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Study on the Historical Evolution and Artistic Characteristics of Fish Skin Culture of Hezhe Nationality in Heilongjiang River Basin

Jingxuan Feng^{1*}

1.Jimei University

Abstract

Heilongjiang Province is the northernmost region in China, which is rich in water system resources, forest resources and wetland resources, and has given birth to a unique minority-Hezhe nationality. Hezhe peoples fish skin making skills were listed in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage lists, and Hezhe peoples marriage customs and Wurigong conference were listed as national intangible cultural heritage items, among which Hezhe peoples "Imakan" was listed in the "Intangible Cultural Heritage List in Urgent Need of Protection" by UNESCO. Taking Hezhe nationality as the research object, this paper first introduces the development process of Hezhe nationality, then analyzes the artistic characteristics and significance of Hezhe nationality fish skin painting according to the field investigation, and finally puts forward corresponding solutions from the perspective of cultural inheritance.

Keywords: Hezhe culture, fish skin painting, fish skin costume

Development of Hezhe Nationality

1. The origin of Hezhe nationality

Jiejinkou Township of Hezhe nationality is located 45 kilometers northeast of Tongjiang City, Heilongjiang Province, facing Russia across Heilongjiang River. The mileage of the highway from Jiamusi to Jiejinkou is

about 260 kilometers, and all along the way are great plains except for a few hills. Therefore, the topographic features of Jiejin Mountain are very prominent in Sanjiang Plain. The climate here belongs to cold temperate continental climate, which is greatly affected by the Siberian cold current^[1]. The severe cold winter causes ice and snow to be covered in ice for several months, which restricts the production activities of Hezhe people and makes their living conditions more difficult. Therefore, Hezhe people are one of the ancient ethnic groups with a long history and a small population in China. The ancestors of Hezhe nationality who lived in Heilongjiang, Songhua River and Wusuli River basins in northeast China came from ethnic groups in diverse and multi-flow areas. The Hezhe ethnic group originated more than 6,000 years ago in the period of Mishan New Kailiu. According to the traditional ancient historical view, there are three basic families in Northeast China: Sushen, Zimanu and Donghu^[2]. Among them, the "Sushen clan" came from Sushen in the pre-Qin Dynasty to Yilou in the Han and Wei Dynasties, Wuji in the Northern Dynasties, Heishui Mohe in the Sui and Tang Dynasties, and then Jurchen and Hezhe all came from this.

2. The life and utensils of primitive Hezhe people

The Hezhe people make a living by fishing and hunting, and fishing and hunting are the main ways of production and life of the Hezhe people. According to the Origin and Origin of Manchurian Clans, "Those who travel thousands and five hundred miles northeast of Ningguta and live on

both sides of the Songhua River are called Hezhe Kala; Those who travel four or five hundred miles northeast, living in Ussuri, Songhua, and Mixed Three Rivers on the left and right, are also called Hezhekala, even in the country of dogs. ”^[3]The life of the primitive Hezhe ancestors mainly took fish in rivers and wild animals in land forests as their main food sources. They steamed food by natural fire and kept kindling for heating. Since Sushen, with the development of society, Hezhe people have gradually improved their fishing and hunting tools by relying on rich imagination and creativity in their long-term production and life, and their productivity has been continuously improved by using fish bones, fish bones, fish skins, animal skins, animal bones, wood cutting, leather cracking and natural products to make living utensils.

3. Ancient Hezhe peoples beliefs

The Hezhe people mainly believe in shamanism. Shamanism is divided into three schools: River God School, Unicorned Dragon School and Jiangshen School. The distinction between the three schools is marked by the antlers on the hat (Figure 1). The number of antlers branches and forks on the shamans hat mostly represents the faction and grade of the figure. Among them, the antlers on the hat of the River God School are one on the left and right; The antlers on the hat of the unicorned dragon school are two on the left and right; There are three antlers on the left and right side of the River God Sects divine hat. The number of forks on the antler indicates

the level and ability of the shaman. Shamanism has complicated divine clothes, ornaments and tools, which cover it with mysterious colors. The Hezhe people pray for the blessing and blessing of the gods through various ceremonies and belief activities to ensure the prosperity of the tribe and the smooth progress of life. At the same time, the beliefs of Hezhe people also incorporate shamanism elements. Shaman priests play an important role in the tribe, playing multiple functions such as contacting people and gods, solving problems, praying for blessings and offering sacrifices, etc. These belief activities are not only religious practices, but also a unique and rich cultural heritage in Hezhe culture.



