

## Analysis of Chinese Folk Art Features

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**Abstract.** Chinese folk arts features can reflect the psychological tendency, the way of thinking and value orientation of the Chinese nation. Chinese folk arts possess very strong generalizability which is particularly expressed in the way of spatial modeling. From the morphological feature, it can be judged that Chinese folk arts has possessed the overall awareness of comprehensively displaying our nation's psychological tendency and the way of thinking. Chinese folk arts has been considered as cultural products of China and this overall consciousness is one of the important cultural connotations of Chinese folk arts. This paper has made analysis of it from five aspects as follows: the great spatial feature of folk arts, continuous expansion of folk arts application area feature, aesthetic features of folk art, fragmented structure feature of folk arts and unique aesthetic value of folk arts.

### Introduction

Represented as ordinary people, folk art is one of the most important manifestations of ethnic art. Folk customs, ideology and aesthetic thinking have been fully embodied in folk arts. Although folk art comes from the folk, it has provided rich nutrition for the other art forms and thus become an important basis for the national culture. Therefore, folk culture containing folk art is just the basis of national culture. As a multinational country, China has a vast territory. There are differences of geographical environment and social customs and habits as those of different places, which has led to the civilization benchmark and unparalleled development between regions and nationalities. The reason that China folk arts has produced the phenomenon of multiple types and levels has not only generated humankind art's mystery of initial stage but also epic and extensive spirit of rising period and charm of mature period. China folk art is the most important part characteristic of national features and local spirit. Here, the author tries to make more deep research of some characteristics of the China folk arts and illustrate the important cultural connotation reserved in folk arts.

### The great spatial feature of folk arts

As people's own art form, Chinese folk art has been long rooted in the bottom of society with little interference from the upper culture or foreign culture. So-called nature worship, procreation worship and hero worship themes revealed in Chinese folk arts and mutual infiltration consciousness of part of products have consciously or unconsciously inherited the original philosophy or the original way of thinking. For example, from the Chinese folk art works, it is often able to see that amount of modelings and patterns are very similar with those of ancient times. Fish shape of northern Shanxi's paper-cutting can be confirmed by Renmian Yu Wen-Banpo painted pottery of more than 6000 years history; Folk frog pillow can search corresponding basis from the ancient myths and legends; Folk paper-cutting of Bai Fenglan of China Shanxi has the same name as 《Cattle Farming Map》 with stone relief of Han Dynasty; Embroidery of Miao nationality of Guizhou Taijiang has still retained primitive and mysterious atmosphere of "harmony of man with nature" and "unity of man and God". So it enjoys the reputation of "living fossil". Chinese primitive "harmony of man with nature" philosophy is just the spirit of the mutual coordination between human and nature and that is the most resolute affirmation of life. Folk art is just the most magnificent carol demonstrated by this philosophy.

## **Continuous expansion of folk arts application area feature**

In view of the continuous improvement and enthusiasm of development of cultural industry of all walks of society, the people's national consciousness and aesthetic ability have been greatly enhanced. Folk art has got brand-new developing chance and more extensive development space in China, especially reflected in the creation of environment, comic and animation, tourism and folk collection.

First, let us talk about the aspect of environment creation. It involves a lot of areas such as square, streets, bridges and public buildings. As city squares, there are more and more sculptures embodied in ancient mythology figures, folklore, local customs and practices. For instance, Pan Gu, Hou Yi, Xiang Yu, mermaid and rooster are more acceptable to the masses than those abstract fiberglass or stainless steel sculptures with confusing meaning and images. For the bridge, it is common to use a mythical animal or the auspicious pattern which are the conventional subjects in arts and crafts such as dragon, phoenix, crane, fish pattern, Babao pattern and Pan-Chang pattern. They are often greatly applied in the plate, railing, deck of a bridge and both sides of bridge abutment. For indoor decoration, no matter in public buildings such as hotels, restaurants and tea houses or in bedrooms of ordinary civil houses, there will have wide use of arts and crafts such as paper-cutting, Chinese node, New Year paintings, stone carving, jade carving and antique furnitures. Then they will create the simple and elegant cultural environment, fatherly express the national style and tone.

Second, let us talk about the development of animation industry. Folk arts with Chinese distinctive features and wellknown traditional subjects have become very important objects. For example, the paper-cut film and shadow play of Chinese animation works have offered excellent templates for the innovation of folk arts. The Chinese people are very familiar with "The Monkey Creates Havoc in Heaven", "Prince Nezha's Triumph Against Dragon King" and "The Calabash Brothers" and these myths and legends, folk fables can be used as our country's important animation materials which will gradually get the universal love. At present, Chinese folk art is still on the stage of exploration and development in the animation development. It has a very broad prospect for development. Except the paper-cutting, shadow play and painting, other folk arts have further expansion in the process of the animation industrial development, such as hand pinch clay, New Year paintings, portraits, wood carving, stone carving and etc.. Because of very distinctive national characteristics and local flavor, it is very conducive to participate in the international competition environment of animation industry.

