

THE SEMANTIC GENERATION, CONNOTATION, AND IMAGERY OF THE CHINESE VOCABULARY 羽毛 (yǔmáo)

Influenced by bird worship, bird feathers had a profound impact on clothing decoration, dance, warfare, sacrificial activities, thoughts, and behaviors of early Chinese ancestors. A series of words related to 羽 (yǔ) had already appeared in the pre-Qin period. The combination of 羽 and 毛 (máo) appeared at the latest in the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period. The two words gradually evolved into one word, and 羽毛 (yǔmáo) became a synonym for bird feather and sometimes also referred to birds. The connotation of the word 羽毛 has been continuously expanded and has been associated with various aspects of ancient Chinese culture, such as clothing culture, political and military culture, sacrificial culture, and religious beliefs, thus forming a rich imagery. The image of 羽毛 itself gradually became a part of ancient Chinese culture and had an important influence on ancient poetry, songs and dance, national costumes, immortal thoughts, and the sentiments and character of the ancients.

Key words: feather, word meaning generation, connotation, imagery

As early as the totem worship period of clan society, with the rise of bird worship, bird feathers were valued and utilized by ancient people for their warmth, beauty, and bright colors. These feathers had a profound influence on clothing ornamentation, dance, warfare, sacrificial rituals, and even people's thoughts and behaviors. During the pre-Qin period, a set of vocabulary related to feathers had already emerged, such as feather clothing (羽衣 yǔ yī), feather dance (羽舞 yǔ wǔ), feather flag (羽旗 yǔ qí), and feather person/shaman (羽人 yǔ rén). These terms originated from the functions of feathers: using feathers as garments, holding feathers while dancing, decorating flags with feathers, and employing feathers to communicate with deities. The combination of 羽 (yǔ) and

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毛 (máo) into the compound 羽毛 (yǔ máo) appeared as late as the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, gradually evolving from two separate characters into a single word. 羽毛 became a synonym for bird feathers and sometimes also referred to birds themselves. Although its basic meaning had been established, the ancient belief in bird worship continued to exert significant cultural influence. In its early usage, the compound 羽毛 combined with other words carried multiple rich connotations. As a result, the connotation of 羽毛 continued to expand, becoming associated with various aspects of ancient Chinese culture, including clothing culture, political and military culture, sacrificial culture, and religious beliefs, thereby forming a rich set of images. 羽毛 has gradually become an integral part of ancient Chinese culture, exerting a notable influence on ancient poetry, song and dance, ethnic costumes, immortality beliefs, and the moral character of the ancients.

1. The Bird Totem Belief of Ancestors and the Cultural Significance of 羽毛

The bird worship in ancient China lasted for a long time and covered a wide range. This can be confirmed by archaeological discoveries, rock paintings, and ancient literary records. From the Neolithic Age to the Shang and Zhou dynasties, bird-patterned and bird-shaped utensils found across different regions of China reflect the widespread bird totem beliefs among various tribes and clans of early Chinese ancestors. For example, bird patterns appear on pottery from the early Hemudu Culture and Yangshao Banpo Culture; bird patterns on pottery sculptures from the Tanglin Site and Miaodigou Site of the mid-Neolithic period; as well as bird-shaped painted pottery pots from the Xiaohuyan and Majiayao cultures, and bird-shaped bronze vessels from the Shang and Zhou dynasties.

