

The Application Research of Liangshan Yi Nationality Lacquer Design Language in Modern Product Design

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Abstract

The lacquer has lightweight, strong, anti-acid, anti-corrosion and many other practical advantages, but also has a gorgeous texture, colorful artistic qualities. Its double value and profound national artistic charm are loved by domestic and foreign groups. The Yi nationality's unique lacquer art is famous for its quaint patterns, bright colors and exquisite style with ethnic flavor at home and abroad. Exploring the nature of the Yi nationality's lacquer art design language and its application in modern product designs is of important practical significance.

Key words: Yi nationality; Lacquer; Design; Modern product

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INTRODUCTION

In the realm of traditional handicraft art of Chinese national minority, Yi Nationality lacquer has played a role can't be neglected, its unique and exquisite shape, dignified and plain ornamentation, gorgeous and glorious color are the artistic and abstractive expressions of Yi Nationality traditional culture, production, living and

geographic cultural characteristics. It boasts practical and aesthetic dual value, Yi Nationality lacquer shows enormous reference value when conducting researches to our national cultures, and meanwhile, it is very popular by domestic and international vast people. Shocked by economic and multi-cultural development, the cultural content of Yi Nationality lacquer's traditional designs is fade away and eliminated gradually, this requires us researching and analyzing this valuable traditional handcraft, to make it be inherited entirely and carried forward further in the new age.

1. OVERVIEW OF LIANGSHAN YI NATIONALITY LACQUER

1.1 Historic Source

Yi Nationality lives in the forests of large and small Liangshan, they live a nomadic life where there is water and grass, they live in the mountain in summer, enter into the valley in the winter, because they migrate frequently in their lives and in production, fragile or heavy articles of daily use are not appropriate. In the forests rich of natural resources, Yi Nationality ancestors use local materials, cutting wood to make the appliances, and cultivate a living habit of making, using wooden and light vessels and this habit are carrying on as before until now, the using of wooden vessels has settled basis for the arising of Yi Nationality lacquer. After finding and using lacquer among Yi Nationality toilers, it generates wooden appliances which print single black print, which is the primitive form of lacquer.

1.2 Craftsmanship

1.2.1 Material Selecting

Material selection is the basis of lacquer making, in terms of body face, the materials selected are relatively wide, and different materials such as wood, leather, horn, knuckle and so on are used so far, for the sake of

space limitation of this study, this paper will only do brief description to the material selection and making of wooden lacquer.

Wood is the most important body face material used for making Yi Nationality lacquer. Through long term practice, aspen, birch, Rhododendron tree and other trees with suitable wooden structure are more suitable for making lacquer. According to the size of the appliances, Yi Nationality people will choose trees with different size, and then cutting them between the Winter solstice and before the Spring Festival when they are in optimum utilization situation. The timber need to be poached or deeply buried or processed by other means to make them shrink, in order to prevent deformation, cracking and expand service life.

1.2.2 Making

Limited by the productivity, the making of traditional lacquer wooden body face will go through cast iron casting, burning, processing and other steps, developed up to now, the making of wooden body face has shifted to use lathe machine, which is saving time and energy and the shaping is more standard and smoother than before. Painting is the most sophisticated link in making; it will go through “prime lacquer, filling thinly, grinding, filling deeply, regrinding, kermes printing, finishing coat” and seven steps (Hou, 2010). After painting, it shall do further drawing to the body face, which will draw three different stripes in red, blue and black with the tung oil, onyx powder, realgar and cinnabar, subsequently printing thick-layer transparent raw lacquer to encapsulate and grind to rubdown the surplus and extruded pigments, then print a thin-layer clear lacquer, finally conduct a dry in the shade for a period in the dedicated earth kiln, then it can make beautiful and durable Yi Nationality lacquer.

2. ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

2.1 Ornamentation

Art is deriving from real life, Yi Nationality has created unique pattern decorations with multiple forms and being full of national art style rooted in the nature, the lacquer ornamentation with different patterns reflects Yi Nationality's historic culture, religious faith, living emotions and other things from the side, which boasts relatively higher artistic aesthetic value. To sum up, it can be divided into the following types.

2.1.1 Natural Ornamentation

The ornamentation that reflects the changing of the Nature, mountains and the earth and so on are: sun ornamentation, moon ornamentation, mountain range ornamentation, cloud ornamentation, star ornamentation, wave ornamentation and so on.

2.1.2 Plant Ornamentation

The ornamentation patterns reflect the plants are: Flower ornamentation, rapeseed ornamentation, melon

ornamentation, garlic clove ornamentation, fiddlehead ornamentation and so on, the drawing of the plant has presented the beautiful wishes of Yi Nationality to the rich and abundant lives. For example, the rapeseed ornamentation presents the seeds of the oilseed rape, means the wish to good harvest.

