

Symbolic Significance and Inheritance of White Hmong Costume Pattern

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Abstract

This article aims to study the symbolic significance and inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern through qualitative research methods and two research tools: interview and observation. in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. Relevant data were collected through a study of 17 people, including protectors, heirs and consumers of White Hmong clothing in Laos. Using the theory of symbolic interactionism, this article analyzes the symbolic significance of the White Hmong costume pattern of Laos, including butterfly, spiral pattern and flower, and the inheritance value reflected in it. Using the theory of communication, this article studies the inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern and its inheritors. By studying the two objectives of Symbolic Significance and Inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern, It provides reference for better inheritance and research of White Hmong costume pattern. The results show that the White Hmong costume pattern not only has rich symbolic significance, but also carries the history and cultural memory of the Hmong people. In order to protect and pass on these valuable cultural heritages, managers need to take a variety of measures, including establishing a variety of ways to pass on skills, training new inheritors, and seeking support from the government and all sectors of society. Moreover, the inheritance and development of White Hmong costume pattern not only benefits the White Hmong group and the inheritors themselves, but also benefits the development of tourists and consumers, academia and research institutions as well as the whole society and culture.

Keywords : White Hmong , Costume pattern, Symbolic significance, Inheritance

Introduction

The Miao nationality is a worldwide nation with a large population. It is mainly distributed in China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, the United States, France, Germany, Canada, Argentina, Guyana, Australia, New Zealand and other countries.

The Miao nationality originated in China and is the oldest indigenous people in China. A large number of historical records and archaeological discoveries show that the Miao people originated in the three river basins of China (the Yangtze River, the Yellow River, and the Huaihe River), namely the East China Sea, the Yellow Sea, and the Bohai Bay. For thousands of years, the Miao people, forced by wars and wars, finally found a place to survive in the mountains of Guizhou and scattered in Hunan, Yunnan, Chongqing, Guangxi, Hubei, and Sichuan in China. With the development of history, the Miao people gradually spread to Southeast Asia. Thai historian Jonsai said: "The Hmong moved from northern China before the Thai people. Like the Thai people, they were gradually driven out of China, first to south China, then to Laos, Thailand, south Vietnam, and Cambodia in the south..." (Qiong, S., 1974) The Miao people have rich and colorful forms of cultural expression, including dance, music, film, and costume.

The Miao costumes, called "vomiting and owing" in the Miao language, are mainly composed of children's clothes, casual clothes and costumes. According to the database of Chinese intangible cultural heritage, there are many styles of Miao costumes. According to incomplete statistics, there are more than 200 styles with a large span of age. Silver ornaments, Miao embroidery and batik are the main characteristics of Miao costumes. The Miao costumes are famous for their dazzling colors, complicated decoration and thought-provoking cultural connotations. The Miao nationality costume pattern bears the historical responsibility of inheriting the national culture, and thus has the expression function of the written part.

Miao costume pattern is a decorative art with the development of Miao costumes, which is still used in daily clothing and daily necessities. It has practical and aesthetic functions, and is endowed with the colorful significance of inheriting national traditions, commemorating ancestors and inheriting ancestral teachings. The pattern content is a wide range of materials, including sky, earth, people, gods, plants, animals and other types. Since the Miao people are mainly

scattered in China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and other countries in Asia, the development situation of the Miao people in each country is different.

According to the census data of Laos in 1995, among the 47 ethnic groups in Laos, the population of the Miao people is 315,000, ranking the fourth after the elderly, Putai people and Kemu people (Liu, X. Y., 2008). The Miao people in Laos call themselves Hemun (Zhou, J. X., 2002). The Miao people in Laos include five branches, namely black, White Hmong, green, flower and red, each of which has its own name. Among the branches, White Hmong has the largest number of people, calling themselves "Mengdou", followed by "green seedlings", "Mongolian brush" and "black seedlings", only two villages, called "Mengdu", flower seedlings "MengLeng" and red seedlings "Monterey". Hemon scholars in Laos believe that the h-tone in claims is weak, calling mon is more precise. Some people call it a mog (meng). There are now 315,465 Hemons in Laos. It is distributed in Fengshari, Langnan Tower, Pojo, Province, Udamsay, Luang Prabang, Xikhouang, Huapan, Syabri, Vientiane, Polikansai and Vientiane City.