Third, let us talk about the development of tourism industry. Our folk art has become a new bright spot in the development process of the construction of scenic spots and tourist products, and it has formed the main body of the folk custom tourism in China. For the construction of scenic spots and attractions, cultural streets, ancient streets or folk art museums which are commonly seen in all over the country are in need of folk art. For instance, in cultural streets of Jiangsu Zhouzhuang, there are amount of embroidery, musical instruments and toys to be sold; in the ancient streets of Nanjing Gaochun, there are a large number of exquisite wood carvings and brick works to be sold. In the folk art museum of all scenic spots, people mainly display treasures like brick carving, stone carving, carved bed, clay figure and etc.. As the products of the project, participatory folk art activities are usually welcomed by tourists. From the small paper-cutting and weaving to huge pottery and porcelain, they are all shown by craftsmen and technicians on-site teaching. In this process, visitors can fully obtain the sense of satisfaction of art experience such as tour souvenir products supplied by pottery bar of Jiangsu Yixing, professional workshops of bricks in Zhouzhuang. Products like jade pendants, ceramics, wood toys and blue printed cloth can also be taken as special consumption-type products with memorial influence.

## **Aesthetic features of folk art**

For a long time, under the condition of Chinese original ecology, folk art has maintained comprehensive practical and aesthetic features which has very strong utilitarian features. They are not only directly manifested as the material and practical characteristics, but also have penetrated into the aesthetic mechanism, which displays in visual form and be an alternative to meet the practical

need. This has shown that folk art is different from pure aesthetic form in the aspect of original ecology and this special nature is its spiritual utilitarian feature. By the shaping of idealized vision image, it can let the subject feel like in the aesthetic imagination and be illustrated as the utilitarian intention controlled by the reality. Then we could be able to productively digest the psychological anxiety of social practice. In the development of industrial civilization, the practical and aesthetic value structure of Chinese folk art, which have been holding since ancient times, have appeared the trend of collapse. No matter the material utilitarianism related with traditional production and living method or the spiritual utilitarianism related with traditional beliefs, they both have lost corresponding efficiency under the new historical conditions. Material benefits caused by industrial civilization let those who originally rely mostly on vicarious satisfaction to cope with the masses, so as to find or have a powerful way of material existence. The corresponding change of our folk art has been shown by the way of functional aestheticism. Transformed forms of folk arts can realize the transformation of the value and thus get the power of sustainable development. However, because of the continuous shrinking or even disappearance of utilitarian value, we have lost amount of corresponding aesthetic content. In the progress of function-oriented aesthetic trend, part of aesthetic trends have changed from spiritual utilitarianism to material original ecology and the transformation of value has become more and more naturally and smoothly. Of course it is more favored by people of modern times. It is the most obvious for the New Year paintings, paper-cutting, embroidery, knitting, toys and colored lanterns of China's folks. The decorative and aesthetic features they possessing have now been greatly strengthened and purified. The aesthetic value orientation with historical sense and national color has formed the unique charm of art goods. The increasing added commercial value not only has activated part of the individual workshops but also launched a lot of intensification, specialization of production.

### **Fragmented structure feature of folk arts**

The main ideas of the influence and control of folk art activities of pre-industrial era are the unification of collective and individual awareness. As the collective consciousness carried out by the traditional forces, it has continuous influence on folk arts in the long-term historical development process. It has not only penetrated from subject to object through the realistic situation and let psychological projection now cover the historical and collective components, but also made use of subjective history combine with objective in the long-term social practice. Symbolic mental factors and corresponding symbolic forms have come together to construct household collective contract. On the basis of that, creative forms of folk arts are actually sharing the same set of artistic language. Although differences of each individual's wording and phrasing have led to changes of literary grace of folk arts, its semantic structure has deeply run through a context pulse from ancient times till now. The systematic spiritual chain of social significance will be able to form a organic system of collective consciousness with the combination of social individual's colorful creativities and various important components so as to inherently standardize the general formula composed of folk art images. At the same time, it has provided ample evidences for people's reading and evaluating. As the main performances of social cultural changes, the trend of change existing habits and customs have been more and more intensified in recent years. Under this situation, the existing system of social significance has shown continuous disintegration and collapse because of carrier's lost and the maintaining power no longer exists. Individualism strongly encouraged by the modern consciousness has taken advantage and put the personal point of view of non collective consciousness into the deep place of our country's folk art's original ecological semantic structure so as to dissolve the spiritual strength of uniform elements. The resulting transformation is mainly shown by fragmented structure. Molding structure of transformation is showing a separable or piece-together like form with the lack of the sense of continuity and integrity running through it all the time.

## **Unique aesthetic value of folk arts**

Folk art in China is a kind of cultural form which has been produced by the communication and convergence of the people of all ethnic groups all over the country. The art exists in the masses. Because it is spontaneous and amateur in creation, it has possessed technical simplicity and innocence and also functional entertainment and practical use. All these have been decided by people's sincere and authentic cultural temperament so they are able to show the undecorated characteristics. Chinese folk art is so touching because it is mainly from its aesthetic quality and personality characteristics are embodied by a special form which is just the aesthetic form of people's personality. The deep and powerful, strong and confident, honest and hardworking characteristics of Chinese people are just like the strong vitality of the irresistible tide of the Yellow River or the Yangtze River. All these can be better displayed in the folk art.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, Chinese folk art is a magnificent and grand cultural collection and it has the connotation of psychology, anthropology, cult-urology and folklore by the way of humankind's natural power with the record of various symbols. Therefore,our country's folk art has not only the unique value but also a modern approach for people of modern times to explore Chinese culture and even humankind cultural nature.Chinese folk art will not stop just because of the end of the feudal society and it will exist for a long time as an amateur art form different from the professional one.Due to the development of China's history, the folk art activities have begun to be solidified in the folk festivals. Folk art which appeared in China's rural economy has formed a new aesthetic feature and regulated performance and innovation of our folk art so that Chinese folk art has the new sublimation.

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