

# THE ART OF WOODBLOCK NEW YEAR PAINTINGS IN ZHUXIAN TOWN, CHINA FROM THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF CONNOTATION, BELIEFS, SYMBOLS AND FOLK ART

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## ABSTRACT

As a national intangible cultural heritage, the woodblock New Year paintings of Zhuxian Town, China are known as the treasures of Chinese traditional culture. This study aims to explore the art of woodblock New Year paintings in Zhuxian Town, China from the cultural dimensions of connotations, beliefs, symbols and folk art. Qualitative research methods and descriptive analysis methods were used to conduct an in-depth study of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings from four cultural dimensions of connotation, beliefs, symbols and folk art. Through literature review and field investigation in Zhuxian Town, combined with observations and in-depth interviews with local artists and residents, the researchers selected more than twenty representative New Year paintings for analysis to reveal their profound traditional values and culture idea. These works not only reflect the artistic charm and cultural connotation of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year pictures, but also reflect their important role in the inheritance of beliefs, symbol systems and folk art.

**Keywords:** Cultural Dimensions, Connotation, Beliefs, Symbols, Folk Art

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## INTRODUCTION

The report of the 20th National Congress of Communist Party of China clearly states: "Advance cultural confidence and strength, and forge a new brilliance in socialist culture." The specific content discusses stimulating cultural innovation and creativity of entire nation. It emphasizes on creative transformation and innovative development, inheriting China's excellent traditional culture, and continuously enhancing the country's cultural soft power and the influence of Chinese culture. Under the background that China attaches great importance to excellent traditional culture and strengthens cultural self-confidence, more and more design workers have new ideas about the inheritance of excellent traditional culture. They develop traditional culture from simple protection and inheritance to creativity and innovation. Transform and promote the development of excellent traditional culture. Through innovative cultural and creative products, it not only promotes economic development, but also meets market demand, forming a new form of regional cultural development with cultural and creative products as the core (Jin, 2021). With development of cultural and creative industries, creative products rich in cultural value connotations play an increasingly important role in the market (Dou, 2022). These products not only embody profound cultural heritage and innovative spirit, but also play a key role in promoting economic development and enriching social and cultural life.

Chinese traditional culture has a long history and has been passed down in various cultural fields. Rich and colorful folk art resources, with profound connotations, embody the essence of the traditional culture of the Chinese nation and are precious spiritual wealth of mankind. As an important part of traditional culture, intangible cultural heritage allows China's traditional culture to be continued and passed on from generation to generation. As an Intangible Cultural Heritage of China, woodblock New Year paintings are one of the few cultural carriers that can centrally exhibit the connotations of Chinese folk culture and the inner spirit of the Chinese people (Liang, 2021). Woodblock New Year paintings are representatives of China's folk culture and a carrier of the New Year culture. They express the hopes and ideals, beliefs and desires of the Chinese people for the year. The cultural connotation and value of these paintings far exceed their artistic essence (Ge, 2010).

The woodblock New Year paintings from Zhuxian Town, Kaifeng City, Henan Province, China, are considered the origin of Chinese woodblock New Year paintings, often referred to as the "Patriarch of Chinese Woodblock New Year Paintings." The Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings have developed into a unique form of folk art, accumulating a profound deposit of simple folk culture. The history of these paintings can be traced back to the Song Dynasty. They are not only a form of visual art but also carry rich cultural and historical information. Typically depicting mythological stories, historical figures, folk legends, and scenes of life, they not only provide visual pleasure but also convey moral teachings and auspicious meanings. This article deeply explores the connotation, beliefs, symbols and folk art of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings from a cultural perspective, and explores their profound cultural characteristics and origins. Through special research, the profound folk cultural heritage of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings is revealed, and its profound influence on Chinese culture and folk customs is revealed, providing a new perspective and understanding for the study of traditional Chinese folk art. This study aims to explore the art of woodblock New Year paintings in Zhuxian Town, China from the cultural dimensions of connotations, beliefs, symbols and folk art.

