

## Pingyang New Year Pictures Painted with Wood Block

### Traditional Arts



Pingyang New Year pictures painted with wood block are in the second batch of National Intangible Cultural Heritage Projects.

Pingyang New Year pictures painted with wood block are traditional art works, which integrate theme, line, color and wood engraving. The place of production is mainly distributed in Pingyang (now Linfen), Fushan, Jiangzhou (now Jiang County). *History of Chinese Ancient Printing* regarded Pingyang New Year pictures as the "earliest ancestor" of the New Year paintings, and *History of Chinese Print* said, Pingyang New Year pictures were the origin of Chinese Print.

Pingyang New Year pictures began in the Sui and Tang Dynasties, developed in Song and Jin period, and flourished in Yuan and Ming Dynasties. Folk artists considered the Ming and Qing Dynasties as the "Golden Age" of the New Year paintings. The production process is mainly divided into three parts, the first one is to engrave wood version; the second is to dye the wood block; the last one is printing. The pictures are always put up during the New Year or festive festivals. Therefore, its theme is always happiness and good fortune and the content is mainly about folk, customs, myths, legends, heroes and other beautiful sceneries. There are people's longing and pursuit of the better life lying on the Pingyang New Year pictures. Pingyang New Year pictures romantically painted the abstract sceneries, without the constraint of the natural phenomena or objective things. The pictures, with vivid images and bright colors presenting the feeling of unconstraint and freedom, have high decoration value.

Pingyang New Year pictures are rich in content and diverse in form, expressing the good wishes of the working people for a good harvest and good fortune. They are a true portrayal of folk history, a crystallization of the wisdom of folk artists, and a treasure of Chinese national art.