

A Study of Traditional Motifs in the Costumes of the Dong Ethnic Group in Qiandongnan: The Evolution and Protection of Cultural Symbols

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Abstract

The Dong costume patterns in Qiandongnan have a long history and distinctive regional cultural characteristics, and their patterns contain high cultural and emotional values. Nowadays, the development of traditional patterns and cultural symbols of Dong costumes is facing many new challenges, which require expanding the application carriers of the patterns and giving them a new life. This is the value of inheritance, revitalization, and innovation of costume patterns, as well as a new direction for the development of Dong traditional costume patterns. In this thesis, the origin, connotation, and cultural symbols of Dong costumes in Qiandongnan are studied in depth, aiming to explore their role in Dong's cultural inheritance. Through the historical tracing and cultural connotation analysis of Dong costumes, we find that they are not only a decorative tool but also a vivid expression of Dong culture relying on the profound historical background. Through the comprehensive study of Dong costumes, the cultural heritage of traditional patterns of Dong costumes not only provides strong support for the cultural inheritance of the Dong people but also provides useful inspiration for the protection and inheritance of other ethnic cultures. By strengthening the cognition and dissemination of cultural symbols, we are expected to promote exchanges between different cultures and realize communal development.

Keywords: Dong Clothing, Traditional Patterns, Cultural Symbols, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Cultural Heritage.

The Dong people developed from the Baiyue ethnic group in the south (Chen et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2024), and they call themselves "Gan", "Jin" and "Gong", collectively known as the "Dong people" (Cao & Woramitmaitee, 2023; Kexia & Sensai, 2022). They called themselves "Gan", "Jin" and "Gong", collectively known as the "Dong", also known as "Dong" and "Dong" (Jin et al., 2022). During the Qin and Han Dynasties, there were

many tribes living in the area of present-day Guangdong and Guangxi, collectively known as the "Luo Yue" (one of the Bai Yue) (Fei, 2017). After the Wei and Jin dynasties, these tribes were called "Bong" (Hinsch, 2004). After the Sui and Tang dynasties, some documents call the Xiangqian-Guizhou region "Dong", "Dong" or "Xidong", and the local people "Dong people" or "Dong people". The local people are called "Dong people" or "Dong people" (Baldanza,

2015; Wenli et al., 2024). Nowadays, the Dong live in areas adjacent to the Zhuang, Shui (Shang et al., 2020), and Maonan ethnic groups, and their language belongs to the Zhuang and Dong ethnic groups, their customs are similar, so there is a basis for the development of the Dong from Baiyue (Kaup, 2000; Wu & Phanlukthao, 2023). After the development of primitive society, the Dong began to transition directly to feudal society in the Tang Dynasty (Chu, 2020). From the Tang Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, the central government strengthened the local rule and set up tie-ups and the Tujia system. At the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, the "Rehabilitation" was implemented, and the Qing Dynasty directly managed the Dong, entering the period of feudal landlord economic development (Jin et al., 2017; Zhang, 2020). However, the "joint payment" of tribal alliances within the Dong society with clans bound by territory still prevails. In every village, a figure known as the "village elder" continued to oversee all matters and employed traditional legal practices to uphold social order within the Dong community (Antony, 2016; Dang & Nguyen, 2023). This organizational structure endured until the transition from the Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China (Guy, 2015; Mühlhahn, 2019).

The Dong ethnic group boasts a rich historical lineage (Di Cosmo & Wyatt, 2003). Dating back to the Five Dynasties period, the Lingnan region was home to the Baiyue people, who are recognized as the progenitors of the Dong (Lai, 2020). Insights from Dong folk songs suggest that a significant portion of the Dong populace were descendants of the Yue people residing in the Cangwu area during the Qin and Han Dynasties (Hargett, 1996). However, contemporary scholarship presents an alternate perspective, positing a potential link between Dong's origins and military movements in Ji'an Province, Jiangxi Province during the Ming Dynasty (Wong, 2020). Since the Ming Dynasty successively cantoned troops in the Dong area, there were many Han Chinese from the Jiangxi area (Wu, 2021). These cantoned troops and their

descendants interacted with the Dong for a long time, and they absorbed the Dong culture while spreading the Han culture, some of them intermarried with the Dong and gradually integrated into the Dong. Though partly integrated through interaction, the main body of the Dong people is still from Baiyue (Li, 2023).

