

Psychological Interpretation of Functional Changes of Yao Nationality clothing in Northern Guangdong

Xiaoping Hu
School of Design
South China University of Technology
Guangzhou, China

Xiaohan Zhou
School of Design
South China University of Technology
Guangzhou, China

Delai Men*
School of Design
South China University of Technology
Guangzhou, China
(Corresponding Author)

Abstract—This paper discusses on the necessity of functional changes of Yao nationality clothing in northern Guangdong province based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory in psychology. The research methods of literature review and field investigation were used to carry out in the study, and finally proposed these functional changes via sorting out and analyzing the relevant characteristics from a perspective of development of Yao's clothing. The results provide a unique view for the Yao's clothing related research in northern Guangdong as reference.

Keywords—Yao nationality clothing; northern Guangdong; functional changes; Psychology; Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the data of the Chinese Yao Museum in 2018, there were 276,000 Yao people in Guangdong Province, including "Pai Yao" and "Guoshan Yao". Scholars' research on Yao nationality is mostly based on historical culture and education at present. The research related to clothing tends to discuss the aesthetic features, embroidery technology or application in modern clothing, and there are few studies involving the function and psychology of Yao costumes. Therefore, this paper takes the development stages of Yao costumes in northern Guangdong as the starting point, and makes a further interpretation of costume characteristics from the point of view of functional change of Clothing and the psychological needs of Yao people.

II. CLOTHING CHARACTERISTICS OF YAO NATIONALITY IN NORTHERN GUANGDONG

Clothing of Yao nationality in northern Guangdong includes headscarves, headgear, upper garment, trousers, belts, leg wrappings and other accessories. Clothing styles and accessories vary from region to region.

A. Headdress

In traditional costumes matching, Pai Yao men have long

hair, wearing red kerchiefs decorated with feathers (Fig.1, Fig.2). Women wear kerchiefs or caps, and they wear embroidered crowns when dressing up (Fig.3). Unmarried women do not wear kerchiefs. Guoshan Yao men in Liannan usually wear black kerchiefs with embroidered patterns at both ends. Girls wear embroidered caps while women wear Pointed hats [1] (Fig.4). Guoshan Yao men in Ruyuan usually wear white kerchiefs, which are embroidered with a square pattern in the middle and decorate patterns at both ends. Unmarried women wear flat caps and married women wear triangular high caps.

B. Upper Garments

Most of upper garments of Pai Yao in Liannan are collarless and buttonless, but some have embroidered collars, and most of unmarried women wear white belts. The placket of upper garments of Guoshan Yao men in Liannan has buttonholes, which are embroidered with white silk thread, and nails beads as buttons [1] (Fig.5). Women wear loose black upper garments with embroidered patterns at the placket. Guoshan Yao men in Ruyuan mostly wear Tang clothes with stand collars and square patterns embroidered on the front and back (Fig.6). Upper garments of women are usually blue, buttons are placed on the right. And the women usually wear long aprons, the back of the upper garments and the center of the aprons are embroidered with square patterns (Fig.7).

C. Lower Garments

Paiyao men wear loose trousers, women wear straight skirts or pleated skirts. Both men and women of Guoshan Yao in Liannan prefer to wear embroidered aprons and belts, and usually wear black and white embroidered leg wrappings. People of Guoshan Yao in Ruyuan usually wear white embroidered leg wrappings, women wear short skirts, long aprons and belts, no trousers.

