

Cultural Study of Miao People's "Buffalo-fight"*

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Abstract—Using ethnographic research, field investigation, personal participation and logical analysis, the author studies the inheritance context of the emergence of the Buffalo-fight of Miao "Hanshan Festival" in Yunnan Wenshan area. The study found that the context of the Miao Buffalo-fight manifested as the image of the Miao people's ancestral spirit, agricultural imagery, and reproductive imagery. Buffalo-fight is not only a way of ritual or entertainment in Miao people's festivals, Buffalo-fight is a tool of expression. Through the Buffalo-fight, the Miao nationality temperament and social characteristics can be constructed and discovered.

Keywords—*Buffalo-fight; mapping; culture*

I. INTRODUCTION

China's Buffalo-fight has a long history and culture. It can be traced back to the primitive society and developed in the slave society. Because in these two social stages, human social productivity is very low and scientific knowledge is extremely poor. Primitive religious concepts such as totem worship and nature worship are common. Buffalo is a product of nature, and it is also one of nature's creatures. Under the control of primitive religious concepts, it is a natural rule to treat Buffalos as god. The Miao people's Buffalo worship is more prominent and more characteristic than other ethnic groups. The Buffalo culture runs through all aspects of Miao people's social life and has a major impact on Miao people's religion, philosophy and psychology. Studying the local Miao Buffalo-fight culture has important significance for the inheritance and innovation of national culture.

Located in the southeastern of Yunnan Province, Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture and Honghe Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture are the main settlements of the Miao nationality in Yunnan. Among which there are 4 counties have more than 50,000 people: Guangnan, Jinping, Pingbian and Maguan. Cai hua shan is the most important festival of the Miao compatriots, it is held on the third day of the first month of the year, Cai hua shan has plenty festival activities and Buffalo-fight is one of them. The Miao people's "Cai hua shan" Buffalo-fight is a ritualized activity adopted in order to commemorate Miao people's ancestor "Chiyou" so that to promote the spirit of the Miao people's unity and the belief of building a beautiful home. Miao people's Buffalo-fight activities not only can be said as the living fossil of the history of Miao people, but also the concentrated expression of Miao people's lifestyle. Since ancient times, Miao people have

continued the folklore of Buffalo-fight, what kind of culture does the Buffalo-fight has projected, this article has elaborated on this issue.

II. THE EMERGENCE OF MIAO BUFFALO-FIGHT

A. Ancestor Spirit Imagery of the Buffalo-fight

Miao people's Buffalo worship is related to its ancestor Chiyou. "Shan Hai Jing. Dongshan Jing" records: "Taishan ... has beast there, its shape is like a Buffalo, it has a white head, one eye and a snake tail, the world will suffer epidemic disease once it has been seen. [1] "Shan Hai Jing. Zhongshan Jing" records: "The mountain in Huaijiang... has a god, it is like a Buffalo, and it has eight feet, two heads and horsetail, the country will suffer from wars once it has been seen. [2] "Long Yu He Tu" said: "Before the Emperor regent, Chiyou has 81 brothers, they speak human language but with animal bodies, they have copper head and iron forehead, they hold huge knives and crossbows and threaten the world, they killing bad people and show no mercy [3]. The existing "Song of Huashan Origin" has the content: "Miao people live on the Yellow River Dam, the king of Miao is Meng Ziyou. It's true that his leadership is really good, everyone's life is happy. I don't know what kind of flower mountain... The patriarch's heart is full of sorrow, tears flow quietly, carrying a big knife up to the mountain, cutting down the maple tree and insert it into the dam, and then tell the story to the Miao people that this Miao people's Cai Hua Shan". [4] The priest said at the Huashan Festival when he worshipped the flower pole: "Today is an auspicious day, Ziyou is our ancestor, and the Yangtze River is our source. For thousands of years of migration, we lived in the south, worshiped the Miao ancestors, Ziyou (Chiyou), and offered the Miao people's ancestors, letting them protect us to be safe and have a good harvest every year, let them protect us to have prosperous population, and their careers are successful" [5][6][7]. According to the Buffalo-fight, Miao compatriots formed a "Buffalo-fight" game, that is, the Miao adults or children go against each other with a round wood with a horn in the slack season. The intrinsic expression of the game is to show the strength, power, and bravery of the Miao man, thus extending the legacy of the ancestors. At the same time, it is also an expression of love, that is, only the strong man can have love. This shows that the Miao Buffalo-fight has its profound cultural heritage.

