

# *A Study of the Application of Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival in Digital Illustration*

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**Abstract:** The current social development is changing rapidly, constantly impacting the development of traditional folk culture heritage. Innovative reforms in the field of art continue to keep pace with the times, and are more and more widely used in the creation of new folk culture. The main research object of the article is Tianheng Sea Sacrificial Festival and digital illustration, which mainly discusses how Tianheng Sea Sacrificial Festival is applied in digital illustration, the importance and significance of the application of Tianheng Sea Sacrificial Festival in digital illustration, and how to realise the inheritance and innovation of Tianheng Sea Sacrificial Festival culture. The application of Tianheng Sea Sacrificial Festival in digital illustration is not only a typical case of innovation and development of traditional culture, but also provides a new road for its own long-term development in the new era, enriches the choice of themes for digital illustration and promotes its development in combination with traditional culture.

**Keywords:** Tianheng Sea Sacrificial Festival, Digital Illustration, Visual Expression, Illustration Design and Application

## **1. Introduction**

Sacrificing to the sea is a unique folk culture formed by fishermen in their years of fishing life due to the worship of nature, among which the most famous activity of sacrificing to the sea in Zhougezhuang Village, Tianheng Town, Jimo District, Qingdao City, Shandong Province, is "Tianheng Sacrificing to the Sea". In the year before and after the rainy season, fishermen buy fishing gear, repair their boats, and choose auspicious days to carry their nets to the boats in preparation for fishing, which is known as "netting", also known as "Zhougezhuang Netting Festival".

The name "Tianheng" comes from a heroic epic poem during the late Qin and early Han Dynasties - Tian Heng's Five Hundred Soldiers, from the Records of the Grand Historian (Annals), which recounts the story of Tian Heng, a general who refused to surrender to the Han Dynasty at the end of the Qin Dynasty and died to make his will clear. After the unification of Liu Bang, Tian Heng and his generals retreated to Tian Heng Island (present-day Tianheng Town). When Liu Bang failed to recruit Tianheng, he ordered Tian Heng to go to the capital to face the saint. In order to save the lives of more than 500 people on the island, Tian Heng resolutely set out on the road to see the saint, and killed himself on the way, with his men handing over his head to Liu Bang, thus demonstrating his determination not to surrender, and also saving the lives of the rest of his men. Liu Bang was deeply

touched by Tian Heng and ordered him to be buried with honours. After the burial, the men who followed Tian Heng to the capital killed themselves in his grave, and the people on the island also jumped into the sea to die after hearing about the incident. In order to commemorate this group of brave and noble men, the descendants named this place "Tianheng".

According to evidence, fishing and hunting activities began in the Tianheng area as early as the Neolithic Age, more than 6,000 years ago. Restricted to the development of productive forces and knowledge of nature, the ancestors were full of reverence, worship and adoration of the sea, and every time they went out to the sea to fish, they had to carry out rituals and pray for blessings before doing so. During the Yongle period of the Ming Dynasty, the population of Tianheng area gathered, the villages and towns began to take shape, and the rituals of offering sacrifices to the sea gradually took shape. During the Republic of China, the sea rituals developed into collective rituals based on families or groups of boats, expanding in scale and tending to mature in form. Entering the modern society with greatly improved productivity and advanced science and technology, people are no longer satisfied with food and clothing, and while retaining the traditional ritual form, they add the blessing of the festival and the hope for a better future, which gradually develops into the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival, a folk culture festival with unique marine characteristics [1].

## **2. Digital Illustration Overview**

Digital illustration is a new form of visual art expression, originating from the continuous development of computer technology. It can no longer rely on traditional painting tools such as paper and paint, and use electronic products such as computers, tablet PCs and smart phones as media, and design and draw in a virtual state with painting software, common painting software are Photoshop, Procreate, Clip Studio Paint, Painter and so on. Compared with traditional painting, digital painting has multiple advantages: high efficiency, easy to modify, convenient storage, diverse forms, easy to start, etc... Because it is not limited by physical media, digital painting is easier to spread and display, and can be freely released and shared through the Internet platform, while displaying a richer and more diverse forms, such as printing, airbrushing and so on. Digital illustration has the incomparable rendering technology and image processing ability of traditional painting, which breaks through the barriers between painting styles and categories and allows artists to create more diversified works. In addition, digital painting has stronger interactivity, making it more vitality and expressive, and bringing people a more intuitive and outstanding visual experience [2].