Rock paintings also preserve rich evidence of early ancestral bird totem beliefs. For instance, the feather ornaments on the head of the human face in the rock paintings of General Cliff in Lianyungang; the long feathers and wing-like appendages under the arms of shamans in the Cangyuan Rock Paintings; the feather shirts worn by shamans in the Gengma Rock Paintings; and the birds depicted above the heads of frontal figures in the Zuojiang Cliff Murals – all reflect the bird worship prevalent among early ancestors. Some express worship and prayer to bird totems (e.g., Zuojiang Cliff Murals). Some shamans used the power of bird wings to achieve their desire to ascend to heaven (e.g., Cangyuan and Gengma Rock Paintings). Some contain a dual meaning of aesthetics and sacrifice (e.g., General Cliff Rock Paintings). The General Cliff Rock Paintings date back approximately five to six thousand years, the Cangyuan Rock Paintings two to three thousand years, and the Left River Flower Mountain Cliff Rock Paintings were likely created during the Spring and Autumn period, the Warring States period, and the Han dynasty. These provide intuitive evidence for early Chinese ancestors' bird totem beliefs.

According to literary records, the most prominent tribe in ancient bird totem beliefs was the Dongyi Shaohao tribe. *Zuozhuan* reveals the splendid bird worship culture of the ancient East through the account of Tan Zi tracing his ancestor Shaohao's practice of naming official titles after birds (Guo Dan, Cheng Xiaoqing, Li Binyuan trans. and anno., 2012: 1845-1846). *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* also demonstrates the phenomenon of bird worship in antiquity (Guo Pu annot., Bi Yuan coll., 1989: 80, 108, 118). The Eastern Divine Gou Mang, the Northern Divine Yu Jiang, and the Western Sea Divine Lun Zi all have human faces and bird bodies. Some gods have bird heads and dragon bodies, or dragon heads and bird bodies. In the Country of Yan Chang, there are people with bird heads called the Bird Clan (鸟氏 Niǎo shì). In the Yu Republic (羽民国 Yǔ mín guó), people have long heads and are covered in feathers. In the Land of the Feathered People (羽人国 Yǔ rén guó), all people have feathers. This indicates that ancient China had a kingdom of bird totem beliefs with various bird species as totems.

The feathers of birds were valued and loved by ancestors for their beautiful appearance, bright colors, ability to keep warm and assistance in flight, thus occupying an important position in bird worship. Moreover, feathers also carried deeper cultural meanings, mainly including the following aspects.

A. Communicating with God and pleasing God. The witch held a dance instrument made of egret feathers and kept dancing, using shamanic dance to communicate with the gods and make them happy.

B. Used for travel. Feather flags and chariots related to feathers could be used for travel, symbolizing the cultural virtues of emperors and empresses.

C. Used for military purposes. In ancient times, chariots and warships were adorned with feather flags, which had the effect of boosting morale and strengthening military power.

D. Used to recruit wise men. In ancient times, when the emperor and feudal lords recruited wise men, they had to abide by relevant etiquette and righteousness, using different flags to recruit people of different identities. Among them, the recruitment of officials used feathered banners.

Tracing the cultural roots of feather imagery, one can go back to the Neolithic Age. Through rock paintings and literary records, it is known that as early as the period of clan totem worship, feathers - as an integral part of bird totem worship - were valued and utilized by ancestors. By the Zhou dynasty, feathers had acquired diverse functions and rich cultural connotations. Thus, from the perspective of word formation, what changes has the meaning of 羽 undergone?

2. The Generation and Multiple Meanings of the Word 羽毛

From the perspective of word formation, 羽毛 underwent a transformation from a compound word into a monosyllabic concept, first narrowing in meaning and then expanding. As the meaning of 羽毛 gradually stabilized, people developed a relatively fixed understanding of its basic connotation.

During the pre-Qin period, the single character 羽 was often used to denote the feathers of birds, as seen in phrases such as white feathers (白羽 báiyǔ), one feather (一羽 yīyǔ), and one carriage-load of feathers (一輿羽 yīyúyǔ) in the Mencius. In contrast, when combined with other characters, 羽 (yǔ) often carried richer meanings, e.g., feather people (羽民 yǔmín), feather person (羽人), feather dance (羽舞), feather banner (羽旗), and feathers and ox-tails (羽旄 yǔmáo). The character 毛 at that time mostly referred to the hair of humans and animals, not to bird feathers.