From the above, the Miao people in the Wenshan and Honghe areas incorporate Buffalo-fight into the form of religious culture, use the Buffalo to identify the ancestor Chiyou, so in the minds of the Miao compatriots, Buffalo is a

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symbol of hero, and use the Buffalo as decoration is to cherish their ancestor Chiyou. The traditional aesthetic of the Miao nationality is strong, full and powerful, and the strong physique of the Buffalo is a symbol of strength and life, which is in line with Miao people's aesthetic standards. As a kind of national activity, Buffalo-fight has always existed in the Miao festivals. That is to say, Buffalo-fight is not only an external symbol of the culture of Miao people, but a spiritual symbol that always last in the hearts of Miao people.

B. Agricultural Imagery of Buffalo-fight

Miao people's Buffalo-fight is greatly related with agricultural activities. The Miao nationality is a farming nation. In history, the ancestors of the Miao nationality used glutinous rice as the basis, and invented Buffalo, planted rice, glutinous rice, millet and many other crops, and the agriculture has achieved unprecedented development. They love buffalo, consider cull as a mascot, they wear horns for prosper, why the Miao people invented Buffalo-fight, and even Buffalo-fight has become the biggest entertainment activity. It is said that when the Miao was defeated in the north and had to migrate, many belongings that Miao people could not take during the migration, so they only brought three valuables: rice, buffalo and reed. With these three items as the basis, the Miao developed a developed and systematic farming culture, Buffalo culture and reed dance culture in the later social development process. Every New Year or the winter solstice, they treat the Buffalo as a "god" and "dragon" to worship, they feed the Buffalo with rice and melon in order to thank the Buffalo for their contribution to the development of the Miao nationality. It can be seen that Buffalo has occupied an important position in the social production and life of the Miao people. "Tai Ping Guang Ji" volume seventy-eight quotes "Shi Han Shen Wu": "The big footprint appeared in Lei Ze Lake, Huaxu stepped on it and later gave birth of the Fuxi." [8] The Chiyou people once believed in the dragon, because the Yellow Emperor killed the dragon and defeated the Chiyou people, after the defeat, the dragon has become Buffalo. That is to say, the Buffalo worship of the Miao nationality is the dragon worship, dragon is the Buffalo, and the Buffalo is the dragon. Therefore, the dragon god bless the weather is smooth, the grain is harvested, that is, the Buffalo bless the good weather and harvest. The Buffalo and the Miao nationality's farming and cultural activities are adapted to each other. As a cultural form, they are integrated into the life of the Miao people, and they have been well inherited and developed in the long history.

C. The Reproductive Worship Imagery of Buffalo-fight

The endless life is the core spirit of the Chinese nation's tradition. The core of the Miao people's reproductive worship is life consciousness. The so-called reproductive worship is a kind of praise and yearning for the reproductive ability of the biological world [9]. The reproductive intention of the Miao Buffalo-fight is embodied in the male genital function like a Buffalo. To this end, they can be "multiple birth" and "eugenic". Only when there are many offspring, and their children and grandchildren are as strong as Buffalo, so that the clan could grow, develop and prosper. [10] In the "Gu She Ji" of the Miao nationality, the Miao people held the genital worship of men and women as the climax of the sacrifice. In some places, woodcuts are used to create male and female

genital, many men have genitals on their backs and chase each other, they called it "chasing women." [11] Miao people believed that Buffalo is their ancestor, and the Miao people were the reincarnation of their ancestors. That is to say, after the Buffalo dead, it will reincarnate into human. This is their life and death logic. Therefore, the Miao "Gu She Ji" and "The Buffalo Sacrifice" are very picky, it is necessary to pick a buffalo with good hair to sacrifice. Then the ancestors will be happy and will send hundreds of children and grandchildren. It can be seen that the specific behavior of Miao people's Buffalo-fight reproductive worship is the worship of Buffalo reproductive organs. It is hoped that the male reproductive ability can be as mighty as a Buffalo. The core of it is the prominent of life consciousness, which is an expression of the pursuit of happiness and career prosperity of the Miao people. .

III. THE FIGHT OF BUFFALO

The fight of Buffalo includes the process of preparation, starting the fight, fighting orgasm, from the fighting against the owner of the Buffalo, the onlookers and the two Buffaloes, we can see the heartfelt emotional input of the Buffalo owner, the cheers and frustrations of the onlookers, and the bloody killing of the Buffaloes.

A. Preparation

When carrying out the Buffalo-fight competition, the first thing is to have aggressive and capable Buffalo. The Miao compatriots are also very particular about the Buffalo selection. They mainly consist of Buffalo selection, Buffalo purchase and Buffalo welcome.

