting the restrained and reserved processing mode of the Chinese. In addition to being placed on the ridge of the roof, the Kinmen Clay Wind Lion God is also placed on the slope of the roof for decoration. Affected by different surrounding environments, its placement location will also be different. Due to the private

attribute of the Clay Wind Lion God, functionally, it is only responsible for guarding and arranging private houses. This kind of Clay Wind Lion God has a history of more than 300 years in Kinmen. It appears more in Changhua, which is related to several floods. In the later stage, it is mainly used to ward off evil spirits.

3.3. Okinawa Ceramic Wind Lion God

The Japanese Okinawa "Wind Lion God" was introduced in 1371 A.D. (the 4th year of Hongwu of the Ming Dynasty) when the 36 surnames of the Fujian people moved to Ryukyu. Later, it was combined with local cultural elements to form the image of the Wind Lion God with unique local characteristics. The Japanese term for the ceramic talisman on the roof of a building, which resembles the Wind Lion God, is "シーサー", namely, the roof lion, which is pronounced as Shisa in the Okinawan dialect and called "シーサー" in Japanese, and is derived from the pronunciation of the southern Fujian lion. *Qiuyang* (球陽) [11] records that in the era of King Shangzhen, Fusheng Village of Dongfengping County suffered repeated fires. Cai Yingrui, a local nobleman, proposed to set up a lion statue on the roof facing Mount Yaese to play a role in preventing fire. Legend has it that in 1689, due to frequent fires, people consulted feng shui and were told to have been influenced by Mount Yaese. To prevent this, feng shui masters recommend making a lion statue and putting it on the mountain. When residents put it according to the statement, the fire stopped, and the legend added another layer of mystery to the Wind Lion God.

There are two types of Okinawa roof lion production: ceramic and brick and plaster. Due to the strict grade restrictions on residential building forms in the Ryukyu Kingdom era, only the roofs of noble houses could be covered with tiles and the roofs of civilian houses could only be thatched, in the early days, lion statues were only established in Buddhism temples and Shinto shrines, city gates, Utaki, houses of senior nobles, tombs of nobles, entrances and exits of villages, etc. Therefore, at that time, only the roof of the nobleman could be installed with a Wind Lion God. After the collapse of the Ryukyu Kingdom and its incorporation into Japan, and the abolition of all vassal states in the country and the reunification of prefectures in the Meiji era, the roofs of the civilian houses began to be covered with roof lions. This period was the heyday of setting up Wind Lion God. The materials were mainly ceramic, stone, plaster and lacquerware in the early stage, and cement, bronze and other materials appeared in the later stage.

Most of the roof lions in Okinawa appear individually and are placed on the front slope of the roof. Unlike the southern Fujian area, they won't decorate on the

main ridge. The roof lion is placed on the central axis of the roof near the cornice and appears in the image of squatting or turning its head sideways. It is different from the Wind Lion God in southern Fujian and Taiwan in terms of placement location and shape. However, in terms of function, the roof lion also possesses the private attribute, with main function of guarding the house.

The shape of the Okinawan ceramic Wind Lion God is influenced by the native Japanese Komainu, which resembles both a dog and a lion in terms of look. However, considering that Okinawa has close ties with China, it has been affected in terms of culture and is more inclined to lions. Compared with the image of the ceramic Wind Lion God in southern Fujian and Kinmen, it is more ferocious and has fangs exposed. The depiction of its teeth is also sharper and thinner and its face is more ferocious, which is in contrast to the serious and mighty image of the Chinese Wind Lion God. The characteristics of the Okinawa Roof Wind Lion God are that: its eyes and teeth are white, the body is relatively slimmer, the specific posture is also mainly standing and squatting, and the whole appears in the image of a single lion. Different from southern Fujian and Kinmen, there are few General Tile who ride on lions, instead, the Wind Lion God's tail has an exaggerated shape and its manes are relatively exaggerated and unrestrained. In local area, there are two types of Wind Lion God, namely, male and female. Male lions open their mouths, lionesses close their mouths, and lions in this form are usually presented in a pair.

With the development and spread of lion culture in Okinawa, the ceramic Wind Lion God appears one after another on the windows of storefronts and the walls along the road. Its shape also breaks through the traditional statues, and appears with the cheerful, grimacing, and dancing image, increasing the fun. With the development of tourism culture, the expression of the roof lion has developed from seriousness and solemnity to cuteness and approachableness and its function has changed from solemn protection to attracting tourists. From this, it can be seen that the image of the Wind Lion God has almost become a symbol of Okinawa.

4. CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE CERAMIC WIND LION GOD

4.1. Bearing of the Wind Lion God's Cultural Function

After analyzing the reasons for the appearance of the Wind Lion God in the three places and the shape of the statue, it can be concluded that the appearance of the image of the Wind Lion God is related to the natural environment and the worship of the lion culture. People want to carry some of their needs and expectations in life through a specific image or object. At the same time, the Wind Lion God has been endowed with functions such as suppressing and exorcising evil spirits, keeping the house safe, restraining ant infestation, protecting feng shui, cracking village inter-restriction, and eliminating and defending against supernatural scourges and so on. These symbolic meanings of the Wind Lion God embody the common emotions and good wishes formed by the ancestors of southern Fujian, Kinmen and Okinawa in their long-term life and labor.

The Wind Lion God, a branch of Chinese culture, can reflect the inheritance and export of Chinese culture. In China, the Wind Lion God has gradually developed from southern Fujian to the Kinmen area, and then has been better inherited and developed there, further enriching its cultural connotation and modeling form, becoming a cultural symbol with unique Kinmen regional characteristics. In foreign countries, influenced by the Chinese lion culture, related cultures have also appeared in Japan and Southeast Asian countries. Roof lions in Ryukyu, stone-sculpted lions in India and Thailand, and Singapore lion statues are all similar to Chinese lion statues, and the images are exaggerated to highlight their facial features, reflecting the influence of Chinese cultural output on the cultural development of surrounding countries.

4.2. Inevitability of the Appearance of the Wind Lion God's Ceramic Materials

The roof Wind Lion God with different names in the three places perfectly combines the nature of the ceramic materials with the belief culture. Compared with most stone Wind Lion God, those made of ceramic materials are richer in color and quainter as a whole. The plasticity of the ceramic materials is stronger and the details are more refined. Compared with the stone Wind Lion God, the ceramic Wind Lion God is smaller and lighter, which makes it more

suitable to be placed on the roof. Although the ceramic Wind Lion God is rough in appearance, it is solid and durable. Ceramics have strong compactness, water-absorbing quality and hardness, which can meet the role of daily roof decoration functions. In terms of price, the ceramic Wind Lion God is cheap, easy to be fired, and has a low damage rate. Therefore, it is more suitable for use as a small roof utensil. In terms of materials, the ceramic is more convenient than stone and copper materials, and it is also more convenient to transport. Compared with the stone Wind Lion God, the ceramic Wind Lion God has added a strong wind alarm function. The Wind Lion God with an open mouth can let the wind pass through and produce sounds of different volumes according to the wind to indicate windy weather.

In addition to the advantages of material and practicality, the color of the ceramic Wind Lion God can better match the color of the roof. There are many red brick buildings in Jinmen and other places in southern Fujian and the bricks and tiles are mainly red. The color of the Roof Wind Lion God is also dominated by red, which contrasts with the overall hue of the building. Some buildings in Okinawa are gray as a whole, and the ceramic color used by the Roof Wind Lion God is also perfectly matched with the main color of the building. In this way, the architectural decoration and the main body of the building are matched.

5. CONCLUSION

Through the analysis of the origin of the development background and the characteristics of the ceramic roof Wind Lion God, it can be learned that the three places of southern Fujian, Kinmen and Okinawa have strong similarities and relevance in history and culture, reflecting the power of Chinese cultural heritage and cultural output. The expectations and long-cherished wishes carried behind the Wind Lion God culture are consistent, but there are still certain differences and national characteristics in the shape according to local cultural traditions. The appearance of the Wind Lion God fully reflects the rich imagination and creativity of the predecessors, and it is also the crystallization of human wisdom. The own characteristics of ceramic materials enrich the shape and color of the Roof Wind Lion God and give full play to the advantages of ceramics. The practical function and decorative function of ceramic materials are vividly reflected, and as a result, the simple and plain ceramic materials can reveal a rich humanistic charm.

Today, the ceramic roof Wind Lion God not only has the function of avoiding evil spirits, but also can be used as a regional representative, with symbolic meaning. The ceramic roof Wind Lion God not only inherits and carries forward the lion culture, but also reflects the practical significance of ceramic materials and the unique aesthetics of plastic arts.

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