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

New Year paintings are a type of painting traditionally posted during Chinese New Year. According to "Cihai", a comprehensive dictionary of Chinese terms: "New Year paintings are a kind of Chinese painting. Posted during the lunar New Year, hence the name." The "lunar New Year" refers to the Spring Festival of the lunar calendar, a traditional Chinese festival. It

is a comprehensive and significant national festival with profound cultural connotations, celebrated with great solemnity. Families prepare New Year goods, clean courtyards, and post New Year paintings and Spring Festival couplets. Activities include making dumplings, having the New Year's Eve dinner, everyone wearing new clothes, exchanging greetings, and an overall atmosphere of joy and festivity. Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings carry a strong sense of history. From the cultural implications embedded in the visual symbols of images and language in each painting, we can discern the living conditions of ordinary people under the societal backdrop of the time, as well as their expectations for life.

As one of the cultural and artistic exemplars of the agricultural era, Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings contain ancient people's fear of the unknown world and their longing for future life. They often express the inner cultural meaning, the aesthetic emotions, and life concepts of the people through the characters, symbolic forms, and thematic content of the paintings (Chen, 2022). Yan Ruibin's "Study of the Artistic Language of Zhuxian Town Woodblock New Year Paintings" primarily explores the development, artistic language, and thematic content of the woodblock New Year paintings from Zhuxian Town, Kaifeng. The goal is to understand the art's aesthetic and the connotations of folk art. By examining examples of New Year paintings, the study elucidates their deep forms and meanings, and profoundly appreciates their artistic value and significance. Articles related to the cultural connotations of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings often start with the subject matter, delving deeply into it. The paintings use homophonic meanings or Chinese traditional auspicious mascots and symbolic symbols that convey good fortune to express the emotions and wishes of the people. The thematic content of these paintings carries a rich folk cultural connotation and reflects the spiritual pursuits of the people (Yan, 2011).

The subjects and characters chosen in the Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings are well-known myths, folk stories, drama characters, and heroes who are deeply loved and respected by the people. These popular beliefs form an important spiritual pillar of the woodblock New Year paintings, embodying the people's hopes, beliefs, and their beautiful aspirations for life (Ge, 2010).

The subjects of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings possess a high level of metaphorical significance. The patterns and texts with beautiful implications present in these paintings embody people's aspirations for a better life and reflect their spiritual ideals (He & Yang, 2009). Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings often express emotions through physical images, using flowers, grass, animals, birds, etc. to express people's wishes. In addition, the Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings have created many heroic characters who are witty and unrestrained, with clear distinctions between love and hate. They not only cater to people's love for myths, legends and custom novels, but also express their admiration for heroic characters (Cai, 2010).

Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year pictures are rooted in the folk, have distinctive Central Plains cultural characteristics, show a strong folk art atmosphere, and contain rich folk customs and interests. Their unique artistic value makes them a treasure of Central Plains culture and art (Yang, 2020). From the perspective of integrating tradition and modernity, some scholars have connected traditional Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year pictures with contemporary life, and conducted a summary and study of the themes, shapes, colors, structures and other artistic languages in their pattern culture. They combine the visual patterns of excellent traditional culture with contemporary aesthetics to promote the integration and application of cultural and creative design of woodblock New Year paintings in Zhuxian Town (Wu, 2022). Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings are traditional cultural resources with rich cultural connotations. In the process of protecting this cultural heritage, it also faces the challenge of development to unearth its deeper values. Protective measures must be taken to

balance preservation and development, ensuring the inheritance of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings (Qin, 2016).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, qualitative research methods and descriptive analysis were used to explore the performance of the woodblock New Year painting art in Zhuxian Town, China, in the four cultural dimensions of connotation, belief, symbol and folk art. The researcher followed the following steps for data collection and analysis:

**Step 1: First, determine the scope of the research content.** Through extensive review and analysis of relevant literature, we understand the folk cultural connotation of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings, and then identify and define the main cultural dimensions of this study as connotation, beliefs, symbols and folk art and collect relevant information; secondly, the researchers conducted research and inspections in Kaifeng City and Zhuxian Town to understand cultural dimension of woodblock New Year paintings in Zhuxian Town.

