

The Performances of Chinese Peasants' new life -- In Propaganda Poster of China 1949--1976

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Abstract. As a special kind of art in the history of Chinese art, propaganda posters have been the most important form of art in the 1950s to the late 1970s, and have been developed in an unprecedented way. As with other forms of painting, the image of peasants and the expression of peasant life have been important themes in the propaganda of new China. Founding of the people's republic of China in 1949, in order to reflect the fresh China's value, it also demands and represent the national ideals in the new era. As the result, the peasants' images in propaganda posters show a totally unprecedented new model, which abandon the old shape system and show a new way of peasants' life as well. The performances have three main aspects, which are the romantic imagination of harvest, the presentation of modernity and the expression of group happiness.

Introduction

In the 1930s, Chinese art works of left-wing art movement and Yan'an period have emerged a large number of peasant images as the theme. As the owner of the land and the people of the oppressed, the peasants always continuously sent out their voices from the land, they rise and fall in the nation struggle and resistance. The founding of New China marked the end of an old era and the beginning of a new time in which the Communist Party of China, as the new proletarian ruling party, should lead the people to overthrow the feudal rule and carry out new Literature and Art rules under the leadership of Political Parties. The Yan'an Symposium on Literature and Art, held in May 1942, completely subverted the idea that literature and art only served superstructures or elites in the past, and it emphasized the idea of "literature and art serve the public" instead and turned these into various fields. The largest proportion of the population of the dominant position of the peasant class has also been highlighted, and therefore the new Chinese art opened a new chapter.

As a special kind of art in the history of Chinese art, propaganda posters have been the most important form of art in the 1950s to the late 1970s, and have been developed in an unprecedented way. As with other forms of painting, the image of peasants and the expression of peasant life have been important themes in the propaganda of new China. After the founding of new China in 1949, especially after the land reform, the peasants share the land that used to be charged by landlords, they began to feel the benefits of the revolution, a kind of happiness and joy made them regain the feeling of home. In order to reflect the fresh China's value, it demands and represent the national ideals in the new era, peasant groups in posters should show the peasantry's industrious cooperation, the positive image of production, praise the collective life and construct the modern national imagination. The new life of the peasant group in the poster is shown as a kind of abandoned the old shape system and way of life and turn to be an unprecedented new model.

The Romantic Imagination of Harvest

The new life of peasants is firstly from the romantic imagination of the harvest. The peasants rely on land to live and the income of individual ones is agricultural production, especially grain production as the main source. The harvest of agricultural production is the most straightforward

expression of farmers' happy life. From ancient times to today, for the farmers, to see the golden wheat everywhere, to harvest rich in their own land is the most tempting things than anything else. Therefore, in order to form a stark contrast to the miserable life before the founding of the People's Republic of China, the portrayal of a bumper harvest has become a typical image of a better life in the new era.

First of all, the imagination of the harvest is specific performance for the number of agricultural products. From the Great Leap Forward, so many propaganda posters have the similar images, such as the picture of crowds of chickens and ducks, rows of pigs, cotton baskets and granaries and a variety of agricultural products neatly arranged from near to far filling the screen. No matter people have seen or even seen the vegetables and fruits, they are brightly shining in the sun; farmers are busying in work with smile, rich agricultural products and the joy of the farmers completely describe the praise of the public commune system.

Secondly, the harvest of imagination also comes from the performance of the products' volume. Worship of the huge is the basis mode of the formation in the great leap forward period. During the Great Leap Forward period, due to the extreme scarcity of material, the government strictly prohibit waste on one hand, and also to encourage the public to actively carry out agricultural production. The confidence that the economy can achieve a great victory is manifested wide a variety of products in the posters, including grain, agricultural and sideline products, metals, and so on.

There was a very famous poster created by Jin Meisheng called "vegetable green melon fat " which was performance of rich food posters, its first edition was published in 1956, most of the copies are from the 1959 version. The picture depicts a scene where a young beautiful farm girl is harvesting vegetables. The girl's front is filled with fruits and vegetables, tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers, onions, corn, melon, pumpkin, eggplant and cabbage. These foods look not only attractively colorful, but also all fresh and big, of which melon, squash and cabbage is particularly huge. These fruits beyond the reality, and the girl seems to be in the sun shining pleasant, more like a primitive worship of food. However, in fact, because of crop failure and famine after the Great Leap Forward, the vegetables and fruits as this poster can only exist in people's imagination. It is precisely because people have not seen such a wonderful fruits and vegetables for a long while and these foods are extraordinarily precious and important. This poster was reprinted over and over again, printing a total of more than one million copies.

