

Research of Constitutive Elements of the Miao Traditional Costume's Beauty

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Abstract: Miao traditional costume possesses its unique style, different from other ethnic costumes, which Miao people formed in its specific historical conditions. Miao costume is an important part of Miao nationality culture system. It has harmonious and natural, gorgeous and sprightly, complex and luxury as the main features. Miao costume has strong national characteristic, numerous styles, rich colors, magnificent patterns and exquisite silver, which is the cultural heritage the Miao formed in the long history of practice, reflecting the Miao's unique aesthetic ideology. Exploring constitutive elements of the Miao traditional costume's beauty, which can contribute to the heritage and development of Miao costume culture, and have a positive influence on modern fashion design.

Keywords: The Miao; Costume's beauty; Constitutive elements; Aesthetic ideology

1. Introduction

China has a reputation named "dressed kingdom" since ancient times. Chinese costume culture is Chinese nation's art treasure, a splendid civilization that fifty six nations create together, each nation has its own unique costumes for inheriting their own national culture.

Miao costume has its unique style which the Miao formed in its specific historical conditions according to their unique nature, religion, culture and customs. What's more, it's the product of the Miao created in social production practice for thousands of years, is the dual vector of nationality's material culture and spiritual culture, reflecting the unique aesthetic characteristics of the Miao.

2. Historical Evolution of the Miao costumes

Books on the history of the earliest recorded Miao costume is "Huainan", the book called "three seedlings song", namely that hair and linen mixed to get her dish on the top of head. The costume culture is from the time of its culture of Glory "clothing leather Phileaf", reaches the Ming and Qing dynasties, "women wear embroidered cloths and pleated skirts, with bun plugging and silver jewelry", and has been developed and changed in accordance with their national law during thousands of years.

Miao costume is influenced by internal factors and external environment in two ways to evolution. The changed internal factors of Miao costume are mainly about national consciousness, production skills and clothing materials. These factors are spontaneous and non-mandatory in the Miao's historical development, and changes which result in are often progressive and localized changing. However, the guide of external environment is force fulmandatory, mostly influenced by the impact of the natural environment, national communication and social

changes in environmental and other external reason. The transition of the national clothing fundamentally belongs to sudden change, which the speed of is faster, generally manifesting the traditional costume replaced by a new.

Under the strong impact in the modern society, communication between different cultures is rapidly deepening. Today, the Miao have been influenced by the modern concept of social life, their daily life also beginning westernized, especially for men, gradually wearing modern Western-style clothing, and mostly women's clothing also with their own features.

3. Constitutive Elements of the Miao Traditional Costume's Beauty

Miao costume is an important part of the Miao nationality culture system, from which can see the development process and cultural heritage of Miao history, reflecting the Miao's cognition and sublimation of things, when competing with nature. Miao costume has distinct aesthetic value and artistic characteristics, resulting in a unique aesthetic sense.

Miao costume is still using traditional Chinese clothing production technology, which is on weaving, embroidery, pick, dyeing and other based technology, and it can be divided into two kinds of costumes and clothes, patterns are usually based on the life of scenes, objects, myths and legends. The use of color contrast is strong, and has brilliant feelings, basically can be divided into white, red, yellow, black, blue five colors; accessories mainly with silver. The beauty of costumes is mainly about style beauty, color beauty, patter beauty and silver beauty.

3.1. Beauty of Style

Costume style is clothing's appearance, and also the concentrated expression of personality characteristics of clothing. According to the survey, Miao costume's styles are as much as one hundred seventy-three kinds, of which there are more than 130 styles of female species. In these Miao costumes which have numerous styles and different shapes, people can clearly see the Miao people's pristine and unique aesthetic ideology.

From the modeling point of view, the whole Miao costume's shirt is usually right round neck T-shirt or coat with crossed on his chest, like to use dajinor double-breasted long-sleeved. The lower part of the body is mostly wearing pleated pants, dress up to foot some long, some short not up to knee. More attention to hierarchy when dressing, the waist is often beamed with apron and abelt, the shoulder can also be coupled with the sleeve shawl, the calf have to leggings, in clothing chest, back, neck and sleeves are embroidered with colorful ornamentation patterns, often the head with a variety of silver, the overall impression is harmonious and orderly as the natural world in general.