Situated in the southeastern region of Guizhou Province, Qiandongnan is bordered by Huaihua City in Hunan Province to the east, Qiannan Prefecture to the west, and shares its boundaries with Liuzhou and Hechi in the Guangxi Autonomous Region to the south. To the north, it borders Zunyi and Tongren. Within this area, a diverse array of 46 ethnic groups reside, including the Dong, Miao, Han, Shui, Yao, Zhuang, and Tujia. The Dong population is predominantly concentrated in the Qiandongnan and Tongren regions of Guizhou (Yihong et al., 2022).

The Dong ethnic group ranks among the more populous ethnic minorities in Southwest China (Harrell, 2012). According to the 2020 Seventh National Population Census, the Dong population in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture of Guizhou totaled 3.7586 million, comprising 30.5% of the total regional population. Over two-thirds of the Dong population is concentrated in the border areas of Guizhou, Hunan, and Guangxi provinces, with smaller communities found in other regions such as Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Hubei Province, as well as in Jiangsu, Guangdong, and Zhejiang provinces. Within Dong settlements, cohabitation with Miao, Shui, Yao, Han, and other ethnic groups is common, fostering a multi-ethnic environment conducive to mutual development (Tsung, 2015).

The complex geographical environment of Dong villages in Qiandongnan, characterized by remote and overlapping mountainous terrain, has preserved relatively intact attire traditions (Bratt, 2014). These traditions include the habit of donning ethnic costumes during important festivals and celebrations, as well as the practice

of crafting such attire during periods of agricultural downtime. These material conditions provide a foundational basis for the research presented in this paper. The study focuses on three main aspects of Dong costume traditions: traditional patterns, the evolution of cultural symbols embedded within these costumes, and their transmission. Through specific investigative research, this paper aims to achieve several primary objectives.

Firstly, it aims to refine our understanding of Dong ethnic attire. While there is a relative uniformity among different branches of the Dong ethnic group in terms of clothing styles, colors, and accessories, regional differences lead to distinct features in the attire of various branches. In some cases, significant variations in attire can even be observed between different villages or settlements. Through the study of Dong ethnic attire, a clearer understanding of the distinctive features of attire within the region and the differences between various branches can be gained, thereby enhancing our appreciation of Dong ethnic attire culture.

Secondly, we analyze the characteristics of the Dong's costumes and explore the social and cultural background of their creation. The Dong ethnic group has a similar geographic latitude and similar living environment with the neighboring Shui and Miao ethnic groups, and all of them live in self-sufficient mountainous areas, but there is a big difference in their costumes. What creates the uniqueness of the Dong costumes and what kind of cultural connotations they contain is worth exploring and discovering.

The third is to explore the impact of local non-genetic inheritance exploration work on Dong costumes. In recent years, Dong costumes have been facing the dangers of the decline of handicrafts, the reduction of costumes in kind, and the commercialization and ritualization of costumes. Fortunately, the local community has taken several measures to explore the inheritance and development of costumes, such as providing skills training for NGTs and local ethnic groups, which has led to the mastery of new skills,

improved their aesthetic ability, and fostered their sense of innovation. To a certain extent, the training has played a role in passing on the skills of national costumes and promoting the combination of national resources and the market, but many shortcomings deserve consideration.

Origin and Connotation of Dong Clothing in Qiandongnan

No matter which country or nation's clothing, there is a gradual maturation process from scratch, from simple to complex (Portes & Haller, 2010). The formation and evolution of Dong traditional clothing, we mainly based on ancient literature to sort out, the ancient Dong clothing through the Baiyue period, the Song and Yuan periods, the Ming and Qing dynasties, "improve the Yi style" movement of four important stages, formed a stable style of national dress.

