

The Traditional Culture and Contemporary Development of Southern Fujian from the Perspective of Jincang Embroidery

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Abstract: Jincang embroidery is a unique traditional embroidery craft in Quanzhou. Jincang embroidery has a rich cultural connotation and profound significance. It encompasses the history, folk customs, and artistic traditions of the Quanzhou area, showcasing people's pursuit of faith, protection, and a better life through the decoration of religious sacrifices and places. It also plays a vital role in the inheritance and development of cultural heritage. The preservation of Jincang embroidery not only involves the preservation of skills, but also the promotion of southern Fujian culture. By safeguarding and passing down this precious cultural heritage, we can gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the artistic traditions of the Quanzhou area, and further promote the development of traditional Chinese folk art. The unique features and cultural value of Jincang embroidery will continue to be cherished and perpetuated in contemporary times, contributing to the preservation and innovation of traditional culture.

Keywords: Jincang Embroidery; Artistic Characteristics; Cultural Connotation

1. Introduction

Jincang embroidery is a unique traditional embroidery craft that originated from the Quanzhou area in southern Fujian, China. In ancient times, because the pronunciation is the same as "green onion" and the shape of embroidery thread wrapped in gold foil is similar to a green onion, it is also called golden onion embroidery among the folk. Jincang embroidery mainly includes ground embroidery, such as cool umbrellas, building flags, dragon python table skirts (Lin Huadong, 2020). In addition, the embroidery is also used in costumes such as Gaoopera and Gezai opera, as well as in festive embroidery scenes. Understanding the development of Jincang embroidery and inheriting its superb skills is not only crucial for preserving and continuing the characteristic culture in southern Fujian, but also key for the inheritance and development of Chinese traditional folk art (Sun Hongtu, 2008).

However, with the process of global integration in the 21st century and the shift in production methods, many traditional crafts have lost their cultural foundation and suffered a significant impact. Jincang embroidery, with its long history and superb skills, is a characteristic technology of southern Fujian that should not be overlooked. At present, there is limited research on Jincang embroidery in academia. Apart from the occasional news reports on the non-genetic inheritors of Jincang embroidery, there are no academic articles available on this topic. For the skills of Jincang embroidery, it only stays at the level of amateur artists.

2. The development of cang embroidery

Quanzhou is located on the southeast coast of Fujian Province, which is considered the birthplace of southern Fujian culture. From the Han Dynasty to the Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties, there were numerous wars in the Central Plains. The clothing scholars chose to travel south to Quanzhou, bringing with them the culture and production technology of the Central Plains, including embroidery skills. The Tang Dynasty was a period of brilliant embroidery technology, and the social economy and culture of Quanzhou rose rapidly, providing fertile soil for the development of Jincang embroidery.

During the Song and Yuan dynasties, Quanzhou's Yitong Port reached its peak and became one of the four major ports in the world, showcasing a scene of prosperity. In particular, the trade of silk products promoted the combination of silk production and embroidery skills, forming the unique artistic characteristics of Quanzhou Cang embroidery ^[2] (Liu Denghan, 2003).

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Quanzhou's local opera experienced a diversified development trend. In 1949, the Quanzhou

municipal government organized the Art Workshop Embroidery Group to promote the development of Jincang embroidery and preserve its traditional skills. Over time, this group evolved into an embroidery workshop. This plays an important role in preserving and passing down the Jincang embroidery skills. In July 2021, Quanzhou successfully applied for inclusion in the World Heritage List and was designated as "Quanzhou: The World Marine Business Center of Song and Yuan China" on the list. As one of the traditional techniques, Jincang embroidery has ushered in a new era of historical development, making the precious heritage of southern Fujian culture even more magnificent and enduring.

3. The craft features of Jincang embroidery

3.1 Jincang embroidery craft characteristics

Gold embroidery is similar to the cluster gold embroidery of the Tang Dynasty more than one thousand years ago. There are various ways of treating silk thread, such as arranging silk thread or winding it in a unified direction. These treatment methods give the embroidery a "high relief" effect, highlighting the rich layers of the bottom cloth ^[4] (Zhangzhou Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center, 2009).