Miao costume prefers natural beauty. For example, the design layout (Figure 1), either on the local or on the whole, are very stressed point on the collocation of line, surface, color, pattern and silver, each part is independent and unified, as perfect combination of natural landscape together. On the size of clothing, it does not pay attention to fit, but rather to smooth, natural-based, making it in the style of clothing to show balance, symmetry, echo, contrast, harmony, rhythm and other aesthetic features, forming a beauty from natural and beyond nature.



Figure 1. The design layout

3.2. Beauty of Color

Color is an important factor of Miao costume's beauty. When appreciating the Miao costume, people will first notice is its dazzling colors. This is because the Miao is a mountainous nation, where is mostly in the mountains. Therefore, nature's colorful flowers provide inexhaustible high quality material for their clothing color's manufacture and creation, which is a natural treasure in the creation of Miao costume.

According to history records, the Miao people love "good colored clothes", so that "the great poet" Du Fu had "Wuxi clothes are comparable with beautiful clouds" the famous verse. Here the "five colors" is referring to white, red, yellow, black and blue.

The colorful utilizing of Miao costumes is particular about gorgeous and sprightly, natural and harmonious. Often with the use of multi-color mode, it pays more attention to level, regularity, full of rhythm. The choice of using color is slightly exaggerated, so the color contrast is relatively intense, full of tension. And the colorful materials of Miao costume are mostly local materials, and basically extracted from nature, which itself reflects the beauty of a harmony with nature.



Figure 2. Collocation full of rich nature and harmony

Miao costume's color collocation is full of rich nature and harmony. For example, (Figure 2) a large number of women dress in red, but above with green embroidery,

contrast with the red. The above green is divided into different levels and superimposed combinations in accordance with the ornamentation patterns. In their creative ideas, the red represents the fruits of the harvest, and the green represents the wilderness where the fruit are produced. Such color collocation seems bold and simple, but great tension, combinations of different color is contrasting intensely and full of layers, which easily grabs people's optic nerves, giving a warm and lively aesthetic experience, while reflecting the Miao passionate mental qualities and better visions of a happy life.

Overall, the Miao costume focus on the complementary and combination of plain and magnificent in the using of color, pursuing organic unity of both. The method is the main feature of the Miao costume color, which is from nature and the pursuit of nature, everything is full of harmonious beauty of man and nature.

3.3. Beauty of Pattern

As the absence of words, Miao costume also assumes the heritage of its national history responsibility. Therefore, Miao costume has been hailed as a "wordless history books." And the carrier for recording the history of Miao is the colorful patterns on the Miao costume.

Miao costume's patterns can be roughly divided into four categories: geometric patterns, animal prints, floral motifs and other patterns. Among them, geometric patterns are more concise, whose modeling becomes more abstract, but after making precise combinations of many simple geometric shapes, they form a very sheer beauty of form. The use of animal prints is based on cattle, dragons, elephants, tigers, deer, half man, half beast and other subjects, of which styles are mostly exaggerated, simple and full of dynamic. Floral motifs are mainly about daisies, lotuses, pomegranates, sunflowers, cucurbits, etc. And its technique of expression is more abundant, having weaving, dyeing, embroidery, pick and strong levels, also full of visual aesthetic.

The Miao costume's patterns, the most widely used is the account of the history of the Miao ancestors' tragic migration "Yellow River", "Yangtze River", "plain", "city", "Flying Horse" and other motifs, are the core of Miao culture history books, inheriting the Miao's thousands of years of history. These patterns are considered to be signs of Miao ethnic heritage from generation to generation, which retain vivid memories of the history of the Miao and reflect the Miao's better visions of the pursuit of happiness.