In the early days, the Dong lived deep in the mountains at the border of Hunan-Guizhou-Guizhou and were isolated from the outside world without their writing, so there are very few records of Dong costumes before the Song Dynasty, which gradually increased after the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Since the Song Dynasty, the ethnicity of the Dong has gradually appeared in the records of the Han history books, and from the Song Dynasty, the Dong people had a specific name, and the Dong costumes gradually formed their characteristics. In the Song Dynasty, Dong men used feathers as headdresses and women used to hang several beads of conch on their necks, which was the same as that in the Tang Dynasty, in modern times, there is also the custom of using chicken feathers as decorations in the six Dong areas bordering Liping and Congjiang, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Liping Modern Dong Clothing

The descriptions of Dong costumes in the Qing Dynasty can already distinguish local characteristics. In the middle and late Qing Dynasty, due to the continuous improvement of social productivity in ethnic minority areas, the Dong had more interactions with neighboring ethnic groups, especially in the northern part of the country, which was close to the Han Chinese settlement, resulting in the gradual sinicization of the costumes, but the southern part of the country had very few exchanges with the outside world due to the inconvenience of transportation and the southern part of the country still retains a lot of traditional features in its costumes as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Dong Clothing in Southern Guizhou Province

When the footsteps of the times into the Republic of China, Dong clothing from fabrics to styles was affected by the cultural trends at that time, 1967 to 1976 was the Cultural Revolution

turmoil of the decade, and the Dong people are still wearing Dong clothes, but there are some changes, young men do not keep long braids, young women under 20 years old do not wear skirts, so that some young people said goodbye to the primitive dress, and from now on, began to appear to wear shirts, pants or locks, bed covers began to get rid of the black Dong cloth quilt replaced by large flowers and red quilts, the bed covers were replaced by large red quilts. From then on, some young people began to wear shirts, pants, or locks, and the quilts on the beds began to be replaced by red quilts with big flowers, instead of the black Dong cloth quilts. Due to the establishment of the people's commune and the rise of the "Great Leap Forward" movement, the family-based small peasant economy towards disintegration, collectivism led to a decline in people's labor enthusiasm, the soil cloth production, the market supply of woven fabrics continue to influx of rural townships, the traditional old-fashioned thinking is quietly changing. After entering the 21st century, girls in the Dong village wore pants before the age of 16 and changed from pants to skirts when performing the rite of passage, thus confirming their adulthood and accepting them as full-fledged members of society. At this time, trouser suits have been adopted by Dong women as a regular dress in their lives and can be seen everywhere in the whole Dong area.

Dong clothing not only shows practical functions such as keeping warm and breathable, avoiding mosquito bites and thorns, as well as facilitating human activities but also shows a strong aesthetic sense, giving people a feeling of beauty, which is the product of the unification of practical and aesthetic functions. Not only that, the Dong people also show their profound cultural connotation of dress to the world through the tangible and distinctive national costumes. Clothing has clear personalized symbolic characteristics, as well as clear social and cultural directions; it embodies the social style of the times and is rooted in the humanistic traditions of history. Essentially, dress culture is

a weaving of national beliefs, values, customs, lifestyles, production methods, and the resulting cognition, aesthetics, philosophy, morality, individuality, feelings, attitudes, shapes, symbols, and so on.

At the same time, within the Dong ethnic group, dress also has the function of distinguishing age and identity, and it is especially obvious in female dress. The first is to distinguish the age according to the dress matching. Unmarried women's daily dress matching is mostly of the type of pants under the top, and their tops are round-necked with right overlapping short placket and narrow cuffs; married women's daily dress matching is of the type of skirt under the top, and the tops are of the type of round-necked with right overlapping big placket and lose cuffs, and the body is long and wide, and the bottom is matched with the pleated skirts and the plain tied legs, that is to say, the pleated skirts in the daily dresses are the references for distinguishing between the adult and the immature women, and the women who have not For girls who have not yet reached the age of 16, they wear pants with their everyday clothes and skirts to show that they have grown up and are no longer children.