The compound 羽毛 emerged during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, initially as two separate characters. In ancient texts such as *Mozi* ("Against Music"), *Guanzi* ("Water and Earth"), *Xunzi* ("Rich Country"), and *the Book of Rites* ("Royal Regulations"), the characters 羽 and 毛 appear together but still function as two distinct words. For example, in the *Mozi* ("Against Music"), the phrase 因其羽毛, 以为衣裘 (yīn qí yǔmáo, yǐ wéi yīqiú, "have feathers and furs for coats") occurs (Li Shaokun, 2009: 154); in the *Guanzi* ("Water and Earth"), 羽毛丰茂 (yǔmáo fēng mào, "feathers and furs are abundant") is found (Teng Xincan, Teng Yong, 1994: 350). Here, 羽 specifically refers to bird feathers, while 毛 refers to animal fur. By extension, the compound 羽毛 could also denote birds and beasts in general.

The character 毛 truly entered the semantic field of 羽 during the Han dynasty. In one situation, 羽毛 became a single word meaning "bird feathers"; the original sense of 毛 was backgrounded, and it served as a supporting character. Occasionally, 毛羽 (máoyǔ) was also used to mean "bird feathers", such as 毛羽何摧颓 (máoyǔ hé cuītuí, "Why are the down feathers so frail?") in the poem *Yan Ge He Chang Xing* (Guo Maoqian, 1998: 576). In another situation, 毛 alone was used directly to refer to "bird feathers", as recorded in *the Book of the Later Han*.

The meaning of 羽毛 as bird feathers originated in the Han dynasty and was inherited by later dynasties. During the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern dynasties, this sense was widely used in classical annotations, poetry, songs, and prose fiction. Of course, the original meaning of 羽毛 as two separate words (bird feathers + animal fur) did not completely disappear and was still sometimes employed.

As the meaning of 羽毛 shifted from "bird feathers and animal fur" to simply "bird feathers", the original extended sense of 羽毛 meaning "birds and beasts" also changed, sometimes referring specifically to birds. For example, in the *Yingwu Fu* (《鸚鵡賦》) written by Mi Heng during the Han dynasty, the phrase 虽同族於羽毛 (*suī tóngzú yú yǔmáo*, "although of the same kin among birds") occurs (Xiao Tong, 1988: 184). Here 羽毛 refers to birds rather than birds and beasts, using parrots and other birds as a comparison to highlight the parrot's uniqueness.

In summary, during the pre-Qin period, 羽 and 毛 were two separate words. In the Han dynasty, 羽毛 became a single word, giving rise to the new meaning "bird feathers". However, at that time the two-word reading of 羽毛 was still very active. From the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties onward, the meaning of 羽毛 as "bird feathers" gained recognition and widespread use. Nevertheless, the earliest meaning of 羽毛 never completely faded from the historical stage and continued to be used occasionally.

In addition to the two basic meanings mentioned above and the extended meanings of "birds and beasts" and "birds", due to the significant influence of ancient bird worship beliefs in culture and the multiple rich connotations of the early combination of the word 羽 with other vocabulary, the word 羽毛 had many other meanings in historical development:

A. To refer to the feather flag. In the 14th year of Duke Xiang's reign in the *Zuozhuan* (Commentary on the "Spring and Autumn Annals"), it is written: "Fan Xuanzi borrowed feathers from Qi but did not return them, and the people of Qi began to be double-minded [范宣子假羽毛于齐而弗归，齐人始贰 *Fàn Xuānzǐ jiǎ yǔmáo yú Qí ér fú guī, Qí rén shǐ èr*]" (Du Yu, 1977: 920). Du Yu notes: "The feathers were used as banners, and the king's chariot could have this. Qi had it in private, so it was called feathers [析羽为旌，王者游车之所建，齐私有之，因谓之羽毛 *Xī yǔ wéi jīng, wángzhě yóuchē zhī suǒ jiàn, Qí sī yǒu zhī, yīn wèi zhī yǔmáo*]" (Du Yu, 1977: 920).