## **3. The Importance of the Application of the Tianheng Sacrificial Sea in Digital Illustration**

As times change and society develops, more and more foreign cultures are penetrating into our cultural circle, and more new cultures catering for the times are gradually breaking out of the circle, thus attracting a lot of heat and attention. In contrast, traditional folk culture has also ushered in a huge challenge. Under the impact of the ever-changing culture of the new era, most of the traditional culture still chooses to stick to the old rut, facing the situation of being gradually forgotten and buried, and slowly disappearing in the long river of history. Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival in recent years through the co-operation of publicity with the local media platforms, carry out special performances, create cultural activities and other ways. In recent years, the festival has actively promoted its traditional culture by cooperating with local media platforms, carrying out special performances, and creating cultural activities, etc., but it still remains in a superficial form of publicity, and has not really explored the cultural core of the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice to carry out effective cultural output; the form of publicity and dissemination also stays at the level of news reports, and it is difficult to break through and penetrate into the young cultural circle, which will lead to the gradual disengagement of the festival from the younger generation [3]. It is difficult to break through and penetrate into the

young culture circle. The Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival is known as an integral part of Chinese folk culture, with strong academic research value, cultural value and social influence value. Its origin, continuation and development process have an important reference value for the study of the process of human beings in the coastal area in Chinese history, the living environment and cultural and economic composition and development, and it is a living fossil reflecting the ancient coastal human culture, with great anthropological and folklore research value.

#### 4. Extraction of elements of the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice

The visual elements of the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice are complex and varied, including various art forms such as dance, drums and music, and opera, as well as artefacts such as stages, statues, offering tables, tributes, boats and temples, and at the same time natural landscapes such as mountains and oceans. .... It is obvious that the "Sea Sacrifice" is a devotional worship to the sea. It is obvious that "Sacrifice to the Sea" is a devotional worship to the sea, focusing on "Sacrifice" and "Sea". The ocean is the kernel of the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Culture, the cultural carrier of Tianheng Sea Sacrifice. For thousands of years, people have been able to live and work in peace and contentment here, farming and fishing in the sea, thanks to the nourishment of the sea, thus forming a traditional culture with strong marine characteristics. Compared with the traditional folk culture developed in the inland of the Central Plains, the marine culture is more innovative and unique, highlighting the unique charm of the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice.

Sacrifice is an important form of Tianheng Sea Sacrifice culture, after thousands of years of circulation and development, has formed a complete set of preparatory processes and sacrificial rituals, and sacrificial rituals for the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice to add a few mysterious colours, is to make the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice enduring, long-lasting important cultural bloodline, is the key to the inheritance of the many customs and development of the cultural key, and thus make digital illustration creators extracted from the rich visual expression elements. This makes digital illustration creators extract a wealth of visual expression elements. After checking various information and literature, the author tries to list here the most original and complete cultural customs and rituals of the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice, which are mainly divided into the preliminary preparations and the sacrificial process. The main processes of the preliminary preparations include choosing three animals, steaming noodle moulds, writing peace literature, writing couplets, decorating the Longwang Temple, setting up a stage and purchasing related items, and the sacrificial process will be highlighted by the author in the following paragraphs:

Ship lining: In the early morning of the day of the sea festival, the ships are neatly moored in Kaolao Bay, more than ten metres apart from each other, lined up neatly towards the sea; the captains of the ships put up couplets on the main part of the hull, hang up all the coloured flags, and set up the newly repaired fishing tools, ready to go in the bay. Hundreds of boats create a grand and spectacular scene.

Setting up the offerings: Fishermen get busy after seven in the morning and set up the tables and tributes on the beach in front of the bay according to the corresponding positions of their own fishing boats. Tributes are placed on three tables per boat, the table is covered with a red tablecloth representing good luck and festivity, the statue of the god is offered, and the pre-prepared tributes such as noodle moulds, fruits, chickens, fishes, drinks, snacks, and so on, are offered. In addition, in front of each boat's offering table, a bunch of bamboo poles are tied together to form a "standing tassel" representing a fishing boat going out to sea, and at the end of the offerings, a couplet written by the family is also pasted in front of the Dragon King Temple at the head of the village. Hundreds of tables stretch neatly through the pine gate to the theatre, a spectacular sight!