Luang Prabang is a famous ancient capital and Buddhist center in Laos. Luang Prabang has a superior geographical location, a cool climate, gentle terrain, and was once the cultural center of Laos. In the 21st century, this became a beautiful town with magical cultural deposits.

The places of interest include the temple, Mammota, Jinta Mountain and the palace. In December 1995, Luang Prabang was listed as the world's "natural and cultural" double heritage city by UNESCO.

The ancestor of White Hmong came from southwest China. The Hmong in Laos is one of the most ethnic minorities in Laos, and they moved in from China in history, and they still think their roots are in China (Liu, X. Y., 2008). According to the staff of the Luang Prabang Hmong Museum, the village of White Hmong where it is located originated from southwest China." They came from two routes. One moved out of China, through Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam, into Sangnu Xieng Khouang in Laos, after the Anti-American War, and moved from Xieng Khouang to other places, a large number of people taking this route. First White Hmong took this route, and then Hua Hmong followed the route (Zhou, J.X., 2002). According to the protectors of the local Miao village, Luang Prabang White Hmong costume pattern is mostly from generation to generation, which is closely related to the belief and living environment of the Miao ancestors.

Under the influence of the historical environment and religious culture of Laos, White Hmong costume pattern, its ethnic costume pattern gradually integrates with the local culture, with extremely high regional

and cultural value. However, with the acceleration of the pace of modern life, people's life style and production capacity have undergone great changes, and the development and inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern in Luang Prabang is facing many difficulties. Living in the White Hmong of Luang Prabang, their clothes have not been well developed and utilized, and they are still in a primitive natural state of their own production and use. At present, although the new generation of White Hmong has made great efforts in selling ethnic costumes, it completely does not understand the process of costume pattern creation and the symbolic significance of costume pattern, which will seriously restrict the development and innovation of White Hmong costume pattern, and even become a non-renewable national culture.

However, related to Miao costume pattern, most of the scholars focus on the Hmong in China. The research related to Miao nationality in Laos mainly focused on miao history and marriage customs, and were not studied in depth. There are few studies related to White Hmong costume pattern in Luang Prabang.

As a worldwide nation, the Miao nationality has made important contributions to the world culture. From the perspective of cultural diversity, Luang Prabang White Hmong, as a part of Miao culture and world culture, is unique and needs to be protected and inherited. Therefore, this paper will study the symbolic significance and inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern.

This paper examines the symbolic significance and inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern in Luang Prabang, using interviews and observation. Analysis of the interviews and observations of protectors and inheritors by applying the symbolic interactionism theory, to determine the symbolic significance and inheritance value of White Hmong costume pattern in Luang Prabang, To study the inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern in Luang Prabang, last, A method is proposed to improve the inheritance effect of White Hmong costume pattern in Luang Prabang.

Research Objective

1. To study the Symbolic Significance of White Hmong costume pattern.
2. To study the Inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern.

Research Methodology

This study used qualitative research using relevant literature and field studies. Research tools included surveys, interviews, and observations.

1. The study steps are performed as follows

Collect White Hmong costume pattern, symbolic significance and costume pattern heritage and provide sufficient evidence to support this study through field investigation of White Hmong Museum and physical stores.

2. The target group includes the following groups

Key Informants: There are three people in total, including one protector and two inheritors respectively.

Casual Informants: There are four people in total, they are scholars related to Miao costume research;

General Informants: There are ten people, who are tourists or consumers.

3. The research tools

included interviews and observations. The symbolic significance and inheritance data were obtained by observing Key Informants and interviewing Key Informants, Casual Informants and General Informants.

4. Data collection

First, collect secondary data from relevant literature, articles, research and other sources to establish a framework. Second, the observation and interview methods were used to collect the data during the field visits.

5. Data analysis

The data are analyzed by content analysis, and the results will be presented.