B. To refer to the props of educational dance. For example, in He Chengtian's "Long Term Chapter" from the Collection of Yuefu Poems: "Xiao Guan evokes mournful sounds, and feathers raise magnificent patterns [萧管激悲音，羽毛扬华文 *Xiāo guǎn jī bēi yīn, yǔmáo yáng huá wén*]" (Guo Maoqian, 2017: 423). Sometimes it referred to dance itself, as in Ji Kang's "On the Sound without Sorrow and Joy": "Silk, bamboo, dish, and platter coexisted; feathers and bowing were used together [丝竹与俎豆并存，羽毛与揖让俱用 *Sī zhú yǔ zǔ dòu bìng cún, yǔmáo yǔ yī ràng jù yòng*]" (Yan Kejun, 1958: 1333). Here, silk and bamboo refer respectively to string and wind instruments; dish and platter refer to two types of vessels used in ancient times for serving meat and other food during sacrificial ceremonies and banquets; feathers and bowing refer respectively to dance and etiquette.

C. To refer to a person's reputation. Feathers give birds and animals a decorative quality, as they symbolize human reputation.

D. To refer to a person's strength, talent, or ability. Birds grow feathers and thereby gain the ability to survive and fly. The expression "feather growth" (羽毛成就 yǔ máo chéng jiù) is used to describe a person's development, indicating that the person possesses a certain strength, talent, or ability.

To refer to auxiliary forces, including followers, wings and auxiliary forces.

3. Feather Imagery and Immortal Culture

Ancient Chinese culture contained a wealth of specific images, whether of natural phenomena such as the sun, moon, rain, and snow; of trees and flowers such as pine, bamboo, chrysanthemum, and plum; or of birds and beasts such as crows, sparrows, tigers, and dragons. From a broad perspective, feathers painted or carved in prehistoric archaeological relics and rock paintings from various regions can be seen as image symbols. The rich images related to the character 羽 in ancient books before the Qin dynasty can also be regarded as specific feather images. However, what is discussed here is mainly the "feather image" under the term 羽毛. From this perspective, the feather as an image was created after the Han dynasty. During the Han and Wei dynasties, the word "image" appeared and acquired a basic connotation. At that time, the two basic meanings of 羽 were finalized, and many extended meanings were generated, providing a lexical basis and rich connotations for the emergence of the "feather image".

The imagery of feathers was closely related to immortal magic and Taoism. There was a correlation among immortal magic, Taoist culture, and the prevalent witchcraft of national deities in prehistoric totem beliefs. At that time, wizards who communicated with gods used supernatural plants or totemic animals to perform witchcraft. Moreover, wizards usually wore special clothing such as down jackets or used feathers as decorations to communicate with the gods and bring them down. Immortal magic and Taoist culture also inherited these practices of using animals, plants, or feathers as a medium to achieve their goals. However, the goal of immortal magic and Taoism was no longer merely to communicate with the gods and invoke their protection, but to cultivate immortality or attain enlightenment, ultimately achieving eternal life.

During the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period, various immortal arts were popular. At this time, the immortality of alchemy had already begun to take shape. From the Qin and Han dynasties onward, it became more professional, and emperors and generals also believed in it. From the immortal grain god in *Laozi*, to the immortal man in *Zhuangzi* who did not eat grains, rode on clouds, controlled flying dragons, and was unharmed by anything, to the alchemists of the Qin and Han dynasties who achieved immortality and ascended to heaven through alchemy, breath regulation, and

fasting – the elements of gods diminished while the elements of immortals and humans increased. This meant that human initiative was enhanced. People no longer blindly and passively pleased the gods to seek blessings, but achieved freedom in life and spirit through their own efforts.