Furthermore, the age distinction is based on color, such as white and blue tops for women under 65 years of age in summer, dark blue tops for older people over 65 years of age in summer, young women tend to wear colorful satin dresses, and middle-aged and older women tend to wear Dong cloth dresses. The dresses also have strict folklore regulations, The Dong cloth dress is the official ceremonial dress of Dong women, while the colorful satin dress belongs to the latter and is the innovation of women's love of beauty, and the two occasions of use are also different. For example, at weddings, the bride and groom must wear a Dong cloth dress to show the importance of the wedding, respect for ancestors, etc., while the colorful satin dress is mostly used on the occasion of celebrations, which is a support for women to show their spiritual outlook.



Figure 3. Dong village dress costumes

Dresses are formal and ornate garments that are different from ordinary daily wear. It is worn during marriages and major festivals. It uses various kinds of silk threads to embroider flowers and dragons on self-woven fabrics, and the upper garment is gorgeously embroidered and paired with a flower belt around the waist. Lower dress wearing a pleated skirt and flower belt tied legs, feet wearing curved head embroidered shoes; accessories are more Dong characteristics, plate head don't silver hairpin, body back silver buckle, neck set of silver ring silver chain, ear with silver earrings, hand with silver bracelet. The whole set of dresses is exquisite, colorful, and unique, showing the Dong ethnic dress culture, as shown in Figure 3.

Analysis of Cultural Symbols of Traditional Patterns of Dong Clothing

The patterns of the Dong people can generally be divided into two forms of modeling (Peng & Zuo, 2010), abstract modeling techniques and other is figurative modeling techniques. The reasons for the formation of these two techniques are closely related to the life and psychology of the Dong people.

Dong brocade technology is relatively single, mainly loom technology, due to the limitations of its technology, the decision of the Dong brocade pattern is mostly in the form of points, lines, surfaces from different directions and

orientations of the geometric composition of the common mountain pattern, cedar tree pattern, water pattern, people pattern, fish pattern, and so on, as shown in Figure 4. For a long time, the Dong people have been perfecting the beautification and taking of natural things, striving for perfection, and the form of geometric patterns has also formed a rule, which has been passed down from generation to generation in the form of fixed patterns, making the art of Dong brocade more and more mature. It is this kind of programmed traditional pattern that makes the Dong brocade culture able to be preserved under the impact of modern civilization for a long time, and the original and mysterious atmosphere always runs through the Dong brocade pattern, which makes it particularly unique in the brocade art of Chinese minorities.

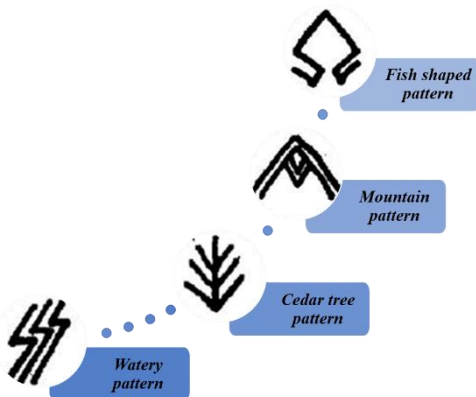


Figure 4. Examples of Dong geometric patterns

In addition to abstract geometric patterns, figurative patterns are also one of the manifestations of the Dong people, mostly used in flower embroidery, the Dong people will allow some of the mythological images in their minds to be omitted to add, but still retain their relative shape of the state of the common phoenix and bird patterns, dragons, butterflies, people, horses, war horses, geese and so on, as shown in Figure 5. Due to the limitations of the process, we can also see traces of geometry in these figurative images.