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Fig.1 Men's Headdress of
Pai Yao in Liannan
(Embroidery Workshop of Deng)



Fig.2 Men's Headdress of
Pai Yao in Liannan
(The Millennial Yao village)

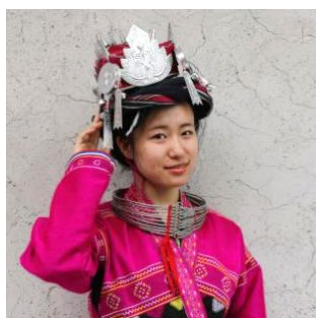


Fig.3 Women's Headdress
of Pai Yao in Liannan
(Embroidery Workshop of Deng)

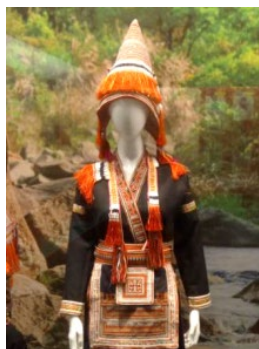


Fig.4 Guoshan Yao in Liannan
(Chinese Yao Museum)



Fig.5 Guoshan Yao in Liannan
(Chinese Yao Museum)



Fig.6 Guoshan Yao in Ruyuan
(World Museum of Guoshan Yao)

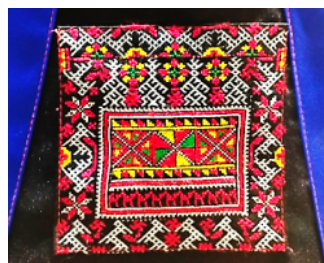


Fig.7 Square pattern of apron
(World Museum of Guoshan Yao)

III. FUNCTIONAL CHANGES OF YAO NATIONALITY CLOTHING IN NORTHERN GUANGDONG

The functional characteristics of clothing are mainly embodied in five parts: protective function, adaptive function, recognizable function, decorative function and symbolic function. And there are different emphasis on function at different stages of development of clothing, but the functions of each stage are not independent. In the development of Yao costumes in northern Guangdong, the recognizable, decorative and symbolic functions are more prominent.

A. The Origin Stage of Clothing

At present, most academics believe that the Yao nationality originated from barbarian in Changsha, Wuling or Wuxi.[2] Some scholars believe that the the Yao people moved to northern Guangdong during the Sui and Tang Dynasties, while others believe that the ancestors of the Yao people lived in Guangdong during the Qin and Han Dynasties.[3] However, whenever the Yao nationality appeared in northern Guangdong, their clothing was initially formed in order to avoid body damage from external environment and implement the protective function.

B. Preliminary Formation Stage of Characteristics

The characteristics of branches of Yao nationality have been gradually clearly during the Sui and Tang Dynasties. Because the ancestors of the Yao nationality have been in the process of continuous migration for a long time, their living conditions are arduous. They have no savings, despising life , and they are aggressive [4], spinning with wood bark, dyeing with grass, leaves or plant fruits [5]. In the process of adapting to the environment, they have formed a unique style of dress, which is rough clothing with colorful embroidery patterns [6].

Thus it can be seen that the development of clothing needs to conform to the natural environment. The climate in the mountainous areas of northern Guangdong is hot and humid all the year round. Therefore, the wear of Yao nationality in north Guangdong does not play a prominent role in keeping out the cold, clothing style of Yao people is simple, they need to develop decorative function if they want to form own style. Yao women abstracted objects in nature and created a series of embroidery patterns with Yao characteristics, which developed and changed in each branch of Yao nationality. They embroidered those exquisite patterns on clothes, which made national characteristics more obvious and also embodied the recognizable function of the clothing.

C. Development and Maturity Stage

In the Song Dynasty, aesthetic played a vital role in Yao costumes, by the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the regional style was more obvious [7].In the process of development, the clothing has made difference and gradually matured in different branches of Yao nationality in northern Guangdong province. *County Chronicle of Lianshan* records: Yao people comb their hair into cones and walk barefoot...people of Pai Yao wear square kerchiefs and white pads of caps...people of Jian Yao wear long hairpins on their hair buns [4]. The combed conical hair and bare feet are the characteristics of the whole Yao nationality, square kerchiefs, white pads of caps and long

hairpins are the results of regional differentiation.