羽化 (yǔhuà) was an important path for immortal magic and Taoism in pursuing immortality. Before the Eastern Han dynasty, there were already humans seeking to ascend to immortality through the process of giving birth to feathers (生羽 shēng yǔ). Many practitioners of Taoism were willing to use various means to grow feathers in order to soar. The concept of giving birth to feathers included both the material aspect of growing feathers and the spiritual aspect of imagining such growth. Immortal practitioners could also imagine themselves wearing nine-colored feather jackets to become immortals. In early Taoism, giving birth to feathers was an important connotation of 羽化, but it was later questioned due to the difficulty of achieving tangible effects. Subsequently, 羽化 more often referred to reaching a certain level of spiritual achievement, such as transcending life and death.

羽化, 羽衣, 羽人 and 生羽 in immortal magic and Taoist culture were all related to feathers, providing rich cultural connotations for feather imagery. In Taoist scriptures, it was common for immortals to wear feather crowns on their heads, hold feather knots in their hands, wear feather jackets or skirts, and adorn their bodies with feather fur. The description of immortals in novels fully absorbed this idea. In the book *Records of the Netherworld*, a woman pushed her husband, causing him to fall into a cave. The husband tried to find his way out and discovered a city where people were three meters tall and covered with feathers. (This story was also recorded in the *Jinlouzi*, with a similar narrative but slightly different wording, in which "covered with feathers" was written as "covered with feather clothes".) The description of the immortal's residence, clothing, diet, etc., in this story became a conventional portrayal of immortals in later literary works. Moreover, feathers or feather clothes had become the materialized symbols of immortality.

The description of mortals cultivating toward 羽化 in fairy tales also did not depart from the materialized symbol of "giving birth to feathers". The Maonu (Mao Woman 毛女) recorded in ancient books was a palace maid of the Qin dynasty. She fled to the mountains without clothes and grew black hair on her body. She could leap over pits and valleys as if flying. She learned to eat pine nuts, after which she no longer felt hungry or thirsty. She was not cold in winter and not hot in summer. Later, she ate grains, and her hair fell off somewhat. She grew old and died at the age of over one hundred. The "black hair" on her body might have resembled black bird feathers, so Chang Jian directly wrote in a poem: "Feathers through the Han dynasty [羽毛经汉代 Yǔmáo jīng Hàn dài]" (Peng Dingqiu et al., 1986: 333). The phrase "the hair on her body fell off somewhat, and she grew old and died [身毛稍脱落, 转老而死 Shēn máo shāo

tuōluò, zhuǎn lǎo ér sǐ]" (Ge Hong, 1990: 85) carries strong symbolic meaning. Taoists regard "metamorphosis" as a symbol of immortality. Maonu did not eat grains but ate pine needles and pine nuts. She grew black hair and was able to fly. It could be said that she obtained some signs of metamorphosis and was on the path to immortality. However, Maonu obviously did not achieve true metamorphosis, for her hair fell off, and she grew old and died. It can be said that feathers played an important role in the Taoist pursuit of immortality. This image was regarded as a symbol of attaining immortality.

4. The Feather Imagery and Its Influence in Poetry

The meaning of feather imagery in the cultural background of immortality and Taoism was relatively narrow, only serving as a tool and symbol for immortals and Taoists to pursue immortality and ascend to immortality. By comparison, the feather imagery in poetry had a broader meaning, almost containing most of the connotations of the word 羽毛, and had multiple symbolic meanings, making poetry more profound and charming.

The imagery of feathers in poetry can be traced back to *the Book of Songs*. *The Book of Songs* either rose to fame through the use of feathers, or used scattered feathers as a metaphor, or praised their five colors to praise people. Some poems used a bustard that looked like a wild goose fluttering its wings on a tree and standing unsteadily, describing the resentment of conscripted soldiers and their inability to live in peace. Some poems described weak birds being bullied by owls, causing their feathers to wither and become miserable, which was a metaphor for the rulers' invasion and plunder of the common people. Some poems expressed the joy of the wedding and the bride's beautiful dress by describing the oriole's bright and brilliant feathers. Some poems used the beautiful and colorful green bird's feathers to praise a gentleman's outstanding talents, which won the protection of God and the reliance of the country. The abundant imagery of 羽 in *the Book of Songs* was mostly absorbed by the later emerging feather imagery, and on this basis, more meanings were generated.