The Results

1. symbolic significance

1.1 Butterfly

The Miao people rely on long-term life experience and passed down from generation to generation, and gradually formed their own beliefs. The theory of symbolic interaction holds that "there is no objective meaning in things themselves, and

it is endowed by people in the process of social interaction" (Che, W. B., 2001). In ancient songs such as the Miao Epic, the Birth of a Butterfly Mother and the Maple Song, there are ancient legends about the birth of butterflies. According to ancient records, the ghosts and gods in the pond beside the

maple tree told the birds of the god in the maple tree to steal the fish in the pond. The god determined that the maple tree covered the birds and split the maple tree in half, and the cocoon of the tree hatched butterflies, fell in love with the blisters in the pond and gave birth to twelve eggs (Peng, C., 2016). As the "Maple Song", " Maple sister list, maple sister stay... sister and blisters, travel for twelve days, into 12 nights, with twelve eggs."From the twelve eggs hatched thunder, elephant, tiger, snake, snake, dragon and Jiang Yang brother and sister, etc. One of them, Jiang Yangzao, has human beings and

descendants. Therefore, the butterfly mother is regarded as the ancestor of all things, the ancestor of the Miao people and human beings (Zhou, L., 2010). Based on the word of mouth of the Miao people, the Miao nationality has the custom of worshipping the butterfly mother. The butterfly has also become the guardian in the eyes of the Miao people, praying that the butterfly mother bless the descendants of happiness. Living in Luang Prabang, White Hmong also continued its national belief under the influence of its ancestors and the previous generation.

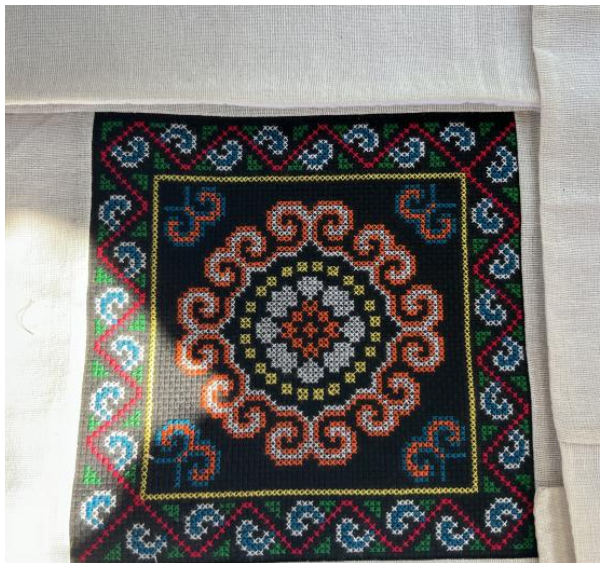


Figure 1 Butterfly embroidery



Figure 2 Butterfly drawing

Butterfly patterns are also gradually simplified and symbolized during the White Hmong generations, as shown in Figures 1 and 2. In his book *The Theory of Semiotics*, American psychologist Wumeng Botto Eco

proposed that symbols are not only the composition of the text, but also have emotional and behavioral reactions. In his opinion, a code system should be divided into three parts: symbols, the state and

behavioral reflection of external concepts, and each symbol stimulates an emotional response (Eco, U. & Lu, D.P., 1990). As a symbol, the butterfly is spread in the Miao culture, with a historic transmission process. It is constantly communicated and inherited among the Miao people, and finally developed into a symbolic belief. Until now, when the Miao people mention the butterfly pattern, they will think of the story of the mother butterfly and express their best wishes through this symbol. In White Hmong village most costume pattern creation, can find this is simplified butterfly design, they through the industrious hands and the wisdom of life, the butterfly design and design symbol of blessing decoration on a variety of articles for daily use, to tourists from all over the world and interaction, but

also let the butterfly symbol represents the meaning in the public.

1.2 Spiral lines

The spiral pattern usually show a dynamic pattern with centripetal or centrifugal trends, and this dynamic can be interpreted as a symbol of change and development. In the theory of symbolic interaction, the spiral pattern is regarded as a process representing the development and change of the individual or the society, emphasizing the continuous evolution of life. The spiral pattern is one of the important symbols in White Hmong culture. White Hmong sewed the spiral pattern on its own clothes, mainly reflected in the skirt, cuffs and waist, symbolizing the reproduction of life and the protection of ancestors, as shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4.