The Presentation of Modernity

Modern and traditional is always a relative group of concepts. The peasants' traditional appearance is weak and thins; their traditional lives are the self-sufficiency; their production tradition is depends on the livestock and the own hands. The founding of new China broke all established traditions and created a new discourse system under the leadership of the proletarian party. The image of the peasants is transformed into a mighty and revolutionary hero; the life of the peasants is transformed into the communist ideal of collective cooperation; the production of the peasants is changed into the mechanical labor relying on science and culture. The new aesthetic taste and aesthetic standard is the direct expression of the establishment of the symbol of agricultural modernization, a large number of emerging mechanical tools, electronic products appear in the propaganda poster paintings, characterization of agricultural production labor and peasant life of the modernization process.

Agricultural civilization is a long-term cultural foundation of China. Peasants' aesthetic objects and aesthetic goals are often manifested as agricultural productions that are closely related to their own lives. The main characteristics of agricultural production progress under the new regime are the modernization of agriculture, and the machines are automatically become a significant symbol of modernization. The new agricultural production tools, such as tractors, planter, rice transplanters, harvesters and other large-scale become the important reference when artists try to present the new rural life. Agricultural machinery in posters is closely related to socialist construction, which represents the great strides forward and the future trend of agricultural production in new China.

Farmers who participate in the practice and use of agricultural machinery are also considered as the pillars and hopes of the whole country.

Electricity is an important indicator of the new life of farmers. There are quite a lot of descriptions about electricity, for example: the peasants buy filament-bulbs with joyful and the installation of the electric lamp in the rural cooperative. A small light bulb in the hands of the farmers is treated as the holy objects, and it is cared about, worshiped. At the same time, an implicit visual discourse is also involved - the moral ritual of solidarity. The expression of rural cultural life, such as film and television, also manifests itself in posters. A famous poster called "The film projectionists" created by Xin Liliang constructed the modernization of peasants' amateur cultural life. The picture depicts a pretty girl who is thick eyebrows, red lips and white teeth, is showing the slide while playing Allegro. The artist focuses on a series of machines used for projection, as they symbolize the modern life of the countryside. Red, green, blue and yellow projectors with different shades of light, the girl wears with the microphone and a huge movie projector behind her, these should be quite unfamiliar for the peasants in old era. However this kind of unfamiliar has great value, and the strange brings fancy, because of this strange complete their presentation of modernity.

The Expression of Group Happiness

The concept of happiness embodied in the poster comes from the formation of the peasant collective idea. In the past, the production pattern of the peasant economy revolved around their own families. After the liberation, the production and lifestyle of rural cooperative and the people's commune break out not only the old production concept, but also the peasants' ideological thoughts. The peasant image cycle shows the misery of the peasants 'old life, infiltrating their exclusion and protest against the class they used to belong to. The posters of the farmer present the new life and aim to accomplish the farmers' sense of belonging and dependence on the existing system and real life. This is a collective ownership and dependence; it can go beyond the value and emotion, integration into the farmer groups' self-identity and social identity. Posters with the image of peasants express the social aspirations; "commune" and "cooperatives" are carrying the modern life ideal of farmers for the future.

In generally, peasants in posters have individual expression, personality and characteristics, but these characteristics are not obvious, and they have the tendency of group identity. The public dining hall shown in poster frequently is the most concentrated expression of collective life. Since 1958, the people's commune movement was in full swing; all production teams had opened their own basic public canteens, the canteens provided food for the people's commune members. In consequence, the commune members do not have to cook for themselves and they could save time to do more invested in the field work. The government thinks that "let the belly full" could "drum up energy to product." Food is free and the big public canteen provides a picture of the modern homesteads that are close to communism. All the posters, which describe public canteens usually, have universal visual symbols, clean and sanitary environment, harmonious atmosphere, rich and clean food, in an orderly and well-sequenced manner. These signs are created deliberately and the purpose is intended to emphasize the rationality of group life.

In summary, the joy of harvest, modern desire and collective well-being has opened the possibility of public life of farmers. In this public life, the identity of the participants is essential. Propaganda posters have great social effects in encouraging labor production, and guiding social values, implementing group ideas. The peasants are re-shaped in the context of the new society, and they become new-era cultural newcomers who abandoned the narrow-minded individualism. The peasants in the propaganda poster of the new China showed joy, happiness and optimism as a group. There was no pain and no hardship. Everything was so beautiful. The peasants in Chinese propaganda posters show joy, happiness and optimism spirit as a group, and this group creates a false and illusory utopia without any pain and difficulties.

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