Figure 1 Hezhe people dance the deer god dance

4、 Hezhe Epic-Imakan

"Imakan" is known as the epic of Hezhe nationality, which is the intangible cultural heritage of the world and represents the essence of Hezhe nationality's literature and art. "Imakan" is the rap literature of Hezhe nationality, which is popular in Hezhe nationality inhabited areas in Heilongjiang Province. The singing music of "Imakan" has distinctive

national characteristics, and it is a long narrative poem handed down from mouth to mouth by Hezhe people. There are more than 50 classics, and it is known as the living fossil of primitive language art in northern Asia.^[4]“Imakan” has no instrumental accompaniment, speaks one paragraph and sings another, the language rhymes, is concise and bright, vigorous and simple, catchy and full of rhythm. Epic imakan is a performance form that combines rap and singing with oral narration. It focuses on expressing heroic and legendary contents, and singing as a supplement to express lyrical contents. It is a comprehensive literary expression form that integrates language and poetry, cultural representation and oral performance context.^[5]By reproducing the rap scene of Hezhe Imakan and listening to the rap clips of Imakan, Imakan Courtyard shows the magical charm of Imakan, and makes it inherit and spread. In 2006, Imakan of Hezhe nationality was listed as the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage protection projects, and in 2011, it was approved by UNESCO to be included in the "List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Urgent Need of Protection".

Second, the artistic characteristics of traditional patterns and costumes of Hezhe nationality

(1) Patterns and patterns of fish skin paintings

The fish skin culture of Hezhe nationality is rooted in rich natural resources and unique national traditions. As an important part of fish skin

culture, the plants, animals, buildings and symbolic elements in Hezhe fish skin patterns have unique artistic charm.

1、Plant Elements in Fish Skin Paintings

The plant elements used in the fish skin paintings of Hezhe nationality are rich and diverse, and the plant elements are mainly trees. Natural forms such as wood, flowers and plants appear. Trees are usually used as backgrounds or borders, in which details such as branches and leaves, trunks, etc. are carefully depicted. They believe that trees are guardians of the earth, providing shelter and food for animals and humans. Therefore, trees are not only the background of the picture, but also the awe and praise of nature and life in Hezhe fish skin paintings. Common aquatic plants such as reeds, aquatic plants, lotus flowers, etc. (Figure 2), these elements reflect Hezhe peoples love for nature and lifestyle. As an aquatic plant, lotus is deeply loved by Hezhe people for its elegant shape and pure color. In fish skin paintings, lotus is often depicted vividly and colorfully, which reflects Hezhe peoples pursuit and praise of natural beauty. The integration of plant elements into fish skin paintings not only enriches the pattern content of fish skin paintings, but also plays a decorative and embellishing role in artistic expression, adding unique charm to the inheritance and development of Hezhe culture.

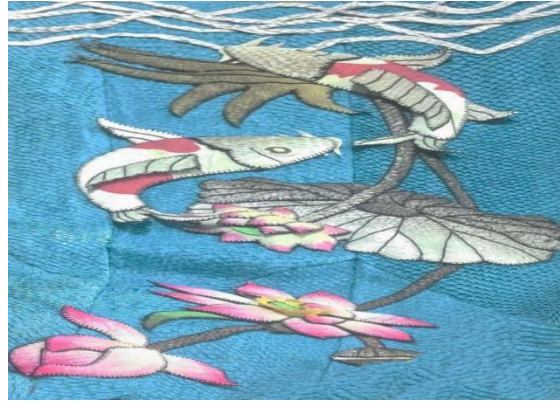


Fig. 2 Hezhe plant ornamentation

2、 Animal Elements in Fish Skin Paintings

The animal elements of Hezhe fish skin painting patterns not only contain local unique animals

