

Exploring the Inheritance and Development of Guangxi Zhuang Brocade

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Abstract

The Zhuang nationality is one of the ethnic minorities with a large population in China, mainly distributed in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. In the long river of history, the people of the Zhuang nationality have created an excellent Zhuang culture with distinctive national characteristics, including material culture and spiritual culture, by virtue of their hard work and wisdom. As one of the most representative cultural treasures of the Zhuang nationality, Zhuang brocade, together with Song brocade, Yun brocade and Shu brocade, is known as the four famous brocades in China, and it has been included in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage in the protection list. However, in recent years, the Zhuang brocade has encountered bottlenecks in the process of inheritance and development, making it difficult for the Zhuang brocade to be known to the whole country and even more difficult for it to be known to the world. The inheritance of national culture is a major issue related to the sustainable development of the nation, which needs to be paid great attention to. This paper focuses on analyzing the development problems encountered by Zhuang brocade in modern society, and exploring the path of Zhuang brocade inheritance and development.

Keywords

Zhuang Brocade; Inheritance; Development Path.

1. The Importance of Inheriting and Developing Zhuang Brocade

Zhuang brocade is the traditional handicraft of Zhuang nationality people in Guangxi, with great national characteristics, and it is also the historical treasure of Chinese traditional culture. However, with the continuous development of social economy and the impact of foreign cultures, the inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade faces many difficulties, which affects the dissemination of Zhuang brocade culture to the world. Analyzing the development status of Guangxi Zhuang brocade and exploring the suitable path for the inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade have far-reaching significance for carrying forward the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation and enriching people's spiritual world.

Zhuang brocade is created by the Zhuang nationality people in the long-term practice of production and life, is the crystallization of the wisdom of the Zhuang nationality people, is the physical form of the customs and festivals of the Zhuang nationality, and sketches out the picture of the beautiful life pursued and desired by the Zhuang nationality people in their hearts. Zhuang brocade is brightly colored, vividly patterned, durable, and has distinctive artistic characteristics. This unique weaving technology and exquisite design contain the cultural connotation of good luck and prosperity, which fully expresses the Zhuang nationality people's most genuine pursuit of a better life. Zhuang brocade embodies the optimistic spirit of the Zhuang nationality people, as well as the people's love of life and the national style of self-improvement. For the Zhuang nationality people, Zhuang brocade has the significance of spreading love and cohesion, which is a beautiful metaphor for people's unlimited longing and blessing for a better life.

The inheritance of culture carries the historical changes of the peoples living in a region; and is a witness to the survival and development of human beings (Zhuang Wenxue; Huang Zhaoyan: 2020). Guangxi Zhuang brocade is the representative of Zhuang nationality culture and the spiritual embodiment of the Zhuang nationality people. Ethnic culture is an important spiritual pillar for the survival and development of the nation, and the Zhuang brocade is an extremely important spiritual support for the Zhuang nationality people, as well as the source of their national self-confidence and national pride. In addition, Guangxi is an important hub of “the Belt and Road”, with a superior geographical location, which is conducive to the promotion of the Zhuang brocade culture and the promotion of the excellent Chinese national culture. Therefore, the inheritance and development of Guangxi Zhuang brocade is of great significance and value to both the nation and the country.

2. The Current Situation of the Inheritance and Development of Zhuang Brocade

2.1. Insufficient Succession for the Inheritance of Zhuang Brocade

Zhuang brocade largely reflects the local customs of the local people. The colors, patterns, and motifs of Zhuang brocade show the character of the Zhuang people and their aspirations and hopes for future life. In Guangxi, the origin of Zhuang brocade is mainly distributed in Binyang County, Xincheng County, and Jingxi County (Huang Feiyue: 2018). In the past, Zhuang brocade was a necessity for the Zhuang nationality people, and brocade weaving was a necessary skill in the life of the Zhuang nationality women, but with the development of society, Zhuang brocade transformed into a handicraft and existed, and people knew less and less about Zhuang brocade.

