



Study of Qing Dynasty Stone Guardian Lion from Anthropological Perspective

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Abstract. This study is based on field research located in the Beijing Stone Carving Art Museum which focuses on the museum collection of stone guardian lions. By comparing the appearance of these stone guardian lions vertically this study concentrates on the emergence and variation of the ‘tapestry Meru-pedestal’ form of stone guardian lions, which was a gap in the previous studies. It is found that this specific form was popular in Qing dynasty and been related to royal usage, while developed and largely used for its ability to reinforce and visualize solid social hierarchies. Moreover, because of the development of royal craft production industry, tapestry’s identity was not considered to be limited at a demonstration of social status but an expression of personal appreciation.

Keywords: Stone guardian lion, Tapestry, Qing culture, Hand craft art, Status grad

1 Introduction

There are a total of thirteen stone lions displayed in the Beijing Stone Carving Art Museum, and the items was gathered from allover the Beijing. Though Among all, two types of them will be discussed in the subsequent pages. One is ‘tapestry-Meru pedestal’ guardian lion and the other is Meru pedestal guardian lion. This Meru pedestal is a type of pedestal that came from Indian Buddhism. While the tapestry referred to a special stone-carved pattern that looked like a traditional Chinese fabric

which often use to decorate table or pedestals and was relatively expensive. Namely, four of them are the former ones that made in Qing dynasty and especially early Qing, while the other one is the latter type that made in Ming dynasty .

Therefore through analyze the data, several findings were gained. First, the height of these lions mainly range from 150cm to 190cm; Secondly, one commonality between the tapestries is that they were all decorated with two copper coins on their two sides; Moreover, normally the patterns on tapestries were all general designs such as flowers or geometric patterns. Meanwhile, there is a stone offering table from the Ming dynasty that been displayed in the museum which also employed the form of the ‘tapestries-Meru pedestal’ combination. What is significant about this stone offering table is that by comparing it with the guardian lions that have similar form, the evolvement of this combination was shown: This combination has been seen to be popular on the fabricate of guardian lion. These variations may be the main as well as the most obvious invention of early middle Qing periods on the usage of the ‘tapestry-Meru pedestal’ form that presents a trend of becoming delicate.

Apart from that, Guardian Lion 03 was outstanding because of its uniqueness in several aspects : First, it’s craft was apparently more exquisite and the carving patterns on it were shown to be well-preserved and thus distinguishable. Secondly, It is 2.23m tall, the largest guardian lion in the. Thirdly and also more interestingly, the content of the patterns on its tapestry are three Chinese zodiacs-- Horse, pig and cow which each of them have interval of five with the previous one. This largely stands out from the general patterns , it obviously used to have personal meanings and belonging. Additionally, these zodiacs were set in stone mountains, cloud and mist , sun and sea waves which were all presented secular style. Although the museum could only approximately deduce guardian lion 03 to be belonged to early Qing dynasty, it’s uniqueness still proved it should have more concrete cultural and historical meanings as well as largely valuable for deeper discussions on these ‘tapestry-Meru pedestal’ guardian lions as a whole.

And when we turn our attention to guardian lions in the entire city of Beijing, , several features were found. First of all, this research has recorded thirteen ‘tapestry-Meru pedestal’ and Meru pedestal guardian lions that are still approachable and has relatively clear records in Beijing. Next, the result showed that they were distributed in three kinds of places that relate with royalty -- five mansion house of the emperor’s kin of Qing, Ming dynasty ; three temples that were either visited by the emperor or been given inscribed plaques that bestowed by the emperor; Three

royal gardens in Ming and Qing dynasty. The most interesting finding is when comparing horizontally between the guardian lions that located in these royal related temples : The temple called Jietai Temple was repaired and been given emperor’s inscribe board in the middle Ming dynasty (1450-1582) , the guardian lion in it was the Meru type that with no tapestries ; another temple that called Guangji Temple was visited by many Qing emperor, the guardian lion in it was the ‘tapestry-Meru pedestal’ type. Similarly, the temple called Cypress Grove Temple which been repaired and given inscribe board by Kangxi emperor in early Qing dynasty has guardian lions in ‘tapestry-Meru pedestal’ form. This results confirmed that the usage of tapestry Meru-pedestal form should be a trend in the Qing dynasty.