1) *Buffalo selection:* In the farming society, Miao people use Buffalo as the main labor force, and domestication of Buffalo is a product of the development of productivity to a certain extent. Proficient in Buffalo selection is also a farming need. The good or bad of a Buffalo represents the strength of its family productivity. Therefore, the Miao people are very particular about Buffalo selection. The basic conditions for selecting Buffalo are: first, the Buffalo should be male, then the Buffalo should be strong, and the last is it should be aggressive. The skills of Buffalo selection in the Miao folks are generally secret. The Miao nationality is an ancient farming nation, it has accumulated rich experience in selecting Buffalo during historical production and life. At the same time, it proves from the side that the Miao people and the Buffalo have deep and rich emotions.

2) *Buffalo purchase:* If you want to purchase fight Buffaloes even the one who fight very hard, normally you have to go some place very far away and visit many villages. When buying Buffalo, the buyer may be individuals to pay for the Buffalo, and also may be partners to make contribution for buying Buffalo. It is also necessary to depends on the price of the Buffalo and the relationship between the buyers.

3) *Buffalo welcome:* Miao people believe that it is a big joy to buy a Buffalo that can fight and good at it, they hope the Buffaloes that they purchased can bring good luck to the whole village and themselves, this Buffalo carries the hope of the whole village. The Buffalo has not yet entered the village,

the waiting villagers on the roadside already fired the welcome firecrackers, if the Buffalo is a collective purchase of the whole village, the old man who specializes in the sacrifice in the village would go to welcome the Buffalo and toast to the person who brought the Buffalo. Then everyone gathered and sang hymns and sent the Buffalo to the specially lair. At this time, special people were arranged to feed it and non-feeding people were generally not allowed to be close to the Buffalo lair and also they were not allowed to be close to the Buffalo. If it is a Buffalo-fighter bought by an individual, mainly the buyer's friends and relatives would come to welcome the Buffalo and fire the firecrackers, and he will raise it himself.

B. Buffalo-fight

The Buffalo-fight of the Miao Huashan Festival refers to the activity in which people let the two buffaloes fight against each other to compete for the victory, it held for three days from the fourth day to the seventh day of the first month of each year. Before the Buffalo-fight began, the middlemen recommended by each villages ran between the Buffalo owners to understand the length, height, age, weight, and growth of the horn, etc. [12] after the owner agreed to participate in the Buffalo-fight, then press the knockout match.,it is required to sort and use the sorting method to decide who fights with whom. Individuals sign up their names at the registration place and participate freely. Before the fight, you need to understand the rules of the Buffalo-fight and voluntarily sign up. If the Buffalo has an accident in the Buffalo-fight, you need to be responsible for it. Then, they participate in the competition order, when the job is all ready, the host announces that the Buffalo-fight begins. At the same time, the Buffalo-fight Department was set up at the Huashan Festival, in addition to the schedule of the Buffalo-fight competition, the Buffalo-fight Department also has the function of mediating the contradictions of the Buffalo-fight.

IV. CULTURAL MAPPING OF MIAO PEOPLE'S BUFFALO-FIGHT

A. General Cultural Mapping of Miao People's Buffalo-fight

From the general characteristics of Buffalo-fight, Buffalo-fight is a kind of sacrificial activity of the Miao people's commemoration of the ancestors, or it is the production and life reaction of an ancient farming nation, or it is the reproductive worship of Miao people. Buffalo-fight is just an animal sport activity that comes out of their ritual or entertainment needs.

Judging from the ancestor worship of the Buffalo-fight, the Buffalo is deified and personalized. According to the concept of the Miao people's original thinking, which partial is equivalent to the whole, so "people = Buffalo = ancestor". Buffalo-fight is a representative activity to commemorate the ancestors. This activity is used to educate the descendants of the Miao people to be a united nation, and to be brave and responsible person.

Judging from the agricultural imagery of Buffalo-fight, Miao nationality is one of the earliest ethnic groups engaged in farming life. From primitive society to farming society, the

Buffalo has a great influence on the production and life of the Miao nationality, they believe that buffalo is not only their productivity, buffalo also has divinity, and the Buffalo-fight related to the harvest of next year. Therefore, Buffalo-fight has a strong agricultural color and religious color.

The reproductive consciousness of the Miao Buffalo-fight stems from the core consciousness of human reproduction, that is, endless life. In tribal societies with low productivity, the Miao compatriots must face multiple tests of nature and war, so the reproduction of population is particularly important. In the Buffalo-fight, the genital organs of the Buffalo are exposed, Miao people believes that the power source comes from the reproductive organs of the Buffalo, thus creating worship and praise for the Buffalo. They believe that the "root" of the Miao man can have strong offspring only as strong as a Buffalo.