**Step 2: Data collection.** First, by visiting local museums, historical archives and art workshops, we collected information on the cultural dimensions of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings. These places preserve a wealth of New Year paintings and related materials, which can provide us with resources to deeply understand history and cultural background of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings. Secondly, in-depth interviews and questionnaires were conducted, including the representative inheritors of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings, craftsmen, local residents and cultural experts. Through communication with them, you will obtain first-hand information about the cultural significance, social influence and status of New Year pictures in modern society; in addition, you will also conduct on-site observations and participate in local cultural activities to intuitively experience the role of New Year pictures in daily life and festivals application in tradition. These activities will provide us with on-the-ground experience and deepen our understanding of the cultural connotation of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings. Through these comprehensive data collection methods, we will provide a rich empirical basis for in-depth research on the folk cultural connotation of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings.

**Step 3: Data analysis.** The researchers categorized and analyzed the data into the following three scenarios:

1) Qualitative analysis: Through in-depth interpretation of the collected historical documents, artistic works and interview records, the cultural dimension of the Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings is revealed. Historical documents include research on the origin, development and cultural inheritance of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings. The analysis of artistic works involves aspects such as the style, theme, and expression techniques of the New Year paintings. Through interview records, the researchers gained an in-depth understanding of the production technology, inheritance of traditional skills, and folk cultural connotations of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings.

2) Content analysis: Systematically analyze the themes, symbols and use of colors in the Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings to explore their expression in folk traditions and social values. The theme analysis can observe the traditional festivals, folk tales, myths and legends that are common in New Year pictures. The use of symbols and colors reflects the cultural significance and aesthetic pursuit of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings.




3) Comparative analysis: By comparing New Year paintings of different styles, researchers observed cultural and artistic development trends. Comparative analysis can highlight the changes and evolution of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings in different historical periods and different production styles, thereby revealing their connection and development between tradition and modernity.




**Step 4: Conclusion.** Combining the results of historical document analysis, field visits, in-depth interviews and content analysis, the researchers came to the conclusion of the study of the folk cultural connotation of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings, further enriching and deepening the understanding and understanding of this traditional folk art.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

As a model of China's excellent traditional culture, the Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings show unique artistic charm with their simple and exaggerated shapes, bright and bright colors, full and compact compositions and rough and simple lines. Its patterns contain a wealth of gods of heaven and earth, folklore and opera stories, presenting profound connotations, beliefs, symbols and internal information of folk art, and have profound cultural heritage. Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings carry a large amount of folk cultural information and national psychological sustenance, and are a symbolic expression of intuitive and aesthetic nature of folk life. Researchers organized research results into a table as follows:

**Table 1** Analysis table of connotation dimensions of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year pictures





No.	Woodblock New Year	Cultural dimension of connotation
1	 <p>"Ma Shang Bian" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	This New Year picture is of relatively ancient door god. It shows Qin Qiong riding a yellow gelding, wearing armor and holding two maces. Jingde rides on a black horse, wearing armor and holding two whips. He looks very majestic. It means wearing a helmet and holding a whip astride a horse. Chinese people please go home during New Year and stick it on the door to guard the door, drive away ghosts and evil spirits, ward off misfortunes and welcome good fortune, and bless peace.
2	 <p>"Fu Lu Shou" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	Fu Lu Shou, it is universal yearning for life in Chinese folk tradition. Among characters in the picture, the one in middle is "Ci Fu Tian Guan (赐福天官)", holding "RuYi (如意)"; on right is Lucky Star, dressed as a Yuanwailang, holding a happy child, which means many children and blessings; the one holding a fairy peach and leaning on a cane is longevity star, with a lovely smile. Ju. The three stars are known among the people as "Fu Lu Shou", which respectively symbolize good luck, official salary and longevity, and convey people's wishes and pursuits in life.
3	 <p>"Chai Wang Tui Che" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	"Chai Wang Tui Che" is also known as "Returning with a Full Load". Legend has it that Chai Wang is the God of Wealth in the world. He was smart and hard-working since he was a child. He sells umbrellas, tea and salt from a push cart. He is also patron saint of transportation industry. In this New Year painting, "Chai Wang" pushes a cart of gold and silver jewelry with a big flag hanging on it, heading towards the people, which means that he will return home with a full load of gold. Most of them are pasted in shops to pray for prosperous business, abundant wealth, and good health. Enter Doujin.