The production process of Zhuang brocade is still based on traditional craftsmanship, and a finished piece of Zhuang brocade requires many procedures from weaving to completing the embroidery. The embroidery of Zhuang brocade is very tedious, and it is usually embroidered by the embroiderer by hand, stitch by stitch. Because of the complexity of the weaving process and the tediousness of the process, many Zhuang nationality youths are not interested in brocade weaving, so it is difficult to popularize the brocade on a large scale like cross-stitch. Because of the cumbersome and time-consuming process of Zhuang brocade weaving and the low economic benefits, coupled with the fact that fewer people are willing to buy it, craftsmen are unable to survive solely on the basis of this craft; therefore, more and more Zhuang brocade craftsmen have given up brocade weaving and have changed their profession to other jobs. Nowadays, only a very small number of old women and housewives are left to engage in this activity, but they have been living in remote areas in the mountains and cities, and they can only communicate with each other to learn the traditional Zhuang brocade weaving techniques. Because they have no access to fresh creative ideas, the Zhuang brocade they weave lacks innovation and attraction (Lu Shuhan: 2018). The simple character of the local people is not highly conscious of the development of Zhuang brocade cultural resources. Zhuang brocade resources are scattered, which is not conducive to the formation of an agglomeration effect. Due to the lack of labor force in the production of Zhuang brocade, and the lack of innovation and attractiveness of its finished products, as well as the low price of Zhuang brocade products, few people are willing to make and produce Zhuang brocade, which makes the inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade even more difficult.

2.2. Lack of Innovation and Low Market Demand

With the constant change and development of society, foreign and modern cultures have brought unprecedented impact to this intangible cultural heritage, Zhuang brocade has gradually lost its market vitality. As a daily consumer product, the price, color, durability and

function of Zhuang brocade can no longer be compared with other textiles, and it can only highlight its value as a national arts and crafts.

Due to less innovation, it is difficult for Zhuang brocade to open up domestic and foreign markets. The pattern of Zhuang brocade comes from the ancient Zhuang people's expectation and yearning for life. Most of the colors on Zhuang Brocade are red, yellow, blue, and green, making it look plain and old. Under the impact of modern society, people's preferences have changed, from the point of view of modern aesthetics, Zhuang brocade looks a bit "vulgar", which is a major obstacle to the development of Zhuang brocade.

Because of the lack of innovation, Zhuang brocade is not as favored by customers as in the past, Zhuang brocade market demand is also greatly reduced. The development of the Internet has boosted the economy and provided better sales channels and platforms for various products and services. Against the background of such a general environment, some Zhuangjin enterprises have also opened online stores, but the data of these stores in terms of the number of followers and the total number of payers are relatively poor. The following table shows the online stores that can be found on Taobao that sell Zhuang brocades or goods with Zhuang brocade elements, as shown in Table 1. From Table 1, we can see that the number of fans (People who follow the store) of these online stores is very low, and the total number of payers on the home page of the online stores is also very small. This reflects the poor market demand for Zhuang brocade, and also shows that Zhuang brocade products are in urgent need of greater self-innovation to expand their popularity and promote their heritage and development.

Table 1. The online stores with Zhuang brocades or goods

Store name	Number of fans	Number of products on the shelves	Total disbursements
Fei Yi Living Center	1203+	101+	5+
Guanxi Zhuang Nationality Specialty Store	10327+	787+	390+
Jingxi Zhuang Brocade Factory	112+	18+	3+
Xiangguang Brocade- Specialized in making Zhuang brocade	4657+	55+	42+

2.3. Lack of National Cultural Identity

As the development of globalization advances, cultures intermingle with each other. The new media era breaks the limitations of time and space, bringing about cultural pluralism and multi-perspective feelings. The conflict of ethnic cultures brought by economic globalization has promoted the development of traditional ethnic cultures, and at the same time brought a certain degree of crisis. Under the impact of foreign culture, many Zhuang nationality people begin to lose interest in Zhuang brocade, which is facing survival and development problems in such a big environment. First of all, the production method on which the traditional Zhuang brocade relies restricts the inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade. This traditional production method will lose the social function it plays due to the arrival of the new media era, and its status in people's hearts is weakening. The deep development of globalization makes it more and more convenient for the people to come into contact with the costumes of other cultures, and people are exposed to more choices. And Zhuang brocade has gradually lost its market due to the lack of innovation, single product and backwardness in color, pattern and material. Because of the decline in the status of Zhuang brocade, the cultural self-confidence of the Zhuang nationality people also suffered a blow, as time went by, Zhuang brocade has not been well developed, the cultural identity of the Zhuang nationality people is also gradually reduced, and the awareness of the inheritance and development of their own culture and the culture of the Zhuang brocade will be gradually weakened.