B. Deep Mapping of Buffalo-fight Culture

The Miao Buffalo-fight was treated as a culture which will show one of its characteristics and also treat it as the most obvious alternative such like ritual or entertainment will make the features becomes obscure, so it is the purpose of pursuing knowledge with emotions. Buffalo-fight uses emotional action to express an excitement of adventure, despair of failure, joy of victory. But itself that enables society to be built, and individual emotions to be gathered. For the Wenshan Miao compatriots, it is an emotional education to appear at the Buffalo-fight scene and engage in Buffalo-fight. The Miao compatriots learned the cultural temperament and the individual perception (or other aspects) in the Huashan Festival Buffalo-fight ring, which is clearly expressed as a state in a collection of texts.

The Miao Buffalo-fight is such a thing that makes the Miao culture condense, leave aside that life is only used as "a game" and reconnected into "not just a game" for the time being, Buffalo-fight are implemented and thus created a typical or generally better, what can be called a paradigm of human things, at the Huashan Festival, the repeated and endless Buffalo-fights made the Miao compatriots see a latitude of their own theme, that is, the owners who participate in the Buffalo-fight, the onlookers of the Miao compatriots appreciate the Buffalo's fearlessness, the calmness of the Buffalo, and the engrossing of the Buffalo, the feeling that comes when the Buffalo wins or fails. Through year after year's Buffalo-fight competition, the spirit of the Buffalo is formed into a moral world in the human body. That is to say, we can discover the national spirit of the Miao people's unity, diligence, courage, unyielding and unyielding, as well as the admiration of the Miao people for strength and bravery.

As the maxim says, every nation loves the violence forms they held. [13] Buffalo-fight is a reflection of the Miao people's violence forms against them; which is, the worship of Buffalo-fight, the battle of Buffalo, the power of Buffalo and the reflection of the charm of Buffalo.

In the language of the Miao people's daily moral teaching, there are many buffalo intentions involving men. The word "you are cattle" is metaphorically expressed "hero", "warrior", "champion", "talented people" or "tough guy" or "tough" in character or disobedience no matter what kind of expression is

self-contained with the context of the time, it is recognized and accepted by the public. However, the intimacy between the Miao people and their Buffalo is not only a metaphor. The Miao men spend a lot of time on Buffalo purchase, feed, retouch, train, talk, let the Buffaloes fight with each other, because of this, the Buffalo-fight is more closely linked with the owner or the village, so that the Buffalo becomes the master or the representative of the village, and it is given more meanings. Miao people have a deep psychological identity with the Buffalo. "Miao people's identity with the Buffalo not only associates the Buffalo with his idealized self, but even with his male organs. In terms of reproductive worship, the reproductive intentions of Miao Buffalo-fight are manifested in the male genitals as a mighty Buffalo, which metaphors man's health, many children. The upper surface of the Buffalo-fight ring is the Buffalo fight and the discussion around the Buffalo, in fact it is the representation of the status relationship in the social life of Miao people. This kind of relationship is manifested in the Buffalo-fight's wins and losses, the victory and defeat of Buffalo-fight is related to certain interests. This kind of interest may be religious, for example, Miao people believe that Buffalo can predict the bad luck, the winning Buffalo king can bring man and animal thrive and prosperous, good weather for the crops and produce good harvest. In ancient times, the winner of the Buffalo fight would have rice seeds and other items. The Buffalo winner will be surrounded by the crowds in colorful clothes, drums will beat along the way to inform neighboring villages about their triumphant return, the winner's owner or village is full of spring breeze, the village is full of joy. At this time, the value of the Buffalo will also rise several times, the buffalo-fighters in the nearby villages will come to an endless stream and ask about the related techniques of Buffalo-fight. The Buffalo owners or villagers who won the competition will warmly welcome people who come to congratulate and exchange experiences with them. What is more important for the Miao Buffalo-fight is not material gain, but respect, dignity, honor, fame or status. The culture of a nation depends on the social background of this nation, Buffalo-fight is only a "real reality" for buffalo, Buffalo-fight does not kill anyone, nor does it reduce people's status down to animals. What Buffalo-fight linked people's temperament with self-esteem, masculinity, passion, failure, victory, etc., and also linked Buffalo with battle, blood, death, through the fight, bloody and death control make the temperament of Miao people to be expressed, social fame, honor, dignity, respect, or status can be promoted or reduced.

V. CONCLUSION

Buffalo-fight is not just a way of ritual or entertainment in the festivals of the Miao people. Buffalo-fight is a tool of expression, its function is not the national passion brought by the Buffalo-fight itself, but through Buffalo, Buffalo and people, blood and crowd as the media to show the ethnic temperament and social characteristics of the Miao nationality such like unity, courage, hard work, and warlike. Also through the Buffalo-fight, Miao people's nationality temperament and social characteristics were constructed and discovered.

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