

Lesser-known Chinese Art Forms

By

Mr. Manoj Krishnan

krisofeden@gmail.com

Abstract

Asia has many countries with great civilizations. Unfortunately, in the last century amid rapid industrialization and other facts, a vast treasure of indigenous art forms and their cultural practices are on verge of extinction and there is indeed an urgency to promote and revitalized or at least spread awareness about them.

China has been always rich in art and culture. With a large number of indigenous communities residing in the most populous and third largest country in size of the world, China is the cradle of many amazing art forms that have evolved with time and have enchanted the world. In this article, a few lesser-known Chinese art forms are included.

Keywords

Chinese, embroidery, painting, embroidery

Introduction

Today's marketplaces are inundated with many Chinese artworks. Their fine designs, distinctive motifs, and exquisite hues often catch the attention of art enthusiasts. Amid these thriving businesses where traditional oriental art forms have embraced the shades of modernity, there are many art forms about which we, the denizens of other regions of the world, are not very familiar.

The list is long but I would like to mention a few of such art forms in this article. Through this article,

I intend to share information on some of the Chinese art forms to the wider audience across Asia as well as the entire world.

Wuhu Iron Art

Wuhu iron art, a traditional handicraft from the Wuhu city of Anhui Province has a long history. It is said that it originated in the Song Dynasty and during the reign of Kangxi of Qing Dynasty its popularity spread worldwide. Wuhu Artists use the hammer as a calligraphy pen, iron as ink, anvil as paper, and forge the wrought iron into a painting with their amazing artistic skills.

Wuhu iron artworks have been exhibited at the Paris World Expo, the Model and Art Exhibition of Budapest, and in many countries all over the world.

Though this art form has thrived for centuries but due to the dwindling number of Wuhu iron craftsmen, this art form is at risk of extinction.

Jieshou Embroidery

Chinese arts have enthralled the world for the last many centuries. Some of them are quite popular but many of them still needed to be popularised in the world. One of them is Jieshou embroidery.

A city of Anhui Province, Jieshou is known for its traditional Jieshou embroidery. These delicate embroideries on satin and silk use threads, metal flakes, and gold fringing. Vibrant colors like red, green, and yellow are used in these flat-stitch embroidery works.

Chinese Phoenix Painting

The Chinese phoenix Feng Huang symbolizes two birds, Feng (a male bird) and Huang (a female bird). However, when it is paired with traditional Chinese dragons, Feng Huang is represented as female while the Dragon is a male. In the Chinese Phoenix Paintings, colorful

lines and techniques from Kung pi (fine brushwork) traditions are used along with typical colors of folk arts. The earliest known ancient phoenix design is said to be 7000–8000 years ago. It was discovered at Gaomiao Archeological Site Hongjiang, Hunan Province.

Gu Embroidery

This decorative needlework uses multi-colored fine silk threads over a silk background. Most of the motifs in Gu Embroidery are inspired by nature or historical instances. It originated during the Ming Dynasty reign and remained quite popular in subsequent centuries. In the Shanghai Museum, many Gu Embroidery items from the time of the Ming period are displayed.

Duijin Brocade

The weaving of Duijin or Duihua brocade was developed during Sui and Tang Dynasties hundreds of years ago. It is also known as three-dimensional Chinese painting. It is a unique traditional folk handicraft of Shanxi Province. In these handicrafts, silk, and brocade are used to interpret traditional paintings. In it, animals, and flowers look so real and attractive.

Conclusion

Losing an art form is losing an important chapter of a once-thriving civilization. We do not need a homogenous society where one culture eclipses everything else. Humanity can thrive only when we do not forget our roots, and value each community and its rich art & culture.

These above-mentioned Chinese art forms have evolved in past many centuries. Possessing a piece of them is nothing less than owning a piece of history.

These art forms are few to mention among the many lesser-known art forms of China. Today many Government and non-Government organizations are supporting reviving and promoting the traditional art forms of this region.

As Gerhard Richter has said, “*Art is the highest form of Hope*”. Art has been instilling positivity and inculcating creativity in humankind for thousands of years. By preserving them we are not only keeping that art form alive but also serving humankind as a whole.

References

- <https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles>

About the Author

Manoj Krishnan is the founder of the Asian Literary Society (a community of thousands of readers, writers, and artists from all over the world). He is the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Asian Arts, Culture and Literature (JAACL).

Manoj Krishnan is the author of the Historical fiction, "Kanishka," and five anthologies of poems. He has compiled and edited nineteen national and international anthologies of poems and short stories.