Additionally, to confirmed that this ‘tapestry-Meru pedestal’ form was also solely belonged to royal use, a comparison between similar guardian lions in royal and non-royal use were done. Namely, there are tapestry-Meru pedestal lions on the bridge of the Summer palace while this palace was built in early middle Qing dynasty for royal usage; on the contrary, the guardian lions on the Lugou Bridge which is was repaired in the Qing dynasty not for royal usage were Meru pedestal type. As the only condition difference between these two bridges were royal usage or not , it indicates that the difference on guardian lions could possibly also due to this. What’s more, another general trend of these lions is that their patterns on Meru-pedestals were seen to be simpler than normal Meru-pedestals. For general Meru-pedestals (those with no tapestry), detail carving of Buddhist motifs such as the conch and the Buddhist scripture roller were often seen, whereas for those tapestry Meru-pedestals the motifs on it have been handled simply or omitted.

To conclude, the basic understanding of the usage of this ‘tapestry-Meru pedestal’ was established: It was mostly seen in the royal related situations in early middle Qing dynasty, and the causes and prevalence of this type need further exploration.

Table 1. Typical Ming and Qing Dynasty stone lions in the Beijing Stone Carving Art Museum.

Name	Image	Dynasty	Location	Sizes(cm)	Detailed description
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Stone lion 01		Qing	On both sides of the gate.	Height 1.69 Width 76 Length 103 Height of Meru pedestal 60	Tapestry: The four sides are carved with floral patterns and stones, and the designs on all four sides are different. The patterns of the two lions are also different. There are copper coins. Meru pedestal: two sides of Lotus flowers, The waist has no patterns, with a layer of cloud patterns.
Stone lion 02		Ming	In front of the old site of the Heart Pearl Bright Hall.	Height 187 Width 50 Length 92 Height of Meru pedestal 72, and Width 52	No Tapestry Meru pedestal: one side of Lotus flowers , The waist is tied to the Dharma wheel of Tibetan Buddhism

Stone lion 03		Estimated Early Qing	In front of the Zhenjue Temple.	Height 223 width 82 Length 150	Tapestry: The four sides feature designs themed around the zodiac animals of the pig, horse, and ox, with a background of clouds, mountains, waves, and the sun. The two lions have ox designs facing each other, with horses on the sides and a pig in front. The poses of the zodiac animals carved on the two lions are different. There are copper coins, which are significantly larger than the copper coins found in other tapestries in the museum. Diameter 14cm Meru pedestal: two
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					sides of Lotus flowers, The waistband has a pattern with non Buddhist significance
Stone lion 04		Qing	On the sides of the gate of the indoor pavilion	Height 156 Length 60 Width 48	Tapestry : The four sides are carved with the same pattern, with hanging copper coins. Meru pedestal: two sides of Lotus flowers, The waist section has no pattern, featuring a layer of cloud design.

Stone lion 05		Qing	In front of the "Jinshi Academy."	Meru pedestal Width 54 Height 48 Length 85 The lion: Height 151 Length 85 Width 54	Greenstone Tapestry: The four sides are engraved with the same four-leaf clover pattern. There are copper coins. The tapestry above is embroidered with a ball and ribbon; one lion is severely damaged. Meru pedestal: two sides of Lotus flowers, The waist band has a pattern.
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2 **The Development of ‘Tapestry-Meru Pedestal’ Stone Guadian Lion**

This chapter will focus on the usage of “tapestry Meru pedestal” guardian lion that recorded in the history from Yuan dynasty to Qing dynasty. The earliest accurate record of the usage of tapestry on guardian lion was stone lion.c1. This lion was significantly smaller than Qing tapestry Meru pedestal lions in this museum. Also, both the tapestry and the pedestal has no meaningful patterns on it. Other Yuan dynasty stone lions are of various shapes and sizes. It is worth noting that the stone lions on the Duanhong bridge named Chou bridge in Yuan dynasty in the Forbidden City which is evident royal related and still preserves a few works from the Yuan Dynasty [1]. Clearly, this lions were also different from the stone lion c1, for

example, the gestures of c3 and c4 were obviously more vivacious and creative than c1; another important distinction is that all the lions on the Duanhong Bridge have no tapestry. Thus, what could be concluded from comparin these Yuan dynasty lions in Beijing area was the uncommonness of the usage of tapestry on lions. Moreover, Chou Bridge as the Yuan Palace's bridge did not employ either Meru pedestal or tapestry could further suggest that the usage of tapestry Meru pedestal was not yet associated with royal attributes in Yuan dynasty (figure 1-3).



