

Experience and Inheritance of Words and Objects—On Craft Materialization of Hakka Customs from Hakka Nursery Rhymes

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Abstract: Nursery rhymes as a form of local written records, and the daily utensils for local life as a record of "tangible culture", both reflect local life style, and narrate the traditional living habits and social consciousness of local people. Through literature survey and empirical research, the relationships between Hakka traditional historical scenes, traditional Hakka nursery rhymes, and daily utensils representing traditional Hakka crafts are conducted with speculative observation and descriptive research. According to the narrative contents in Hakka nursery rhymes, the researches on the items used in daily life and special ceremonies of the Hakkas from the perspectives of Hakka's regional characteristics, festival ceremonies and awareness of folk customs show that the interaction between "words and objects" is the result of people's traditional living habits and social consciousness.

1. Research on the combination of Hakka's local words, customs and crafts is beneficial to the innovation, application and development of traditional folk culture

The 13th Five-Year Plan for Development of National Cultural Relics issued in 2017 is in the hope of telling the Chinese story well and enhancing the international influence of Chinese culture, so as to being consistent with the five engineering links including the National Memory Engineering. In the exploration of the ways to excavate local cultural traditions in different regions of China, Beijing can have royal stories, Hangzhou can have IP contents of Song Dynasty and West Lake, while folk characters and folk utensils are the stories of the regions without official historical events.

The words of local nursery rhymes and the objects of traditional handicrafts reflect the local social consciousness. Social consciousness affecting the changes of cultural and substantial forms is constructed by the mutual influence between the memory of Hakka nursery rhymes and the usage scenarios of daily utensils for traditional crafts (see Figure 1). Just like Deleuze's practice of philosophy and art, "interaction can make philosophy and art possibly generate new ideas, because 'in this way, art and thought keep alive and can find many resonance with each other'. [1]"

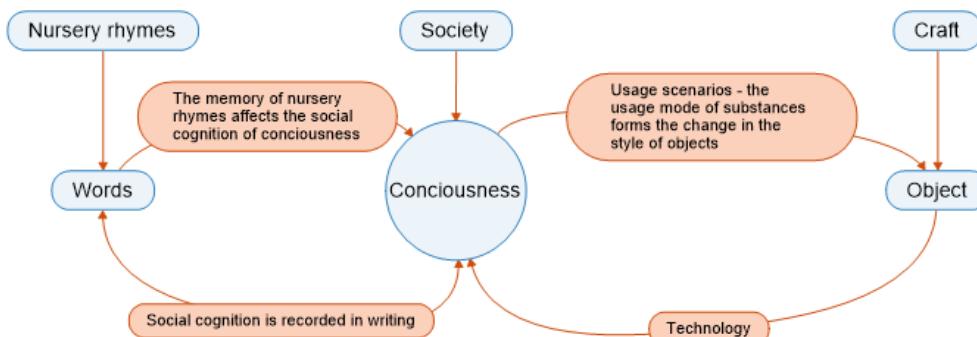


Figure 1 Relational Chart for the Concepts of "Words---Consciousness---Objects" (self-drawing by the author)

1.1 Hakka Nursery Rhymes can reveal Hakka traditional customs

The studies on the contents of Hakka nursery rhymes indirectly show the adherence of the Hakkas to traditional custom. The widely investigations show that the narrative contents of nursery rhymes are all about the topics with characteristics or educational significance in life, while it also can find the detailed difference of social customs and living habits between Hakka and other areas.

Hakka people moving to south from Central Plains behave according to the Rites of the Zhou. The pronunciation of their dialect proved to be the ancient pronunciation of Central Plains in China, while the combination of Hakka characters is an ancient combination of Chinese characters, and numerous researches shows that Hakka folk songs is similar to the Book of Songs in tonality. Hakka nursery rhymes reflect their folk customs and lifestyles, and mix with the elders' instructions to their descendants. Even the elders in the past said that children's learning to read should emphasize "The knowledge of Etiquette, righteousness and self-cultivation are included in the words of cheering and laughing [2]".

1.2 Hakka craft utensils are the materialized manifestation of Hakka traditional life

The studies on folk arts and crafts mainly focus on patterns of utensils, and then their formal characteristics.

The formation and application of Hakka traditional crafts are usually determined by local regional climate and ideology. The materials of local crafts determined by the particular regional climate are usually characterized by green environmental protection, for example, bamboo weaving materials are mostly used by Hakka people as production tools for carrying. Even for the architectures, the building materials and methods will determine the Hakka earth buildings to gradually disappear with natural changes when they are not inhabited. Therefore, there are not many daily crafts handed down in Hakka area, with few special documents, which are mostly handed down in the way of local traditional handicraft techniques.

For the handicrafts, they are "utensils" firstly, and then the patterns decorated on them. The traditional handicrafts in different areas mostly become the finished products by conducting meticulous processing on local materials. The different materials available in each area and the different using habits of utensils make the similar utensils have different materials, thus the patterns decorated on them will be inevitably changed in style details due to the change of materials.