Sacrifice: when the time comes, the firecrackers in front of the Pine Gate are the first to be lit, and the bay in front of the village and all the boats is filled with firecrackers in a split second. It is said

that the longer the firecrackers sound, the more prosperous the fishing business will be, and so most of the fishermen choose to fire thousands of firecrackers; the fishermen are praying for a good wind and rainy days and a good fishery harvest while they recite prayers piously in the midst of firecrackers, and the large handfuls of colourful sweets are spilled on the sandy beach from the hands of the boatmen, and the women and children burn them to make the fishery more prosperous. On the beach, women and children scramble to pick up the candies, grabbing more candies means more blessings; at the same time, drums and gongs, drums and music, the Sea Ceremony began in the crowd's anticipation and cheers! Drums and gongs, songs and dances were performed to dazzle the audience, and at the peak of the atmosphere, the Dragon King was steadily carried onto the stage by strong men in golden armour under the public's attention; a peaceful speech full of gorgeous words and blessings was played, expressing the wishes, gratitude and good wishes for the sea [4].

Gathering: After the ceremony is over, the fishermen take down their tables and tributes and have a gathering with their families in their own courtyards. The food used for the gathering is all tributes, such as wine, noodles, snacks and fruits; the dishes are mainly meat and seafood, which are rich and varied, and neighbours or people who don't know each other are welcome to have a gathering together to share the food and the joys. After the meal is over, it is time to rest and recuperate, and the next day, they start fishing [5].

In fear of the sea, fishermen also worship many legendary sea immortals, and faith is the spiritual pillar and soul of the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival. The fishermen worship the Dragon King, the Queen of Heaven (Mazu), the Sun Immortal Nun, and the Fish Catchers (whales), praying for the protection of the immortals to ensure the safety and success of their fishing endeavours, and the villages and towns are home to Dragon King Temples, Mazu Temples, and a large number of statues of the gods and goddesses.

These elements are either created individually, or combined and reconstructed to release new cultural charms, or create new visual art images through the existing characteristics and images of the elements, thus realising the innovative development of traditional folk culture.

## **5. The significance of the application of Tianheng Sacrificial Sea in digital illustration**

Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival has high academic research value and artistic value, which can provide more diversified and enriched themes and elements for digital illustration creation, thus promoting the organic integration of digital illustration and national traditional culture and promoting the multi-dimensional development of digital illustration; the inspirations and artistic elements extracted from the culture of Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival will burst into more vigorous vitality when they are fused with digital illustration, which is a new type of art form; it can be applied to products, packaging, fashion and other artistic fields, and greatly enhance the popularity of culture and expand the scope of dissemination and influence. The inspiration and artistic elements extracted from Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival culture and the new art form of digital illustration will burst out with more vitality, greatly enhancing the popularity of Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival, expanding the scope of dissemination and influence of the culture, integrating into the young circle with newer status and form, and realising the development of breaking the circle; it can be applied to more artistic fields such as products, packaging, fashion, and so on, to broaden the road of development, realise further economic revenues, promote the further inheritance and development of the culture of Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival, and activate the inherent power of innovation and transformation of traditional folk culture.

## 6. Design Representation of Tianheng Sacrificial Sea in Digital Illustration

### 6.1. Painting Style

There are many styles of digital painting, mainly divided into flat style, CG style, MBE style, vector style, gradient style, watercolour style, Mori style, texture style, etc., of which flat style is the most widely used one in modern digital illustration. The most outstanding part of Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Culture is the sacrificial ceremony, which has a lot of wonderful performances and grand sacrificial scenes, and the flat style is characterized by simple, smooth and smooth lines and bright colours, which is distinct and simple compared with the traditional folk art, suitable for portraying more vivid characters and characteristic activity scenes, and concisely summing up and refining effective visual features, which is conducive to directly conveying the characteristics of the picture, and is beneficial to directly conveying the characteristics of the picture. It is conducive to directly conveying the characteristics and information of the picture, and integrating the trend style of the new era when reshaping the tradition, giving the viewers a stronger visual impact and artistic experience; in the application of the use of flattening will be drumming, dancing, flag-raising, sedan chair characters were re-diversified and differentiated design, and then sparse and dense, staggered and staggered compositional combinations, the formation of illustration design in the main visual.