3. Inheritance and Development Path

3.1. Establishing Educational and Training Bases for Zhuang Brocade Craftsmanship

The people are the creators and disseminators of culture. Zhuang brocade is the physical embodiment of the spiritual culture of the Zhuang people and expresses the ethnic connotation of the Zhuang people. Inheriting and developing the Zhuang brocade culture is a major task for the perpetual development of the Zhuang people. For the inheritance of Zhuang brocade, first of all, a very important step is to make the Zhuang brocade culture and the national spirit of the Zhuang people more firmly in the hearts of the Zhuang people. Only by rooting the national spirit and culture in the hearts of the people can a nation move forward and develop forever. To this end, it is possible to create a Zhuang brocade craft education and training base, integrating theory and practice, to inculcate the national culture and Zhuang brocade culture into the young generation, and to pass on the craft of Zhuang brocade production. The Zhuang brocade craft education and training base can carry out classroom lectures. In the primary stage of learning, students should understand and learn the origin of the Zhuang nationality, and its culture, so as to deepen their understanding of the Zhuang nationality, and then learn the theoretical knowledge of Zhuang brocade weaving. In the practice of Zhuang brocade weaving, the base can gather or hire older and experienced Zhuang brocade craftsmen to teach the young generation the craft of Zhuang brocade production.

In addition, the establishment of the education and training base for the Zhuang brocade craft should be led by the government of the region as the initiator and manager. The creation of the base led by the government is more dignified and easily trusted and supported by the people, which is conducive to the creation and development of the base; secondly, it will help to enhance the national cultural awareness of the Zhuang nationality people. We all know that the government has majesty and solemnity in the hearts of the people, and the creation of a government-led base will be more strongly concerned by the Zhuang nationality people.

3.2. Innovations in Dissemination

Cultural promotion activities can greatly increase the visibility of culture, which is a very effective way to publicize culture. At present, the popularity of Zhuangjin in Guangxi is relatively low, and the publicity and promotion of Zhuang brocade still need to be strengthened. The publicity activities of Guangxi Zhuang brocade are mostly led by the government, and the publicity methods are mostly newspapers, exhibitions, tourism activities, TV programs, and so on. However, the publicity scope of these publicity activities is small and the publicity effect is limited. Therefore, it is necessary to innovate publicity methods, increase publicity efforts, and create modern Zhuang brocade cultural symbols that keep pace with the times. It can take the combination of offline entity publicity and online network publicity to expand the scope of publicity, deepen the connotation of Zhuangjin culture, and improve the quality of publicity content and form; so that the Zhuang brocade culture is really deeply rooted in people's hearts. Broaden the propaganda channels and adopt a combination of dynamic and static communication methods. In terms of static dissemination, combined with modern mass media there are mainly written records, museum collections and displays, filming documentaries, writing ethnographies, publishing books, and recording oral transmission (Lu Shuhan: 2018). Therefore, a periodical can be created on the theme of Zhuang brocade to talk about the culture of Zhuang brocade and the culture of the Zhuang nationality. It is also possible to create a Zhuang brocade exhibition hall, collect Zhuang brocade and related items, and show the Zhuang brocade culture to the public, so as to publicize and promote the Zhuang nationality culture. It can be publicized on platforms favored by young people, such as Tik Tok, Kuaishou, and Xiaohongshu. On these platforms, short videos of the Zhuang brocade production process and

stories of Zhuang brocade culture are launched to attract netizens from all over the world to pay attention to the Zhuang brocade and expand the influence of the Zhuang brocade. Publicizing the Zhuang brocade culture through these online platforms will allow more people to see and understand the Zhuang brocade and its cultural connotations. In terms of dynamic communication, the Zhuang brocade can be combined with tourist attractions. At the same time in the promotion of tourist attractions to publicize the culture of Zhuang brocade, to enhance the popularity of Zhuang brocade. It is possible to add a selling place for Zhuang brocade products in tourist attractions, and at the same time to tell tourists from all over the world about Zhuang culture and Zhuang brocade culture. The local government can also open offline brocade production experience area, enhance the interest of tourists from all over the Zhuang brocade, so as to make the Zhuang brocade culture more deeply rooted in people's hearts.