Plants also reflect Hezhe peoples awe and love for nature. Animal elements play an important symbolic role in the Hezhe fish skin culture, and each animal has a specific symbolic meaning, among which fish symbolizes harvest and abundance (Figure 3). Hezhe people are hunting people, and bears are one of their important hunting objects. Bear patterns have special significance in the culture of Hezhe people. They respect bears as "Mafa", which means to protect their descendants from hunger. Bear patterns often appear on Hezhe peoples costumes and handicrafts. Tigers have a special position in Hezhe culture. They call tigers "ancestors" and regard them as symbols of mountain gods. Before hunting, Hezhe people worship the mountain gods to pray for successful hunting and safe return, so tiger stripes often appear on Hezhe costumes and sacrificial articles. These animal elements are depicted and carefully crafted by the skillful hands of Hezhe

artists, forming a unique fish skin painting artwork, which has become a treasure in the treasure house of Chinese culture and art.



Fig. 3 Hezhe animal ornamentation

3、 Architectural Elements in Fish Skin Paintings

In fish skin paintings, some architectural elements will be used. Architectural elements usually refer to the use of Fish skin to depict the features and forms of various buildings. Outline the outline and structure of the building on the canvas prepared in advance. According to the designed composition, cut the fish skin into fragments that conform to the shape of the building with guillotine. Sometimes, not only fish skin can be painted but also fish bones can be used to paint. (Figure 4) The rocks under Diaoyutai Bridge in Jiejn Mountain are designed and cut on fishbones, then adjusted in shape, size and direction, then collaged and combined fishbones, and finally completed the decoration of the picture. Painting with fish bones of Hezhe people is a unique artistic expression of this nation. It not only embodies the profound fish culture of Hezhe people, but also shows the superb

artistic skills and creativity of Hezhe people.



Figure 4 Diaoyutai, Jinshan, Street

4、Line elements in fish skin painting

The lines in fish skin paintings are rich and diverse, including straight lines, curves, wavy lines, etc. Straight lines represent firmness and stability, arcs symbolize softness and flow, and circles represent harmony and completeness. These lines are intertwined and overlapped in the picture, forming a unique visual effect. Changes in the thickness, length and density of lines not only enhance the layering of the picture, but also make the picture more vivid and lively. The lines in the fish skin painting can not only decorate the picture, but also record the time, and record the date and month by combining and arranging the lines. According to Sun Yulin, the inheritor of Hezhe culture, Hezhe people used the "Millennium Calendar" to record time in the early days (Figure 5). The Millennium Calendar used upper and lower wires to form two semicircles to divide time. The upper wire was covered with 12 small wooden strips to record the month, and the lower wire was covered with 30 small wooden strips to record the date.

Every month, the small wooden blocks on the upper wire were moved downward; Every day, move the wooden block on the wire below down a small wooden block. Through the meticulous use of symbolic elements, Hezhe fish skin paintings are not only rich in levels and depth in artistic expression, but also reflect Hezhe peoples understanding and pursuit of life.

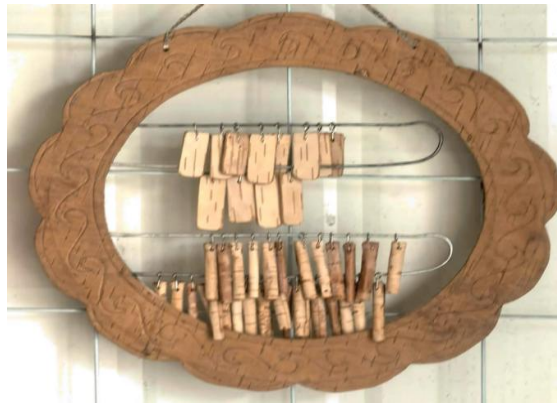


Fig. 5 Millennium Calendar of Hezhe Nationality

(2) Fish skin clothing

The production of fish skin costumes of Hezhe nationality is one of the traditional craft forms of Hezhe nationality. Hezhe fish skin clothes mainly use silver carp, carp, salmon, white fish, grass carp, Zheluo fish, catching fish and many other kinds as raw materials. After catching fish, Hezhe people first peel off the fish skin and dry it or dry it by a fire, then remove the fish scales, put a groove-shaped wooden anvil under it, and beat it with a bladeless iron axe or a special wooden axe to make it flexible and similar to the feeling of cotton cloth. Called "cooked skin". Cooked fish skin, then spliced into a large sheet with thread according to the pattern, becomes a spare clothing material. When used, it is cut according to the