Figure 3 Spiral totem



Figure 4 Spiral embroidery

The symbolic significance of the White Hmong spiral costume pattern is deepened in the interaction. With the globalization of the tourism economy, People are also more exposed to different cultures, Feeling the distinctive culture, Through the observation that the, In the night market in Luang Prabang, There are many tourists who buy White Hmong clothing, Most tourists are from the United States or China, Tourists have a similar interpretation of the Miao costumes, This is the function of symbols: on the one hand, because spiral patterns are widespread in mathematics and nature, Such as the golden helix, the helix-shaped celestial structure, This connection between

mathematics and nature can be understood as the cognition of the laws and wisdom of nature in the symbolic interaction; On the other hand, the widespread distribution of the Miao people also brings the pattern culture around the world. Therefore, "the use of meaning and symbols enables people to have human action and interaction" (Li, M. & Zhang, X.S., 2005). As the crystallization of Miao culture in the long history, the spiral symbols have subtle differences and innovations in different Miao regions, but they have a common origin, can be inherited and developed in the interaction of ethnic groups, and can be recognized by more people.

1.3 Flowers

Flower design, design design, design from the living environment, Luang Prabang climate conditions are better, warm and humid, very suitable for the growth of flowers and plants. Flower pattern is not only the crystallization of White Hmong women's life wisdom, but also shows White Hmong's love

for nature, condensing a huge psychological connotation and strong emotional color. It expresses White Hmong's respect for nature and his yearning for a better life. Flower patterns in the clothing are mainly decorated in the main body part of the clothes, as shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6



Figure 5 Flower embroidery



Figure 6 Flower texture

White Hmong Think that flowers not only represent the beauty of nature, but also represent personal beauty and kindness. In different cultures, flowers have different symbolic significance, but in most cultures, brightly colored flowers generally represent pure and beautiful emotions. White Hmong Through flower patterns, symbols in Miao culture are conveyed or recognized to people, so as to establish resonance and understanding. In addition to the flower itself, there are also each individual of White

Hmong, and their simple and kind eyes are also a kind of symbolic interaction, conveyed to the tourists. From the aesthetic point of view, White Hmong can arouse people's aesthetic feeling and aesthetic emotion by taking flowers as costume pattern elements. This aesthetic feeling is not only formal, but also related to people's resonance of nature, vitality and harmony.

To sum up, the symbolic significance of White Hmong costume pattern is mainly reflected in three patterns: butterfly, spiral

pattern and flower. Different patterns represent different things and are a kind of symbolic existence. For example, the butterfly pattern symbolizes many children and many blessings, the spiral pattern symbolizes the prosperity and protection of life, and the flower pattern symbolizes

beauty and kindness. In addition, these patterns also carry the legend, belief and life experience of White Hmong, which is a precious national culture and witnesses the history of the nation. Therefore, it has an important inheritance value.

2. Inheritance

2.1 Inheritance of pattern skills

Through the investigation, it is found that the inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern production skills is mainly inherited by family hands, which is easy to lead to the loss and extinction of costume pattern inheritance. Due to the overall economic environment of White Hmong is relatively poor, the planting industry and handicraft industry are not developed, they often use

relatively old production techniques in clothing production, as shown in Figure 7, Figure 8 and Figure 9, the production of a complete clothing needs to start from raw materials, which also increases the difficulty of clothing production and inheritance. Therefore, if White Hmong wants to inherit costume pattern, it needs to establish various ways to inherit skills, such as handicraft workshop, digital communication, etc.



Figure 7 Twine unit



Figure 8 Spinning machine



Figure 9 Textile machine

Establish handicraft workshop to provide venues and equipment for craft production. Artists and artisans can teach the process of making patterns, convey the story behind the patterns, and attract interested

people to participate, which can promote the communication and dissemination of White Hmong costume pattern production, and innovate on the basis of the original experience. By inheriting traditional skills,

people not only convey the pattern itself, but also the values, beliefs, customs and other cultural elements related to the skills. The inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern skills is a form of information dissemination. The transmission of skills knowledge through different media (oral, practice, writing, etc.) is helpful to preserve and disseminate cultural information and ensure the continuation of skills.

Digital communication can bring wider publicity and more innovation opportunities. By recording, storing and transmitting key information of techniques through digital technology, we can prevent pattern techniques from being lost due to the influence of time and environment. The advantage of digital communication is that it is not limited by geographical location and can be widely spread through the Internet. People can easily obtain information, tutorials and resources related to skills through online platforms, social media and other channels. At the same time, the

integration of digital technology may lead to the integration of skills with modern design, art and other fields, promoting the development of traditional skills in contemporary society.

