

## A Preliminary Study of Kylin Paintings Handed Down

Since 1414

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**Abstract** The giraffe grown in Africa was mistaken for the kylin (Chinese unicorn) in the Ming Dynasty. Kylin, being a symbol of the Holy Emperor on the throne, became the target of Zheng He's scouting navigation. In 1414, Bangladesh paid the kylin as tribute, that's the first time the giraffe appeared in China. The member of the Imperial Academy Shen Du wrote a eulogy to commemorate this event. Somebody made a giraffe painting in addition to the eulogy, and became the so-called *Kylin Drawn by Some Ming Painter with Shen Du's Eulogy* collected in the Palace Museum in Taipei. Analyzing the inscription and calligraphy of the painting in this paper, we believe that this work may be not the original presented to the emperor. We also study other six kylin paintings, and we can say that all these giraffe paintings come from the same origin.

**Key words:** The Grand Voyages of Zheng He, kylin tribute, *Kylin Drawn by Some Ming Painter with Shen Du's Eulogy*, Kylin Painting, giraffe