No.	Woodblock New Year	Cultural dimension of connotation
4	 <p>"He He Er Xian" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>The poet Hanshan is known as "Hesheng (和圣)"; the monk Shide of Guoqing Temple is known as "Hesheng (合圣)". In the New Year painting, there are two boys with disheveled hair and smiling faces. One is holding a treasure box and the other is holding a lotus. They are homophonic to the word "He He (和合)", which is harmonious and beautiful. It is often displayed in center of heaven and earth table at weddings. It is an auspicious deity that symbolizes a happy marriage between husband and wife.</p>
5	 <p>"Pi Pao" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>What is shown in this year's painting is the erect general Qin Qiong. The figure is tall, sturdy and majestic. He is holding a command flag and is about to go out in armor. Posted on the door to guard the door and protect the peace.</p>
6	 <p>"Yao Qian Shu, Ju Bao Pen" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>This New Year painting depicts Shen Wansan and his wife under a money tree, with a cornucopia under the tree. It has the auspicious meaning of attracting wealth and bringing wealth to the family.</p>

According to Table 1, we can know that the connotation of Zhuxianzhen woodblock New Year pictures covers the orderly and regular connotation of the visual symbols of the New Year pictures, as well as the rhythmic form displayed by the communication of symbolic meanings. These connotations reflect the consciousness contained in the New Year picture symbols. Hidden content such as form and emotional appeal. Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year pictures are not only works of art, but also a carrier of cultural inheritance. Through the connotation of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings, it reflects people's wishes for exorcism and evil, peace, prosperity, happy family, health and longevity. These paintings represent cultural and historical traces of a specific era and region, allowing us to deeply understand the emotional attitudes and life concepts of our ancestors in the farming society at that time.





**Table 2** Analysis table of belief dimensions of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings

No.	Woodblock New Year	Cultural dimension of beliefs
1	 <p>"Zhong Kui" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>In this year's painting, Zhong Kui wears a judge's gauze hat and green official uniform, with an open red beard and wide eyes. He is sitting upright with a sword in his hand. He has an awe-inspiring and inviolable appearance. Although Zhong Kui looks ugly, he is upright and selfless, hates evil as much as his enemies, and can slay demons and exorcise evil. People often hang it on the gatehouse in the backyard, hoping that it can guard the house and ward off evil, protect peace, and show the people's psychological and spiritual wishes.</p>
2	 <p>"Qin Qiong · Jingde" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>"Qin Qiong · Jingde" is about military commander door god. The military commander door god is one of the oldest themes in door god paintings and is a reflection of the belief concept of folk gods in ancient society. The picture of this New Year picture consists of the image of a brave, majestic, resolute and burly general, holding a weapon and wearing armor. It has the meaning of suppressing evil and exorcizing demons, guarding the door and court, and praying for blessings and good luck.</p>
3	 <p>"Zao Jun Shen" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>"Zao Jun (灶君)" and "Zao Nai (灶奶)" are called "the head of family" by Chinese people. On the Kitchen God's Day in twelfth month of lunar calendar, the whole family prays to Kitchen God that "God will say good things and the lower world will keep you safe." Picture content of this New Year painting is complex, including "Yao Qian Shu (摇钱树)" and "Ju Bao Pen (聚宝盆)" represent meaning of wealth; at bottom of picture, there are chickens, rabbits, dogs and other farm poultry, accompanied by various gods and goddesses, representing people's expectation that everything will go well in coming year and the protection of the gods, and worship the Kitchen God. It symbolizes meaning of praying for blessings and avoiding disasters.</p>
4	 <p>"Tian Di Quan Shen" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>The sacrifice of "Tian Di Quan Shen" originated from the ancient Chinese nature worship of heaven and earth. The sky is rain, dew and sunshine, and the earth is nourished by water and soil, which nourishes all living things and depends on them for survival. Later, it evolved into a personal god. With the integration of Buddhism, Taoism, religion and folk beliefs, a complex god system was formed. Generally, the Jade Emperor in Taoism is the main figure, and beside him are the gods. On the night before the New Year, a table of heaven and earth is set up in the courtyard and a full-length statue of heaven and earth is set up for worship, praying for the coming of the gods and good health for the family and home, which reflects people's worship and belief in various gods of nature.</p>