At this stage, recognizable function and decorative function of Yao clothing and are more prominent. For example, Pai Yao married women wear headgear or embroidered crowns, unmarried women wear flowers or feathers in their hair; Guoshan Yao married women in Liannan wear Pointed caps, while unmarried women wear embroidered caps and so on. However, no matter how the style of costumes develops and changes, the "gene" of Yao clothing in northern Guangdong is deeply engraved in it, and the symbolic function can not be ignored.

D. Recession Stage

The long-standing closed state of Yao nationality in northern Guangdong has been gradually broken under the strong impact of the modernization process, most of the Yao people begin step into modern society to seek new opportunities. But the recognizable function of clothing means that wearing the ethnic clothing will show the national characteristics, so the Yao people no longer wear Yao clothing in order to be able to integrate into the new environment. Yao clothing in northern Guangdong are only worn by a few people, so it is difficult to inherit the traditional crafts. At present, the clothing styles of the Yao nationality in northern Guangdong are gradually simplified, and the ornaments are also seldom worn. Yao people only wear traditional costumes in grand national festivals or important activities.

IV. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Clothing is an effective way for people to show their social culture, embodying the history of a nation [8], conveying the psychological characteristics from one to the other, and implying the changing process and social facts of an ethnic group [9]. The clothing characteristics of the Yao nationality in northern Guangdong are the result of the functional and psychological needs of the Yao people in different stages of development, which can reflect the changes in psychological needs of the Yao people in northern Guangdong.

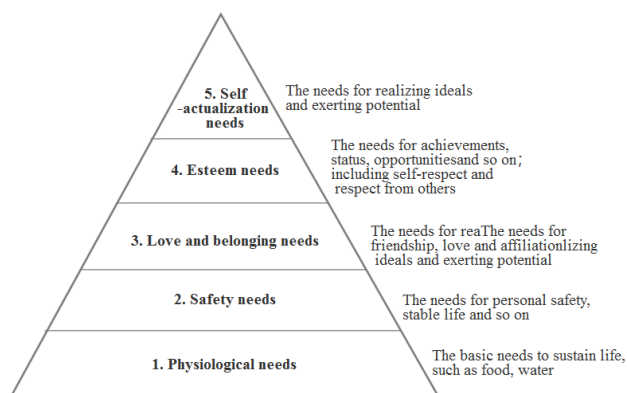


Fig.8 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Abraham H. Maslow, 1943)

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory divides human basic psychological needs into five parts, from the low level to the

high level are: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs [10] (Fig.8). In the process of the development of Yao costume in northern Guangdong, the function changes with people's psychological needs (TABLE I.).

A. Physiological and Safety Needs

At the origin stage of costumes, the ancestors of Yao nationality only seek basic physiological needs and safety needs due to the limitation of living environment. Therefore, the people focused on the protective function of clothing when it first came into being, which can be seen from the clothing characteristics of Yao people in northern Guangdong.

For example, Yao people in northern Guangdong often wear kerchiefs, which not only stabilize their hair buns, but also avoid direct sunlight. In addition, the mountains are full of thorns, this method can also protect the head from being injured. The sharp corners of caps are mostly for self-defense, so as to escape from the wild animals in the mountains.

In addition, due to the hot and humid climate in the mountainous of northern Guangdong, the temperature difference between day and night is small, and there is no obvious change in four seasons, the clothing is more focused on heat dissipation. Therefore, most of the costumes are collarless and buttonless, which are easy to wear and take off quickly. And Yao ancestors wore leg wrappings in order to avoid mosquito bites, wood and stone scratches, as well as to isolate moisture.

The barefoot custom of the Yao ancestors in northern Guangdong is convenient for people to work and travel. There are many descriptions related to bare feet of Yao people in ancient books: Yao people brand feet of toddlers with burnt iron, then there will be a thick layer of cocoon on their feet, and they can walk easily even on thorns [4] and so on. With the development of the times, the Yao people have almost abandoned the barefoot custom.

