

Sun Mengyuan¹, Zhang Hongshan²

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¹⁻² School of Design, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou, China

RESEARCH ON THE PROTECTION AND INHERITANCE PATH OF LI ETHNIC FOLK CULTURE

Li ethnicity culture, as an important part of China's ethnic minority culture, carries rich historical memory and unique ethnic characteristics. With the rapid development of the social economy and the continuous advancement of the modernization process, the folk culture of the Li ethnic group is facing problems such as difficulty in inheritance and cultural loss, making the protection and inheritance work particularly actual. This paper takes the folk culture of the Li ethnic group as the research object, systematically analyzes its cultural connotation, characteristics and value, and discusses the achievements and existing problems in the current process of protection and inheritance.

Keywords: Hainan Li nationality folk songs; music culture; artistic characteristics; inheritance and protection; national music.

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Сунь Менюань¹, Чжан Хуншань²

¹⁻² Институт дизайна Хайнаньского научно-технического профессионального университета, Хайнань, Китай

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ЗАЩИТЫ И НАСЛЕДОВАНИЯ ЭТНИЧЕСКОЙ НАРОДНОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ ЛИ

Культура национальности Ли, являясь важной частью культуры этнических меньшинств Китая, обладает богатой исторической памятью и уникальными этническими характеристиками. С быстрым развитием социальной экономики и непрерывным развитием процесса модернизации фольклор этнической группы Ли сталкивается с такими проблемами, как трудности наследования и культурные потери, что делает защиту и наследование особенно актуальными. В настоящей статье в качестве объекта исследования рассматривается фольклор этнической группы Ли, систематически анализируются ее культурная коннотация, характеристики и ценность, а также обсуждаются достижения и существующие проблемы в нынешнем процессе охраны и наследования.

Ключевые слова: фольклорные песни национальности Ли; музыкальная культура; художественные особенности; наследование и защита; национальная музыка.

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Authors:

¹ **Sun Mengyuan** – Lecturer at the School of Design, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology.
Sunm@hvust.edu.cn

Авторы:

Сунь Менюань – преподаватель Института дизайна Хайнаньского научно-технического профессионального университета.



² **Zhang Hongshan** – Ph. D. Associate Professor at the School of Design, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology.
zms3003@hvust.edu.cn

Чжан Хуншань – кандидат филологических наук, доцент Института дизайна Хайнаньского научно-технического профессионального университета.



The Li people are one of the important ethnic minorities in southern China. They mainly live in the central and southern part of Hainan Province. The folk culture here has a long history. The Li culture has a unique ethnic style and regional characteristics. Their culture covers many fields such as language, clothing, food, festivals, weddings and funerals, religious beliefs, and folk art. This is an inseparable part of the diverse culture of the Chinese nation. With the continuous acceleration of modernization and the rapid impact of globalization and urbanization, the traditional folk culture of the Li ethnic group has faced unprecedented challenges. The social and economic structure has changed, the younger generation's cognition of their own ethnic culture has gradually weakened, some traditional customs are in crisis of extinction, the impact of foreign cultures has continued to intensify, the Li ethnic folk culture is facing an identity dilemma in the process of inheritance and is gradually approaching the fringes. According to the “Hainan Statistical Yearbook 2024”, there are about 1.6 million Li people in Hainan Province. Accounting for 13 percent of the province's total population, about 70 percent of them live in rural areas where the folk culture is still relatively well-preserved.

1. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LI PEOPLE

The Li people are one of the oldest ethnic minorities in southern China. They mainly live in the central and southern part of Hainan Province. Archaeological and ethnological studies suggest that the origin of the Li people can be traced back to the ancient Baiyue people. They are the result of the integration and development of the descendants of the Baiyue who moved southward with the local indigenous people. The ancestors of the Li people have a long history on Hainan Island, dating back to the late Neolithic Age. At that time, there was