The well-known traditional Miao costume embroidery pattern "Butterfly mother" (Figure 3) is a shining example of their national costumes aesthetics. "Butterfly mother" is the mother of mankind and all things in Miao legend, which is from the heart of the of the maple tree, so the Miao think "Butterfly mother" living above the maple, and this pattern is seen as gods. In these ornamentation

patterns, the Miao adventurously use red-green color, intersperse with blue, purple, yellow and other colors for the embellishment, showing the Miao's love and adore to their ancestors and nature by the exquisite embroidery and beautiful decoration. This is an external formal beauty, but also a kind of heavy beauty to historical favor.



Figure 3. The well-known traditional Miao costume embroidery pattern "Butterfly mother"



Figure 4. Silver production is sophisticated, undefiled and immaculate, and aesthetic prefers big, more and heavy

3.4. Beauty of Silver

Miao Silver is another major feature of Miao costume, is the choice of Miao history. Because the Miao nationality

is a migratory nationality in a perennial unrest, the Miao have to use their wealth made portable silver to be kept, which is the historical root of many Miao silverwares.

Miao's silver species are rich, and are famous for its exquisite fabrications and unique sculpts. The most famous Miao silver is the female silver, its subjects are about maples, butterflies, dragons, phoenix, rivers, flowers, birds, etc. There are headdress, neck ornaments, pectoral, dorsal ornaments, jewelry and other limbs. Silver production is sophisticated, undefiled and immaculate, and aesthetic prefers big, more and heavy (Figure 4), as the "Silver" is a symbol of beauty under the understanding of Miao.

Miao silver is revered for its "big", most of the production is very huge. For example, the Great horn Silver among silverworks, its length even reached half the height of the wearer. These are due to the Miao people worship of nature, majestic mountains towering is for beauty and vast expanse of the sea is for beauty. Miao people reflect their worship to nature in their silver jewelry without reservation. Under their carefully crafted, huge silverwork is not only not gives a heavy feeling, but also lets people feel the beauty of an exciting shines, which the Miao bringing us shocking arts with their unique aesthetic philosophy.

Miao silver is beautiful for their "more" feature. Since ancient times, "Silver" is a precious metal, is also a symbol of wealth in the concept of the Miao people. But different with other nations like the collection of gold and silver products, Miao people like the "Silver" worn display. On the clothing worn, especially on major festivals, whose family woman wears silver the most, representing who is the most glorious and beautiful. Thus in Miao culture costume, the number of silver wearing are many, such as some Miao women's apparel, which is up to more than fifty pieces, earrings up to three or four, straight down to the shoulder. Collars are also three or four parts, the amount of shielding neck. Others such as pectoral, waist silver is a layer of pile layer, densely shadowing body. The wearing silver bracelets can also reach seven-

ty-eight, even as many as ten. However, although the collocation of Miao silver is complex, but not messy, there is more focus on quality not quantity, which still able to give people clear priorities, orderly luxury complex aesthetic experience.

Miao silver is beautiful for its "heavy" feature. This is complementary with "big" and "many". Miao Silver is not numerous, large and most surprising weight. For example, some silver Coronets Miao woman wearing, weight up to four pounds more than, some stenciling row silver rings are also as more heavy as better, and some even weigh as much eighty-nine pounds. With "heavy" regarding as beauty, "heavy" is a good wish for pursuing prosperous and happy life.

"Big," "more," "heavy" Miao silverware shows the world the Miao people's unique attainments in clothing aesthetic, with its exquisite craftsmanship, natural decoration patterns and clever collocated skills.

Conclusion

Miao costume is Miao's art treasure, reflecting the Miao's unique aesthetic ideology, containing deep Miao cultural emotion, and is the concentrated reflection of Miao people's aesthetic taste with a high cultural and artistic value. Therefore, the inductive analysis for Miao traditional costume beauty's constitution is enough to understand deeply of the Miao costume beauty's culture, to contribute to the heritage and development of Miao costume culture, and to learn from and use in modern fashion design, to create better costume.

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