No.	Woodblock New Year	Cultural dimension of beliefs
5	 <p>"Qian Shou Qian Yan Fo" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>The prototype of "Qian Shou Qian Yan Fo" comes from the Thousand-Armed and Thousand-Eyed Buddha statue carved from the trunk of a ginkgo tree in Daxiangguo Temple in Kaifeng. The Buddha statue is more than one foot high and is a four-sided three-dimensional statue. The Buddha statue wears a crown on its head and consists of thousands of hands. Each palm has an eye of wisdom, totaling a thousand eyes. The Thousand Eyes means that the Buddha can see into everything in the world, and the Thousand Hands means that the Buddha can turn things around. The power of Buddha is boundless and supreme.</p>

According to Table 2, we can know that Zhuxian Town, Henan, China, has been influenced by traditional Chinese religion and various foreign religious concepts, which has led to the worship of gods becoming a deeply rooted custom and belief. Zhuxianzhen woodblock New Year paintings originated from the primitive worship of nature and belief in gods. One of the important themes is the theme of worshipping gods. These categories of gods are closely related to people's lives, such as the door god who guards the door, the kitchen god who manages the kitchen fire, and the gods of heaven and earth who represent the folk gods. In New Year pictures, the images of gods are often solemn and solemn, reflecting people's desire for a peaceful, auspicious, prosperous and beautiful life.

**Table 3** Analysis table of symbolic dimensions of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year pictures

No.	Woodblock New Year	Cultural dimension of symbols
1	 <p>"Bao Hua Ping" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>Two innocent and lively children, newly dressed and with colorful ribbons on their waists, each holding a vase, were jumping and jumping happily. The "peony" in the painting means prosperity and wealth; the "Ping (瓶)" means peace, wealth, good luck and happiness. New Year paintings set off the strong festive atmosphere of the Spring Festival.</p>
2	 <p>"Da Ji Da Li" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>In Chinese folk, chickens are regarded as auspicious birds that ward off evil spirits and are the gods of houses. In ancient times, there was a custom of painting chickens on households during Spring Festival. "Ji (鸡)" and "Ji (吉)" are homophonic, symbolizing good luck. The paintings on this door are colorful and beautiful, with the "sun" and "moon" hanging high in the sky, people riding on "roosters", holding "treasure branches", as well as "Ruyi (如意)", "Xiang Yuan (香缘)", "Yu Pan (玉磐)", etc. Auspicious items, "Ruyi (如意)" symbolizes wealth, and all contain wishes for wealth, happiness, and good luck.</p>








No.	Woodblock New Year	Cultural dimension of symbols
3	 <p data-bbox="272 504 555 568">"Liuhai Xi Ji Chan" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>Among the Chinese folk gods, "Liuhai" is very well-known and is regarded by the common people as the god of "Diao Qian San Cai (钓钱散财)", also known as "Zhao Cai Tong Zi (招财童子)". He has the image of a unkempt doll with a double bun and a cloud around his neck. On the shoulders, wearing red and green clothes, holding a string of money in his hand, he dances to attract the three-legged golden toad. "Ji Qian (金钱)" and "Jin Chan (金蟾)" both have auspicious meanings of attracting wealth. It is also embellished with auspicious decorations such as peonies and gourds. "Peony" means wealth, "Hu Lu (葫芦)" is a homophone of "Fu Lu (福禄)" which means happiness and good fortune, and "fairy peach" means longevity. The whole New Year picture means attracting wealth and lasting wealth.</p>
4	 <p data-bbox="272 985 555 1061">"Qi Lin Song Zi" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>In the New Year painting, "Qi Lin (麒麟)" sits on the back of Guanyin, holding a lively and lovely child holding an osmanthus flower. A lady rides on the back, holding a phoenix-tailed umbrella. The breeze blows her face, and "Qi Lin (麒麟)" walks slowly, followed by the bat. "Qi Lin (麒麟)" belongs to the dragon family and means hoping that the child will become a dragon; "Gui Hua (桂花)" means wealth and good luck; "Bian Fu (蝙蝠)" means blessings falling from the sky and descendants. The whole picture has a full and well-proportioned composition, bright and decorative colors, and a festive and joyful atmosphere. It is deeply loved by newlyweds.</p>
5	 <p data-bbox="272 1413 555 1480">"Lian Nian You Yu" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>The New Year painting depicts a lively and lovely boy holding a big red carp, set against dense lotus leaves and blooming lotus flowers. "Yu (鱼)" corresponds to "Yu (余)", which means abundant life and a prosperous life every year. "Lotus" means peace and unity. The whole picture is auspicious, festive and full of vitality, reflecting the Chinese working people's love and unremitting pursuit of a better life.</p>
6	 <p data-bbox="272 1749 555 1814">"Che Qi" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>Through symbols such as "officials", "carriages and horses", and "flags", it means praying for a safe and smooth journey for people and animals when traveling, and for good fortune, which is people's yearning for peace and good luck.</p>