Fig. 1. Stone lion c1, from Beijing Stone Carving Art Museum, Yuan Dynasty.

Fig. 2. Stone lion c3, from Chou Bridge, Yuan Dynasty. Resource: <https://www.beijing.gov.cn>.

Fig. 3. Stone lion c4, from Chou Bridge, Yuan Dynasty. Resource: <https://www.beijing.gov.cn>.

When it came to Ming dynasty, the combination of ‘tapestry- Meru pedestal’ and guardian lion started to appear in the mausoleum of feudatory in Ming dynasty. As showcased by Wei that the ‘tapestry Meru pedestal’ guardian lion started to appear to be scaled and organized in The Sacred Path of the Mausoleum of the Ming Dynasty Jingjiang Clan Kings. Significantly, to focus on ‘tapestry Meru pedestal’ stone lions, they all started to appear at the Formative stage which represented by Zhaohe mausoleum, Tuanyi mausoleum, Gonghui mausoleum and Ansu mausoleum. This trend of using ‘tapestry-Meru pedestals’ continued to be employed in subsequent stages. Moreover, the trend of stone statues development in Ming royal mausoleum to be from un-refined, natural and simple style which learned from Tang dynasty to become sophisticated and vivid with more charm, this was attribute to the maturity of stone carving skills as well as the progression of stone carving tools [2] [3]. Furthermore, when comparing the development stages of these stone statues it seemed to be correlated with the prosperity of Ming dynasty: the formative level was at Hongzhi reign when economic continued to develop, historical records address this

reign to be ‘prosperity in Hongzhi reign’; when the stone statues came to the Decline stage it was also the very end of Ming dynasty --Chongzhen reign.

Apart from the trend that feudalism demonstrated in royal tombs, the usage of tapestry has also been seen in Beijing at Ming dynasty. Namely, it is the pair of stone guardian lions that settled in front of Tiananmen Gate which is the biggest and highest lion in Beijing city, and each one has 13 ‘knots’ on its head symbolizing the building behind it to be the highest government [4]. Before and during the Ming Dynasty, the ‘knot’ on the stone lions’ head represented different levels of government among which 13 ‘knots’ referred to the highest level. So far, the existence of tapestry on stone lion has been associated with the representation of royalty.

To sum up, the invention of tapestry guardian lion first appeared in the Yuan dynasty, it was not until the middle and middle-late Ming dynasty had this ‘tapestry-Meru’ pedestal guardian lion became a general collocation in the royal-related sites all over the country. What was crucial was that in the Ming dynasty, all these ‘tapestry-Meru’ pedestal guardian lions were in standard appearance and the motifs on their bases formed a certain systematic pattern. However, in the Qing dynasty patterns on the tapestries grew to be notably delicate, complex and in some cases, meaningful.

3 Changes of Stone Guardian in the Qing Dynasty from Socio-Cultural Perspective

3.1 The Royal Use Handicraft Industry and the Popularization of Tapestry-Meru Pedestal Stone Lion

Compared with the Ming dynasty, several tangible changes happened in the bureau responsible for craft making; as a result of this change, royal use of crafts in the Qing dynasty predominantly demonstrated the feature of personalized and customized.

As articulated by Li, royal use craft production obeyed the discipline of standardized and specialized in Ming and previous dynasties, and it had a standardized process of design, production, and transport into the palace. This has been proved by Li’s quotation from Guozhao Hui Dictionary: Imperial Decree: produce according to the robe pattern which submitted by weaving and dyeing bureau; At the same time, other quotations confirmed that the cloth making in Ming dynasty often simply obeyed the pattern left by previous dynasties [5]. Similarly,

when consider royal porcelain making, the primary feature of the royal use porcelain has concluded to be ‘an unchanging program and requires that the bureau must follow’ In this case, all the processes should be done by different government departments while the role of preference of royal family was largely invisible during these processes. Therefore, the royal use craft industry in Ming could be summarized as Government-run handicraft production centered on a strict feudal structure (figure 4).

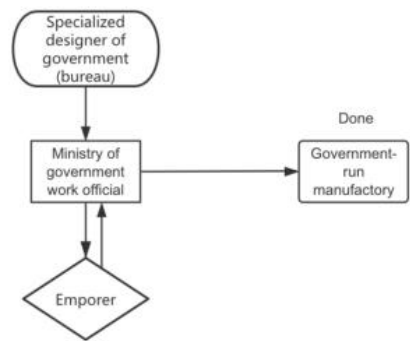


Fig. 4. Flow chart for Ming dynasty royal use handicraft production graph.

