

Study on the Difference of Meanings of Chinese Zodiac Nouns from the Perspective of Chinese and Foreign Cultures

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Abstract

The zodiac is a classic culture left by the ancestors to future generations, and has a unique cultural significance. In addition to China, there are many countries with cultural traditions of the zodiac year, such as South Korea, Japan, North Korea, India and so on. The zodiac is an ancient Chinese folk culture symbol. It plays an irreplaceable role in people's daily life and folk life practice, and is inseparable from people's life. The animals that make up the zodiac have different symbolic meanings. In different countries and national cultures, animals of the same zodiac also have different meanings. The article will start with the nouns of the zodiac signs and discuss the cultural differences between China and foreign countries.

Keywords

Chinese Zodiac; Chinese and Foreign Cultures.

1. Introduction

Since ancient times, animals have been inseparable from people's survival and life. Based on the living habits, temperaments and contributions to human life of different types of animals, the ancestors endowed these animals with emotions and their own meanings through imagination, and then formed a unique folk culture and acted on people's social life. This is reflected in any country and any nation. In the zodiac, people seem to make each sign represent a virtue, giving them a personal meaning.

2. Rat

Perhaps many people have a stereotype of "cunning, greedy, and shrewd" about mice, so there are idioms such as "short-sighted, thirsty, timid as a mouse". But in fact, in ancient China, the "rat" was a spiritual beast and a beast of gratitude, and was a kind-hearted and loyal animal. People have evolved the meaning of "gathering wealth" according to the habit of mice like to hide things. In addition, in the old folk, "rat" also has the symbolic meaning of "more sons and more blessings".

In Western culture, the "rat"'s nocturnal habit and its close relationship with the earth and nature make people curious and mysterious about it. There is a statue of a bronze rat in ancient Rome. Due to the keen sense of "rat", it responds rapidly to changes in the environment. The saying that "rat can predict disasters" has been widely spread in the West for a long time. The ancient Romans believed that the "rat" could foretell the future, that seeing a white rat was auspicious, and that a rat biting through clothes meant bad luck. In ancient Roman culture, the rat was also a spiritual creature.

3. Cow

The cow usually symbolizes practical work and hard work, and it has also become a totem worship in some areas. In Chinese culture, the cow symbolizes industriousness, steadfastness,

and ability. It is used to pull the plough to level the land, bringing convenience and productivity to the people in the ancient farming society, so it is highly respected by people. Due to the importance of ancient agriculture, Cattle also play an important role in agricultural production, so people did not eat beef for a long time.

The cow is a symbol of wealth and power in Western culture. In Greek mythology, the cow is the incarnation of Zeus; in the history of ancient Egypt, the cow is a religious symbol of great significance; in Arabic mythology, the cow is related to the gods. important representative. However, in the eyes of some people, "bull" is both good and evil. In Picasso's works in his later years, the bull was used as a symbol of death, and Picasso used it to depict the fear of death. In the famous "Guernica", the "bull" placed in the center of the picture is recognized as a symbol representing Nazi fascism, symbolizing destruction and death.

In both China and Japan, cattle are used as sacrifices to show respect for the gods, so for a long time, beef was banned in both China and Japan.

4. Tiger

"Tiger" is a heroic and mighty image. It is often called "King of the Jungle", symbolizing majesty and power. In ancient my country, the thing used to convey military orders was called "Tiger Talisman", which is enough to see that "tiger" is in people's hearts. status. People regard the zodiac tiger as the "Tiger Lord", and believe that it is the mount of the mountain god, the two earth gods or the city god.

In Western countries, the tiger is often a symbol of courage and strength, and has a unique imperial demeanor. However, in some cultural backgrounds, tigers will also become synonymous with ferocity and toughness.

5. Rabbit

In China, docile and cute little rabbits usually show people the image of honesty and kindness. People place good hopes on this lovely creature. The rabbit has the meaning of kindness, beauty and peace. Such a gentle and harmless little Animals always arouse boundless love and affection in people's hearts. Even the idiom "Three Caves of a Cunning Rabbit" shows that the lowest point of a rabbit's character is only the word "cunning".

Surprisingly, in the cultures of other countries, the rabbit can become a symbol of evil. In medieval people's concept, the rabbit was regarded as a symbol of lust, linked to evil. In England, rabbits bring misfortune and bad luck; in some countries, rabbits are also a symbol of cowardice, vigilance and cowardice.

6. Dragon

The dragon has a unique position in Chinese culture. In China, it is a mascot that everyone admires, and a symbol of good weather, peace and prosperity. This is also the only creature in the zodiac that has never been seen in real life. To a large extent, it may not be a physical animal, but a spirit, a non-physical idealized existence. In ancient times, the emperor was known as the "True Dragon Emperor", the dragon was majestic and noble, and was admired by people. The Chinese dragon entrusts the spirit of unity and invincibility, and embodies the spirit of the Chinese nation's unremitting self-improvement.

Unlike Chinese civilization, Western civilization originated from ancient Greek civilization. In "The Origin of Dragons", Professor Robert Brewster cuts in from the perspective of belief fusion, uses the inference of causality, combines nature and belief, and deeply explores the relationship between the specific origin of Western dragon culture and environmental development The

mystery. Dragons often represent evil, gloom, greed, slaughter, war and so on in Western culture.