According to Table 3, we can know that Chinese traditional cultural symbols reflect China's national characteristics and have metaphorical and symbolic characteristics. The images and visual symbols of language in each of the Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings contain cultural characteristics such as national traditions, folk traditions, and artistic aesthetics. At that time, the people integrated their pursuit of good wishes into New Year

pictures with allegorical symbols to convey them, such as "Bian Fu (蝙蝠)", "Yu (鱼)", "Hu Lu (葫芦)", "Lotus", "Ping (瓶)", and "Peony", which symbolized auspiciousness, etc., through design techniques such as symbols and metaphors, New Year pictures expressed people's pursuit of the living environment at that time. The cultural implications contained in the Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings satisfied people's psychological needs for blessings and reflected people's yearning and expectations for a better life under the social background at that time.

**Table 4** Dimensional analysis table of folk art of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings

No.	Woodblock New Year	Cultural dimension of folk art
1	 <p>"San Niang Jiao Zi" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>The theme of this New Year picture comes from the popular play "San Niang Jiao Zi" in local Chinese dramas. It is a very life-like painting among the woodblock New Year pictures in Zhuxian Town. The picture is rich in content, the composition is layered, and the brushwork is skillful. It vividly depicts the role of women in the Ming Dynasty. Scenes from daily life at home. It shows that Sanniang not only makes a living by spinning and weaving, but also educates her children. It praises women's good moral character of hard work, hard work and dexterity.</p>
2	 <p>"Feng Zheng Ji" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>"Feng Zheng Ji" is one of the representative works of custom woodblock New Year pictures in Zhuxian Town. The picture is delicate and elegant, full of dynamics, the composition is clear and the lines are smooth. It reflects people's living conditions from the crowded and lively scenes, and also reflects the time. The social situation is stable and people are in a peaceful era.</p>
3	 <p>"Qi Shan Jiao" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>The story of Zhao Gongming and Ran Deng Taoist originates from "The Romance of the Gods". Zhao Gongming rides a black tiger, holds a divine whip and a golden dragon, and holds an ingot in his hand; Ran Deng Taoist rides a sika deer, holds the Qiankun Ruler and Jin Ruyi. The figures are strangely shaped, and the paintings are decorated with pearls, jade, coral and other treasures, which are full of bustling, auspicious and festive features.</p>
4	 <p>"Wu Zi Deng Ke" Woodblock Overprinting</p>	<p>"Wu Zi Deng Ke" is a Chinese proverb and a folk story. It tells the story of a prominent official family in Yanshan Prefecture named Dou Yujun. The family had strict rules and good education for their children. All five sons were excellent in character and academics and passed the imperial examination one after another. In the picture, the five children hugged their father tightly, with strong family affection and joy, expressing their beautiful wish that their children would become successful.</p>

No.	Woodblock New Year	Cultural dimension of folk art
5	 "Dui Hua Qiang" Woodblock Overprinting	This New Year painting is based on the Henan Henan opera "Dui Hua Qiang". The line in the New Year picture is a scene of two generals fighting. Each general holds the same weapon in his hand, and the postures of the two generals are different. The characters want to be upright and full of justice, express the idea of punishing evil, and symbolize disaster control. It means exorcising evil spirits and protecting the country.