pattern and size, and sewn with silver carp skin thread. Influenced by Manchu costumes, fish skin clothes are mostly long clothes. During the production process, Hezhe people will also incorporate rich cultural elements and fairy tales, giving each work a unique artistic charm. Hezhe womens costumes are generally dominated by suits, and pants are often decorated with ethnic patterns, which adds to the overall beauty of the costumes, while mens costumes are also dominated by suits, but the upper side of the trousers is in the form of mouth-length.^[6]When getting married, Hezhe people usually embroider soul bird patterns on their costumes. Soul bird symbolizes the resurrection and rebirth of the soul, plays an important role in Hezhe peoples beliefs, and pins their wishes and expectations for a better life for newlyweds (Figure 6). The patterns on Hezhe wedding costumes not only have decorative functions, but also carry profound cultural connotations and implications. Natural elements such as moire and spray symbolize the beauty and strength of nature. Patterns such as soul birds entrust good wishes and expectations for newlyweds. The patterns on Hezhe wedding costumes are colorful and profound, which not only show the aesthetic taste and cultural characteristics of Hezhe people, but also reflect their pursuit and yearning for nature, life and a better life.



Figure 6 Hezhe costumes

III. Inheritance and Development of Hezhe Culture

(1) Current Situation of Hezhe Culture Development

1. Difficulty in inheriting skills

During the investigation in Tongjiang City, it was found that the traditional skills of Hezhe people, such as fish skin making skills and Hezhe language, are mostly in the hands of the older generation of inheritors. However, with the younger generations pursuit and recognition of modern culture, many young people are unwilling to inherit these traditional skills, which leads to a serious aging phenomenon of inheritors^[7]. For example, the number of users of Hezhe language is small, and most of them are elderly people. The younger generation generally uses Chinese, which leads to the inheritance crisis of Hezhe language. Traditional fish skin skills include a complete set of complicated processing processes, and the production processes are cumbersome and interlocking, which requires the maker to have considerable endurance and determination, as well as artistic discrimination and combination. Before the 1950s, most Hezhe people liked

to wear clothes made of fish skin, mainly pants, leggings and long clothes worn by women. Later, due to the complicated production process and high cost, it was gradually replaced by other materials, and this traditional craft was gradually lost.

2. Insufficient cultural communication

Although Hezhe people have rich cultural resources, they still need to be strengthened in promotion and inheritance. First of all, in school education, there is insufficient investment in the education of Hezhe culture. Although some schools have incorporated Hezhe culture into the curriculum, the coverage and depth of the curriculum are limited, and it lacks systematicness and coherence, which leads to the limited understanding of the younger generations own culture, thus affecting the inheritance and dissemination of culture. Secondly, there is less professional training for Hezhe cultural inheritors, which leads to insufficient professionalism and depth of cultural inheritance. Finally, the existing content of Hezhe culture communication is often limited to specific aspects, such as traditional handicrafts, fishing and hunting skills, etc., but there is a lack of comprehensive and in-depth excavation and display of Hezhe culture, and the number of reports and interpretations on the development of Hezhe culture in modern society is small, which makes the outside worlds cognition of Hezhe culture stay in the past.

3、 Limited communication channels

There is a lack of innovation and diversity in the communication mode of Hezhe culture. The communication channels of Hezhe nationality are relatively single, and the traditional stories, songs and skills of Hezhe nationality are mainly spread within the clan through oral inheritance. Although this way retains the originality of culture, it is limited by the number and scope of inheritors, and it is difficult to popularize it on a large scale. In the era of digitalization and networking, the exposure of Hezhe culture in mainstream media is relatively low, and there is a lack of special TV programs, radio programs or online media platforms to fully display and spread Hezhe culture. Hezhe cultural products lack market competitiveness and low market recognition, which makes it difficult to sell and promote cultural products. When publicizing Hezhe products, there is a lack of effective marketing strategies and brand building, which makes it difficult for their products to gain enough exposure and popularity in the market.