In some places, 毛羽 was written as 羽毛, which was an early reference to the direct appearance of feather imagery in poetry. Poets such as He Xun and Bao Zhao from the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties often used this imagery in their poems, describing a person's weakened strength or inability to unleash their abilities through the destruction or withering of their feathers. Sometimes 羽毛 also referred to fame and reputation.

The feather imagery in Tang and Song poetry was more abundant. It can be roughly divided into the following categories.

A. To sing about the beauty of bird feathers. For example, Wang Ganhua's poem in the Tang dynasty used the whiteness of reed catkins to represent the whiteness of magpie feathers. Qi Ji's poem in the Tang dynasty used chrysanthemums as a contrast to highlight the bright feathers of yellow orioles.

Wang Shipeng's poem in the Song dynasty described the swallows returning in spring with their new feathers. Wang Anshi's poem in the Song dynasty used the pure whiteness of snow to describe the whiteness of river gull feathers.

B. Related to music and dance. For example, Tian Xi of the Song dynasty described in his poem that the feathers danced with the music, and the gods and fortune came naturally. He Gong of the Song dynasty described the feathers dancing to show the harmony of heaven, and the talented scholar Gaoyang sang in front of him.

C. To describe a person's talent, ability, or strength. Wang Renyu of the Tang dynasty used "feathers grow" to describe his students' learning achievements. Zhao Gu of the Tang dynasty quoted the story of Ding Lingwei returning from immortality and turning into a crane to encourage his friends to keep a low profile after returning home and return again when they were stronger. Wang Yang of the Song dynasty used the phrase "crane soaring into the sky" to express his desire to display his talents. Sometimes feathers were also used to describe pillars of talent. Cao Yanyue of the Song dynasty used "national feathers" to describe Zhao Chongxian as a pillar of talent.

D. To use feathers as a metaphor for friends. Zhao Gu of the Tang dynasty wrote a poem describing the loneliness of saying goodbye to his friends after hearing the sound of wild geese while traveling. The "feather" in the poem actually followed the ancient meaning of 羽, which was a beautiful name for friends and a term for wings.

E. To use the metaphor of cherishing feathers to emphasize reputation. For example, in the poem by Xu Jun of the Song dynasty, it was described that a wild goose cherished its feathers thousands of miles away, and its good reputation made it high in the world.

F. Related to the ascent of Taoist immortality. Li Bai of the Tang dynasty wanted to know how to grow feathers, and he stayed in the thatched palace for thousands of years. Yang Shi of the Song dynasty described the ancient temple as still the same, but the feathers were gone without a trace, and fell into the human world for hundreds of years.

G. Metaphorically referring to noble aspirations. Guanxiu of the Tang dynasty used "feathers" in his poems to express his noble aspirations and pursuits. Living in seclusion in the mountains and valleys, although not considered a great success in the eyes of ordinary people, was considered by the author to be a sign of independence and high character.

Among the poems in ancient times that featured feathers most frequently were Du Fu's, with as many as seven poems. Du Fu preferred the image of feathers, and he used it to express his ambitions, criticize reality, or praise people's character. For example, "Feathers know independence, black and white are too distinct [羽毛知獨立, 黑白太分明 Yǔmáo zhī dúlì, hēibái tài fēnmíng]" (Peng Dingqiu et al., 1986: 556). On the surface, it sang about the unique