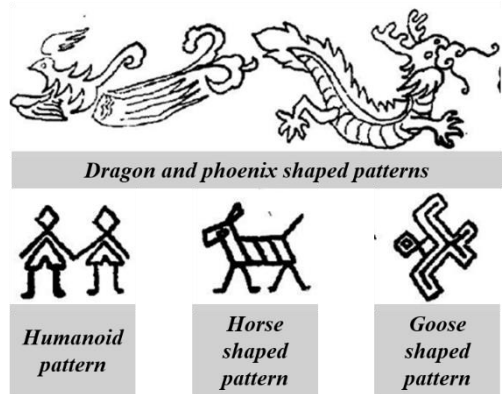


Figure 5. Examples of Dong's figurative patterns

The motifs of Dong's costumes are mostly derived from folklore, which depicts the natural phenomena of Dong's life and historical myths and legends and are full of philosophy. Dong motifs can be broadly categorized into animal motifs, plant motifs, natural celestial motifs, and geometric motifs. Embroidery and brocade weaving are the two main crafts of the Dong people. Embroidery is relatively delicate and complex, changing flexibly according to the creator's ideas, while brocade weaving, due to the limitations of the warp and weft threads of the loom, produces a slightly more concise pattern compared to embroidery, and the colors are not as rich as those of embroidery patterns. Even the color brocade is not as colorful as the embroidery patterns.

Dong brocade is a kind of emblem passed down from generation to generation, which interprets the long history of the Dong people, remembers the ancestors and national beliefs of the Dong people, and recalls the homeland and migration trajectory of the Dong people. While enjoying the beautiful patterns of different Dong brocades, we can unveil the mysterious interviews of the Dong people, see the historical trajectory of the Dong people from the ancient Luo and Yue people to a new ethnic group nowadays, and listen to the Dong brocades telling the beautiful legends, history, and culture

of the Dong people from the Dong countryside. Also therefore each pair of Dong patterns of artistic style and overall image and other ethnic patterns have an essential sense of difference. Dong plain brocade and Dong colored brocade, as shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Dong plain brocade and Dong colored brocade

The Dong people's patterns are very bold in their use of color, often using a lot of bright colors such as big red and peach red, supplemented by small areas of tonal colors. Strong contrasting colors are also commonly used in Dong patterns. Dong costumes are usually made of shiny black cloth, for example, the patterns on backpacks and aprons are embroidered with bright red or green velvet threads, to achieve a strong visual effect and create a cheerful, festive, and enthusiastic feeling. After talking about contrasting colors, Dong craftsmen will also cleverly add blending colors when using contrasting colors, they use orange, pink, purple, and other such colors with high purity and complementary colors, for example, purple with blue, making the picture primary and secondary, colorful and colorful.

Protection and transmission of cultural symbols

4.1 The Historical Evolution of Cultural Symbols in Dong Clothing

Since ancient times, the Dong people have believed that "everything has a spirit" (Zhonghai, 2023), so to get the blessing and protection of the gods, the Dong people often create patterns of this "everything" and use them in their costumes, architectural vessels, and other things they see.

Positive, undaunted by difficulties, and full of beautiful visions of all things around them, they have a positive attitude toward life and have therefore derived many legends and patterns that express their ideals and aspirations. Such as "birds facing the phoenix", "Luan and phoenix sunrise", "two dragons grabbing treasure", "butterflies love flowers", "Dragon and Phoenix Auspiciousness", etc. There are also "Entertaining the God" and "Sacrificing Sa" to express the piety of sacrifices, and there are also totems expressing the love of life, such as in addition, there are also totems that express the love of life, such as "cockfighting", "bullfighting" and so on. The traditional Dong motifs of "Flying Dragon Playing with Pearls" and "Double Dragons Grabbing Treasure" are shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Examples of Dong traditional patterns

In addition, ethnic customs and historical experiences are also important sources of cultural symbols of Dong patterns. The patterns on the buildings, utensils, and clothes of the Dong people carry a memorable history, celebrating the excellent traditions of the nation and hoping to pass them on to future generations. For example, the Dong people have recorded the story of the double-goat drum pattern. Legend has it that when the Dong villages were attacked by the enemy, the Dong people used the trick of an empty city to confuse the enemy by hanging the double goat on the drum and letting it struggle and beat the drum. To glorify the high wisdom of the ancient Dong people who skillfully fought against the enemy, Dong women wove the pattern of the two goats beating the drums into the Dong brocade so that the descendants could pass on the wisdom, kindness,

diligence, and harmony of the Dong people. It also reflects the beautiful hope of the Dong people for equality and against oppression.