already a relatively stable agricultural production and settled life. Historical documents describe the story of the Han Dynasty. Ancient books such as “Records of the Grand Historian” and “History of the Han Dynasty” mention the “Luoyue” and “Li people” of Hainan Island, who were the ancestors of the Li people. In the Tang and Song dynasties, the Central Plains culture gradually spread and economic exchanges became frequent. The social structure of the Li people began to take shape and the culture began to take shape. The Yuanhe County Atlas of the Tang Dynasty records that “there are Li people in Qiongzhou”. At that time, the Li people were officially recorded as an independent ethnic group. In the Song Dynasty, the settlements of the Li people gradually expanded and became larger. The Li people gradually formed the current distribution pattern of living in places such as Wuzhishan, Baisha, Changjiang and Dongfang, as recorded in “A Brief History of China’s Ethnic Minorities”, the Li people have undergone several migrations in history and split into different dialects such as Ha dialect, Qi dialect, Run dialect, Mei dialect and Jia MAO dialect. Each branch has its own unique language, clothing, customs and religious beliefs. The Li people in the Ha dialect area specialize in brocade weaving techniques, while the Li people in the Mei dialect area preserve traditional boatshaped house architecture. The Overview of China’s Autonomous areas of Ethnic Minorities records that the Li population was about 1.6 million in 2020, accounting for 0.8 % of the total population of ethnic minorities in the country. More than 95 % of them live in Hainan Province, where the geographical environment has shaped the way of life of the Li people. The Li people have long relied on farming, gathering and hunting for a living. Rice farming is their core economic source. On this land, the Li people have created exquisite handicrafts, such as Li brocade, bone hairpins and bamboo weaving, which are both practical and culturally rich. The Li language belongs to the Zhuang-Dong language family and is closely related to Zhuang, Buyi and other languages. The Li language is divided into several dialects, and there are several differences among the dialects. Overall, there is still a high degree of intercommunication. The Li people’s traditional music, dance, festival celebrations and other folk activities have distinct characteristics, such as the ‘March 3rd’ festival and the ‘Ancestral Worship Ceremony’, which reflect their unique cultural features. The Li people believe in nature and their ancestors, and their customs are often closely combined with religious ceremonies, forming a unique culture. In recent years, the state has increasingly emphasized minority cultures, and the Li traditions have been protected and continued, such as Li brocade, which has become a national intangible cultural heritage and a symbol of this ethnic culture. The government promotes education, healthcare and infrastructure in the Li region. These measures ensure the sustainable development of the Li culture. The origin and development of the Li people have gone through a long process. The geographical environment, historical changes and cultural exchanges are all influencing it. The Li people are an important part of China’s ethnic minorities, and their cultural traditions and ways of life are of

2. DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION STATUS OF THE LI ETHNIC GROUP

The Li people are one of China’s ethnic minorities and live in the central and southern part of Hainan Province. They are the original indigenous people of Hainan Island. The Li people are centered around Wuzhishan and scattered in Sanya, Dongfang, Changjiang, Baisha, Qiongzong, Lingshui and other places, which constitute their settlements. According to the China Ethnic Statistical Yearbook and data from the National Bureau of Statistics, by 2023, The population of the Li people is about 1.7 million, which accounts for 5 percent of

Hainan's total population. The majority of the Li people live in the mountainous areas of central and southern Hainan Island. The natural conditions in these areas are relatively closed, and the traditional Li way of life is well preserved here, which provides an important basis for the continuation of Li folk culture. The Li people mainly live in autonomous counties and ethnic townships, such as Baisha Li Autonomous County, Changjiang Li Autonomous County, Qiongzong Li and Miao Autonomous County, Lingshui Li Autonomous County in Hainan Province. These regions enjoy ethnic autonomy in administration and maintain strong independence and integrity in cultural inheritance. In non-autonomous areas such as Sanya City, Dongfang City and Ledong Li Autonomous County, there are also a number of Li people living. Their cultural heritage is less dense and less complete. The Li people mainly live in the tropical rainforest climate zone, which is mainly hilly and mountainous, with complex terrain and relatively inconvenient transportation. Such an environment restricts their communication with the outside world, but helps preserve their cultural traditions better. The Li people mainly live in the hinterland of Hainan Island. Wuzhishan, Limu Mountain and other places, where the mountains and waters remain in their original form and the scenery is unique, laid the foundation for the life, beliefs and art of the Li people. Regarding the population, there are more young people in the Li ethnic group and fewer elderly people and children, which is related to the common "hollowing out" in rural areas. The process of urbanization has accelerated, many Li youth have entered cities for employment or education, and some people from traditional villages have gradually left, which has brought new challenges to the inheritance of Li culture. The population growth of the Li ethnic group has remained stable in recent years. However, factors such as the level of education, medical resources and economic development have led to the need for further improvement in the overall quality of the Li population, and the language usage of the Li people is of great significance. The Li language is the native language of the Li people, belonging to the Sino-Tibetan language family and the Zhuang-Dong language branch. It is still widely used within the Li people. With urbanization, some young people are gradually turning to Mandarin, which poses a certain threat to the inheritance of the Li language. In order to protect and inherit the Li language, the government and all sectors of society have increased investment in Li language education in recent years. Bilingual education courses are offered and Li language teaching is promoted in some areas where the Li people live. The aim is to enhance the identity and mastery of the Li language among the Li youth. The Li people live in specific areas and maintain distinct ethnic characteristics. Their population size, residential distribution and language usage are all closely related to the inheritance of folk culture. In the process of protecting Li culture, we need to pay close attention to these characteristics of population distribution. With the continuous development of modern society, we need to explore more appropriate ways of cultural inheritance.