2.1.3 Animal Ornamentation

Ornamentation patterns reflect animals are: goat eye ornamentation, cleat ornamentation, cow horn ornamentation, horse teeth ornamentation, comb ornamentation and snake, worm, fish and bird and other patterns. Uniquely, the using of one pattern in animal ornamentation patterns will represent the entire group of the animal represented by that ornamentation pattern.

2.1.4 Living Ornamentation

The ornamentation patterns reflect production and living are: fishnet ornamentation, steel ornamentation, pane ornamentation, spearhead ornamentation, fingernail ornamentation, twine shelf ornamentation, copper cash ornamentation and so on. The pane ornamentation shows the pane in ancient Yamen; fishnet ornamentation shows the longitude and latitude lines of the braided wire of the fishnet; spearhead ornamentation shows the fighting tool in ancient; steel ornamentation shows the ignition tool when burning. The forming of these ornamentation patterns are all closely bound up the articles of daily use or living environment of Yi Nationality. It is an expression of cherishing to the living resources in lacquer before of living in the mountain and the shortage of living resources.

2.2 Molding

There is a wide range of Yi Nationality lacquer with numerous moldings, they can be divided into the following types according to their molding.

2.2.1 Tableware: Mainly Used to Hold The Soup, Rice, Meat and Dishes

According to their function, they can be divided into wooden helmet, trough, trencher, wooden bowl, leather cup, wood spoon and so on.

(a) Wooden helmet, which is called “couzou” in Yi local language, is mainly used to hold the soup. The body face base of the lacquer is making of wooden materials; the opening is round and the opening is restraining slightly to prevent from overflow of the soup or water. The abdomen of the appliance is relatively deep and externally bulged, the bottom of the abdomen of the appliance is in round bottom which is retractile internally; the bottom of the appliance has high foot with round shape.

(b) Trough, which is mainly used to fill the meat. The body face base of the lacquer is making from wooden materials; its features are: the opening of the appliance is in oval with small opening; the bowl body is in hemispheric with a snap fastener matched with it, which can be fastened in longitudinal symmetry. It can be used to

fill the foods after converting; the bottom of the appliance is in oval with short bottom.

(c) Trencher, which is called “Caidi” in Yi local language, which is mainly used to fill the cooked meat or steamed bun, rice and other staple food. The body face base of the lacquer is making from wooden materials; the opening of the appliance is in round and open wide externally, the caliber is relatively large; the abdomen of the appliance is shrank internally, the bottom of the abdomen is flat; the bottom of the appliance is in round with high bottom.

(d) Wooden bowl, which is called “Zhere” in Yi local language, it is mainly used in drinking or fills the rice. The body face base of the lacquer is making from wooden materials; the opening of the appliance is in round with its mouth restrained; the abdomen of the appliance is in canister shape with straight abdomen; and the bottom is a round bottom shrank internally; the bottom of the appliance is in round with short bottom.

(e) Talon wooden bowl, which is called “Jiuxi Zhere” in Yi Nationality local language. it is mainly used in drinking or fill the rice. The body face bottom of the lacquer is a combination of talon and wooden bowl, its shape is very unique.

(f) Wood spoon, a tool used to have dinner or drinking soup. The body face base of the lacquer is making of wooden materials, and consists of soup spoon and hand shank. Its features include: The spoon is in round with slightly bouffant shape; the hand shank is a long shank in square; it prints black varnish inside the spoon and the long handle, outside is ornamenting with ornamentation patterns.

2.2.2 Drinking Vessel- Including Flagon and Wine Glass

(a) Flagon: It was divided into round flagon, oblateness flagon and pigeon-shape flagon. Round flagon or oblateness flagon: The abdomen of the appliance is in round or oblateness with large tummy, the bottom of the appliance is in round with high bottom; the top of the pot is in pagoda-shaped or in calabash shape, but it has no utility, only for ornamentation; the body of the pot is inserted a sucker, the height of the sucker is slightly lower than the top of the pot; there are small holes at the bottom of the pot, where is inserted a taper straight pipe, which is used to infuse liquor, when infusing, the plane of the liquor shall be lower than the height of the straight pipe, so that the liquor will not be poured out even it is reversed after filling. The inside structure of the flagon is very complicated, but people can't see it from outside, it represents the smart and wisdom of the Yi Nationality people, now it is the most characteristic lacquer of Yi Nationality.

Pigeon-shape flagon: it is like a pigeon with opening at the top of the appliance which is used to refuse of the liquor; there is an opening in the mouth of the pigeon,

which is the outlet of the liquor of the flagon; the bottom of the appliance is in round with high foot or with talon high foot.