2. Embodiment of Hakka Nursery rhyme to Hakka traditional daily craft

In the process of spreading nursery rhymes, taking the objects appeared in nursery rhymes as an extension of cultural communication in material image is to make people generate certain understanding on the shapes, materials, colors and manufacturing methods of traditional living goods from childhood. It is difficult to verify folk legend, but the analysis and reasoning on details, as well as the phenomenon analysis combined with the background make it possible to conduct reasonable assumption on its real situation.

2.1 Hakka Nursery rhyme represent the colors of life scene:

The sentence that "water carried by gold bucket should be loaded in gold tank" in "*Chickabiddy*" indicates the thought of Hakka people, that is, bucket and tank should be respectively used for water carrying and water loading, while even the utensils made from gold are no exception. The color "gold" is one of the colors rarely described in the current Hakka nursery rhymes. The metaphorical consciousness explained by with "luxury psychology [3]" shows that can indicate the less pursuit of the Hakka people seldom go for colors in their daily life, which is related to the strict regulation on the use of colors in Chinese social hierarchy.

Hakka people are accustomed to keeping a low profile and living in small households, and strictly follow the rules of "civil use" regarding the image, color and material form of daily utensils, Hakka people characterized by low-key style and small household strictly abide by "civil color" in the shape, color and material form of daily utensils, with their architectures and daily handicrafts

dominated by black, blue, white, yellow and other simple colors.

The civil architectures of Hakka characterized by earth walls and grey tiles, plastered with white lime, occasionally decorated with the framed and less detailed calligraphy and painting. The official buildings or ancestral halls and other social buildings in eastern Guangdong supported by stone materials [4] and wooden structures basically follow the architectural style of Central Plains, with Phoenix heads attached on the eaves, which is elegant.

The narration on the color habit in the studies of Hakka clothing is that "clothing colors are dominated by blue, white, black and gray, but golden yellow, red and purple are rarely used [5]". The embodiment of blue gown in Hakka Wedding Lament is that "I will wear the cambric gown rather than the blue in my hand [6]". Even in the wedding and other important ceremonies, Hakka people also wear the clothes in daily colors; except the red scarf on her head, red shoes, and some decorative patterns on her clothes, the bride also wears blue gown and black dress, without too much difference from daily clothing. The grandmother also wears the traditional clothes similar to the bride in color and style, thus indicating that this kind of clothes can also be wore in daily life after marriage. A literature in 1937 described the color of Hakka clothing as follows: "In my childhood, 90% of the common people wore the blue gown that has the 'same family name but different ancestor' with the clothes worn by the people in Beiping. It is the rendered Lishui white cloth, whose color likes the leaves of green onion, thus making it beautiful and economic to wear, and the elders will certainly choose the color that looks more antique.^[7]" It shows the frugal and pragmatic folkways of Hakka people. The Hakka nursery rhyme "*Paper Soled Shoes*" [8] clearly and specifically describes the "old-customs female makeup", and two feet eight is considered as "good luck" according to the carpenter's square, which indicates the Hakka's particular attention on ceremony.

However, it can be inferred that without the popularization of chemical colors, the relatively single use of former mineral color and plant color in printing and dyeing has made Hakka have not many color elements, and especially the emphasis on the compliance with official and civilian class system in the Hakka areas resulted in the seldom usage of colorful processing on daily utensils, while the diversification of color application was mostly shown in the combination of different utensils for the sacrificial ceremony. The foreign trade goods in Guangdong such as "famille rose porcelain", "Chaozhou embroidery", "glass painting" and other colorful objects were rare in Hakka areas during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. While after the Republic of China, the elimination of official class has made the colorful objects in Hakka area spread, but fail to develop as vigorously as Chaoshan area, it reflected the introverted, modest and low-key characteristics of Hakka culture. The inexistence of colorful objects in Hakka nursery rhymes shows the rare appearance of color in Hakka's life scenes, rather than the normal.

2.2 Description of scene visualization in Hakka nursery rhymes:

Studying the description of life scene and social customs in Hakka nursery rhymes is an effective way to understand the Hakka traditional life. There are many animal characters in nursery rhymes, for example, the sentence that "In the bright moonlight, the goose is carrying water, the duck is washing vegetables, the cock is ridging with the dog treading on it, and the monkey steals food and gets a burn at the mouth." in *Moonlight and Mountain Back* [6, 8] to show the fairy tale scene by using animals to describe human beings indicates the harmony between animals. The descriptions in the documents of the Republic of China that "averagely, each family has one or two pig, dog or cat, several chickens or ducks to raise, thus feeding livestock is also one of the daily work of Hakka women. All kinds of livestock gather in one place, people hold a dinner....it shows the harmonious atmosphere^[9]" show that in traditional Hakka houses, there is usually a courtyard for livestock raising activities, and children are familiar with livestock regardless of family size, which is why the animals can be related to each other and endowed with anthropomorphic thoughts and behaviors, without any estrangement. This content can also become the textual research on the basic style of residential buildings in Hakka areas.