The Dong patterns are rich in symbolism, interpreting the long history stories and unique traditional culture of the Dong people, as well as expressing the attitude of every Dong person's life and carrying the love and meaning of every Dong person.

Although the Opium War opened the door to modern China, it also changed people's lifestyles and living conditions, causing social classes to begin to change accordingly. However, due to the relatively close geographical environment of the Sanjiang Dong region, it was not until around 1912 that the class changes in the region began to change slightly along with the development of politics, economy, culture, and art. However, during the Republican period, Sanjiang was not much affected by class changes, including after the founding of New China, compared with the Han Chinese, the social class changes in the Sanjiang Dong region were not particularly obvious, and the class nature of the Dong clothing patterns was naturally not obvious either. The Dong people have been a very light social class since ancient times, which may have a certain relationship with the insufficient development of the feudal economy in their national society, which also retained the characteristics of Dong dress patterns in this period, making the class of their dress patterns have not been reflected.

Although the geographical environment of the Dong Autonomous Region is relatively closed, it is far from the so-called "paradise". Since the Republic of China period, the social situation has been changing, and a lot of Han Chinese or people of other nationalities have migrated or fled to this area to avoid the war and chaos, and brought their own national culture, which to a certain extent has influenced the people of the Dong ethnic minority, and has made their culture begin to merge with the diverse cultures of various ethnic groups. The culture of the Dong has begun to merge with the

diversified cultures of various ethnic groups. Especially after the founding of the State, the Dong people have been living together with Miao, Han, Shui, Buyei, and other ethnic groups for a long time, making this phenomenon of multicultural integration of ethnic groups more and more obvious. Coupled with the fact that the state introduced several policies on ethnic integration during this period, the Dong people began to frequently interact with people of other ethnic groups, and to exchange and learn from each other, influence each other, promote each other, and develop together in their daily production and life, and in the way they dressed and ate, leading to an increase in the number of multicultural factors in the traditional culture of the Dong people. This fusion of national cultures naturally affects the changes in the Dong dress patterns, making the Dong dress patterns also absorb the factors of various national cultures. It can be said that the multi-cultural fusion between Dong and other ethnic groups has influenced the development of Dong costume patterns, which determines that their national costume patterns are characterized by a certain degree of cultural compatibility.

4.2 Inheritance and Development of Traditional Cultural Symbols

Against the background of the replacement of the agrarian civilization by the modern industrial civilization, the internal inheriting power of the "originality" of the national costume production has gradually declined, and the phenomenon of "having a transmitter but no inheritor" has led to the intangible cultural heritage becoming a unidirectional act of the transmitter, at this time. At this time, a group of "exogenous" inheritors collects, organizes, processes, creates, and improves the intangible cultural heritage from the periphery of the culture in the role of a cultural protector, which makes the intangible cultural heritage survive to a certain extent, but the products of the national culture, including national costumes, are rooted in the soil of a specific national culture and are cultural matters that exist in a specific group of

people. But national cultural products, including national costumes, are rooted in specific national cultural soil and exist in specific people's cultural matters, which cannot exist independently from culture and cultural subjects, therefore, it is the key to the continuation of national cultural veins and national cultural genes to raise the successors from the national "originality" to take up the mission of passing down and spreading the national costumes. National and local governments have begun to realize the crisis and participate in the protection, the establishment of local craft workshops, national culture, and national handicrafts into classroom teaching, and cultivating excellent "origin" successor has become one of the key points of the work of non-legacy.