(b) Yi nationality wing glass is divided into wine bowl and wine glass two types. The wine bowl is divided into wooden wine bowl and fur wine bowl. Its shapes are in monaural wine bowl and ear-free wine bowl. It is featuring on all straight opening, round bottom and footless. Among them, the monaural wine bowl is very lovely in shape, like a peaked cap, there is a ledge along the edge of the glass like the visor, when drinking, and you can hold the glass ledge. Its shape is very similar like the single ear cup in Han Dynasty.

The wine glass is divided into wooden wine glass, fur wine glass and talon wine glass. The different from wine bowl is: the body of the cup is relatively small with high foot shape. Furthermore, there is also some wine glass that use part of the animal body to make directly, and the shape, feature can mainly reflect the most original appearance of the animal body, they are ox horn wine glass, cleat wine glass, pig's feet wine glass and so on.

2.2.3 Weapons-Including Horn, Armor, Cuff and So on

Yi Nationality people was good at fighting, the armor they wear is a kind of colored drawing lacquer armor made of the whole cow skin. It is divided into prothorax and back two parts, where mounted the small hard lump on it to protect the chest and back; the lower end of the armor has connected to many square gelosis with the creance, like the kilt, which can be used to protect the abdomen and the haunch.

2.2.4 Harness-Including Saddle and Stirrup and So on

Whatever for transportation or for war, Yi Nationality people can't do without a horse. The harness is very exquisite, including two parts, they are saddle and stirrup, and the saddle is made through bonding of wooden material, then use the rivet to fix them; the stirrup is using wood to make the body face, the upper part is in handle shape, and the lower part is in hook-like shape, you can use your feet to pedal the hook when using.

Along with the growing of the society, Yi Nationality people has stepped into modern society from Slave Society, the war is a far away, the harness and war supplies have disappeared in Yi nationality people's life, we can see it any more.

2.3 Color

Color is the important composition element of lacquer and artistic manifestation mode, it has experienced long historical accumulation. The color of Yi nationality lacquer is relatively simple and pure, mainly are black (neutral color), red (warm color) and yellow (cool color) (Harry, 2000).

Yi nationality has a cultural tradition of totemism, they take black tiger as their ancestors, so they believe in

black, black reflects dignity and solemn in Yi nationality culture. Influenced by hunting culture, the red of blood is regarded as the color of life in the traditional culture of Yi nationality, it represents courage, enthusiasm. Yellow is the expression of Yi nationality to light and nature, which represents hope and beauty in the traditional culture of Yi nationality. Yi nationality lacquers takes the deep black as the essence, using the bright red and yellow to draw the patterns, these three colors will set off by contrast, also give consideration to the primary and secondary, complication and simplicity, no multiple colors' combinations, and no transition of deep and shallow hue, the makers will use the pen with different width to draw the outline of the points, line and surface alternatively, and combining with different techniques of overlapping, interface and inlay flexibly, the drawn figure is simple but no lacking of fine and smooth, also boasts of plain national art implication.

3. AESTHETIC ANALYSES

3.1 Aesthetic Feature of Mould

3.1.1 Primitiveness

Some representative wine set of Yi nationality such as ox horn, wild boar feet wine glass and so on has embodied the primitiveness in its aesthetic orientation. Seemingly, the wine set that using ox horn and wild boar as the body face is simple and crude, even seems to be wild, however, in traditional culture of Yi nationality, hunting the beast of prey and take parts of the beast body can serve to protect people from evil, and play an active role in people life. The property of spoils of war can be the expressions of the individual courage spirit. The wild shape and modeling can represent the original, unique aesthetic perspective of Yi nationality people.

3.1.2 Utility

The lacquer of Yi nationality boasts of unique national character, and the vessel of other nationalities are similar. Taking the wine set for example, the shape of flat flagon and round flagon is very exquisite, the closed abdominal cavity can protect the wine inside from losing flavor and taste for the sake of evaporation, the thin bamboo drain can be used to drink, inside dedicated setting can make the filling of wine very conveniently, and will not splash for bumping, the utility of the lacquer has presented the practical aesthetic pursuit of Yi nationality people.

3.1.3 Religion and Hierarchy

From the talon cup, we can find that, the shape design of Yi nationality lacquer boasts deep religion spirit. Yi nationality ancestor takes hawk as the embodiment of the God, so talon represents the power of the God (Zhou, 2010). Using the talon as the base need a fixed direction, the third order tower modeling connecting the base to

the body of the cup represents the place God located. In class society, talon cup can only be used by the nobility (i.e. black Yi nationality). From this, we know that this kind of lacquer, talon cup has represented the religion and hierarchy feature of Yi nationality in art of vessel.