Countermeasures for the development of fish skin culture of Hezhe nationality

1、 Inheritance and innovation of skills

First of all, the Hezhe people have rich intangible cultural heritage, such as Imakan rap, Wurigong conference, fish skin painting production, etc. These traditional skills have been displayed and exchanged in research activities, so that more people can know about the culture of the Hezhe people. For example, in the "Study Saturday" activity held in Sipai Hezhe

Township, Raohe County, the non-genetic inheritors carefully explained and taught relevant skills to the students, so that the students fully felt the charm of non-legacy culture. Secondly, to ensure that the skills of fish skin making are passed down, the older generation of Hezhe fish skin making artists can impart their skills to young people by setting up inheritance bases and mentoring systems. At the same time, young people should be encouraged to innovate on the basis of inheriting tradition, and design and produce more fashionable and practical fish skin products in combination with modern aesthetics and market demand. Finally, the non-genetic inheritors of Hezhe nationality can broadcast live on social media and pass on their skills, which is a modern and innovative way. In the live broadcast, the non-genetic inheritors demonstrated the specific production process of Hezhe fishskin paintings and fishskin costumes, and told the cultural characteristics and historical stories of Hezhe, attracting the interest of young people and letting them have an in-depth understanding of the production technology and cultural connotation of Hezhe.

2. Popularization of culture and education

First of all, set up courses about Hezhe culture in the school curriculum, such as Hezhe history, cultural customs, language, art, etc., so that students can fully understand Hezhe culture. Secondly, integrate Hezhe culture with other disciplines, such as Chinese, history, geography, art, etc., so that students can feel the charm of Hezhe culture in different disciplines.

Thirdly, the school sets up Hezhe cultural interest groups or associations to attract students who are interested in Hezhe culture to participate, and regularly organizes activities to deepen students love for Hezhe culture. Finally, the Hezhe nationality promotes the spread and development of its fish skin culture by strengthening exchanges and cooperation with other nationalities and regions^[8]。 There are close ties between Hezhe nationality and Nanai nationality and other ethnic groups. For example, tongjiang city organized a Hezhe delegation to participate in the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the founding of Nanai District, Russia, to promote the spread and exchange of Hezhe art. The Hezhe nationality regularly holds national festivals, cultural exhibitions, artistic performances and other activities, and invites different ethnic groups to participate, which not only shows the cultural characteristics of the Hezhe nationality, but also promotes the exchanges among different ethnic groups. By encouraging friendly exchanges between Hezhe nationality and other ethnic groups, such as mutual visits, exchange of experiences and sharing of resources, we can promote cultural exchanges and cooperation and promote the common development of all ethnic groups.

3、 Broaden the route of transmission

Oral legends, stories, songs, etc. of Hezhe nationality are systematically sorted out and recorded to form text or audio materials for easy preservation and dissemination. Hold regular Hezhe cultural festivals or

celebrations to attract more tourists and media attention, and at the same time show the unique charm of Hezhe culture. By producing high-quality documentaries and propaganda films on Hezhe culture, and broadcasting them on TV, Internet and other channels, the popularity and influence of Hezhe culture will be enhanced^[9]。 Develop Hezhe cultural products with market competitiveness, such as tourist souvenirs, handicrafts, etc., to improve the added value and market recognition of products. Strengthen marketing and brand building, and improve product popularity and sales through advertising and promotional activities. This not only brings economic benefits to Hezhe nationality, but also promotes the spread of Hezhe nationality culture to the outside world. Industrialize the fish skin culture of Hezhe nationality, Hezhe culture has been more widely displayed and exchanged, attracted more peoples attention and interest, and promoted the inheritance and popularization of fish skin culture.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, the development of Hezhe nationality is rich and colorful, and it has experienced many historical changes and cultural blending. The traditional patterns of Hezhe nationality are famous for their unique artistic style. The elements such as animal and plant images and architectural symbols appearing in these patterns are not only decorative, but also bear rich cultural connotations and symbolic meanings. The inheritance and development of Hezhe culture is the heart of Hezhe people. They inherit

the wisdom and cultural tradition of their ancestors through word of mouth, and at the same time, they actively explore the road of cultural innovation and development in modern society, and are committed to carrying forward Hezhe culture. Inheriting Hezhe culture is of great significance for preserving history and culture, highlighting national characteristics, protecting cultural heritage, promoting economic development and promoting education, and also allows more people to know and cherish this precious cultural heritage.

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