However, when apropos to Qing dynasty the royal craft industry, it’s development was shown to be inheriting and modifying simultaneously. On the inheritance side, the style of these crafts in the early Qing dynasty largely preserved or affected by the style from last dynasty [6]. The teaching duty bared by these craftsmen from the last dynasty ensured the possibility of some specific Ming’s art style to be inherited and further developed by Qing craftsmen. On the modifying side, Kangxi has established a new department called the Qing Court Craftmanship Department to serve for royal need. After this change, the prosperity of royal use of craft started: It consisted of dozens of different workshops, with a maximum record of more than 400 workshops [7]. On the one hand, these workshops created crafts that continued to carry the responsibility of manifesting prerogative; On the other hand, they were largely tailored according to the personal preferences and specific needs of the emperor to be liberalized [8-9]. As illustrated by the graph below, the establishment of the Qing Court Craftmanship Department operated to maximize the preference judgments made by the Emperor (figure 5).

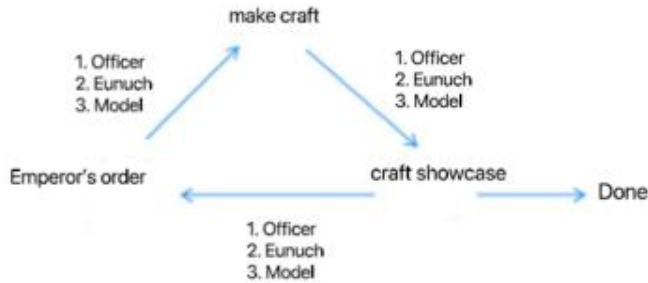


Fig. 5. Translated flowchart for the work in the Qing Court Craftmanship Department[10].

As mentioned above, another function that could be revealed by the appearance of these crafts was the emphasis on feudal hierarchy: Yongzheng especially attached importance on the symbolisms that could be employed on crafts which he meant to demonstrate his sovereignty. Correspondingly, Chen also proposed that emperors were clear about the significance of craft in the case of constituting and illustrating their superior social identity [11]. Thus, the pattern, color and texture used on crafts produced by the Qing Court Craftmanship Department was not solely decided by the interest of emperors but also by their need to confirm their sovereignty. Significantly, Chou delineated emperor Yongzheng’ s heavy emphasis on crafts as a demonstration of prerogative through his measure of ‘avoid external/civilian style’ (The General Collection of Archives of the Household Office of the Qing Palace, 2007, [10].) By this, Yongzheng meant to set a clear distinction between civilian and royal crafts, hence establishing the uniqueness and superiority of royalty.

Thus, the regularity on the usage of tapestry-Meru pedestal on royal-related stone guardian lions could possibly be an established royal specification that implied a certain aristocracy and personal choice. Meanwhile, the employment of Ming’s craftsmen enabled the art style of this tapestry-Meru pedestal to be continually popularized from Ming court to Qing court.

3.2 The Social Culture and the Popularization of Tapestry-Meru Pedestal Stone Lions

Context to note first is that the major political aim of the Qing dynasty was a concentrated political system in which the power of the Emperor was maximized and unshakingly established. Thus, to approach this aim, the Qing potentate aroused a top-down renaissance of Confucianism ideology. Confucianism constituted the most significant basis for comprehending the Qing's society; Namely, it emphasizes firm and stable social hierarchies and orders under patriarchal context. Family, as illustrated by *The Book of Rites* --cultivate one's moral character, align one's family, rule the country, and pacify the world, is the smallest unit of practicing and stabilizing social hierarchy, has been attached emphasis in the Qing dynasty. This emphasis on the family for the sake of stabilizing society could be revealed through the national female-focusing policies publiced by the Qing government, which in practice aimed at protecting the stability of the family unit. As Mann noted that there was one policy for 'raping women' was published to inhibit females from being pawned, sold, abducted, and kidnapped [12]. To interpret, by preventing the illegal social flow of female members, it not only preserved the integrity of a family unit but also enhanced the establishment of rightful boundaries between family units.