According to Table 4, we can know that in the long-term development process, Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings have a certain relationship with another traditional folk art in Henan, China-drama, and thus opera-type New Year paintings were derived. Henan is the hometown of opera, and Zhuxian Town is one of the birthplaces of Henan Opera and Henan Opera. As an important part of folk art, traditional opera has extensive influence among the people and is deeply loved by the people. Integrating local drama into New Year pictures and using folk stories, heroic stories, folk myths and legends as creative materials have become an important feature of Zhuxian Town opera-type woodblock New Year pictures. This kind of traditional woodblock New Year pictures are very popular among the people, such as "San Niang Jiao Zi", "Dui Hua Qiang", etc. They mainly aim to promote the truth, goodness and beauty in the world, praise the moral deeds of heroes, provide education and entertainment, and narrate stories. The Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year pictures present rich and colorful cultural expressions through the integration of traditional opera art. They not only inherit the essence of folk art, but also provide people with a window to understand history and culture and feel folk customs.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Through the analysis of more than twenty representative works of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings, we deeply explored their cultural dimensions in terms of connotation, beliefs, symbols and folk art. The research results are summarized as follows:

- 1) Research on the connotation dimensions of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings shows that the rich colors, ingenious compositions and images of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings vividly demonstrate the connotation of traditional Chinese culture, highlight the inner pursuit and spiritual perseverance of the Chinese nation, and present Profound cultural heritage and spiritual connotation. The cultural elements contained in New Year paintings not only have the function of educating and enlightening people, but also imply the beautiful vision of society in a pleasant form, reflecting the unity of education and entertainment in folk art.
- 2) Research on the belief dimensions of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year paintings shows that the Chinese people's view of folk beliefs embodies a characteristic of "polygod worship." Based on ancient Chinese myths and legends and the subjective thinking of the creators, New Year pictures create images of gods and goddesses with strong folk customs and religious colors. These images are intended to satisfy the people's desire for a prosperous life, safety and health, to drive away devils, beasts, and evil spirits. Prayers for spiritual needs such as disaster relief. As an expression carrier of folk beliefs, the Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings not only demonstrate the diversity and inclusiveness of beliefs, but also reflect the people's deep expectations and confidence in the blessings of the gods.
- 3) Research on symbolic dimensions of Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings shows that establishment of their symbolic symbols mainly relies on artificial social conventions. Usually, conventional symbolic forms in society are used, such as "Qi Lin (麒麟)", "Guanyin

(观音)", etc., to symbolize desire for wealth and children; or through collective identification, specific things in the real world are used as symbolic forms, such as "Xiantao", "Lotus" symbolizes longevity and having children. The symbols of the Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year pictures are derived from rich folk customs and historical and literary allusions. Through symbolic means, they convey people's simplest and most familiar folk information, express people's best wishes, and embody the moral values of traditional society. Each New Year picture symbol carries specific folk customs, history and cultural information in the process of dissemination, richly and diversely showing the profound heritage of Chinese traditional culture.

4) Research on the folk art dimension of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year pictures shows that presenting the most popular drama stories in the form of woodblock New Year pictures has promoted the spread of Henan's traditional dramas and folk tales. These drama-themed New Year pictures not only enrich the artistic content of Zhuxian Town's woodblock New Year pictures, but also help folk artists deeply understand and meet the aesthetic needs of the people. Folk art originates from people's daily life and reflects and interprets people's living conditions. In the long historical development, various elements have been continuously absorbed and integrated to form a unique art form, thus showing the profound cultural heritage of Zhuxian Town.

The door god paintings in the Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings combine elements of Taoism and folk beliefs, reflecting people's wishes for good luck and prosperity. As a profound cultural and social symbol, Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings not only show the charm of visual art, but also profoundly interpret the folk beliefs, values and lifestyles in traditional Chinese culture through their stories, characters and symbolic meanings. These works reflect people's pursuit of balance, harmony and prosperity, as well as their yearning and prayer for a better life, making Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings not only artistic treasures, but also an important part of cultural heritage, carrying rich folk customs cultural connotation and historical information. Therefore, the Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings are not only an important representative of traditional Chinese culture, but also a window for us to understand and cherish traditional folk beliefs. It is hoped that through the exploration of this unique art form, more people will be interested in Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings and the culture behind them, and promote their inheritance and development. At the same time, combined with modern cultural and creative concepts, Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year paintings are integrated into contemporary life to create more creative and modern works, which can not only inherit traditional culture, but also inject new ideas into the development of local economy and cultural industries of vitality.

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