The expression form of golden and Jincang embroidery can be divided into flat embroidery and convex embroidery. Flat embroidery is on the plane silk fabric coiled knot pattern, and convex embroidery is to draw the pattern first, and then use fillers such as cotton superposition, and finally with gold, silver wire plate to produce the pattern. Common folk patterns such as "Huang Chaoshou", "Double dragon play beads", "Spring" and "Fu Lu Shou" ^[7] (Liu Yunjuan, Zhao Li, Jin Juanfeng, 2020), while the unique thematic brick carvings in southern Fujian architecture such as "Phoenix peony" and "lotus chi double carp" are often embroidered on the satin.

3.2 The color characteristics of golden and grey embroidery

Jincang embroidery is famous for its unique color characteristics, showing the unique artistic style of southern Fujian. In the Jincang embroidery works, the use of color is very rich, presenting a bright, dazzling effect.

First of all, gold and green embroidery prefers red, gold and black in the color choice. According to the local saying: "red happy, black generous, gold wealth" ^[8] (Guan Zichen, Wu Qiyun, 2021). Therefore, gold and grey embroidery often takes red as the background color, and makes exquisite patterns through gold thread embroidery, so that the work is full of festive and magnificent feeling.

Next, gold and green embroidery is good at contrast and collocation in the use of color. Gold embroidery often uses bright gold wire, forming a strong contrast with the red of the bottom cloth, making the pattern more eye-catching and prominent. In addition, gold embroidery is often inlaid with green or black silk on the edge of the pattern, making the pattern more clear and distinct, highlighting the three-dimensional and hierarchical sense of the pattern.

4. The cultural connotation of Jincang embroidery

4.1 Cultural inheritance of cang embroidery

As a unique traditional embroidery craft in Quanzhou, Jincang embroidery carries rich cultural connotation and embodies the history, folk customs and artistic tradition of Quanzhou area. It is not only an art form, but also an important part of southern Fujian culture.

Cultural foundation. Quanzhou Minnan culture is an important foundation for the inheritance of Jincang embroidery. Southern Fujian has been a prosperous area since ancient times, with rich cultural deposits and folk traditions. As a unique art form of Quanzhou in southern Fujian, Jincang embroidery is deeply rooted in the lives of local people. It carries people's pursuit of good luck, beauty and wealth, and represents the expression of folk beliefs and rituals.

The inheritance of Jincang embroidery cannot be separated from the protection and continuation of traditional crafts. Through word of mouth and inheritance, the skills of traditional golden embroidery can be preserved and developed. At the same time, the Quanzhou municipal government also realized the importance of Jincang embroidery as a traditional art, and organized the art workshop embroidery group and embroidery workshop, which provided a good environment and support for the inheritance of Jincang embroidery. These measures make Jincang embroidery continue to be inherited in contemporary, and gradually into modern life and artistic creation ^[9] (Hong-fuli, 2015).

4.2 The cultural significance of Jincang embroidery

Jincang embroidery is not only a traditional art form, but also has profound cultural significance, which reflects people's pursuit of a better life and cultural tradition.

Inheritance of cultural heritage. As an important part of the Chinese traditional folk art, the inheritance and development of Jincang embroidery is not only the inheritance of skills, but also the protection and inheritance of cultural heritage. The successful application of Jincang embroidery for World Heritage has made it a world-class cultural heritage with important historical and cultural value.

Through the inheritance and development of Jincang embroidery, it can not only inherit the treasures of southern Fujian culture, but also promote the development and inheritance of Chinese traditional folk art. The unique and cultural value of Jincang embroidery will continue to be valued and inherited in contemporary [6] (Tu kang, 2012).

5. Conclusion

As a unique traditional embroidery craft in Quanzhou, Jincang embroidery carries rich cultural connotation and profound cultural significance. Through the inheritance and artistic expression of Jincang embroidery, we can have a deep understanding of the long history, folk customs, unique cultural creation and artistic tradition of Quanzhou.

The existence and development of Jincang embroidery embodies people's love for art and the pursuit of creativity. With its unique embroidery techniques and exquisite handicrafts, it constantly innovates, presenting a three-dimensional and full of aesthetic feeling, highlighting the sense of hierarchy of the base map. The patterns of Jincang embroidery are mostly based on folk patterns, local architectural patterns and characters, showing the rich and colorful cultural elements in southern Fujian. By protecting and inheriting this precious cultural heritage, we can better understand and appreciate the artistic tradition of Quanzhou area, and pass it on to future generations, so that it will continue to shine. The unique and cultural value of Jincang embroidery will continue to be valued and inherited in contemporary times, and make contributions to the protection and innovation of traditional culture.

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