Similarly, Mann listed another 'virtuous women', law that largely prevented women from participating in social flow so they could maintain the stability of one family unit and set social boundaries [12]. Specifically those who stayed at their first marriage family after their husband has died for more than twenty years. Those who passed the Ministry of Ceremonies were given a certificate of commendation in the Emperor's handwriting. In some cases, these women were also honored by having a memorial arch of honor erected in their honor of being virtuous. By referring to virtue, the obvious intention of the Qing potentates was to transcend women's ability of 'maintaining' and their characteristic of inner-unchangeability (a social attribute of women that families were settled and locate around them) to the height of national honor. This elevation suggested that the idea of firm boundaries and hierarchy were deliberately centralized.

Significantly, an implicit parallel between women's role and the stone Guardian lion's function has been made here. To explain, the 'memorial arch' construction further indicated Qing's tendency to set physical demonstrations for this boundary emphasis. That is what defines Stone guardian lions. Noticeably, by placing Stone

guardian lions in front the mansion gates, people in the Qing dynasty meant to demarcate their clan area visually and physically. Women, as argued above were considered to demarcate this distinct and immobile boundary of areas metaphysically, while Stone guardian lions appeared to accomplish this physically. At the same time, its patterns and size standards further contributed to distinguishing the social hierarchies of the family units behind it. Generally, there is a positive correlation between the social class of the clan and the size of the stone guardian lions. However, stone guardian lions, profiting from its material, not only visualized the concept of social hierarchy and clan boundaries; but also extended these concepts to be unbreakable, immovable and permanent. So for the same purpose, stone lions in the Qing dynasty were attached similar importance as what has been attached on women role, to therefore be developed and popularized.

Apropos to tapestry, its attributes mentioned above explained both the emergence of the strong correlation between royalty, tapestry pattern and the widespread of it in the Qing dynasty. Namely, it is for the intention to utilize visual symbols to illustrate social hierarchies. This assumption helps to partially explain the pattern differences of tapestries. For instance, a stone guardian lion located at Former site of the French Embassy (At Beijing, a street the south of the Forbidden City that was first Prince An's residence then the Legation quarter during the Boxer uprising.) was similar with stone lion 03. It also has three animals with stone mountain patterns on its tapestry. However, the three animals on its tapestries are Qilin, Griffin, and Myth deer (sika deer). Its height is 2.56 with a width of 91cm, which is both higher and wider than stone lion 03. This indicates that it possibly represents a higher social class than stone lion 03. This class difference was also hinted through their choice of animal patterns: Qilin pattern usage on fabric appeared to be a symbol of status that was not allowed to be used casually since the Tang dynasty. In the Qing dynasty, the Qilin pattern was even more exclusive to officials of the first rank [8]. For stone lion 03, the choice of pig, cow, and horse was not considered exclusive to any specific or high social class. This comparison confirmed that the development of tapestry was meant to strengthen the visualization of social hierarchy. Choice of employing the Griffen pattern as one of the animal on the tapestry is interesting, its obvious western characteristic directly correlate with the house's identity as France legation. This verified that the animal patterns on stone lion 03's tapestries conveyed not only the specific and individual information of its owner but also could be chosen based on the differentiated appreciation of its owner, providing a space for the owner to explore their

individualized appreciation more freely. Significantly, this was enabled because of the change and development of royal use craft production in the Qing dynasty.

The position relation between tapestry and Meru-pedestal is also noteworthy. In particular, the tapestry is designed to be on top of the Meru-pedestal, covering part of the Meru-pedestal pattern. The point is that the Meru-pedestal is a style of architecture brought by Buddhism. The patterns on it are all religious symbols such as conch, prayer wheel, etc. Through such placement, secular, personalized, and aestheticized choice of patterns replaced the religious symbols to occupy the visual center, in charge of the major conveying of meaning. This design reflected the Qing dynasty's emphasis on secular monarchical power, which meant organize social-political power by family and hierarchy structure and gradually weakened the influence of religion.

4 Conclusion

To conclude, the popularization of the stone lions took place based on the renewal and progress of the royal craft industry named the Qing Court Craftmanship Department, while due to the pursuit of solid social class which was centralized by the Qing potentates, the stone guardian lions were given more importance than in the previous dynasty, and thus enriched in appearance to have tapestries. By enlarging this visual elements of the stone lions, the concept of distinct class differences is reinforced and conveyed. What cannot be ignored, however, is the artistic attribute of the tapestry itself, which provides a display area that allows for individualized and characteristic appreciation.

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