TABLE I. FUNCTIONAL CHANGES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS LEVEL OF YAO CLOTHING IN NORTHERN GUANGDONG

The Development Stages of Yao Nationality in North Guangdong	Functional Changes	Psychological Demand (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory)
1. The Origin Stage of Clothing	Protective function	Physiological needs, Safety needs
2. Preliminary Formation Stage of Characteristics	Adaptive, Recognizable, Decorative function	Safety needs, Love and belonging needs
3. Development and Maturity Stage	Recognizable, Decorative, Symbolic function	Esteem needs and Self-actualization needs
4. Recession stage	Recognizable function	Love and belonging needs

B. Love and Belonging Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory points out that people will begin to seek the needs of the next higher stage when their psychological needs are met at a low level. In the first stage, the generation of Yao costumes is mainly to avoid the bodies of the dressers being harmed by the external environment. The basic physiological needs are met, and then the Yao people will begin to pursue higher levels of demand.

The Yao people in northern Guangdong province have difficult living conditions, they are eager to stay away from suffering and seek a sense of security. Therefore, they create common characteristics through clothing, which gradually become a unique symbol of Yao nationality, and play the role of "clan insignia", strangers can also identify their ethnic groups by the clothing characteristics. The culture of mutual identity between groups connects these independent individuals into a spiritually connected group when the Yao people in northern Guangdong wear ethnic costumes, then they will have a sense of security and belonging from the group, which is the demand for belonging and love in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. However, in order to integrate into the new social circle, the Yao people living in modern cities need to abandon the costumes with national characteristics and choose the costumes recognized by popular culture.

C. Esteem Needs

The common characteristics of costumes and customs can bring a certain sense of belonging to the Yao people, but can not satisfy the deeper psychological needs of the clan. They also need to shape an object of worship in the spiritual realm to reinforce the sense of belonging, which helps to make the advantages of their nation more prominent, and win the respect of other nationalities and themselves. Therefore, the ancestors of the Yao nationality created the image of Panhu, a colorful dragon dog, and gave it great merits. They rationalized dog worship through myths and legends and combined Panhu legend with costumes characteristics.

According to legend, Panhu is a five-colored dragon dog, who wears a kerchief and leg wrapping after becoming a human, those descriptions all conform to the characteristics of Yao costumes. The emergence of the image of Panhu made the psychological national identity of Yao people clearer, and the privileges Panhu won for the Yao people made their national pride stronger. In the process of forming the characteristics of Yao costumes, patterns of seal of King Pan also came into being and developed. Although the patterns of various branches of the Yao nationality in northern Guangdong are different, the overall style is unified. Today, patterns of seal of King Pan has become the most striking symbol of Yao nationality.

D. Self-actualization Needs

Yao people in northern Guangdong province, living in the mountains, have few ways of entertainment, and the females are more limited. But it is easier to get respect and praise from others by focusing on clothing. Males who wear well-made

clothes are easily respected and admired by others, and females can also find the meaning of strengthening self-existence by making exquisite clothes. The production process of the costumes includes pattern creation, color matching, and a series of craft processes such as weaving, printing and embroidery. When these processes are completed, a satisfactory clothing work is produced and can be noticed and praised by others, the heart of the maker will be greatly satisfied and the self-perception will be stronger. The Yao females of different branches in northern Guangdong province have realized self-worth through their superb embroidery skills and rich imagination, which means that the level of psychological needs has been sublimated to the self-fulfillment needs.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper analyses the function of clothing of Yao nationality in northern Guangdong through describing the clothing characteristics in different development stages, and analyses the reasons for functional changes of Yao nationality clothing with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. It is found that the characteristics of Yao costumes in northern Guangdong can reflect the psychological needs of the people, and reveal the potential relationship among the characteristics, functions of Yao costumes in northern Guangdong and the mental state of the people, which can provide relevant reference for the related research of Yao culture in the future. At the same time, the discoveries also play enlightening roles in the creation of Yao related works, and are conducive to the inheritance and development of Yao traditional culture in northern Guangdong.

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