7. Snake

The snake symbolizes luck, auspiciousness and longevity, and is also called "little dragon" by people to show love and respect. Although in the impression of many people, snakes are dangerous animals, but in Chinese cultural traditions, snakes are actually a kind of auspicious things, praised and worshipped by people in ancient times.

Not only in China, but even all over the world, many countries consider snakes to be auspicious and sacred. People in ancient Egypt believed that the snake was the protector of the monarch, and there was also an image of a cobra on the crown to symbolize imperial power. European aristocrats also used the image of snakes to decorate their crowns.

8. Horse

Legend has it that in ancient times, horses had wings and were favored by the Jade Emperor with their own talents. They became the imperial horses in front of the Heavenly Palace. However, due to the Jade Emperor's love for it, they gradually became arrogant and often misbehaved. It was a big disaster, and finally was crushed to the foot of Kunlun Mountain. More than 200 years later, the first ancestor of mankind rescued the horse, and the horse came to the world to serve mankind, deeply feeling the kindness of mankind. The spirit of the horse is loyalty, nobility, and galloping.

Similar to the beloved character of horses in Chinese tradition, horses in Western culture represent chivalry and are synonymous with fame, perseverance and loyalty.

9. Sheep

In the concept of ancient Chinese, the sheep is a symbol of beauty and kindness. Sheep are docile, lively, and synonymous with vitality. In ancient my country, people often used sheep to sacrifice to ancestral temples. People believed that sheep were the messengers between man and heaven and earth. From this, it also had great religious significance. As a sacred object with special religious meaning, the sheep has also evolved into the totem of some ethnic minorities in China, so it has been endowed with a noble social status.

Since ancient times, sheep have played a docile and gentle role. It is also a symbol of the abundance of grains, the prosperity of the country and the safety of the people. In English, the word "sheep" is chosen to interpret the meaning of "sheep". It can be seen that people love sheep. Westerners also admire sheep's "sheep", believing that sheep are pure and flawless and gentle and courteous.

10. Monkey

The monkey is a primate like a human, and its wisdom is also close to that of a human being. In most cases, monkeys are good friends of human beings, smart, lively and endearing. The Monkey King in "Journey to the West" is also a clever, witty, and daring image. In most cases, in traditional Chinese cognition, monkeys often appear in a positive image.

In the West, monkeys are also considered inferior to humans due to their proximity to humans. In the traditional cognition of Christianity, monkeys represent some negative meanings, which will arouse people's suspicion and disgust, imply evil, greed, and even represent heretical cults, which is very different from the love of monkeys in China.

11. Chicken

The rooster was used to announce the dawn in ancient times, to inform people of the arrival of a new day, which means that the sky will dawn, so the most significant symbolic meaning of the rooster is punctuality and trustworthiness. There is a poem saying: "The world is white with the sound of a rooster", which is magnificent and bright. And "rooster" is the tenth in the Chinese zodiac, and it also contains the best wishes of "perfection".

In the cultural background of many countries, people regard the chicken as a symbol of the sun and light, and this is not only in China. One of the most representative countries in Europe is France. The French love and even admire chickens very much. They praise the optimistic and positive spirit and life attitude of chickens, and believe that such spirits are worth learning. Man symbol.

12. Dog

In the eyes of Chinese people, dogs are mostly the image of loyalty and righteousness, so people used to keep dogs in their homes because they were loyal to the Lord and loved by people. However, for the image of "dog", people always have mixed praise and criticism. Words such as "hu friends and dog friends" and "wolf heart and dog lung" show that dogs are not very popular. In Western cultures, dogs are generally docile and dependable. They are loved and pitied. But in fact, in the early legends of Western mythology, the image of the dog exists mainly in a negative form. "In the Norse mythology system, Tyr, the god of war, one of the twelve main gods, and the son of the giant Himil, was killed by a vicious dog in a Scandinavian sacrificial ceremony. In Greek mythology, the The dark goddess of ghosts and magic, Hecate, is always accompanied by a pack of vicious dogs on the wanderthenight, and uses them to attack any traveler she sees." So in the eyes of many people, a loyal and lovely dog Maybe not a very positive image.

13. Pig

Hai pig, one of the twelve zodiac signs, is the twelfth in the earthly branch. In Chinese, the image of pigs is mostly negative, representing bad connotations such as stupidity and laziness. In the farming society, the image of the pig is positive, it is a very important animal, and it is also a symbol of wealth. In addition, it also has a docile and honest nature. Although it is clumsy and clumsy, its temperament is docile and easy-going, thus representing harmony and auspiciousness.

In Western culture, the boar symbolizes a brave and fearless warrior image, and the sow means "breeding" and "mother goddess", but sometimes people use "pig" to refer to bad things, such as dirty, lazy. "Interestingly, in German culture, pigs are still a symbol of luck, and when people say 'Er hat Schwein gehabt!' (he has a pig) it means 'He is so lucky!' The German word for 'Schwein haben' is 'Glück' haben', 'having a pig' means 'lucky'."

14. Conclusion

The animals in the zodiac have their own characteristics, and various factors related to the symbolism of the zodiac have led people to look for its relationship with totem worship and agricultural social life, and also entrusted with good blessings to human beings. Under the different historical development and cultural backgrounds at home and abroad, the twelve zodiac animals have shown similar or far different symbolic meanings in different countries and national cultures, which is of great help for us to understand the similarities and differences of different cultures. .

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