3. THE CONTENT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF LI ETHNIC FOLK CULTURE

Folk culture is formed by a nation or region over a long period of time. It comes from social life, from production practice, from religious beliefs, from language habits, and from art forms. This culture has distinct local characteristics and ethnic features. It is the accumulation of collective wisdom of a nation and an essential part of the nation's culture. It records the history of the nation. The Li ethnic group, a minority in southern China, sustenance their values and embodies their way of life. Their folk culture is characterized by distinct regional and ethnic traits, which are manifested in areas such as language, clothing,

food, festivals, wedding and funeral customs, religious beliefs and folk art. Scholars divide folk culture into four main categories: material folk, spiritual folk, social folk and language folk. Material folk includes food, clothing, housing and transportation, covering production tools. It includes architectural styles, spiritual customs include religious beliefs, myths and legends, folk art, and social customs involve family structure, marriage system, and social etiquette. The folk culture of the Li people follows the same classification. The traditional clothing of the Li people is mainly made of cotton and linen. The men's clothing is a short jacket with a front opening and wide-leg trousers, and the women often wear tube skirts and jackets. The colors of the clothes are mainly black, blue and red, with geometric patterns and natural patterns on them. These patterns reflect the Li people's worship of nature and their aesthetic concepts, as written in "The Annals of the Li People in Hainan", the Li people have a wide variety of traditional costumes, and the styles of clothes of different branches are quite distinct. The Ha dialect, the Qi dialect, and the Run dialect each have their own characteristics. In terms of diet, the Li people mainly eat rice, along with mountain crops and livestock farming, forming a special diet structure. The Li people's traditional foods such as bamboo tube rice and five-color rice not only have local characteristics but also contain many cultural meanings. The Li people are good at making glutinous rice wine and coconut wine, which they drink daily and are indispensable during festivals. The Li people believe in nature and ancestors. They believe that mountains, water, flowers, grass and trees have a spirit, so they often offer sacrifices to pray for a good year. The Li people have passed down many long-standing myths, legends and folk tales. Stories like "The Legend of Wuzhishan" and "The Origin of Limu Mountain" are the emotional support of the Li people and the manifestation of their cultural identity. In terms of social customs, the Li family structure is dominated by the patrilineal family, the marriage system is stable, the matching of social status is emphasized, the wedding ceremony is grand and solemn, the social etiquette of the Li people is standardized, and the hospitality and respect for the elderly and the young are rich in traditional cultural colors. In terms of language customs, the Li people have their own language – Li, which belongs to the Zhuang-Dong branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family. It is divided into several dialects such as Ha dialect, Qi dialect and Run dialect. Li language is the medium of communication among the Li people and also an important carrier for the inheritance of their ethnic culture. In recent years, the state has paid increasing attention to the protection of minority languages, and the use and inheritance of the Li language have also received attention. Some schools have begun to incorporate the Li language into the classroom, allowing this language to continue. The traditional culture of the Li people is rich and colorful, with a long history and a unique ethnic flavor. We study the definition and classification of folk culture. This provides a clearer view of the characteristics of Li culture, which lays the foundation and points the way for the protection and inheritance of Li culture.

4. MAIN FEATURES OF LI FOLK CULTURE

The folk culture of the Li ethnic group is an important part of the cultures of China's ethnic minorities. It has distinct ethnic characteristics and regional features. This culture has a complex structure. The Li ethnic group is the indigenous ethnic group of Hainan Island. During the long historical development, their folk culture has absorbed elements from the Han culture of Central Plains, the Baiyue culture of Lingnan and the cultures of surrounding ethnic minorities. Ultimately, a unique cultural system has been formed, which has maintained the