The Dong women have passed down the complete handmade skills of spinning, weaving, and embroidery, which have a long history and are rich in Dong culture, to the present day. It takes a year to make Dong costumes, as each of

its processes is affected by the seasons, and more than 30 procedures are needed from weaving, spinning, embroidery, and drawing patterns until the completion.

Nowadays, there is still a group of folk craftsmen who can dye cloth and make clothes distributed in all villages and hamlets, as shown in Table 1, but the younger generation of Dong women's mastery of the traditional clothing crafts of this ethnic group is not optimistic, especially the inheritance of the dress skills. Nowadays, the social evaluation index for judging whether a girl is skillful or not has been weakened to negligible, therefore, the inheritance between family members, such as mothers and daughters, which was common in the past, has gradually collapsed, and the craftsmanship training center in the context of the new era has become a very important way for the inheritance of the Dong traditional clothing-making skills and the cultivation of the national aesthetic sense.

Table 1. Catalog of Folk Craftsmen in Traditional Clothing-Making Techniques

Name	Age	Current residence	Mastery of the craft
Wu Xingyu	38	Hunan Passage	Production of traditional clothing, embroidery
Su Changlan	32	Hunan Yatonbao	Production of traditional clothing, embroidery
Lan Yuanyuan	33	Zaida Village, Guangxi	Production of traditional clothing, embroidery
Shi Mingjuan	36	Cenbun Village, Guangxi	Production of traditional clothing, embroidery
Pan Nai Zhengyue	56	Guangxi Zalongzhai	Making traditional clothes, pleated skirts, embroidery, dyeing, and weaving of cloth
Pan Zhengchun	30	Guangxi Dudong Village	Production of traditional clothing, embroidery, dyeing, and weaving of cloth
Wu Meinong	63	Gaoxiu Village, Guangxi	Making traditional clothing, pleated skirts, embroidery, dyeing fabrics
Lu Qianliang	65	Zhaoxing, Guizhou	Making traditional clothes, pleated skirts, embroidery, dyeing, and weaving of cloth
Zhang Zefen	40	Leli, Guizhou	Making traditional dresses, pleated skirts, embroidery
Chen Xiuzheng	30	Zengchong, Guizhou	Production of traditional clothing, embroidery
Yang ChunYi	56	Kouzhai Village, Guizhou	Production of traditional clothing, embroidery, dyeing, and weaving of cloth
Wu Nai Xianguo	60	Panli Village, Guizhou	Making traditional clothes, pleated skirts, embroidery, dyeing, and weaving of cloth
Liang Naitang	72	Dingdong Village, Guizhou	Making traditional clothes, pleated skirts, embroidery, dyeing, and weaving of cloth
Wu Guilin	47	Xiaohuang Village, Guizhou	Making traditional clothes, pleated skirts, embroidery, dyeing, and weaving of cloth

Wu Nai Minsheng	51	Gaozeng Village, Guizhou	Making traditional clothes, pleated skirts, embroidery, dyeing, and weaving of cloth
Wu Yonghua	45	Pingjie Village, Guizhou	Making traditional clothes, pleated skirts, embroidery, dyeing, and weaving of cloth

In Guizhou, Hunan, Guangxi, and other places, the inheritors hold regular monthly training activities, organizing women from adjacent villages to focus on learning and exchanging skills. For example, the representative inheritors of Guangxi's intangible cultural heritage "Of Dong embroidery", with the support of the local government, jointly built the "Sanjiang Dong Embroidery Museum", which is not only a platform for the display of Dong embroidery works, but also a training center for inheritance and learning. The museum regularly organizes a series of activities such as Dong embroidery culture learning, skill exchange, study, and discussion, encouraging members to pass on traditional clothing skills and culture, with Tongle Township as the center, radiating to the surrounding Liangkou Township, Fulu Township, and Dong women in Dudong Township. Under the leadership of the inheritors, their Dong embroidery works are sold both at home and abroad, and they have realized family income through their ancient embroidery skills. As people's awareness of ethnic clothing and culture gradually increases, organizations with the nature of training centers will be a new mode of non-genetic inheritance. Figure 8 shows an inheritor of intangible cultural heritage in Qiandongnan, Guizhou Province, demonstrating the production process of Dong embroidery.