3. Mapping of Hakka Traditional Daily Utensils in Hakka Nursery Rhymes

3.1 On the cultural heritage of Central Plains from the nursery rhymes of festive lanterns

Besides Spring Festival, lantern show as an important festival in China is the only day that unmarried men and women can meet. The Lantern Festival in China is on the fifteenth day of the Lunar New Year, and both the Lantern Festival and Ghost Festival in China have lantern shows. The Lantern Festival Parade includes three activities, namely, lantern making, decoration with lanterns and festoons, and lantern appreciation, which can be last for ten days in some areas. The activity of lantern appreciation by Jiangnan people and the lantern show in Beijing have been vividly described in the eleventh chapters of *The Scholars* and the Volume 2 of *A brief Introduction to the Scenery of Imperial Capital* respectively [10].

These lantern images that have been described in the south of the Yangtze River and in the northern area also appear in the Lingnan area. The activity of "lantern appreciation" described by the sentences that "watch the lion dance on the ninth and tenth days of the first lunar month and watch the dragon lantern on the eleventh and twelfth days of the first lunar month^[6]" in Hakka nursery rhyme is a manifestation of Central Plains culture. This festival and Torch Festival are usually held at the same time in different areas, while long dragon of torch, lantern decorations, etc. are all the utensils or objects related to the Lantern Festival.

Zhongxin lantern customs in Heyuan as a kind of family celebration ceremony is a manifestation of good leadership of the clan. Lantern hanging custom is an unique birth ceremony held for the traditional celebration of having a baby (boy) born into a family, and at the same time, lantern festival are held at specific times and days for people to appreciate or buy lanterns. This kind of seemingly extravagant large objects is usually preserved by some clan activities. In the lantern parade, the mutual blessing between patriarch and lantern owner are needed to say the ritualized words , for example, "lantern owner says 'the lantern for the celebration of having a baby born is beautiful and bright', and the patriarch says 'men, women, old and young are full of happiness'; "lantern owner says 'the lantern is sent to the ancestral hall and hung on the beam', and the patriarch says 'wealth and children are prosperous for million years'. [11]" The words used in sacrificial occasions contain the meaning of blessing, and some are written on lanterns, which are clear and easy to understand, thus being handed down in the family. "The man coming home at the Lunar New Year's Day will re embark on the journey after the 'Lantern Festival' to live a hard life in a strange land, with the purpose of seeking career success and comforting the family" [9].

3.2 From the application of daily utensils to the formation of nursery rhymes

Among the scenes of Hakka production, life and labor described in the nursery rhymes about labor, customs, solar terms, animals and plants, "picking up Gardenia jasminoides...dyeing clothes", "learning liquor-making...learning brick-making...learning umbrella-mending" describe the production process of daily utensils in nursery rhymes.

Hakka's living in mountainous area makes their daily tools require the structural parts that need to be stressed, and the bamboo are mostly used for manufacturing and processing of daily tools, thus the production and living utensils made from bamboo can be seen everywhere. The economical, practical and creative festival utensils that are mostly made from bamboo and paper not only enrich the colors of Hakka festivals, but also lighten the burden of expenses. At the same time, the materials for weaving utensils also include rattan and palm. The nursery rhyme *Father Grows Melons and Children Weave Baskets* [6] narrates the children's mood of weaving baskets, that is, they are worried that the baskets are too big for their fathers to carry, but too small to hold watermelons, which vividly shows the psychological state of children in the process of labor, and then it becomes a nursery rhyme.

The few types of Hakka toys makes the kids in the relatively poor families usually accompany with their parents to do farm work in the fields and play together. Hakka women often take their children with them, and "the older people carry children to the fields to know about the field work and the common animals and plants [9]". Hakka children's childhood playing stuffs are related to natural ecology, such as catching crabs, thus the life style of taking nature as toys promotes the

emergence of *Crab Song*.

4. Research on the combination of nursery rhyme and craft can form multi-dimensional development for the inheritance of traditional culture

All the time, the inheritance of local intangible cultural heritage is mainly based on the collection of original data of text and image, with the existence of folk crafts and folk literatures in the form of independent archival data, while the simple data collection that fails to make the public directly sense the characteristics of folk history and culture and learn about their fun is very unfavorable for cultural heritage.

Hakka culture has integrated into the characteristics of life in the south area of Five Ridges by preserving many ancient Chinese cultural thoughts and living habits. Local nursery rhymes reflect the local traditional culture and social habits, while local handicrafts reflect the living habits and behavior of local people. The comprehensive comparison between some Hakka nursery rhymes and the using habits of daily utensils for local traditional crafts is conducted in this paper to explore the cultural connection between them.

In the design of folk cultural communication, the communication should be conducted in the form of "words and objects" visualization and based on the new ways of spreading reading habits in the current society, so as to change the traditional archives collection method of collecting text data and image data into volumes. Through the cross application of "words and objects", local cultural atmosphere of "visible nostalgia" can be formed by designing the image narration of scenes related to the content of local folk nursery rhymes.

It is believed that the contents of folk written records and intangible cultural heritage in China should not only stay in the stage of recording text and picture, and the craft creation for inheritance should not only pay attention to the spread of skills, but also become the researches on the background phenomenon of social groups formed by the combination of words and craft images.

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