In addition, it is possible to expand the consumer market for brocade both locally and abroad. Guangxi is in an important position in "the Belt and Road" initiative, neighboring Southeast Asia and closely connected with Southeast Asian countries. The in-depth implementation of "the Belt and Road" initiative has brought good opportunities for the development of China's cultural industry (Zhuang Wen; Huang Zhaoyan: 2020). At the same time, Guangxi, as the permanent host of the ASEAN Expo, has wider cultural exchanges with ASEAN countries, which is of great significance to the development and dissemination of Zhuang brocade culture. The local government can show the Zhuang brocade culture and its derivatives to domestic and foreign countries by organizing activities around the Expo, so that more and more people can know the Zhuang brocade culture and the Zhuang nationality culture.

3.3. Product Design Innovation

Zhuang brocade, in terms of color matching, pay attention to the contrast between light and dark, cold and warm, the distribution and matching of colors make the Zhuang brocade color coordinated and rich in aesthetics. Zhuang brocade is simple in composition, rich in meaning, with sharp color contrasts and a strong sense of life, so it can be applied to more design fields (Huang Weishui; Ren Xinyu: 2022). However, in fact, the designs of Zhuang brocade are uniform, and most of them are for the daily life of the Zhuang people, such as Zhuang brocade clothing, backpacks, pillowcases, quilt covers, handbags, etc. The pattern design of Zhuang brocade does not meet modern aesthetics, therefore, the craft products of Zhuang brocade urgently need to be reformed and innovated. Firstly, it is necessary to change the concept of Zhuang brocade production, take the initiative to accept new ideas, learn new methods, and improve the old textile technology (Wang Haiyang; Liang Juanyuan Ting: 2022). Secondly, it is necessary to promote the up-to-date development of Zhuang brocade patterns, colors, and other designs. The vision of handicrafts inheritors should not be limited to traditional styles only. While actively catering to the public's preferences, they should also highlight the stories and culture of Zhuang brocade, combine with the popular elements of the times, and make changes in the colors, fabrics, styles, patterns, etc., to improve the overall quality of the products.

Secondly, the pattern style and meaning of Zhuang brocade can be combined with the packaging design of modern products, which not only retains the traditional modeling characteristics but also meets the aesthetic pursuit of modern people. For example, the geometric shape of Zhuang brocade can be deformed and reorganized; and then added to the product packaging design. Customized packaging design can also be produced, according to the different requirements of customers to adjust and change the pattern of Zhuang brocade. At the same time, because there are also many popular attractions in Guangxi, the symbolism of endless life expressed by the Zhuang brocade can be applied to the design of tourism products, which will be a very attractive design point (Xiao Xin; Liu Sen: 2022). Combining the elements of the Zhuang brocade with modern elements can convey the culture of Zhuang brocade and ethnic culture while increasing the visual memory.

4. Conclusion

The Zhuang brocade culture is one of the treasures of the Zhuang nationality and the national culture of the Chinese people. The Zhuang brocade culture is one of the treasures of the Zhuang nationality and the national culture of the Chinese nation. The inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade are of great significance and value to both the nation and the country. The inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade is conducive to the enhancement of national self-confidence and pride. The development of Zhuang brocade has an important strategic significance to drive the local economic development, so the inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade should not be delayed.

At present, the production and development of Zhuang brocade still face many problems. The inheritance and development of the Zhuang brocade requires the joint efforts of the Zhuang nationality people and the Government, as well as the joint efforts of the older craftsmen and the young generation. Understanding and identifying with the culture of Zhuang brocade is a better way to protect and inherit it, and taking the initiative and seriously publicizing the culture of Zhuang brocade is a better way to promote and develop it. The inheritance of the Zhuang brocade culture also needs to start from the source, and the Zhuang brocade culture and national culture should be inculcated into the young generation of Zhuang people from childhood. The Zhuang brocade itself also needs to keep pace with the times, and self-innovation, in terms of color, pattern, materials, production technology, and other aspects of the need for breakthroughs, so as to achieve the fusion of the elements of the Zhuang brocade and modern elements to enhance the competitiveness of the Zhuang brocade.

The inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade needs the joint efforts of many parties, the only way to let Guangxi Zhuang brocade really restore vitality.

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