Figure 8. The inheritor is showing the production process of Dong embroidery works

The inheritance of dress cannot be separated from the inheritance and protection of dress skills. The inheritance of dress skills must be a living inheritance, a dynamic inheritance, that is, it requires human participation, and it is necessary to promote the protection and inheritance of dress skills through skill training for non-hereditary inheritors, local people, and so on. For example, the Cultural Center of Rongjiang County, Qiandongnan Miao, and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province, is committed to expanding the population of traditional handicraft inheritors and providing training and education for them. In addition to recommending the inheritors to participate in the provincial and state training programs for one million talents, the cultural center also organizes "Miao Batik, Embroidery and Costume Training", "Miao Batik, Embroidery and Costume Training", "Miao Batik, Embroidery and Costume Training", "Miao Batik, Embroidery and Costume Training", "Miao Batik, Embroidery and Costume Training", "Miao Batik, Embroidery and Costume Training", "Miao Batik, Embroidery and Costume Training", "Miao Batik, Embroidery and Costume Training", "Miao Batik, Embroidery and Costume Training", and "Miao Costume Training". "Miao Batik, Embroidery, and Costume Training", "Dong

Batik, Embroidery and Costume Training" and "Ethnic Crafts Training" were also organized in Miao villages, and Dong villages in Guizhou, Zhai Artemisia, Xinghua, Liangwang, Langdong, Tashi and Pingjiang, to encourage the public to acquire new skills and apply them to costumes.

The protection of dress objects and the inheritance of dress skills are external and material inheritance, while the inheritance of cultural connotation is internal and belongs to the spiritual level, in which the origin of patterns and symbols occupy a larger proportion. Such as dragon worship and dragon pattern, fish worship, and fish pattern, seek good luck and good fortune pattern, these patterns do not appear out of thin air, but the Dong people in long-term social practice and preserved, if not protected and inherited, it is easy to lead to the loss of the inner meaning of the dress, but only material level of the empty shell.

The inheritance and development of the traditional culture of Dong clothing is a long-term exploration process, how to effectively pass on its characteristics and cultural connotations, must require year after year of effort, I hope that the government can work together with the people, to increase the work, and actively explore more ways to lead the people of the Dong ethnic minority to realize the inheritance and development of their national costumes.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed in depth the origin and connotation of Dong costumes in Qiandongnan as well as the analysis, protection, and inheritance of traditional cultural symbols. Through the in-depth study of Dong costumes, we find that this carrier of cultural heritage is not

only a decorative object but also a vivid embodiment of Dong culture based on its rich historical background and profound cultural connotation.

By analyzing the history and cultural connotations of Dong costumes, we find that these costumes are not only a kind of wearing tool but also an expression of the Dong people's own culture, beliefs, and way of life. This profound cultural connotation makes the Dong costumes colorful in both form and meaning and becomes part of the cultural heritage of the Dong people. However, in today's society, facing the impact of modernization and the challenge of cultural diversity, we need to take effective measures to protect and pass on the rich cultural symbols contained in the Dong costumes, to ensure the inheritance and development of this valuable cultural heritage.

As an important form of cultural expression, Dong costumes are not only a part of the life of the Dong people but also a carrier of rich cultural connotations and profound historical memories. Through the in-depth study of its origin, connotation, and cultural symbols, we have gained a deeper understanding of the uniqueness of Dong culture. In modern society, we should pay attention to the protection and inheritance of cultural symbols to ensure that the important cultural heritage of Dong costumes can be inherited and developed in the future. At the same time, this study also provides useful inspiration for the protection and inheritance of other ethnic cultures. By strengthening the knowledge and dissemination of cultural symbols, we can better protect and pass on the rich and colorful human cultural heritage, and promote communication and communion among different cultures.

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