The mountain, the sea and the boat are also important cultural carriers and elements of Tianheng Sea Sacrifice, when drawing the characters, you can choose the three as the background of the picture, or re-design the combination with the characters to form a new picture expression, reflecting that the mountain, the sea, and the boat carry the wisdom and faith of the fishermen from generation to generation to this day, and the origin goes back a long way. Because all three are large objects, after the end of drawing with the flat wind can add texture, texture to enhance the richness and completeness of the picture, its modelling characteristics, traditional colour scheme can also be subverted, the use of modernist colour scheme and reconstruction of the way to draw, to enhance the visual characteristics of the picture and the emotional transmission [6].

Performing art groups, surging waves, and moving ships are also suitable for dynamic design, which can make the viewers feel the visual performance and emotional rendering conveyed by the paintings when viewing the paintings, and enhance the sense of immersion and experience.

### 6.2. Colour matching

Colour is one of the essential points in illustration design. Harmonious colours can enhance the unity of the picture, while bright colours can attract the viewer's eyes at the first time and stand out from other works [7]. The ocean culture is the cultural core of Tianheng's sea rituals, and it is an indelible cultural background, and blue, the inherent colour of the ocean, is the main tone of the colour scheme. Blue is a typical cold tone, calm and steady, on behalf of the marine culture at the same time highlights the thick cultural heritage of the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival, in the painting and creation of the sea can be used in different brightness, purity, saturation of the blue gradient drawing; sacrifice is a sacred, solemn faith activities, and the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival and the celebration of the sacrifice and the combination of the reunion, and has been endowed with a beautiful expectation and yearning, can choose yellow, red and orange for colour matching. Yellow, red and orange can be chosen for the colour scheme. Yellow represents the solemnity of the festival, red represents the festivity of the festival, and orange represents the happiness and warmth of the fishermen gathering here. Meanwhile, as a warm colour, it forms a sharp contrast and complement with the main colour blue, which is more in line with the trendy and vivid characteristics of the flat style. In the application of digital illustration, the characters and other things in the main visual use of yellow, red and other warm colours for colour matching, easy to highlight the main visual image, enhance the visual impact;



the use of blue, green and other cold tones on the background of the ocean, buildings, boats and other colour matching to set off the main visual image; alternating warm and cold colours with the gradient processing of the same colour is conducive to the transition of warm and cold colours with the transition, making the overall richer picture [8]. The whole picture is richer. The figures for each place in Tianheng are illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Digital Illustration of Tianheng's Localities.

## 7. Extended Creative Design for Digital Illustration

Digital illustration is widely used in other artistic fields, and can also be extended to create new artistic products and achieve further expansion of promotion and dissemination [9]. Various images of Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival in digital illustration application can be extracted and applied to cultural and creative products such as hanging price, hand office, medals, toys, etc., and can also be directly printed on notebooks, postcards, canvas bags, etc., so as to make the culture feed the economy, and to promote the development of the local enterprises and the economy; it can be applied to the production and design of the posters or videos in the publicity, and can assist in the upgrading of the cultural publicity, and to increase the popularity of the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice Festival culture. It can be based on the Tianheng Sea Sacrifice digital illustration, to create an exclusive APP for Tianheng Tourism Zone, applied to the UI design, joint culture and tourism together for cultural publicity and protection to increase the sound volume, to promote the integration of multi-faceted innovation [10].

## 8. Conclusion

With the continuous attention paid to the protection and inheritance of traditional folk culture at the national level and the enhancement of people's awareness of the protection of traditional culture in recent years, the innovative development of traditional folk culture has constantly broken through the boundaries of the traditional media and forms, and sought innovative development. Innovative development promotes the organic integration of traditional folk culture with the current social trend, and at the same time ensures its own development and inheritance. How to realise the innovative development of traditional folk culture while highlighting the core and essence of culture is an urgent problem we are facing. Digital illustration as a new communication medium can make the essence and kernel of Tianheng Sea Sacrifice culture to be refined and innovated, but in the creation of the need to balance the weight of the innovative elements and traditional elements, not to lose sight of one or the other, the inheritance of the culture at the same time blossomed into a more vibrant energy.

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