independence of Li folk culture, as well as the characteristics of inclusiveness and openness. The ancestors of the Li people drew inspiration from the natural environment and formed a unique system of natural beliefs. Mountains, rivers, animals and plants were all objects of their worship. For example, the common worship of the “Dragon mother” in the traditional beliefs of the Li people shows people ‘reverence and dependence on the power of nature’. The Li people still retain a diverse totem culture. The images of animals such as cows, birds and fish frequently appear in their costumes, utensils and ritual activities. These totems are not only symbols of artistic appreciation, but also important signs of ethnic identity. The Li people have a unique language family and writing system. Li is their native language, belonging to the Zhuang-Dong language family. Li is divided into five dialect areas, including Ha dialect, Qi dialect, Run dialect, Meifu dialect and Kamo dialect. Li carries the historical memory of the Li people and plays an important role in folk literature, ballads and proverbs. The Li people do not have a systematic writing system. The cultural information is passed down through word of mouth and mind. The Li people have a rich variety of festivals and rituals, and traditional festivals are abundant, such as March 3rd, June 6th, and the Spring Festival. The typical example is the March 3rd festival, which is the day when the Li people offer sacrifices to their ancestors. They pray for a bountiful harvest. The festival presents ethnic costumes, songs and dances, and food culture. The Li people preserve ancient rituals, including ancestral worship, marriage, and funeral, which demonstrate religious beliefs and carry social ethics and moral norms. The Li people's handicraft culture is quite exquisite. The Li brocade, weaving and dyeing, and embroidery are particularly notable. Li brocade is a skill that Li women are skilled in, and its unique patterns, colors and weaving methods have made it world-famous. Research shows that Li brocade has more than a hundred patterns, each with a special cultural meaning. For example, the frog pattern represents fertility, the human figure pattern symbolizes ancestor worship, and Li handicrafts such as pottery, bamboo weaving, and wood carving have strong ethnic characteristics. These handicrafts reflect the wisdom and creativity of the Li people, who uphold the concepts of ecology and sustainable development. The production and lifestyle of the Li people are closely related to the natural environment. For a long time, they have adhered to the principle of eating from the mountains and from the water, and the concept of harmonious coexistence between man and nature is deeply rooted in their lives. When working in the fields, the Li people are accustomed to using traditional methods of crop rotation and intercropping to cultivate the land and not depleting its fertility. When hunting and picking wild fruits in the mountains, they usually follow the seasons and take as much as they should. These simple yet profound truths are not only applied to agricultural work, but also incorporated into their folk songs, stories and festival customs. Everyone understands the importance of mutual assistance and cooperation in life. The basic units of Li society are families and villages, and they value collectivism and the values of mutual assistance and cooperation. Villagers support each other in their daily lives and participate in public affairs together, forming a close social network. The marriage system, kinship and power structure of the Li people carry a strong sense of collectivity, such as the “walking marriage” system, a special form of marriage in the Li society that balances individual freedom and group interests, and the eighth is the unique way of passing on language and literature. The folk literature of the Li people, including myths, legends, ballads, stories, etc., mainly relies on oral transmission and is passed down from generation to generation. The Five Finger Mountain Legend and the Flood Myth are classics of Li folk literature. They not only have literary value, but

also carry profound historical culture and national spirit. The ninth point is the localization of education and knowledge transmission. Li education is centered around families and villages. They attach importance to the teaching of practical experience and life skills. In traditional agricultural production, The elders themselves demonstrate and explain, and they pass on knowledge of planting, breeding, construction, etc. to the next generation. The Li people also have a unique form of education called “song education”. They pass on history, morality and common sense of life through singing, which is vivid, interesting and easy to remember and spread. Modern media play a role in traditional culture, the modernization process continues to accelerate, Li folk culture faces new tests and opportunities, television and the Internet are increasingly widely spread, Li culture spreads further, young people begin to pay attention, The introduction of foreign cultures has led to the gradual decline of some traditional customs, and some may even die out. In modern society, how to protect and pass on Li folk culture has become an issue that needs to be addressed. Li folk culture has many characteristics, including nature worship, language and writing, festivals and ceremonies, handicrafts, ecological concepts, collective consciousness, literary inheritance, educational methods, etc. These characteristics make Li culture stand out.

CONCLUSION

Li folk culture is an important part of China's minority culture. It has a long history and unique value. This culture not only promotes Li people to identify themselves, but also enriches the diversity of Chinese culture. Li folk culture is the accumulation of the life of the indigenous people of Hainan Island, including language, clothing, food, festivals, religious beliefs and folk art, etc. Forming a complete and rich cultural system, Li folk culture has profound historical value, and the Li people are among the earliest inhabitants of Hainan Island. The culture of this ethnic group has lasted for thousands of years.

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