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INHERITANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE FOLK PAPER-CUT ART

Abstract. Paper-cut is one of the oldest folk art of Chinese Han nationality. The author assesses the unique artistic form and value of Chinese folk paper-cut art based on a brief summarize of its history, unique artistic style, inheritance and development. It is hoped that the research of this paper may point out a clear direction for the inheritance of Chinese traditional literature and art, thereby developing modern folk paper-cut art with Chinese characteristics.

Keywords: Paper-cut; art; folk; inheritance.

Paper-cut, also known as paper-cut pattern and paper-cuts for window decoration, is one of the intangible cultural heritages in China. Paper-cut art has a long history, however, few classic paper-cut works are preserved, as they are made of fragile materials, therefore, it is urgent to call for people's attention and protection. Some far-sighted artists have been tapping into, gathering up, and collating paper-cut art since the founding of New China. The government of our country also gradually took cultural value of folk art seriously, and take a full range of effective measures to protect and save them.

I Brief introductions of Chinese folk paper-cut

Paper-cut has a long history in China. According to textual research, the earliest form of paper-cut in China appeared in the Shang Dynasty, it was a kind of decorations made of gold and silver foil, leather or silk fabrics. The people in the Western Han Dynasty were found to use hemp fiber to make paper. It is said that Emperor Wu of the Western Han missed Concubine Li, whom he loved most, very
much after she died, so he asked warlocks to cut the image of Concubine Li with hemp paper for the purpose of calling back the spirit of the dead. In 105 AD, thanks to the paper-making developed by Cai Lun, the paper-cut art achieved further development. A gold and silver inlay technology was invented in the Tang Dynasty by making use of paper-cut patterns. It pasted the engraved gold and silver foil on the back of lacquer ware or bronze mirror, and golden patterns would appear on the surface of lacquer ware once the fill-in lacquer was dry. Many written records about paper-cut were found in in the Song Dynasty. People used paper-cut as an ornament for gifts, for examples, some of them was used to decorate colored lanterns or windows. There was a famous folk product called "gauze lamp" in the Ming Dynasty. When the "gauze lamp" was made, paper-cuts was inserted in yarn. Patterns would projected by candlelight as a result. Now people call it "revolving scenic lantern". The paper-cut even presented in the palace of the Qing Dynasty. Black "double-happiness" paper-cut were pasted on the four corners of the wall of the Forbidden City, and they were also pasted on the aisle walls on both sides of the palace. Paper-cut art has been developing and inheriting since its birth. It frequently appears in various folk activities, and enriches our cultural life. It attempts to evoke people's pursuit of life in a unique way, and stands for our Chinese nation's pursuit and yearning for truth, goodness and beauty as well.

II Artistic characteristic of Chinese folk paper-cut

Folk paper-cut is world famous for its unique artistic style. Such an unique artistic feature of folk paper-cut originates from its raw materials(i.e. paper) and its making tools (i.e. scissors and carving knives). 1) In terms of the composition, it changes the object and scene from the three-dimensional image of the three-dimensional space to the two-dimensional plane image of kechu d the space by adopting the head-up composition. It selects the materials cleverly, and sketches the concise lines, as a result, the focus of the picture can be highlighted, and the shadows and highlights can complement each other, and the expression of the works can be enhanced finally. 2) Judging by the color, paper-cut can be classified into single-color paper-cut and multi-color paper-cut. Single-color paper-cut is rather plain while multi-color paper-cut is relatively unique and vivid. 3) Folk paper-cut focuses
on theatrical treatment of image. The themes of folk paper-cut are mainly taken from real life, and most of them reflect the life and things related to the working people. However, it is not only a simple and objective imitation but a subjective exaggeration and deformation of physical images. For example, eyes occupy a large proportion of the characters' facial shapes in many folk paper-cut works. Because eyes are regarded as the most vivid part of the whole face, creators all trend to exaggerate eyes. Folk paper-cut shall reflect the characteristics of objects, have decorative functions, and further showing the creator's desire and ideal for a better life. 4) In terms of the performance of techniques, a good paper-cut work must be created by a stable, accurate and skillful paper-cut techniques. "Be stable" means to exert force evenly, stiffly and flexibly. "Be accurate" means that the creator must hold a knife firmly, and keep the knife upright, so as to make an accurate paper-cut work. "Skillful strength" means the skill in cutting jagged and crescent shapes. However, the creator should focus on the artistic language of the work and the convey of his or her own emotion while creating paper-cut works. Actually, the creation process of folk paper-cut is a process in which creators evolve from the "truth" of real life to the "beauty" of art.

III The exploration of inheritance and development of Chinese Folk paper-cut Art

The social enlightenment function of folk paper-cut art is fully reflected in the process of its inheritance, and people's beliefs and ethical concepts are epitomized by its unique art form. For example, a lot stories told by paper-cut (such as "Yang Warrior" and "Cao Chong weighs the elephants") attempt to deliver the values of "truth, goodness and beauty" and "loyalty, righteousness and filial piety" while decorating people's window. thereby further showing the social function of art and culture. In the meantime, paper-cut culture can meet people's spiritual needs. In some rural areas, traditional working women often express their feelings and place their best wishes through paper-cuts. Paper-cut art has a certain of inheritance value, as it can regulate people's physical and mental health. Therefore, it is necessary to combine its own characteristics to realize the sustainable development of folk paper-cut art during the exploring process of the inheritance and development of such a folk art.
1. We should maintain the unique characteristics of paper-cut culture and show the charm of traditional art. From the author’s point of view, we shall fully understand and understand the aesthetic concepts contained in paper-cut works, and create folk craft works with paper-cut characteristics by combining its folk craft characteristics with design elements in the new period. In addition, we shall also fully make use of the development value of paper-cut art, enrich the connotation of paper-cut, optimize the graphic style of paper-cut, and sublimate the aesthetics of paper-cut art.

2. It is necessary for the folk paper-cut art adapt to the needs of modern aesthetics and keep up with the pace of the times. We shall constantly adjust the development direction of folk crafts based on the original development direction of folk paper-cut art. What’s more, it is necessary to introduce modern aesthetic elements to original artistic aesthetics, and recreated cultural elements. For example, paper-cut creators can take the aesthetic demands of modern people into account when designing works, so that works of art can express more life, personality and perceptual elements, thus better serving the transmission of social and cultural values.

3. We should also abide the laws of the market and clarify the direction of inheritance and development. During the development process of folk arts and crafts, it is necessary to break the traditional folk arts and crafts creation goal based on the concept of “artistic production”, so as to better promote the inheritance and innovation of its artistic characteristics in cultural construction. For example, as the folk paper-cut culture develops gradually, it abandons the traditional creative form with entertainment as the purpose in the past, and turns to building a cultural industry and adapting to market changes. Because the paper-cut works has certain labor value, people can transform them into artistic products. As a result, a transformation from “artistic products to artistic commodities” in the market circulation is successfully realized.

Conclusion
Tradition belongs to the category of development, which changes from the past to the present, and even to the future. It is not fixed at the beginning of national
history, but a constantly developing and changing form. As society and economy keep develops, paper-cut art is also constantly developing. The paper-cut art indicates people's pursuit of truth, goodness and beauty, meanwhile, it makes people love life and art more, and promotes people to discover and create beauty constantly. Therefore, we should inherit and carry forward this traditional folk art with national characteristics, so that it can penetrate our life continuously and go to the world.

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