feathers of the spotted duck, which were black and white, but in fact it expressed his character of distinguishing right from wrong and not following the crowd. "Times are critical and people are in urgent need, and feathers are hurt by the wind [时危人事急, 风逆羽毛伤 *Shí wēi rénshì jí, fēng nì yǔmáo shāng*]" (Peng Dingqiu et al., 1986: 565) expressed his depressed mood of being unable to display his talents. "The world pitied and hurt, why use the feathers? [世人怜复损, 何用羽毛奇 *Shìrén lián fù sǔn, hé yòng yǔmáo qí*]" (Peng Dingqiu et al., 1986: 570) The parrot was caged because of its beautiful feathers, expressing the lament that talented people suffered misfortune because of their intelligence and talent. "The waterways look like frost and snow, and feathers can be seen in the forests [水路疑霜雪, 林栖见羽毛 *Shuǐlù yí shuāng xuě, lín qī jiàn yǔmáo*]" (Peng Dingqiu et al., 1986: 572) described the poet's feeling of loneliness when walking alone and crossing the river through the forest on the Mid-Autumn night. "A feather in the eternal cloud [万古云霄一羽毛 *Wàn gǔ yúnxīāo yī yǔmáo*]" (Peng Dingqiu et al., 1986: 568) sang about Zhuge Liang's noble ambition, praising him as a phoenix among men, and his high reputation would last forever. The flexible use of the image of feathers precisely expressed the poet's deep understanding of this image. In Du Fu's poems, the image of "feather" was a symbol of the poet's independent temperament, outstanding talent, and noble character.

After the Tang and Song dynasties, feathers were still admired by poets and often appeared in poetry, continuing the various meanings of feather imagery from before. The imagery of feathers, with its rich connotations and profound cultural implications, added much charm and sentiment to poetry. In particular, many poets liked to symbolize their noble, majestic, and ethereal aspirations with the pure white and elegant feathers, making their poetry elegant, dynamic, and full of charm.

Conclusion

From the prehistoric bird totem worship period, when our ancestors used feathers to keep warm and perform sacrifices, through the pre-Qin and Han dynasties to the modern era, feathers have consistently influenced people's lives and even social culture. They have not only had an important influence on ancient poetry, songs and dance, Taoist thoughts, and the sentiments and character of the ancients, but also continue to affect Chinese literary creation, ideology and culture, and personality formation today.

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Су Јунлеј

СЕМАНТИЧКИ РАЗВОЈ, КОНОТАЦИЈЕ И СЛИКОВИТОСТ КИНЕСКЕ ЛЕКСЕМЕ 羽毛 (yǔmáo)

Резиме

Под утицајем култа птица, птичје перје имало је изузетно важну улогу у животу старих Кинеза, остављајући дубок траг у култури одевања, плесу, ратовању, жртвеним обредима, као и у начину размишљања и понашања раних кинеских предака. Већ у преткинском периоду јавља се низ лексема повезаних са појмом 羽 (yǔ), док се сложеница 羽毛 (yǔmáo), настала спајањем знакова 羽 и 毛, први пут појављује у раздобљу Пролећа и јесени и Зараћених држава. Током историјског развоја ова два знака постепено су се стопила у јединствену лексичку цјелину, при чему је ријеч 羽毛 првенствено означавала птичје перје, а у појединим контекстима и саме птице.

У раду се анализира процес семантичког развоја ове лексеме, њено постепено ширење значења и формирање богатих културних конотација. Показује се да је појам 羽毛 временом постао неодвојив од бројних области традиционалне кинеске културе, укључујући културу одијевања, политичку и војну културу, жртвене обреде, религијска вјеровања и таоистичку традицију. Истовремено, перје је постепено израсло у сложен и вишеслојан културни симбол, чија се сликовитост одражава у поезији, пјесми и плесу, традиционалној ношњи, представама о бесмртности, као и у обликовању моралних вриједности, емоционалног свијета и карактера древних Кинеза. На тај начин, ријеч 羽毛 превазилази своје првобитно лексичко значење и постаје важан носилац културне меморије и симболичког наслеђа кинеске цивилизације.

Кључне ријечи: перје; семантички развој; конотација; сликовитост