2.2 Pattern inheritors

According to the data of field survey, the main protectors have many problems in the process of White Hmong costume pattern production inheritors, for example, the inheritors are older and the inheritors do not know the pattern symbolic significance. Scholars related to Miao culture say that the study of White Hmong costume pattern in Laos has not been paid attention to by the academic circle, most of the focus is focused on the clothing of the Miao people in China, and geographical restrictions and capital costs are the main factors they consider. The following figure shows the protectors and inheritors of White Hmong clothing interviewed by the author, as shown in Figure 10, Figure 11 and Figure 12.



Figure 10 Left 1 and right 1,
museum staff



Figure 11 Left side 1, inheritor



Figure 12 inheritor

The above results also fully show that the inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern has a huge crisis. Therefore, training inheritors and government support is an important link of inheritance. Whether it is family inheritance or the cultivation of new inheritors, it is particularly important to pass on skills to future generations through oral tradition, practical demonstration and practical operation, which can not only

ensure the continuation of traditional pattern skills in production and connotation, but also inject fresh blood. Government financial support, establish protection projects. This can enable the inheritors to have the most basic financial guarantee, so as to take root in the production and innovation of pattern skills, and provide more opportunities and platforms for the development of the inheritors.

Conclusion and Discussion

The costume pattern of the White Hmong is a symbol system full of symbolic meanings. It constructs the ethnic group's cultural identity, social order and individual behavior pattern through the symbolic application of legends, beliefs and life experience. These patterns not only have aesthetic value, but also are an important way for White Hmong people to interact with the world, express themselves and inherit culture.

Symbolization of legend and belief. White Hmong myths and legends, especially stories about common ancestors and butterfly patterns, are important carriers of the group's history and culture. These legends have been passed from generation to generation by word of mouth, forming a strong cultural identity and collective

memory. From the perspective of symbolic interaction theory, these legends and beliefs are regarded by White Hmong members as symbols to explain the world, establish social order and strengthen ethnic cohesion. As a symbol in the legend, the butterfly pattern not only represents the protection of ancestors and the origin of the ethnic group, but also becomes a sign of cultural identity.

The symbolic application of life experience. White Hmong people incorporate wisdom and experience from life into costume patterns, such as the application of spiral patterns. This pattern may be derived from the observation of spiral shapes in nature, such as the growth mode of conches and plants, reflecting their symbolic understanding and application of objective things. Symbolic interaction theory holds that

individuals use symbols to understand and interpret the world around them. The White Hmong transform life experiences into visual symbols through patterns such as spiral patterns, which not only beautify their clothing, but also convey their understanding and reverence for the natural world.

Longing for a better life and symbolic expression. Flower patterns play an important role in the dress of the White Hmong, symbolizing beauty, prosperity and happiness. The choice and arrangement of this pattern reflects the White Hmong's yearning and pursuit for a better life. In the process of symbolic interaction, flower patterns have become symbols for White Hmong to express their life vision and emotions. By wearing these clothes with flower patterns, they not only show their aesthetic preferences, but also convey the cultural values and attitudes of the ethnic group to the outside world.

The dilemma of inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern is a typical case of communication, which reveals the challenges and dilemmas faced by traditional skills and culture in the process of modernization. In order to effectively address these challenges, it is necessary to explore new channels and modes of communication, strengthen education and training for cultural inheritance, and raise the awareness and

interest of the younger generation in traditional culture.

At present, the inheritance of White Hmong costume pattern has encountered difficulties. The first is the inheritance of skills, which are only passed down by hand and by word of mouth. Backward economy and industry make the skills of White Hmong costume pattern face huge difficulties in the inheritance. Backward production techniques and slow production speed all become huge problems restricting their inheritance. Secondly, there is the lack of inheritors. As a result of the aging and extinction trend of inheritors, White Hmong has no one to inherit the making skills of its patterns and even does not know the symbolic significance behind the patterns, which is very unfavorable to the spread and development of White Hmong culture.

As a cosmopolitan nation, the Miao nationality has contributed a lot to the development of world culture with its profound history and rich cultural heritage. Among them, Luang Prabang White Hmong dress, as a treasure of Miao culture, is not only an important part of Miao culture, but also a precious embodiment of the cultural diversity of the world. From the perspective of cultural diversity, we can see the uniqueness of Luang Prabang White Hmong costume pattern, which not only represents

the height of Miao costume pattern craftsmanship, but also an important symbol carrying Miao myths and legends, objective existence and life experience.

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