3.2 Aesthetic Orientation of Color

The subjective impression of color in our mind is based on imagination, which is influenced by many different factors such as social environment, group character and ideology. The subjective impression of color to people is diversified, so the aesthetic orientation of color is different from each other too, consequently it gets a nationality feature. Through our observations to Yi nationality lacquer, it is easy to find that, although the modeling, size, type etc. of the lacquer is different, they all use black, red, yellow and these three colors to paint without exception. These three colors represent different aspects of Yi nationality thoughts and emotions, the pursuit of the beauty of these three colors has presented the artistic, abstract construction to the real world of Yi nationality. These three colors are unity of opposites in the lacquer, emblem the generality understanding to this colorful world, pinning Yi nationality people's artistic description to this beautiful world.

3.3 Aesthetic Content of Patterns

Vessels are not only for its utility, but also boasting their aesthetic property, which is equally to the lacquer; the making and drawing of lacquer patterns have represented the aesthetic pursuit. Comparing with the color, the patterns on the lacquer can even more reflect the objective feelings of Yi nationality people to the life directly. The patterns include animals, plants, lives, production and much other sufficient content. Through different patterns on the lacquer, we can obtain visualized understanding to Yi nationality's history, culture and religion faith, we can say that, the lacquer patterns which represent ideology property of Yi nationality can also possess aesthetic and deep historic and cultural connotation. The patterns painted on the surface of lacquer are the concrete expression of Yi nationality people's own emotions, and externalized, express unique Eastern aesthetic connotation.

4. DESIGN AND APPLICATION CONCEPTION TO MODERN PRODUCTS

4.1 Focusing on National Features

National features mean the differentia of national identities and other aspects shown in politics, economy, culture and art, life styles, religious faith and social lives from other nationalities, it includes diet, dress, religious faith and folkways and so on. It is a very good

way to absorb the handicrafts with national identities into the designing and making of modern products. For example, Liangshan is an important area of Yi nationality culture, so idiomatic folk arts and crafts are numerous, such as the symbolically characteristic black, red, and yellow wooden lacquer of Yi nationality, is the most typical products with modern design in this area. However, besides this, other modern products are still not developed completely, while these national elements can all be absorbed into the design of traditional using instruments as the local type elements. Hence, you must understand the culture and arts, living style and religion faith of Yi nationality if you want to design modern products comprehensively, you also need to use national features as the label of this area's modern products, so as to develop products with unique utility and ornamental value. The modern products shall not only be rooted on regional culture and national identity, but also conduct comprehensive development as a whole, positioning reasonably, master unite and uniform external appearance, integrate regional culture and national identity into modern products (Zhou, 2000).

4.2 Maintaining an Environmental Protection Property of Modern Products of Yi Nationality Lacquer

Body face selection and pigments shall pay more attention to environmental protection property. Firstly, in body face selection, wooden products can use the renewable woods, and other parts such as ox horn cup, talon cup and so on shall be replaced by the artificial imitations according to animal protection principle. Secondly, market economy drives people to pursue short term production cycle and high efficiency; it is also applicable in lacquer making. In the process of design and production of Modern Yi Nationality lacquer, products, the pigment use polyurethane (PU) and such chemical paint no need to deploy, and adding quantitative curing agent to cut the time of drying in the shade. However, this kind of paint vehicles contains a lot of chemical ingredients such as methylbenzene which is harmful to the health of human body, and not suitable for making tableware and wine set and other kinds of lacquers. Subsequently, paint vehicle selection shall abide by the basic principle of health, safety and environmental harm-free.

4.3 The Value of the Yi Nationality Lacquer Modern Product Diversification

As the Yi nationality lacquer is the bearer of specific function and meaning of commodities, its design should first consider its decorative features, functionality, followed by consideration of its collection. Previous single-function products are currently not able to meet the diverse needs of the people, so that an important focus for the design of Yi nationality lacquer ware should transform multi-function into daily necessities, such as small class of products - tableware, electronic product appearance, lamps, book covers, product packaging. These products are added some ornamental value because after these products are used there is also the value of watching, collection, not just a commodity. There is a huge market potential in the Yi lacquer. The designers should look to meet the needs of modern life through product differentiation and segmentation, so as to find a new meeting point to take the initiative explores in the market.

CONCLUSION

In recent years, our products have begun making gradual shift from learning to the design innovation. In this critical period of transition, the designer must stand on the position of national culture to think of innovation, inherit and carry forward the national culture and arts. To analyze the Yi lacquer and design elements combined with modern design, it is a new way of lacquer art development, but also to create a national brand with Chinese characteristics. It is an effective way to win the international art market competitiveness and it has important practical significance.

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